

## CHRONICLE

### THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS.

*The History of Religions in Italian Universities*, by Louis Henry Jordan, B.D. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1919), gives a rapid survey of the subject from 1873, the date when the theological faculties of all the Italian universities were summarily abolished by Act of Parliament. Although the deputies expressly maintained that the history of religions (including the history of Christianity) should be assigned a place in the official courses of study, the results were not wholly satisfactory; and Mr Jordan indicates how France avoided some of the Italian mistakes, when the faculties of theology were allowed to disappear in that country, by the establishment of the 'section des sciences religieuses' of the famous *École des Hautes-Études* of Paris. Mr Jordan describes and discusses the standpoints and methods of the best-known Italian professors and lecturers since 1873, and sums up the gains of the last eight or ten years. In spite of the serious opposition which the study of the history of religions has met with, he considers the outlook distinctly promising. The difficulty is that 'there exists for the Church of Rome, in effect, only *one* religion; and of Roman Christianity that church is the *sole* authoritative interpreter. . . . Moreover, the Church of Rome continues to be needlessly uneasy whenever laymen invade any theological domain.'

The *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society*, 1916-1917, and 1917-1918 (Longmans, Green & Co.), contains several articles that require mention here. The Bishop of Salford writes on the work of the late Prof. James Hope Moulton as an Iranian scholar. Miss M. A. Murray, in an article on 'the god of the witches', suggests that in the witch-cult we catch glimpses of the religion practised by one of the earliest races of western Europe—a dwarf race. Prof. Canney discusses the term 'Sun of Righteousness' and the Hebrew root  $\text{קָרַע}$  (used of the Divine Spirit 'cleaving' a man). Prof. G. Elliott Smith writes characteristically on 'the giver of life': 'the ultimate motive which impelled mankind to depart from the simple life of his original ancestors, and embark upon the hazardous regimen of toil and strife which we call progress and civilization, was the search for an "elixir of life"'. He is, as ever, suggestive and interesting, but if we may use the present to explain the past, it is fairly obvious that not the least important factors in enquiry and progress are crises—economic, social,

political, and intellectual. But Prof. Smith himself recognizes that 'the preservation of life is the fundamental and dominating instinct', and we have, therefore, to understand by 'life' all its manifestations. Prof. Parker contributes an informing account of Kwan-Tsz, 'the earliest articulate Chinese philosopher'.

The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, sends a copy of the address delivered at the twenty-fifth Annual Commencement, June 1918, by S. S. Cohen, M.D., on its past and future. It is interesting testimony to the spirit animating Judaism, and upholds the conviction that Judaism 'is Faith made life'. Judaism, says the same speaker in an address of 1894 (also reprinted here), forced to 'defend itself against a worship repugnant to its lofty conception of God, has perhaps gone too far to the other extreme'. The hold of Christianity upon the masses lies in 'the nearness of its man-god to his worshippers. To him they turn as to an elder brother. . . . In putting aside the deified man [Jesus] we have perhaps stripped our teaching of God of some of those attributes most precious to the soul that seeks from its Creator help and guidance.'

Rabbi Julian Morgenstern, Ph.D., in *A Jewish Interpretation of the Book of Genesis* (Cincinnati, 1919), writes for the needs of the 'professional Jewish religious school teacher and the non-professional Jewish Bible student'. It is throughout Jewish, in spirit, in its selection of illustrative material from the Talmud, &c. Everywhere it 'accepts the established and irrefutable teachings of science with regard to Genesis, and seeks to determine constantly what is the fundamental Jewish thought and teaching of the various stories and groups of stories, for the sake of which their Jewish authors and editors cast them into their present form'. Complaining that the numerous scientific interpretations of Genesis, mostly by non-Jewish scholars, have been too analytic, and have failed to determine both the aims for which the various sources were combined, and the thoughts and purposes of the editors, the writer, who is Professor of Bible and Semitic Languages, at Hebrew Union College, takes a thoroughly synthetic view, one indeed which will be found suggestive by Christian and other non-Jewish writers. Convinced, though one may be, that the work of penetrating analysis is still unfinished, the exigencies of the age appear to demand a re-handling of Biblical problems from a more psychological and humanistic point of view. It is not that analytical criticism is wrong, but in the history of a study, as in that of a people, one needs unifying and synthesizing guiding lines which shall regulate the work of analysis and make it more fruitful for ordinary readers.

