

## BOOKS REVIEWED.

## I. OLD TESTAMENT.

**A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea.**

By William Rainey Harper. New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons. 1905. Crown, 800 vo. pp. CLXXXI and 424. \$3.00.

This learned commentary on Amos and Hosea is the fruit of fourteen years' toil by one of the busiest men of the present generation. Of all the men in the world President Harper is the last from whom one would have expected to find such statements as the following: "We may safely deny the ascription to Moses of literary work of any kind." "Moses was pre-eminently a man of affairs; the strenuous nature of his activities as leader and organizer of the tribes of Israel left no opportunity for literary pursuits" (Introduction, p. LXXXVI.). Ghost of Moses! Didst thou lead a more strenuous life than Presidents Harper and Roosevelt? Or is it possible that these gentlemen are not the authors of the numerous works bearing their names? Have they been practicing *illusion* in persuading the public to buy and read certain books that purport to have come from their fertile minds and facile pens? Was it some redactor desirous of furthering the illusion who inserted the third sentence in the preface? If so, his work was skillfully done, for he makes the busy president say, "But in all these years of administrative concern I have had recourse for change, comfort and courage to my work on the Twelve Prophets." Moses is said to have withdrawn from the administrative concern of a busy camp for forty days at a time to commune with the living God, and receive the laws that were to regulate the religious life of his people. Dr. Harper never complains for lack of time, but only for lack of

space: "I ought perhaps to mention that a considerable portion of my manuscript has been thrown out because I had transgressed the limits set for the volume." Now we submit that President Harper's contemporaries may swallow this illusion that the brilliant professor and gifted president and marvelous popular lecturer and teacher is the real author of certain learned tomes that have appeared in the last few years, but future generations of higher critics will marvel at our credulity. They will discover the fact that the busy president had a brother versed in Hebrew and Assyrian lore, and they will attribute to him the nucleus of the famous commentary on Amos and Hosea, especially the portions indicating familiarity with Assyrian research; but by far the greater portions of the work will be distributed among a school of writers, most of whom received their impulse from the great university in which the brothers taught. Some antiquarian of that future time will discover what purports to be a preface in which special acknowledgment is made to the famous redactor, Dr. John M. P. Smith, and other able scholars such as Professors Berry and Goodspeed. The critics will then apportion the work among H, S, B, and G.

Dr. Harper has found time to go through practically all the literature, ancient and modern, on the books of Amos and Hosea. His commentary is a thesaurus of opinion on every conceivable question connected with the text and the interpretation of these two books. One marvels at the completeness which the compilation of various opinions has here attained. Nothing seems to have escaped the keen eye of the compiler. Moreover, he has opinions of his own, and is not afraid to announce them.

An elaborate introduction precedes the commentary proper. The author traces the "Pre-prophetic Movement," from the revolt of Jeroboam I. to the rise of written prophecy in the time of Amos and Hosea. He treats at length of Elijah and Elisha, and the societies over which they presided. He thinks there is a legendary ele-

ment in the picture of Ahab and in the magical powers possessed by Elijah. He defends Elisha against those who count him of little value to Israelitish thought. The so-called "Schools of the Prophets," he regards as guilds or corporations. Dr. Harper regards Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 as the younger of two decalogues, the older being found in Ex. 34:12-26. What now is the critical view of the date of the Ten Commandments? Our author concludes his discussion of the various views by stating his own: "Upon the whole we shall be justified in assigning the formulation of the younger decalogue in the original form, even with the second commandment, to a period not much later than 750 B. C., the arguments for a still later date not being convincing" (p. LXII). Dr. Harper places the Judæan narrative (J) in the Hexateuch within the century 850-750 B. C., and the Ephraimite narrative (E) within the half-century 800-750 B. C. He closes his discussion of the essential thought of Pre-prophetism with this statement, "The movement, in so far as it concerns the idea of God, is still henotheistic, not monotheistic."

After an interesting and informing account of the personal life of Amos, our author discusses the message of Amos. "The message of Amos must be obtained from words actually uttered or written by Amos himself. This involves the separation of insertions and additions coming from the pen of later prophets. Nearly one-fifth of the book which bears the name of Amos is thus to be set aside. It is to be conceded at once that the omission of these passages modifies very considerably the nature and content of the message. It is most important, however, in the interest of a true historical development of Israelitish thought to restrict ourselves to those portions of the book, the authenticity of which is incontrovertible. The other portions have just as important a place to occupy in the later literature."

