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## Book Reviews.

### **A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs.**

*International Critical Commentary.* By PROFESSOR CRAWFORD H. TOY, D.D., Harvard University. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899. Pp. xxxvi + 554. \$3, net.

The literature of Proverbs has lately been enriched with three good commentaries: that of Wildeboer, in Marti's *Kurzer Handkommentar* (1897); that of Frankenberg, in Nowack's *Handkommentar* (1898); and, lastly, the present work of Toy, in the *International Critical Commentary*. This accession of new and competent treatises on the great Wisdom book is significant of progress and of growing interest. An immense advance has been made during the last quarter of a century, especially in the treatment of questions, whether of general or special interpretation, whose solution depends upon a knowledge of the history of Hebrew thought. It is perhaps the greatest merit of Toy's most excellent book that he sets forth clearly and sharply the relations of Proverbs to the other Hebrew writings, canonical and extra-canonical, as well as to the intellectual and social conditions under which the Proverbs were evolved and collected.

The introduction to the exposition occupies thirty-six pages. It is a model of concise and comprehensive analysis and statement. It is, in fact, somewhat too brief. A noteworthy section is that on "Rhythm and Parallelism" (§ 4). The subject of rhythmical form in Hebrew poetry being somewhat obscure, it is safer to employ, as Toy does, the terms *binary* (having two beats), *ternary*, and *quaternary*, than to use the misleading classical terminology, "dimeter," "trimeter," "tetrameter," etc. The section on "Thought" (§ 5, pp. v-xix) is naturally among the most important. The easy-going reader may be surprised to find how many points of view familiar to the Christian theologian or sociologist are unthought of or ignored in the Proverbs (*cf.* pp. xiv ff.). But the justice done to the book as "definitely religious, standing in sympathetic and reverent contact with the conception of a just and wise divine government of the world" (p. xvi), will satisfy the judicious Bible student. Moreover, it is both just and sagacious on the part of the author to assume (pp. xv f.) that certain religious elements absent from the collection were not necessarily unknown to the writers—a

saving principle valid also in other regions of Old Testament literary criticism.

Perhaps the author's most valuable contribution to the general treatment is found in § 6, "Origin and Date." He makes some excellent points by comparing (pp. xxiv ff.) with one another the several Wisdom books (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon, Ben-Sira). The collection of the several sections of the book is made to run from the fourth to the second century B. C. (p. xxx). I quote the essential statements: "Out of certain current collections of aphorisms were first put together our subsections chaps. 10-15; 16: 1-22: 16; 25-27, and 28, 29; and from these by different editors the sections 10: 1-22: 16 and 25-29 were made, the editor of the latter being aware of the existence of the former. The two may have received substantially their present form between 350 and 300 B. C., the second a little later than the first. During the next half-century the third section (22: 17-24: 34) was produced, and a book of aphorisms was formed by combining section two (10: 1-22: 16) and section four (chaps. 25-29) and inserting section three between them. . . . The opening section (omitting 6: 1-19; 9: 7-12) may have been composed about the middle of the third century B. C. . . . The additions to the section (6: 1-19; 9: 7-12), which resemble sections three and five (chaps. 30, 31) and two, may be due to the final redactor, or to a very late scribe. Finally, the work was completed by the addition of the fragments contained in chaps. 30, 31, the completion falling in the second century B. C." Professor Toy, it may be added, is clearly right in making Proverbs later than Job. It may be said, further, that the business of collecting Proverbs is one of the latest of literary pursuits.

In the exposition the author displays insight, good sense, and soberness of judgment in a high degree—qualities which are especially needed in an interpreter of Proverbs, where allusions are so frequent to modes of thought and habits of life scarcely touched upon in the rest of the Old Testament. Examples of judicious treatment, chosen at random, are the comments on Prov. 5: 15-20; 8: 22-31; 9: 1-6; 11: 30; 21: 9.

No serious strictures can be made upon the book. It is only upon the concluding section (chaps. 30, 31) that the present reviewer feels himself justified in dissenting from the general positions held by the author. Have we not in these chapters groups of proverbs coined in communities outside of Palestine proper? Among the indications

are the following: (1) the suspected Arabisms (not admitted by Dr. Toy), and the Aramaizing tendency of the language, a combination natural on the southeastern borderland; (2) the suggestion of a queen-dom or of feminine influence at court (31:1), a phenomenon notoriously common in ancient Arabia from the days of the reign of the queen of Sheba to those of the queen of Palmyre; (3) the exceptionally important place accorded to women in business, both domestic and non-domestic; (4) the allusions to "Massa" (30:1; 31:1); (5) the fact that the "sons of the East" were renowned for their proverbial wisdom (1 Kings 5:10), and the likelihood that some of their sayings would be taken up by Hebrew-speaking borderers and become part of current collections; (6) the absence of allusions to vices and temptations peculiar to city life, upon which Dr. Toy lays stress as characterizing the book generally (pp. xi, xviii, xxii).

The translations are in keeping with the simplicity, conciseness, and nervous strength of the original. Ethical and intellectual terms are felicitously rendered. It would be better to avoid following E. V. by rendering  $\text{חַמַּס}$  "violence" (*e. g.*, in 10:11; 13:2). For this the Hebrew word is  $\text{שָׁוְיָ}$ , which he renders in 21:7 correctly.  $\text{חַמַּס}$  is properly "injustice," of course by constraint, as in the East generally. Considerable attention is paid to the etymology of important or obscure words. Grammatical constructions are also looked after sharply. But Professor Toy is in error on chap. 4:18, when he says that  $\text{כְּבוֹר}$  is impossible as a construct; see König, *Syntax*, § 305*b*. He has, therefore, missed the right meaning of the sentence in his translation.

Good emendations of the text are often made. In 10:16 the substitution of "destruction" for "sin" is hazardous.

The proof-reading has been carefully done. But on p. xxvi, note, we find "Cyclopaedia Biblica." On p. 167 stands "Peshita," while on pp. xxxii and xxxiii is found "Peshitta." On p. 3 occurs "distiches." An awkward footnote on p. v, referring to Bertheau, is "*Einleitung* to his Comm'y on *Sprüche*."

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**The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity.** By JOHN CAIRD, D.D., LL.D. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1899. Two volumes. Pp. li + 232, 297. \$3.50.

These two volumes come laden with a pathetic interest into the hands of those who are familiar with the writings of the famous brothers, John and Edward Caird. Mr. Edward Caird has here