

wallis's honour that he gave copies of several of his predecessors to the Palace to fill up the gaps: Arundel, from the picture at Penshurst; Juxon, from Longleat; Sheldon, from Brome Hall; Sancroft, from Emanuel College, Cambridge.

W. BENHAM.

(To be continued.)



ART. II.—THE WITNESS OF THE HISTORICAL SCRIPTURES TO THE ACCURACY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

No. VI.

THE Book of Ruth, we may observe *in limine*, short as it is, displays traces of independent authorship at least equal to those which have just been pointed out in the case of Judges. But on this point I will not dwell in detail. The characters of Naomi and Boaz are just such as an honest and conscientious observance of the principles of the Mosaic law would tend to produce. In fact, the whole history is impossible unless the religion of the five books of Moses was, and had for some time been, fully recognised as a guide for conduct, for the four chapters now known as the "Book of the Covenant," apart from the rest of the Pentateuch, could hardly have produced such a social and moral tone as we find before us. The simple sketch of pastoral life seems to have been written at an early period in the history of Israel rather than that of the later kings, when cruelty, oppression, and licentiousness reigned supreme. The merciful conduct of Boaz toward the young gleaner implies the full recognition of the precepts in Deut. xxiv. and the supposed post-Exilic Lev. xix. The way in which the daughter of the stranger is welcomed in the land of Israel, in consequence of her pure, upright, and affectionate character, fixes the composition of the book at a time when the observance of the spirit, rather than the letter, of the law was in the ascendant. It was only after frequent and obstinate rebellions against God that a stringent enforcement of its provisions in the letter was believed to have become necessary. The institution of the *Goel*, or Redeemer (Deut. xxv.), is represented, not only as being in existence, but as having been so for a long time. This we learn from chap. iv. 7, where it is stated that in the lapse of ages some changes had taken place in the form of the ceremony. We must, therefore, assign the law in Deut. xxv. to a very early date. The genealogy with which the book

concludes stops with David, whence the inference is a natural, if not an absolutely certain, one, that the book was written in that reign. Thus, it becomes practically a part of the records of the early history of Bethlehem which have come down to us, of which the three concluding chapters of the Book of Judges form the earlier portion. These are not, however, necessarily by the same author. There is only one more point to which reference is necessary. The Book of Ruth, like the Book of Judges, is not only in its religion and morality far in advance of the "Book of the Covenant," but it "knows nothing" of its contents. We have thus, on the principles of the German criticism, another argument in favour of making the "Book of the Covenant" the latest, instead of the earliest, portion of the Jewish law. Professor Driver, it may be added, ventures here to differ from the German school, and assigns the Book of Ruth to the pre-Exilic period.

There is no need to take serious exception to the Professor's remark that "distance" of time may have "mellowed" the picture we find here of life under the Judges, though we have somewhat of a companion picture in 1 Samuel of Eli, Hannah, and Samuel.¹ Professor Driver, however, I should add, denies that in the mention of the *Goel*, referred to above, there is any reference to Deut. xxv. I should be disposed, on the contrary, to contend that the original Mosaic institution of the Levirate marriages, connected as they became under Deut. xxv. with the tenure of land, had undergone a gradual development, even as early as the time of Boaz, into an enforcement of the law on the nearest kinsman when no brother existed to carry it out; and that thus the Deuteronomic law here mentioned, so far from dating from the reign of Josiah, must have been coeval with the settlement in Palestine.

¹ "The history of Eli and Hannah presupposes the influence of the Mosaic institutions as emphatically as that of Samuel. There is literally nothing in the religious colouring of the picture, save the Tabernacle, which would be out of keeping with an English country parish in the nineteenth century A.D.; and it is absolutely unlike all Greek, or Roman, or Egyptian, or Babylonian, or Phœnician religious thought, or that of any other peoples with whom we are familiar. Whence, then, this close similarity between the religious conceptions of Eli and Hannah, and those of our own time? Either the history is literally true down to the smallest details, and the ideas of Eli and Hannah were as much coloured as our own by the law of Moses, or once more we have a master of fiction as great as Shakespeare evolving the history out of his own imagination, after the Priestly Code had for some time been accepted as binding on the Jewish conscience" (*Church Quarterly Review*, July, 1895, p. 296). Professor Driver, it may be remarked, does not venture to assign a date to this history, except so far as he declares it to be earlier in date than "either ch. i.-iv. 1a or iv. 1b-vii. 1." As is so often the case, no reason is given for this assertion.

