



ARTICLE VII.

DR. DRIVER'S PROOF-TEXTS.

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THE demand for a sixth edition of Dr. Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament" indicates an interest in the subject which warrants renewed attention to the arguments upon which his conclusions are based. The ability of the volume also amply accounts for the interest which it has aroused in Old Testament criticism; for it is, without doubt, the ablest defense which has yet been made in the English language of the inferences concerning the Old Testament which have been drawn by the Graf-Wellhausen school of critics; while the studious effort made by the author so to minimize the destructive tendencies of the German school as to allay the alarm produced by their radical and extreme statements does much to win public favor. Of the extent to which Dr. Driver is really successful in removing objections we will speak later.

From much which is appearing in current literature upon this subject, it is evident that the conclusions of this school of critics are already rapidly passing into the traditional stage, in which the statements are accepted upon authority, with little attempt to verify the references by which they are supported. The mass of readers will be in danger of accepting Dr. Driver's book as they have formerly done the decrees of the councils of the Catholic Church or of the general assemblies of the Presbyterian Church,

ascribing to them such infallibility that any questioning of the results seems presumptuous, and indeed scarcely less than sacrilegious. To question the correctness of conclusions agreed upon by so many eminent critics, and supported by such an array of references as darken the pages of Dr. Driver's volume, is to incur an *odium criticum* which is coming to be no less effective in the suppression of independent investigation than the *odium theologicum* has been in past times.

Nevertheless loyalty to truth and to the right of private judgment demands that each one of us should assume the responsibility of proving all things, and holding fast only to what is good; for, the conclusions of critical investigators, like those of Congregational councils, should have no more weight than there is in the reasons underlying them. This responsibility is all the more imperative from the fact, that the conclusions of the prevalent critical school concerning the Old Testament do not depend upon newly discovered facts which are beyond the reach of ordinary students, but are arrived at by examination and analysis of documents which are in possession of all. We have the high authority of Professor W. Robertson Smith in his preface to Wellhausen's "Prolegomena to the History of Israel," for saying that, "The matters with which Professor Wellhausen deals are such as no intelligent student of the Old Testament can afford to neglect; and the present volume [the Prolegomena] gives the English reader an opportunity to form his own judgment on questions which are within the scope of any one who reads the English Bible carefully, and is able to think clearly and without prejudice about its contents." The praise here bestowed upon Wellhausen's "Prolegomena" is still more applicable to Driver's "Introduction." To the most salient portions of this work we will now give attention.

On page 124, Dr. Driver presents his formal proof of the

position maintained by him and his associates, that, when the oldest portions of the Pentateuch were written, "the period of the Exodus lay in the past [that is, as the context shows, in the remote past¹], and that Israel is established in Canaan." Whereupon he cites certain passages which he says cannot all be treated as glosses, and in which language is used certainly implying the correctness of this proposition, that is, these passages carry to Dr. Driver's mind convincing proof that even what he considers to be the oldest portions of the Pentateuch were written at a time long subsequent to the death of Moses. The following are the passages:—

(1) Gen. xii. 6: "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land."

(2) Gen. xiii. 7: "The Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt in the land."

The inference from these passages is, that the statement that the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then in the land would not have been made until after they had been driven out, and hence the passages could not have been written until after Moses' time. But this is a gratuitous and incorrect assumption. The period referred to in the time of Abraham was four or five hundred years previous to Moses, and the statement is that the Canaanites and the Perizzites, whom the children of Israel were about to expel from the land, had been there from that time on, a fact which is amply supported by recent archæological discoveries. These first proof-texts of Dr. Driver, therefore, are wholly without weight, and fit in with the ordinary theory of the date of the Pentateuch better than into his.

(3) His third proof-text is Gen. xxxiv. 7, where there occurs the phrase "he had wrought folly in Israel." In parenthesis we are referred to Deut. xxii. 21; Judges xx. 6

¹ Elsewhere he assigns the date to that of the early kingdom.

and 10; 2 Sam. xiii. 12. The inference is that the descendants of Jacob would not have been called "Israel" during the time of Moses. But according to the account, Jacob's name was changed to Israel four hundred years before the time of Moses, and there is no literature with which to compare the Pentateuch from which any adverse conclusion can be drawn. That the name Israel in passages quite similar to this was used in Judges and Second Samuel is no proof that it had not been used earlier. The little positive evidence we have is the inscription recently published by Mr. Petrie in which Merenptah, who is probably the Pharaoh of the Exodus, enumerates the people of YSIRAAL among others whom he had spoiled.¹

(4) The next reference is Gen. xl. 15, where it is intimated, by Dr. Driver, that the phrase "land of the Hebrews," put into Joseph's mouth while interpreting Pharaoh's dream, is a phrase that could not have been used by Joseph or in the time of Moses, but only after Israel was established in Canaan. But we would like to know what reason he has for affirming that this phrase might not have been in circulation in the time of Moses. In Gen. xiv. 13, a passage which the critics cannot well put at a late date, Abram is called a Hebrew. The patriarchs were recognized as men of eminence with a large following of retainers, and there is no reason in the world why the children of Israel should not have been called Hebrews either in the time of Moses or of Joseph.

