

*fundamentally* neither more nor less critical or conservative towards tradition than literary criticism is. The Old Testament scholar as a traditio-critic will be engrossed in the same task as the literary critic was and is, namely, a correct and true placing of the separate Old Testament texts" (p. 63). The "traditio-critic" seeks to "reach an understanding of the (sensible) motives that asserted themselves in the formation of large complexes of traditions" (*idem*). Nielsen gives examples of this method applied to Jeremiah 36, Micah 4-5 and Genesis 6-9.

The investigation of Genesis 6-9 yields the following results. The author who arranged the traditions contained in Genesis 6-9 was no mere redactor, but rather a great artist who tried to compose the traditions into a definite chronological scheme, and if this chronological scheme is to be connected with the so-called P, then this latter may no longer be regarded as an independent source existing beside the older traditions. If we are to gain a picture of the author's personality and theology, we must study the literary character and theological foundation of the chronological system. "The clue of this system, we think, is the clue to the personality of the author(s)" (p. 103).

Nielsen's little book is very refreshing, and opens up fruitful paths of study and thought. There is much that can be learned from the modern Scandinavian writers, and it is worthwhile to learn to read the Scandinavian languages simply to make a first-hand acquaintance with their writings.

What, however, is to be our estimate of the traditio-historical method of study? For our part, we feel that it does not place sufficient stress upon the written literatures of the ancient near eastern world. Say what one will about oral tradition, it must be acknowledged that we have an extensive written literature from Ugarit, the Hittites, the Babylonians, Sumerians and Egyptians. The widespread role of the *tupfarru*, we believe, is quite significant. And the testimony of the Bible, if we do not first rule out the value of that testimony in favor of a theory already adopted, is rather instructive. We may note Deuteronomy 31:24-26 with its command to put the book of the law by the side of the ark of the covenant. The king also was to possess a copy of the law (Deuteronomy 17:18, 19). Joshua 1:8 is very important, as a witness of the central place which the Law occupied. Such passages as these make it clear that there was in existence a written law to which Israel must give heed. They refute a basic assumption of the traditio-historical school, namely, that only a small portion of the Old Testament existed in written form before the exile.

Lastly, one cannot escape the impression that, in so far as this school