

## ART. IV.—THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

BY an unfortunate oversight I omitted to mention, in speaking of the Confusion of Tongues, one explanation of that event, which seems to point in the right direction, though it is scarcely sufficient by itself. It is that when the people were collected together from all sides to build a great common city, and began to try and hold intercourse with one another as they built, it was found that by lapse of time and distance their language had become so different that they could not sufficiently understand each other, and utter confusion arose.

I now take up my work at the chapter containing

## JACOB'S BLESSING.

“Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days” (Gen. xlix. 1), and then follow his words of blessing.

That is quite untrue, we are told nowadays. The words are an invention of a later age. Jacob never said them: they were put into his mouth in the time of the Judges, or, perhaps, of David. He could never have uttered the last two clauses of ver. 7. It is tolerably certain that the author was a poet of the tribe of Judah, for he ranks that tribe evidently as the premier one.

It is not, however, at all clear that we are bound to accept all this. We are dealing with a book that does not claim to be a complete history, but which is in itself leading us by a kind of philosophy of history—doubtless not entirely realized by the author, but inspired by its Divine Source—up to the formation of a “peculiar people.” In that case, we can well imagine the head of his family, with an intimate knowledge of the characteristics of his twelve sons, looking forward to the development of a federation, as we should call it now, of twelve tribes under the headship of one, each tribe at the same time retaining its own peculiar attributes. This seems just as probable a theory as the other, if we once allow any kind of inspiration at all, such as will include some knowledge of the future.

Much has been made of the idea that this chapter has in it reminiscences of the Song of Deborah, or *vice versâ*. But if this be so, how is it that in Gen. xlix. 13 it is said that “Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea,” while in Judg. v. 17 it is Asher who “sat still at the haven of the sea”? The statements are clothed in the same language, but they are different. Why is Judah made so much of in

Gen. xlix., where there is good reason for it, if Jacob uttered the words, because of the part which Judah took with regard to Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, while Judah is not mentioned in Judg. v.? Why is Issachar made "to prefer ease to independence" in Gen. xlix. 14, 15, whilst in Judg. v. 15 Issachar is made to be most eager in the fight for independence? Why in Gen. xlix. 14 should Issachar crouch down between the sheep-folds, whilst in Judg. v. 16 it is Reuben that sits among the sheep-folds? There is just that independence which proclaims variety of origin. There is also a certain amount of personal allusion to the founder of the tribe—*e.g.*, in the case of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi—which would scarcely have found place in a composition such as this, if it had been of a later age. We are glad, by the way, to see that Dr. Driver allows that, at any rate in a limited way, the words of Gen. xlix. 10 are Messianic.

We have now reached the end of our treatment of the difficulties and objections that have been raised to the authenticity and historicity of the Book of Genesis. Putting on one side a very few isolated clauses, such as that "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" (Gen. xxxvi. 31), which, it is admitted by all critics alike, may have been later additions to the text, having first of all, perhaps, been marginal notes at the side of a manuscript, it is contended by the present writer that, granting that previous sources may have been used, there is nothing in this book which requires us to give it any later date than that which has always been assigned to it in earlier times, and to which the Jews of our Lord's day, as well as those before them, and our Lord Himself, also attributed it.

Further still, if it be allowed that it bears traces of having been compiled from various sources, those sources, it is contended, though their style and language may be different, can in no sense be said to be contradictory. If such were the case, how is it that, with all the attention that has always been paid to it, such contradictions have not been found out before? An attempt has been made to show that such contradictions and discrepancies are capable of explanation, and they have, so far as is possible, been treated one by one. And, in fine, if it be a *mosaic* cunningly put together by the fitting in of each fragment to make a whole, it is artistically done, and can still be called *Mosaic* in another sense.

It is sometimes said: After all, you must take a wider and more general view, and look for general principles. Of course a general view and general principles must be looked for. But these can only be arrived at by inductive methods and by the study of details. That is why I venture to think any-

thing like the present investigation is important. The treatment of the details must come first; afterwards generalizations can be arrived at; and, after that, if the generalizations are not borne out by a further examination of the details, they cannot command our assent.

One of the great dangers of the present school of Biblical critics seems to be their subjective treatment and handling of the books of the Bible. They first of all lay down what they imagine to be the possibilities of any particular age in history, and then if the narratives referring to the period do not agree with their preconceptions, so much the worse for the history concerned: it is an invention of a later time. I may take an illustration of this from another period of Scripture history. The social and religious life of the Hebrew nation and its environment in the days of David are held to have been such that any outburst or production of religious poetry such as is contained in the Psalms cannot have been possible. *Ergo*, David did not compose any of the Psalms attributed to him. Such a style of argument would certainly not carry weight in any other subject than Biblical Criticism. It is enough, surely, in answer to say: (1) That we do not know enough about the conditions of life in David's time to make such an assertion at all; and (2) that in all ages, even if such an assertion were generally true, men in advance of their age and with great and wonderful gifts have constantly in the world's history been raised up by Divine Providence to occupy certain spheres and do certain work; and David may have been one of these.

