

CHRONICLE

ASSYRIOLOGY.

Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens. Von MORRIS JASTROW, Jr.
Lieferungen 8, 9, 10, 11. (A. Töpelmann, Giessen, 1905-7.)

PROFESSOR JASTROW continues his great work on Babylonian Religion. Chapter xviii deals with Psalms and Lamentations. The Oracles follow, then Omens and their interpretation. These chapters are of great interest for the illustrations they afford of the Old Testament and for the religious conceptions they embody. The translations of specimen passages are in most cases improvements on previous attempts, and many will be astonished to see the amount of such literature and to learn of its great age. The discussion of the oracles is most valuable, and to most readers will introduce a completely new subject for comparison with both O. T. and classical examples. To the investigation of omen texts and the actual nature of the appearances observed on the liver of the slain animal Dr Jastrow has contributed a brilliant piece of research. Consequently a flood of light is thrown on Etruscan augury as well as many obscure O. T. references. The book is a mine for comparative religion and challenges all who are interested in Old Testament study.

Babylonisches im Neuen Testament. Von DR A. JEREMIAS. (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1905.)

DR JEREMIAS, well known by his invaluable *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*, here extends his researches into the New Testament. His special theory of Calendar myths and their importance for the understanding of ancient religion is developed with great skill, and one may here see what is to be said for it. The Apocalypse is naturally the chief field of exploration, but classical parallels and even less known religions are used for illustration. The remarkable nature of the likenesses between the early Christian presentation and pagan religious thought shew what a struggle the early apologists must have had to face, and it is instructive, also, in view of attacks now made in the name of comparative religion. The book is a mine of interesting illustrations.

Die Panbabylonisten, der Alte Orient und die Aegyptische Religion. Von DR A. JEREMIAS. (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1907.)

THIS first number of a series entitled *Im Kampfe um den Alten Orient, Wehr- und Streitschriften, herausgegeben von Alfred Jeremias und Hugo Winckler*, is an attempt to bring the knowledge of the new views of ancient religion and culture under the notice of the layman. It is very interesting and will quicken the impulse given by Dehitzsch's *Babel und Bibel* to the study of Babylonian antiquities. Probably some such theorizing as is here given is absolutely necessary to stir up interest in subjects which more sober treatment would ensure being entirely ignored. Criticism will doubtless refute the errors, and more mature reflexion modify the point of view, and the usual turmoil made by new theories will settle down into lasting appreciation of the truth. Meantime this sort of thing must be read and considered.

Assyrisch-babylonische Briefe religiösen Inhalts aus der Sargonidenseit. Inaugural dissertation. Von DR EMIL BEHRENS. (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1905.) 57 pp. 8vo.

DR BEHRENS has taken for his dissertation a number of the letters published by Professor R. F. Harper from the Nineveh collections in the British Museum, selecting those which are interesting for the light they throw upon the religion of Assyria. By comparing passage with passage, culled not only from the letters but from the whole field of Assyrian literature, he has succeeded in solving many of the difficulties of these very difficult documents. The letters did not attempt to explain what their recipient was bound to know, and, consequently, at every step we are faced by unanswered questions.

The introduction gives the literature of the subject and a brief sketch of the many contributions to the lexicon, which the letters make. Then follows an admirable outline of what can be gained from these documents for the history of the cults. This part is full of interest and well arranged. Then follow the selected texts, more of which are to appear as Heft I of the second volume of the *Leipzig Semitic Studies*. They are discussed with a full commentary and no difficulty is shirked, though naturally much is left unsolved. This is largely due to the many technical expressions, which are usually found with the same context and thus remain as obscure as if they were only found once. The publication of more texts is our only hope of discovering some different usage which will fix their meaning.

Assyrisch-babylonische Briefe kultischen Inhalts aus der Sargonidenzeit.

VON DR EMIL BEHRENS. (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1906.)

THE number of the *Leipziger Semitische Studien* which extends the above dissertation discusses a number of other passages from the Assyrian Letters, and is a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of the religious rites and ceremonies.

The work is most carefully and thoroughly done, and its value is increased by the numerous little notes (marked Z.) by Professor Zimmermann, whose vast knowledge and rare insight rarely fails to bring light into obscure places. The general contents are of high value for the study of religion in Assyria and for the lexicon. It is noteworthy that the writers sometimes quote from their religious books such phrases as 'the fear of the gods begets favour', or 'the veneration of the Anunnaki restores life'. The section on the 'holy days' is valuable for the question of the Sabbath. The connexion of sickness and sin is full of interest, as are also the references to the cult of the dead. The mention of Nabû's writing the 'credit on account' of the king and his sons in the 'book of life to last for ever' is noteworthy. Deeply interesting are the pilgrimages of the king's 'double' and the royal cloak (or *pallium*?).

The lexicon benefits greatly. Thus the *rikki*, so long obscure, are seen to be a sort of spice or incense, with which we may compare the female name *Marhihitâ*, root *raḥāhu*. Some thirty or forty new words are discussed which bear more or less on Hebrew etymology and deserve the attention of comparative philologists.

The Origin of Some Cuneiform Signs. By GEORGE A. BARTON.
Reprinted from *Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of William Rainey Harper.* (University of Chicago Press.)

