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I. SOME PERILS OF MISSIONARY LIFE.¹

I suppose we all recognize that missionaries are the cream of Christians. They may say with Paul, in the whole length and breadth of his meaning, that unto them the grace has been given to preach unto the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. iii., 8). They are the bold and faithful spirits who bear the banner of the cross courageously to the front. We who abide at home, hope that we are at home by the will of God and to his glory; but we cannot withhold our admiration from those whom God has chosen to form the advance-guard of his conquering host. We recognize that these "picked men" are the *elite* of the army of the cross. Their bearing justifies this recognition. There is no body of men in the world of equal numbers who so thoroughly meet the trust reposed in them and the lofty sentiments entertained towards them by their fellow Christians.

So exalted is our well-founded appreciation of the character of missionaries in general that it comes with something of a shock to us to discover, as we are now and then led to discover, that even missionaries are, nevertheless, men, and are sometimes liable to the temptations, and shall

¹An address to a body of prospective missionaries.

IV. "THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS,
COMMONLY CALLED THE MINOR :"¹ CONSID-
ERED AS A TYPE.

Notices of this book seem to have been slow in finding their way to the public. The very complete bibliography provided in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* mentions the book itself, but that is all. This looks as if the usually careful compiler of that bibliography had not met with any formal and extended criticisms of Dr. Smith's book. Certainly no such criticisms have fallen under the eye of the present writer. Indeed, I can, at the moment, recall but two notices of the book. One of these appeared in the *Expository Times*, the other in the *Christian Observer*. The former was sufficiently appreciative, but not judicious or discriminating. The latter was judicious, but not specially appreciative. For lack of space neither was at all adequate to the real merits, and still less to the real importance of the book. Of its merits I shall have occasion to speak later. Apart from all other considerations, its importance lies in the fact that from its title page to its last paragraph the book is typical. It reflects, as in a mirror, all the leading characteristics, the excellencies, and, one must add, the defects also of the school to which its author belongs.

The typical character of the book reveals itself in its very title. Let the reader refer to it again. He will find that it is not called by any such staid name as "A Commentary on the Minor Prophets." It is not a Com-

¹THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS, COMMONLY CALLED THE MINOR. By George Adam Smith, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow. IN TWO VOLUMES, Vol. II. Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, i.-viii., "Malachi," Joel, "Zechariah," ix.-xiv., and Jonah, with Historical and Critical Introductions.

mentary. It is not called, "An Exposition of the Minor Prophets." And, notwithstanding the fact that it is one of the series known as the "Expositor's Bible," it is not an exposition. The title reads, "The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Commonly Called the Minor," (here follow the names of such of the Minor Prophets as are treated in this volume) "with Historical and Critical Introductions." Now this title is not only sufficiently unconventional to have a literary flavor and individuality of its own, but it has an additional charm, viz. : it conforms strictly to reality. And, just here, it may not be amiss to add that, while Dr. Smith has succeeded in being unconventional throughout, sometimes even laboriously so, he has not been equally successful in imparting to all of his statements that peculiar charm that comes only from being conformed to reality. In his title, however, the combination of these two qualities, freshness and reality, is almost perfect and altogether happy. If one will be at the pains to read the title, he will have only himself to blame, if, on reading the book, he feels defrauded or disappointed. It contains comments, grammatical and otherwise, and many of them of an illuminating character ; it contains expositions, and some very fine ones ; but, as already stated, it is neither commentary nor exposition. It is for the most part a series of translations prefaced by historical and critical introductions. Dr. Smith's title then could hardly have been improved upon.

The freshness and force which characterize the title characterize the book. They characterize both its literary form and its thought. Dr. Smith will put more thought upon the wording of a phrase than many writers will put upon that of a whole paragraph. He will put more thought into a phrase than some will put into many paragraphs. The result justifies his expenditure of energy. Men will read what he writes. And as they read they cannot but become aware that they have come into contact with an automobile

mind. They perceive unmistakable evidences of a real mind, really wrestling with a real problem. They may sometimes feel that the processes of this mind are erratic, and that the positions to which these processes lead are worse than erratic, but, if they think at all, they are compelled to experience a certain sympathy with and admiration for the wrestling mind as it addresses itself with skill and energy to the mastery of its problem. Dr. Smith is no mere manipulator of other men's thoughts. He thinks. Everywhere his thought shows that it has been forged at his own furnace and stamped with his own image and super-scription. And because he does think, his readers will be apt to forgive him much—far too much. Carried forward upon the full, free-flowing tide of his learning, charmed by the chaste beauty and vigor of his style, mastered by the energy of his mental action, only too many of his readers will be apt to overlook the preposterousness of certain of his pre-suppositions, the perversity of his logic, the impossibility of his methods and the inconcinnities which mar his conclusions.

I call attention to these points of excellence in Dr. Smith's book for the special benefit of my younger brethren. They have golden opportunities to do valiant service for the truth. Let them remember that it was of the sword of Goliath, the Philistine, that David said, "There is none like that; give it me."

It is no mean compliment to the school to which Dr. Smith belongs to say that, in its literary merits, his book is typical.

