

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

No. VII.

BEFORE leaving the history of David it may not be out of place to advert once more to the incident of Absalom's rebellion, and David's consequent retirement from Jerusalem. If there be any passage in literature which must either have been written by an eye-witness or, to use the forcible expression of the Bishop of Durham, an "unknown Shakespeare," it is 2 Sam. xv. To dissect this striking and picturesque narrative into fragments, as the custom of the critics is, with its remarkable word-pictures, its flashes of character and individuality, as in the self-revelations of David, of Ittai, of Zadok, of the people of Jerusalem in general, would require extraordinary audacity or absence of insight, or both. Yet the Levites are there, the ark is there, the priest, who is also a seer, is there, and the religious colouring of the whole is as clearly marked as in any incident in history. David's emotion is evidently as much due to his feeling of reverence for the ark, the embodiment of the Israelite religious idea, as to the straits to which he has been driven. His firm faith in Jehovah is as little like that of a man who was feeling his way from fetichism into "ethic monotheism," as may well be conceived. The whole story presupposes the unquestioned supremacy of the Mosaic law, with its lofty morality and its ennobling conceptions of the Deity. No other environment could have brought such circumstances, as are here described, into being than the conceptions of God and of man's relations to Him which are contained in the Pentateuch as a whole. Even Professor Driver recognises the fact that "the parts of the narrative are connected together, and are marked by unity of plan,"¹ and that it "must date from a period very little later than that of the events narrated."² Yet he does not vouchsafe a word on the light thrown on the religious history of Israel and upon the *genesis* of its religious documents by a narrative which he himself admits to be authentic. Surely Old Testament criticism can hardly be held to have said its last word until the spirit breathed in these histories has been more carefully examined and explained.

The two Books of Kings make far less mention of the Mosaic institutions than the preceding books. The knowledge of and attention to the precepts of the law, even in the confusions of the period of the Judges, will be found greater

¹ "Introduction," p. 172.

² "Introduction," p. 173.

than in the more orderly condition of society under the kings. This might, at first sight, appear surprising. But whether surprising or not, the history of the Christian Church affords an exact parallel to that of Israel on this point. In each case, as years rolled on, traditions more or less unsound took the place of the authority of the sacred books, and they gradually fell into the background. In the Reformation era the recurrence to the authority of Scripture was felt to be the precise counterpart of what took place in the Reformation under Josiah. And we may predict with a tolerable amount of confidence that this view of the case will outlast the theory which seems at present to hold the field against it—the theory, namely, that instead of efforts after the revival of religion in Josiah's day, there was an attempt at that time to impose on the Jewish people a volume lately composed, or, as it is now suggested, compiled.¹

We will briefly note the allusions to religious ceremonies, and examine, where necessary, the critical theories concerning them. Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings viii. has already been discussed. First of all, in chap. ii. 2, 3 we have distinct allusions to Joshua and Deuteronomy.² Those books were therefore presumably in existence, nor does there seem any reason beyond the exigencies of a theory to support the allegation that this charge of David, a perfectly natural and reasonable utterance under the circumstances, has been interpolated.³ Joab's death is accompanied with circumstances which involve provisions only found in P (Exod. xxvii. 2, and xxxviii. 2). He lays hold of the "horns of the altar." Moreover, in the account of Abiathar's fate, Solomon quotes the first and second Books of Samuel as we have them now—the prophecy by Eli and the participation of Abiathar in "all" the afflictions of David—an obvious reference to his fidelity to his master in Absalom's rebellion, as well as in the days of Saul. It is remarkable how a minute study of each detail in the history confirms the traditional theory of the sequence of

¹ It should be noted once more that these books know no more of the "Book of the Covenant" than of any other portion of the Mosaic Law.

² Deut. xxix. 9; Josh. i. 7, xxiii. 14.

³ David has been severely blamed for this charge. I maintain that, living as he did under the law of Moses, he had no alternative but to give it. Joab was guilty of more than one treacherous and cowardly murder, and richly deserved his fate. Shimei had grievously offended against the provisions of the law, and conduct like his tended to make government impossible. In a burst of clemency his life was spared. But he was doubtless a secret enemy of David's dynasty. Professor Driver sees in vers. 2-4 the hand of the compiler "unmistakably." But he omits to notice that ver. 5 begins with "Moreover." From what document has ver. 5 been severed?

