

## ARTICLE V.

TWO NEW VOLUMES OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
CRITICAL COMMENTARY.

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I. THE MINOR PROPHETS.<sup>1</sup>

UNDOUBTEDLY the most extraordinary feature of this volume is the last sentence of the preface, for which the general editors, our old friends Doctors Briggs and Driver, are responsible. This preface is their first joint utterance since the Skinner correspondence, and to appreciate its full force one must remember the various positions that they successively occupied and evacuated in that correspondence. First, they said that they were not responsible if Dr. Skinner had not told the truth. I drove them out of this, indicating that men who purchased volumes of a series that they edited might reasonably hold that professors of standing would not lend their names to anything that was written in deliberate bad faith. After all, no man of honor who edited a series would say, "I do not care whether what is written in these volumes is true or false, composed in good or in bad faith. If anybody chooses to buy or read a book in reliance on my name, that is his affair, not mine. *Caveat emptor*: I recognize no responsi-

<sup>1</sup> A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Joel. By John Merlin Powis Smith, Ph.D.; William Hayes Ward, D.D., LL.D.; Julius A. Bewer, Ph.D. Crown 8vo. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1912. \$3.00, *net*.

bility towards a public that trusts me." When this had been driven home sufficiently, our friends decided to abandon the position, and wrote at great length about textual criticism. But they added: "We naturally read the sheets of our contributors and make suggestions upon them, but we do not consider it to be our duty to instruct them how they are to deal with every question which arises." Now they have got hold of yet another conception of their duties, which, apparently, does not involve reading the sheets. Their present position is stated on page iv: "The editors are not responsible for the opinions of the authors or for the details of their work, but only for the choice of the authors and such general supervision of their work as to insure its conformity to the plan of the series." What does this mean? It means, first, that the general editors accept no responsibility whatever for the good faith of the volumes. Good faith is not comprised in the "plan of the series." If one could show that the work on a particular book of the Bible did not include an introduction, or that there was only one set of notes instead of a minimum of two, then indeed "the plan of the series" might be infringed, and the editors might possibly accept responsibility. But if a book is dishonest and deceitful, "the plan of the series" is or may be inviolate, and in that case the editors are entirely satisfied. What do they care how many people may be deceived by works to which they stand sponsors? What concern has the International Critical Commentary or Professor Charles Augustus Briggs or Professor Samuel Rolles Driver with the elements of honor or good faith? So long as they can secure authors who are willing to write introductions and at least two sets of notes, that is all that matters.

But the editorial declaration has other bearings too. In

the correspondence with me they held that it was their duty to secure an author with whose principles they were generally in agreement. But now, "The editors are not responsible for the opinions of the authors." What is the precise force of this? When first I read it, I thought that perhaps the general editors were acquainted with discreditable facts respecting one or more of the authors of books contained in this volume, and were anxious to forestall possible objectors by explaining that they did not hold themselves responsible for the veracity of the gentlemen they were introducing to the public. For all I know there may have been something of the sort at the back of the editorial minds, but another explanation is also possible. Of the three contributors to the volume, one, Dr. Bewer, is the incumbent of a teaching post at the Union Theological Seminary, where Dr. Briggs professes. He has not ventured to commit himself in public to a single word of defense of his colleague's ethical or textual principles. But, on the other hand, his commentary probably contains little that could jar on these. Not so with the other two writers, and their opinions are calculated to cause the general editors acute discomfort. Dr. Smith opens his introduction to Micah with a section on the text which, he says, "has come down to us in a bad state of corruption." "In the correction of MT," he writes later, "LXX is of the most value. It offers a larger number of textual variants than all of the remaining versions combined. In many cases the text presupposed by LXX's rendering is superior to MT. More than one-third of the emendations here adopted are based upon LXX" (p. 5). In a similar spirit Dr. Ward writes on page 19 of his "Habakkuk": "For emendations of the text of chapters 1 and 2 we have had to depend mainly on LXX, but we have occasionally noted another small class of MSS. For ch 3 we fortunately

have more help from this class of MSS., chiefly 23, 62, 86 and 147 of Holmes and Parsons. Two of these are among the more ancient MSS., and one is an uncial. They agree in being based on a text quite variant from MT and so of special value. Cornill says in his *Ezekiel* that 62, 147 are not Lucianic. So Vollers, *ZATW.*, 1883, 4, p. 239, says that this group goes back to '*sehr alte und wertvolle Vorlagen.*'" How such expressions must annoy devotees of the Massoretic text, if they read them! But there is even worse to follow. Dr. Smith uses language that is strongly condemnatory of such conduct as that of his editors. Thus we read: "To 'walk in a spirit of falsehood' and preach lies is to deceive people deliberately, and is far worse than to deceive unwittingly" (p. 63). So it is, but the general editors have no objection to being parties to such deceit. On Micah vi. 12, "And their tongue is deceit in their mouths," he writes as follows: "A vivid way of saying that not a word they speak can be trusted. Lying is a common oriental vice even at the present day" (p. 132). He might have added that it flourishes in Occidental theological chairs. Or, again, take his remarks on Zephaniah iii. 13, "They will not do wickedness, nor will they speak lies": "Sure of themselves and their God, they will have no need to take refuge in lies. This writer evidently sees a vital connection between morality and religion" (p. 252). Such expressions must grate horribly on the general editors if they read them. And yet they suggest something further. For, after all, the views put forward by Dr. Smith have their roots in the texts that he is interpreting, in the Bible itself. The general editors have not gone far enough in repudiating responsibility for the opinions advocated. Next time they write a preface they should add something like this: "The editors are not responsible for the