This view seems certainly *primâ facie* to be more probable than any other. One additional point relating to date may be of interest. The historian in Gen. xxxv. speaks of Bethlehem by its ancient name of Ephrath. The words "which is Bethlehem" may not unreasonably be contended to be the work of a later redactor or annotator. In Judg. xvii. 7, 9, xix. 1, 18, Bethlehem is called Bethlehem-judah, to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Zebulun. The same specification appears in Ruth i. 1, 2, and in 1 Sam. xvii. 12. It must further be observed, that the old name was kept up by calling the inhabitants Ephrathites. We find the prophet Micah, too, whose message was to Israel as well as to Judah, distinguishing Bethlehem in Judah from the other Bethlehem by the addition of Ephratah. Now, it is highly improbable that it would have occurred to any purely Jewish writer at a later date than that of Micah—that is to say, after the deportation of the ten tribes—to distinguish between the two places. The occurrence, therefore, of the phrase "Bethlehem-judah" would seem once again to involve the early date of the portion of the narrative in which it appears.¹

It will be needless for me to repeat the arguments on the First Book of Samuel, which are to be found in my essay in "Lex Mosaica." I may claim, at least until serious arguments are brought forward to the contrary, to have proved that this book, as far as the history of Samuel and Saul are concerned, postulates the existence of the whole Mosaic law, J E, D, and P combined, the one sanctuary at Shiloh, the high priest, the tabernacle, the ark, the law of sacrifice, and a host of minor regulations. Either, therefore, the story of Samuel and Saul is a narrative *composed*, not compiled, at a time when the post-Exilic institutions were recognised without contradiction—a hypothesis which does not find favour with the German school—or the presumed post-Exilic P was in existence, not only when the history was written, but when the events related in it occurred. There is a third hypothesis, which is practically identical with the second—namely, that the institutions mentioned in P, including the one sanctuary, were in existence in early times, but were not formally embodied in a code until the return from the Captivity. The matter is of no moment, though perhaps one may be allowed to ask the precise difference between the existence of regulations *as* regulations and their embedment in a code. And it may further be worth inquiring how much evidence remains, on the hypothesis just mentioned, for the alleged post-Exilic codification.

¹ If this view be correct, then the story of David and Goliath is an *early* narrative, and Gen. xxxv. one of still earlier date.

It may be necessary to add that stress still appears to be laid on the different aspects in which Samuel's character is represented in 1 Sam. ix. to that in which it is placed, say, in chap. x. As usual, the conclusion is drawn that we have here two irreconcilable accounts of the prophet, an earlier and a later, and that the later is, of course, purely mythical. But this summary method of writing history is a little discredited by the fact that the supposed earlier idea of Samuel presented in chap. ix. is at variance with every reference to that prophet in the rest of the books of the Old Testament. Sweep away Samuel, with his revival of Israelite nationality, and not only Saul, but David and the rest of the monarchs of Israel and Judah remain suspended in mid-air, as Wellhausen would say, "by their own waistbands." How were the disorganized peoples to which the Book of Judges introduces us, and which, if we are to believe some critics of the German school, had neither a national polity nor religion at the time of the conquest, but were isolated tribes, with no link of connection whatsoever, brought into the condition in which we find them at the accession of David? The history as it stands explains the phenomena; take away the central figure of Samuel, and it becomes unexplainable. Is it sound historical criticism to remove a central figure of this kind because the servant of an ignorant young man of "the least of the tribes of Israel" is reported to have been unaware of the high character of the person to whom he proposed that his young master should address himself when in trouble?¹ If we are compelled to reject one or other of these narratives—and it does not seem quite clear that we are—we must strike out as unhistorical one of the most representative characters of Jewish history in order to maintain the indisputable accuracy of a story about some lost asses and their discovery, not by the "seer" himself, but by some other means. Whether there be or be not some inversion of the ordinary laws of logic here, some lack of historical perspective, some misconception of the rules of historical criticism, let historical experts tell us.