In what has been said of the title I have already indicated that for reasons satisfactory to himself Dr. Smith has largely delegated to others the task of expounding the prophecies that fall within the compass of this volume, and has devoted himself to the problems of criticism and of the historical development of prophecy which they present. Such a procedure, however, is sufficiently remarkable to

demand something of the nature of explanation or justification. And here it will be only fair to permit Dr. Smith to speak for himself. He says : "The necessity of including in one volume so many prophets, scattered over more than three centuries, and each of them requiring a separate introduction, has reduced the space available for a practical application of their teaching to modern life. But this is the less to be regretted, that the contents of the nine books before us are not so applicable to our own day as we have found their greater predecessors to be. On the other hand, however, they form a more varied introduction to Old Testament criticism, while, by the long range of time which they cover, and the many stages of religion to which they belong, they afford a wider view of the development of prophecy."

Speaking of the first of these points Dr. Smith says : "To Old Testament criticism these books furnish valuable introduction—some of them, like Obadiah, Joel and 'Zechariah,' ix.-xiv., by the great variety of opinion that has prevailed as to their dates or their relation to the other prophets with whom they have passages in common ; some, like Zechariah and 'Malachi,' by their relation to the Law, in the light of modern theories of the origin of the latter ; and some, like Joel and Jonah, by the question whether we are to regard them as history, or as allegories of history, or as Apocalypse."

On the second of the two points mentioned above, he says : "But the critical and textual value of our nine books is far exceeded by the historical. Each exhibits a development of prophecy of the greatest value. From this point of view, indeed, the volume might be entitled, 'The Passing of the Prophet.' For throughout our nine books we see the spirit and style of the classic prophecy of Israel gradually dissolved into other forms of religious thought and feeling. The clear start from the facts of the prophet's day, the ancient truths about Jehovah and Israel, and the

direct appeal to the prophet's contemporaries, are not always given, or when given are mingled, colored and warped by other religious interests, both present and future, which are even powerful enough to shake the ethical absolutism of the older prophets." But I cannot quote farther.

Whether or not Dr. Smith has justified himself in substituting criticism of the prophets for expository comments, and that in a book published and sold under the title of "The Expositor's Bible," is a question about which I feel little interest or concern. The fact that he does make such substitution of criticism for expository comment is significant. Here again we have the characteristic of the entire school to which Dr. Smith belongs. Take, for instance, the series known as "The International Commentary," and it will be found that, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, a proportionately small space is taken up in making plain what the Biblical author has said. Page after page is devoted to elaborating some theory of the so-called commentator in reference to double, triple, quadruple or quintuple authorship; or in showing up some absurdity or incongruity in the Biblical writer which the so-called commentator has, I dislike exceedingly to say it, himself devised.

In this connection, I may be permitted to add two remarks. The first is, that, when properly employed, there can be no exception taken to the validity of the methods and principles of historical criticism. With these, in the abstract, conservatives have no contention. It may fall in very well with the excellent opinions which "we moderns" entertain of ourselves and our achievements to represent the methods and principles of historical criticism as a recent discovery. Such boasts, however, must make the Muse of History blush. For she knows that there is merely enough truth in them to mislead the careless. The fact is that all the legitimate processes of the higher criticism, like the processes of logic, have their basis in the

very constitution of our minds. Their employment, to some degree or other, is scarcely optional. They come into play *sua sponte*, when the mind is confronted with the problems of higher criticism. What "we moderns" have done, and it is no mean service, is to give definite statement to these principles and methods; to bring them into formal relation one to another; and to apply them with a fuller consciousness of the fact that we are applying them, and so with greater chances of applying them consistently and successfully. Further, it ought not to be forgotten that these methods and principles are not the property of any one school. Nor does the use of them necessarily guarantee the correctness of the results reached. One's conclusion may be formally sound and yet his ratiocination as a whole fearfully rotten. In order to sound conclusions, sound methods and principles must be sanely used. Much, however, that in our day calls itself "historical criticism" is the very insanity of fancy prostituted to furnish plausible premises for foregone conclusions.

The other remark that ought to be made in order to prevent misconception is simply this: No language is too strong to express my appreciation of the laborious patience of the minute investigation instituted by writers, like Dr. Smith, in order to secure scientific accuracy in their results. They esteem no toil too great, no scrutiny too searching, no detail of form, phrase or thought, too minute to demand their consideration, if only they can get clearly before them all the factors that enter into the complex problem with which they undertake to deal. Nor can too great admiration be expressed for the amplitude of the learning which they bring to bear upon these problems. The evidence of such learning meets us on almost every page of Dr. Smith's book. And here lies the secret of the confidence which the general public seems disposed to repose in these men, and the homage it accords them. However it may hold in the forum of reason, or in that of conscience, no indictment

framed against them is likely to hold at the bar of the general public except as it is drawn by those who show themselves their peers in the respects I have indicated. Hence the folly and sin of the church, if she fails to raise up for God a body of men, not only of competent but of commanding scholarship. Such scholarship was never more demanded of her ministry than it is to-day.

