

ARTICLE VIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.

TRUTH OR PIOUS FRAUD.

IN the preface of "The International Critical Commentary" the editors say: "There are now before the public many commentaries written by British and American divines, of a popular or homiletical character . . . but they do not enter into the field of critical biblical scholarship occupied by such series of commentaries as" certain German works. "The time has come, in the judgment of the projectors of this enterprise, when it is practicable to combine British and American scholars in the production of a critical, comprehensive commentary that will be abreast of modern Biblical scholarship, and in a measure lead its van." The commentaries "will be based upon a thorough critical study of the original texts of the Bible, and upon critical methods of interpretation. They are designed chiefly for students and clergymen, and will be written in a compact style." Dr. Driver tells us in the preface of his "Deuteronomy"¹: "The aim of the present volume is to supply the English reader with a commentary which, so far as the writer's powers permit it, may be abreast of the best scholarship and knowledge of the day." Dr. Driver's name is the synonym of Hebrew scholarship of the first rank, and the names published of the other scholars who will comment on the remaining books of the Bible assure us that nothing will be wanting in scholarship. Whether this scholastic commentary will furnish the best knowledge of the Bible is altogether another question. In this volume there is a crush of painstaking erudition, of minute detail, endless citations of contradictions, a method of comment that covers every verse with the dust that has never known rain and will make "the student and clergyman" pine for a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple. Whatever criticisms might justly be offered on subordinate points are in this note passed over in order to set before the reader the main points on which this whole criticism rests, and of which any man of sound moral perception is quite as good a critic as the most learned Hebraist.

¹ A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy. By the Rev. S. R. Driver, D. D. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1895. Pp. xcv, 434. \$3.00. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, under the editorship of the Rev. Charles Augustus Briggs, D. D., New York, the Rev. S. R. Driver, D. D., Oxford, the Rev. Alfred Plummer, D. D., Durham.

It may seem strange to one not intimately acquainted with the shifting scenes of German criticism that Dt.¹ is issued as the first volume of this critical commentary. But it is in accordance with the present dicta of that criticism that Dt. is now made by it "the firm basis and turning point,"² of all its decisions. "Here we have the *δὸς μοι τοῦ στῶ* for the criticism of the whole Old Testament literature."³ "The study of Dt. carries the reader into the very heart of the critical problems which arise in connexion with the Old Testament" (Driver, p. xii). It is well that this basis is taken, for the fundamental critical problems of Dt. are perfectly plain. A reading of Dt. in any fair translation will enable an intelligent reader to decide very quickly whether Dt. is what it claims to be, or what this criticism says it is.

The theory concerning Dt. by this criticism is that until 900-800 B. C. the Israelites had no written records, only oral traditions, sagas, legends of their history; their first writings, J and E, were collections of these popular traditions, legends; there were two political parties with antagonistic interests, the prophetic and the priestly; both suffered greatly under Manasseh (685-639 B. C.); for a compromise and union of the interests of both parties, Dt. was written by one of the prophetic party, as the basis of a reform, to establish the sole worship of Jehovah (prophetic), and this worship only at Jerusalem (priestly). Written with this intent, Dt. was "found" just at the right time and the intended plan carried out. The author, to give greater force to his history and laws, puts them in the mouth of God and of Moses; but in reality the history and laws were not so delivered, they were only tradition and legend.

The points fundamental to all this criticism are: The proof of the date of Dt.; The character of the history taught by Dt.; The character of the author.

THE DATE BY THIS CRITICISM.

Dr. Driver (p. xlv), in common with all critics of this school, makes Dt. the book found by Hilkiah in the temple B. C. 621. He leaves it an open question whether Dt. was written under Manasseh or Josiah (p. xlix), but the "verdict of criticism" is that it was written between 685 and 621 B. C., and consequently the Mosaic authorship cannot be maintained (p. xii). Dt., therefore, was the first written book of laws acknowledged as authoritative by the Israelites (p. lxiv), or as Smend⁴ puts it, "Dt. became the earliest law book of Old Testament religion and the beginning of all the canonical Scripture of the Jews." For the proof of these positive dogmatic assertions we are referred to 2 Kings xxii. and xxiii. This is the passage that serves as the foundation socket on which all this criticism turns.

¹ Dt. in this note is put only for what Dr. Driver says was the original Deuteronomy, and D for the author of that original. According to Dr. Driver, there were four authors of the book as we now have it.

² Reuss, *Gte d. H. S.*, § 286. ³ Wildeboer, *Litt.*, § 11.

⁴ A. T. Rgte, p. 284.

