who has learnt no Semitic language would have less diffi­culty in mastering the Amharic construction than one to whom the Semitic syntax is familiar. What here appears contrary to Semitic analogy is sometimes the rule in Agaw. Hence it is probable that in this case tribes originally Hamitic retained their former modes of thought and expres­sion after they had adopted a Semitic speech, and that they modified their new language accordingly. And it is not certain that the partial Semitization of the southern dis­tricts of Abyssinia (which had scarcely any connexion with the civilization of Aksúm during its best period) was en­tirely or even principally due to influences from the north.

In spite of its dominant position, Amharic did not for several centuries show any signs of becoming a literary language. The oldest documents which we possess are a few songs of the 15th and 16th centuries, which were not, however, written down till a later time, and are very diffi­cult to interpret. There are also a few Geez-Amharic gloss­aries, which may be tolerably old. Since the 17th century various attempts have been made, sometimes by European missionaries, to write in Amharic, and in modern times this language has to a considerable extent been employed for literary purposes; nor is this to be ascribed exclu­sively to foreign influence. A literary language, fixed in a sufficient measure, has thus been formed. Books belonging to a somewhat earlier period contain tolerably clear proofs of dialectical differences. Scattered notices by travellers seem

to indicate that in some districts the language diverges in a very much greater degree from the recognized type.

The Abyssinian chronicles have for centuries been written in Geez, largely intermingled with Amharic elements. This “language of the chronicles,” in itself a dreary chaos, often enables us to discover what were the older forms of Amharic words. A similar mixture of Geez and Amharic is exemplified in various other books, especially such as refer to the affairs of the Government and of the court.

The languages spoken still farther to the south, that of Gurágué (south of Shoa) and that of Harar, are perhaps more fitly described as languages akin to Amharic than as Amharic dialects. Until we possess more precise information respecting them, and in general respecting the linguistic and ethnographical condition of these countries, it would not be safe to hazard even a conjecture as to the origin of these languages, which, corrupt as they may be, and surrounded by tongues of a wholly different class, must still be regarded as Semitic. It is enough to repeat that the immigration of the Semites into these parts of Africa was probably no one single act, that it may have taken place at different times, that the immi­grants perhaps belonged to different tribes and to different districts of Arabia, and that very heterogeneous peoples and languages appear to have been variously mingled together in these regions.

The clever and brilliant work of Renan, *Histoire générale des langues Sémi­tiques* (1st ed., Paris, 1855), could not fail to produce much effect at the time, in spite of its one-sided character and the actual mistakes that it contains. Even at the present day a *scholar* may read it with great interest and profit ; but as a whole it has been superseded by the discoveries of the last twenty or thirty years. The remarks of Ewald, in the introduction to his Hebrew grammar, upon the mutual relationship of the Semitic languages are still worthy of perusal, much as they provoke contradiction. A work upon the subject which realizes for the present state of science what Renan endeavoured to realize for his own time unfortunately does not exist. (TH. N.)

SEMLER, Johann Salomo (1725-1791), ecclesiastical historian and critic, sometimes called “the father of German rationalism” (see Rationalism), was born at Saalfeld in Thuringia on 18th December 1725. He was the son of a clergyman in poor circumstances, and had to fight his way in the world solely by his own talents. He grew up amidst Pietistic surroundings, which power­fully influenced him his life through, though he was never spiritually or intellectually a Pietist. As a boy he showed the omnivorous appetite for books which was characteristic of his later life. In his seventeenth year he entered the university of Halle, where he became the disciple, after­wards the assistant, and at last the literary executor of the orthodox rationalistic Professor Baumgarten. In 1749 he accepted the position of editor, with the title of professor, of the Coburg official *Gazette,* with leisure to pursue his­torical and scientific studies. But the next year he was invited to Altdorf as professor of philology and history, and six months later became a professor of theology in Halle. After the death of Baumgarten (1757) Semler be­came the head of the theological faculty of his university, and the fierce opposition which his writings and lectures provoked only helped to increase his fame as a professor. His popularity continued undiminished for more than twenty years, until 1779. In that year he came forward with a reply to the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (see Reimarus) and to Bahrdt’s confession of faith, a step which was inter­preted by the extreme rationalists as a revocation of his own rationalistic position. Even the Prussian Government, which favoured Bahrdt, made Semler painfully feel its dis­pleasure at this new but really not inconsistent aspect of his position. But, though Semler was really not incon­sistent with himself in attacking the views of Reimarus and Bahrdt, as a comparison of his works prior and subse­quent to 1779 with those in question shows, his popularity began from that year to decline, and towards the end of his life he felt painfully the necessity of emphasizing the apologetic and conservative value of true historical inquiry. With more justification, perhaps, might his defence of the notorious edict of Wöllner (1788), the cultus minister, be cited as a sign of the decline of his powers and of an un­faithfulness to his principles. He died at Halle on 14th

March 1791, worn out by his prodigious labours, embittered by his desertion, and disappointed at the issue of his work.

Sender’s importance in the history of theology and the human mind is that of a critic of Biblical and ecclesiastical documents and of the history of dogmas. He was not a philosophical thinker or theologian, though he insisted, more or less confusedly, and yet with an energy and persistency before unknown, on certain distinc­tions of great importance when properly worked out and applied, *c.g.,* the distinction between religion and theology, that between private personal beliefs and public historical creeds, and that between the local and temporal and the permanent elements of historical reli­gion. His great work was that of the critic. He was the first to reject with sufficient proof the equal value of the Old and the New Testa­ments, the uniform authority of all parts of the Bible, the divine authority of the traditional canon of Scripture, the inspiration and supposed correctness of the text of the Old and New Testaments, and, generally, the identification of revelation with Scripture. Though to some extent anticipated by the English deist Thomas Morgan, Semler was the first to take due note of and use for critical purposes the opposition between the Judaic and anti-Judaic parties of the early church. He led the way in the task of discovering the origin of the Gospels, the Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse. He revived previous doubts as to the direct Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews, called in question Peter’s authorship of the first epistle, and referred the second epistle to the end of the 2d century. He wished to remove the Apocalypse altogether from the canon. In textual criticism Semler pursued further the principle of classifying MSS. in families, adopted by R. Simon and Bengel. Though he lacked almost every qualification of the true church historian, Semler did the work of a pioneer in many periods and in several departments of ecclesiastical history. Tholuck pronounces him “the father of the history of doctrines” and Baur " the first to deal with that history from the true critical standpoint.” At the same time, it is admitted by all that he was nowhere more than a pioneer. Baur’s description of his work in one department of ecclesiastical history is true of his work generally. “ His writings on the history of dogma resemble a fallow-field wait­ing to be cultivated or a building-site on which, underneath refuse and ruins, lie the materials in chaotic confusion for a new edifice. The consequence was that as he was always occupied in preliminary labours, he brought nothing to even partial completion; and, though his general critical standpoint was correct, in its application to details his criticism could only be regarded as extremely bold and arbitrary.”

Tholuck gives 171 as the number of Sender’s works, of which only two reached a second edition, and none is now read for its own sake. Amongst the chief are—*De demoniacis* (Halle, 1760, 4th ed. 1779), *Selecta capita historiae ecclesiasticae* (3 vols., Halle, 1767-69), *Von freier Untersuchung des Kanon* (Halle, 1771-72), *Apparatus ad liberalem N. T. interpretationem* (1767; *ad V. T.,* 1773), *Institutio ad doctrinam Christ. liberaliter discendam* (Halle,