We proceed to the history of David. And here there are a number of undesigned coincidences indicating the early date of the materials from which the history is compiled. We have seen that the history of the Judges, save during its earliest period, represents Judah as taking no part, for some reason or other, in the conflicts of that unsettled age. To

¹ Is it not in perfect keeping with the primitive state of society described that the prophet was accessible to all sorts and conditions of men in Israel, whatever their business might be? By the time of David all this accessibility had vanished.

Samuel is due the union of the twelve tribes once more into one confederation; but we have more than one hint that the isolation of Judah had already attracted attention even in the days of Saul. When Saul sent his message to all Israel to join him in his expedition for the relief of Jabesh-gilead, the men of Judah are specially numbered apart (1 Sam. xi. 8). When Goliath was slain, "the men of Israel and of Judah," we are told, pursued after the Philistines (xvii. 52). "All Israel and Judah" loved David (xviii. 16). It is impossible to avoid seeing in these hints the presence to the mind of the writer, not only of the distinction and the rivalry which, as we are afterwards told, existed between the two most powerful tribes, but also the fact that Ephraim, not Judah, had hitherto taken the lead in Israel. It is equally impossible to deny that in these slight, but most important, touches we may not unreasonably infer the hand of an almost contemporary narrator.

There are other points in the narrative which cannot be passed over. The institution of the shew-bread was already in existence, and therefore in all probability the sanctuary and the tabernacle, as they are described by P, in which alone the mention of the shew-bread is to be found.¹ The provision which reserved the shew-bread for the priests is found in Lev. xxiv. 9, attributed to the post-Exilic writer or compiler; and it is most improbable that anyone would have introduced a mention of this provision into the narrative in order to emphasize the fact that the law it was desired to inculcate was not kept on the only occasion on which it is mentioned. The historical investigator has, therefore, no alternative but to believe that we have here a piece of genuine history. Moreover, we are compelled to see here a "codification" by P of a custom as old as the reign of Saul. Why was it not "codified" before the Exile? The custom of inquiring of the Lord, of which we have no mention but in P, is frequently referred to in this history (1 Sam. xiv. 3, 18, 37; xxiii. 6, 9; xxviii. 6; xxx. 7). The use of the ephod was evidently a substitute for the inquiry by Urim when the latter was impossible. Among other indications of the accuracy of the history we may observe the double reference to Caleb (xxv. 3, xxx. 14), involving the truth of the story of Caleb as told in Josh. xiv., xv. The repeated mention we find of David's scrupulous regard for "Jehovah's anointed" implies the existence of "commandments, statutes, and judgments" established, at least in his belief, under very solemn sanction; in other words, of a definite religious system, very clearly

¹ Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5-9.

understood and recognised, instead of a blind and confused struggle between an immoral polytheism and an undeveloped monotheism. Nor does David's scrupulosity in this particular appear to fit in at all with a later date or a character other than his. Lastly, the continual mention of the "Hebrews" in this book (chaps. xiii. 3, 7, 19; xiv. 11, 21; xxix. 3) is apparently another mark of early date. The book was probably compiled from authentic sources in the reign of David, and signs of compilation unquestionably appear in its pages. But criticism will only begin to be on the right scent when it casts aside all foregone conclusions about the history having been placed in a "setting," or "worked over" by later writers into a contradiction of the real facts, and in accordance with the preconceived opinions of the "redactor" or "redactors." When criticism ceases to be on the look-out for confirmations of previously formed theories, and endeavours with a single eye to ascertain the facts, we shall be on the road to a critical presentment of the history which will meet with general approval. At present this is by no means the case. There is no reason to doubt that documents are inserted *in extenso* in the narrative. But the scissors-and-paste theory so much in favour with certain modern theorists does not stand the test of examination. There is only one other point which requires notice. There is not, once more, in the whole First Book of Samuel *one single reference* to the "Book of the Covenant" as a code of laws acknowledged in Israel. Critics of the German School must, therefore, once more admit that, according to their favourite argument *e silentio*, it was not in existence when this book was published. Nor is this all. Mention is made in the narrative of other provisions of the Mosaic law. On the *e silentio* principle, therefore, these provisions are older than, not later than, the so-called "Book of the Covenant."