ethical views and standards advocated by the Biblical writers. They do not seek to translate such views and standards into practice, and have refrained from including them in the plan of the series." Then readers would know where they were.

There is, however, yet another aspect of the editorial declaration which needs attention. The general editors used to read the sheets of their contributors, and make suggestions on them. If therefore they saw anything which they knew to be clearly mistaken, they would presumably mention this to the contributor, and it could be corrected. The new version of their duties excludes this, and accordingly Dr. Smith — who seems to have suffered by this policy — often adopts positions which Dr. Driver knows to be untenable. Thus on Micah iv. 2 (p. 86) he uses expressions about the "sanctuary" that could not be accepted by anybody who knows how unable the members of the Wellhausen school are to defend their theories against my attacks. From the point of view of the higher criticism this line of conduct has great advantages. Silence an adherent of the evolutionary hypothesis, and he can still propagate what he cannot defend by inviting some other adherent of the hypothesis to prepare a volume for a series to which he himself lends his name as general editor. As he holds himself free not to read the sheets or draw his contributor's attention to what he knows to be wrong, everything can go on just as if he had not been silenced. It is unfair to the contributor, but what does that matter to the general editor? The ordinary rules of honor have no application to the higher criticism as interpreted by Doctors Briggs and Driver.

Before passing away from the general editors, attention should be drawn to some of the other ways in which they have scamped their work. It appears that arrangements were made for a commentary on the Minor Prophets as far back as

1890, i.e. something over twenty-one years before the issue of this volume. And yet no engagement is announced for the book of Job. Nobody would wish that a commentary of this kind should be prepared in too great a hurry, but surely twenty-one years of failure to secure a commentator on Job pass all reasonable limits. It is the more striking because the general editors themselves say: "The delay in the preparation of the volumes [on the Minor Prophets] was so great that it seemed best to distribute the work remaining to be done among several scholars." What then about the delay in the preparation of the volume on Job? Or have the general editors discovered something in the poem which is inconsistent with the sacrosanct "plan of the series," and decided to banish it from their canon?

Another matter seems to have caused some qualms to the editors themselves. "The several authors," they write, "have their own special preferences in doing their work, and there are therefore differences in these commentaries such as would have been avoided if any one author had composed them all." Unfortunately that is not the whole truth of the matter, for there are differences of a somewhat inconvenient character *within* the limits of a single author's work. Thus Dr. Bewer, who writes the commentary on two of the prophets treated in this volume, gives a translation of the one (Joel), but not of the other (Obadiah); and Dr. Smith separates his notes on Micah into three separate and distinct commentaries, viz. textual, exegetical, and philological, which are often divided from one another by several pages, but arranges his notes on Zephaniah and Nahum in two divisions. Such divergences could not occur if the series were not so poorly edited.

I come now to the contributors. Each of the three writes

a separate book with its own pagination, and these books are bound together to form the volume. It may be well first to deal with a matter that has already been partly raised — the disposition of Dr. Smith's work. In order to ascertain what he has to say on any particular passage it is often necessary to look at *five* different places. There is first a translation, then a critical commentary, then an exegetical commentary, then footnotes to the last-mentioned, and finally a philological commentary. It is not too much to say that this arrangement does injustice not merely to the readers, but also to the work (often very valuable, and always laborious and conscientious) that Dr. Smith has bestowed on his book. And matters are aggravated by an inconvenient omission, to which any sensible editor would have drawn his attention. His translations are printed without the verse numbers. Hence there is difficulty in following where he has omitted or transposed any portion of the Hebrew text. Time has to be wasted in ascertaining what he has done; whereas, if he had numbered the verses in his translation and adopted suitable symbols for indicating emendations, glosses, etc., the reader's time would be saved, and his task rendered pleasanter. Dr. Smith may be advised to look at a volume of Jebb's "Sophocles" to see what a really well-arranged edition of an author is like. Of course the "plan of the series" would prevent his imitating it in every detail in his forthcoming commentary on Malachi, but he might at least so order matters as to insure that all the notes on a particular passage should be on a single page divided into not more than two groups, and that the translation of that passage should appear at the top of the same page adorned with verse numbers and suitable symbols. Moreover, for the footnotes an inconveniently small type is used which is needlessly irritating. It would therefore be well

to abolish them altogether, incorporating all necessary matter in the text. In this way his work would be displayed to the best advantage.

