

BREVIA.

The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament.¹—After a long delay the second volume of the translation of Dr. Schrader's excellent book, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, has appeared. This part contains translations of Dr. Schrader's commentary on various verses of the Bible, beginning with 2 Kings xviii. 14; a good excursus on chronology, with a translation of the Assyrian Eponym Canon; and a glossary, which fills eighty pages printed in small type. In addition to these we have two indexes and about thirty pages of "Notes and Addenda," by the English translator. Throughout the work Dr. Schrader has added notes and corrections, caused by the steady advance which the science of Assyriology is making year by year, and his most recent discoveries and theories have been diligently gathered together and brought into their proper place by Mr. Whitehouse. On his own account Mr. Whitehouse has brought together some observations on passages in the Hebrew Bible, some of the words of which, in their Assyrian form, occur in the cuneiform inscriptions. The number of these passages may be increased almost indefinitely, and, inasmuch as the Hebrew and Assyrian dialects are very closely related, this is not to be wondered at. When the Assyrian inscriptions are better known we shall see the Assyrian forms of verbs and nouns common to Assyrian and Hebrew printed in the same dictionary. This however is a matter for the future, and can only be done in a small way now. Mr. Whitehouse's translation is tolerably literal, and is certainly easy to read; and his studies of Assyrian matters have prevented him from making the mistakes which a translator with no special knowledge would have made. With a modesty rarely to be met with among the new school of students of Assyrian, Mr. Whitehouse owns to the fact that he is not an "independent investigator in the department of cuneiform research"; hence it is hardly fair to criticise the statements which he makes on certain subjects which one knows to be the productions of others. It must however be pointed out that Dr. Schrader would have added, under his own name and authority, the greater part of the translator's notes had they been

¹ *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*. Vol. ii. By E. Schrader. Translated into English by O. C. Whitehouse. (Williams & Norgate, 1888.)

necessary to the reader. In the last German edition of his work he gave whatever parallels there are between biblical statements and historical facts in the cuneiform inscriptions, and explanations which could be relied upon of words and passages in them. We may be wrong, but it seems to us quite unnecessary to devote half a page to the discussion of a philological theory of Dr. Fried. Delitzsch (p. 303), which no one with any knowledge of Semitic grammar could entertain for a moment. In the same way we are sorry to see nearly two whole pages (pp. 313-315) devoted to the explanation of an absurd theory, for which we have to thank Mr. Pinches. In 1875 Sir H. Rawlinson published in his *Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. iv., pl. 67, No. 2, the copy of an Assyrian religious or mythological text from a tablet numbered K. 3972. Subsequently Mr. Pinches published¹ a little account of it, and translated a part of its colophon. He omitted to say however, that he obtained the restorations of some of the broken passages and nearly the whole colophon from K. 2518, which has since been published by Mr. Evetts.² Messrs Halévy and Haupt have discussed passages from it, and Mr. Sayce has given a translation of it in his *Hibbert Lectures* (p. 535). The composition is either a prayer or a hymn, most probably the latter. In it there is one line (W. A. I. xv. 67, l. 61) which has been differently rendered by each of these students. Haupt translates the line, "Wer verwichene Nacht lebte, starb heute," "He who lived last night died to-day"; Sayce, "That which has lived and died at evening (*ina amšat*), does he renew"; Pinches, "(The God) who in the earth lived, died, renewed (himself)," and later, "Who in the world lived, died, renewed?" Of these three renderings the most probable is that given by Haupt. A fourth rendering, characterized by absurdity and nonsense, is given by Jeremias in his *Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode* (pp. 48, 49), of which "important contribution" Mr. Whitehouse has made no use in this case. In this composition Jeremias sees the prayer of a sufferer who sighs in a mournful lamentation which touches Jeremias even at this remote time, and reminds him of Psalm lxxxviii. 4, "I am counted with them that go down into the pit." The sufferer says afterwards, "The day is sighing, the night is a

¹ *Proc. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, Jan. 13th, 1885, p. 68. See also *Academy*, Jan. 21st, 1888.

² *Ibid.*, June 5th, 1888, p. 478.

torrent of tears, the month is weeping, and the year is misery." After a few more lines, in which the sufferer abandons himself to despair, he promises that he and all his house will dedicate themselves to the fear of God. In the following paragraph Jeremias quotes from Haupt, without acknowledgment, the line referred to above, and translates "Wer am Abend zuvor noch lebte,—bei Tagesanbruch ist er tot, "He who last evening¹ was still alive is dead at daybreak." Each of these four renderings is open to serious objections, and the only translator who has attempted to fix any meaning to the line is Mr. Pinches, who sees in it a reference to a supposed expectation of the Babylonians of a Messiah. The transcription of the line by Haupt reads:

"Sa ina amšat ibluṭu imât uddiš";

and that of Mr. Pinches:

"Ša ina am-mat ib-lu-ṭu i-mut ud-di-iš."

Now the most difficult word to understand in this line is AMŠAT, or, according to Mr. Pinches, AMMAT. This word Mr. Pinches renders by "world," and says that it occurs with the meaning "earth" on the first creation tablet. Now this is a bad blunder, for the word *ammāt* does not occur on the first "creation" tablet or K. 5419c. In line four of this tablet however we read "mu-um-mu Ti-amat mu-al-li-da-at gim-ri-šū-un"; and we can only suppose that Mr. Pinches has confused *amat*, a part of the proper name Ti-amat, with the word which he transcribes *ammāt* in the line quoted above. Mr. Whitehouse has already printed Dr. Schrader's transliteration of the first "creation" tablet in his English translation (vol. i., p. 2); and he should have verified Mr. Pinches' unfortunate statement by it. Mr. Pinches' derivation of *ud-di-iš* from a root ערש is most improbable, while that of Haupt and Jeremias is better, and makes better sense. From the time of the gentleman who read the ten commandments out of an inscription of Assur-nasir-pal until to-day, it has been the fashion with a certain class of students to find proofs of Bible statements and Bible ideas in every Assyrian text published. It is only to be expected that a nation like the Assyrians, which was so closely connected with the Jews, in fact, having with them one common origin, should possess the same ideas and the same way of express-

¹ *Lit.*, "He who the evening before."

ing them. Wherever parallels can be shown between the two cognate peoples, whether in reference to their religion, language, or customs, it is important to do so; but we think that the system of reading Bible ideas into passages of doubtful or unknown meaning cannot be too strongly condemned, for it is mischievously misleading. We need hardly say that there is not the least support of the theory that the Babylonians had "Messianic conceptions" in the text a line of which is quoted above. We are glad to see that Mr. Whitehouse does not attach any importance to the theory; but why did he waste two pages of valuable space on such a wild imagination? It is a pity that so good a book as this, sound and trustworthy in all respects as far as Dr. Schrader's own work is concerned, should be disfigured in this manner.

E.