The Second Book of Samuel displays the same traces of individual authorship as the Books of Judges and 1 Samuel, though perhaps not quite to the same extent. It will not be necessary to enter into a detailed examination of its contents, because this would be to go over the same ground as we have gone over before. Its hero is David, and of him we may say the same as I have said of Samuel in "Lex Mosaica." He is the creature of his environment. And that environment is the law of Moses.¹ If he be indeed an ideal character, fashioned by fancy after the model of a law which was hardly yet in existence, and therefore was as yet incapable of moulding character and circumstance, one can only say that the art of ideal portraiture of character had risen in those distant days

¹ On this point see Dr. Watson's essay in "Lex Mosaica."

to a height to which Shakespeare himself affords no parallel. Were we to imagine, with some of the critics, that David lived at a period when fetichism was developed, or was developing, into polytheism, the narrative we have before us was not only drawn up with an impudent disregard for truth, but some of the scenes are absolutely impossible. The whole story of Bathsheba in particular, from this point of view, is at once a ridiculous fabrication and a glaring anachronism. The religion of Palestine, unless all the leading authorities have deceived us, was shamelessly immoral, and David's adultery with Bathsheba, in an age when Palestinian polytheism was in the ascendant, would have been no more than a fitting act of homage to the goddess Ashtoreth. Even if Uriah were jealous of his wife's honour, it would be a feeling confined to himself alone. He would have obtained little sympathy from a people among whom licentiousness had been elevated into a creed. There would have been no need for the King to conspire against his servant. Had the servant, on the contrary, conspired against the King, his jealous rage, though natural enough in himself, would have been regarded as absurd by everyone else. One has only to read the stories in Herodotus to see how different was the environment among a people given up to nature worship. It is obvious enough in the narrative that it was not the anger of Uriah that David feared, but the reproach of his own conscience and the indignation of an outraged public opinion. Even the hypothesis that "a certain germ" of legal and religious enactment—say, the "Book of the Covenant"—was already in existence will not help us here. The only way in which David's conduct can be satisfactorily explained is on the hypothesis that the supposed post-Exilic law of Lev. xx. 10, that "the adulterer and adulteress should be put to death," was already in existence; that the conceptions entertained by David of the moral character and requirements of Jehovah were in many ways as clear as our own, and that he must have enjoyed the blessing of living under a very definite revelation of His being. Nothing short of this can explain the cruel perplexity into which Bathsheba's message plunged him, or account for the absolute necessity that the whole matter should be hushed up.¹ Not only the story of Bathsheba, but the whole character of David, presupposes the moral and religious environment of the Pentateuch. If we are to suppose that the Israelites were

¹ The story of Bathsheba for the first time quotes the "Book of the Covenant" (*cf.* 2 Sam. xii. 6; Exod. xxii. 1). But it is also acquainted with Num. xv. 31 (JE). We may observe that the story, simple and natural as it is, presupposes regulations only found in Lev. xv. 19, 28; xviii. 19; and xx. 18 (P).

