

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jts-os\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article]

## CHRONICLE

### OLD TESTAMENT CHRONICLE

*The Old Testament, its Meaning and Making*, by Principal H. Wheeler Robinson (pp. x + 248, Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), aims at presenting a brief account of the literary character of the several books and their specific qualities. 'The story of the *making* of the Old Testament', he writes, 'remains the essential guide to its proper interpretation, but the *meaning* grows with the experience of every interpreter who finds God in it and through it' (p. 209). The book is intended to lay the foundation for the study of both the history and the religion of Israel; and students old and young will appreciate the carefully digested material that Dr Robinson has provided. His position is the ordinary orthodox critical one, e.g. as regards Deuteronomy and Ezekiel. And while some scholars are now inclined to emphasize the antiquity of the Psalms and of the Wisdom Literature, he himself judiciously points out that the present book of Psalms is a 'post-exilic collection adapted for post-exilic use', and its Theology as a whole 'the prophetic religion worked out in the terms of praise and prayer' (p. 133). Similarly the book of Proverbs is likely to be post-exilic (p. 151). Some of the most illuminating pages—as might be expected from Dr Robinson—relate to the prophets and inspiration. In general, this book is concerned with the Old Testament as a piece of literature—there is a bare synopsis of the main lines of its development. The general historical and religious background, which alone enables one to grasp the real essence of that development, is not dealt with.

Prof. Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Story of the Bible* (pp. xvi + 187 + 150, Chicago and Camb. Univ. Press, 1936). This rather slight volume gives a purely introductory statement of the several books, presenting 'vividly and unconventionally the situations which called them forth'. Its distinctive feature is the list of questions and suggestions for study at the end of each chapter. Thus, in reference to Ruth (2½ pp.) it is asked, 'How did Paul afterward express its fundamental idea?' Romans (6 pp.), 'Why does Romans stand first among the letters of Paul, although it is far from being the oldest of them?' Of thirteen questions on 1 Peter (3 pp.) the last quotes from 'Enoch' and asks for a comparison with the Epistle; and of eleven on James (4½ pp.) the last quotes from Epictetus and likewise invites comparison. That the book is novel and suggestive will be seen.

Prof. Elmer A. Leslie, *Old Testament Religion in the Light of its Canaanite Background* (pp. 289, Abingdon Press, 1936). This is an interesting sketch of the development of the religion from the pre-

Israelite or Canaanite age to the Exile, tracing the conflict between the native religion and that of the invading Israelites to 'the final synthesis'. The chief feature of the book is the consistent attention paid to the non-Israelite or pre-Israelite material too often ignored by modern writers. Among other interesting points the following may be noted: the author explains and follows Alt's treatment of the patriarchal religion (p. 79; see *J.T.S.* xxxi 429). He is among those who date the Exodus not earlier than the thirteenth century, on the basis of the archaeological evidence (p. 79; see *J.T.S.* xxxviii 99 f). Of interest for modern conditions is the observation that those who could command the sea-coast of Palestine had a great advantage over the inhabitants of the interior (p. 112). Finally, he makes the important and correct statement that 'in the conception of God held by the Second Isaiah we have a remarkable synthesis between the Yahweh of the nomadic period and the Yahweh of the Canaanite era' (p. 231). It was just this period when the influence of nomadic desert people was once more especially prominent.

Principal A. J. Grieve edits a supplement to Peake's commentary (pp. 38, Jack, 1936). It consists of a series of articles which bring that famous and popular work more or less up-to-date. They are from the pen of Dr H. W. Robinson, Dr W. F. Howard, Prof. Calder, the Editor, and others. Dr Jack writes on archaeology and on the Exodus; Dr Wardle, on prophecy and the prophets, gives deserved prominence to Dr Aubrey Johnson's study of the interrelation between prophet and priest. Prof. Vincent Taylor explains *Formgeschichte*, and Mr H. G. Wood surveys recent literature on the life and teaching of Jesus. Some effort is made to supplement the bibliographies: among the omissions should be noted G. R. Driver's searching criticism of Burney's book on the Aramaic origin of the Fourth Gospel (*Jewish Guardian*, 5 and 12 Jan., 1923). This supplement will undoubtedly be found valuable by others than those who already possess 'Peake'.