Passing by other features of Dr. Smith's book which are typical, the remainder of this paper must be devoted to a somewhat fuller illustration of a single such feature. I refer to the tone and attitude which Dr. Smith assumes towards the Scripture writings and writers. The practical importance of this point must be obvious to all. The question has often been asked, What will be the effect upon the authority of Scripture, should the principles of Dr. Smith's school prevail? Dr. Smith's book furnishes the answer. And this answer, if less reassuring, seems more conclusive and convincing than some that have been given by the advocates of that school. Canon Cheyne, for instance, has written a volume entitled, "Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism." In it, he has undertaken to show that the legitimate result of the critical findings of his school is to increase our reverence for Scripture, and its value for edification. Dr. Driver has also given very comfortable assurances along the same line. But a greater than either has said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Would it be considered ungracious, should I recall the fact that he also said, "Beware of false prophets which come unto you in sheep's clothing?") I propose making a practical application of this test to the case in hand. In other words, I propose exhibiting in Dr. Smith's own words the effects of the principles of his school in his his own case. Surely this is fair. If these principles could be safe and wholesome in the hands of anyone, then, I may frankly say, I would have expected them to be found so in the case of Dr. Smith. Never did any reader come to

the perusal of a book with kindlier sentiments of confidence and regard for its author than were brought by the present writer to the perusal of Dr. Smith's book. And if I have been disappointed, I am compelled to believe that the fault is with Dr. Smith's critical principles rather than with Dr. Smith himself. But be that as it may, the fact is, that in this particular, as in others, Dr. Smith is a type. And it is fair to add that he is an exponent of the best element in his school.

What then is his tone, and what his attitude towards the Scripture writings and writers? The following quotations will sufficiently show. Let us begin, so to speak, with the minima. Here is what Dr. Smith has to say in regard to the style of Zechariah—he is speaking of the Visions—“Here the style is involved and redundant—the formulas ‘thus saith’ and ‘saying’ are repeated to weariness.” Dr. Smith admits that some of the defects in style to which he has referred may be traceable to corruptions of the text. But he adds, “There must of course have been a certain amount of redundancy in the original to provoke such aggravations of it, and of obscurity or tortuousness of style to cause them to be deemed necessary.” He is careful, however, to make this excuse for the prophet, “Of course the involved and and misty subjects of the latter (that is the Visions) naturally forced upon the description of them a laboriousness of art to which there was no provocation in directly exhorting the people to a pure life.” Again, in another place, he refers to the “strained art and obscure truths of the Visions.” That Dr. Smith cannot wholly excuse the prophet, however, appears from the fact that after having made every allowance possible he feels constrained to say, “The problem, therefore, remains—how one who had gift of speech, so straight and clear, came to torture and tangle his style.”

Dr. Smith adopts the same tone in speaking of the style of Haggai. He says, “The sneers of modern writers have

not been spared upon a style that is crabbed and jejune, and they have esteemed this to be a collapse of the prophetic spirit." Then follows the usual generous partial apology. It concludes as follows, "What God's people themselves could do for themselves—that was what needed telling at the moment; and if Haggai told it with a meagre and starved style, this also was in harmony with the occasion. One does not expect it otherwise when hungry men speak to each other of their duty." I cite these passages not because of any special importance that attaches to the matter of style, looked at in itself, but partly because they exhibit the force and finish of the style of which Dr. Smith is himself master, and partly because they will prepare the reader for what is to follow. They notify us that Dr. Smith, while disposed to deal generously with Scripture writers, can nevertheless, when occasion demands, deal with them with the utmost, most unflinching, unreserved faithfulness. Whether at times both his generosity and his severity are not overdone, even wholly misplaced, will of course be a question by itself. It is, however, a question upon which we need not stop. We are concerned rather with ascertaining and setting forth what are Dr. Smith's tone and attitude towards the Scripture writers, rather than with determining whether or not these are what they should be.

Let us pass on to notice Dr. Smith's estimate of the mental grasp of certain of the prophets. Speaking of prophecy during the Persian period, he says: "We miss, too, the clear outlook of the earlier prophets upon the history of the world, and their calm rational grasp of its forces. The world is still seen, and even to further distance than before. The people abate no whit of their ideal to be the teachers of mankind. But it is all through another medium. The lurid air of Apocalypse envelopes the future, and in their weakness to grapple either politically or philosophically with the problems which history offers, the prophets

resort to the expectation of physical catastrophes and of the intervention of supernatural armies. Such an atmosphere is not the native air of prophecy, and prophecy yields its supreme office in Israel to other forms of religious development. On one side the ecclesiastic comes to the front—the legalist, the organizer of ritual, the priest; on the other, the teacher, the moralist, the thinker and the speculator. At the same time personal religion is perhaps more deeply cultivated than at any other stage of the people's history." I hope that I shall be pardoned for adding that last sentence to my quotation. Of course it is not strictly relevant to the main purpose for which the quotation is made. It will, however, at least serve to show that Dr. Smith is dimly conscious of a problem which his school have conjured up for themselves, but with which they have made no serious effort to grapple. I refer to the fact that they would have us believe that from the same religious fountain there were going forth at one and the same time sweet waters and bitter. They are shut up to maintaining that the spent religious forces of the nation were at one and the same time going to seed in the ritualism and formalism of the Law (Dr. Smith himself pays this venerable relic of the religious past the graceful tribute of spelling it with a capital—"Law"), and striking root downward and bearing fruit upward in the splendid spirituality of the Psalms. But, like Dr. Smith, I can only glance at this interesting problem and pass it by. Our present business is with other elements in Dr. Smith's vivid, if somewhat startling and uncompromising portrait of prophecy during this critical period of Israel's history. Let the reader run his eye over it again. If he is in the habit of thinking at all he will be apt to find that it breeds many questions in his mind. I cannot go into them, nor even glance at them. I shall not call into question his "lurid" description of Apocalypse, nor ask by what authority Dr. Smith characterizes God's accredited messengers in the

