

tions of date and authorship. Professor Kittel does not agree with the radical critics concerning the late origin of psalm-writing in Israel. He is of the opinion that psalms were composed and sung in the time of David, and possibly at an earlier date. He thinks, however, that it is scarcely possible to identify any individual psalms in the Psalter as we have it as Davidic in origin. He devotes little space in his commentary to such questions, making it his aim to introduce modern readers to the charm and uplift that come from a sympathetic study of Israel's hymnal and prayer-book.

Dr. Kittel has prefixed to each psalm a special title, some of which are quite happy. He suggests as the title for the First Psalm, "The Two Ways"; for the sixteenth, "God the Highest Good"; for the thirty-seventh, "Happiness of the Wicked Appearance Only"; for Psalms forty-two and three, "Homesickness for God"; for Psalm seventy-one, "In Old Age Forsake Me Not." In general, Professor Kittel has given special attention in his commentary to literary form, thereby making it easy to understand his meaning and enticing the reader to pursue the study. Special topics of great importance are treated at length in separate articles. There is full recognition of the Babylonian and Egyptian literature similar to the Psalter. Dr. Kittel has learned much from Calvin in the psychological interpretation of the Psalms. He has also drunk deep of Luther's spirit. He has written a commentary that will find a warm welcome on the desk of Old Testament scholars.

JOHN R. SAMPEY.

The Prophet and His Problems. By J. M. Powis Smith, Ph.D. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914. 244 pp. \$1.25 net.

Three of the eight chapters in Dr. Smith's latest book had already appeared in Biblical or theological journals, though there has been revision and enlargement of them for the volume on "The Prophet and his Problems." The author is known as a diligent student, a vigorous teacher, and a stimulating writer. He is master of a trenchant style; and is not afraid to speak his

mind, even to the point of shocking persons of conventional taste. Thus in advocating the literal view as to the marriage of Hosea, he writes: "Hosea was not led blindfolded by Yahweh into a marriage that was to break his heart and wreck his life. On the contrary, he married a woman of evil reputation with his eyes wide open. If this seem to us a psychological impossibility, we need only recall other cases in which prophets did extraordinary things. The psychology of a prophet was not subject to the laws controlling the mental operations of ordinary men. The belief that Yahweh willed the performance of any act was enough to lead him to undertake the most unusual, yea, repugnant programme."

Dr. Smith's occasional tendency to rank literalism in interpretation is at its worst in this chapter on "A Prophet's Marriage" in which he makes bold to say: "The prophets were never deterred from any course by the fear of its being considered startling. The standards of taste of that day were not identical with ours; but the prophets were not afraid to violate such standards as there were. Isaiah walked the streets of Jerusalem in stark nakedness; Ezekiel broke through the wall of his own house and moved out his goods under cover of the dark; Jeremiah dragged his dirty linen before the public eye. Hosea is moving along the same lines when he marries a harlot and declares it to be in obedience to Yahweh's behest."

Writing of the lying spirit that went forth from the presence of Jehovah to deceive the four hundred prophets of Ahab, Prof. Smith says:

"It is at once evident that the moral responsibility for the lie rests upon Yahweh himself. The prophets are helpless; Yahweh, through His agent, has inspired them to tell a lie. What a flood of light a statement like this lets in upon the ethical standards of the prophets of the ninth century B. C.! Micaiah's God was capable of strange and questionable things. Strictly speaking, if Micaiah's interpretation of their conduct be correct, the four hundred prophets are free from all blame. They are but unconscious tools in the hand of Yahweh."

Dr. Smith has given us a book that will provoke thought and stimulate research. There is not a dull page in it.

JOHN R. SAMPEY.

The Culture of Ancient Israel. By Carl Heinrich Cornill, Professor of Old Testament History in the University of Halle. Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1914. 167 pp.

American admirers of Professor Cornill have brought together in this volume five of his popular lectures on Old Testament subjects. In the lecture "Rise of the People of Israel" and in that on "Moses, the Founder of Monotheistic Religion," Professor Cornill presents the current advanced view of the origin of Israel's religion. He always speaks and writes in a most fascinating manner. On almost every page there may be found sentences worthy of quotation by reason of their brilliancy. Among the notable deliverances contained in the volume under review, we allow space for the following:

"The most careful and impartial weighing of all adverse arguments and difficulties has not as yet been able to shake my faith in the genuine historical authenticity of Abraham. I regard Abraham as an historical personality in the strictest sense of the word, as really so as Alaric, the king of the Visigoths, or Rurik, the prince of the Varangians." "Israel is the only nation of which we have knowledge, that had never had a mythology, that never differentiated divinity according to sex—the concept 'goddess' is so absolutely inconceivable to the Israelites that the Hebrew language never attempted to form the word 'goddess!' This is a miracle performed by Moses which is greater and more incomprehensible than the greatest and most incomprehensible which tradition has ascribed to him." "Permit me in closing to mention a recent personal experience of mine, illustrating the manner in which the Psalms give us the fitting word for every situation in life. One who for days and weeks has watched in anguish over the life that is dearest to him on earth, when he has already prepared to surrender it, there comes a turn for the better, and the angel of death who has already spread his