Martin Buber's *Königtum Gottes*, appears in a second edition (pp. lxi + 293, Schocken, Berlin, 1936). The author pointedly refers to Dr Oman's review of the first edition (*J.T.S.* xxxiv 214 ff), feeling that most of his other reviewers had somewhat failed to appreciate the significance of his work. His book has indeed been received with serious attention (e.g. by Baumgartner in the *D.L.Z.*, 16 July, 1933); but while every one values the material he has collected, a distinction must be drawn between the prevalence and persistence of the theocratic idea and the effort to find it in the history of pre-monarchic Israel. In the new edition Dr Buber deals with his critics and adds many new notes, the most important of which is his discussion of Eissfeldt's explanation of Moloch (Molech) and the cult.

Emanuel Hirsch, *Das Alte Testament und die Predigt des Evangeliums* (pp. 87, Mohr, Tübingen, 1936). One of the many rather ephemeral books called forth by the present controversy in Germany over the Old Testament. As a contribution to the question 'what to do with the Old Testament' it is not without its interest.

Dr W. O. E. Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel* (pp. 320, Hodder and Stoughton, 1937). The book is an expansion and elaboration of lectures at King's College, London, and gives a very convenient conspectus of the evidence down to and including the New Testament. After summarizing the main theories of sacrifice, Dr Oesterley treats of sacrifices among uncultured peoples and among the Semites. The relevant Old Testament technical terms are then explained, and he proceeds to describe the Israelite usages during the nomadic and the subsequent agricultural periods; the prophetic and the priestly attitudes to sacrifice; the post-exilic and the Jewish systems; the teaching of Jesus, and finally the chief views of the Atonement. He distinguishes three fundamental types of sacrifice (1) sacrifice as a gift, (2) to effect a communion, and (3) to liberate and give life. Of these, the last—the surrender of life that others should have life—is in his opinion the most important. He urges that the death of Christ was not an expiatory sacrifice, and that the Atonement was not a single act performed in the death on the Cross, but—following Rashdall—the natural meaning and purpose of the entire life (pp. 296 sqq.). Thus, His whole career—the 'daily cross'—culminated in the Cross, as the crowning act of love. Dr Oesterley's handy volume ranges over a wide field and is more popular than Buchanan Gray's more technical and difficult treatise (1925) to which it will serve as a stepping stone.

A second volume from the prolific pen of Dr Oesterley, *A Fresh Approach to the Psalms* (pp. x+303, Nicholson and Watson, 1937), makes no claim to originality; its utility lies in the large variety of elucidatory material that is collected. Much of course is of a familiar type: the collections of the Psalms, dates, use in Synagogue and in the Christian Church, Messianic interpretations, main theological ideas (God, sin, the hereafter, &c.) A chapter on the Psalms as part of world literature contains in handy compass illustrations from Egypt and, more especially, from Babylonia. Two delightfully novel chapters on the music of the Ancient East and music among the Israelites are off the beaten track and may be commended to other than biblical students. The book is entirely popular, and informing, and once more students will be grateful to Dr Oesterley for presenting the fruits of his varied interests and wide reading.