Apart from matters of technique, Dr. Smith has done a piece of work which a reviewer may honestly praise. He is not a great commentator: he has no outstanding comprehension of the Hebrew prophets: and, unfortunately, he is dominated by some very unsound theories. But he is thorough and honest: he has done a great deal of work at the subject and has succeeded by sheer merit in producing a book that would be a credit to any series. And his difficulties were not slight. Perhaps some readers may suppose that the length of a commentary varies directly with the amount that is known about the authors interpreted, and on learning that Dr. Smith has written nearly 360 pages on Micah, Zephaniah, and Nahum may be tempted to infer that there must be an immense amount of extant knowledge that directly illuminates the scant remains of these prophets; but the opposite would be nearer the truth. The size of a biblical commentary is apt to vary inversely with the amount of knowledge available. For instance, in Zephaniah i. 9 mention is made of the custom of leaping over the threshold. Nobody knows what is meant by this, and Dr. Smith has to devote about a page to the various guesses of interpreters. This is unsatisfying, but is the best that can be done, and in such cases Dr. Smith is conspicuously fair in setting out various opinions without seeking to bias the reader in favor of any particular hypothesis. There are many such excellent notes in his book, alike in the exegetical and in the philological divisions, and there can be no doubt that his work will provide a storehouse of useful knowledge for a long time to come, though perhaps there are too many long discussions of what with our present



knowledge must be regarded as the unknowable. Further there are a number of sensible remarks scattered up and down the work, and sense is not a common characteristic of biblical commentators. Here are a few instances: "Micah, quite as well as a later reader, could carry his figure through to the very end" (p. 73). "May not a prophet descend to prose occasionally? Homer sometimes nods" (p. 74, footnote). "But a fuller knowledge of the history of Israelitish life than is now accessible to us might show other periods when such conditions prevailed" (p. 139). "But surely the prophets were not mere copyists or venders of second-hand goods. Nor was it essential that they should always furnish an invoice of the injuries inflicted upon Israel by a foe; cf Am ii. 1-3. Knowledge of these on the part of the audience might sometimes be taken for granted" (p. 235). "But surely no prophet is to be restricted to the constant reiteration of what he has once said" (p. 244). Such passages are none too frequent in modern books on the Bible, or indeed in the work of Dr. Smith himself. But for those that he has written we must be grateful, and we must hope that they will increase and multiply in his future publications.

Another virtue of Dr. Smith's work is the excellent style of his translations, which produce a very pleasing impression on the reader. I think it might be well to collect and reissue them (with verse numbers, etc.) in a separate form for the benefit of educated readers who would be unwilling to use such a work as the *International Critical Commentary*. A modern scholarly translation of the Bible is badly wanted, and Dr. Smith obviously possesses a combination of qualities which render him unusually well fitted to contribute to such a work. Few of the writers in this series can produce renderings that would compare with his for literary excellence.

Indeed, it may be said generally of the book that it is good enough to make one regret that it is not much better. It easily might have been. Dr. Smith is unfortunately under the influence of certain fixed ideas which are false in themselves and prejudice his work severely. In the true spirit of the anti-historical school he sets up standards to which history and prophecy are expected to conform, and deals ruthlessly with anything that cannot be twisted into conformity with them. Of his higher critical views it may be said that the majority would probably never have been put forward at all if he could have realized that Hebrew prophets were not German theological professors. He is not always consistent with himself; e.g. on pages 32 f. Micah i. 7 is declared to be spurious, and this view is adopted on page 37, but in the philological notes on this very verse (p. 40) we are told that the use of a particular word "here is seen to be paronomasia, very characteristic of Micah." Obviously Dr. Smith had forgotten all about his higher criticism when he wrote this note. A more serious instance occurs in his treatment of Nahum, to whom he is conspicuously unjust on pages 280 f. Thus on page 281 the obligations of Israel according to Nahum are laid down, and we are told of the duty to eschew foreign cults and perform the cultus of its God, etc.; but in the commentary the only passage relating to this is treated as spurious. On page 309 it is said that i. 11, together with certain subsequent verses, is "the first of the genuine oracles of Nahum," ii. 1, "celebrate thy feasts, O Judah, fulfil thy vows," having been previously declared "a later addition to the prophecy of Nahum" (pp. 302 ff.). The two views do not hang together. If Nahum wrote only the passages that Dr. Smith regards as genuine, then he has no right to attribute to him ideas that are set forth only in passages that

he regards as spurious. And, as I have touched on his treatment of Nahum, let me say at once that it is an excellent example of the extreme folly — the word is not too strong — of his method. Having reduced the extant works of Nahum to something under two pages of his own translation (which on his own view deal simply with a single topic), he proceeds to denounce the prophet in unmeasured language for not having dealt with other topics: “In Nahum, a representative of the old, narrow and shallow prophetism finds its place in the Canon of Scripture. His point of view is essentially one with that of such men as Hananiah (Jer xxviii), the four hundred prophets in opposition to Micaiah ben Imlah (1 K xxii), and the so-called ‘false prophets’ in general” (p. 281). How does he arrive at this conclusion? First he banishes from the book everything that does not bear directly on the destruction of Nineveh. Then he assumes that Nahum never said, did, or thought anything save what is contained in the few extant sentences that he concedes to him, and this leads him to exclaim triumphantly, “He can, he will see nothing else” (p. 280). By precisely the same reasoning it could be shown that Nahum never ate, drank, or breathed, and that his sojourn in the world was strictly limited to the time necessary for the writing of the two pages that Dr. Smith assigns to him. “He could, he would do nothing else.” If Dr. Smith refuses to accept this conclusion, then he must abandon the suppressed premise of his present reasoning, viz. that nothing was thought or done or said that is not reported in the scanty extant fragments of Hebrew literature.