Here must also be mentioned Mr H. M. Wiener's reprint of his essay *The Religion of Moses* (from 'Bibliotheca Sacra', 1919). While Prof. Morgen-

stern insists that the books of the Torah are the least corrupt of all the books of the Old Testament (p. 73), Mr Wiener's plank has long been the insecurity of the text, on the strength of which he attempts to deprive the critics of the Old Testament of some of their weapons. Thus he argues that 'we can place no reliance on the Massoretic designations of the supernatural beings' in the patriarchal history (p. 23), and his general attitude to the text seems to me to be as devoid of sound principle as the effort to see Jerahmeelite and other southern names beneath the present Hebrew recension. He urges that 'Baal' occurred much more frequently once, and has been systematically removed from the text—a not unnatural view if held in moderation. He thinks that the patriarchs believed in a plurality of Baals, and that 'the people who went down into Egypt, therefore, were polytheists and the descendants of polytheists' (p. 29). In Egypt Akhenaton (Amenhotep IV) 'taught a speculative belief of pantheistic character in the solar disc', and comparing the oft-quoted royal hymn with the parallels or echoes in Ps. civ, he ingeniously suggests that 'the Hebrew is answering Akhenaton . . . though he may have had before him a different set of excerpts, excluding some of the matter contained in our hymn' (p. 8). He proceeds to argue that Moses must have been acquainted with monotheism in Egypt (although, of course, the monotheism of Moses is different, p. 32), and that the hymn tells against the 'evolutionary school'. To this it may be said that what is really emerging from current tendencies in Old Testament criticism is the fact that facile theories of the history of Israelite religion are untenable. Current events, too, have shaken our dogmas of religious evolution in general. The simple progression from desert nomadism to priestly legalism, which Hugo Winckler, in particular, was never weary of attacking, is a *logical* construction for which it is difficult to find any parallel elsewhere. Yet everywhere else there is definite progress and genetic development; although it is not easy to determine with precision the course taken. We need a new theory of the history of Israelite religion, even as the age needs some new conception of the line of development of religion in general. Yahweh may have been primarily as much an ethical god as, for example, the wonderful Varuna of the Vedas, who later occupies a secondary position. The old historians' philosophy of history with its apostasy and return may contain elements of historical fact which criticism has tended to ignore. But what is now of special interest is the extent to which essentially 'critical' problems are found to turn upon questions of psychology, of personal and national religion and of religious experience. Mr Wiener argues that the patriarchs were Baal-worshippers and polytheists; Dr Morgenstern points to the sublime monotheistic teaching which

the editors of the narratives wished to convey. The former dismisses Akhenaton as a speculative pantheist (p. 32), in spite of the delicate sympathy and humanism of the royal hymns (e. g. p. 5 sq.); and he whom some call 'the world's first idealist' is to others a fanatic and a pathological specimen. We raise questions of the *meaning* that gods, and Baals, and solar discs, and so forth had for their worshippers; and it seems no exaggeration to say that the trend of modern research where religion is involved, like the trend of social and political events, has reached the point where everything turns upon problems of a profoundly deep religious character. At all events, there is an *impasse* in biblical criticism, and whatever direction one takes one comes up against some fundamental problem of the nature of religion which is in some way bound up with the modern conditions of life and thought.

One of the few really important and constructive books on Old Testament study is due to the industrious veteran, Prof. Eduard König of Bonn (*Hermeneutik des Alten Testaments mit spezieller Berücksichtigung der modernen Probleme*, Bonn, 1916). When one considers the numerous aspects under which the Old Testament can be approached, the really enormous accumulation of material, varying in significance and value, and the way in which 'religious' and 'scientific' enquiries can conflict or overlap, the need of some comprehensive and informing handbook on the general methodology of the subject will be obvious. Where may we allegorize? where are moralizing and psychological interpretations to be employed? where are we to treat narratives as poetry and myth, and where as history? Are we to read the Old Testament through Jewish eyes, or through Christian, or from some philosophical standpoint? The fine work which was done by Dr Briggs (*The Study of Holy Scripture*) is here undertaken along characteristically German lines and in a more technical form. While the book by Briggs is always one to be commended to the younger students, König's book, in spite of its frequent difficulty, deserves careful consideration. It is a suggestive contribution to the larger problem of the Church and the interpretation of the Old Testament. The progress of scientific research since the Reformation has gradually brought the question of the interpretation of the Old Testament to the front, and at a time when there is a certain awakening among large masses of the population and a new interest in the Bible and in Palestine itself. The Old Testament does not interpret itself, and in the present position of criticism there is not the requisite unanimity of interpretation whether among Christians or, as we have just seen, among Jews. There must be some harmonious interrelationship between psychological, historical, archaeological, and other lines of enquiry; some new methodology is needed whereby the interconnexion

