

the cause of evangelical religion, and pray God for a lengthening of his days.

JOHN R. SAMPEY.

An American Commentary on the Old Testament. LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS.

By George F. Genung, D.D. Pages 108 and 144, octavo, paper. Postpaid, \$2.12. American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia.

Dr. Genung has produced a most interesting and readable commentary on the books of Leviticus and Numbers. He is master of a pleasing English style, and his commentary leads the reader straight on as if he were perusing a volume of entertaining lectures and essays rather than a commentary. Our author is almost always happy in his manner of putting things when he gives us the fruit of his own first-hand studies. We cannot say as much for him when he seeks to align himself with those who accept the modern critical view of the Pentateuch. He seems to think it necessary to take at least a little of this medicine, but he almost invariably makes a wry face as he swallows it, and some at least of his readers will imitate him as they try to dispose of the considerable modicum of this medicine which he passes on to them.

He accepts the theory of different documentary strata in the Pentateuch. He seems to have followed, for the most part, the mediating critics rather than the thoroughly radical school. The author has too much religion and good sense to follow the more skeptical wing of the critics. At the same time, our author's position is removed quite a long way from that of the old orthodoxy. Writing of the Levitical regulations, Dr. Genung says: "It is not impossible that Moses, the great founder of the nation, may have given to some of these laws the sanction of his authority. It was not the habit of the priest in precritical times to inquire closely into the authorship of what had come down to him as established and sacred. Custom soon hardened into obligation, and any precept whose lifetime ran back beyond the memory

of man would be as a matter of course endowed with the prestige of that great name which had given such a mighty initial impulse to the nation's life. It was therefore the most natural thing in the world for a writer or redactor, in codifying the temple usages which had existed from time immemorial, to introduce each new topic or section with the recognized legal formula, 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying.' The book of Leviticus may therefore be said to be Mosaic in that it is the literary precipitate of Moses' work and of its continuation through the priestly activity which took its rise from the Mosaic tabernacle system and fulfilled itself in the nation's religious life."

Our author accepts Driver's view that by 444 B. C., Leviticus had received almost its present form: "The priest code would thus serve its purpose as the backbone of the post-exilic reformation." While recognizing much in the modern documentary theory that one may well hesitate to accept, Dr. Genung remarks: "Nevertheless that the germs of the priest-code existed and were a living influence in those circles to which its legislation applied, in times long anterior to the prophets, though subject to growth and modification as the religious problems of the nation advanced in complexity, is a fact which must be evident from a careful and unprejudiced study of the history." Our author in a good many places follows the logic of his critical premises to its inevitable conclusion in a much lower estimate of the Levitical law than we are accustomed to expect in a reverent and safe commentator.

In the Introduction to Numbers, Dr. Genung commits himself with even more assurance to the modern documentary theory of the Pentateuch. He is of opinion that the book was wrought into its final shape long after the period of which it treats. He finds a radical difference in the point of view regarding the hierarchy between the history and Deuteronomy on the one hand, and the

priestly legislation on the other, and argues that all the earlier history of Israel developed in the ignorance or entire absence of any organic law embodying these arrangements of the Priest Code. He sums up the matter as follows: "The probability emerging from the comparison of details which present themselves from various parts of the Old Testament appears to be: that the completed temple organization and ritual, including the relegation of the Levites to the position of subordinate helpers in the temple, did not come into force until after the exile; and that in the books of Leviticus and Numbers which, availing themselves of ancient materials, were put into shape after that period, these priestly arrangements were ascribed to Moses through a use of legal formulas or fictions which was a common literary procedure among the nations of antiquity." Of these "legal formulas or fictions" in literature worthy of study we have little or no objective proof. It is a fancy spun out of whole cloth by modern Old Testament critics.

Before our author lays down his pen he seems almost tempted to abjure analytical criticism altogether and lead his readers in the study of the book of Numbers as we have it before us. For such a delightful excursion as this it would be difficult to find a better guide than Dr. Genung. Referring to the critical dissection of books, the author remarks: "But we dissect only the dead body; and we must not think that dissection of the dead can give the same results as communion with the living. May the day be far distant when the Bible shall become for Western Christendom only a cadaver, the prey of dissection and analysis and criticism, a thing to be endlessly studied about, but never to be studied or communed with in its own living body and spirit. It will do the full good which its divine Inspirer intended only as it is a live book, a speaking companion, approached and appreciated through the naïve power to merge the willing mind in its

current of thought and imagery which the coldly critical habit can only do us infinite harm by taking away. Thus read and appreciated, not the least inspiring and vitally helpful of the sixty-six books in our canon will be found to be the divinely given book of Numbers."

That the author of the Pentateuch may have used much documentary material already to hand no conservative critic would be at the pains to disprove; it is altogether likely that both oral and written tradition furnished materials for Genesis. An eye-witness tells us the story from Exodus to Deuteronomy. The hero and the responsible author of these four books is none other than Moses the Lawgiver. Dr. Genung is too good a literary critic not to tremble when he undertakes the dissection of a book like Numbers, for he is engaged in vivisection. According to his own testimony, the Bible is a live book; why apply to it the knife of modern analytical criticism—unless it be to remove some parasitic growth inimical to the life of the Book?

JOHN R. SAMPEY.

Old Testament Introduction. General and Special.

By John Howard Raven, D.D. 362 pages, octavo, \$2.00. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 1906.

Dr. Raven is Professor of Old Testament Languages and Exegesis in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, at New Brunswick, N. J. He has given to the friends of the Old Testament a handy volume in which the latest theories of the divisive critics are fairly stated and answered. He deals in argument rather than ridicule or invective. "As far as possible the arguments of the liberals are given in their own words, not only to conserve fairness but to encourage the student to read the opposite side of the case." Professor Raven seems eminently fair in his statement of the modern critical view, and his arguments in refutation of their theories are usually cogent and convincing. He stands with Keil and W. H. Green squarely confronting the divisive