way he does. I shall not ask what he does with Apocalypse in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In reference to all such matters, it is, perhaps, sufficient simply to remind one's self that to the "*sic volo, sic jubeo*" type of criticism "nothing is impossible." It is a law unto itself. What I do desire to do is simply to arrest attention upon the fact that the prophets of this period, if they were men of ordinary self-respect, could not but feel—mortified, shall I say? or indignant, at the portrait which this gifted literary artist has drawn of them. Happily, the prophets are long dead; and those long dead, of course, have no sensibilities to be wounded. Hence, doubtless, it is that criticism feels that there is no occasion for mincing her words when speaking of them. It does not fall within the province of this paper to inquire whether criticism has any need to consider that the God who commissioned these prophets, and spoke by them is still the living God, and so may be a factor worth reckoning with. The practical question is, What is likely to be the effect of this sort of "criticism" upon the living, the men and women of to-day, who are here with the problem of their own destiny actually upon their hands, and who have been inclined to look to the "more sure word of prophecy" for guidance and comfort? Let us look at Dr. Smith's account of the matter again. Here it is, very simple and intelligible—mental impotence confronted with the dark problems of history brought forth Apocalypse; and Apocalypse, that is revelation, revealed—mental impotence. Now let this scholarly conception of Dr. Smith penetrate the thick heads and permeate the thinking of the slow brains of us ordinary Anglo-Saxons; let us once become firmly seized of the idea that the darkness that characterizes Apocalypse does not truly represent or represent at all the clouds and darkness which serve at one and the same time to herald the coming of Jehovah and to hide his movements; let us become fully convinced that this darkness is occasioned by the dust which has been cast up by

discomforted prophecy to hide its impotence—I say, let this idea once become firmly lodged in men's minds and what will be its effect upon their reverence for Scripture? We Anglo-Saxons have our faults and our follies, but, so far as my observation goes, homage for exposed, impudent impotence masquerading in the terrors of deity has not been one of them. Dr. Smith may, indeed, continue to write prophecy with a capital "P," and so express his personal reverence for departed greatness, but will that be sufficient to inspire a similar reverence in others?

Having glanced at Dr. Smith's conception of Apocalypse, and gotten his view of the mental measure, and the methods of the prophets of the Persian period, let us next hear what he has to say of other prophets and their prophecies. "Criticism" has made us acquainted with a prophet nowhere explicitly mentioned in Scripture—I refer to him who is commonly known as the "Second Isaiah." It has said many very gracious things of him. Dr. Driver has assured us that he uttered genuine predictions, real disclosures of what would be the course of events in the future; not in the distant future, to be sure, but still sufficiently distant to give us all the assurance that we need that the prophet spoke from the mouth of God.

It sounds a little strange, therefore, and not wholly encouraging to hear Dr. Smith say, "We must remember that Haggai and Zechariah were addressing a people to whom (whatever view we take of the transactions under Cyrus) the favor of Cyrus had been one vast disillusion in the light of the predictions of the Second Isaiah." (219.)

From this it would appear that the "Second Isaiah" of "Criticism" was so unfortunate as to awaken expectations that were not to be realized in the sphere of history. I do not mean, of course, merely that he was misinterpreted, nor does Dr. Smith. The latter would doubtless scorn such a subterfuge. I mean that, according to Dr. Smith, those

who understood his words best, and trusted to them most implicitly fared worst. Those who walked in the light of his promises, in the end awoke to the realization of the bitter truth that they had been following up an *ignis fatuus*.

And what was true of the "Second Isaiah" was true, according to Dr. Smith, of Haggai. We read in the latter, "And the word of Jehovah came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, saying: Speak to Zerubbabel, Satrap of Judah, saying: I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, and I will overturn the thrones of kingdoms, and will shatter the power of the kingdoms of the Gentiles, and will overturn chariots and their riders, and horses and their riders will come down every man by the sword of his brother. In that day—oracle of Jehovah of Hosts—I will take Zerubbabel, the son of She'alti'el, My servant—oracle of Jehovah—and will make him like a signet ring; for thee have I chosen—oracle of Jehovah of Hosts."

