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THE LANGUAGE OF PRIMITIVE MAN.

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It is proposed, in this article, to consider the following question: Whether the theory maintained by many writers upon Comparative Philology as to the origin of language, either necessitates or warrants the theory so many of them hold as to the origin of religion. The view commonly proposed by them as to the first branch of this general question is succinctly stated by Mr. Charles Francis Keary, of the British Museum, in his work on "Outlines of Primitive Belief." "Philologists," he says, "may continue long to dispute on the precise origin of language; but Philology has brought us so far that there can be now no question that the primitive speech of mankind was of the rudest character, devoid almost utterly of abstract words, unfit for the use of any kind of men save such as were in the earliest stage of thought." All words, he claims, expressive of abstract ideas, "had their physical antecedents;" originating in sensation and in observation, and passing over, in process of time, to higher meanings. "To speak more plainly," he says, "such ideas as *horse, tree, wolf, run, flow, river*, must have been the first to receive names. * * * But inward ideas—*anxiety, love, thought*,—would receive their names later, and by a metaphorical transfer of the words from physical to meta-physical ideas." To show how out of such "ideas" religion grew, he observes further on: "As surely as *love, hate, right and wrong* have had their physical antecedents, and as surely as these sensations have developed in time into thoughts and feelings, so surely have the outward things,

as the mere rocks and trees, which were themselves objects of worship, grown in time to be abstract gods, or to be One abstract God."

By this theory man, having originally, however acquired, the faculty of speech, began to exercise it first by naming the objects around him in the physical world, next by giving names to acts, sensations, and occurrences in his own outer life; then, in some unconscious use of metaphor in the employment of such words, grew to express the thoughts and ideas of which he became conscious in the process of his intellectual development. In due time sensations of wonder and worship began to move within him, centering first on natural objects adapted in their nature to excite such sensations, from which it was an easy step to the conception of invisible powers, and finally of one great, all-ruling Power, the "One abstract God." The point now in hand is, whether all that is essential to so much of this theory as relates to the origin of language might not be conceded, should the evidence so require, and still leave undisturbed all those other evidences by which belief in the origin of religion through a divine revelation is sustained.

What I have to say upon this point I prefer to put in the form of suggestion, as to what may seem entirely fair inferences from so much of the history of primitive man as is given us in the first four chapters of Genesis. I put these observations in the form of suggestion, rather than of positive statement, not because the interpretations indicated conflict in the least with the customary ones, but because they seem to find in the narrative somewhat *more* than has commonly been sought there.

I. THE NAMING OF THE ANIMALS.

The first of these suggestions is that of a possible indication in one part of the narrative of the manner in which Adam himself learned to employ his faculty of speech. I take the passage (Gen. II. 19, 20) as translated by Lenormant: "And Yahveh Elohim formed out of earth all the animals of the field and all the fowls of the air, *and he led them to the man to see how he would name them*; and according as the man should name a living being, such should be its name. And the man called by name all cattle, all fowl of the air and all wild beasts of the fields; but for the man he did not find a help fitting for him." Now, it is quite customary with interpreters to explain the concluding words of this passage: "But for the man he did not find a help fitting for him," as indicating the chief divine motive in bringing the animals

thus to the man. For example, Dr. Robert Jamieson, of Glasgow, says: "Thus did the all-wise Creator, when about to provide an help meet for the first man, cause him to go through a course of simple but important training, by which he was not only made sensible of the privation under which, as a social being, he labored, but also qualified to appreciate the magnitude of the boon about to be conferred on him by the creation of woman, as well as prepared to communicate his thoughts and feelings to her through the medium of articulate language." In this explanation the purpose first named is so dwelt upon as nearly to put out of sight altogether the second one, implied in the concluding words of the comment. It may be that the order of precedence should be reversed. The paramount thing in the Genesis narrative, as quoted, is certainly the *naming* of the animals. It was that he might name them that they were brought to the man. What is subsequently said implies that as he thus grew familiar with the life around him Adam became conscious how much *alone* he himself was. Every other living being had its mate; for himself "the man did not find a help fitting for him." The two meanings are doubtless in the passage, but that which seems especially to invite consideration is the distinct indication as to the method which God employed in teaching man to use that faculty of *speech* with which he had endowed him. The "*bringing*" of the animals is, perhaps, not to be taken too literally. It may simply be the form of expression used to denote rather a *process* than a distinct and definite *act*.

For to any proper conception of the divine procedure in giving a language to mankind, it is not necessary to suppose that such a language was given them ready-made. Upon the contrary, all that we observe of the divine method in dealing with mankind suggests that God would teach man to speak, by putting him in the way of making and using a language for himself. The direct divine gift would be in the *faculty* of language. Why should we suppose that the use of this faculty began under conditions essentially different from those which accompany and guide the use of all our faculties? If we may take the passage in this way, we have then in the words quoted a distinct indication as to the manner in which human language originated; an indication, too, perfectly consistent with what philology itself claims. It began in the *naming* of the various objects which man saw around him; that which, in the strictly scientific view is the only form in which a language *could* begin.

II. THE EDEN SYMBOLS.

Each of these points must be touched briefly, and so I pass to another. It is claimed that primitive man could not have been possessed of abstract ideas, or of the power of expressing such. Now, it is remarkable that nowhere in the whole account in Genesis, as concerns the first man, is there any implication whatever that man in his original state was capable of such ideas, or that he had words in which to express them. The indications are all to an entirely contrary effect.

One of the earliest lessons important for the human being to learn, was that of the nature of those distinctions upon which the whole moral trial of humanity in this world was to rest. Those hostile to belief in a divine revelation, and so of anything more than at best mere allegory, in this Genesis account of the first man, deride the idea that the partaking or non-partaking of a certain kind of fruit could have been a matter of such moment as to carry with it all the consequences that are traced to it. Yet it is exactly in this feature of the divine procedure with Adam, that we find the narrative coming into consistency with what science claims must have been the condition of primitive man. He was incapable, it is said, of clearly shaping abstract ideas, or of expressing them in words. Indeed, the language for such expression would be necessary to clearness and distinctness of conception. All this had to be a *growth*; a growth beginning in ideas brought home to him through his observation of external things, these ideas serving him as steps upward to what concerned his higher nature and higher life. Now, it is remarkable that, according to the narrative, this was precisely the divine method with man. The conveyance to him of a moral law, in the terms of a formal precept, was in the circumstances impossible. He had no word for the idea of obedience, or that of disobedience. But he could understand a permission or a prohibition set before him in the form of a visible and tangible object, representative of *an act*. Hence the word spoken to him: "Of every tree in the garden thou mayst eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for on the day thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die of death." (I use again Lenormant's translation.)

Whether the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, each, had in them some miraculous property suited to the purpose indicated by its name, may or may not have been the case.

If any object to the supposition as "unscientific," then we will say that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil stood in the garden as the *symbol* of man's moral trial, resting on this knowledge, and of the distinction of good and evil implied; and hence its name. In any case, it is clear that by this method it pleased God, exactly as science supposes in the case of a primitive man in whom what most distinguishes man as man existed rather as *germs* and *possibilities* than as developed powers, to bring to the apprehension of this being he had made the great idea of law, and obligation, of obedience or disobedience, of permission and prohibition, of reward and penalty—in the form of a visible and tangible *object*—an object-lesson, if any so choose to term it,—and in this way to begin man's moral and intellectual education. How consistent this is with what science insists upon in such a case, may be illustrated by imagining that the account in Genesis had been, in any measure, like that of Milton in "Paradise Lost." How the poet makes Adam capable of the profoundest reasoning upon metaphysical and theological themes, and puts into his mouth terms representative of abstract ideas which were hardly familiar ones even in Milton's own time, is well known to every reader of the poem. Anything approaching this in the Genesis narrative would, undoubtedly, supply the hostile critic with a dangerous weapon. But read the account as it stands, and how is it possible for science to even cavil, as to the precise point now in question?