Dr Joseph Rieder, *Deuteronomy* (pp. xlv+355, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1937). This the second volume of a series

written by and for Jews, presents the Society's own translation, with notes, introduction, and three maps. The series takes the line that Jews should not leave it for Christians to explain to them their own sacred literature: Jews and Christians naturally approach the Old Testament with different predispositions, and the effort is made in this commentary to draw much more upon the classical Jewish commentaries and familiarize readers with the Jewish point of view. Typical examples are furnished by the notes on Deut. v 9, xi 6, xii 15 sq. Although by no means unacquainted with modern critical views, the author takes a definitely traditionalist position: thus Deuteronomy represents a later stage in the history of the wanderings of the Israelites than does Leviticus; and the book that was brought to light in the time of Josiah was neither Deuteronomy nor any portion thereof but the whole Pentateuch. No effort is made to meet the 'critical' position critically. Support is indeed claimed from the American archaeologist Albright (p. xxi) who, it is true, holds that the bulk of Deuteronomy dates from the ninth century. This in itself is very different from the traditional position and is much more than the 'thin end of the wedge'. Besides, while Albright himself thus might seem to confirm the old view, he writes: 'Since, however, the idea of a central sanctuary faded rapidly with the development of local particularism, and again after the disruption of the monarchy, we may still adhere to Wellhausen's contention that the movement for a single center of cult became acute in the late seventh century, and that its success is presupposed by the Priestly code in the sixth' (*Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, pp. 162 sqq.). Archaeology is a precarious support to the traditional position, and equally to current 'orthodox' critical views.

To the *Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures* Father Lattey adds the commentary on Nahum and Habakkuk by the late Dom Hugh Bévenol (pp. xxxviii + 40, Longmans, 1937). Owing to the sudden death of the author, whose commentary on the two books of the Maccabees was noticed in these pages (*J.T.S.* xxx pp. 105 sq.), the general editor, besides reviewing the MS, has completed the introduction to Habakkuk, added notes on ii 4, and edited an article by Father Hugh on Hab. iii. Here the latter had rejected various lines, which the Editor inserts in square brackets, faithfully mentioning Father Hugh's reasons for their omission. The commentary has several points of interest; and it may be mentioned that in Nahum ii 8 Father Hugh (after Sellin) reads 'its queen (*ba'alathah*) is uncovered', and in iii 18, by taking the last word of *v.* 17 and emending, he translates 'Woe! thy shepherds slumber'.

Of two parts of the *Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen*, vol. xiii (Aschen-dorff, Münster i. W.), one, by Dr Joh. Schmidt, is sufficiently explained

by its title: *Studien zur Stilistik der alttestamentlichen Spruchliteratur* (pp. xii + 176). It is a pretty comprehensive analysis of the structure, vocabulary, syntax, and general character of the proverbs in the Old Testament and Apocrypha. The first work of its kind, it establishes the thesis that this literature has a type of its own. He notes that only a few cases of rhyme can be found (p. 62). In an excursus on Egyptian Wisdom literature (pp. 68 sqq.)—there is little that is Accadian—he observes that Egypt knows no personification of Wisdom (p. 76). Elsewhere he refers (p. 54 n.) to the view of Boström—probably not widely known—that Wisdom as a female figure is a substitute for and a protection against the cult of the *Liebesgöttin*—who is indicated in the ‘strange woman’ of Prov. i–ix. The other volume is by Dr Martin Reim, *Textkritische Untersuchungen zu der Parallelstellen der Samuel-Königsbücher und der Chronik* (pp. x + 148). This painstaking work discusses the Lucianic readings, the peculiarities of the Greek version, the use of the LXX of Sam.–Kings by the translators of Chronicles, the influence of Chronicles upon the Greek translation of the former, types of errors and their causes (due to dictation, confusion of Hebrew letters, &c.), and several other topics. On the whole, while the Hebrew text of Chronicles is earlier than the LXX of Sam.–Kings, it is for literary rather than for textual criticism to determine whether the chronicler used the canonical Sam.–Kings or their sources. Dr Reim provides abundant material and there is a very adequate index: students of the Septuagint will value the book.