so indifferent to their own literature that no composition by one well described as the "sweet Psalmist of Israel" has been handed down—a tolerably bold supposition—yet there still remains enough in the masterly and characteristic portrait drawn for us in the First and Second Books of Samuel to support the assertion that we have made. It was hardly the worshipper of an "unknown God" who could display such confidence in that God's protection as David does in his determination to meet Goliath. Nor is this a mere isolated incident. The spirit attributed to David on that occasion animates him throughout his whole career. It is the leading feature in his character, and is displayed as strongly in his earnest desire to build a temple for the God in whom he had trusted, and in his commission to do so addressed to his successor, as when the courageous stripling went out to do battle against the enemies of Jehovah, relying on a strength supplied by the covenant God of Israel. It is not in the Bathsheba episode only, but in the whole tone and tenor of his acts, that we find ourselves either in the presence of veracious history or in the presence of a dramatic power which anticipates by some 2,500 years the course of the world's intellectual development. Not to enter further into detail, we may remark how the same high moral standard, combined with the deep humiliation the sense of having violated it involved, is visible throughout the rest of David's history, and especially in the rebellion of Absalom. The psychological elements in David's character require that the Mosaic institutions in their present shape must have been as well known to him as to ourselves. Making all deductions, moreover, for the theories of the Germanizers, there remains in the history of David as much deserving of the grateful remembrance of the Jewish people as we English find in the reign of our own King Alfred. We have shown our respect and gratitude to our great ruler, not only by remembering his life, but by handing down his compositions. Israel owes more to David even than England to Alfred. Was she likely to show less gratitude than we?

But we are further told that the adoption of modern critical theories about the composition of the Old Testament will leave its moral influence precisely where it was. Will it? Is there anyone bold enough to assert that the touching and striking scene between the prophet Nathan and the King, the stern rebuke of the former and the conscience-stricken outcry of the latter, or the profound and touching and lifelong devotion of the warrior-statesman to his God, or his solemn sense of consecration attaching to the person of Jehovah's anointed,¹

¹ Cf. the Psalms, *passim*.

or the gentleness, the patience, so contrary to the conduct of most successful Oriental warriors, with which he treated those who withstood him, will have precisely the same effect on the ordinary truth-loving Englishman whether the story be brilliant fiction or sober historical fact? There are some among us who believe that the precise contrary will be the case. And this will account for their anxiety that the critical theories should be proved up to the hilt before a surrender is made which will unquestionably seriously diminish the influence of the Scriptures for good.¹

But to proceed. We are forbidden to use Chronicles to establish our point, a principle about as rational as if we were forbidden to use ecclesiastical documents, such as the various monastic chronicles, including even the pseudo-Ingulphus of which Professor Freeman makes use in his "History of the Norman Conquest," to illustrate the traditions in which the writer was brought up, in compiling a history of England. But enough remains for our purpose in the secular histories. If no such thing as a central sanctuary were contemplated in the ages before David, whence came his intense anxiety to build such a sanctuary?² and why, when it was built, did Solomon make it so markedly and essentially the centre of all Israelite worship as is implied in 1 Kings viii.? This chapter, it is true, is held by Professor Driver to have been added by the compiler. But once more, not the slightest proof is alleged in favour of this statement. Of course, as we have no information concerning the date and authorship of the Books of the Old Testament, 1 Kings viii. *may* have been a later insertion. But surely the difference between *may* have been and *must* have been is practically infinite. The ground for Professor Driver's assertion is not that the chapter in question is in the slightest degree out of keeping with the rest of the narrative. On the contrary, it harmonizes perfectly with its surroundings—the anxiety of David above referred to, his great preparations for a great object, the majesty of the temple, the extraordinary magnificence and solemnity of the dedication. The ground is simply and solely that the authenticity of this chapter conflicts with the theory that there was no central sanctuary, and no conception of a central sanctuary, at the time to which the narrative refers. This

¹ It may not be amiss to add that, on so-called critical principles, *nearly every* striking or forcible story in the Old Testament is more or less of a fabrication.

² See 2 Sam. vii. 2-13, 18-29. The "curtains," it may be noted, are P's creation (Exod. xxvi., xl.). The preparations made by David, though only described at length in Chronicles, are indicated in 2 Sam. viii. 11 and 1 Kings vii. 51.

mode of dealing with our authorities, it cannot be too often repeated, is *not* that which competent historians are accustomed to adopt.