It may possibly be said that it is inconceivable that such tremendous consequences to a whole race of human beings should by a perfect moral ruler be made to turn upon the act of a being like this primitive man, done under the circumstances supposed. But I am not aware that the Scripture any where teaches that upon this one act of disobedience, simply as *an act*, standing by itself, all those consequences *did* turn. It was not the partaking of the fruit, but the *disobedience*; and the disobedience, itself, not as a mere act, but as the first step out of the way of right, sure to be followed by others, with endless depraving, and hence ruinous, results. The words, "thou shalt die of death," are not the mere utterance of arbitrary penalty; they announce consequences sure to follow, and which not even God could prevent, unless it had suited his purpose in the creation of man to make him a being to whom moral trial should be a thing impossible.

III. THE COLLOQUY WITH CAIN.

In the colloquy of Jehovah with Cain only two words occur which can properly be called abstract terms, and these are illustratively so accompanied as to lose very much of the abstract quality. These two words are "sin" and "punishment"—the latter being "crime" in Lenormant's translation, and "iniquity," in that of Conant. The use of the former of these words is, in its connection, quite remarkable. Jehovah says to Cain: "When thou hast done well dost thou not lift it up [thy countenance]?" And in that thou hast not done well, sin lies in ambush at thy door, and its appetite is turned toward thee; but thou, rule over it." Sin is here a wild beast, and in the form of that vivid object-lesson it is represented to Cain. When Cain says, after the deed of murder is done, and the doom of the murderer is declared, "My crime is too great for me to carry the weight of it," whatever abstract quality may be in the word "crime" is nearly lost in the manner of its conception. There is no indication that Cain laments his crime *as a crime*; rather it is as a *burden* whose "weight" he dreads. Physical experiences of this nature have quite as much to do with the idea he has of his own guilt and its consequences, probably much more, than any conception of the moral quality of his act in killing his brother.

Then the method Jehovah uses in bringing his crime clearly before his consciousness, and the language of Cain himself are equally to our present point. "Where is Abel, thy brother?" God asks. "Is it my business," the sullen criminal replies, "to look after my brother, as he himself keeps one of his own flock? Am I my brother's keeper?" Mark, then, what the Divine Voice says to him: "What hast thou done?" A deed which has not yet even a name. "The voice of thy brother's blood cries toward me from the soil." Cain had seen that blood, which ought to have been so sacred to him, sink into the soil. How vividly is his fearful guilt brought home to him as God gives it thus a voice of accusation! Could science represent to us the scene more in perfect consistence with its own theory as to primitive man?

The penalty visited upon Cain is in a like manner significant. There is a difference among translators as to whether we shall render "Jehovah gave a sign to Cain," or "placed a mark on Cain." The latter is Lenormant's rendering. It does not much matter, to my present purpose, which of these be taken. The essential fact is that the divine wisdom did not appoint to this first murderer that penalty which, later, was ordained for all such as he. Cain is made the monument of his

own crime: "a fugitive and a vagabond," whom even "the soil of the earth" which had drunk his brother's blood would curse, and protected against the violence which he had visited upon pious Abel, only by a divine interposition. In what other way could the growing families of earth be so impressed with the hatefulness of such deeds as this which Cain had done, and in what way could he himself be so deeply punished? The time had not yet come for the formulation of law; nor for expressing in the form of principle and precept what belongs to all human relations. Even the declaration, "each one of you *is* his brother's keeper," could not yet be comprehended with the breadth of meaning such words now have. But whoever looked upon Cain, an oak splintered by the lightning of Jehovah's just wrath, a marked and branded man, against whom even "the soil of the earth" uttered its testimony, *knew* that God abhors murder and will surely punish it.

IV. THE SONG OF LAMECH.

The limits of this paper will allow of but one example more. By common consent what is called the song of Lamech is the oldest poetical production, if we may so term it, now extant. Conant's translation of it is as follows:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,
Wives of Lamech, give ear to my word.
For I have slain a man for my wound,
And a young man for my hurt.
For sevenfold should Cain be avenged:
And Lamech seventy and seven."

Lenormant's runs thus:

"Adah and Zillah listen to my voice!
Wives of Lemek give heed to my word!
For I have killed a man for my wound,
And a child for my bruise.
After the same manner as Quain shall be avenged seven times,
Lemek shall be seventy-seven times."

It would seem that now, after the lapse of something like a hundred years since the murder of Abel, the meaning of the divine fiat in regard to Cain had come to be misunderstood, or at least, by those who had an interest in so doing, misinterpreted. Lamech, one of his descendants, chooses to view him as a man heroically taking vengeance for a personal injury, and justified in so doing. He himself, a worthy offspring of the first murderer, and an equally worthy progenitor of those who were soon to "fill the earth with violence," in a like bloody manner avenges himself for the "bruise" he has received. These lines are his boastful song of triumph, addressed to his wives, as if sure of

their admiration. They are called poetry on account of their parallelisms, and the form of the expression; yet to us of this age they certainly seem not very highly poetical. All the more significant for us are they, for this very reason. While they show how rapidly that seed of evil which "man's first disobedience" had planted in the world was coming to the harvest, they also illustrate the fact that man was still the primitive man, his range of ideas limited, his power of expression equally so. Why do not the scientists themselves fix upon this very song of Lamech as proving what they claim, that "the primitive speech of mankind was of the rudest character, devoid almost utterly of abstract words, unfit for the use of any kind of men save such as were in the earliest stages of thought?"

It is possible that interpretations and inferences such as are here suggested may require some modification of the views commonly held concerning primitive man, among believers in the Bible as an inspired book. But is it not also quite likely that many of these views have been taken fully as much from the poem of Milton as from the history as written by Moses? It is not the Adam of "Paradise Lost," but the Adam of Genesis whom we must try to conceive of in a right way. Nor do we imagine it to be necessary to Christian doctrine in any phase of it, that we should view the first man as gifted with faculties and attainments already mature. He was not the semi-brute of the materialists, but neither was he the wonderfully gifted and expert being Milton has made him seem to us. He was enriched with faculties and potencies in which was foreshadowed the whole career of humanity; he was made capable of learning, in the ways God chose for teaching him, those things which imply all obligation and all destiny; he had the royal gift of intelligence and the royal prerogative of moral freedom; to him it was given to "name" all terrestrial things and all living beings on the earth, and to be creation's voice in all the marvels of speech and all high testimonies of praise to the Creator;—but *he began at the beginning*. In this light inspiration itself pictures him for us; and when "science" imagines that in declaring his condition as a primitive man it declares some new thing, it is just carried away by another of its many delusions.

THE MEN OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE.

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Possibly the most common traditional view of the Great Synagogue is, that it was a semi-miraculous body of men, organized by Ezra for the purpose of putting the Hebrew Scriptures into final shape, and composed of men who were contemporary with him and with one another. Some difficulties attending this view are obviated by supposing that the men who composed the Great Synagogue, instead of being contemporaneous, formed a succession extending through several generations. In direct opposition to both these views, many scholars assert that the Great Synagogue of tradition had no real existence, and that the accounts of it, which have come down to us, are mere Mid-rashic enlargements of the account of the great convocation described in Neh. VIII.—X. Still a fourth view, well presented in the article on the subject in McClintock and Strong, and in the sources whence that article is taken, is that the Great Synagogue was a somewhat permanent body, organized at the time of the convocation of Nehemiah.

