

The Rev. Leonard Ashby, M.A., never prepares a sermon without considering what he hopes to accomplish by it. This compels him to see that it is true to the Word of God and intelligible to his hearers. To secure fidelity to God's Word he reads carefully and compares Scripture with Scripture. To make sure that his sermon is intelligible he writes logically and illustrates freely. Being once a foreign missionary, Mr. Ashby finds most of his illustrations in missions and missionary literature. And he shows us once for all how fertile that field is, and how feebly it has been worked hitherto. The title of his book is *To whom shall we go?* (Elliot Stock; 2s. net).

Mr. Arthur H. Stockwell has published the first volume of *The Weekly Pulpit* (4s. 6d. net). It is a volume of more than six hundred pages. It

contains new sermons by such distinguished preachers as Dr. P. T. Forsyth, Dr. Charles Brown, Dr. W. L. Watkinson, Dr. J. H. Jowett, and Dr. Alexander Whyte; original children's sermons by Mr. J. D. Jones and others; Bible Studies, Devotional Studies, Condensed Sermons, Anecdotes, and other good things—all for the advantage of the pew just as much as the pulpit.

One of the easiest and safest ways of following the course of religious thought is to read all the writings of the Rev. Henry D. A. Major, M.A., Vice-Principal of Ripon Clergy College. For Mr. Major is himself in touch with all the great movements, and he writes with clearness. He has just gathered some of his magazine articles into a volume under the title of *The Gospel of Freedom* (Fisher Unwin; 2s. 6d. net).

Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

BY THE REV. A. H. SAYCE, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D., PROFESSOR OF ASSYRIOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

The Transmission of Religious Texts in the Ancient Oriental World.

WE have long been accustomed to believe that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is either in so corrupt a state, or so changed from its primitive form, that we are at liberty to 'emend' it whenever we choose. The belief is not unnatural. The Greek and Latin texts of classical antiquity have come down to us in a faulty condition, and a considerable part of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is ungrammatical or unintelligible as it stands. Moreover, a comparison of it with the Septuagint proves that it is extensively 'corrupt,' and the letters of the Phœnician alphabet in which it was written lend themselves readily, like those of the Greek alphabet, to errors in transcription.

The older the document, the more numerous, we are apt to think, will be the chances of error. It has been assumed that texts that are as recent even as the age of the Exile, will not only exhibit the usual signs of textual corruption, but will be full of interpolations and omissions. Such changes, partly unconscious and partly intentional, will, it is assumed, be largely increased

the farther back we go, and a considerable part of the modern criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures is built on the assumption that they are a literary mosaic consisting of fragments, additions, and modifications more or less unskilfully pieced together.

We now at last possess the means of testing these beliefs. The religious literature of Babylonia was of greater extent even than that of Israel, and much of it is now in our hands. The Assyrians and Babylonians were Semites like the Israelites, and their fundamental religious conceptions and prejudices were much the same. But whereas we have to depend on very late Hebrew MSS. for our knowledge of the Old Testament text, we now have the actual copies of the religious texts of Babylonia that were made in the time of Khammu-rabi, that is to say, in the Abrahamic age, as well as in the earlier age of the dynasty of Ur. In some instances it has been found that the texts are fortunately the same as those which were edited for the library of Nineveh nearly 1500 or 2000 years later, and we are therefore in a position to determine how much alteration a religious text may be expected to have under-

gone among a Semitic people in the course of centuries.

In the twenty-ninth volume of *The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania* (Pt. I., 1911), Dr. Radau has published a Sumerian hymn to Nin-ib, of which we have a Neo-Babylonian copy, with a Semitic translation, that was 'written about 2500 years later than the Nippur texts.' When we compare the two editions; which are thus separated by a space of between two and three thousand years, the differences in the respective versions amount to almost nothing. In one or two cases there are variations of spelling or of equivalent grammatical forms—*i* for *e*, *gar* for *gur*, *mi* for its equivalent *bi*, etc.—in one instance the word *en*, 'lord,' has been inserted; that is all.