Now upon these words Dr. Smith has the following interesting series of comments: "The wars and mutual destructions of the Gentiles of which Haggai speaks, are doubtless those revolts of races and provinces, which threatened to disrupt the Persian Empire upon the accession of Darius, 521. In four years Darius quelled them all and reorganized his empire before the Jews finished their Temple. Like all the Syrian governors, Zerubbabel remained his poor lieutenant and submissive tributary. History rolled westward into Europe. The signet-ring of Jehovah was not acknowledged by the world—does not even seem to have challenged its briefest attention. But Haggai had at least succeeded in asserting the Messianic hope of Israel, always baffled, never quenched, in this reopening of her life. He had delivered the ancient heritage of Israel to the care of the new Judaism."

I ask the reader to give both the prophecy and Dr. Smith's comment his most thoughtful attention. In regard

to the former, let him ask himself whether the prophet could have spoken with greater authority or with greater assurance? Would it have been possible for him to give in words a more vivid impression of his own conviction that he was speaking directly from the mouth of God? Could he, if he had tried, more fully have committed that God, for whom he professed to speak, to the effecting of the event predicted? And now let him ask himself whether the prophet who spoke these words could read Dr. Smith's comment without, I will not say chagrin and profound mortification, but without resentment? And why with resentment? Surely, not merely because, as a critic, Dr. Smith has felt obliged to tell the truth regardless of whose feelings may be wounded; nor merely because Dr. Smith has been pleased to assume that the words of the prophet will bear no other interpretation than one that brings them into direct and palpable conflict with the facts of history. I think that the prophet might possibly have read with a grim smile the blunt words of which the Scotch Professor makes use a little further on: "Four months had elapsed since Haggai promised that in a little while God would shake the world. But the world was not shaken." But I cannot avoid the feeling that, if the prophet possessed the slightest particle of self-respect, his indignation would have flamed out hot as he read these fine sentences—and they are very fine—in which Dr. Smith is at pains to attempt elaborately to prove that his prophecy—despite its thrice repeated "oracle of Jehovah"—was a miserable and even ridiculous fiasco.

Some one, however, may insist that while the Scotch Professor has been possibly unnecessarily elaborate in making obvious the untowardness of the prophet's utterance in this particular instance, his offence after all amounts only to a little over-indulgence in fine writing. I am aware, of course, of the fact that by his ordination vows, as well as by his occupancy of a chair in one of the Theological

Seminaries of the Free Church, Dr. Smith is committed to the position that the book of Haggai, including this oracle, is a part of the Word of God written. I am aware that, in the paragraph immediately following the one above quoted, Dr. Smith undertakes to defend Haggai against some who are disposed "to depress his value as a prophet almost to a vanishing point." Hence should Dr. Smith claim that these facts are of themselves sufficient evidence that he does entertain a due respect for the prophet, I trust that I should be the last to avail myself of his own critical methods to impeach his veracity; though anyone at all acquainted with those methods can easily see how this could be done, not only with poetic justice, but without any of the violence that characterizes Dr. Smith's application of the same methods to a writer, like the author of the book of Ezra. Admitting, then, that Dr. Smith does, doubtless, believe himself to have some sort of respect, such as it is, for Haggai, I should feel amply warranted in insisting that the manner in which he has expressed it is not at all calculated to inspire a similar sentiment in others. To stultify the prophet, and prove that the "Word of Jehovah" in his lips was but an empty phrase synonymous with the desire, and as the event proved the delusion of his own heart may not in the least interfere with Dr. Smith's reverence for the "Word of Jehovah," or his respect for the prophet who uttered it; but certainly if the above be a just exposition of the "Word of Jehovah" by Haggai, then, many will feel that they had just as well go to, let us say, Dr. Smith himself, or any of the "prophets" of his school for the "Word of Jehovah" as to Isaiah, or the "Second Isaiah," or Haggai. And he may feel quite sure that, if ever things should come to such a pass, at least one of the predictions of the "Second Zechariah" will not lack fulfillment: "And it shall come to pass, if any man prophecy again, then shall his father and mother who begat him say to him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest falsehood in the name of Jehovah; and his

father and his mother shall stab him for his prophecying. And it shall be in that day that the prophets shall be ashamed of their visions when they prophecy, and they shall not wear the leather cloak in order to lie." But I must pass on.

Without stopping to comment upon them individually, I shall next group together several statements from the Glasgow Professor which will throw light upon an important aspect of the matter under consideration. I mean the tone which Dr. Smith permits himself to assume towards the writers of Scripture.

Speaking of Nahum, he says, "Such is the sheer religion of the Proem to the Book of Nahum—thoroughly Oriental in its sense of God's method and resources of destruction; very Jewish, and very natural to that age of Jewish history, in the bursting of its long pent hopes of revenge. We of the West might express these hopes differently. We should not attribute so much personal passion to the Avenger. With our keener sense of law, we should emphasize the slowness of the process, and select for its illustration the forces of decay rather than those of sudden ruin. But we must remember the crashing times in which the Jews lived." (92).

Again speaking of Obadiah he indulges in this vein, "Brave, hot heart! It shall be as thou sayest; it shall be for a brief season. But in exile thy people and thou have first to learn many more things about the heathen than you can now feel. Mix with them on that far-off coast, from which thou criest. Learn what the world is, and that more beautiful and more possible than the narrow rule which thou hast promised to Israel over her neighbors shall be that world-wide service of man, of which, in fifty years, all the best of thy people shall be dreaming." (183).

