

*RECENT AMERICAN LITERATURE ON THE  
OLD TESTAMENT.*

SEMITIC studies are constantly advancing in America. Already there is provision for thorough instruction in the Semitic Languages, especially in Hebrew, at two of the oldest universities in the country—not to speak of one of the youngest and best, Johns Hopkins at Baltimore, where Dr. Paul Haupt, a rising German Assyriologist, is Professor of Semitic Languages. At Harvard University, in connection with the Divinity School, Prof. C. H. Toy has the chair in Hebrew, and Prof. D. G. Lyon devotes especial attention to Assyriology. Recently Yale College has added Prof. W. R. Harper, late of the Chicago Baptist Union Theological Seminary, to its faculty. It is expected that he will do for Semitic studies a work similar to that which Prof. Whitney of that institution has accomplished in Sanscrit. He will not only give instruction in the college, but also in the Yale Divinity School. With his tireless energy and his contagious enthusiasm for these studies, we may hope not only that he will attract the attention of many to them, but also that he may be successful in inaugurating a movement whereby the preparatory work in Hebrew shall be done before the admission of students to the theological seminaries.

Besides his regular work in the seminary<sup>34</sup> during eight months and in connection with the Hebrew Correspondence School, he has been at the head of five Summer Schools of the Institute of Hebrew, each lasting a month, which have been held beginning respectively, June 7th at Philadelphia, June 28th at Morgan Park near Chicago, July 19th at Newton Centre, Mass., August 2nd at Chautauqua, N.Y., and August 16th at the University of Virginia. Dr. Harper has spent from two to three weeks in each place, and has received the co-operation of some of the most eminent Semitic scholars in the country. The object of these schools may be learned substantially from the prospectus of the one at Philadelphia: (1) for those desiring to begin; (2) for those desiring to review; (3) for the study of Hebrew Grammar (Etymology) and Deuteronomy; (4) for study of Hebrew Grammar (Syntax) and Minor Prophets; (5) sections for sight-reading; (6) sections for conversation and pronunciation of unpointed Hebrew; (7) for study of Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, and Assyrian; (8) twenty lectures on linguistic and literary topics. The tuition

fee at each of these schools is £2. By concentration on one thing admirable progress is made even in a month. The schools are useful as tending to establish an *esprit du corps* among the Hebrew professors in America, and afford a valuable opportunity for ministers to review their studies, or even to lay a foundation where they have not studied Hebrew before. At the same time it is hoped that students may be prepared to enter the seminaries with some knowledge of Hebrew.

The Institute of Hebrew, under whose auspices these schools have been established, has made an arrangement for electing as Fellows of the Institute those who shall successfully pass examinations in one half of each of the three grand divisions of the Hebrew Bible (history, prophecy, poetry), including a thorough knowledge of Hebrew Grammar, and two cognate languages, *e.g.* Aramaic and Arabic, or Assyrian and Arabic, and who shall prepare an original thesis on some subject connected with Old Testament Study.

HEBREW GRAMMAR.—Two interesting articles on *The Study of the Hebrew Language among Jews and Christians*<sup>1</sup> have recently appeared from the prolific pen of Rev. B. Pick, a Christian Jew. *Hebraica* has furnished other contributions of more or less merit. The following are perhaps the most noteworthy: Prof. C. H. Toy, writing on *The Massoretic Vowel System*,<sup>2</sup> affirms that Shewa was a real vowel sound, and that the language treated it as forming an independent syllable. He holds that it is unnecessary to speak of half open syllables. In the same number<sup>3</sup> Prof. Haupt has published an instructive article on *Assyrian Phonology, with Special Reference to Hebrew*. Not to mention other articles, Prof. Briggs has begun a series on Hebrew Poetry,<sup>4</sup> in which he gives illustrations of the trimeter.

Prof. Harper has recently issued two of his text books in new editions. One is called an *Introductory Hebrew Method and Manual*<sup>5</sup> ("second edition—re-written"), the other, *Elements of Hebrew by an Inductive Method*<sup>5</sup> ("sixth edition—re-written"). The Method contains fifty lessons, which are based on the first eight chapters of Genesis. Each verse is taken up and analysed in the most careful manner, *e.g.* in the first lesson, which is based on Gen. i. 1,

<sup>1</sup> See the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for July, 1884, pp. 477 ff., and for July, 1885, pp. 470 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Hebraica*, Jan., 1885, pp. 137-144.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175-181.

<sup>4</sup> *Hebraica*, April, 1886, pp. 164-170.

<sup>5</sup> Chicago American Publication Society of Hebrew, 1885.

there are (1) Notes, (2) Observations, (3) Word-lesson, (4) Exercises, English and Hebrew, (5) Topics for study. The Manual, which is bound up with the Method, contains (1) The first four chapters of Genesis in the Hebrew text, (2) in a literal translation, (3) in unpointed Hebrew, (4) a transliteration of the first chapter. Besides, there is the text of v.-viii., a Hebrew-English and English-Hebrew vocabulary, and list of 332 words in Hebrew and translation. The grammar exhibits a thorough mastery of the principles of vocalisation set forth by Bickell. It is perhaps easier by the inductive method, which at once introduces the student to the text, to excite and retain the general interest of a class than by any other. The writer, however, who has used Davidson's *Introductory Hebrew Grammar* for seven years, is not yet certain that the results attained by the use of Harper's books are preferable to those secured by the use of Davidson's Grammar.

OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION.—Attention is called by Prof. H. P. Smith, of Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, in two issues of the *Old Testament Student*,<sup>1</sup> to the importance of text-criticism. He maintains that at the best we cannot definitely prove that our Massoretic text extends farther back than the beginning of the first century. Therefore the Septuagint is of the greatest importance in forming a critical text, since we have reason to believe that it was complete about 131 B.C.; he holds, therefore, that "it is older by three centuries than any other source of knowledge concerning the Old Testament text."

PENTATEUCH CRITICISM.—Old Testament scholars of the conservative school have not been idle in repelling the attacks made by the school of Wellhausen. While they all fail in meeting some of the important objections made by the destructive critics to the traditional view of the origin of the Pentateuch, yet they have done an important work in showing the strength of some of the positions which may be taken against the critical theory of the origin of Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah (621 B.C.), and of the middle books of the Pentateuch after the return from the exile under Ezra (444 B.C.).

Wellhausen's argument in favour of the post-exilic origin of the middle books of the Pentateuch is a master-piece of logic and

<sup>1</sup> April, 1885, pp. 337-344; May, 1885, pp. 402-488. With this should be compared his more extended Article, *The Old Testament Text and the Revised Version*, in *The Presbyterian Review*, New York, October, 1885, pp. 623-625.

critical investigation. But he has dealt with the Pentateuch about as the new French empire did with the crooked, narrow streets of old Paris. His avenues are broad and direct, but it is very questionable whether they represent the ancient topography.

Prof. W. H. Green of Princeton has produced two books,<sup>1</sup> which exhibit a good understanding of the subject, and are worthy of great praise. He shows that if we regard Moses as a historical personage, and the ten commandments as emanating from him substantially in their present form—and for this he contends—that the critical hypothesis loses a most important support, and that we can hold beyond a peradventure that law preceded prophecy. He shows that the critics in developing their hypothesis as to the middle books of the Pentateuch have carried their arguments concerning the silence of the more primitive Old Testament history and prophecy too far, and so have fallen, in some cases, into reasoning in a circle by ascribing certain passages to later priestly hands, when the question at issue is after all as to the age of these documents. He argues forcibly that the Jehovistic legislation in the classic passage (Exod. xx. 24) indicates but one place of worship at a time, not contemporaneous places, and in this respect agrees with the teaching in Deuteronomy and the Priests' Code. His answer to Kuenen, however, in *Moses and the Prophets*, is the least satisfactory part of that book.

Prof. Bissell's work<sup>2</sup> exhibits great industry, and is a valuable contribution to the literature of the subject. He is often dogmatic and perhaps uses more similes than are necessary in a discussion where a wise compression is a virtue. He hardly gives a fair impression as to the real strength of the new critical school in Germany with regard to the number and character of its adherents. But the book is a useful and honest endeavour to present arguments in favour of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Like Prof. Green, he shows clearly and forcibly how incredible it is that a man writing in the time of Josiah should embody such commands and statements as the author of Deuteronomy has done. Indeed these arguments against a late authorship seem more powerful than those which the critics urge in favour of it. Or was the author of Deuteronomy such an antiquarian that he could

<sup>1</sup> *Moses and the Prophets*, New York, 1883; *The Hebrew Feasts*, New York, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pentateuch: its Origin and Structure. An Examination of Recent Theories*, by Edward Cone Bissell, D.D., New York, 1885.

simulate all these marks of an earlier age? We know of no parallel example in Old Testament literature. Prof. Bissell, after an introductory chapter, gives a historical sketch of the criticism, tests the proposed analysis of the law, considers laws peculiar to Deuteronomy, repeated and modified in Deuteronomy, laws peculiar to the Priests' Code, and the genuineness of Deuteronomy. He then discusses the Law in relation to the Prophets, the Historical Books, and the Psalms, and appends a very complete table of the literature of the Pentateuch and the related criticism of the Old Testament, besides full indexes. Without design, this book clearly exhibits the existence of three parallel codes in its efforts to harmonize them.

