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Recent Foreign Theology.

Old Testament Problems.

THERE is no Old Testament problem on which dogmatism is more unseemly than that of the Decalogue, which has been assigned by equally competent scholars to practically every period between Moses and the early post-exilic age. Professor Ludwig Köhler has given an admirable conspectus¹ of the present position of the discussion, setting forth briefly but pointedly the nature of the problems raised, for example, by the alleged relation of the Sabbath to the phases of the moon, by the presence of commands in a series of prohibitions, by the fact that only one sacred cult-day is recognized by the Decalogue, etc. As against Mowinkel, he maintains that an analysis of the sources of the documents in which the two versions of the Decalogue are now embedded gives us really no clue to its date; while upon those who plead for a Mosaic origin he urges the wholesome reminder that the utmost they can claim is that the Decalogue *may*, but not that it *must*, have come from Moses.

To the lively discussion which has gathered in recent years round the Deuteronomic problem, Dr. A. R. Siebens has made a highly lucid and valuable contribution,² which takes into careful account the views of Kennett, Hölscher, Horst, Bentzen, Oestreicher, Schmidt, Welch, and others. Dr. Siebens maintains that of all the theories of Deuteronomy that of the school of de Wette-Graf-Wellhausen is, in its broad lines, still the most plausible: the book discovered by Hilkiah must have been some form of Deuteronomy, it had some connection with the reformation of Josiah, and its object was the centralization of the worship at Jerusalem. He makes certain modifications, however, on the prevailing critical theory; he admits that the reforms extended over a longer period than is commonly allowed for, that some were inaugurated before the eighteenth year of Josiah, that while some of the laws were the cause, others were the consequence of the reform, and that the (civil)

¹ In a *Separatabdruck* of the *Theologische Rundschau* (Mohr, Tübingen).

² *L'Origine du Code Deuteronomique*, Examen historique et littéraire du sujet à la lumière de la critique contemporaine, par Dr. Arthur-Robert Siebens (Librairie Ernest Leroux, 28 Rue Bonaparte, Paris; 25 francs).

laws in chs. 19–25 had not the same origin as the religious laws in 12–18. The book, which on its humanitarian side summarizes the teaching of the great prophets of the eighth century, lies somewhere between Hezekiah and 621, probably in the first twenty years of the seventh century. He accepts as authentic the reformation of Hezekiah as described in 2 K 18⁴, connecting it skilfully with the history of the period, and he offers some useful remarks on *waw* with the pf. for the consideration of scholars who propose to disintegrate 2 K 23 on the basis of the occasional emergence of that construction. He has little faith in the theory that Deuteronomy appeared in different editions; in any case there are no sufficient criteria for their discrimination. The book, written obviously by one who has the whole immense literature on Deuteronomy at his finger-ends, makes delightful reading: it is a thoroughly able defence of the commonly accepted view of the origin and purpose of Deuteronomy against the attacks which have recently been hurled at it from opposite flanks.

In the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*³ Eichrodt discusses the question whether O.T. theology has still an independent significance within O.T. science, and Morgenstern deals with the Matriarchate in ancient Israel and its historical implications. H. Hommel, pointing out the striking similarity between Ps 139 and the Vedic hymn (Atharvaveda iv. 16), raises the question whether, in view of the sparse emphasis upon the omnipresence of God in the O.T., the psalm may not be in some way dependent on the hymn. Galling throws light upon ancient worship by treating certain psalms and other brief sections of the O.T. as liturgical confessions of innocence made by the worshipper before being admitted to participation in the rites. Dr. Welch submits Neh 9 to an acute analysis, and concludes that 'the chapter has preserved a litany written for the worship of Northern Israel, on the occasion of a day of fasting, confession, and prayer.' The adoption of this litany by the men of Judah raises questions of the relation of the South to the North and questions about the composition of Ezr.-Neh. on which we hope Dr. Welch will in the near future throw some much needed light.

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³ 1929—Heft 2 (Töpelmann, Giessen; Mk. 4. 50).