It is well to remind the reader that the numerous sections excised by Dr. Harper as later interpolations and additions are found in all the ancient versions as well as

in the Massoretic Text. The reasons for the removal of these groups of verses are not strictly textual. They are set aside because in the mouth of Amos they condemn certain hypotheses accepted by the modern critics who do not believe in miracles. It is inconvenient to have Amos predicting a restoration of the Davidic throne nearly two centuries before the Babylonian Exile. The two oracles against Tyre and Edom might be used to establish the possibility of an early date for Obadiah and Joel; and the brief oracle against Judah lays emphasis on the rejection of "Jehovah's law and his statutes," a phrase which would suggest to many readers the Pentateuch. Dr. Harper calls Amos 2:4f a Deuteronomic insertion, probably made in Jeremiah's time. The brilliant Messianic promise found in Amos 9:11-15 he would assign to the days of Zerubbabel, or perhaps still later. These and other passages are denied to Amos "in the interest of a true historical development of Israelitish thought." Most Christian readers have a keener interest in tracing the development of the revelation made to the fathers through the prophets. There is an element in the prophetic literature more important than the development of Israelitish thought; for God spoke to the fathers through the prophets (Hebrews 1:1). To trace this revelation, made in many parts and in many manners, is exceedingly interesting and profitable.

President Harper's outline of the book of Amos is quite good; a series of judgment oracles (1, 2); a series of judgment sermons (3-6); a series of judgment visions (7-9).

Scattered throughout the commentary are statements that sound strange to the reader uninitiated into the sceptical treatment of the Biblical historians. To one who has read the account of the reigns of David and Solomon it is a little surprising to learn that in the century in which Amos lived "Israel was, for the first time, enjoying the privileges of civilization." It is also a little confusing to the ordinary mind to learn of the signal failure of Amos from one who belongs to a school of critics for ever re-

minding us that every prophet's message was primarily for the men of his own time. Our author remarks on Amos's failure to reach very many minds, "There were probably not fifty people in Northern Israel who could understand him." He adds a further statement in explanation that will be challenged by many readers of Amos, "It is quite certain that he did not himself have in mind a clear conception of the issues involved in his preaching."

Hosea's writings are exceedingly difficult, and one could pardon a reasonable use even of conjectural emendation; but it is rather suspicious to find one-fourth of his words set aside as not belonging to the original document. We have space for only one question, and that the most important, viz: Whether the predictions of Israel's restoration come from Hosea or from some later writer. The naturalistic critics, who look with suspicion on early expressions of the Messianic hope, are agreed in placing in the period after the Babylonian exile most of the beautiful passages in the early prophets which depict the future glory of God's people. Dr. Harper agrees with the critics who deny to Hosea the wonderful promises of the restoration of Israel to the favor of Jehovah (Hosea 1:10-2:1; 2:14-16, 18-23; 3:5; 14:2-9, etc.). This position seems wholly illogical; for our author accepts in full the story of Gomer's unfaithfulness and the prophet's kindness in buying her back from the slavery into which she had fallen. He accepts Hosea 3:1-4 almost exactly as it stands in the received text, but rejects verse 5. How does he escape the inevitable conclusion that the loving Jehovah will also redeem Israel from the slavery into which she has fallen? Concerning Hosea's home after the return of Gomer, he remarks: "The relationship of wife, however, is not re-established; how could it be? She is placed where she will, in discipline, be shut off from intercourse with men, even from the legitimate intercourse with her husband. This period of seclusion will last 'many days.' How long? No indication is given" (Introduction, p. CXLIII.). Does the author mean to imply that

this period of seclusion may last forever? Then Hosea's love has failed, and we are hurled into the abyss of pessimism. The reading of the American Standard Revision seems to this reviewer an accurate translation of the Hebrew of Hosea 3:3, "and I said unto her, thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife; so will I also be toward thee." Certainly these words ought to have kindled in Gomer's soul hope of ultimate restoration to the old relation of beloved wife. The God of Hosea would not be less forgiving than his prophet. In the latter days he would welcome the repentant people. Hosea had a gospel of hope, because he had a gospel of love. There was hope for poor Gomer, and there was hope for unfaithful Israel. It is utterly perverse in modern critics to make Hosea's last word a message of destruction and despair.

The longer one studies this commentary the more he must admire the author's industry and learning, and the more he regrets that such a scholar should have been completely captured by the Graf-Wellhausen school.

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### **Studies in the Religion of Israel.**

By the Rev. L. A. Pooler, B. D., Rector of Down, Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Edwin S. Gorham, New York. \$1.40 net.

Let the author of this attempt to make popular the results of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament state his purpose in his own words: "At the present time the thoughts of Christian people are turned to the Old Testament, and there is much unrest. Most of the books which deal with modern higher criticism are largely technical, or treat only of some particular point. The man in the street has not read them, and would not understand them if he did.

The achæologist is also criticising the Old Testament from his standpoint; and sometimes will not see that any other standpoint is possible. The man in the street has