Commenting upon Haggai's opening oracle, he says, "For ourselves, Haggai's appeal to the barren seasons and

poverty of the people as a proof of God's anger with their selfishness, must raise questions." (239).

Referring to Zechariah xiv, 17ff, he expresses himself thus, "But such a punishment for such a neglect shows how completely prophecy has become subject to the Law. One is tempted to think what Amos, or Jeremiah, or even 'Malachi' would have thought of this. Verily all the writers of the prophetic books did not stand upon the same level." (489).

This last, though not quite up to Dr. Smith's high grade of literary excellence, is in its way unsurpassed by anything in his book. It relieves the tension on the feelings caused by some of Dr. Smith's preceding pronouncements, and provokes a smile, not only because of the naive way in which it reveals what Dr. Smith thinks of Zechariah, but because it compels us to consider what Zechariah, or "even 'Malachi'" would think of Dr. Smith. One hardly knows which to admire more in the preceding excerpts, Dr. Smith's frank expression of appreciation of whatever of excellence he may have discerned "even in 'Malachi'"; the steadiness and steadfastness with which he asserts and maintains his own critical independence; or the very delicate but thorough way in which he performs the difficult and disagreeable task of preventing his readers from suffering damage from the mistaken notions of the prophets. And yet, much as I admire the brilliance of the Glasgow Professor, I can but question whether he is quite wise to bring himself into such painfully pointed contrast even with "Malachi." For should the poor confused people of God ever find themselves compelled to forsake "Malachi" *et id omne genus*, and take up the distressed cry, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" I can but question whether a single voice from heaven or upon the earth would be heard to reply: "To George Adam Smith."

I come next to consider a yet more important element in the prophetic writings, as it appears in the light of Dr.

Smith's criticism. I refer to the ethical temper of the prophets and the ethical content of their productions. The reader is of course cognizant of the fact that "Criticism" has assured us that even after the Scriptures, viewed as histories, have been relegated by it to the waste basket, the world will take them from there for the sake of the "grand religious stories" which they unquestionably contain. Hence it is the more discouraging to hear Dr. Smith say :

"With Nahum and Obadaiah the ethical is entirely missed in the presence of the claims—and we cannot deny that they are natural claims—of the long-suffering nation's hour of revenge upon her heathen tyrants."

And again :

"In the Greek period, the oracles now numbered from the ninth to the fourteenth chapters of the Book of Zechariah repeat to aggravation the exulting revenge of Nahum and Obadiah, without the strong style or the hold upon history which the former exhibits, and show us prophecy still further enwrapped in apocalypse."

Nor is there much to encourage in such a portrait as this :

"For this (i. e. the punishments of "the incorrigible people of Jehovah") Nahum has no thought. His heart, for all its bigness, holds room only for the bitter memories, the baffled hopes and the unappeased hatreds of a hundred years. . . . Nahum's book is one great At Last !" (90).

"And, therefore, while Nahum is a worse prophet than Zephaniah, with less conscience and less insight, he is a greater poet, pouring fourth the exultation of a people long enslaved, who see their tyrant ready for destruction." (91).

And quite unique, at least in Anglo-Saxon religious literature is the following :

"About 1030 David, about 130 the Hasmonians, were equally at war with Edom ; and few are the prophets between those distant dates who do not cry for vengeance

against him or exult in his overthrow. The Book of Obadiah is singular in this, that it contains nothing else than such feelings and such cries. It brings no spiritual message. It speaks no word of sin, or of righteousness, or of mercy, but only doom upon Edom in bitter resentment at his cruelties and in exultation that, as he has helped to disinherit Israel, Israel shall disinherit him. Such a book among the prophets surprises us. It seems but a dark surge staining the stream of revelation, as if to exhibit through what a muddy channel these sacred waters have been poured upon the world. Is the book only an outbreak of Israel's selfish patriotism? This is the question we have to discuss in the present chapter." (178).

"It is, therefore, no mere passion for revenge, which inspires the few hot verses of Obadiah. No doubt, bitter memories rankle in his heart. He eagerly repeats the voices of a day when Israel matched Edom in cruelty and was cruel for the sake of gold, when Judah's kings coveted Esau's treasures and were foiled. No doubt there is exultation in the news he hears, that these treasures have been rifled by others; that all the cleverness of this proud people has not availed against its treacherous allies; and that it has been sent packing to its border. But beneath such savage tempers there beats a heart which has fought and suffered for the highest things, and now in its martyrdom sees them baffled and mocked by a people without vision and without feeling. Justice, mercy and truth; the education of humanity in the law of God, the establishment of His will upon earth—these things, it is true, are not mentioned in the book of Obadiah, but it is for the sake of some dim instinct of them that its wrath is poured upon those foes whose treachery and malice seek to make them impossible by destroying the one people on earth who then believed them and lived for them." (182, 3).

