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RECENT OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE.

PROF. SWETE'S *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*<sup>1</sup> is a work for which students have long been waiting; it supplies a want even more fully than could have been expected. The reader is delighted to find subject after subject dealt with, as to which hitherto information had to be sought from a number of out-of-the-way sources. In many ways the book adds to our knowledge and understanding of the subject, notably by the text of, and introduction to, the Letter of Aristeas by Mr. H. St. J. Thackeray. The whole book is a monument of accurate and exhaustive scholarship. Prof. Swete assigns the LXX of the Pentateuch to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, B.C. 285-247; with regard to the completion of the work he writes: "On the whole, though the direct evidence is fragmentary, it is probable that before the Christian era Alexandria possessed the whole, or nearly the whole, of the Hebrew Scriptures in a Greek translation" (p. 25). Mahaffy and Deissmann's work on the papyri is used as additional evidence of the Egyptian character of the Greek of the LXX. We do not notice any criticism of the suggestion that supposed Hebraisms in Hellenistic Greek are merely idioms of the Egyptian dialect. This contention, however, may be true, and yet these idioms may be Hebraisms, or perhaps we might say Semitisms, due to the influence of the large Jewish and Semitic population in Egypt, and of the Semitic element in Coptic on the formation and development of the dialect. In the list of common grammatical peculiarities on p. 308 the literal translation of the Hebrew *wayyehi* . . . *w*, EV "and it came to pass that," should have been included.

Dr. Swete holds that the Hebrew MSS. used by the translators of the LXX were written in a character inter-

<sup>1</sup> Camb. Univ. Press, 1900, pp. xiv. 593.

mediate between that used by the ancient Israelites and the later square character, except perhaps in the case of the Pentateuch (p. 321). In this connexion we may remark that so closely packed a book needs a better index; for the above topic we tried "script," "writing," "character," all in vain, and could find nothing in the index to refer to it, or to another important topic, the date of the completion of the LXX. Again, a table of symbols and contractions would have been useful; modern scholars are getting quite rabbinic in their use of these devices. The bibliography is avowedly a selection, but on pp. 262 ff. Dr. Haupt's *Sacred Books of the Old Testament* should have been mentioned; and later editions will have to take account of the remarkable collection of striking facts about the LXX published by Dr. E. A. Abbott in *Clue* and other works of the same series.

Our chief feeling as to Prof. Driver's *Daniel* in the *Cambridge Bible* is one of regret that a work that must rank with Prof. Bevan's as one of the two best extant commentaries on *Daniel* should be published in small type, as notes to the Authorised Version. Could not the material be somewhat amplified and modified, and published as a commentary on the Hebrew text? There is one paragraph in which the author carries his habitual caution a step too far. On p. lxxv. he writes: "A number of independent considerations, including some of great cogency, thus combine in favour of the conclusion that the Book of Daniel was not written earlier than c. 300 B.C." [and therefore not by Daniel]. "And there are certainly grounds which, though they may not be regarded as *demonstrative*, except on the part of those who deny all predictive prophecy, nevertheless make the opinion a highly *probable* one, that the book is a work of the age of Antiochus Epiphanes." In the first place there are very many who do *not* "deny all predictive prophecy," and who yet hold

that the Maccabean date of *Daniel* is a demonstrable fact. Further, if, as is here implied, it is conclusively proved that the book was not written by *Daniel*, there is nothing to countervail the evidence which points to the Maccabean period. The use of the first person, if it be not recognized as a literary convention, may be misunderstood and taken as evidence for authorship by Daniel; otherwise the writer's information, interests and standpoint indicate the Maccabean period; there is no positive evidence for any other period. As far as we have noticed, those who consider that the Maccabean date is not proved believe that the authorship by Daniel can be demonstrated, and *vice versa*.

Prof. R. H. Charles lays scholars of apocalyptic literature under fresh obligations by a new and very complete and interesting edition of the *Ascension of Isaiah*.<sup>1</sup> It contains the Ethiopic Version, the new Greek Fragment, the Latin Versions, the Latin Translation from the Slavonic, an annotated English translation from the Ethiopic, and a full Introduction. Prof. Charles holds that the *Ascension* is a composite work formed not later than A.D. 200 by the combination of three works circulating in the first century A.D., viz. the Martyrdom of Isaiah, a Jewish work, and the Vision of Isaiah, and the Testament of Hezekiah, composed by Christians. The last-named is "the first and oldest document that testifies to the martyrdom of St. Peter at Rome" (p. xii.). The complete work includes apocalyptic visions of the usual type seen by Isaiah, the account of the sawing asunder of that prophet, etc., etc. The introduction shows that the *Ascension* throws much light on the criticism of *Revelation*; Prof. Charles holds that Jewish materials were used by the author of the canonical book (pp. lx. ff.), which he dates c. 90-100, p. lxxi. We may point out that the variants *Melchira*, *Belchira* (p. 13 n.) are

<sup>1</sup> A. & C. Black, pp. lxxiii. 155. 7s. 6d.

doubtless due to the fact that in the Hebrew script of New Testament times *B* could hardly be distinguished from *M*.

The Rev. D. McKenzie's *Exposition of Old Testament Sacrifices*<sup>1</sup> is unduly traditional in its views of criticism and the history of Israelite religion; nevertheless its application of the symbolism of sacrifice to Christ and Christian teaching is often interesting and edifying.

*The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew*,<sup>2</sup> by David Baron, a Christian Jew, is chiefly valuable for its account of Zionism, Anti-Semitism, and modern Judaism generally.

Dr. E. C. Selwyn's *Christian Prophets*<sup>3</sup> is an original and scholarly work, in which the order of prophets often referred to in the New Testament is made to play an important part in the early Church. The Synoptic Gospels come to us through the prophets, and St. Luke wrote 2 Peter for that apostle (!) The Fourth Gospel is a non-prophetic work, certainly not written by the author of *Revelation*, but rather to correct it. Many, however, of these views seem rather ingenious than sound.

We have also received *Sermons on the Psalms*, by the Rev. J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.,<sup>4</sup> a set of analyses of sermons by distinguished preachers—a useful homiletic help to busy pastors.

W. H. BENNETT.

<sup>1</sup> Toronto: Wm. Briggs, pp. 368. \$1.25.

<sup>2</sup> Hodder & Stoughton, pp. xii. 342. 6s.

<sup>3</sup> Macmillan, pp. xvi. 278. 6s.

<sup>4</sup> Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 144. 1s. 6d.