

*RECENT OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES IN
AMERICA.*

PROF. W. H. GREEN, of Princeton, subjects Exodus i., ii., to a minute analysis,¹ and remarks concerning the divisions made by the principal critics in these chapters: "I think it can scarcely be said that they are very plausible, much less conclusive. So extensive an hypothesis cannot, it is true, be judged by the inspection of one brief passage. . . . But we can at least say that, so far as we have seen in this specimen passage, there is not much to commend it to sober and judicious minds. It may be very ingenious, and may set forth a long array of arguments. But we have found no proof that it is true." In another brief article Dr. Green raises the question: "Is the current critical division of the Pentateuch inimical to the Christian faith?"²

While he says that "truth is to be accepted at all hazards," he cautions Christian scholars against an over-hasty acceptance of critical conclusions, and declares that "no more perilous enterprise was ever attempted by men held in honour by the Church than the wholesale commendation of the results of an unbelieving criticism in application both to the Pentateuch and to the rest of the Bible, as though they were the incontestable product of the highest scholarship." He thinks that those who have been thoroughly grounded in the faith "may, by a happy inconsistency, hold fast their old convictions, while admitting principles, methods, and conclusions which are logically at war with them." Others however are likely, with a stricter logic, to carry these critical principles to their legitimate issue.

Prof. George H. Schodde, of Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, occupies substantially the same standpoint regarding the "Literary Problem of Genesis i.-iii."³

Prof. Charles A. Briggs, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, continues his series of articles on Hebrew poetry, presenting the "Strophical Organization of Hebrew Trimeters,"⁴ which he illustrates by examples from Psalms xxxiv., iii., cxlviii., ii., xlix., li., c., containing respectively strophes of two, four, six, seven, eight,

¹ *Hebraica*, pp. 1-12. (Chicago, 1886.)

² *Old Testament Student*, vol. vi., pp. 314-318. (New Haven, 1887.)

³ *Ibid.*, vol. vi., pp. 101-105. (New Haven, 1886.)

⁴ *Hebraica*, pp. 152-165. (New Haven, 1887.)

ten, and twelve lines. He finds examples of trimeters in fourteen lines in the story of Cain and Abel, which is given in four strophes. We shall watch further developments in Dr. Briggs' theory of Hebrew poetry with great interest.

Prof. H. P. Smith, of Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, fully approves of the use of the Septuagint in emending the Hebrew text of Jeremiah.¹ Although the Alexandrian text is much briefer than the Massoretic, he claims that the very fact that it is briefer is a proof of its greater purity. He says: "A text is more likely to grow in the process of transmission than to shrink. The rhetorical expansion of an obscure phrase is more likely than its omission. The insertion of synonyms is more likely than their omission. The influence of parallel passages tends to swell the shorter form." Dr. Smith gives examples, which seem to be favourable to his theory.

Prof. J. F. McCurdy, of the University College, Toronto, in treating of "Popular Uses of the Margin in the Old Testament Revision,"² remarks: "The whole tendency of modern Bible study is to push the Septuagint to the front rank as a companion-book to the Hebrew Bible. . . . It will not then have been in vain that such a scholar as Lagarde has spent the best hours of a busy life in gathering and sifting materials for a worthy text of a work which, after the neglect and depreciation of many centuries, is destined to rule in no small measure the realm of Old Testament study and research."

President Alvah Hovey, of Newton Theological Institution, Newton Centre, Mass., in his article on "Shekhar and Leaven in Mosaic Offerings,"³ successfully defends the Revised Version against the ignorant aspersions of a writer in the *National Temperance Advocate*.

Prof. Francis Brown, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, contributes a valuable article concerning the "Commentaries on Exodus";⁴ and Prof. E. C. Mitchell, of Cambridge, Mass., gives "The Bibliography of Exploration,"⁵ limiting it however to American writers, and enlarging the scope so as to include biblical archæology.