In the face of these conflicting views, it must be admitted that the state of public knowledge in the matter is somewhat nebulous and uncertain. Does it follow that what has commonly been cited as the evidence of the Great Synagogue concerning the Scriptures is equally uncertain? Must we wait until the current differences regarding the Great Synagogue are cleared up, before we venture to make further use of this evidence? To answer this question in the negative is the object of the present article.

I.

Let us first examine a few specimens of the traditional testimonies concerning the Great Synagogue.

Maimonides, that most illustrious of Israelitish scholars, who flourished in Spain in the latter half of the 12th century, sums up the Israelitish traditions in a classic passage which is often cited in works on the subject. The following citation of it is translated from Ugolino, Vol. I., Col. 12. "By the Consistory of Ezra are understood the men of the Great Synagogue, to wit: Zacharias, Malachi, Daniel, Hananias, Misael, Agarias, Nehemias, son of Hecheliash, Mardocheaus, Belsan, Zorobabel, and many wise men with them. In all they were 120

elders, the last of whom within the number 120 was Simon the Just, who received the oral law from all these, and was high priest after Ezra."

This passage gives an outline of the whole tradition. Passages containing parts of it are numerous, and are of all dates back nearly to the time of Jesus.

Rabbi Nathan, the Babylonian, is said to have been the vicar of Simon II., A. D. 140-163. The Talmudic treatise "Pirke Aboth," attributed to him, is said to contain a mention of the Gemara, showing that passages in it did not receive their present form earlier than about 300 A. D. But probably no one would claim that the two opening sections are later than the days of Nathan himself. These sections are thus translated by Robert Young:

1. "Moses received the law from Sinai, and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets delivered it to the men of the Great Synagogue. They said three things: "Be deliberate in judgment; train up many disciples; and make a fence for the law.'
2. "Simon the Just, was of the remnant of the Great Synagogue. He used to say, 'On three things the world standeth,—on the law, and on the service [of God], and on gratitude for kindness.'"

Here we have it assumed, as a familiarly known fact, that there had been a body of men later in date than those properly known as the men of the Great Synagogue.

For convenience, the two following citations are from Robertson Smith's lectures on the Jewish Church, from notes eight and three on Lecture VI. Different from the "Pirke Aboth" is the work entitled "The Aboth by Rabbi Nathan," printed in the editions of the Talmud among the appendices or Apocrypha, after the Talmud itself. From this Smith quotes: "At first they said that Proverbs, Canticles and Ecclesiastes are apocryphal. They said they are parabolic writings, and not of the Hagiographa. So they prepared to suppress them, till the men of the Great Synagogue came and explained them." And from the Midrash to Ruth, which the article "Midrash" in McClintock and Strong dates at about 278 A. D., he quotes: "What did the men of the Great Synagogue do? They wrote a book and spread it out in the court of the temple. And at dawn of day they rose and found it sealed. This is what is written in Neh. IX. 38."

The celebrated passage from the Talmudic treatise "Baba Batra,"

in which the authorship of the several books of the Hebrew canon is declared, is cited in many of the books of reference. The following copy of part of it is, except the inserted Hebrew letters, from the English edition of Smith's Bible Dictionary: "Jeremiah wrote his own book, the books of Kings and Lamentations. Hezekiah and his friends [reduced to writing] the books contained in the memorial word **משק**, Isaiah, Proverbs, Canticles, Ecclesiastes. The men of the Great Synagogue [reduced to writing] the books contained in the memorial word **קנרג**, Ezekiel, the 12 lesser prophets, Daniel and Esther. Ezra wrote his own book, and brought down the genealogies of the books of Chronicles to his own times. * * * Who brought the remainder of the books [of Chronicles] to a close? Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah."

Stuart, in his *Work on the Canon* (Andover ed. of 1872, p. 268), quotes as follows from the Commentary of Rabbi Solomon Jarchi (A. D. 1040-1105), upon this passage. "The men of the Great Synagogue wrote out Ezekiel, who prophesied in exile. And I know not why Ezekiel did not write it out himself, except that prophecy is not given for any one to write it in a foreign country. They wrote it out after they returned to the holy land. And so, in respect to the book of Daniel, who lived in exile; and so, in regard to the volume of Esther. And as to the 12 prophets, because their prophecies were brief, the prophets did not themselves write them down, each one his own book. But when Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi came, and saw that the Holy Spirit was about to depart, inasmuch as they were the last prophets, then they rose up and wrote down their prophecies, and joined those of the minor prophets with them, and thus made one large book, so that they might not perish on account of their smallness." (The translation is slightly changed from the English of Prof. Stuart.)

Since Ezra figures as the founder of the Great Synagogue and its work, we must add a specimen of what tradition says about him. Dr. Bissell translates the classic passage in 4 Esd. XIV., as follows, beginning at the 20th verse, where Ezra is represented as himself speaking: "The world therefore lieth in darkness, and they that dwell therein are without light, since thy law is burnt; therefore no man knoweth the things that are done by thee, or the works that shall begin. But if I have found grace before thee, send the Holy spirit into me, and I will write all that hath taken place in the world since the beginning, which were written in thy law, that men may find a path, and that they who

live in the later days may live." Then the account says that Ezra, at God's command, gave notice to the people not to seek him for 40 days, took five rapid penmen with him, and retired "into the field." Then a peculiar drink was given him, "and when I had drunk of it, my heart streamed over with understanding, and wisdom grew in my breast, for my spirit strengthened my memory. And my mouth was opened, and shut no more. But the Most High gave understanding unto the five men, and they wrote the visions of the night which were told them, which they knew not. And they sat 40 days; but they wrote in the day time, and at night they ate bread. But I spake in the day, and was not silent by night. In 40 days they wrote 94 books." The Syriac adds: And it came to pass, when the 40 days were fulfilled, that the Most High spake, saying—The first that thou hast written publish openly, that the worthy and unworthy may read; but keep the 70 later ones, that thou mayest deliver them to such as are wise among the people." There is here some uncertainty, both as to text and as to date. Bissell dates the work A. D. 89-96.

We must not take time further to look over the original authorities for the traditions concerning Ezra. The passages are numerous, and are freely referred to in the Bible Dictionary articles and other current sources of information. Lord Henry says, in Smith's Bible Dictionary, that the traditions attributed to Ezra, "the settling of the canons of Scripture, and restoring, correcting and editing the whole Sacred Volume according to the threefold arrangement of the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, with the divisions of the *pesukim*, or verses, the vowel-points handed down by tradition from Moses, and the emendations of the *Keri*." Ezra is said to have been destined to be the medium through which the law was to be given, except that Moses antedated him, so that it was only possible for Ezra to be the *second* giver of the law. He is said to have introduced the present alphabet, in place of the one formerly used, to have written most of the later books, to have established synagogues; and indeed, the variety of matters attributed to him is almost endless.

II.

These specimens of the evidence are taken quite at random, and, for quality, probably represent the whole. So far as the reaching of definite results as to the actual character of the Great Synagogue is concerned, the field is not promising.

Etheridge, pp. 18-22, summing up the evidence, says that Ezra,

B. C. 458, "associated with himself some of the most eminent men of the age, as an organized Synod or College, commonly called the Great Synagogue." He says that it comprised such men as Haggai, Zechariah, Zerubbabel, &c., and "terminated with the life of Simon the Just, its last surviving member. The entire number of which it was composed is said to have been 120, in a succession stretching through a period of about as many years." He represents the Great Synagogue as engaged in "collecting, authenticating, and defining the canonical books of the Old Testament, in multiplying copies of them by careful transcription, in explaining them to the people themselves, and in establishing an agency for the inculcation of the Word of God upon the people, in" the institution of synagogues.

