itself. Amharic has diverged from the ancient Semitic type to a far greater extent than any of the dialects which we have hitherto enumerated. Many of the old formations preserved in Geez are completely modified in Amharic. Of the feminine forms there remain but a few traces; and that is the case also with the ancient plural of the noun. The strangest innovations occur in the personal pronouns. And certainly not more than half the vocabulary can without improbability be made to correspond with that of the other Semitic languages. In this, as also in the grammar, we must leave out of account all that is borrowed from Geez, which, as being the ecclesiastical tongue, exercises a great influence everywhere in Abyssinia. On the other hand, we must make allowance for the fact that in this language the very considerable phonetic modifications often produce a total change of form, so that many words which at first have a thoroughly foreign appearance prove on further examination to be but the regular development of words with which we are already acquainted. But the most striking deviations occur in the syntax. Things which we are accustomed to regard as usual or even universal in the Semitic languages, such as the placing of the verb before the subject, of the governing noun before the genitive, and of the attributive relative clause after its substantive, are here totally reversed. Words which are marked as genitives by the prefixing of the relative particle, and even whole relative clauses, are treated as one word, and are capable of having the objective suffix added to them. It is scarcely going too far to say that a person 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 Axum 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 arc 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.

Hararī and Gurägue.

The town of Harar, situated at some distance east of Shoa, forms a Semitic island; for its language is extremely similar to Amharic. In comparison with this, it exhibits sometimes later, sometimes older formations. A few centuries ago, Hararī was perhaps a dialect only slightly divergent from Amhanc. To-day, Amharians and the inhabitants of Harar can no longer understand each other, especially as the latter have drawn largely on the languages of the surrounding Hamites (Galla, Somāl and probably also DanäkiI), and on Arabic, which exercises a strong influence upon them as Moslems. We may fairly regard them as an old colony of Abyssinians. As the case is with Hararī, so it is probably with the dialects of Gurāguē (south of Shoa). These dialects, which are markedly divergent from one another and have assumed a highly peculiar form, placed as they are in the midst of entirely alien idioms, yet give unmistakable signs of an origin either from Amharic or a dialect extremely close to Amharic. It is certainly a matter for desire that we should soon receive some really comprehensive and at the same time trustworthy account of Hararī and the language of Gurδguc. We 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. (Th. N.)

SEMLER, JOHANN SALOMO (1725-1791), German church historian and biblical critic, was born at Saalfeld in Thuringia on the 18th of December 1725, the son of a clergyman in poor circumstances. He grew up amidst pietistic surroundings, which powerfully influenced him his life through, though he

never became a Pietist. 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 S. J. Baumgarten (1706-1757). In 1749 he accepted the position of editor, with the title of professor, of the Coburg official *Gazette.* But in 1751 he was invited to Altdorf as professor of philology and history, and in 1752 he 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 (*Beantwortung der Fragmente eines Ungenannten)* to the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (see Reimarus) and to K. F. 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, his popularity began from that year to decline, and towards the end of his life he felt the necessity of emphasizing the apologetic and conservative value of true historical inquiry. His defence of the notorious edict of July 9, 1788, issued by the Prussian minister for ecclesiasticaI affairs, Johann Christoph von Wöllner (1732-1800), the object of which was to enforce Lutheran orthodoxy, might with greater justice be cited as a sign of the decline of his powers and of an unfaithfulness to his principles. He died at Halle on the r4th of March 1791, worn out by his labours, and disappointed at the issue of his work.

The importance of Semler, sometimes called “ the father of German rationalism,” 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, with an energy and persistency before unknown, on certain distinctions of great importance when properly worked out and applied, *e.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 2nd 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 J. A. Bengel. In church history Semler did the work of a pioneer in many periods and in several departments. Friedrich Tholuck pronounces him “ the father of the history of doctrines,” anil F. C. 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.

Tholuck gives 171 as the number of Semler’s works, of which only two reached a second edition, and none is now read for its own sake. Amongst the chief are: Commentatio de demoniacis (Halle, 1760, 4th ed. 1779), Umständliche Untersuchung der dämonischen Leute (1762), Versuch einer biblischen Dämonologie (1776), Selecta capita historiae ecclesiasticae (3 vola., Halle, 1767-1769), Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Kanon (Halle, 1771-1775), Apparatus ad liberalem N.T. interpretationem (1767; ad V.T., 1773), Institutio ad doctrinam Christ. liberaliter discendam (Halle, 1774), Über histor­ische, gesellschaftliche, und moralische Religion der Christen (1786), and his autobiography, Semler's Lebensbeschreibung, von ihm selbst abgefasst (Halle, 1781-1782).

For estimates of Semler’s labours, see W. Gass, *Gesch. der prot. Dogmatik* (Berlin, 1854-1867); Isaak Dorner, *Gesch. der prοt. Theol.* (Munich, 1867); the art. in Herzog’s *Realencyklopädie ;* Adolf Hilgenfeld, *Einleitung in das Neue Test.* (Leipzig, 1875); F. C. Baur, *Epochen der kirchlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (1852); and Albrecht Ritschl, *Gesch. des Pietismus* (Bonn, 1880-1884).