It therefore must be one of the absolutely sure points in the Bible which this criticism has discovered. But when we ask as to the credibility of the books of Kings, we are told that they are full of sagas and fictions, which have been worked over three times in the interest of the Dt. party,¹ and when we ask about this small portion (2 Kings xxii. 8 ff.) where all this criticism begins, we are again assured that it is not of contemporary authorship, it is "saga," "fiction," "tradition," written in the late exile or post-exile period, and worked over and over by partisan editors; that the prophecy of Huldah,² the mainstay of the passage, and many other points, are fictitious.³ Therefore we are cautioned by the leaders of this criticism: "As to the particulars in 2 Kings xxii. the greatest precaution is needful. . . . The dressing up of the narrative, which must be granted, did not extend to the entire expulsion of the original tradition."⁴ "The account of Josiah's reformation in 2 Kings xxii. 8ff. has come to us only in a reworked form and therefore is to be used with precaution."⁵ "The narrative in Kings on the reformation by Josiah is not in its present form really historical."⁶

This date of Dt., this turning-point of "this criticism," the bottom fact for all its positiveness, by its own confession, is to be picked out by "the greatest precaution" from an original tradition worked over by partisan editors, and now overlaid and surrounded by sagas, fictions, honey-combed with errors, in which the only thing credible is just what this criticism wishes to believe. "It is to be used with precaution, but in the chief matter it is credible and by it we are directed to Dt."⁷ That is the character of the foundation of this criticism. It never fails to pour its contempt on believers in the truth of the history in the Bible as traditional believers. But here we see it by its own testimony founded on what it says is nothing but tradition extracted from an unhistorical account. Somewhat more of modesty might well be sought by these positive dogmatists.

THE CHARACTER OF THE HISTORY IN DT.

Since the author of Dt. places the facts he relates as occurring nine hundred years before his time, according to this criticism, it is needful to

¹ Wellhausen, *Gte Isr.*, pp. 293-309; Kuenen, *Ond.*, Vol. i. p. 421; Driver, *Introd.*, p. 189 ff.

² Dr. Driver knows that this criticism unanimously decides that Huldah's prophecy is fictitious, yet quotes that prophecy as proof of the honesty of Dt. (p. lx). Similar instances of the proffer of known forbidden fruit compel again the question asked by one of Dr. Driver's own school, "Is Dr. Driver laughing in his sleeve?" Such things ought not to be done "in the van of criticism."

³ Kuenen, *Ond.*, Vol. i. p. 420; Reuss, *Gte d. A. T.*, § 287; Stade, *Gte Isr.*, Vol. i. pp. 649, 651, 664; Kautzsch, *A. T.*, 2 Kings xxii. 15-20; Smend, *A. T. Rgte.*, p. 279; Holzinger, *Einl.*, p. 255 ff.; Horst, *Hist. d. Rel.*, 1887-91.

⁴ Holzinger, *Einl.*, p. 257. ⁵ Wildeboer, *Lept. d. A. T.*, p. 175.

⁶ Smend, *A. T. Rgte.*, p. 279. ⁷ Wildeboer, *Litt.*, p. 175.

ask, whence he obtained the history and laws he prescribes? Does he furnish true or false history? Dr. Driver tells us that all his history and his laws, with few exceptions, are taken only from JE (pp. xiv-xix, xlii).¹ J and E are assumed by this criticism as the two authors of the greater part of the history and many of the laws contained in the first four books of the Pentateuch. What then is the value of these documents for history and law? Dr. Driver does not characterize them. He assumes and acts upon but does not say plainly what is the unanimous verdict of this criticism on these documents. All European critics of this school without exception decide that J and E were nothing more than collections of "sagas," "myths," "legends." They deny them any historical value whatsoever; i. e., that all the history and laws contained in the Pentateuch are fictitious, destitute of the slightest claim to be regarded as history. "Its patriarchal history is saga, not history;" "only sagas."² "In Genesis there is no history."³ "For the beginnings of Israelite religion and history the Israelite saga offers nothing."⁴ "The narrative concerning the time of Moses is saga."⁵ "The exodus, the wandering, the passage of the Jordan and the settlement in Canaan, as they are described in the Hexateuch, are simply impossible." "The representation of all this given in the Hexateuch is absurd."⁶ Dr. Driver treats these histories and laws as fictitious in his comments, but refrains from saying so.

The history and laws, then, in Dt. are fictitious, traditional, legendary, according to this criticism.

THE CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR.