The foregoing is an extremely strong instance of the method pursued — but it is only an instance. Similar assumptions run through the whole of the higher critical work on the prophets treated by Dr. Smith. “Bricks without straw”

is the comment that constantly forces itself into the reader's mind. And if such tacit assumptions where there is a partial or total failure of evidence constitute one weakness of the book, other assumptions which are used to override all the available evidence provide another. Does an inconvenient phrase occur in four pre-exilic passages when Dr. Smith desires to assign it to "the exilic and post-exilic circle of ideas"? What can be easier than to say — without a scrap of evidence — that these passages are "due to interpolation"? (p. 86). It is amusing to note that in the very next volume of the series issued, a fellow-member of the anti-historical school, Dr. G. B. Gray, contradicts the idea that the phrase is late, and accepts at least three of these very "interpolations" as genuine.<sup>1</sup> Or, again, take Dr. Smith's constant assumptions that monotheism must be late, as also the idea that the heathen would worship the God of Israel. Such assumptions are the constant marks of the anti-historical school, which sweeps from the biblical record everything that does not tally with certain preconceived ideas.

Where the interpretation of a chapter requires real insight, Dr. Smith is, of course, quite at fault: but I confess that I do not understand why in Micah vii. 6-10 he failed to see that the speaker, having a feminine "enemy" and being the antecedent of the feminine "thy" in verse 10, must herself be feminine. The passage is best understood as spoken in continuation of verses 1-7. For some reason Dr. Smith cannot understand verse 7. "The original connection of this verse with another context is shown by the manner in which it evidently contrasts 'I' with something that has gone before, though there is no fitting contrast in the present context" (p. 145). "In my present plight I, Zion, impersonat-

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah*, vol. 1. p. 44.

ing the idealism of the community, will, in contrast to the undesirable sons, daughters, etc., already referred to, put my trust in God Who will hear me." And then follows the apostrophe of the "enemy." If this train of thought appears unnatural or improbable to Dr. Smith, I can only reply that to a Jewish mind nothing could be more natural. Indeed, I can honestly say that his difficulty has no meaning at all to me. It only shows that he lacks the necessary sympathy with the Hebrew mind to grasp what is instinctive to it. Why has not Dr. Smith made more extensive use of the commentary on Micah by Dr. Margolis, who knows what he is talking about?<sup>1</sup> In brief notes which do not raise unnecessary difficulties, that commentator makes perfectly clear what Dr. Smith cannot comprehend. Thus on verse 1 he writes, "The prophet speaks in the name of the community." On verse 6 he explains the trend of thought further: "The idea underlying these expectations is that evil must have run its course before the good can come. The hope in the triumphant advent of the Kingdom of God is intensified by the very contemplation of the evil as it exists. When the moral corruption is greatest, salvation is surest; or, as the rabbis say, 'out of distress cometh relief.'" He then quotes from Friedmann, "The hope in the regeneration of the world after a period of greatest physical and moral evil is deeply implanted in the Jewish soul"; and continues: "This thought dominates the present passage, and is expressed in phraseology which antedates the prophets. Hence the seemingly sudden transition to the hopeful vision, verse 7 ff., where the prophet speaks for the 'remnant' (verse 18), the ideal community which,

<sup>1</sup>The Holy Scriptures, with Commentary. Micah. By Max L. Margolis, Ph.D. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America. 1908.

when freed from its own sin, is destined to triumph over the nations now rejoicing in its downfall." I cannot conceive why Dr. Smith, having at hand so excellent a guide, should have neglected to avail himself of his services to the fullest extent.

The textual criticism of the book is distinguished by marked excellences. It is very thorough. A particularly pleasing feature is the use made of the collations of Kennicott and de Rossi. It is the fashion in some quarters at present to underrate the assistance that may be derived from these, but in this respect Dr. Smith is no follower of the mode, and a perusal of his *apparatus criticus* must satisfy any impartial reader that there exists a large number of passages where the variants recorded by one or more Hebrew MSS. receive versional support. Such cases naturally enhance and control the value of the Versions. On the other hand, Dr. Smith's own treatment of the text is often hazardous and arbitrary; but in his case this can scarcely be called a defect, because he is so conspicuously fair about it. "The translation here given," he writes in his exegetical notes on Nahum i. 10, "rests upon a text which is confessedly largely conjectural, and, as with all guesses, the chances are against it" (p. 294). There can be no reasonable objection to any textual criticism that is conducted in this spirit, for every reader is fully warned that he is dealing with conjectures, and is free to form his own opinion. It is only by the steady multiplication of various conjectures that progress can be made.