(5) Dr. Driver's next reference is Num. xxxii. 41 (adding in parenthesis "as Deut. iii. 14: see Judges x. 4"). The references here relate how "Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the towns thereof, and called them Havvoth-jair," or the towns of Jair, as given in the margin of the Revision. In Deuteronomy and Judges it is related that these are called Havvoth-jair unto this day. Dr. Driver's

¹ See *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Oct. 1896), Vol. liii, p. 746.

inference is that it would not have been said "these are called Havvoth-jair unto this day," unless a long time had elapsed, and Israel were already established in Canaan. But, to say nothing of the plausible theory (in analogy with the facts illustrating the minor corruptions of the text in the New Testament), that this phrase may be a gloss subsequently added to the text, it should be remembered that, according to the account, the villages in Bashan here named had been captured some months before the alleged date of Moses' address, and that, in consequence of Jair's victories, the names had been changed to commemorate the event. There is no reason why Moses should not have been impressed by the fact that the villages were still called by Jair's name some months after the conquest. It was a period when history was rapidly made, and the survival of the name during several months of active conquest was an indication of the importance of the event.

(6) Dr. Driver's next reference relates to another one of the sources of the Pentateuch, supposed to be among the most ancient, namely, to the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, which in the Polychrome Bible is put in a color by itself, and to Deut. xxxiv. 1, in both of which the town of Dan is referred to by that name, while in Josh. xix. 47 and in Judges xviii. 29 it is said that the original name of the town was Leshem or Laish, and that the name Dan was given to it during the conquest of Joshua. From this, Dr. Driver infers that both these sources of the Pentateuch were written after Israel was established in Canaan. But this, too, is one of those cases where the substitution of a later name for an earlier in the processes of textual transmission would be both natural and easy. The ordinary view of the Mosaic origin of the document as a whole is not disturbed by such a slight and natural change in text as that would be. It may also be maintained that in the case of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis it is by no means

certain that the same town is had in view. It should be remarked also, in passing, that this, like most of the other of Dr. Driver's strong points, is not new, but has been considered by biblical critics from the earliest times, and generally regarded as no serious difficulty in the way of entertaining the ordinary view.

(7) The next reference of Dr. Driver is Gen. xxxvi. 31, "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." From this it is inferred that it must have been written after the establishment of the kingdom in Israel. There is, however, no solid ground for such an inference. The promise to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 6) was that kings should come out of his loins, and to Jacob (Gen. xxxv. 11) that "a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins"; while Balaam foretold (Num. xxiv. 7) that Israel's king "shall be higher than Agag." In Deuteronomy, likewise, explicit cautions are given against the abuses that should creep in when the children of Israel should set up a king over them. From Isaac's blessing upon Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 29), and from the announcement of the Lord to Rebecca at the time of the birth of Jacob and Esau, Moses could scarcely help foreseeing that Israel was to become a kingdom, and would find it difficult to refrain from mentioning the kings and dukes that had already reigned in Edom among the descendants of Esau. Many considerations point to the last king in this list as a contemporary of Moses. So that it may be maintained with a fair degree of probability, that the form of the expression in this verse is perfectly appropriate to Moses and his time. The very logic of events would lead a great statesman to foresee such an ordinary coming political danger.

(8) The next reference is Lev. xviii. 27 foll., "For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which

were before you." The same phrase "which were done before you" occurs, also, in the two following verses. Dr. Driver, however, is not warranted in inferring from this that the Exodus was long past, and Israel already established in Canaan; for Moses could well look upon the fate of these nations as already sealed. Their history was practically closed. The whole conception throughout the book of Leviticus rests on the assumption that the nations of Palestine are doomed, and that the children of Israel are sure to possess the land, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." The cup of iniquity of the Canaanites was already full, and in the counsel of God the land was already prepared to vomit out the nations now in possession of it. It is worthy of note, also, that in the first reference (ver. 25) the present tense is used, the words being, "I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants," a phrase that would scarcely have been used several hundred years after the transaction.

(9) The next references are Num. xxii. 1; xxxiv. 15, and (referring back to page 84) Deut. i. 1, 5; iii. 8; iv. 41, 46-49, passages in which the phrase "beyond Jordan" (בעבר הירדן) refers to the region east of the Jordan, implying that the writer was at the time on the west side of the Jordan; while, according to the account itself, Moses was still on the east side. Hence it is inferred that Moses could not have used the phrase. To him, at that time, it is inferred, "beyond Jordan" would mean west of Jordan. Parallel instances, where the phrase "beyond Jordan" clearly refers to a region upon the other side of the river from the writer are Josh. ii. 10; vii. 7; ix. 10, etc.; Jud. v. 17 and x. 8. Before accepting Dr. Driver's oracular statements on this point, however, it is well to examine the facts for ourselves, when we shall find that there are numerous instances in which the phrase clearly refers to the same side on which the writer is known to be. In