Now let us turn to the texts which were from the outset in Semitic. One of these has recently been published by Dr. Langdon in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, xxxiv. 4, and is a prayer to Ellil. It was written for the library of Nippur about 2100 B.C., and Dr. Langdon has compared it with a copy of the same text made for the library of Nineveh about 650 B.C. As he remarks, the only important change made in the Assyrian version 'is an insertion of three lines to adapt the prayer for the penitential service of the king at the dark of the moon.' In Assyria, it must be remembered, the king took the place of the priest in Babylonia. Otherwise the differences between the two versions are of the slightest. There are, again, a few variations in spelling—*ma* for *mu*, *i* for *e*, *ku* for *ka*, *ameri* for *amiru*, and *balta* for *basta*, where, as Dr. Langdon says, 'the Assyrian scribe deliberately changed the original to make the word conform to Assyrian usage,' the Assyrian form being *balta* and not *basta*. Two unimportant words are omitted in the Assyrian copy, neither of them being needed for the sense, and in two instances an equivalent word is substituted for its homonym. One line has been omitted, apparently by oversight, and at the end of the text the concluding formula is replaced by another which is equally common ('in thy supreme command which cannot be altered, and in thine everlasting grace which changeth not,' whereas the Babylonian original has, to quote Dr. Langdon's translation: 'May the gods adore thee, may the goddesses seek thee. And I thy servant would live, would prosper. Thy greatness I would glorify, thy praises I would sing').

It will be impossible in future to assume the corruption of the Hebrew text with the same confidence as formerly, or to have such reckless recourse to conjectural emendation. The very fact that a text was sacred or semi-sacred, ensured its accurate transmission. Its efficacy depended on the words themselves being preserved and properly pronounced. Moreover, as we now know, the scribes who were employed in copying and re-editing the texts collected in the libraries of Babylonia and other parts of Western Asia, were extraordinarily conscientious. When a scribe could not make out the meaning or form of a character, he wrote, 'I do not know it,' or gave the varying forms between which he was unable to choose. If characters or words were obliterated and broken, he wrote 'wanting,' and never attempted to supply their place. The early Babylonian originals of late Assyrian texts have shown us how conscientiously this word *khibi*, 'wanting,' was applied.

It is true that all this accuracy of transcription belongs to the cuneiform texts which were written upon clay. We cannot expect the same amount of accuracy in texts which were written on papyrus or vellum in the letters of the Phœnician alphabet. But the difference will be one of degree rather than of kind. The old tradition of scribal accuracy in the copying of religious documents must have survived in Palestine. And a good test case is the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. We know the date of the events which are there recorded, about 2100 B.C. We also know the Babylonian forms of the names which occur in it. They are names which would have sounded strangely in the ears of a late Jewish scribe, unlike anything with which he was acquainted. Nevertheless they have been handed down to us with extraordinary fidelity. In one instance where Ellasar has been substituted for *al Larsa*, there has been a metathesis of the letters; otherwise the transcription is scrupulously accurate. In the case of Amraphel, indeed, the cuneiform character which has the variant values of *pil* and *pi* has been read *pil* instead of *pi*; but, on the other hand, the name of the Amorite prince is written more correctly than it is in Babylonian, where the Amorite Ammu-rapi is transformed into Khammu-rabi. And the title given to Tid'al or Tudghula has come down to us with quite astonishing accuracy. He was leader of the Manda or

Northern 'Hordes,' a title the signification of which had been forgotten in the age of the Exile and confounded with the name of the Medes. Doubtless the fourteenth chapter of Genesis was long preserved in cuneiform script, but between the time when it was translated into Hebrew and the age of the Septuagint translation a long interval must have elapsed, and the little change undergone by the proper names is a fair measure of the general trustworthiness of the Hebrew text.

The Origin of the Hebrew *Cohen*.