The little commentary on Habakkuk by Dr. Ward need not detain us. It is one of the feeblest contributions to the International Critical Commentary, and suffers from the inevitable comparison with the other two books bound up in this volume. A couple of instances of his methods may be cited. The intro-

duction contains no section on the literature of the book (is not this omission contrary to the "plan of the series"?); and in i. 13 the first half of the verse (R.V. "Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness") is ignored without a word of explanation alike in the translation and in both sets of notes. Perhaps this is due to an oversight; but such oversights do not testify to any great expenditure of care. The scale of the commentary is slighter and less elaborate than that of the companion publications.

The third writer, Dr. Bewer, is a German, and he must be heartily congratulated on the mastery he has acquired of his adopted language. In reading his book I noticed very few turns of phrase that would betray the fact that English is not his mother-tongue to even a close observer who was ignorant of the fact. His work is somewhat less thorough and comprehensive than that of Dr. Smith, but it is more original: and in his general learning Dr. Bewer is well up to the normal standard of the series. Unfortunately he too is a member of the anti-historical school, and shares its prejudices and faults of method to a very full extent. He has not the slightest shadow of an idea of what evidence means, holding apparently that his *ipse dixit*, especially if printed in italics, is sufficient to establish any proposition. With such a man one cannot attempt to argue, and it merely remains to warn readers of some of the characteristics of the book.

Like Dr. Smith, Dr. Bewer is unable to tell a consistent story. For instance, on page 59 we are told that a supposititious editor to whom he attributes Joel iv. 2b, 3, "does not even think of N. Israel in his picture of the golden future": but when in the commentary he comes to deal with the

reference to Israel contained in this passage, he writes, "Whether also the north Israelitish dispersion is included, we cannot tell, but it is likely" (p. 129). How, it may be asked, does it come about that on page 59 Dr. Bewer can be dogmatically certain that a hypothetical personage was not thinking of what on page 129 he treats as "likely" to have been present to his mind? The answer is of course to be sought for in the present condition of biblical studies, when anybody can make a reputation by the means adopted by Dr. Bewer in this volume. Lay down a theory first, and then invent reasons; and, provided your theory is sufficiently remote from all the known facts, you will be regarded by the critics as a great scholar.

I think it unlikely that anybody will trouble to refute Dr. Bewer's higher critical views in detail. It would be difficult to find weaker reasoning anywhere than that on pages 57 f. Most readers should be able to see through it for themselves. Who, for example, will take at its face value the statement that "it appears that every single member of the people can attend the assembly at the temple"? Dr. Bewer's difficulties flow in part from his preconceptions. Thus, he makes Joel i. 15 an interpolation, with the result that he has to admit, in commenting on verses 16-20, that they are incomplete.

On the other hand, it is pleasant to be able to note that his originality is sometimes stimulating. His introduction to Obadiah is unfortunately too hysterical in parts, but considerable interest attaches to his view of the interpretation of the book: and his exegesis of Joel ii. 15-17 is certainly worthy of consideration. It is a pity that theologians are not given a training which would fit them better to conduct investigation: I have often regretted it, and when I see how much harm the present system has done to a man of Dr. Bewer's



freshness of mind, my regrets are intensified. In some ways he is so far above the level of the ordinary German theological professor that one cannot help feeling sorry that he has not been trained better. However, even as it is, he may quite fairly be said to have contributed something considerable to the understanding of the authors of whom he has treated, and to have produced some of the most original work in the series.

## II. ISAIAH.<sup>1</sup>

This volume from the pen of a well-known Oxford critic followed the American volume at an interval of only a few weeks, and presents some very curious contrasts to it. Its best feature, the comparative moderation of tone which characterizes it, is a case in point. Like the authors of the volume on the Minor Prophets, Dr. Gray belongs to the critical school which at one time appeared to be triumphant; but, unlike them, he has apparently come to feel that there is a possibility that he may be wrong. Of course he does not yet believe that he is wrong; but there is a moderation of tone about the book, and more especially about the introduction, which almost leads me to think that a day may yet come when it will be possible to reason with Dr. Gray as with an ordinary man who does not claim plenary inspiration for all his theories. One other point of contrast is also in favor of the Englishman,—a recognition, slight and hesitating, it is true, but still genuine in its way, that there may be such a

<sup>1</sup> A *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I-XXXIX*. By George Buchanan Gray, D.D., D.Litt., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis in Mansfield College, Oxford. XL-LXVI. By Arthur S. Peake, D.D., Rylands Professor of Biblical Exegesis in the University of Manchester. In two volumes. Vol. I. Introduction, and Commentary on I-XXVII. Crown 8vo. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1912. \$3.00.