Let the reader remember that this last is designed by Dr. Smith to be a defense of the prophet. He follows it up

with the feeling apostrophe, "Brave, hot heart!" which we have already read. Now let us imagine the prophet Obadiah coming across it with this title, "*Apologia Pro Vita Prophetæ Abdiaë*," and ask ourselves what would probably be the prophet's feelings. These feelings would of course be no criteria as to the justice of Dr. Smith's portrait, but they will, at least, serve to bring before us the effect that the prophet would expect it to have upon his reputation wherever it found acceptance as true to life. His only consolation would be that beneath his "savage tempers," and the "dark surge" with which he stained "the sacred waters of revelation," Dr. Smith has confessed that even he could discern "some dim instinct" of the fact that, in the prophet's mind, Israel somehow stood for "Justice, mercy and truth, the education of humanity in the law of God, and the establishment of His will upon earth." I fear, however, that to many of us moderns Dr. Smith will appear to have gone beyond the bounds of a wise magnanimity in finding in this "dim instinct" a paliation, if not a justification, of the prophet in emptying upon Edom the full viols of his poisonous, personal hate.

I come now to the last point to be considered in this paper. I refer to the cavalier way in which Dr. Smith brings into suspicion, or brushes aside the veracity of the statements made by one and another of the Scripture writers. The position of critical independence which he assumes towards the statements of the Book of Kings, and the critical freedom that he employs in referring to them appears in the following passages :

"Jerusalem was delivered in 701, and the Assyrians kept away from Palestine for twenty-three years. Judah had peace, and Hezekiah was free to devote his latter days to the work of purifying the worship of his people. What he exactly achieved is uncertain. The historian imputes to him the removal of the high places, the destruction of the Maceboth and Asheras and of the brazen serpent. (5.)

“The Book of Deuteronomy forms a problem by itself. The legislation which composes the bulk of it appears to have been found among the Temple archives at the end of our period and presented to Josiah as an old and forgotten work. There is no reason to charge with fraud those who made the presentation by affirming that they really invented the book. They were priests of Jerusalem, but the book was written by members of the prophetic party, and ostensibly in the interests of the priests of the country.” (10.)

What Hezekiah really did, in the present state of his information, Dr. Smith does not care positively to say. He deems it sufficient and safest to indicate that “the historian *imputes*” certain changes to him. And so as to the real purpose of the members of “the prophetic party” in writing Deuteronomy, Dr. Smith leaves it to his readers to surmise, if they can, what this purpose was. He contents himself by throwing out, as it were, a note of warning, to the effect that it was written “*ostensibly* in the interests of the country priests,” that is, the country priests as opposed to the priests of Jerusalem.

Those at all familiar with the trend of current criticism will be prepared for Dr. Smith’s critical reserve in reference to the Chronicler. It comes out not obscurely in such language as this :

“What grounds the Chronicler had for such a statement are quite unknown to us. He introduces Manasseh’s captivity as the consequence of idolatry, and asserts that on his restoration Manasseh abolished in Judah all worship save that of Jehovah, but if this happened (and the Book of Kings has no trace of it) it was without result.” (11.)

His estimate of the historicity of portions of the matter found in Ezra may be gathered from the following : “This last assertion, which of course was false, may have been due either to a misunderstanding of the Jewish elders by the reporting Satrap, or else to the Jews themselves, anxious to make their case as strong as possible. The

latter is a more probable alternative." No one, I think, should object to a spade's being called a spade. Hence it would be mere squeamishness to stumble at Dr. Smith's word "false," seeing that the "assertion" to which it is applied is unquestionably false. But I must confess that I cannot regard it as generous in Dr. Smith first gratuitously to construct the words of the record into a falsehood, and then gratuitously to put this falsehood into the mouths of the elders of the Jews. It will be observed that his reasoning is something like this: "This statement, as I have now found it, may very well be a deliberate falsehood, rather than a mere misunderstanding, hence it is, under all the circumstances, probable that it is a falsehood." It was this sort of "judicial" impartiality which gave to the "bloody Jeffries" his great distinction among Jurists. If such criticism does not secure for Dr. Smith a similar distinction among critics, it will only be because it is his misfortune to be exercising his function at a time when this style of criticism, so far from being exceptional, is quite the rule.

The following will be found to be in the same vein: "On these grounds, therefore, we must hold that the attempt to discredit the tradition of an important return of exiles under Cyrus has not been successful; that such a return remains the more probable solution of an obscure and difficult problem, and that therefore the Jews who with Zerubbabel and Joshua are represented in Haggai and Zechariah as building the Temple in the second year of Darius, 520, had come up from Babylon about 537. *Such a conclusion, of course, need not commit us to the various data offered by the Chronicler in his story of the Return, such as the Edict of Cyrus, nor to all his details.* (The italics are mine.)