The Hebrew word *kôhên*, 'priest,' has no known Semitic etymology; the corresponding Arabic and Aramaic words are borrowed from it, and there is no verbal root to which it can be referred. On the other hand, the word is found in Asia Minor. According to Hesychius, *κοίης* or *κόης* meant a 'priest of the Kabeiri who purified a murderer,' and among the Pisidian names met with in Greek inscriptions is *Koias*, which appears as *Kouas* in Cilicia, with the usual Hittite interchange of *u* and *i*. One of the founders of Sinope was *Koos*, which Greek writers naturally explained as signifying 'the Coan.' The statement that the *κοίης* or priest of the Kabeiri 'purified a murderer' is noteworthy, since the institution of *asyla*, or cities of refuge, had its origin in Asia Minor, from whence it passed to the Semitic world.

In Greek inscriptions recently discovered by the American excavators at Sardes, the word *καύειν* is used in the sense of 'priest.' *Kauvein* is evidently the Lydian form of the *κοίης* of Hesychius, with the same termination as that of the Lydian word for 'king,' *κοάλμειν* (as we must correct the reading of the MSS. *KOAAAΔΔEIN*). *Koalmein*, it may be noted, must be an earlier form of *πάλμυν*, which is also given as a (Lydian) word for 'king,' and claims relationship with the Karian *γέλαν* and Phrygian *βαλήν*, 'king.' The original form would have been *kwalmein*.

To return, however, to *kôhên*. There is no corresponding word in Assyrian, which suggests that we should look westward for its origin. Now in an inscription in Aramaic letters found by Dr. von Luschan at Ordek-burnu, near Sinjerli, and recently published by Dr. Lidzbarski, the word *כִּן* more than once occurs as a title with the name of a god following it. The inscription is not in a Semitic language, and is presumably Hittite. *כִּן* would correspond with *κοίην*, the older form being *כִּי*, the Lydian

καύειν. In the Hittite hieroglyphic texts the word takes the form of *kani(s)*, also written *kaini(s)*. The *h* of *kôhên* has the same merely graphic origin as in *hêkâl*, 'palace,' from the Assyrian *ekallu*, Sumerian *ê-gal*, or Abraham from *Aba-ramu*; on this see Hommel, *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 276-277.

Nimrod.

The name of Nimrod has not yet been found in the cuneiform inscriptions, but recent discoveries in Babylonian archæology are beginning to clear away the mystery that surrounded his figure. Various identifications, all of them unsatisfactory, have been proposed for him, and it has generally been assumed that his name is corrupt. Such was also my belief; but the belief turns out to have been unfounded.

Among the proper names of the Khammu-rabi era are *Namram-Sarur* and *Namram-Serum*, also written *Namra-Sarur* and *Nawiram-Sarur* (Thureau-Dangin, *Lettres et Contrats*, p. 37). The formation of the names is similar to that of an Amorite name found in tablets of the Khammu-rabi age, *Abam-ramu* or *Aba-ramu*, the Biblical *Abram*, except that *ramu* seems to be a participle rather than a divine name, whereas *Sarur* and *Serum* are the names of the Sunrise and the Dawn. The signification of the names is difficult to determine, since *namram* or *namra* is an adjective meaning 'bright' in the accusative case, so that Dr. Ranke's translation 'Sherum is brilliant' is contrary to the rules of Babylonian grammar. Perhaps the form of the name is Amorite; in this case *Abam-ramu* would be 'a father is Ramu,' corresponding with the Assyrian *Abi-ramu* (earlier *Abum-rânum*).

However this may be, a parallel name to *Namram-Serum* is *Namram-Uddu* or *Namra-Uddu*, 'brilliant is the Daylight.' The Daylight deity appears also in the name of *Uddu-sunâmir*, 'the Daylight illuminates,' who was created by *Ea* in order to rescue *Istar* from the darkness of the under world. Now *Namra-Uddu* is letter for letter the *Nimrod* of the Old Testament.

