

under the heaped-up offscourings; He makes plain the quintessence of the results of the experience of centuries. He sets aside the accidental, the caricature, the decayed, and in the focus of His individuality collects the eternally valid, the divine-human. "Ecce homo"—a divine marvel in such a time and such surroundings.' If so, we must ask Wellhausen's own question, 'How did He this?' 'Why has no one else done it?'

It scarcely needs saying that the three hundred and fifty pages of this book bristle with details that provoke discussion, favourable or adverse. Amongst the many points on which welcome light is thrown, we may mention the origin of prophecy in Israel, the beginning of the substitution of Aramaic for Hebrew, the relation between the psalms and public worship, the significance of the community as such, the low value ascribed to sacrifices. On the other hand, it would be easy to criticise. Even so accomplished a scholar as Wellhausen is scarcely entitled to say of the tetragrammaton: 'Its etymology is perfectly plain, meaning He moves through the air, He blows.' Whatever our individual opinion may be, it seems but courteous to acknowledge that the question is still an open one. And probably the opinion will long hold its own, that the word Yahveh may best be explained as signifying 'The Giver of Life.' Equally bold, may it not be said, unduly bold, is the assertion that Ps. lxxviii. was written for the triumphal ceremony of which we are told in 1 Macc. v. 54.<sup>1</sup> Canon

<sup>1</sup> P. 212, note.

Cheyne, in his Bampton Lectures, expressed his belief that it has become comparatively easy to understand this psalm as a historical product, and went on to say: 'It was written either towards the close of the Exile, or during one of the dynastic wars between Egypt and Syria for the possession of Palestine; either in the sixth century . . . or the third. . . . Pre-Exilic the poem cannot be; and, I may add, Maccabæan it cannot be.' Wellhausen has a perfect right to his own view, but the cautious reader will remember that there are others. How many others, as to this sixty-eighth psalm?

It remains but to add one word. If the *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte* be translated into English and widely read amongst us, our orthodoxy will be deeply pained by finding its fundamental principles quietly ignored, but no offence can possibly be felt at the *spirit* in which the history is written. We shall all learn much from it. We can supply for ourselves what is lacking. And if, as is almost certain to be the case, the chapter entitled 'The Gospel' is unfairly made use of to prove that criticism necessarily tends to mere Unitarianism, those of us who know better will recall with pleasure the charming sermonettes which have recently appeared from the pen of a German, a professor, a critic. Dr. Rudolf Kittel's 'Aus dem Leben des Propheten Jesaja,' written to show how the assured results of theological science may be applied to our instruction and edification, breathes a more evangelical spirit than many of the pulpit utterances to which Englishmen listen with pleasure and profit.

## Is the Old Testament Authentic?

By THE REV. J. ELDER CUMMING, D.D., GLASGOW.

### III.

THE new critics have been, and still are, much at variance in their views on important, and sometimes on essential matters. To a certain extent this was to be expected; but when it is remembered that many of their judgments on the books of the Old Testament are founded on *internal evidence*, it is clear that the fact of their disagreement with each other greatly shakes confidence in these opinions. These divergences have been kept largely in the background, and one of the most effective char-

acteristics of Dr. Driver's book is the art with which they have been so much ignored. It may be well, therefore, to present in a short compass the various theories maintained by the new critics, as abridged from a full account of these in Dr. Cave's *Inspiration of the Old Testament* (London: Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street).

Omitting the earlier views of Astruc and Eichhorn—

I. Ewald affirms the existence of *two documents*.

which have both been edited, of which the first dates from the time of the Judges, and the second from that of the early Kings. Traces of the two are discernible in the Pentateuch and in Joshua.

II. Hupfeld affirms *three documents* and an *editor*; the Book of Deuteronomy dating from the time of Josiah.

III. Wellhausen affirms *three codes*: The *priestly* (an *Elohist*), *The Deuteronomist*, and *The Jehovist*. The two latter date from the time of Josiah, the first from the closing days of the Exile.

IV. Robertson Smith and Kuenen, modifying the conclusions of Wellhausen, affirm that there are no fewer than *six documents*—(1) an *Elohist*, dating from time of Ezekiel, to whom are due *the Ten Commandments* and Exodus xx.—xxiii. and xxxiv.; (2) a *Jehovist*, after the time of Rehoboam; (3) a *Deuteronomist*, in seventh century B.C.; (4) an *author of Leviticus* (vii.—xxiii.), who, however, was probably Ezekiel; (5) a *second Elohist* of the priestly order; and (6) an *Editor*, about B.C. 444.

These views, then, divergent in almost every question which has been raised, and assigning dates for the 'documents' which underlie the history of the Old Testament, varying from the generation after Moses to the time of Maccabees, are now still farther developed into those of Canon Cheyne, followed at a certain distance by Dr. Driver and Professor Ryle, which not only take the Maccabæan age as the basis of some of the books, but threaten to make it the *point d'appui* of all the Psalms, and one hardly knows how much more of the structure of the Old Testament.

For it has been not obscurely intimated that more lies behind. Expressions have been used by Canon Cheyne, which appear to mean that he has *already arrived* at much farther and more startling conclusions, which in the meantime he does not think it wise to make known, lest he should unduly shock a public and (we presume) a Church, not yet prepared for them. If this be not his meaning, to what unhappy looseness of expression are we to attribute the following? 'So long as this theory (Dr. Driver's is in question) was advocated in a semi-popular work, it was possible to hold that Dr. Driver adopted it *from educational considerations*. There is, *of course*, no competent teacher, who does not sometimes have to condescend to the capacities of his pupils' (*Expositor*, March 1892).