thing as human nature. Dr. Gray is probably the only commentator on a Hebrew prophet who has ever introduced the word "maffickers" into his work (p. 364); and while I confess that I laughed very heartily when I saw it, and wondered whether Oxford theologians attend bump suppers, or dance round bonfires on Guy Fawkes day, yet I cannot help seeing that its occurrence is a good sign in the work of a writer of the anti-historical school. Dr. Gray, of all men, requires sympathy with human nature to improve his work; for it is the case with him, even more than with most members of the school, that his interests are predominantly philological. On the other hand, his work is not on the whole as good as the best parts of the companion volume. If it was his object to prove that he could write very much worse English than the German contributor, he has certainly succeeded uncommonly well. There is nothing in Dr. Bewer's work that can be compared to such a word as "insensitivity" (p. 109), and a rendering of Isaiah that includes such expressions as "shed-blood" (p. 7), "a binder up" (pp. 61, 65), "yelpers," "shriekers" (p. 237) can hardly be put by the side of the American volume. Here are a couple of examples of Dr. Gray at his worst:—

"Ah!

The booming of many peoples!

Like the booming of seas they boom!" (xvii. 12).

"Ah! land of the whirring (?) of wings,

Which is beyond the rivers of Cush!

Which sendeth envoys (?) on the sea,

And ^ vessels of papyrus on the face of the water.

"Go, ye fleet messengers,

To a nation tall (?) and of polished appearance (?),

To a people terrible. . .

A nation mighty (?) and down-treading,

Whose land rivers dissect (?)." (xviii. 1, 2.)

Well may Dr. Gray write in his preface, "I have aimed at making my translations the pivot of the Commentary; apart from it they have, indeed, little claim to consideration; I have deliberately, where necessary, sacrificed form and style, in order to make them as expressive as possible of what I understand the Hebrew text to mean, but also of the numerous uncertainties which appear to me at present to beset the text." Whether a translation couched in such terms is not more likely to defeat its own object than to attain any other purpose is of course a matter of opinion.

In treating of a volume of the bulk of this book, it is not feasible to do more than pick out a few topics for discussion. A certain amount of space is devoted to textual criticism, and here Dr. Gray writes in a manner that is calculated to reassure Dr. Barton and others whose devotion to faith is characterized by blind zeal rather than knowledge or intelligence. In the course of his discussion he writes some sentences that must be quoted. "We must then reckon with the possibility of mis-copying, whether we follow the Jewish recension of the Hebrew text or whether we follow the LXX, and we have no more ground for refusing to consider the evidence of the LXX, because the translators sometimes misread their original, than we have for refusing to consider the evidence of the Jewish recension of the Hebrew text." And then he adds a footnote which, coming as it does from the pen of an eminent Christian divine, may be heartily commended to Dr. Barton and those who may be disposed to agree with him: "Mr. Ottley, indeed, would meet this by a dogmatic consideration, 'Some minds, moreover, will still not refuse to entertain the idea that the Heb. text has been guarded, not only by the watchful care of the Jews, but also by the special providence of the Almighty' (ii. p. xvii). Yet even if dog-

matic considerations were in place here at all, it is difficult to see why the Almighty granted to the text of the Jews a special Providence which He withheld from the Greek Text, which became the Bible of the Christian Church" (pp. xxvii, xxviii). That is the answer of a Christian theologian to the theory that the scientific use of the LXX is destructive of faith. I had already answered the charge from a Jewish point of view as far back as April, 1910. It will be interesting to see whether Dr. Barton will dare to say anything more on the subject, or whether he will continue to maintain the unbroken silence of the last two years.

In spite of my approval of Dr. Gray's general attitude towards textual criticism, I regret to say that I am wholly unable to commend the use he has made of the materials in this volume. His labors in this field fall very far short of the work done by some of the other writers in the series, e.g. H. P. Smith on Samuel, or G. F. Moore on Judges. In his preface Dr. Gray writes that he might be more satisfied if he could feel that two or three important fields of inquiry were really worked out, and he gives, as the first instance of this, the state of the text, adding that he is persuaded that the evidence of the Greek Version has not been as yet completely and accurately sifted. For this conviction he has the best of grounds; but his dissatisfaction is utterly unreasonable, having regard to the very perfunctory manner in which he has used the available materials. I doubt whether he has used the cursives at all; certainly he has not made the faintest attempt to group the various MSS. or trace the recensions; while, from the way in which he cites an article of my own, I feel inclined to suggest to him that he should now set out to read it carefully. I do not think that a commentator who has spent so little labor on the matter as Dr. Gray

is justified in complaining that the study is still in so incomplete a condition. It is open to his readers to retort, "Well, you might at any rate have tried to advance it a little yourself."

On the question of Hebrew metre Gray's remarks are sane and interesting; and, as already hinted, he is more at home in the philological portion of his subject than in any other. His ideas of date and development are of course hopelessly vitiated by his adherence to untenable theories.