It cannot escape attention that this summary of Etheridge is quite different from that of Maimonides. Etheridge makes the duration of the Great Synagogue to be about 120 years. To make this number, he dates the death of Simon about 320 B. C. The date he assigns to Ezra is 458 B. C. Hence he either dates the organization of the Great Synagogue 18 years later than that, or else dates its close 18 years before the death of Simon, or adjusts his numerals in some other similar way. But Josephus says that Jaddua the high priest died at about the same time with Alexander the Great, that is, about 323 B. C. The death of Simon can hardly have been less than 30 years later. Besides, Maimonides carefully includes Daniel and his three companions among the members of the Great Synagogue. This institution, as he describes it, must have begun to exist before the middle of the sixth century B. C., and must have continued in existence more than two and a half centuries.

Etheridge is perhaps a good representation of the men who hold the traditional view. Considering the treatment of the evidence which this view involves, it is no wonder that men like Krochmal and Graetz have attempted to establish entirely different views. And as the matter now stands, it can hardly be expected that persons who are not experts will adopt, with very decided intensity of conviction, any of the conflicting views now advocated.

Fortunately, for purposes of Biblical study, it is not necessary to adopt either. So far as testimony concerning the Bible is concerned, we have to deal, not with the real or supposed institution known as the Great Synagogue, but with a succession of men who, on any theory, may appropriately be called the men of the Great Synagogue. This

distinction has not been emphasized as it should be, but it is a true distinction. And it is important; for however confused the evidence may be concerning the institution, the evidence concerning the men is, at all important points, clear and indisputable.

This succession of men, from Daniel to Simon the Just, actually existed. The proof of this fact is not affected by the fabulous elements contained in the evidence. It is certain that these men were historical characters and not myths. It is now impossible to make out a list of 120 historical names and say, 'These are the names of the 120 men whom tradition groups as the men of the Great Synagogue.' It is equally impossible to deny that such a list may once have existed. But however it may be as to the number of them, the men themselves were the statesmen, governors, prophets, high priests and other prominent men of their times.

Secondly, it is certain that these men, Daniel, Ezra, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and the others, were somewhat prominently occupied with studies in the ancient scriptures of their people. Daniel (IX. 2) "understood by *the books*, the number of the years concerning which was the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet." In Ezra VII. 6, Ezra is described as "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel gave." In V. 11, he is "Ezra the priest, the scribe writing as scribe the words of the commandments of the LORD and his statutes upon Israel." In the next verse, he is "Ezra the priest, the ready scribe of the legislation of the God of the heavens." Similar language concerning him is used in Neh. XII. 26, 36, and throughout Neh. VIII. 10. In these chapters, Ezra, Nehemiah and others, who figure, in the tradition, as men of the Great Synagogue, are represented as engaged in a systematic attempt to spread the knowledge of the law of the LORD.

Thirdly, whether these men formed a special organization by themselves or not, they were contemporaneous with organized arrangements for the care of the sacred books, and are likely, many of them, at least, to have belonged to these organizations. Perhaps only Ezra and Zadok (Neh. XIII. 13) are personally called scribes; but we learn from 1 Chron. II. 55, that the scribes were somewhat numerous, and existed in recognized organizations or "families."

Fourthly, it needs no additional argument to prove that these men, whatever be the truth concerning the so-called Great Synagogue itself, may, as a succession of men, fairly be called by the descriptive term "the men of the Great Synagogue."

Nor, fifthly, does it need argument to show that, among these men of the Great Synagogue, Ezra is pre-eminently the representative man. He was by no means the first man in the succession. Daniel and his three friends were earlier. So were the men who led the first expedition in the return from the exile. But Ezra was the man whose spirit dominated in the work done by this succession of men. The later books of the Old Testament attributed to him special prominence in it. He was a priest. He was a leader. He was a great man. He had prophetic gifts. But none of these respects, in which he was so great, is chosen by which to characterize him. His characteristic, as we have seen, is that he was a scribe. Moses does not stand out more clearly as the great legislator of the Bible, or David as the great singer, or Solomon as the great builder, or Josiah as the great reformer, than does Ezra as the great scribe. These facts, put in connection with the role which tradition has assigned to him, point out distinctly that he had something very remarkable to do with the digesting of the writings of the Hebrew Scriptures into their final form.

Inadvertently the Septuagint translators, in Ezra VII. 11, have given us a pretty distinct intimation as to what the common opinion of their day was concerning the nature of the work of Ezra. The Hebrew of that verse is, "Ezra the priest, the scribe writing as scribe the words of the commandments of the LORD." The Greek translators, instead of reading the second ספר as סֵפֶר, *writing as scribe*, read it סֵפֶר, *book*, making the translation to be, "Ezra the priest, the scribe of the book of the words of the commandments of the LORD." The generation to which these translators belonged evidently regarded Ezra as in some important and peculiar sense *the* scribe of the LORD'S Bible. Doubtless they were mistaken in translating, but it is a mistake of the sort which quite strikingly shows what their preconceived opinions of the matter were. We have here a notice of Ezra's Old Testament work, additional to those contained in the Old Testament itself, some hundreds of years earlier, and vastly more trustworthy than that in chap. XIV. of 4 Esdras.

Summing up the whole matter, the uncertainties concerning the Great Synagogue itself are not of such a nature as to forbid our accepting, at whatever value may properly belong to them, the testimonies concerning the Biblical work done by the men of the Great Synagogue.

GLIMPSES AT THE SYRIA OF THE PRESENT.[Adapted from the *Juedische Literaturblatt* of Magdeburg.]

BY REV. D. TEMPLE.

The old Tyropæum valley, which cuts the city of Jerusalem from north to south and extends from the western hill of the city (the falsely so-called Mount Zion) to the hill of the Temple has been from most ancient times the industrial quarter. It is in these densely peopled lanes and streets that the degeneracy and decline of the Jewish people is most evident. By a long stay in the Orient one becomes accustomed to many things that are found here, and yet ever and again he is most unpleasantly surprised by unwholesome odors and accumulations of filth encountered in the narrow lanes of this quarter, swarming with an unwashed population. Numerous vaulted alleys and covered passage ways afford opportunity for this general filthiness, for in their obscure nooks and corners are piled together things of every kind in all stages of putrefaction and decay. In the eastern bazaar alley which extends in a southerly direction into the Jewish quarter are, if possible, greater accumulations of filth and refuse than elsewhere. Small work and antiquarian shops and wine rooms that are scarcely enticing, abound in this locality.

Disgusting to a stranger are the meat markets, which in unappetizing appearance and disease-breeding odors excel even those of the moslem bazaars. The ground near them is soaked with the blood of slaughtered animals; bloody heads of lambs and goats are piled in front of the markets, and hides as soon as removed are stretched upon the surface of the street in order to be tanned, in the easiest way, by the feet of the multitude that unceasingly passes.

The people of this quarter give the impression of a physically degenerate race. A pale, sickly look characterizes them all. The women are small and scantily built, generally with blonde or reddish hair and gray or light blue eyes. The cut of their clothing reminds one of European style, but the large white linen cloth, which they wind about the head, banishes from their appearance the last element of grace. Among the men there are occasionally found some of remarkably large stature, yet even these have a haggard look.

A very large portion of the Jews at Jerusalem live, as is well known, upon the charity of their wealthy European co-religionists

without further occupation than the conduct of religious study and exercises. These last consist in maintaining regular prayers and are commonly carried on under the direction of their European benefactors.