According to the Book of Genesis, *Nimrod* was a son of *Cush*, 'a mighty hunter before *Yahweh*,' and one of the old heroes of Babylonia who founded an empire there. Subsequently he made his way northward to *Asshur* (Kalah *Shergat*), and built the Semitic city of *Nineveh* with its *Rêbituri*, or 'Broad-streets,' and *Res-eni*, or 'well-head' of the water-supply, as well as the adjoining suburb.

of Calah. In other words, he was the leader of the Semitic conquerors who occupied what we now know to have been the Mitannian kingdom of Asshur; hence Micah (v.⁶) calls Assyria 'the land of Nimrod.'

The 'beginning' of his empire, we are told, 'was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh in the land of Shinar.' Erech had been the seat of the first Babylonian empire, that of Lugal-zaggisi; Accad the seat of the first Semitic empire, that of Sargon and Naram-Sin. Calneh, which is said to be 'in the land of Shinar,' in order to distinguish it from the Calneh of Northern Syria (the Assyrian Kullania), is still unidentified: from its position in the list of cities it would seem to have been the seat of an empire which was later than that of Accad.

That Babylon should be given the first place in the list of cities, points to the age of Khammu-rabi, when Babylon for the first time became an imperial city, and its god Bel-Merodach claimed to be lord of the known world. It was then that legends were modified or fabricated which made Babylon the oldest and chiefest city of the country from an immemorial past, and the two first antediluvian kings, Alorus and Alaparus of Babylon, were prefixed to the original list which began with Amelon, 'the Man' of Pantibbla or Sippara. But the primacy of Babylon in Babylonia was the work of the Amorites, and was effected by the Amorite dynasty to which Khammu-rabi belonged.

This explains the statement that the Babylonian hero was a 'hunter before Yahweh.' Yahweh, as we now know, is the Amorite Yahum or Yau (Yahu) who figures in Babylonian documents of the Khammu-rabi and Kassite periods, and who is made a synonym of *ilu*, 'god,' by the compilers of the lexical tablets. The phrase which we have in Genesis is thus of Amorite origin, and must go back to the Abrahamic era.

What the phrase means is explained by the use of the Assyrian *pāni* and *lapān*, 'before.' Nimrod did not serve in the temples or offer shew-bread (*akal panu*) or dance before Yahweh; he hunted, and the spoils of the chase were brought and offered to his god. In other words, it was in honour of Yahweh that he slaughtered the wild beasts of Babylonia.

One of the 'heroes' commonly represented on early Babylonian seals is a huntsman who either holds an animal in either hand or is engaged in

mortal combat with a lion or a wild bull. Hitherto all Assyriologists, with the exception of Dr. Pinches, have assumed that the hero is intended for Gilgames; but, as Dr. Pinches points out, there is no connexion between the designs on the seals and the exploits of Gilgames. Gilgames was not a hunter, and he never struggled with lions or held slaughtered animals in his hands. I have, therefore, no longer any doubt that Dr. Pinches is right, and that in the huntsmen of the seals of the Semitic epoch of Babylonia we must see, not Gilgames, but Namra-Uddu or Nimrod. The figure of the huntsman with the wild animals in his hands made its way from Babylonia to Asia Minor: the Lydian Hermès was called Kandaulès, 'the hound-strangler,' and even in Cyprus a figure of the hero has been found with an animal in either hand.¹ In Greece representations of Hēraklès struggling with the lion were not unfrequent; they are the Western reflexion of the legend of Nimrod.

Why Nimrod should be called the son of Cush is not clear. In the Mosaic age the Tel el-Amarna tablets have shown that the Babylonians were known to their Western neighbours as the Kasi or Cush, the Kassites having been for some time the rulers of Babylonia. It is therefore possible that 'son of Cush' means merely a 'Babylonian.'