I should like to restate here a view which I think is extremely probable as to the Hebrew names of God which occur in the Old Testament. I propose to deal only with those four, and particularly with the last two of the four, which rank by themselves—El, Eloah (with plural Elohim), Jah, Jehovah, if I may be allowed for the moment to use the old form. The rest of the names, like Shaddai, Elyon, etc., are more or less of the nature of epithets.

It has been often asserted that Eloah is a form connected with El, and perhaps of later origin, giving more dignity than the simpler form. If this be so, then it is equally possible that Jah was the earliest form and Jehovah also a more magnificent name. There are reasons for supposing that Jah was like El, the more primitive form. If we look outside the Scriptures it has, perhaps, its analogue in the Assyrian Ea or Aa, who is "the hero of the earlier episodes of the Creation story" (King, "Seven Tablets of Creation," p. xxxvii). In the Scriptures themselves Jah is evidently

treated as an ancient name of God: "Jah is . . . my father's God, and I will exalt Him" (Exod. xv. 2; compare Isa. xii. 2; Ps. cxviii. 14). "His name is Jah" (Ps. lxxviii. 4).

Jehovah, then, may be an intensive form of Jah, and may have primarily been יהיה, and not יהוה. This would account for the connection implied between the name and the verb יהיה, *not* יהוה. It is asserted that יהוה is older than יהיה; but occurrences of יהיה are to be found earlier than any of יהוה. Whichever may be the earlier form, it seems to me quite clear that when the Pentateuch was written in its present form, and even before that, there was not much distinction made between י and ך, for we have, for instance, Peniel and Penuel in two successive verses in Genesis (xxxii. 30, 31), both ascribed to J. This will allow us, then, not to attach much weight to the variation between ך and י in Exod. iii.; and יהוה may be a later form which took the place of יהיה, when, perhaps, יהוה became the common form of the verb, and not יהיה.

If יהיה is the original form of the name, then:

1. It may be taken as an intensive form of יה, for which intensive form we have analogies in the proper names of persons, such as Chalcol (1 Kings iv. 31), Bakbuk (Ezra ii. 51), Harhur (Ezra ii. 5; Neh. vii. 53). If that were so, then a Jew need not hesitate to utter the name Jah, while he would not utter the name Jehovah; whereas if Jah had been a contraction from Jehovah, the same treatment would surely have been given to it.

2. It may still actually occur in the Hebrew Bible. In Isa. xxxviii. 11 יה יה occurs where one Divine name would give the best sense, and subterfuges have to be adopted to explain the form away—either (*a*) that it is a dittograph, or (*b*) that we must insert with the Revised Version something between the two names: "I shall not see the Lord, *even* the Lord in the land of the living." There are two other places (Isa. xii. 2; xxvi. 4) where, with Isa. xxxviii. 11 before us, it might reasonably be contended that יהיה originally stood. The combination "Jah Jehovah" does not seem a very happy one, even though we meet with the combination "Jah Elohim" in Ps. lxxviii. 19, for the one name there may be interpretative of the other. It seems more easy to imagine that, as in Isa. xxxviii. 11, so in these two passages, יהיה stood at first, and that when that form of the name ceased to be used and was generally forgotten, and יהוה was substituted for it, in these two passages יהיה may have been written יה יה, and so יה יהוה became the established reading.

In bringing this series of articles to a conclusion, the im-

pression remaining on the mind of the writer is that he has found nothing in the Book as a whole to disprove the traditional view that it belongs to the period to which it was assigned—the age of Moses. At any rate, he thinks that what he has said deserves some consideration. There is so much that is at all times fashionable with the men of a particular time, and which is accepted by many because it is fashionable. This is not the way in which the problems of Biblical criticism should be handled. Before a new theory is accepted, it should be subject to the most searching criticism, and in a case where the faith of many is involved, at any rate reserve and caution should be exercised. It is better about such things to withhold assent and to keep the mind in suspense for the time than to accept on the authority of others, however famous, dogmatic statements as to what is really still *sub judice*.



#### ART. V.—STUDIES ON ISAIAH.

2. *THE Futility of Human Calculations (continued).*—Apply chap. vii. 1-17 to our own history. In how many instances, from the Spanish Armada downwards, do we see the Divine Hand overruling the most carefully-planned schemes for our overthrow! Even our own national sins and follies, our errors in policy, our neglect of the most ordinary precautions, have not overthrown us, because, on the whole, as a nation, we have not forgotten that the Lord was our God. That has been a source of moral strength which has raised up for us deliverers in the hour of peril. As long as faith dwells among us that “hour” will ever produce its “man.” During the whole struggle with Napoleon, though we had one of the keenest and most brilliant of mankind as our antagonist, though he possessed and controlled the vastest resources ever yet known, and though we committed numberless follies and even insanities, the Divine Hand was stretched out over us. He raised up deliverers who were never daunted either by the valour or numbers of their foes, nor of the still more appalling shortsightedness and folly of their masters, the British people. Our greatest captain, Wellington, in particular, was cautious and provident in the hour of adversity, and yet knew how to strike boldly and decisively when the hour of triumph was within his reach. Of no people may it be more truly said than of the people of this land, “Not by their own power or the might of their hand have they gotten all this wealth, but