

Book Reviews

Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives. By CHARLES FOSTER KENT. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905. Pp. xxxi + 506. \$2.75, net.

The general plan and purpose of the "Student's Old Testament" was discussed in the review of Vol. I published in the *Biblical World* for April, 1904. The present volume, the second of the series, further exemplifies the author's painstaking and judicial spirit in carrying out his threefold purpose: (1) arrangement of the Old Testament writings in logical order; (2) indication of the dates and classes of writers from which the various parts come, with more important reasons for the critical analysis; (3) a translation which shall reveal the beauty and thought of the original. The present volume includes the narrative books from Samuel to Esther, historical and biographical chapters of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Haggai, 1 Maccabees entire, nearly all of 2 Maccabees, and a little of 1 Esdras.

In executing the first part of his purpose, Kent seeks to arrange the Old Testament historical sources in such a way as to present the events and characters of the history in their chronological order, with all the narratives concerning each grouped together. This involves rearrangement in the order of detailed events in many places, but the only considerable change in the general course of the history is in the Ezra-Nehemiah material. Here the sources are so arranged as to present the view, now widely held among students of Old Testament history, that there was but a small return of Jews to Palestine in the years immediately following Cyrus' capture of Babylon, and that the work of Nehemiah preceded that of Ezra. In his *Jewish History*, published in 1899, Kent already declared his adherence to this position.

In the minute analysis and classification of the sources, required by the second aim of the work, the present volume does not enter upon a field so battle-scarred as that of its predecessor. The dates assigned to much of the material in these writings do not vary greatly from those traditionally held, and in Kings and Chronicles we have constant references to earlier written sources. In the Hexateuch, compilation from earlier documents must be inferred from internal characteristics; here it is plainly indicated on the surface. Furthermore, in the parallel narratives of Chronicles and Samuel-Kings, it is possible to compare immediately a later compilation

with its sources and to observe directly the method of work of a Jewish historiographer. With such tangible evidences for the documentary analysis of Kings and Chronicles, it is not a difficult step to the conclusion that one is justified in assuming a similar structure for the books of Samuel, especially where several narratives offer such obvious instances of duplicate traditions. It has often been remarked that the proper approach to the study of hexateuchal analysis is through the investigation of the composition of these books, and it is suggested in the preface of the present volume that, for general Bible classes, the logical order of the two volumes be disregarded and this material be studied before the *Beginnings of Hebrew History* are considered.

In their analysis and rearrangement of Israel's historical narratives these two volumes represent a large amount of careful, scholarly investigation, characterized by unusual ability to note and use minute and complex data in the forming of broad, sane conclusions. As such a production, the work may confidently be used as an available source-book by those who would know Hebrew and Jewish history, as nearly as they can, at first hand. The limits of the work confessedly make it possible to present only the more important reasons for the analysis and rearrangement of the material, but the classified bibliography at the close will furnish suggestions and guidance for those who desire further to investigate the grounds of the conclusions adopted.

In seeking to give a translation which shall represent the beauty and thought of the original Hebrew as closely as possible, the work shows many changes, in minor points, from the current English versions. Much greater freedom, for example, is exercised here than in the Revised Version in substituting a variety of conjunctions for the mere connective. Thus the relation of clauses is much more accurately expressed. A general modernizing of forms is also noticeable, as in the substitution of "has been" or "was" for "hath been." At times the translator seems to have been overanxious to make the meaning perfectly clear to the present prosaic age, and has occasionally lost in this effort some of the terse and picturesque qualities of the Hebrew. More important changes are those resulting from a correction of the Hebrew text. In this matter the revisers of the Old Testament, both British and American, were exceedingly conservative. Chapter 6 in the Introduction of the present work discusses most admirably the necessity, materials, principles, and methods of Old Testament textual criticism, and the translation shows at once freedom and judicial care in applying these materials and methods to the necessary criticism of the Massoretic text. The translator does not permit him-

self to roam far in the fascinating fields of conjectural emendation, but holds himself closely to the testimony of the versions. If, at times, he may seem rather too ready to adopt a smooth reading from the Greek in preference to a difficult one in the Hebrew, he stands, generally, an example of self-restraint and admirable poise among present-day critics of the Massoretic text. Indeed, it is probable that this revision offers the untechnical student the nearest approximation to the true force of the original documents available at the present time.

In general plan and mechanical construction the volume leaves nothing to be desired. The complex arrangement of parallel accounts, headings, and notes has been so conceived and executed as to make the whole exceedingly clear and available. Numerous chronological charts and maps add greatly to the general usefulness of the work.

The Introduction, concerning the literary history of the books included in this volume, maintains the high standard set in the corresponding part of the first volume. In these so-called introductions Kent is really producing an excellent history of Old Testament literature. "The Students' Old Testament" is demonstrating to large numbers that the reasonable results of historical and literary analysis have now reached a point where they can be presented to the general reader in such a way that he can turn from the discussions about the Bible to the Bible itself, and can read it in far better historical perspective than ever before. The work is already meeting a large need in college and seminary classes, as well as among clergymen and those general readers who desire to view the Bible from the standpoint of modern scholarship.

HENRY T. FOWLER.

BROWN UNIVERSITY,
Providence, R. I.

The Christian Ministry. By LYMAN ABBOTT. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1905. Pp. xi + 317. \$1.50.

The author of this book speaks like a scholar, sage, and prophet. He is a serious student of the Scriptures, and is thoroughly at home in the world of modern thought; he has dealt with the problems of the ministry for half a century, and speaks with the maturity accruing from long experience; and he is animated throughout by that inward fire which inspired prophets and apostles.

The book is characterized by keen analysis, comprehensive thought, practical interest, and by vigorous and clean-cut expression. The lofty conception of the minister and his work, with the hopeful outlook for