The Semitic conquest of Asshur and the foundation of Nineveh must have preceded the establishment of the Assyro-Babylonian colony at Kara Eyuk in Cappadocia, where many of the personal names were those of Semitic Assyrians, and the years were reckoned by *limmi* as in Assyria. The colony was already in existence in the time of the Babylonian dynasty of Ur (about 2500 B.C.). On the other hand, the mention of Akkad in the list of Nimrod's cities implies that it had already been the seat of empire, and the same may be said of the mention of Calneh. At present, however, we still know nothing from cuneiform sources of the period in Babylonian history which intervened between the conquest of the country by the Kurds of Gutium, twenty-six years after the fall of the dynasty of Akkad, and the rise of the dynasty of Ur. The two earliest of the high-priests of Asshur of whom we hear bear Mitannian

¹ On coins of Tarsus of the fifth century B.C. Sandan-Hēraklès appears with a lion suspended from his hand by its leg or tail, which he is striking with a club held in the other hand (Six, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 3rd ser., iv. p. 153).

names, Auspia and Kikia; the next high priest whose name has come down to us, and who was probably a contemporary of the dynasty of Ur, was Ikunum. But we have no means of gauging the length of time that elapsed between Kikia and Ikunum. This was the period, however, somewhere about B.C. 3000, to which we must assign the date of Nimrod.

In later legend he has been confounded with Etana, the hero-founder of sovereignty on earth, and has also naturally taken the place of the various individuals who on the Sumerian seals of Lagas

are represented as engaged in combat with wild beasts. There is, however, nothing to show that these individuals as yet represented heroes of mythology, or that they were, in fact, anything more than pictures of real life such as meet us elsewhere on the seals of the Sumerian epoch. Perhaps there is a reference to the name Namra-Uddu in the statement of Sargon of Assyria, that Assyrian history went back to 'the age of the Moon-god.' The Moon-god was succeeded by the Sun-god; the lord of night was followed by Uddu, the god of day.

Recent Foreign Theology.

A Survey.

The Study of Religion.

PROFESSOR FOUCART of the University of Marseilles is known to the readers of the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. His special field is the Religion of Egypt, but no one can be an authority in any department of religion without being something of an expert in every department. In his new book, however, of which the title is *Histoire des Religions et Méthode Comparative* (Paris: Picard et Fils; Fr.5), Dr. Foucart makes no pretence of describing the religion of any people or tribe. He occupies himself with the principles which underlie the study of Religion everywhere, and in illustration he uses the phenomena of Totemism, Sacrifice, Magic, Morality, and Priesthood. The last three chapters are given to a discussion of the evolution of religious practices, when Divination, Dualism, Human Sacrifice, and the like, find their place and exposition. Professor Foucart is master of the literature, but the value of his book lies rather in the refreshing freedom with which he expresses his own opinions.

A manual of the History of Religions comes from the Roman Catholic Seminary at Hastings. It is published under the startling title of *Christus* (Paris: Beauchesne). The title, after the first shock, will be supposed to be apologetic. But that is not so. Professor Joseph Huby and his collaborators describe in some measure all the religions of the world that have anything distinc-

tive about them, and then they direct the attention of the reader upon Christianity. They believe that Christianity is *the* religion, and to that extent the book may be said to be apologetic. But it would be a most unjust judgment to condemn it as unscientific or misleading because the authors find no religion like the Christian, and no founder of a religion like the Christ. Professor Huby has not attempted to describe all the religions of the world himself. For each religion he has found a writer, sufficiently conversant with the subject and sufficiently 'Catholic.' He himself has written the chapter on Greece, and co-operated with others in the chapters on Christianity.

A series of articles appeared in the *Revue Biblique* during 1910 and 1911 on the references in Assyrian literature to the Israelites and contiguous nations. These articles have now been published under the title of *Les Pays Éibliques et l'Assyrie* (Paris: Lecoffre). The author is Professor Paul Dhorme of Jerusalem.

The interest in the Jewish colony of Elephantine is inexhaustible. Again two volumes demand notice. One is entitled *Aramäische Papyrus aus Elephantine*. Its author is Dr. Arthur Ungnad. The other is called *Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine*. It is written by Professor Eduard Meyer. Both are published by Hinrichs in Leipzig (M.3 and M.2).

From the same publishers there comes a fresh and thorough study of the condition of life of the Jews in Babylon. The author is Erich Klamroth,