of the different departments of research shall be understood. Only in this way does it seem possible that the necessary harmony of interpretation can be acquired, and that unity gained which makes for the progressive development of every branch of what is essentially a single tree. That such a result will involve some new harmonious inter-relationship between purely religious and purely scientific lines of thought is obvious, and it is very distinctly indicated by a writer on the history of religions to whom we shall refer presently.

*The Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*, compiled by Prof. E. G. Browne (Cambridge University Press, 1918), comprise much miscellaneous matter which throws additional light upon a movement which, to quote his words, 'even if its practical and political importance should prove to be less than I had once thought, will always be profoundly interesting to students of Comparative Religion and the history of Religious Evolution'. The book includes an account of the Bábí movement from an Arabic source, a description of the character of the Bahai propaganda in America, a complete bibliography supplementing earlier lists by Prof. Browne, various facsimiles, texts, and translations, some accounts of the persecution of the Bábís, and also an interesting summary of the doctrines which the Shiites consider heretical. In the course of an introductory statement of the features of political, ethical, and historical interest, Prof. Browne draws attention, first, to the important political side of Baháism, in particular to the evolution of ideas since its propaganda achieved success in America. As regards the ethical interest, it is instructive to find that Baha'ullah had to face a problem similar to that which confronted St Paul, namely, whether the new religion he represented was to be universal or to remain that of a small sect. '*Mutatis mutandis* the strife between Baha'ullah and Subh-i-Azal was essentially identical with the strife between St Paul and St Peter' (p. xxi). Finally, 'in spite of the official denial of the necessity, importance, or evidential value of miracles in the ordinary sense, numerous miracles are recorded in Bábí histories . . . and many more are related by adherents of the faith'. Extraordinary diversity of opinion prevails as to such fundamental doctrines as those connected with the future life, and, also, as to the authorship of various Bábí writings although the beginnings of the literature only go back to 1844-1845. The earliest history of the Bab and his disciples was suppressed and replaced by a version which modified or omitted features regarded as undesirable, and while this was suffered to remain in MS, a third official history with another representation of the succession was widely diffused. It only remains to be said that it is a great gain to be able to see so closely into the history of the rise and early vicissitudes of an Oriental religion and to obtain so many positive data suggestive for the investi-

gation of the rise of other religions where contemporary material is scanty or wanting.

No less than three different works on the history of religions have recently been published in the United States. Prof. G. A. Barton writes (*The Religions of the World*) for the series of 'Handbooks of Ethics and Religion' issued by the University of Chicago (1917). It is intended for class purposes and aims at fairly brief and concise descriptions, each chapter being followed by a bibliography graded to suit students of slight or of extended opportunities for further study. It may be cordially recommended to those who desire only brief outlines. It begins with a chapter on primitive religions, passes to Babylonia and Egypt, thence to the religion of the Hebrews (to the Persian period), the Jews and the Mohammedans; it then goes east to Persia, India, and Further Asia, returns west, to Greece and Rome, and concludes with Christianity. A specially interesting feature in this little book—it runs to about 360 pages—is the extensive list of topics for further study and discussion, and the suggested outline of a book to be written by the student himself.

A larger work, by Prof. E. W. Hopkins, Ph.D., LL.D., on *The History of Religions* (Macmillan, New York, 1918), about 630 pages, covers the same religions, though in a different order, and includes a much fuller account of the more primitive religions, with chapters on the religions of Africa, Polynesia, N. American Indians, Mexico, S. America, Celts, Slavs, and Teutons. Here a more determined effort is made to indicate the growth of religion as it passes from primitive peoples to those higher in the scale of cultural development, and where possible the historical vicissitudes of each religion are traced stage by stage. The volume belongs to the Yale 'Religious Science and Literature Series', and whereas Prof. Barton—like Prof. Moore (see below)—is well known in the field of Old Testament and Semitic research, Dr Hopkins is the Yale Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology, and the author of a valuable work on Indian religions. In both text and foot-notes Dr Hopkins devotes more attention than the other writers to points of detail, and his volume, covering a considerably wider field than the others, though in several respects not so full as Prof. Moore's, will be appreciated by those who desire a less elementary work than the preceding.