Writing of Isaiah xxiv.—xxvii., of which Dr. Driver says, 'It may be referred most plausibly to the

early post-Exilic period,' Canon Cheyne adds, surely with a singular cynicism (more like Wellhausen's than hitherto), 'Well, perhaps it may—*for the present!*' Whatever we may deduce from these strange expressions, besides a not too great respect for his and Dr. Driver's readers, no one aware of the drift of recent critical efforts can fail to see that the same style of treatment, applied to the New Testament, will produce results equally startling. And, indeed, the process is well begun; and we are within measurable distance of the supposed discovery of documents, Judaistic, Hellenistic, Aramaic, and perhaps Gnostic; and of an editor, or editors, for the Four Gospels, the Acts, the Apocalypse, and other books. The same reckless speculation, the same contempt for *Harmonistik*, the assumption that when a sacred writer did not mention a fact it was because he did not know it; the all but universal preference of a hint or a doubt in a secular historian to the testimony of a sacred writer; the same underlying opposition to the miraculous; the same patronage of the sceptical, and self-satisfaction in the heterodox which have distinguished the bulk of the new critics, and they will leave us as little of the New Testament as they profess to have done of the Old.

For, with regard to the Old Testament, what do they profess to have done? How many of the books are left us, as they are or were? The *Five Books of Moses* and that of *Joshua* are compilations, drawn up on the basis of divergent and very inaccurate tradition, by an editor (who took great liberties with his documents) from eight hundred to one thousand years after the events described! *Judges* is 'not, strictly speaking, history, but rather the "philosophy of history"' (Dr. A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, Jan. 3, 1887).

The first *Book of Samuel* is made up of two often inconsistent narratives, and the *second* book likewise contains some of the latest writing in the Old Testament embodied in it. Of *Kings*, both I. and II., it is asserted that they 'date from a time' when many of the names were forgotten, and that some of the narratives were suggested by statements in the prophetic books. *Chronicles* is one of the latest, and it is written for a purpose, with little regard to accuracy. The *Book of Jonah* 'like that of *Esther*,' is 'a solar myth.' *Isaiah* and *Zechariah* are collections by various authors—the former by three or four, the latter by two—of

widely varying dates, loosely pieced together. Psalms—Yes; the Book of Psalms is far too spiritual to have been written in any part by David, and *therefore* by far the greater part of it was written in the late post-Exilic, or more probably in the Maccabæan age, we know not by whom. In fact, with the exception of Amos and perhaps Hosea, there is hardly a book of the Old Testament which is admitted to be at once genuine and authentic, the production of the author whose name it bears, and of the age at which it professes to have been written. What is left to us by the new critics is *not* the Old Testament! It is the rags, the fragments, the *dissecta membra*, the mythical stories of the Jews who came back from Babylon! Part of it was foisted on a Jewish king to terrify him into action. Part of it was written just after the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, and pretends to have been a prophecy of his action, and to have been written before. Most of it was put into the lips of men who had been dead for five hundred years—a species of spiritual ventriloquism! As it stands, it is one great piece of deception, no doubt with good intentions, but of deception all the same. And *this* is the Book of which Jesus Christ declared—‘THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN.’

While the dissection of the sources and structure of the books of the Old Testament has advanced, as we have stated, many of the writers who have laboured in the cause of the New Criticism maintain that there still remains untouched all the vitality and ‘inspiration’ of the Book as a whole, and that they have done nothing to invalidate its claims to be a medium of conveying to us spiritual truth. In a word, they declare that *the teaching* is there as it was, unaffected by the question when was it originally given. Says Professor Ryle, who shows much natural anxiety on this subject: The reader’s ‘conviction that a book is rightly regarded as Holy Scripture will not be shaken, because it proves to consist of elements whose very existence had been scarcely imagined before the present century’ (p. 1). ‘*Everywhere throughout the history of the literature, as well as in the actual pages of God’s*

holy word, *we recognise the invisible presence and the constant operation of His Holy Spirit*’ (p. 12). ‘They will be the product of the usual methods pursued by authors in that age and country, the Divine Spirit penetrates their message with life; it quickens their teaching with power, but it does not supersede,’ etc. (p. 13). ‘The three stages under which we recognise the guidance of the Holy Spirit in preparing for us the revelation of the word contained in the Old Testament’ (p. 17). These are extraordinary terms to be used of the processes which have been described in the preceding pages, and of the literary subtleties and arts, the alterations and the ‘editing,’ to which the books of the Old Testament are said to owe their present shape. And it is surely a matter fitted to elicit immediate questioning, that the Holy Ghost is referred to in these questions as ‘*it*’ and not ‘*He*.’ What are we to infer from this?

Dr. Driver uses language hardly less strong, but as usual more careful. ‘Criticism in the hands of scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament, *it presupposes it*; it seeks only to determine the conditions under which it manifests itself’ (Pref., p. 19).

Canon Cheyne is less cautious but, also as usual, much more precise. He gives us some ideas of what he *means* by inspiration in a remarkable passage (*Expositor*, April 1892, p. 266): ‘If Dr. Driver had only been a little clearer on the subjects of inspiration and of the growth of the Canon, how much simpler would have been his task, especially in dealing with the Hagiographa. *Of course, the Chronicles are inspired*; not as the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, *BUT as even a sermon might be called inspired, i.e. touched in a high degree with the best spiritual influences of the time.*’ The writer of Chronicles ‘omits some facts and *colours others*, in perfect good faith (!) according to a preconceived religious theory, to edify himself and his readers. . . . We dare not say that he had any greater skill than his neighbours in sifting the contents of these records, even if he had any desire to do so’ (!) (p. 262).