Dr. Driver tells us (p. lii) that, under Josiah, 639-621 B. C., "the prophets, encouraged by the brighter prospect, resolved upon putting forward the spiritual requirements of the age in a shape [i. e. book] which, if circumstances favored, might serve more immediately as a basis of reform. Such at any rate . . . was the aim which the prophetic author of Dt. set himself." The author is unknown and for lack of knowledge is marked simply D. This book, written by a certain school for a certain end by which that school is to gain, and "found" by that school

¹ Dr. Driver says (pp. xiv-xix, xlii), that Dt. was later than JE. For this he offers no proof. He certainly knows that all the leaders of this criticism say that J and E were not united into JE until after the date of Dt.; and that Dt. took its statements from J and E while separate documents. This puts a different phase on the matter. Why does Dr. Driver here differ from all his school?

² Holzinger, Einl., pp. 172 ff., 226.

³ Kayser, Theol. d. A. T., ed. Marti, p. 20.

⁴ Meinhold, Kleinglauben, pp. 25, 30.

⁵ Smend, A. T. Rgte, p. 13.

⁶ Kuenen, Hex., pp. 43, 46, 226 ff., 240 ff.; Wellhausen. Prol., pp. 300, 358, 371, etc.; Reuss, Gte d. H. S., §§ 213, etc.; Dillmann, Gen., pp. xi, xiii, 217, etc.; Riehm, Einl., Vol. i. p. 343 ff.; Cornill, Einl., p. 46, etc.; Holzinger, Einl., pp. 364, 371, etc., and many others.

in the temple just in the nick of time for carrying out its purposes, is severely characterized by all the European and a few English critics, except Dr. Driver. We pass over this manipulation for the more important point. D was no blind ignoramus, merely following the copy set him without inquiry. According to Dr. Driver, he possessed great "rhetorical power," his style is "singularly pure and beautiful." "The strong individuality of the author colors everything that he writes." "In his command of a chaste yet warm and persuasive eloquence, the author of Dt. stands unique among the writers of the Old Testament." No argument, therefore, can be founded upon his want of intellect or knowledge of his subject. D, to impress his contemporaries with the legal aspect of his work (p. lx), throws all his history and laws back in the past, eight hundred to nine hundred years previous to his time, and makes the traditional hero of Israel, Moses, who left neither history nor laws, the spokesman of both the history and laws; D makes Moses assert in a hundred ways that he had lived through and knew by personal experience this history and gave under the most solemn admonition these laws. D knew that Moses knew nothing of the history and laws which were put in his mouth. D makes Moses with the most sacred adjuration on his lips (Dt. vi. 1-5) a monotheist, what, according to Dr. Driver, Moses was not (p. 90). But D goes still further: he makes Moses assert, what D knew to be false, that he (Moses) received these laws from God directly (Dt. iv. 1, 2, 40; v. 28-31; vi. 2; viii. 11; x. 13; xi. 27, 28; xiii. 18 (19); xv. 5; xxvi. 16; xxvii. 10; xxviii. 1, 13, 15; xxx. 16).

And there is a deeper depth. D makes Moses asseverate and plead (iii. 18-29; ix. 18-29) the fictitious history in fictitious prayers to a fictitious God, and makes Moses teach each Israelite to plead these fictitious laws in prayer to God (xxvi. 13-15). "If the critical view of Dt. be correct," D's course respecting Moses is the least of his frauds. He may have been in some measure blinded by the legends, traditions, sagas concerning Moses. But there is no possibility of a plea justifying a man ascribing to God what he knew God had never said. But, if the critical view be correct, this is just what D did in the instances quoted and in i. 42; ii. 1, 2, 9, 17, 31; iii. 26; iv. 10; ix. 12, 13, 15, etc., etc. The commands given by D are, though given through Moses, said to be God's voice speaking to the people (v. 22 (19); ix. 23; xiii. 4 (5), 18 (19); xv. 5; xxvi. 14, 17; xxvii. 10; xxviii. 1, 2, 15, 45). Still this does not satisfy D. He goes beyond Moses, across a thousand years of pure legend, and makes God solemnly covenant¹ with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give them

¹ "That the idea of a covenant of Jehovah with Israel is everywhere in the Old Testament the center of gravity and of support in Old Testament religion needs no proof" (Reuss, *Gte d. H. S.* § 261); "Fiction . . . sagas about the mythical persons of the patriarchs," "myths" (§§ 130, 132).