Of two new volumes of the series *Handbuch zum alten Testament*, edited by Eissfeldt (Mohr, Tübingen), one, on Ezekiel by Prof. Bertholet (pp. xxiv + 171, 1936), is an entire rewriting of the well-known commentary which he contributed to Marti's series in 1897. Ezekiel has become one of the most problematic of the prophetic books, and it is of interest to see how much the author—like all of us—has confessedly had to unlearn, and how tentatively he finds himself obliged to deal with the new questions that have arisen. Here a special feature is the attention paid to the more or less significant doublets; these are printed in parallel columns (e.g. xviii 21–32 and xxiii 12–20, 10, 11). The ‘Daniel’ who is mentioned between Noah and Job in xiv 14, 20, is now explained after the Ras Shamra texts, where the name is that of a god of Wisdom who maintains the cause of the widow and orphan. The reference to Assyria in ch. xv 28 is taken (after Eissfeldt) to refer to the intrigues with Egypt and Assyria in the time of Sennacherib (701 B.C.). The fact that the oracles against the Nations hold a similar position in Ezekiel (xxv–xxxii), Isaiah (xiii–xxiii) and Jeremiah (originally after xxv) is a piece of ‘redactional architecture’, a transition ‘von Unheils- zu Heilsver-

kündigung': this is important for the literary analysis elsewhere. Prof. Galling is responsible for the passages relating to the Temple-building (xl-xlii, xliii 10-17) and the relevant section in the Introduction. Throughout the explanatory notes and paragraphs are concise and adequate. The second commentary is on Proverbs, by Prof. Gemser (pp. 85, 1937). It is relatively brief. He regards i-ix as early post-exilic but pre-Ezran, chaps. x-xxii 16 are dated a couple of centuries after Solomon, and xxii 17-xxiv 22 and xxiv 23-34 are two supplements. As regards xxv-xxix, which is ascribed to the age of Hezekiah, it may be worth observing that the Story of Ahikar with its twofold collection of pithy sayings, takes us back to the days of Sennacherib, and that Prof. Gemser himself finds points of contact especially with the Syriac version. There are, however, very few cases of interdependence between the Hebrew proverbs and Ahikar, and it is shewn that even the proverbs of Amen-em-ope are not at all slavishly followed in xxii 17-xxiv 22 (p. 69). As regards the question of Israelite trading activity, to date it only after the Exile (pp. 35 sqq.) is surely to rely too rigidly upon the uneven distribution of the Old Testament literature: one cannot form a fair estimate of the activity of Israelite life from the scanty records of the monarchy. And as regards the references to kings (pp. 49 sqq.), the Letter of Aristeas affords an excellent idea of what the 'philosopher kings' of the Greek age might do to encourage the pursuit of wisdom (cf. also 1 Esdras iii sq.).

Of two monographs of the Oslo University (Dybwad, Oslo, 1936), one by A. Brock-Ulne, *Der Gottesgarten* (pp. viii + 136), is a discussion of the Paradise myths along novel lines. In the place of the familiar 'comparative' treatment of the subject the author undertakes a special study of Oriental gardens and garden-life in general, utilizing the works of Dalman and other writers. Thus it is usual to tend gardens, to preserve their fruit for the owner (forbidden fruits for others), and to safeguard them from thieves; so that, quite apart from mythical *motifs*, ordinary garden lore and usage must be taken into consideration. He finds a polemic against 'heathen' garden-cults, sacred trees, serpent-oracles, and their orgiastic rites, and also against the association of Wisdom with an *Urmensch* (pp. 113, 118). Even the fig-leaves have an orgiastic suggestion (pp. 60 sq.). The little book does good service in reminding us that mythological stories of men and incidents must utilize ordinary human experience of the everyday world. It used to be said once that women were veiled because the goddess Ishtar was veiled, but the notion that she wore a veil was naturally based upon a usage with which the original myth-makers were familiar. This is a very trite observation; but it is easy to forget to what extent men's conceptions of a supernatural realm are built up upon a knowledge of

ordinary life before—at the later stage—they become ideals, patterns, and precedents. The second monograph, by P. A. Munch in *The Expression Bajjôm Hähü* (pp. 69), gives a full discussion of the words 'in that day' and argues that it is quite unnecessary to interpret them in an eschatological manner. They can always be understood as a temporal adverb, and at times as an editorial introduction to independent oracles the metre of which they are found to disturb. In the New Testament they may have developed and become an eschatological term (p. 57). The author agrees with Messel that 'in the latter end of days' corresponds to our 'at last'; it is used of something that will happen 'sometime'. The English is not always quite intelligible, and the title—as will be seen—contains a misprint for *Hähü*.