With regard to the mechanical portion of the book, the criticisms of the American volume are applicable to this with almost equal force; but it must be reckoned to Dr. Gray for righteousness that he has printed his translations in very much better type than his colleagues. The sheets of this volume have been read by Dr. Driver, but it does not appear that Dr. Briggs has had anything to do with them. Still, in view of Dr. Driver's share in the production of the book, it is very interesting to find "*God hath heard*" adopted as the true reading of the explanation of the name Ishmael in Gen. xvi. 11 (p. 128). It is remarkable that no hint is here given that the Massoretic text has been silently abandoned in favor of a variant the correctness of which was expressly disputed by the general editors in writing to me. If this means that Doctors Gray and Driver now agree with me, I can only express my unqualified satisfaction.

Apart from his acceptance of certain preposterous higher critical theories, and the absurdities into which they lead him, Dr. Gray kicks over the traces really badly in one place only. On page 256, in the course of a note on xiv. 13, he writes of the Tent of assembly (i.e. the Tabernacle), that it "may originally have meant a tent for the assembly of the gods, though to the Hebrews it came to bear quite another mean-

ing (Ex 33 7-11), and may have had a connection with the Babylonian conception of the World-Mountain piercing into heaven, where the gods assembled to determine destinies." The probative and scholarly value of this remark may be exactly paralleled as follows: "'Dr. Gray' may originally have meant a mermaid, though to the readers of the International Critical Commentary it came to have quite another meaning, and may have had a connection with the English conception of the great sea-serpent, which generally attains to fame in the gooseberry season." The one sentence is not more preposterous than the other.

Of course Dr. Gray is apt to make a mess of things through his literary incompetence. For instance, in vi. 1 he insists on rendering "skirts" for train, and after speaking of it as "æsthetically unsatisfactory" in English goes on to discuss the anthropomorphism. All I can see in this is a proof of incompetence to edit a poet. Either a man sympathizes with a poet's methods of expression and comprehends them instinctively, or else he does not, and Dr. Gray unfortunately falls in the latter category. There is here no question of philology or anthropomorphism. The idea is closely parallel to that contained in Wordsworth's

"But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home."

A note on this passage explaining that trailing could be appropriately used of the way in which a tired child will drag along an umbrella with its ferrule in the dust would be as much in place as this note on Isaiah. Another instance of what this egregious commentator can effect in literary matters is to be found on page 107, where we read, on vi. 4, "whether a heavenly temple would have quaked at what in

a heavenly temple should have been an ordinary occurrence, may be doubted"! It is a pity that Dr. Gray was not a contemporary of those old Russian theologians who used to dispute as to whether the angels reasoned by synthesis or analysis!

The blind acceptance of theories that are absurd and untenable is very marked, and in some places Dr. Gray overreaches himself in a curious manner. Thus, on the words "the Law and the Testimony" (viii. 20), he gives away the critical case entirely by saying that if the verse is late, Torah may mean written law (p. 159). Here we have a plain instance of the way in which the evidence is "faked" by the critics in the interests of the postdating of the Pentateuch. The word may have its natural meaning if the verse be postdated; otherwise this must be denied to it in the interests of a theory. Another monstrous piece of work is the treatment of the idea of holiness. Alike in the introduction (p. lxxxix) and the commentary (p. 106) we are invited to believe that the term was originally devoid of all moral import and "ethicised by Isaiah." Of course for this remarkable allegation dependence must to some extent be placed on the assigning of large sections of the Pentateuch (including Lev. xix.) to a late age; but, even so, the allegation will not stand. The original offer of the covenant contains language that is perfectly clear on the point: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 6). The first terms of the covenant are the ten commandments. Amos (ii. 7) speaks of a highly immoral act as profaning God's *holy* name — thus clearly showing the connection between holiness and moral conceptions — and makes God swear by his 'Holiness' (iv. 2). If Dr. Gray had considered the matter before writing on the subject, he might have been led to

ask whether an Amos who equates seeking the Lord with seeking good attached no ethical meaning to that attribute by which the Lord himself swears. There is therefore no doubt that the word had (*inter alia*) ethical associations before the time of Isaiah.

I conclude with a few words about a great passage the true and full import of which it is impossible for Dr. Gray to realize without legal assistance, of which, like the other members of this school, he of course fails to avail himself — I mean Isaiah xix. 18 ff. The long study of covenants which forms the second chapter of my "Studies in Biblical Law" is probably beyond Dr. Gray's comprehension, and so I must try and put the gist of the matter, so far as it relates to this passage of Isaiah, into language that he may be able to understand. The whole of modern business rests on contract, i.e. on agreements which are recognized as binding, and enforced by the courts. But this idea of contract is a conception that came gradually and at a relatively late stage in human progress. When there are no courts there can be no question of agreements enforceable by them. Yet occasions will arise when men will feel the need of some form of binding engagement. How is this to be supplied? If we interrogate legal history we shall see how it in fact was supplied: "The greatest gap in ancient civil law will always be caused by the absence of Contract, which some archaic codes do not mention at all, while others significantly attest the immaturity of the moral notions on which Contract depends by supplying its place with an elaborate jurisprudence of Oaths" (Maine, *Ancient Law*, p. 369). Oaths are the natural solution of the difficulty not only in the stages of history that give birth to the early codes, but also in those more primitive and loosely knit societies which can have no codes because they have no