Of Jewish craftsmen there are but few, chiefly stone cutters and workers in a limited way in metals. The Bazaars of Jerusalem are not to be compared with those of Cairo, or of Damascus. Excepting, perhaps, the products of certain saddlery and shoemaking establishments, there is nothing to be seen in their vaulted and gloomy shops that lays any claim to originality or good workmanship. It is evident enough that their stock in trade is designed exclusively for the poorest class of Jews, and for Bedouins. The grain and fruit markets with large heaps of various kinds of grain, are interesting. Here one meets many Bedouins from the Hawian and Jericho valley. Their women bring milk, cheese, oranges, lemons, cucumbers and olives to sell; and, at a convenient distance from their husband, sit down upon the ground with their wares before them in decorated metallic vessels, or upon palm-leaf baskets. Of inns for caravans Jerusalem has but few, a fact explained by the lack of extensive trade and industry.

The unwearied commercial spirit of the Jewish race is throughout Syria, checked by fear of the government to which, under an oppressive and exhausting system, a wealthy Jew is legitimate plunder. There is, however, in the city of Jerusalem a large number of small Jewish traders and merchants, and in respect to honesty and trustworthiness they stand in the same good repute as the modern Arabians,—a repute which the Christian merchants of Syria do not in general enjoy.

Among the Ashkenazim there are said to be at the present time a number of very wealthy families who have wandered to Jerusalem from other lands. Besides a first precaution to put themselves under the care of their consul, they take others also, and live in the simplest manner possible, avoiding all display which might draw upon them the eye of the Turkish government. The synagogues and numerous costly buildings for charitable institutions, erected here by the families of Rothschild and Montefiore, and by associations of large Jewish firms in England, France and Germany, have, during the last few years, extended considerably the Jewish quarter.

That a real improvement in the distressing state of the political relations of the Jews at Jerusalem would not be brought about by these lavish contributions of their co-religionists, was, and still is, perfectly

clear to the persons whose interests are concerned. Upon the recognition of this fact was based the now almost forgotten scheme to found a great Syrio-Jewish colony in old Gilead and Moab. An area of 600,000 hektors, at present inhabited by nomadic Bedouins, was to be the territory of this new Jewish kingdom. At its head was to stand a prince of Jewish race, but he was nevertheless to be under the supremacy of the Turkish government. The entire plan was laid before the Sultan by the English embassy, and no decided opposition was encountered. The initiatory steps toward compassing the financial part of the undertaking were successful. The scheme involved the construction of two railroads,—one from Joppa to Jerusalem, the other from Haifa to the country beyond Jordan; and of a canal from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Akabat. The leading spirit in this enterprise, which, as appears, aimed at financial rather than religious objects, is reputed to have been a well known English diplomat.

NOTES FROM ABROAD.

BY REV. JOHN P. PETERS, Ph. D.

M. Halevy has recently suggested an explanation of נִסְרָךְ, the name of the Assyrian idol in whose temple Sanherib was murdered by his sons, so plausible as to appear almost self-evident when once suggested. It is known from the inscriptions that a favorite god of Sanherib was *Nusuku*. M. Halevy's suggestion is that נִסְרָךְ (2 K. XIX., 37, and Is. XXXVII., 38) is a clerical error for נִסְוָךְ.

There are to be two new instructors in Old Testament theology at Leipzig next semester, of whom one will be Dr. Wilh. Lotz, author of the valuable little work entitled *Die Inschriften Tiglathpilesers I*. His *Habilitations-Schrift* (thesis presented when he qualifies as instructor) is on the Sabbath, as to the origin of which in Babylonia he offers a very ingenious, if doubtful, explanation. The primary meaning of the root (Heb. *Shabath*, Arab. *Sabata*) is *cut off*. The ancient Babylonian method of reckoning, derived from the non-Semitic, antecedent races, as was also the observance of the Sabbath itself, was by sixes. Business engagements were accordingly entered into for six days as the natural unit, and so a time-reckoning of six business days became established. That which separated one six days from another was the day of *cutting off*, or the sabbath, which was hence established as the day of complete rest—the day on which the king “shall not eat flesh cooked with fire,

shall not change his garments, * * * * shall not pour out a drink-offering; * * * * the priest shall not give oracles in secret places; the magician shall not lay his hand on any sick man, &c."

A valuable addition to Baer's Old Testament texts recently made is *Libri Danielis, Ezræ, et Nehemiæ.....cum præfatione Francisci Delitzsch, et glossis Babylonici Friderici Delitzsch*, from the press of Tauchnitz. There are also a large number of valuable *appendices criticæ et masoreticæ*, and a synopsis of the grammar of Biblical Aramaic. The following are examples of explanations, from the Babylonian, of the curious and puzzling names and forms appearing in the three books mentioned: שְׂדֵרְךָ is *Sudur-Aku, command of (the god) Aku*; עֶבֶר-נְגוּ is *Abad Nabu, servant of Nebo*; מְלִצָר (explained in the 8th edition of Gesenius from the Persian *mel, wine, and cara, head, hence master of the wine, butler*) is *massaru, prefect*, the double letter of the Babylonian being resolved in the Hebrew into לִצָר. This valuable little work costs in Germany somewhat less than 40 cts.

Among other missionary associations of students at the University of Leipzig is an *Institutum Judaicum*, for the conversion of the Jews. As a means towards attaining the desired end the members, about 30 in number, seek to familiarize themselves with Jewish doctrines and modes of thought, and Prof. Franz Delitzsch, under whose patronage the *Institutum* was started two years since, kindly devotes an hour each week to the interpretation with the members of some Jewish work. This *semester* it is the Mishna tractate on the feast of tabernacles with Bertinoro's (rabbinic) commentary. Similar societies exist at Halle and Erlangen.

Fahrbucher fuer protestantische Theologic, first number for 1883, contains an article from Prof. A. Merx, of Heidelberg, on the value of the LXX for Old Testament text criticism. The article is a very severe criticism of Smend's new (2nd) edition of Hitzig's commentary on Ezekiel. Merx complains that Smend has totally disregarded the LXX as a means of amending the numerous corruptions in the Hebrew text of Ezekiel, and has thus changed Hitzig's work of 1847 for the worse. He insists strongly on the importance of comparing the LXX as an independent source with the massoretic Hebrew text.

A fourth edition of A. Dillmann's Commentary on Genesis has appeared (Hirzel, Leipzig, 1882). It is the 11th number in the series of *Kurzgefasste Exegct. Hand-buecher*. The first two editions, 1852 and 1860, were by Knobel. The third edition, 1875, like the present, by

Dillmann of Berlin. The whole work has been carefully revised, but the changes are especially numerous in the first eleven chapters. Notice has been taken particularly of the Wellhausen criticism, and of the Assyriological and archæological work of Schrader, Frdr. Delitzsch, Lenormant, and Halevy. There is also a more careful and thorough separation of the documents of which Genesis is composed. The critical and archæological amendments are numerous, but from a theological point of view the changes are insignificant. Prof. Dillmann maintains his former views with reference to the connection and priority of the various documents of the Pentateuch, while the in general more conservative Delitzsch has in this particular gone over to the Wellhausen school. Dillmann designates these documents as A, B, C, D, and holds this to be their chronological order, also that A and B are more closely connected than B and C, the latter belonging rather with D. The Wellhausen school holds that Q (the priest codex, according to some P), the A of Dillmann (1st chap. of Gen., etc.) is the latest in date, being exilic or post-exilic. According to them the Deuteronomist (D of Dillmann) is the oldest, after which come the Elohist (B) and Jahvist (C), these two again having been separately worked together. This Dillmann has elsewhere described as 'a standing of things on their heads.'

In his fourth edition, Prof. Dillmann has been able to consult the proof-sheets of Prof. Schrader's new edition of *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*. The last named work has just appeared as we write. It will be noticed more fully next month.

