

The Bible Student.

CONTINUING

The Bible Student and Religious Outlook.

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Number 1.

Hosea vi. 7: The word "Adam" is in Hebrew both **Adam or Man?** an appellative noun meaning "man," and the proper name of the first man, much as if we in English should denominate the first man simply "Man." It is a natural consequence that in some of the passages where it occurs the word is capable of either sense, and the commentators are puzzled in which way to interpret it. One of the most famous of these passages is Hosea vi. 7. In our so-called Authorized English Version, this verse is given thus: "But they like men" (mg. "or, like Adam"), "have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me." In the Revised Version, on the other hand, it reads: "But they like Adam" (mg. "or, men"): "have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me." Still another rendering is suggested in the margin of the Revised Version, viz: "But they are as men that have transgressed a covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me." The main fact is that the two versions differ in their reading of the word "adam," the Authorized Version taking it as a common noun and the Revised as a proper

name. But the margin of the Revised Version suggests two ways of translating the verse, if the word be deemed a common noun.

Eastern and Western Traditions.

The difference of opinion thus represented by our English versions is not of modern origin. It goes back to the very earliest times, and indeed gave rise to divergent traditions of interpretation between the Eastern and the Western churches. The early versions of the Eastern Churches,—the Septuagint Greek and the Syriac,—followed by the Arabic, took the word as a common noun. Jerome, on the contrary, in his Latin version, which has since his day occupied the position of the Vulgate Version of the West, renders it as a proper name. Appeal to the underlying Hebrew was rare in the Patristic age, and became ever rarer as the centuries sped away. So that we may be sure that to the Christians of the East this verse for ages spoke of a man's covenant while to the Christians of the West it spoke of a covenant of God with Adam. Occasion for citing the verse did not often arise in the Patristic and Mediæval times, and we can trace the mat-

Current Biblical Thought.

The Angel of Jehovah and Critical Views.

We have honestly sought to obtain profit from the article on "The Angel of Jehovah" by Mr. M-J. LAGRANGE, published in the April number of the *Revue Biblique Internationale*; but, we must confess, with very little success. It opens with a short paragraph in which the problem is quite accurately precised. "The Angel of Jehovah," we read, "is one of the most mysterious figures in the Old Testament. Sometimes he appears and acts like an angel, that is to say, in accordance with the proper sense of the word *Māl'akh*, as a messenger, an officer charged with a mission of his sovereign; sometimes he speaks in the name of God himself. It is on the occasion of the apparition at the Burning Bush that his role is especially enigmatic; for he does not fear to take the name of Jehovah at the very moment when this divine name is revealed." After the good beginning it is particularly disappointing to advance only to insupportable hypotheses. First a few words are said as to the early opinions: Philo's identification of the Angel of God with the Word, the Son of God, and the adoption of this view by so many of the Fathers, including even "a mind so strong as that of Theodoret;" Augustine's preference for the view that he was only a servant who spoke in the name of the King, and THOMAS AQUINAS' pronunciation in the same sense "on very profound theological grounds." Next the contention of the prevailing critical school, that the conception of the Angel of Jehovah dates back to

the very origin of the religion of Israel and indeed forms the starting point from which the idea of other angels has grown, is stated and criticised. This, says LAGRANGE, is to confound the whole order of development of Israelitish religion, which must be presumed to take its start in a naïve anthropomorphism which had no difficulty in bringing Jehovah down to earth and which had no need for intermediary beings. He sets himself then to show "by the aid of literary and textual criticism" how a conception logically developed in the history was artificially carried back to the beginnings. He has, of course, no difficulty in doing so—"by the aid of literary and textual criticism:" as no one need have any difficulty in applying any theory of development of ideas whatever to any text whatever "by the aid of literary and textual criticism," that is, in one simple word, by adjusting the text by hypotheses literary and textual to the theory. As the result of his manipulation of documents and text he secures the desired result: that at first Jehovah himself appeared to his people, while later an angel was interposed between his insufferable and inapproachable majesty and their human littleness. "In one word," he says, "the ancients make no mystery of allowing sensible appearances of Jahvé, without feeling bound from these very varied apparitions to infer that he had a sensible form of his own to which he was necessarily bound. But later, it was preferred to consider these apparitions as conducted by the aid of the ordinary envoy of Jahvé. The old

texts were, therefore, retouched in this sense, but with so much respect and prudence that there was left persisting on the lips of this mysterious Being the affirmation that he was God." That this was the course of things we have no authority for believing except Mr. LAGRANGE's theory. We prefer the theory of the Biblical authors, who, on the lowest ground, had more documentary evidence of the course of religious thought in Israel before them than M. LAGRANGE enjoys; and whose presentation of that course, on the highest ground, has received the imprimatur of our Lord and his apostles, and (this especially for M. LAGRANGE) that also of the Church of Rome speaking in her two greatest councils to the effect that the Biblical books have "God for their author." On a later page of the same number of the *Revue Biblique* attention is called to M. SALOMON REINACH's biting note in the *Revue Archéologique* (XVI., 319), entitled *Au théâtre Folies babyloniennes*, in which he "vigorously reproves those 'saturnalia of the spirit of combination in delirium'" in which WINCKLER has been indulging of late. The writer pointedly asks whether M.

REINACH has not himself yielded to the same temptation to indulge in "deceptive combinations," and whether the totemism of ROBERTSON SMITH is any surer guide to the truth than the system of astral myths employed by WINCKLER. It is a righteous application of the parable of the beam and mote: and we take courage from it to make another application of the parable just as righteous. Is M. LAGRANGE's system of reconstruction of the Biblical material "by the aid of literary and textual criticism" any better in principle than that of Messrs. CHEYNE and ROBERTSON SMITH and SALOMON REINACH,—than that of HUGO WINCKLER and FRIEDRICH DELITZSCH? We do not say that people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. We are glad they are throwing stones and we should be happy to encourage them in it. After all, the thing to do is to get the glass-houses all smashed; and this mutual stone-throwing is likely to accomplish that desirable end, and is therefore to be heartily welcomed by us. There is a house, not glass, built on the rock: when the stone throwing is all over it is likely that this house will be found standing alone. B. B. W.