Timely contributions to the history of Palestine and Syria are made by two new numbers of the valuable series *Der alte Orient* (Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1936). Prof. Albrecht Alt (*Völker und Staater Syriens im früheren Altertum*, pp. 40) sketches the general ethnical and political conditions prior to about 1200 B.C. Amid a medley of scattered data it is not yet possible to form a very satisfactory picture of the area. The population was mixed and exposed to many external non-Semitic influences. But the distinctive feature of recent research is the recognition of the extreme importance of the Hurrian factor. This term (Hurri) is applied to certain groups, perhaps originally Mesopotamian, who wandered southwards leaving their name as, later, did the Hittites. It is in fact held that the name is the same as the Egyptian *haru* and, what may seem more difficult, the 'Horites' of the Old Testament. The terms Amor(ite) and Hebrew (Habiru) had a similarly complex history. At all events, Prof. Alt does present a suggestive *aperçu*, and we are taken down to the sweeping changes round about 1200 B.C. when, after the decline of the great empires, it was possible for new states to arise (Israel and Judah, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Aramaean principalities). The decisive factor was the 'Aramaean' tribes from the desert, with their ideas of social-political groups and groupings foreign to the older system. So, for a time, the small states were able to work out their own history until with the subsequent re-emergence of the Assyrian empire their development was rudely cut short. In the second brochure Prof. Otto Eissfeldt (*Philister und Phönizier*, pp. 42) carries on Alt's story. He sketches the relations between these people of the coastlands and their Israelite neighbours of the lands of the Levant. Although on geographical and historical grounds they should have much in common they differed both ethnically and culturally. The Philistines were active in a military sense, but lost their cultural independence (religion, language, &c.); whereas the Phoenicians were commercially energetic,



their wars appear to have been defensive rather than offensive, and they long persisted, retaining their language and cults. There is little new to be said of the Philistines, save that Judges xvi 25 sqq. does not testify, as has been thought, to a peculiarly 'Philistine' type of building; nor is there ground for any specifically 'Philistine' ware (pp. 10, 34)—as had long ago been suspected.<sup>1</sup> The excavations have proved extremely disappointing. On the other hand, much more can be said as to the antiquity and spread of Phoenician cults, thanks to Eissfeldt's own researches. As regards the discovery of their prominence even as far north as Ras Shamra (p. 20)—Alt rightly notes the non-Semitic character of North Syria—it is a point of some interest that even in the ninth–eighth centuries the same lapidary type of North Semitic epigraphy is found from Zenjirli in the far north to Moab and Gezer in the south. For more detailed evidence on the Philistines and Phoenicians we are referred to Eissfeldt's articles in the new volume of Pauly-Wissowa.