A former pupil of Dr. Schrader, Dr. Fritz Hommel, *Privat-Docent* at Munich, has published a book entitled: *Die Vorsemitischen Kulturen in Aegypten und Babylonien* (Otto Schulze, Leipzig, 1883). This is Vol. I.² of an encyclopædic work projected by the author on "The Semitic peoples and languages, as a first attempt at an encyclopædia of Semitic philology and archæology." The author is able, but he writes too much. One natural consequence is hasty statements, which must afterwards be retracted. In Vol. I.¹ of this series (*Die Semiter und ihre Bedeutung fuer die Kulturgeschichte*) he denied the ethnographical value of the 10th chap. of Genesis. In the present work, under the influence of Prof. Frdr. Delitzsch's *Wo lag das Paradies?* he retracts this, and makes very considerable use of that chapter, adopting, with one important exception, Wellhausen's division. Wellhausen divides as follows: Q: vs. 1, 2—5, 6, 7, 20, 22, 23, 31, 32; Jahvist,—8—18, 21, 25—30; R. (Reviser), 24. Hommel denies the Jahvistic

character of 8—12, removes them from the 10th chapter entirely, and places them after XI, 1—9. An example of unsafe transformation of hypothesis into indubitable fact is the statement that the genealogy of the Phœnician characters can be traced with certainty to the hieratic form of the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Increased knowledge gives increased importance to the pre-Semitic culture of Babylonia. La Couperie and his school of Sinologists maintain the derivation of Chinese culture and Chinese writing from that source, and some Assyriologists ascribe the history of the creation and the flood in Genesis, astronomical and scientific terms, weights, measures, and the like, to the same origin. Under these circumstances great interest cannot but be felt in anything calculated to throw light on that ancient civilization, the people who developed it, the language they spoke, etc. The best known authority on the subject of the language is Dr. Paul Haupt, *Privat-Dozent* at Goettingen. Before this reaches the *Student* a small book will have appeared from his pen on the Sumerian-Akkadian language, a somewhat enlarged form of a paper read by him before the Oriental Congress in Berlin in 1881, and published in the proceedings of that body. Unfortunately the work is disfigured by 30 pages of polemics against Dr. Hommel, who disputes with Haupt the priority of the discovery of two dialects, Sumerian, or southern, and Akkadian, or northern, in the pre-Semitic Babylonian.

The Semitic Assyrian and Babylonian, is every day advancing towards such a state of codification by means of grammars and dictionaries that it must soon be fully available for purposes of comparative etymology. The last number of the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* in England, contains an introductory paper on Assyrian grammar, the first of a series, by T. G. Pinches. About Easter of 1883, an Assyrian grammar, by Haupt, is expected. There is now appearing in Leipzig a dictionary or glossary to the II. and IV. vols. of Rawlinson's Inscriptions, by Dr. J. N. Strassmaier, of the Society of Jesus. At Easter, Prof. Frdr. Delitzsch will go to London to work on his Assyrian dictionary, which must not be expected to appear, however, for a couple of years.

INTRODUCTORY PAPER UPON ASSYRIAN GRAMMAR.

Assyrian was the tongue of the inhabitants of the district extending from the shores of the Persian Gulf on the south, to Armenia on the north, and from Elam and Persia on the east, to Phœnicia on the west. The people who spoke this language formed, originally, one nation, but split, in ancient times, into two, each having its own king. Notwithstanding, however, this separation, and the enmity which these two nations afterwards bore toward each other, the speech of each remained, even to the last, practically the same, the differences being so slight as hardly to amount to provincialisms.

An examination of the construction of the Assyrian language, presented to us in the numerous inscriptions, indicates that the people who spoke it were early separated from intercourse with the other Semitic tribes, and their language, therefore, struck out a course especially its own, and the difference between Assyrian and the other Semitic tongues is often very great. It is especially in the verbs that this departure is to be seen, and for this reason it has been thought well to treat of them first.

If it be really the case that the so-called permansive tense is a late formation (and there is every reason to regard it as such), then the same must be said for the corresponding tense (the perfect) in the other Semitic languages. Even at the time when the separation of the various tribes took place, however, the tendency to form this tense existed, and it was then most likely in full use, but confined to the third person. To the latest times any participle form could be used in Assyrian as a permansive, and take the endings of that tense. Another departure from the usage of the Semitic tongues, is the partial change of meaning of the forms in *u* (in Hebrew the Pual and Hophal, and in Arabic the passive forms of the various conjugations). Assyrian most likely had, at first, both the ordinary forms, and those having *u* as the vowel, but without any distinctive meaning, at least such as is found in Hebrew and Arabic. The examples of these forms which exist, that is, forms having the vowel *u* between the first and second radicals, or after the voice-formative, are only to be found in the infinitive and permansive of the intensive (Piel) stem, and the same tenses of the Shaphel. These forms have almost wholly replaced those in *a*, and have not necessarily a passive meaning.

Other verbal differences also exist. The primitive forms, in Assyrian, are to be found, to a great extent, in the various other Semitic tongues, the chief difference being that the Shaphel conjugation is in full use. The most striking thing, however, is the regular use not only of those secondary forms which insert the letter *t*, but also of those longer and more interesting tertiary forms which insert the particle *tan*, indicating either speed or frequency.

To the above list of interesting verbal differences may be added the strange Niphal forms of those verbs weak of the first radical, in which the *n* either with or without a vowel between, is doubled—evidently indicating a nazalization of the vowel representing the lost or weakened consonant; and those secondary (and tertiary) Niphal-forms which, dropping their *n* before the inserted *t*, will perhaps, help to explain the Hebrew Niphal infinitive (הִקְטִיל). The importance, also, of the real tense-distinctions attached to the long and short forms of the imperfect, cau-

not be overlooked, and it is proposed, in these papers, to give many examples of their use for comparison.

Assyrian is also much richer in pronominal roots than the other Semitic tongues. For the first person singular of the personal pronoun, for example, no less than six words or forms are to be found, and for the second person singular the same number. The greater part of those expressing the first person are formed from the root *iau*, and this word being, as it really seems, the Assyrian representative of the Heb. אני "to be," shows how, clashing with the Assyrian form of the word Jehovah (*iau*), the divine name fell into disuse in Assyrian, and was replaced by *ilu*, a word probably of Akkadian origin. The importance of Assyrian in the science of Semitic philology will therefore readily be seen.

The Assyrian tongue seems, in the earliest times, to have been that of the inhabitants of the south or Babylonia. Large colonies, however, were probably sent out northwards, and the language was, in this way, taken almost as far as the mountains of Armenia. Long before this emigration the Assyrian (or, to speak more correctly, Babylonian) language came into contact with a speech of an entirely different character and genius—the Akkadian, and its dialect, Sumerian. It can easily be understood, therefore, that, as the two peoples were in close contact, the Assyrian language became greatly changed, a number of foreign words being introduced, and the grammar being, to a certain extent, modified, and made something like that of the Akkado-Sumerian language. Assyrian, however, kept to the last its distinctly Semitic character, and, while taking in freely words borrowed from the Akkadian, nevertheless retained in use most of the Semitic equivalents of those words, so that it was seldom needful to draw from a foreign source except for the purpose of bringing greater elegance into the composition.

Assyrian, like most other tongues, had dialects, but, in consequence of the newness of the study, their peculiarities are not easily detected. Most of the texts come from Nineveh and Babylon, and only give, therefore, examples of the language spoken at those places. Judging from these texts, one would say that not only the spelling, but also the composition of the phrases are based, to a great extent, upon tradition and usage, the style being modelled upon ancient translations of the Sumerian and Akkadian records, of which both nations had copies, and for this reason not only the written, but also the spoken language, seems hardly to have differed. It was in Assyria, however, that the clearer and purer pronunciation was kept, and a more careful use of the case-endings of the nouns, &c., observed. The true folk-speech is undoubtedly to be found in those interesting letter-tablets in which the people are to be seen in the more ordinary occupations of life, though not entirely apart from officialism. It is in this popular language that those ground-texts of the science of Assyriology, the Achæmænian inscriptions, are composed.

