

*PROFESSOR LINDSAY'S ARTICLE ON PROFESSOR
W. ROBERTSON SMITH'S DOCTRINE OF
SCRIPTURE.*

AN old friend of Robertson Smith, to whom his name and fame are dear, but to whom fairness in discussion and just appreciation of past and present theologians are still dearer, ventures to criticise one portion of the above-mentioned article. It is surely not quite fair to contrast the theory of the Bible put forward by Robertson Smith as a young and highly trained professor in 1879-1880, and intended mainly for the benefit of students of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, with that put forward or suggested by older and less perfectly trained theologians belonging to a Church of more composite origin, who had to consider, not simply what they as individuals thought reasonable, but what would be intelligible to ordinary members of their church. The latter theory was no doubt too slight, and therefore inadequate, but it does not represent the highest teachings of those who have succeeded Williams, Wilson, and Stanley. That the sympathies of those who may with more or less correctness be described as Broad Church professors of theology are with those leaders of Biblical research in the German Evangelical Church who were also close friends of Robertson Smith, is notorious, and this surely makes it highly improbable that they "feel" any "insuperable difficulties" in the intellectual position which they occupy (*see* EXPOSITOR, p. 261), though they may naturally feel great difficulties in converting the mass of English students to a truer way of thinking on the Bible. They, not less than Robertson Smith, are indebted at least as much to foreign as to native teachers, and, though they may not feel called upon to offer a reconstruction of doctrine, it is not

likely that they are conscious of being as thinkers or as teachers a long way behind the Robertson Smith of 1880. Possibly indeed some of them consider that while much that was put forward by that brilliantly gifted man in his Defences was sound, there are other points in which, from over-subtlety, a pardonable self-confidence, and a desire to keep in touch with old-fashioned theologians, he has ventured upon unsafe statements, and that a fuller and altogether non-sectional treatment of the doctrine of the Scriptures needs to be given.

It is of course not intended to deny that the second edition of Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, which so far as its main ideas are concerned does not differ from the first, represents, as accurately as its popular object admits, his revised opinions on the doctrine of the Bible as well as on criticism. These lines are only a friendly protest against the assumption that a "doctrine of Scripture" derived from Robertson Smith's more or less controversial Defences of 1879-80 is or can be his final legacy to students on the subject of the religious value of the Bible, and against the combination of this with an unsympathetic because not altogether comprehending criticism of certain Anglican theologians, for which, so far as it relates to a present "Broad Church school," Robertson Smith, incautious as he sometimes was, cannot be held responsible. The tendency of university Biblical teachers is on the whole not towards a revised Anglican, but, as has been hinted, towards a non-sectional treatment of the doctrine of the Scriptures.

Would not, then, the best plan for Professor Lindsay be to drop such an ambiguous designation as "the Broad Church school" altogether? Might not all who value the combination of critical honesty and the continuous development of religious thought on Biblical not mediæval lines band themselves together, and think in future less of the

supposed needs of their particular section of the (Reformed) Christian Church, and more of those of students in general, and of the Church that is to be ?

T. K. CHEYNE.

ARCHÆOLOGY AND CRITICISM.

IN all enquiries into the history of a remote past, criticism and archæology generally go hand in hand. They mutually control and further each other, and they ought as a rule to point to similar conclusions. But at present that does not seem to be the case. A slowly widening divergence in the tendency of Archæology and Criticism has been manifesting itself, until they threaten to stand opposite each other as irreconcilable foes. In the main, Archæology has been decisively pushing back the border line of the historic period to always remoter periods. Criticism, on the other hand, has been tending, especially in regard to religious history, to the view that everything before the 4th or 5th century B.C. is so obscure that we must resign ourselves to very partial and conjectural opinions regarding it. The one has manifested a growing tendency to esteem the good faith and accuracy of early tradition and ancient authors always more highly; the other has grown suspicious to such a degree that it admits nothing to be true in these but what it is actually compelled to admit. The extreme results of this latter attitude are seen in Darmesteter's recent declaration that the Zendavesta belongs to an age immediately preceding our era, or to an even later date; in the assertions of some French scholars that the Vedas are not much anterior to Alexander the Great; and in the almost helpless drift of Old Testament critics to a position regarding the dates of Israelite literature which apparently will not be very greatly caricatured in Vernes' view that all the prophetic writings