THIS is a useful attempt to trace the origin of certain cuneiform signs, and incidentally serves to make plain the reasons why certain signs are used with more than one syllabic value. It is naturally somewhat precarious to argue back from the objects which the signs represented in their later forms to the original picture or pictures. Incidentally illustration is afforded of Hebrew and other Semitic metaphors. That any picture at all could be used to denote an abstract idea must have involved a convention as to its meaning is probably obvious, but it is very difficult to be sure of the development from picture-writing to spelling. The value of Dr Barton's monograph lies in its collection and comparison of the oldest forms of the signs, and doubtless he has rightly divined much that will only be confirmed. He can scarcely feel much disappointment if fresh evidence obliges him to modify a large number of his conclusions.

Researches in Assyrian and Babylonian Geography, Part I. By OLAF A. TOFTEEN. (University of Chicago Press, 1908.)

WHATEVER may be our opinion of the value of the historical inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia, there is no doubt that they have greatly increased our knowledge of the geography of Mesopotamia. A king would hardly record his conquest of a land or city that had no existence. His reference may, however, be so vague that much uncertainty is still left as to the exact locality. Consequently some of the conclusions reached by Dr Tofteen will have to be revised. The ancient Babylonians and Assyrians very conveniently inscribed the name of the temple on the bricks with which it was built or restored. If they did not also name the city where it stood, the temple name will usually give a clue. Not much excavation is needed to find such bricks, and the geography would be rapidly made out with little effort if this clue were followed up. Dr Tofteen has made use of the hints contained in deeds of sale, letters, and most of the literary remains, so recovering a vast collection of place-names. Few of these can yet be localized with certainty, but he has made some noteworthy advances, and one can only hope he will be further successful. One source of much confusion is that places far apart bore the same name, or names so nearly alike as to be easily confounded. A future task will be to trace the cause of this, whether due to emigration or racial identity, or merely accidental.

Siebenezahl und Sabbat bei den Babyloniern und im Alten Testament.
Eine religionsgeschichtliche Studie, von DR J. HEHN. (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1907.)

THIS is one of the excellent *Leipsiger Semitische Studien* edited by Professor A. Fischer and H. Zimmern. Dr Hehn collects all the passages in the published cuneiform texts which seem to bear in any way on the meaning of the number 'Seven' or would elucidate its connexion with the Sabbath. Naturally he finds no account of the origin or institution of the Hebrew Sabbath, which remains as obvious or as inexplicable as before. Much that he has collected is of great interest for the history of religious ideas, and he definitely lays many a ghost. It has always been matter of conjecture what suggested the number of the days in the week, and he does well to shew the slightness of its connexion with the planets. His observations on other sacred numbers, three, four, twelve, &c., are equally illuminating.

The discussions of the passages bearing upon the word *Sabbattu* are by

no means satisfactory, but the facts are all marshalled with care and great accuracy. The views which he sets out are marked by originality, and his arguments will have to be met in detail. Whether his investigation of the Old Testament evidence bear the test of time or not, he adds once more proof that we know about all that can be obtained from that quarter. Whether the Babylonian evidence really throws any light at all upon the question is more doubtful. It is a boon to have it collected and arranged in such convenient form.

The Assyrian Word Nubattu. By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTON. Reprinted from *Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of William Rainey Harper.* (University of Chicago Press.)

THE word is of importance in connexion with the Sabbath question, and this monograph is a welcome supplement to the Babylonian evidence as to the real meaning of the Calendar references to the 7th, 14th, &c. days of the month. Dr Johnston has made out a good case for his contentions, and incidentally explains many of the words treated by Dr Hehn above. Much still remains to be worked out concerning the Babylonian calendar, but this piece of work will render advance much easier.

The Aramaic Indorsements on the Documents of the Murašû Sons. By ALBERT T. CLAY. Reprinted from the *Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of William Rainey Harper.* (University of Chicago Press.)

MANY Babylonian Tablets contain inscriptions in Aramaic characters briefly indicating the nature of the business involved. They are valuable as checking in various ways the conclusions of cuneiform scholars. Thus we now know that the Babylonian *GUR* is the same as the Hebrew *cor*, at least in name. The Assyrian *homer* was probably the same measure. These Aramaic legends also give welcome light on the reading of certain divine names, hitherto conjecturally read by consideration of the values of their separate elements. Thus a divine name read Šad-rabû because compound of the sign for *šadu* 'a mountain' and that for *rabû* 'great', and quoted by some in support of a derivation of Shaddai from *šadu*, is now known to have been read Amurru. This is another instance of the precarious nature of deductions from so-called Sumerian words. The monograph is a valuable contribution to both cuneiform and Aramaic knowledge.

Die jüngsten Kämpfer wider den Panbabylonismus. Von HUGO WINCKLER. (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1907.)

THIS is the second number of the series *Im Kampfe um den Alten Orient*. It is a militant little book written by Professor Winckler to make his views clear and defend them against irrelevant attack. It is perhaps a pity that he could not have been clearer before, but people certainly will be stupid in a perfectly astonishing way. Even now most of us would like less assertion and more rigid proof: there are many assumptions which all cannot make at once. At any rate, no one will waste time by attentively reading what Winckler has to say. Not only his opponents, but his patrons, appear frequently to have misunderstood his position.

C. H. W. JOHNS.