Num. xxxii. 19, the phrase occurs twice, once referring to the east side and once to the west. In both cases, also, qualifying adjectives are coupled with it, showing that the phrase itself was not sufficient to define the situation. The passage reads, "For we will not inherit with them on the other side Jordan, and forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward." Here the same phrase evidently refers in the same breath to opposite sides of the river. Clearly, then, in itself, the preposition means no more than "beside," leaving which side to be determined from the understood mental point-of-view of the writer. The indefiniteness of the expression is plainly shown in Deut. iii. 20, 25; and xi. 30; where in Moses' mouth the phrase evidently means west of Jordan, instead of east, as in so many other places. Lest the reader shall not take pains to verify these references, we will quote them. Deut. iii. 20, 25: "Until the Lord give rest unto your brethren, as unto you, and they also possess the land which the Lord your God giveth them beyond Jordan: then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you. . . . Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon." Deut. xi. 30: "Are they not beyond Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites which dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?"

In the following four passages from Joshua, also, while there can be no question that the writer is on the west side of Jordan, yet the phrase "beyond Jordan" in every case refers to the west side of the river upon which the writer is. And again, lest the reader shall fail to verify the references, we will quote them in full, adding one from Samuel and one from Chronicles, which are to the same effect. Josh. v. 1: "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which are beyond Jordan westward, and all

the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard how that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel." Josh. ix. 1, 2: "And it came to pass, when all the kings which were beyond Jordan, in the hill country, and in the lowland, and all the shore of the great sea in front of Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord." Josh. xii. 7: And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the children of Israel smote beyond Jordan westward, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto Mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; and Joshua gave it unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions." Josh. xxii. 7: "Now to the one-half tribe of Manasseh Moses had given inheritance in Bashan; but unto the other half gave Joshua among their brethren beyond Jordan westward." 1 Sam. xxxi. 7: "And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were beyond Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them." 1 Chron. xxvi. 30: "Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valor, a thousand and seven hundred, had the oversight of Israel beyond Jordan westward; for all the business of the Lord and for the service of the king."

Here, again, it should be remarked, that the difficulty is not new, but one that has been thoroughly canvassed for hundreds of years, and Dr. Driver's discussions have added nothing to the old argument. Dr. Driver's error in the premises only illustrates, as did a similar monumental error in the reasoning of Professor Robertson Smith concern-

ing the Hebrew word for "south," that extensive scholarship and sound exegetical judgment are not always combined in the same individual. Robertson Smith, for example, in a most contemptuous manner declared¹ that the word *Negeb* (which primarily means "parched land," and, because that was the character of the southern portion of Palestine, became the general Hebrew word for "south") could not have meant south when used by a writer while on the other side of the region at Mount Sinai. "Moses," he says, "could no more [Ex. xxvii.] call the south side the *Negeb* side of the tabernacle than a Glasgow man could say that the sun set over Edinburgh." Any other view than this he asserts "is nonsense. When a man says 'towards the sea' he means it."

That so learned a man as Professor Robertson Smith could lay such emphasis on so absurd a statement as this gives the ordinary reader just grounds for losing confidence in the correctness of many of Professor Smith's other equally oracular statements, and those of others who blindly follow him; for it is one of the most familiar facts in the study of language, that the meaning of a word in common use has little relation to its etymology. "Transalpine" Gaul means the Gaul which is north of the Alps wherever the speaker may be who now uses the phrase. "Ultramarine" when used as descriptive of a color no longer has any reference to the region "beyond the sea" from which the color was originally obtained. Now, we suppose, ultramarine colors are chiefly made from coal oil. "The Orient" was, to the classic nations, the region over which the sun rose, the word being derived from the Latin word *orior*, "to rise." But here in America the great Canadian Pacific Railroad is flooding the country with illustrated pamphlets headed "A New Route to the Orient." The magnificently equipped trains which, on that road,

¹ The Old Testament in the Jewish Church, p. 323.

carry you to the Orient, are, however, moving westward toward the sun-setting. What, therefore, are we to think of the judgment of a man who could make such confident statements as Professor Robertson Smith did in disregard of this principle? The case may not be quite so clear in connection with the phrase "over Jordan." One thing, however, is certain: that its usage was not so well established as Professor Driver's confident assertions assume it to have been. The loose usage of the term manifested in the passages we have quoted clearly removes the phrase from the list of those which have any important bearing upon the date at which the Pentateuch was written.

But space compels us to pause here. In a future communication we will take up the other passages referred to by Dr. Driver in support of his theory, and consider them one by one. What we have already done, however, is sufficient "to give us pause," and compel us to ask, How is it possible for a learned man who is essaying to lead the thought of the Christian public, to put forth such an array of weak arguments in support of his revolutionary positions? If there are stronger arguments to come, why does he not rely upon them? If his theory is in need of such supports as are derived from these passages, it must rest upon a flimsy foundation. If he has anything better we shall see.