

share in the life to come' (J. T. Sanhedrin 28^b). From about the same period we have the passage in Tosephto Yadayim (ed. Zukermondel, p. 683). ספרי בן סירה וכל הספרים שוכתבו מכאן ואילך אין מטמאין את הידים, 'The books of Ben-Sira and all the books which were written afterwards (after the conclusion of the Canon) do not defile the hands.' R. Joseph of the fourth century says: בספר בן סירה ומי אסור למקרי, 'In the Book of Ben-Sira is also forbidden to read,' etc. (B. T. Sanhedrin 100^b). The passage in Koheleth Rabbah, according to which the bringing in of a book not included in the twenty-four canonical books, as, for instance, the Book of Ben-Sira, means 'to bring confusion into one's house,' I have already quoted in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES of March. In B. T. Baba Kamma 90^b the Book of Ben-Sira is quoted as כחוביב, the *γαφαλ*.

All these passages are clear enough to any one who knows Hebrew, and leave no manner of doubt that in the times of the Rabbis both those whose sayings were collected in the Mishnah and the Tosephto, as well as those of a much later period, whose discussions chiefly form the subject-matter of the Talmud (respectively the Gemara), knew the Wisdom of Ben-Sira as a real, actual written book. Rashi, therefore, who himself commented on some of these passages, could not have been ignorant of their existence, and, in fact, guarded the student, as has been pointed out several times, against the inclusion of Ben-Sira in the category of the books, which were not written 'in their days,' by the words *יבר הלכה*, Ben-Sira certainly not falling under this class of literature, to whatever category it may belong. Weiss, whom the Rev. Professor mentions, of course understood Rashi well enough, and quotes the same Hebrew words.

All the other Talmudic passages Professor Margoliouth mentions are taken from Samter's

translation of the tractate, *Baba Mezi'ah*, and similar productions, and have no bearing on the Ben-Sira problem, dealing mainly with the question whether the Mishnah was written down by the Saint R. Judah Hanasie, or at a much later period.

As to the use made of Ben-Sira by post-Talmudic authorities, I must refer the reader to the preceding numbers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. I will only add, that R. Saadyah seems to have had a special knowledge of extra-canonical books. For in the commentary on Chronicles, which is attributed to one of the pupils of the Gaon (ed. Kirchheim, Frankfort, 1874), R. Saadyah is credited with having brought with him from among the books of the Yeshibah the *Book of Jubilees*. This proves his wide interests in apocryphal and pseudographic literature.

One word more and I have done with this tedious controversy—for the present at least. Professor Margoliouth has a new hypothesis regarding the compilation of the Talmud. I can only say that his statements in this respect must be a matter of inspiration. They are certainly not the result of study. For all those who have studied the Talmud, who have waded through the Responsa of the Geonim, and who have made themselves acquainted with the Halachic codices preceding the 'Strong Hand' of Maimonides, agree that the Talmud of Babylon was written down and compiled by the 'Rabbanan Saborai,' who flourished before Mahomet was born, whilst there is ample evidence that many authorities, who lived long before Saadyah perceived the light of the world, knew and quoted the Talmud of Jerusalem. When Professor Margoliouth will furnish the least proof that he has passed through the tedious process just hinted at, I will argue the matter with him at full length.

S. SCHECHTER.

Cambridge.

The International Critical Commentary on 'Proverbs.'¹

BY REV. J. A. SELBIE, M.A., MARVCULTER.

THIS latest addition to the Old Testament department of the *Internat. Crit. Comm.* amply

¹ *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs.* By Crawford H. Toy, Professor of Hebrew in Harvard University. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899. Price 12s.

maintains the reputation gained by the series to which it belongs. The name of Professor Toy is already well known to scholars on this side of the Atlantic, and the present work will bring his merits under the eyes of a still wider circle. We have had hitherto by no means a superabundance

of good commentaries on *Proverbs* any more than on the rest of the *Hokhmah* literature, and until the appearance of the present volume the English-speaking student had absolutely *no* commentary written in his own language which could be considered as at all of scientific value. He will do well to procure Professor Toy's work at once, if he desires to understand the meaning and structure of the Book of Proverbs, and the character of the species of literature to which it belongs.

In his Introduction our author adopts the usual five divisions of the Book (1) chaps. 1-9, a group of discourses on wisdom and wise conduct; (2) 10¹-22¹⁶, a collection of aphorisms in couplet form; (3) 22¹⁷-24²² and 24²³⁻³⁴, two collections of aphoristic quatrains; (4) chaps. 25-29, a collection of aphoristic couplets; (5) chaps. 30-31, a collection of discourses of various characters. He also holds of course, with all modern scholars, that the present book has been formed by the combination of collections of various dates and origins, a conclusion which is grounded partly on the difficulty of crediting one man with the authorship of such disparate sections as the above five, as well as on the *repetitions* which occur in the book, and which affect sections 2, 3, and 4. No one nowadays, we suppose, contends for the Solomonic authorship of the *whole* book. This, indeed, is claimed in the text itself only for chaps. 10¹-12¹⁶ and 25-29 (hardly for chaps. 1-9), and the name 'Solomon,' as Professor Toy points out, is of as doubtful import in the titles of the Wisdom literature as 'Moses' or 'David' in the Law or the Psalms. It is practically certain, however, that the second and fourth of the above divisions, namely 10¹-22¹⁶ and 25-29, are the oldest part of the book. 'The two may have received substantially their present form between 350 B.C. and 300 B.C., the second a little later than the first.' Then during the next half century the third division (22¹⁷-24) is supposed to have been produced and inserted between the second and the fourth, making up with them a book of aphorisms. The first nine chapters (with the exception of 6¹⁻¹⁹ 9⁷⁻¹², which may be due to the final redactor, or to a very late scribe) may have been composed about the middle of the third century B.C., and the work was completed by the addition of the fragments contained in chaps. 30, 31 in the second century. These

conclusions are supported by Professor Toy by strong arguments, literary, linguistic, and other, and will command general assent, it being understood that the book was *essentially* complete by 250 B.C., for, as Nowack points out (art. 'Proverbs' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*), if the date is brought further down, one 'can see no reason why Sirach itself was not admitted into the Canon.'

As to the subject matter of *Proverbs*, Professor Toy rightly emphasizes the high ethical standard of the book, pointing out that 'the supposed exceptions, cases of alleged selfish prudence (as, for example, the caution against giving security), are only apparent, since proper regard for self is an element of justice.' Monotheism is taken for granted, there is no allusion to angels or demons, no mention of a Messiah, no appeal to divine inspiration or any Law save that of conscience and reason. The eschatology of the book is of the simple and primitive sort that is found in the greater part of the O.T. Like the other Wisdom books, *Proverbs* identifies virtue with knowledge.

Professor Toy has a valuable section on the text and versions. The Massoretic text, like that of many other books, is marred by frequent corruptions, but there is no reason to suppose that changes were made in the interests of theological opinion or from a sense of propriety or decency. The Septuagint version, which is possibly not all the work of one translator, represents in general an older text than the Massoretic one, but has suffered many corruptions, although it is still a valuable critical instrument, and frequently offers good suggestions for the restoration of the original Hebrew. The important question of the plus and the minus of the Greek text as compared with the Hebrew is carefully discussed.

The Commentary proper is an admirable piece of work, being concise yet exhaustive, and a model of lucidity. It will prove one of the most useful of the series.

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