In the very cities, however, where the classical language was most used, seems to have been a tongue, or, rather a form of speech, of a rougher kind, in use among the trading population. How far this language really differed from the literary language it is impossible to say, for the texts which have come down to us contain only the technical terms of trade needful to the occupation of the people, and a free use is also made of those ideographs which render the language, at times, so puzzling to the modern student.

In Babylonia, these trade-documents were always written by the professional scribe, who belonged, at least to some extent, to the learned class, and who observed, therefore, the traditions which he had learnt at school. This custom of employing professional scribes was also, most likely, in force in Assyria. These scribes seem to have possessed, besides the Assyrian or wedge writing, also a knowledge of the Phœnician characters, as the dockets sometimes written on the edge of these trade-tablets show. To these documents and their Phœnician legends, as well as to the correspondence-tablets, must we look in order to gain an insight into the tongue of the more common people of those ancient empires. These trade-dockets also indicate that not only (as shown by the bilingual lists and syllabaries) were the Assyrians aware of the trilateralism of their language, but that they also had a knowledge, in some cases, of the original forms of their own weakened verbal roots.—*Theo. J. Pinches, in the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology.*

➤EDITORIAL NOTES.◀

The Last Number.—Those of us who are immediately interested in the success of THE HEBREW STUDENT feel very grateful for the kind reception accorded to the last number. Many letters and notices of a complimentary nature have been received. If there had remained a doubt as to the wisdom of the undertaking, or as to the demand for such a journal, that doubt has been dispelled. If we may believe what is said,—and why may we not believe it—there is a work to be done which can be done only by a periodical of this character. It is for us, therefore, to go on and, in spite of the many difficulties which, of necessity, beset such an undertaking, to continue the work in the line, and according to the policy marked out.

It was a surprise that the import of the editorial on *Scholarly Ministers* in the last number should have been misunderstood, as it seems to have been. In ascertaining the meaning of a writer, many things must be considered, e. g., the time, circumstances, the nature of the subject, the character of the writer, etc., etc. Would a journal, whose sole purpose it is to incite ministers to study, and to be scholarly, encourage them to avoid scrupulously the study of *all texts* in order that they may be saved the trouble of considering the various views which have been propounded? Perhaps editorials should not be ironical.

In this connection it is but right to apologize for the miserable proof-reading done in the case of Prof. Newman's article: *Professor Strack on the Pentateuch*. "Regard," p. 151 (line 10 from bottom), should have been "regards;" on p. 152, "investigations" (line 16 from bottom), should have been "investigation;" "Tracer" (line 6 from bottom), "traces." On p. 153, "their" (line 9 from top), should have been "these," and "undeniably" (line 9 from bottom), should have been "undeniable." Our proof-reader, it is to be hoped, will hereafter exercise more care.

Notes From Abroad.—We feel confident that our readers will appreciate and be profited by the Notes from Germany, published in this number. It is recogniz-

ed, the world over, that the Germans are the leaders of thought in the line of study in which we feel most deeply interested. This does not mean of course that the scholars of other countries adopt their views, or that no work of this kind is done outside of Germany. It is well known that in no other country do men give themselves up so entirely, so unreservedly to research and investigation; in no other country do men go down so deep. This "depth," to be sure, is often bewildering to the American scholar, who feels that less "depth" and greater clearness would be more profitable; yet no scholarship is upon the whole so highly esteemed as *German* scholarship. In view of this fact, it is a matter of the greatest importance for us to acquaint ourselves with what is doing on the other side. The studies, opinions, and movements of the world's greatest Biblical scholars, men whose names have become household words, should and, indeed, do interest us. Our readers may regard these "Notes" as reliable. They are from the pen of one who is in a position to gather such items, and who, at the same time, is familiar with the subject-matter which he collects. It gives us pleasure to announce that similar notes will be forthcoming in each number.

The Society of Biblical Archaeology.—This learned Society held the first meeting of its thirteenth session (1882-83) November 7th. The President of the Society is Samuel Birch, D. C. L., LL. D., etc. The character of the Society may better be inferred from the subjects of some of the papers which were presented, e. g., (1) Demotic Papyrus containing the malediction of an Egyptian mother on her son embracing Christianity, by M. E. Revillout; (2) Some Recent Discoveries bearing on the Ancient History and Chronology of Babylonia, by Theo. G. Pinches; (3) Papers upon Assyrian Grammar, by the same. We have taken the liberty of reprinting from the "Proceedings of The Society" the Introductory Chapter of these Papers upon Assyrian Grammar. It is well for us to know something of the general character of this language, to which references at the present time are so common. One cannot imagine the influence which the discoveries already made, and yet to be made, in this department, will have upon the Biblical languages and history. The great energy with which the work is carried on in spite of innumerable difficulties, promises well for the future. Will our readers not read this "paper" carefully?

The "Higher" Criticism.—What is meant by the so-called "higher" criticism as contrasted with "lower" criticism? Is it true that the "higher" critics without warrant adopted a term which savors of assumption? Is it the case, as many suppose, that "higher" criticism means rationalism, and "lower" criticism, orthodoxy? Dr. Briggs, in his article in the November number, *The Literary Study of the Bible*, answered these questions, and he did yet more: he made a strong and telling plea in behalf of "Christian" criticism, in opposition to what on the other hand may be termed "Skeptical" criticism:—

"The study of Biblical literature is appropriately called Higher Criticism to distinguish it from Lower Criticism which devotes itself to the study of original texts and versions. There are few who have the patience, the persistence, the life-long industry in the examination of minute details that make up the field of Lower Textual Criticism. But the Higher Criticism is more attractive. It has to do with literary forms and styles and models. It appeals to the imagination and

the æsthetic taste as well as to the logical faculty. It kindles the enthusiasm of the young. It will more and more enlist the attention of the men of culture and the general public. It is the most inviting and fruitful field of Biblical study in our day. We will not deny that the most who are engaged in it are rationalistic and unbelieving, and that they are using it with disastrous effect upon the Scriptures and the orthodox faith. There are few believing critics, especially in this country. There is also a wide-spread prejudice against these studies and an apprehension as to the results. These prejudices are unreasonable. These apprehensions are to be deprecated. It is impossible to prevent discussion. The church is challenged to meet the issue. It is a call of Providence to conflict and to triumph of evangelical truth. The divine word will vindicate itself in all its parts. These are not the times for negligent Elis or timorous and presumptuous Uzzahs. Brave Samuels and ardent Davids who fear not to employ new methods and engage in new enterprises and adapt themselves to altered situations, will overcome the Philistines with their own weapons. The Higher Criticism has rent the crust, with which Rabbinical Tradition has encased the Old Testament, overlaying the poetic and prophetic elements with the legal and the ritual. Younger Biblical scholars have caught glimpses of the beauty and glory of Biblical Literature. The Old Testament is studied as never before in the Christian Church. It is beginning to exert its charming influence upon ministers and people. Christian Theology and Christian life will ere long be enriched by it. God's blessing is in it to those who have the Christian wisdom to recognize and the grace to receive and employ it."

→BOOKS; NOTICES.←

[All publications received, which relate directly or indirectly to the Old Testament, will be promptly noticed under this head. Attention will not be confined to new books; but notices will be given, so far as possible, of such old books, in this department of study, as may be of general interest to pastors and students.]