Four Roman Catholic books may be conveniently mentioned together. (1) A slight pamphlet by Prof. Coppens of Louvain, *Pour mieux comprendre et mieux enseigner l'Histoire Sainte de l'Ancien Testament* (pp. 82; Brouwer, Paris, 1936). The author comments on the importance of the task and outlines the sort of manual that is required, with due respect to what the Biblical Commission does or does not demand of the faithful (pp. 70sq.). (2) Father C. Lavergne, *Guide Pratique de Chronologie Biblique* (pp. 80; Blond, Paris, 1937). A compilation consisting of tables of epochs, dates, and events (including archaeological epochs) with, facing, thirty-four maps of the lands and peoples of the Near East, illustrating the interrelation of peoples, campaigns, &c. It begins with pre-historic Egypt, before 3300 B.C., the date of the flood which overwhelmed Ur and Kish (cf. *J.T.S.* xxxvii 99) and ends with the Eastern Roman Empire. Various explanatory notes are appended, and the book deserves attention for its novelty. We note among the dates 1225 B.C. for Moses and Aaron; 500–450 B.C. Ruth, 405 B.C. Joel. The last dates are round about A.D. 100 (the Apocalypse of St John and Trajan [117 A.D.]). (3) Charles-F. Jean, *Le Milieu Biblique avant Jésus-Christ: III Les Idées religieuses et morales* (pp. xxxix + 727, Geuthner, Paris, 1936). The first volume of this work was noticed several years ago (*J.T.S.* xxv 102 sq.). It is a valuable but popular survey of the Ancient Near East (including the Aegean), epoch by epoch, with special reference to the religious literature, and—as far as the material allows—the ideas. It begins with prehistory (palaeolithic and neolithic) and goes down to the

<sup>1</sup> *The Expositor*, Aug. 1909, pp. 97 sqq.; see *Quart. Stat. of the Palestine Explor. Fund*, Oct. 1913, p. 205.

Hellenistic age in Palestine and the *Diaspora*. Thus, for Canaan in the fourteenth–twelfth centuries we have the native pantheon, the Hittite and other gods, sacred places (as excavated), moral ideals (culled from the Hittite codes). For the seventh–sixth centuries we have paragraphs on the religion of Arabia, Iran, the Aramaeans, &c. Later still are the pages on the Syro-Phoenician and Arab deities, Jewish sects, and so forth. Even the Index is amplified by useful notes, e.g. on the Messiah and on Eissfeldt's Molech-theory. Rich in material, it is abundantly illustrated (76 figures in the text and 80 pages of plates), and forms a very useful compendium to the religious history of the lands of the Bible. (4) A. Allgeier *Biblische Zeitgeschichte in den Grundlinien dargestellt* (pp. xx+327, Herder, Freiburg i. B., 1937). A detailed history from pre-Israelite times to the rise of Christianity. It is intended for theological readers, but avoids critical discussions and bibliographical references: English works are not altogether unknown to the author. The most distinctive features of the history are the fuller paragraphs in smaller type on important matters of detail. We may mention the pages on Israel in Egypt, where Prof. Allgeier especially notes the evidence for a sojourn that was not mere slavery (p. 42). Ramses II is the Pharaoh of the Exodus—another indication of the absence of unanimity touching its date (pp. 44 sq.). Sellin's Shechemite theory is handled (pp. 72 sq.), and attention is paid to Max Weber's sociological interpretation of early Israelite history (pp. 82 sqq.). In this connexion, the problem of the origin of the tribe of Judah and of its absence from the Deuteronomic book of Judges is discussed in a very suggestive manner (pp. 79 sqq.), and when Dr Allgeier speaks of the Levitical or priestly character of the treatment of Joshua and the Judges (p. 98) he is supplementing Smend—who however is not named—who showed that besides 'P' there were popular narratives with 'priestly' interests. The volume, which has two maps and eleven illustrations, has clearly an independent value of its own.

Prof. Peter Thomsen, *Die Palästina-Literatur*, vol. v., two parts (pp. xi+464, 1936–7). The first four volumes covered 1895–1924, and the present, in spite of its 6,261 items, is only about half way through the literature of 1925–1934. Besides a full statement of each book there is in most cases a brief list of contents and frequent reference to important reviews. It is impossible to review this work: it has proved quite indispensable, and reviewers have found very few omissions. The amount of labour entailed has been enormous, and by proposing to include even the literature relating to Modern Palestine (that is, up to 1934), Dr Thomsen has not lightened his task. He acknowledges his indebtedness to publishers, editors, authors, and all

others who have aided him in the past; we hope this help will be continued. His address is Dresden-Blasewitz, Jungststrasse 29.