It will be observed here that Dr. Smith distinctly refuses to commit himself to "the various data offered by the Chronicler in his story of the Return, such as the Edict of Cyrus," and "to all of his details." Of course every man's

first duty is to his own reputation. Hence no one can blame a person occupying Professor Smith's high position for having a care how he lends the influence of his name to loose and unhistorical statements from whatever source they may proceed—even though that source be the author of one of the books of the Bible. And yet, it must be obvious to all that just in proportion as Dr. Smith gains credit for discrimination by this off-hand, matter of course disclaimer, just in that proportion must the credit of the Chronicler suffer. It is much to be regretted that Dr. Smith felt compelled to assume such a position. It looks like a claim either to superior information or to superior morals. Of course, if Dr. Smith has detected the Chronicler in falsifying the truth of history, then he is rather to be praised than blamed for having had the love of truth that inclined him to investigate the case, the candor that enabled him to admit the weight of the evidence, and the courage that sustained him in announcing his conclusion. But, even then, it would have added immeasurably to the moral weight of his judgment could Professor Smith have seen his way clear to surrender a commission that requires him to teach that the Book of Chronicles is the Word of God, to say nothing of the stipend that is usually supposed to attach to the faithful discharge of this commission. The Scotch Professor can hardly be ignorant of the fact that when one appears in court to discredit the statements of even the humblest of his fellow-citizens, it is of prime importance to the full effect of his testimony that the jury should have no grounds to suspect that his own mind is at all beclouded as to the binding obligation of an oath.

This, however, is only one aspect of the case. There is another which even a man of Professor Smith's courage would have done well to consider, if for no other reason, at least out of regard for the interests of the truth, which he holds so dear, though it has cost him so little. The consideration referred to connects itself with the phrase "of

course" which falls so lightly and easily from the Glasgow Professor's pen. It is possible to conceive of a really loyal son whose love of truth would enable him, rising superior to all merely natural, filial instincts, sorrowfully but faithfully and unflinchingly to sift the evidence that was to impeach the chastity of the mother that nurtured him at her breasts, and whose courageous candor would enable him to admit its weight even though it broke his heart. But a son who had been pursuing such investigations, and who, moved by the love of truth, meditated giving his conclusions to the public, would act in a very ill-advised manner should he do it in any such terms as these: "That my honored mother was a woman of substantial chastity, I am prepared to maintain against all gainsayers, though, of course, she had her occasional lapses and liaisons." For, as is only too obvious, the brutal callousness of such an "of course" would be more damning to the fair name of the son than of the mother—even though she were an harlot.

Such, then, is the attitude and such the tone which Dr. Smith, a Professor, be it observed, in the Free Church College, Glasgow, permits himself, and is permitted by his ecclesiastical superiors to assume towards the Scripture writers and writings. He does not hesitate, as we have seen, to describe the prophets of the entire Persian period as a set of mental incompetents, but with enough of a certain immoral shrewdness to attempt to hide their incapacity by enveloping the future in what he is pleased to characterize as "the lurid air of Apocalypse." He does not hesitate to picture Isaiah, Haggai, and others of the prophets as using the solemn formula, "oracle of Jehovah" as a means of securing currency and credit for what were in reality oracles out of the desire and delusion, if not the positive and impudent deceit of their own hearts. While crediting Obadiah, and others of the prophets, with "some dim instinct" of the fact that somehow or somehow his people were no less than the hinge of destiny, he does not hesitate to make

it appear that the real inspiration under which the language of his "oracle of Jehovah" was framed was that of a bitter personal hate, and—last, lowest, bitterest depth of the prophet's humiliation—he does not hesitate to apostrophize him, to applaud him, "damning with faint praise," and ostentatiously to patronize him, making even for his book a place in these goodly "oracles of God." He does not hesitate gratuitously to impugn the veracity of Scripture persons, and to bring the taint of an unjust suspicion upon the veracity of the Scripture writers themselves.

It is not my purpose to indulge in any useless lamentations over this state of things. I have no unavailing protest to make against handling God's holy Word with profane hands. The Master whom we serve, when told on a certain occasion that the Pharisees were criticising his words, experienced no spasm of weak fear, but said with a certain dignified and properly understood, even awful composure: "Let them alone. They be blind leaders of the blind." And again, when these same Pharisees had asked with incredulous contempt: "Are we also blind?" answered: "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say: We see; your sin remaineth." We cannot do more wisely than to note these words of our Master and shape by them our attitude towards those who professing to be "critics," that is, judges, of the written Word, shape their procedure by precedents borrowed from the Courts of Caiaphas, Herod and Pontius Pilate—judges, who, having a case to prove, wisely manipulated some evidence, and manufactured more, and who between them managed to heap upon the Incarnate Word the incongruous indignities, if indignities can be incongruous, of undisguised rejection of his claims, mock reverence for his claims, and misplaced condescension towards the real excellencies of his much misunderstood and misrepresented character, which condescending, weak defense availed as little to deliver Christ from the malice of his enemies as it has availed to deliver

him who uttered it from the condemnation and contempt of posterity.

I say again that I have neither complaint nor protest to make against these "reverent Christian scholars" who now stand to the front. I note their procedure, by which is meant their manner of applying certain methods and principles to concrete cases, merely to say that intelligent students of God's Word, who are able to restrain a certain righteous, fiery indignation and push through a volume like this, will find themselves repaid by laying it down with a deeper sense of the reality of Scripture persons and their experiences, and with a livelier sense also of the preciousness of Scripture, and—of the long-suffering of God.

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