The latest work on Pentateuch criticism is by a Fellow of Princeton Theological Seminary, Geerhardus Vos, of Huguenot descent, although born in Holland. It bears the marks of Dutch thoroughness as well as of our American tendency to undertake many things. No scholar occupying a similar position in Germany would attempt to write anything more than a monograph, but here is a work on the *Mosaic origin of the Pentateuchal Codes*,<sup>1</sup> in twenty-one chapters, which discusses almost every phase of the subject with admirable terseness and clearness. It must be admitted, however, that some of the subjects are necessarily treated in an incomplete and superficial way. The most serious criticism which can be made on the book is its lack of foot-notes and indexes. Such an omission of references is unfair to the conscientious critic who wishes to verify the accuracy of the statements, as well as to the student who should have access to the authorities used by the writer. The tone of the book is in some places unpleasant. There is here and there an imputation of motives which should for ever be banished from such works. His use of the word "pretended" in connexion with evidence, etc., adduced by critics, occurring several times, is an illustration of the catch-words that some suppose they find in the so-called Elohist or Jehovistic documents. The second chapter, on the *History of the Linguistic Argument of the Critics*, which is based on a dissertation by König, not only gives two dates that are wrong by a year, but the author unwittingly conveys an erroneous impression as to the position of Ewald with reference to this argument. He does not seem to know that Ewald withdrew the view<sup>2</sup> which he at-

<sup>1</sup> New York, 1886.    <sup>2</sup> *Studien und Kritiken*, Hamburg, 1831, pp. 596, 597.

tributes to him, and that he speaks depreciatingly of the book in which it is found as the work of one who was only nineteen years old.

He is the only one of the American critics named who examines the linguistic argument. He fails to show satisfactorily, however, how certain expressions are characteristic of the Elohim-passages, while synonymous expressions are found in Jehovah-passages. But aside from these strictures, the book is to be commended as a valuable compendium of arguments from a conservative standpoint for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

OLD TESTAMENT REVISION.—There has been a spirited discussion in some of the Reviews and religious papers regarding the merits of the revision. The occasion was a severe criticism<sup>1</sup> which was made by Prof. Briggs on the entire work, with especial reference to the shortcomings of the American Revisers. Whatever the merits of the discussion may be, there was developed on the part of Prof. Briggs, especially in the religious journals, a partizanship and an assumption of superior scholarship that detracted from the effect of his criticisms, which betray a thorough understanding of the subject. These criticisms are fourfold: the revisers are open to the charge, (1) of not having formed a critical text, or at least of not having used the critical apparatus at hand; (2) of clinging to an antiquated grammar; (3) of failing to indicate the true character of the poetry, by a blind adherence to the Massoretic system; (4) of often missing the true theological terminology in the Old Testament.

The ground taken by Prof. Briggs in regard to the text was, that an eclectic text must be formed through a comparison of the Hebrew with the chief versions. He did not seem to reflect, that however desirable such a work might be, the Old Testament revision could not have been attempted at all until Old Testament text-criticism had passed through a course similar to that of the New. Indeed, the revisers could not well have engaged in the formation of a critical text unless they had been willing to postpone the revision indefinitely, and hand it down for a more modern and better trained generation of scholars,<sup>2</sup> of which Prof. Briggs is himself a representative. The importance and nature of such

<sup>1</sup> *Presbyterian Review*, New York, 1885, pp. 486-533.

<sup>2</sup> Compare my treatment of this subject in *Current Discussions in Theology*, Chicago, 1885, vol. iii. pp. 18ff. and 66; and in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, for July.

textual criticism is also ably set forth by Prof. H. P. Smith of Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati. The charge regarding too great conservatism in following the principles of modern Hebrew grammar was made with more reason, although it seems that such grammarians as Davidson, Driver, and Cheyne, were unable to overcome it, and it must be remembered that conservatism rather than radicalism is demanded in such a work. With regard to the third criticism, it remains for Prof. Briggs to write a work on Hebrew poetry which shall secure the general acceptance of Hebrew scholars before we can blame the revisers very sharply for following Massoretic tradition.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the sum of the criticism can only be, the time was not ripe for an Old Testament revision. Neither the scholarship nor the Church were ripe for it. Only time can prove whether this judgment was just. In any case the discussions of this subject will be of great value in the impulse which they will give to Old Testament scholarship, for which Prof. Briggs is doing so much in America.

MISCELLANEOUS BOOKS.—*The Blood Covenant*,<sup>2</sup> by H. Clay Trumbull, D.D., author of *Kadesh Barnea* and editor of the *Sunday School Times*, is a marked book. The author seems to prove beyond a doubt that the blood covenant is one of the most ancient and universal institutions. This idea is founded on the representation familiar to Old Testament scholars, that the blood stands for the life. Those who enter into the blood covenant, pledge their life-blood in each other's defence, and form a more solemn bond than any which can be established by marriage or the closest natural relationships. Dr. Trumbull shows that substitute blood was the basis of inter-union between God and man, and that the shedding of blood, not the death of the victim, was the important element in sacrifice.

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### BREVIA.

**The late Rev. Dr. John Ker.**—The bright ornament of the Scottish Church who has passed away, may be briefly commemorated in this Magazine, not merely because he was much interested in it and purposed to contribute, though his feeble health prevented him doing more than allow us to use two discourses, the

<sup>1</sup> He has made a beginning in his *Biblical Study*, and has promised, as remarked above, to prepare a series of articles on the subject for *Hebraica*.

<sup>2</sup> New York, 1885.