Finally, *The History of Religions* by Prof. G. F. Moore, D.D., LL.D., deliberately ignores 'what are miscalled "primitive" religions', on the ground that they are a subject for themselves, demand another method, and cannot be 'incidentally despatched in the prolegomena to a history of religions'. Further, he adds, the 'survivals' in the higher religions are just as intelligible in Babylonia or Greece as in Africa or Australia.

The first volume (noticed in the *J. T. S.* January 1915, vol. xvi p. 299 sq.) handled the religions of China, Japan, Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria, India, Persia, Greece, and Rome (about 650 pages). The present volume deals with Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism in about 565 pages, of which the second occupies 380 pages. The pair form a most valuable addition to the 'International Theological Library' (Clark, Edinburgh), and Dr Moore, who is Professor of the History of Religion at Harvard and already well known for his Old Testament work, has laid scholars under a fresh debt. The whole work forms an elaborate handbook to the subject, and the indexes are so contrived that (independently of the various references in vol. ii to vol. i) a comparative study of the treatment of similar topics in the different religions can be readily made. Special attention may be drawn to the important prefaces which furnish the reader with hints on the evolution of religion in general. The writer has made it his aim to secure unity of treatment so that the features of resemblance and difference between religions can be followed throughout. The effect of this is most marked in this second volume where he points out how Neoplatonic mysticism and Aristotelian scholasticism have exercised a fundamental influence upon the three great religions which he styles 'three branches of monotheistic religion in Western Asia and Europe'. Prof. Moore is inclined to take a world-wide survey of the history of religion and lays emphasis upon the significance of the middle of the first millennium B. C. for Taoism, the Upanishads, Buddhism, Zoroaster, Orphic-Pythagorean movements, and Hebrew prophetism (vol. i p. viii sq.). Going back still earlier he finds about 3000 B. C. another great period of supreme importance for Egypt, Babylonia, Elam, Crete, and China. As regards the present age, if there are indications of some new movement sweeping over Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we are directed to the disintegrating effect of the progress of modern science upon religions interwoven with Greek thought and an antique conception of the universe as a whole (p. 275). What was achieved by scholastic theology in the thirteenth century and by the Protestant confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries must now be the task of 'advanced' Protestantism to-day; 'to find a theology, or, some would say, a philosophy of religion which shall represent modern conceptions of the universe, of the place and part of man in it, of the origin and development of religion in general and of Christianity in particular, and of the specific excellencies of Christianity' (p. 379). Both Prof. Barton (p. 307) and Prof. Hopkins (pp. 394 sqq.) give their reasons for their faith in the further progress and supremacy of Christianity; Prof. Moore, throughout markedly objective, notes the present tendencies, and concludes his survey of Christianity with some remarks upon the 'Catholic Church'.

'The Church', he says, 'is resolved by all means in its power to prevent the disintegrating effects of modern philosophy, science, history, biblical criticism and exegesis upon the dogmas of religion, which have been so conspicuously exemplified in contemporary Protestantism' (p. 385). Prof. Moore writes impassively and with complete restraint: the disintegrating tendencies of modern thought, the optimism of Protestantism, which, as we read between the lines, he considers precarious (p. 379), the failure of Protestant bodies to unite (p. 380), the uncompromising attitude of Rome to Modernism (pp. 381 sqq.), its staunch defence of its doctrines—little is said of Neo-scholasticism—and finally the brief paragraph, already partly quoted, on the task awaiting "advanced" Protestantism', which may be said to sum up in half a dozen lines the verdict of the historian of religions. Re-read the history of religions and we shall find a certain uniformity and logical necessity in the sort of questions that arise and the typical solutions. Here the history of religions seems to have something to contribute to modern constructive religious thought; it encourages that more objective point of view from which one can gain a broader survey of the curve of religious history and militates against any narrow outlook of the future of religion which takes its stand upon a man's own particular convictions and ignores those of his no less honest opponents.

STANLEY A. COOK.