Shlomo Shumani, *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies* (pp. 12 + 408, Jerusalem Univ. Press, 1936). The book contains 2,034 items, and a fair idea of their scope can be gathered from the following: No. 497, Catalogue of an Exhibition of Bibles, Glasgow; No. 581, Eisenstein, Partial List of the Principal Prayer-books, first editions; No. 718, Glaymen, List of Plays (in English) Based on the Bible; No. 2006, History of Hebrew Typography. Classified indexes facilitate the use of the book.

Kurt Levy, *Zur masoretischen Grammatik* (pp. vii + 80 + 40, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1936). This monograph forms No. 15 of the Bonn Oriental Studies edited by Kahle and Kirfel, and consists of a Hebrew grammatical text with supplements, translation, and introduction. The subject is no other than the *Sheva* and its uses; and although it might seem to be exceedingly dry, it owes its importance to the fact that we are gradually going back to the stages prior to those Jewish grammarians who laid down the lines which became 'canonical'. Few students are aware of the earlier efforts to elaborate the vowel-system with which they are familiar, and this monograph will enable them to understand something of the steps that preceded it. In the preface Dr Kahle states that Kurt Levy met with a tragic end before the printing of the book was completed: we can only say that the author's scholarship shows that a very promising life was cut off prematurely.

Yet another endeavour to go behind the 'canon' is furnished by G. R. Driver's monograph, *Problems of the Hebrew Verbal System* (pp. xii + 165, T. and T. Clark, 1936). It is No. 2 of the series of Studies, now being published under the auspices of the Society for Old Testament Study, the first being that by Dr Jack on the Ras Shamra tablets. Like Levy's monograph it does not lend itself to ordinary reviewing; indeed, there are very few scholars who can range so freely and exhaustively over the Semitic languages and dialects as Mr Driver. His main argument is the very mixed character of the Hebrew as we know it in the Old Testament. Not only has Hebrew duplicate words (e.g. two words for 'gold' and for 'do, make'), but the accidence and the syntax are of composite origin. Even in the varying forms of the verbs (e.g. the retrogression of the accent in the Imperfect with *wāw* consecutive) there are inconsistencies and peculiarities which, it is argued, become intelligible when we consider the geographical position of Hebrew in Palestine and the Accadian, Aramaean, and other languages, which could and did affect it. It is easy to be too sceptical—cf. Bevan in *Old Testament Essays* (ed. D. C.

Simpson, 1927), pp. 94-98—but so far-reaching are the views adumbrated that a more philosophical treatment sooner or later becomes necessary. For example, Bevan himself draws attention to the necessity of observing what actually has happened to a Semitic language, in the case of Neo-Syriac and Amharic. Other languages, like Accadian, Syriac, Egyptian, and so on, though less exposed to foreign influence might also be expected to shew compositeness, and examples might doubtless be adduced. Certainly there will be much to unlearn.

Meanwhile, the accumulation of new, often perplexing material (as in the Ras Shamra tablets), and the efforts to go back behind our Hebrew vowel-system (viz. Kurt Levy) and our Hebrew grammars (Driver), like the efforts to go behind the 'canonical' history and religion of Israel, are leading to new points of view. With the breakdown of our patterns, modes, or forms there are new ways of dealing with our material. This has its advantages and disadvantages, and Mr Driver's concluding paragraph bids us be cautious. On the one hand, it is true that the tendency to emend all that is anomalous and unique in the Old Testament may be carried too far; but, on the other hand, we may adapt one of Renan's *mots* and say that with a little good will we can cull from our lexicons and concordances support for the most suspicious of Hebrew readings. To put it topically, we must not suppose that the ancient writers invariably cultivated the best of styles or that they necessarily knew their 'Davidson'. To put it more formally, the progress of research into Hebrew language, literature, history, and religion is making it increasingly necessary to find the best methodological principles of dealing with our material.

S. A. Cook.