courts. The agreement depends for its sanction on supernatural powers whose aid is invoked to watch over its fulfilment. Such oaths might or might not be entered into with sacramental or other rites. Among the ancient Hebrews, as among many other ancient nations, we find, as a matter of fact, that a number of different rites were sometimes observed in connection with the pledging of such oaths. Sometimes, not in all cases. Hebrew had a special term which was applied to such transactions, the term which is usually rendered by the word "covenant." Covenants might be of different kinds, i.e. they might be entered into with different ceremonies. We have no information which would enable us to say when each particular kind was in place, but we do know a little about the ceremonies observed in one or two instances. In some cases striking parallels are to be found among other peoples. Now among these various kinds of covenants two are of particular importance for the history of Israel, of religion, and of literature, and it is these two that enter into the consideration of this passage of Isaiah. From certain terms employed I have ventured to designate these respectively as "pillar-covenants" and "token-covenants." In the pillar-covenant we find that the transaction consists of oaths between the parties combined with the erection of an altar and a *mazzebah* (ordinarily rendered "pillar" or "obelisk"), the offering of sacrifices and the eating of a sacrificial meal. The classical instance of such a covenant is to be found in Genesis xxxi. 44-54, where Jacob and Laban enter into one. So far there is nothing remarkable or exceptional. But the next step is without parallel in history. The form of covenant is taken bodily, with only such modifications as the changed circumstances necessitate, and utilized to create the special relationship between God and the Israelitish tribes. The one pillar becomes twelve, according

to the number of the tribes. Representative elders and Moses as go-between are utilized to perform the functions which the people as an unwieldy entity could not perform like a party to an ordinary covenant between individuals. But all the elements are there — the altar, the sacrifice, the pillars, the feast. And the oath? Here a difficulty arose that gave rise to a special literary form. For what is an oath? It is either a declaration or a promise combined with a *jurat*, i.e. an appeal to a supernatural power.<sup>1</sup> The promissory oath is of course the only kind to require consideration in this connection. About the terms of the promise no difficulty arises. They are as bilateral as in any contract in the world. Israel is to receive certain privileges and in return is to do certain things. But the *jurat* is more difficult. There is no supernatural Power outside the covenant to whom the parties can appeal to watch over its due performance, for the Greatest of all powers is Himself a party to the covenant. And so there is no ordinary *jurat*, no appeal to the God of their fathers or the Fear of Isaac. But, in place thereof, we find a Divine discourse enjoining obedience and promising rewards for it, while threatening punishment for the reverse. And so it comes about that a large portion of Israel's law consists of the terms of sworn agreements made between God and Israel. Of the uniqueness of the literary form I cannot here speak, but must content myself with referring my readers to the chapter of "Studies in Biblical Law" of which I have already spoken, and my article "Law in the Old Testament," in Murray's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, with which, so far as I am aware, no higher critic has any acquaintance at all. But its technical terms and its importance for history and religion

<sup>1</sup> See, further, my article on "Oaths in the Old Testament," in Murray's Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

are germane to our passage. The pillar in the Jacob-Laban covenant had been a witness; and, to this day, it is the function of any written document embodying a contract to witness its existence and terms. In the covenant document which constitutes the bulk of the book of Deuteronomy we find the word "testimonies" repeatedly employed for the same reason, and consequently we must recognize that the word had a technical or quasi-technical usage in connection with covenants. If now we turn to the passage of Isaiah, we shall find (ver. 25) that Egypt is at some future time to be God's people on a level with Israel itself, and if we read the preceding verses we shall find all the elements of the Sinaitic covenant ceremony. Swearing and altar, sacrifice (which implies a meal), and the pillar which is to be for a witness, all are there. And there is yet another significant word. The *mazzebah* is also to be for a token. This is a technical term of another kind of covenant, — the kind which had been employed in the covenant with Abraham which is narrated in Genesis xvii. Now the special relationship of Israel to God rests partly on this (to this day initiation into this covenant is indispensable for the Jewish boy), and partly on the covenants of the Mosaic age, and the prophet uses language which designedly covers both. The meaning is that Egypt is to become as completely entitled to a place besides Israel, and to parity of relationship to God, as if too had been a party to the covenants with Abraham and the tribes in the wilderness. It is a mistake to press the language and ask for geographical details in connection with altar or pillar or cities. The prophet does not necessarily mean that there will be an actual physical altar or pillar — indeed, in my opinion, he does not mean that at all. Assyria, which is mentioned in this passage, is to be a third merely in virtue of the fact that it is the work of

God's hands. The real gist of the prophecy is that the privileges and special position of Israel will be extended to the world at large, and no literal meaning should be assigned to the specific formalities mentioned.

Altogether Dr. Gray's book would properly be described, in the language of "maffickers" (a form of speech that is unsurpassed for simple directness) as "pretty rotten."