Beyond the points which have been mentioned, the second Book of Samuel contains little matter for controversy. There is very little quotation of the Pentateuch in its pages. It is acquainted, as we have seen, with the "Book of the Covenant," one of the provisions of which (Exod. xxii. 28) is evidently referred to in the account of Shimei.¹ I need not dwell on what I have said in "*Lex Mosaica*," p. 265, about the fact recorded in 2 Sam. vi. 17, that David provided a tabernacle at Jerusalem for the ark, while the Mosaic tabernacle, which had been removed from Shiloh to Gibeon, was left at the latter place, a fact repeatedly and undesignedly corroborated by the author of 1 Chronicles. We may, however, remark on the coincidence of 2 Sam. vii. 7 with the statements of our former authorities, that the ark and the tabernacle were occasionally, under the pressure of circumstances, removed from Shiloh. In chap. xv. we are once more struck with a fact that meets us alike in Joshua, Judges and 1 Samuel, namely, the recognition of the ark as the centre of Israelite religious worship. Here Zadok and Abiathar evidently desire to keep the solemn sanctions its presence involves by the side of the monarch in his trouble. And for this reason, the ark is to be removed once more, as it had been in the conflict with Benjamin. But the King recognises in Jerusalem the political and religious centre of Israel, and he desires that it shall remain where with so much ceremony he had placed it. Here, again, then, we meet with an undesigned confirmation of the fact that was fully recognised as early as the reign of David—the principle of the one sanctuary, the "habitation" of God.² And we have David, as we might naturally expect, unless his character be indeed a priestly fiction invented centuries afterwards, preferring the rule laid down by Moses to his own personal advantage. "If I shall find favour in the eyes of Jehovah, He will bring me again, and shall show me His habitation. But if He thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let Him do what seemeth Him good." We have here the genuine ring of the Davidic psalms. Is it a ~~post-~~Exilic insertion, or have those psalms been rightly attributed to David? Let anyone judge who has read this vivid description, and who does not hold a brief for the German school. Again, the reference to the Gibeonites in chap. xxi. is just what might be expected in a later writer who briefly summarizes the previous history. But we never

¹ Chap. xvi. 9, xix. 21; *cf.* 1 Kings ii. 8, 36-46.

² Chap. xv. 25.

find the later redactor introducing any portions of later history into the earlier, except, of course, on the assumptions—and they are assumptions, and no more—of the class of critics against which we are contending. All he does is to write occasionally a few explanatory notes. The Psalms are outside our province. But the psalm introduced into chap. xxii. appears from the remark in ver. 1 to have been written before luxury and success had puffed up David—probably at a very early period in his reign. Verses 21-25 could hardly have been written, either by him or by anyone else in his name, after the events recorded in chap. xii. And we may also ask for information—at present none has been vouchsafed us—about the steps of the evolution by which the grand conceptions of God contained in it were reached. The incident mentioned in chap. xxiv. is not without some indications of early date. The phrase “from Dan even unto Beersheba” only meets us while Israel was undivided, nor was it likely to have been invented afterwards. As in Joshua and Judges, so here, we find portions of territory afterwards reconquered by Moab¹ regarded as part of the territory of Israel. One of the pitfalls into which later inventors and redactors are likely to fall stands invitingly open here. How is it that the historian does not fall into it? We have, moreover, in this history, the early date of the composition of which is thus so clearly indicated, no signs whatever of a people or a monarch gradually feeling their way to monotheism. The worship, the very conception, of Jehovah, as well as the recognition by monarch and people of His existence and His character, is as clear and definite as ever it was at any period of Jewish history. If it be urged that David built an altar, and offered sacrifices at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and that this was contrary to the provisions of the Jewish law in its present shape, we have to observe (1) that, as we learn from the story of the circumcision of Israel by Joshua, and from the story of Ruth—from the whole history, in fact—the precepts of the law were intended as general rules, not in any way covering exceptional cases; and (2) that the narrative of Ornan or Araunah appears without explanation or apology in Chronicles, a book confessedly written when the exclusive worship at the one sanctuary was fully established, and with a strong resolution to recommend and even to enforce it.

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(To be continued.)

¹ See Isa. xiv. and Jer. xlviii.