THE MOSAIC ERA.*

Dr. Gibson's former book on the "Ages before Moses" attracted no little attention. This is another venture in the same line and with somewhat less satisfactory results. It is a series of Biblical expositions, addressed to a miscellaneous audience. The present subject does not perhaps yield itself to as picturesque a treatment as that of the Creation and the Fall, or the call and migrations of Abraham. Dr. Gibson has grappled manfully with the problem of making an interesting exposition of the Jewish ritual. There are twenty-four lectures, treating of the period between the Egyptian bondage and the death of Moses. Each lecture is brief, fairly instructive and pervaded by an evangelical spirit. Just what is the amount of assistance which the discussion would furnish to a clergyman, is difficult to determine. It is an attempt to expound a difficult subject and we feel that the result is sometimes neither "fish nor flesh," that while in their original use the lectures may have been highly useful, it was at least hazardous to challenge criticism by putting them into permanent book form. In them the author of course merely touches the deeper questions of criticism.

*THE MOSAIC ERA, A series of Lectures on Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; by J. Monro Gibson, D. D. Cl. 8vo., pp. 345. Price, \$1.50. New York, A. D. F. Randolph & Co.; Chicago, S. A. Maxwell & Co.

but a note upon the names "Jehovah," "Israel" and "Christ" shows that much thought and that of no mean order, has been interwoven with the often meagre and unsatisfactory thread of his exposition. The mechanical execution of the book is all that could be desired.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.*

This little book contains a thoroughgoing discussion of the Sabbath question in a nutshell. The author takes his stand on the statement of the Westminster Confession that the observance of the Sabbath is "a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages," and endeavors to substantiate this position by a two-fold Biblical argument from the Old and New Testaments, showing that the commandment to observe the Sabbath was in force from the Garden of Eden, and was by no means set aside but rather enforced by Christ and the Apostles. Two more points are dwelt upon, that the change to the first day of the week is Scriptural and that the State is in duty bound to compel the observance of the Sabbath, because its own existence is bound up in its observance. The book is thoroughly sound, lively and vigorous. The author's whole soul is engaged in the discussion and he strikes no uncertain blows at those who would undermine the obligation to observe this day. Indeed if any criticism were to be made upon the performance, it is that the tone is a little too dogmatic and pugnacious. But as a tract for the times it is a note on the right side, and with this one qualification we heartily commend it. Of the Old Testament argument, to which our attention was particularly directed, it may be said that it cannot be excelled as a piece of condensed constructive argumentation.

GALILEE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.†

This work "originally appeared as an Essay in the January and April numbers of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1874." It has, however, been virtually re-written. In its present form, it is a classic on this subject.

The author has evidently consulted all works that could possibly shed any light on the matter in hand. The references given are of great value. His judgment on all questions involved is an independent judgment, and as a result, he has dealt some vigorous blows at the commonly accepted notions of Galilee and its inhabitants. He shows it to have been "a region of great natural fertility and richness." As against Strabo, he contends that the cities of Galilee "were, with a very few exceptions, occupied by a Jewish population." He holds that Ritter, Hausrath and others are wrong in representing the Galileans as restive under the restraints of law; and he institutes a comparison which is quite in their favor. The fact that the Galileans were "champions of the law," and in Jerusalem were

*THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH; Its nature, design and proper observance, by the Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D., LL. D., Hampden-Sydney, Va. Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Publication. Cloth, pp. 93.

†GALILEE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST. By Rev. Selah Merrill, D. D. Boston, Congregational Publishing House. 16mo. XIII, 159 pp.

to be found "the champion of traditions" is rightly emphasized. The representation which is given of the character of the Herods (p. 98) deserves consideration. The conclusions of the author are doubtless correct in the main.

The book should be studied by all readers of the Bible. It is time that we had done with slandering Galilee in general, and Nazareth and its inhabitants in particular. This work is worth many times its cost.

THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORY.*

The author of this volume has been before the reading public for some considerable time. In the department of Antiquities he is regarded as a high authority. Prof. Brown, in his Introduction, speaks of "his versatility, energy, rapidity in work, and retentive memory" as remarkable. From the same source we learn that he has been by turns traveler, excavator, essayist, decipherer, grammarian, historian, editor, instructor, and can point to productive labor in all these pursuits. The views advanced by Prof. Lenormant are quite different from the traditional one held by most of us. More interest attaches to the views from the fact that the author is a Catholic, and emphasizes quite strongly his Christian belief. The standpoint of the author is given in his preface, as follows: "That which we read in the first chapters of *Genesis*, is not an account dictated by God himself, the possession of which was the exclusive privilege of the chosen people. It is a tradition whose origin is lost in the night of the remotest ages, and which all the great nations of western Asia possessed in common, with some variations." This tradition is substantially the same as that lately discovered in Babylon. It was carried from Ur of the Chaldees by Abraham's family, at which time it was already fixed, perhaps in written form. The biblical account of the "Beginnings" is "parallel with statements of the sacred books from the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris." The question, of course, comes up as to the divine inspiration of the account. The author's view is that the difference between the Israelitish account and that of the other nations is in the *spirit* which animates the former. They are the same account, and the parts follow in the same order, but the signification is entirely different. While the features remain the same, there is between the narrations "all the distance of one of the most tremendous revolutions which have ever been effected in human beliefs." This difference is explained by some as the result of "development," but by the author it is regarded as "the effect of a supernatural intervention of divine Providence." Such in brief is the point of view from which Professor Lenormant works. He gives us first *The Biblical Account*,—his own translation and rearrangement of the Hebrew text of *Genesis* I.-XI, 9. From this translation, while entirely too much liberty is taken with the text, one may get a more vivid idea of the contents of the narrative than from

*THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORY, according to the Bible and the traditions of Oriental Peoples. From the Creation to the Deluge. By Francois Lenormant, Professor of Archeology at the National Library of France. (Translated from the Second French Edition.) With an introduction by Francis Brown, Associate Professor in Biblical Philology, Union Theological Seminary. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons. For sale by Jansen McClurg & Co., Chicago. 8vo. pp. 588. Price \$2.25.

the authorized version. Then follows a Comparative study of the Biblical Account and of Parallel Traditions. The matter is divided into eight chapters: (1) The Creation of Man; (2) The First Sin; (3) The Kerubim and the Revolving Sword; (4) The Fratricide and the Foundation of the first city; (5) The Sethites and the Qainites; (6) The Ten Antediluvian Patriarchs; (7) The Children of God and the Daughters of Men; (8) The Deluge. Five important Appendices follow: (1) The Cosmogonic Accounts of the Chaldæans, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Phœnicians; (2) Antediluvian Divine Revelations among the Chaldæans; (3) Classic texts relating to the Astronomical system of the Chaldæans; (4) Tables of the Chaldæo-Semitic Calendar and other Semitic Calendars; (5) The Chaldæan Account of the Deluge, Transcription of the Text with Interlinear translation. With reference to the book as a whole it may be said: (1) That no where else can one obtain the mass of information upon this subject in so convenient a form; (2) that the investigation is conducted in a truly scientific manner, and with an eminently Christian spirit; (3) that the results though, as stated above, very different from those in common acceptance, contain much that is interesting and, to say the least, plausible; (4) that, the author while he seems in a number of cases to be injudicious in his statements and conclusions, has done work in investigation and in working out details which will be of service to all, whether general readers or specialists; (5) that, to use the words of Prof. Brown, "in the interests of religion to say nothing of scholarship, we cannot afford to reject conclusions which are put forward in such an exceptional spirit, except on rational grounds established as the result of temperate and candid argument."

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