the books. Then there is the fact of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, his taking her into his house, and his ultimate decision to build her a house outside the more sacred confines of the city (chap. iii. 1; vii. 8; ix. 24). The historian gives no explanation of this singular proceeding, but it is obvious that no other reasonable explanation can be given than that of the Chronicler (2 Chron. viii. 11), that it was a concession to the prejudices of those who felt that such marriages were a breach of the Mosaic law, and Solomon may not impossibly have had some qualms of conscience of his own. The historian does not fail to remark on Solomon's conduct. Yet it may be observed that the prohibition to intermarry with the heathen is first found in a book (JE) of "the eighth or ninth centuries B.C.," and the prohibition to multiply wives in Deuteronomy.¹ Professor Driver sees, however, the "hand of the compiler" in this. Once more he does not explain why. Professor Driver imagines that he has detected a contradiction between ver. 4, which says that these sins were sins of Solomon's later days, and the fact that Rezon, the son of Eliadah, was an adversary to Israel "all the days of Solomon" (xi. 25). Professor Driver does not seem to have read the history very carefully. The writer does *not* say that Solomon only transgressed the law in his old age, but quite the contrary. His sin (so we read in ver. 2) was the taking to himself foreign wives *at all*. But when he had taken them, the natural result followed, namely, the weaning his heart from Jehovah, the God of his fathers. And in his old age his wives persuaded him to forsake the worship of Jehovah altogether, or at the very least to mingle the worship of Jehovah with that of other deities. This affords a very good example of the way in which contradictions not to be found in the narrative itself are manufactured in order to give some colour to the theory that the narrative has been "expanded" or "slightly modified," to suit the compiler's views. We are next invited to imagine that the redactor, whose fine instinct in modifying the narrative to further his ends we are so often asked to contemplate, was guilty of the crass stupidity of blaming Solomon in chap. iii. 3 for worshipping at the high places, while in ver. 4 he passes over the fact without seeing that any excuse was necessary. The fact is, that in ver. 2 the historian *provides Solomon with the necessary excuse*. And we learn once more from 2 Chron. i. 3, which here, as elsewhere, supplies the explanation of the narrative before us, that the reason why Gibeon was "the

¹ There is not, however, a clear reference to *this* prohibition.

great high place" was because the tabernacle, though not the Ark (see ver. 15) was there.¹ In Solomon's temple we find the cherubim, first declared to be in the tabernacle by P. We further find that the place where Moses, and after him the high priest, was wont to commune with God before the Ark has already obtained the technical name רִבִּיךָ, or *oracle*. The statement that the Ten Commandments, and nothing else, were in the Ark is supported by Deut. x. 2 and Exod. xxv. 21. And so we are asked to see in it an insertion by someone "strongly influenced by *Deuteronomy*."² But there is an obvious reference here to Exod. xxv. 14 (P)—"the staves," *i.e.*, the already well-known staves, as described in a well-known book. The priority of the extract from P to the narrative in which it is here embodied is evident to anyone who will take the trouble to compare the two passages.

We will not discuss the prayer of Solomon. It clearly is based upon the Pentateuch as we now have it. But of course, like some of the Psalms at present found in the historic books, it may have been a later insertion. But if so, it may not be immaterial to notice that once more it "knows nothing" of the alleged earliest portion of the law, the "Book of the Covenant." The opening portions of chap. ix. are said to be Deuteronomic additions. It is obviously as impossible to refute this statement as to prove it. But we may remark that these verses are plainly a continuation of the whole previous narrative. Ver. 1 follows naturally on chaps. vi. to viii., and even if chap. viii. be taken from another source, ix. 1 still continues the history of the preceding chapters. Ver. 2 is as obviously a continuation of chap. iii. 5, which is declared to be "entirely the work of the same author as 2 Sam. ix. 20," a narrative "dating from a time very little later than that of the events narrated."³ In ix. 25, again, there is a passage which does not look particularly like a later insertion. But it involves references to Deut. xxiii. 16, as well as to Exod. xxx. 1-10; xxxvii. 25; xi. 5 (P).

J. J. LIAS.

¹ We may observe that in 1 Kings iii., as in Judges, the indifferent use of the words Jehovah and Elohim are not regarded as affording any indications of different authorship.

² "Introduction," p. 175.

³ Driver, "Introduction," p. 181; *cf.* p. 173. There is a distinct reference in ix. 3 to Solomon's prayer, the "present form" of which Professor Driver assigns to the compiler; chaps. ii. 4, vi. 12, are quoted in this passage. But both these passages are separated by Professor Driver from the rest of the narrative, and assigned to the Deuteronomist. No proof of this is or can be given, save that it is necessary for the theory.