In Prof. D. S. Lyon's interesting article on "Israelitish Politics

¹ *Hebraica*, pp. 193-200.

² *Old Testament Student*, pp. 225, 234. (New Haven, 1887.)

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-92.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 303-315.

as Affected by Assyrian, Babylonian, and early Achæmenian Kings,"¹ we see a tendency to the naturalism of the modern critical school.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LITERATURE.—The international system of Sunday-school lessons has given a powerful impulse to the study of the Bible, which has borne good fruit in various writings.

The *Sunday-school Times* of Philadelphia, under the editorial management of Rev. Henry Clay Trumbull, has gathered a remarkable array of contributors, considering the object of the journal. Such names as those of Delitzsch, Driver, and Green are found among them. Prof. Driver began to contribute "Critical Notes on the International Sunday-school Lessons," in which he set forth the "indications of different documents in the Pentateuch." After the publication of an introductory article, and papers on the first four lessons, so many protests were received, that the series was discontinued, although it was afterwards published in pamphlet form.²

Two works, which were doubtless suggested by the topics demanding such general interest, really belong to another category.

One is a series of twelve Sunday lectures on *The Pharaohs of the Bondage and the Exodus*³ by Rev. Charles T. Robinson, of New York. It is based on the latest studies in Egyptology, and contains much interesting information in homiletical form.

The other, entitled *Abraham, Joseph, and Moses in Egypt*,⁴ is a course of six lectures delivered before the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., by Rev. A. H. Kellogg, of Philadelphia. He maintains that Tothmes III. is "the Pharaoh of Joseph's elevation." He gives up the view that Mernephtah⁵ was the Pharaoh of the exodus, but holds that "he was either Mineptah Seti II. or Mineptah Siptah."

EXEGESIS.—We place under this heading Bartlett and Peters' *Scriptures, Hebrew and Christian, Arranged and Edited for Young Readers as an Introduction to the Study of the Bible*. It is really "Hebrew story from creation to the exile," and for the

¹ *Old Testament Studies*, pp. 293-302.

² New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887, pp. 85.

³ The Century Company, New York, 1887.

⁴ A. D. F. Randolph & Co., New York, 1887.

⁵ Weidmann, *Aegyptische Geschichte* (Gotha, 1884), 2 Teil, p. 493, considers that the powerful character of Egypt in the reign of this monarch makes such flight almost impossible; but he overlooks God's miraculous intervention.

most part follows the wording of the Authorized Version, or the Revision, although changes are noticeable. At the same time the critical views of the authors are easily discernible. In the account of the flood they have taken the narrative of the Jahvist, but have not combined that of the Elohist. So too they seem to have followed the text of the Septuagint in the omission of 1 Samuel xvii. 12-31 and 55-xviii. 5, etc.

HISTORY.—Three books have been issued in Putnam's series, "The Story of the Nations,"¹ which are helpful in the study of Old Testament history. Two are by a talented Russian lady, Zénaïde A. Ragozin; one on Chaldæa, the other on Assyria. She gives a list of the most important works bearing on the subjects discussed in the two volumes, which seems to include everything of value until the time of publication. Rawlinson's *Story of Egypt* belongs to the same series. All these volumes are written in an attractive style, and although designed for a younger class of readers, furnish useful information to all who have neither the time nor the disposition to study larger and more expensive works.

THEOLOGY.—Briggs' *Messianic Prophecy*² is an important contribution to Old Testament theology. While admitting the main positions of the modern critical school regarding the origin and age of various parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, his treatment of the Old Testament is reverential and sympathetic. He says: "There is but one legitimate method for the interpretation of prophecy; and that is, (1) to study each prediction by itself with the most patient criticism and painstaking exegesis in all its details; (2) to study it in relation to other predictions in the series, and note the organic connexion; (3) to study it in relation to Christ and His redemption." Even those who do not accept the critical views of Dr. Briggs will find the book instructive and stimulating.

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¹ G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

² Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1876.