"The idea of a covenant between Jehovah and his people was foreign to ancient Israel." (Smend, *A. T. Rgte*, pp. 116, 300; and so the others.)

and their seed the land of Canaan (i. 8; vi. 10; ix. 5, 27; xxx. 20); to redeem their seed from Egypt (vii. 8); to love, bless and multiply their seed (vii. 12); and this covenant Jehovah guaranteed by his oath and this oath is twenty-two times solemnly insisted upon in Dt. as the warrant of their faith (i. 8, 35; vi. 10, 18, 23; vii. 8, 12, 13; viii. 1, 18; ix. 5; x. 11; xi. 9, 21; xiii. 17 (18); xix. 8; xxvi. 3, 15; xxviii. 9, 11; xxx. 20; xxxi. 7). D teaches the Israelite who turns in prayer of gratitude to God (xxvi. 13-15), to use this fictitious oath of Jehovah as an argument with him. "If the critical view is correct," the covenant of God with Abraham is pure fiction, the oath of God is an equal fiction, and yet D represents Jehovah as faithful to all his promises and keeping covenant (vii. 9); and by means of this mass of fiction and oaths encourages the people to put their trust in Jehovah. Jehovah also made a covenant with Israel at Horeb (iv. 13, 23; v. 23; ix. 9, 11, 15; xvii. 2; xxix. 1; xxviii. 69) and in Moab (xxix. 1), as solemn and sacred as he made with Abraham. But these are fictions also if this criticism is correct.

There is still a deeper abyss of infamy and fraud "if the critical view be correct." D has the unparalleled hypocrisy to brand as a sin to be punished with death his own deed, ascribing to Jehovah what Jehovah had never said (xiii. 1-5; xviii. 20). D makes Jehovah forbid the changing of any word of his (iv. 2; v. 32; xii. 32; xvii. 11, 20). He makes Jehovah promise all blessings to obedience to D's words (v. 32 f; vi. 1-9, 12-19; xi. 13-25; xiii. 17 ff. etc); and threaten all dire curses upon disobedience (viii. 19, 20; xi. 28; xxviii. 15 ff.). There is no space to follow D, on this critical theory, through all his frauds; the above may suffice.

No European critic of this school justifies this; they condemn it as "a lie told for the glory of God," "not a moral proceeding," "an intentional forgery," "a literary fraud," "a pious fiction," "an error."¹ Dr. Driver alone justifies D in his proceeding. "The means which he [D] adopted for giving it practical effect were well chosen" (p. lii). His purpose was good. "Ancient writers permitted themselves much freedom in ascribing to historical [Moses historical according to this criticism?] characters speeches which they could not have actually delivered;" "the dialogues of Plato, the epic of Dante, the tragedies of Shakespeare, the Paradise Lost, and even the poem of Job" do the same; D "makes no unfair use of Moses' name . . . he merely develops with great moral energy and rhetorical power, and in a form adapted to the age in which he [D] lived, *principles which Moses had beyond all question advocated, and arguments which he would have cordially accepted as his own*" (p. lviii ff.).

Since, according to this criticism, Moses was behind a Sahara of saga

¹ Kuenen, Hex., p. 219 ff.; Bible for Learners, Vol. ii. p. 330 ff.; Wellhausen, Comp., p. 294; Dillmann, Numeri, etc., p. 595; Reuss, Gte d. H. S., §§ 237-289; Stade, Gte., Vol. i. pp. 16, 656; Cornill, Einl., p. 36 ff.; Holzinger, Einl., p. 328 ff.; Kayser, Theol. d. A. T., pp. 49, 192; Wildeboer, Litt., p. 186 ff.; Westphal, Sources, Vol. ii. pp. 115, 264, 280.

tradition five hundred years wide, without a scrap of history concerning him, Dr. Driver's assertion in the words italicized by us, is a piece of pure dogma destitute of the palest moonbeam of proof. It is a case of attempted mind reading across an abyss of five hundred years; an appropriate plea in defense of D against all his fellow-critics. "If the critical view of Dt. be correct," the book is not a forgery or a fiction or an invention (p. lxi); "he cannot be held guilty of dishonesty or literary fraud;" "its moral and spiritual greatness remains unimpaired; its inspired authority is in no respect less than that of any other part of the Old Testament which happens to be anonymous" (p. lxii). "The adoption of this verdict of criticism implies no detraction either from the inspired authority of Dt., or from its ethical and religious value. . . . Dt. gathers up the spiritual lessons and experiences not of a single lifetime, but of many generations of God-inspired men. It is a nobly conceived endeavor to stir the conscience of the individual Israelite, and to infuse Israel's whole national life with new spiritual and moral energy" (p. xii ff.).

