

RECENT OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE.

As the previous volumes of Prof. McCurdy's *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*¹ have been noticed in these pages, we need say nothing as to its general character. The present and concluding volume includes the period from the accession of Josiah to the eve of the return from the Exile; it maintains the high standard of excellence reached in the former parts of the book. We may note his views on matters still in dispute amongst critics. Josiah's law book comprised substantially Deuteronomy xii.-xxvi.; it was a new and enlarged edition of the *Book of the Covenant*, and was composed shortly before its publication. As against Driver and others our author holds that Jeremiah had no share in the composition or enforcement of Deuteronomy; but he follows Cornill in accepting the bulk of the book of Jeremiah, including xxx. f., as the work of the prophet. An eloquent exposition of the book of Habakkuk is based on views rejected by many critics; the order of paragraphs in the Masoretic Text is accepted; the first two chapters are explained as showing how the sin of Judah will be punished by the Chaldeans, who will be punished in their turn; and the psalm in the last chapter is held to be the work of Habakkuk. Of the Law of Holiness (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.) we read: "We may assume that it was intended as a law book for the new Jerusalem of Ezekiel, and written by a pupil of that priest-prophet in the latter half of the Exile." As regards the book of Isaiah the following portions are dated during the Exile (xiii. 1-xiv. 23, xxi. 1-10, xxxiv. f., and xl.-lv.). Prof. McCurdy follows Tiele and Kosters in rejecting the theory that because Cyrus is spoken of as king of the Elamite province of Auzan, he was therefore an Elamite; on the contrary, Auzan had been con-

¹ Macmillan.

quered by the Persians, and was ruled by a branch of the Achæmenian dynasty. It is also maintained, as against Sayce, that Cyrus was a loyal Zoroastrian, and that his patronage of other religions was due to an enlightened tolerance. Here and elsewhere our author is too ready to credit his characters with modern ideas. Cyrus, no doubt, held that it was legitimate for different nations to follow different religions; and his policy in this respect was followed by his successors.

The treatment of some of the earlier literature had been reserved for the section which dealt with Deuteronomy and the structure and sources of the Pentateuch. Here the reign of Solomon is spoken of as a great literary period, represented in the Old Testament by the blessing of Jacob (Gen. xlix.), some of the sayings in *Proverbs*, and perhaps some other fragments. While accepting the lament over Saul and Jonathan as David's, Prof. McCurdy writes (p. 51): "It is with reluctance that any good son of the church relinquishes the belief in Davidic psalms. But many considerations combine to make such a belief impossible."

The close of the Exile is as satisfactory a *terminus ad quem* as any before the fall of Jerusalem; it has the great advantage of evading the intricate controversy as to the Return. There are, however, references to this event in view of which some mention should have been made of Koster's theories; but this defect will no doubt be remedied in the sequel which we hope will be given us.

We must congratulate Prof. McCurdy on the successful conclusion of a great task. We have had translations and textbooks on Old Testament History; but now we have what we may call a library history by an English-speaking writer, that is abreast of the information of our time. This work is the successor of Stanley's *Jewish Church*; doubtless this is a very different book; Stanley's dramatic instincts and love of the picturesque led him to produce a literary

masterpiece rather than a scientific history, while our author's method makes more exacting demands on his readers. Whatever advantages there may be in the modern plan of accumulating in one volume an account of economics, social life, literature, religion, and politics, it certainly does not make history more readable. Nevertheless the serious student will find Prof. McCurdy not only informing but also interesting.

A melancholy interest attaches to *Messages of the Old Testament*; ¹ it is a memorial volume whose incompleteness makes it all the more suitable to its purpose. The author, the late Rev. G. H. C. Macgregor, M.A., had planned a course of sermons, each of which was to set forth the chief messages of some one book of the Old Testament; but his plans were frustrated by his early death, so that the work before us only deals with the historical books from *Genesis* to *Chronicles*, and with *Joel*. There is much that is suggestive in these sermons, and they are a valuable addition to devotional literature. Moreover they have an important bearing on controversies as to the Bible. They are written with a full knowledge, and considerable acceptance, of modern criticism; nevertheless the author is in no way embarrassed either by what he accepts, or by what he implicitly rejects. The book is a striking illustration of the fact that the spiritual teaching of the Bible has nothing to lose, and much to gain from criticism. One sentence is most suggestive; our author explains that the composite authorship of the historical books is obvious, and that *Genesis* is no exception. Then he adds, "We learn this on the authority of *Genesis* itself. It only needs a very small measure of study to put the matter together beyond doubt" (p. 4). This principle is sound and far-reaching; it amounts to this: the results of criticism are learnt from accurate study of the Bible; they are the testimony of the

¹ Hodder & Stoughton.

Bible, that is of Divine Revelation, as to the origin and composition of the various books, just as the valid deductions of geology are the true interpretation of the voice of God speaking through Nature as to the processes by which our globe was formed. Prefixed to these sermons there is an enthusiastic appreciation of their author by the Rev. F. B. Meyer; the readers of this book will share his regret for the premature loss of so gifted a teacher.

Prof. R. G. Moulton's *Short Introduction to the Literature of the Bible*¹ is not an abridgement of his *Literary Study of the Bible*; the earlier and larger work was intended for formal students; but the present book is addressed to the general reader. It is the work of a literary interpreter pursuing his path undisturbed by the theologian, the historian, or the critic. We may perhaps describe it as a series of able essays on the English Version of the Bible considered purely as literature. It excludes the discussion of such topics as date, authorship, and mode of composition; in fact, nearly everything that Prof. Driver deals with under the title, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*.

In *The Old Testament and the New Scholarship*,² Dr. J. P. Peters, rector of St. Michael's, New York, gives us groups of suggestive, but rather discursive essays on topics more or less connected with the subject described by his title. He deals with the doctrine concerning the Bible; with its development, illustrated at length by the history of the Psalter; and with *Archæology and the Bible*, similarly illustrated by *Daniel*. His critical principles are substantially those of Prof. G. A. Smith. We may note two or three points. On page 39 we read, "The newer criticism lays its special emphasis on the Incarnation; you might almost say that it is a protest against a prevalent but

¹ Isbister & Co., 1901.

² Methuen, *The Churchman's Library*, 1901.

ancient disbelief in the Incarnation." Elsewhere it is pointed out that if archaeology could establish the integrity and Homeric authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and also show that these poems give us an accurate picture of the manners and customs of the times they describe, we should not therefore accept them as history. There are also comments on the absurdity of the statement sometimes made that archaeology has upset the conclusions of Biblical criticism.

We have also received *Sermons on Isaiah*,¹ by J. F. B. Tinling, B.A., a volume of the *Sermon Seed Series*, a useful collection of 150 outlines of sermons by noted preachers, ranging from F. W. Robertson to Dr. Talmage; *Genesis*² in the *Bible for the Young*, by Dr. J. Paterson Smyth, a set of suggestive notes for Sunday School teachers; and *The Mosaic Account of Creation Verified by Science*,³ by George Dickison, who finds in Genesis i., ii., three distinct accounts of "three great creative events": in i. 1, the initial creation of sun and stars, "possibly hundreds of millions of years ago"; in i. 2-ii. 3, the putting of the earth in order, the original creation of plants, animals, and man, and the institution of the Sabbath, "probably . . . something like one million of years ago," and finally, in ii. 4 ff., the renovation of the earth, apparently after some catastrophe, and "the creation of the Adamic race, and the greater part of the plants and animals that are now in existence."

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¹ Hodder & Stoughton.

² Sampson Low, Marston & Co.

³ Elliot Stock.