Under this criticism it has become common to use terms with positive historic signification in a sense that none but the initiated understand. Moral, spiritual, ethical, inspired, God-inspired (only once used in the Bible), conscience, certainly mean something very different from the definitions of the lexicons and common use when applied to justify what every other critic of this school says is a pious fraud. We are glad that only one critic justifies their figment D in the work they have given him to do. This commentary is designed chiefly "for students and clergymen." If they accept the fundamental theory of this criticism, that its fulcrum is mere tradition in pious fraud, we hope they will have, like the European critics, the courage of their convictions and say so plainly, and save morality by denying that God ever inspired fraud and hypocrisy.

If Dt. is what this criticism and commentary make it to be, a fiction from the mouth of God, all labor spent on it is lost. If Dt. is God's truth from God's mouth, good were it for this commentary had it never been born.

THE USE OF KINGDOM AND CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

IN our hymnology, "kingdom" and "church" are synonyms. So are they in the New Testament, but with a wider range of variation. In their simpler meanings we may accept Fairbairn's remark, that "the kingdom is the immanent church, the church is the explicated kingdom." When Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, or in parables, or in passing

allusion, spoke of the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, or simply of the kingdom, it was usually to set forth the ideal which he came into the world to make actual, but which was not yet realized.

This ideal began to be realized in the local Christian assemblies, and the apostles, both in the Acts and the Epistles, spoke much oftener of the actual, concrete church or churches, than of the ideal kingdom.

Of the twenty-one times the word "church" occurs in the book of Acts, all except ix. 31 can be understood of the local congregation, and only three or four others can possibly be taken in any wider sense. In Acts xx. 28, "the church of God which he purchased with his own blood," the word is more naturally taken of the church universal; and so perhaps viii. 3, "made havoc of the church." In ix. 31 the best MSS. leave no doubt of this use, for they read, "then had the church rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria."

The word occurs five times in the Epistle to the Romans, all in the sixteenth chapter, and always with the local meaning.

Of twenty-two occurrences in First Corinthians, only two have the distinctively larger sense: x. 32, "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God;" xii. 28, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles," etc. Two others may be taken in the more extended meaning: xi. 22, "or despise ye the church of God," and xv. 9, "I persecuted the church of God." In Second Corinthians, "church" occurs nine times, always of the local body. The three uses in Galatians are the same except that i. 13, "I persecuted the church of God," cannot be so readily taken of the church in Jerusalem as of the church universal. Two references in each Epistle to the Thessalonians are simply to the local church or churches.

On the other hand, the Epistle to the Philippians has one reference to the local and one to the universal church; while two of the four passages in the Epistle to the Colossians are of the church universal and glorified, calling the church the body of Christ. In the Epistle to the Ephesians this last use occurs nine times, and the local use not at all.

Thus there appears in the Epistles of Paul, and especially the later ones, a use of "church" in a meaning hardly distinguishable from that of "kingdom" in several of the parables and in such phrases as "enter into the kingdom," "fit for the kingdom." Compare especially the phrase "For his body's sake, which is the church" (Col. i. 24) with "For the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. xix. 12), and "the kingdom of heaven, for which ye also suffered" (2 Thess. i. 5).

In the Gospels the word "kingdom" occurs more than a hundred times. The word "church" is found in none of them, except Matthew, and there in but two passages. In Matt. xviii. 7, Christ makes the local church or congregation the final court of appeal in the case of an offending brother. In Matt. xvi. 18, Christ tells Peter, "On this rock I will build my church." Here the word "kingdom" would fit so well that Thayer does

not hesitate in his lexicon to suggest that the evangelist misreported this saying!

On the other hand, in the Acts and Pauline Epistles, exclusive of the Pastoral Epistles, "kingdom" occurs but nineteen times, while "church" is found seventy-nine times. The drift of usage was very rapid in preference of the shorter word. We know how emphasis was increasingly put on the word "church" in the post-apostolic time until the accepted saying was, "There is no salvation outside the church."

Two important inferences may be drawn from these facts.

The first is, that a time much later than the apostolic is very improbable for the production of four books like the Gospels that eschew the use of the word "church" which already in the days of the apostles had become so popular. Some evidence, also, in regard to the date of Revelation may be found in the fact that it never uses "church" in the larger sense.

The second inference is as to the accuracy with which the evangelists reported the words of our Lord. Some, if not all, of the Gospels are later than a part, if not all, of the Pauline Epistles. What but the accuracy of their memory and the carefulness of their record can explain their persistent use of "kingdom" when in so many places "church," in the meantime already becoming current, would have fitted equally well?

W. E. C. WRIGHT.

CLEVELAND, O.