

## Canon Driver and the Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup>

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MESSRS. T. & T. CLARK'S International Theological Library has opened auspiciously and opportunely with the present volume from the pen of Professor Driver. The Oxford Professor, like our Scotch Hebraist who is to follow with a volume on Old Testament Theology, has not published much, but what he has elected to give us is of the first quality, and the editors of the series are to be congratulated on their choice of one so well-equipped for the difficult task of writing an *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. What Dr. Driver "conceives this to include is an account of the contents and structure of the several books, together with [some] indication of their general character and aim" (p. ix), from which it is clear that the author intends to confine himself to what is technically known as "special introduction." This is an unfortunate narrowing of the scope of Old Testament Introduction as a theological discipline. It is as a canonical collection that the literature of the Old Testament has a place in a theological series, and we have a right to expect at least some account of how the books of that collection attained canonical rank. On the other hand, if the books are to be treated as merely literary monuments of Hebrew thought, it is difficult to see why the extra-canonical books are excluded. Perhaps Dr. Driver would include the collection and transmission of the Old Testament books in the somewhat ambiguous *Introduction to the History of the Old Testament*, which, he tells us, his work is *not*. The promised volume of *Theological Encyclopædia*, however, by one of the joint-editors of the series, will doubtless show us how it is proposed to co-ordinate the various branches of Old Testament study. With this exception, nothing could be more admirable than the tone and contents of the Preface as a whole; the latter part especially contains in small compass much wise and greatly needed counsel. One sentence only I should like to quote as expressing at once the justification and the method of all

true biblical research: "There is a human factor in the Bible, which, though quickened and sustained by the informing Spirit, is never wholly absorbed or neutralised by it; *and the limits of its operation cannot be ascertained by an arbitrary a priori determination of the methods of inspiration; the only means by which they can be ascertained is by an assiduous and comprehensive study of the facts presented by the Old Testament itself*"<sup>2</sup> (p. xvii).

On the Preface follows a short introduction (pp. xxvii-xxxv), which anticipates and answers an objection often brought against the conclusions of recent critics as to the age and authorship of certain parts of the Old Testament, that they "are in conflict with trustworthy historical statements derived from Jewish sources." Dr. Driver has no difficulty in showing that the "age and authorship of the books of the Old Testament can be determined (so far as this is possible) only upon the basis of the internal evidence supplied by the books themselves, by methods such as those followed in the present volume; no external evidence worthy of credit exists" (p. xxxv).

Having thus cleared the way for the application of the methods of historical criticism, the author proceeds to the study of the Hexateuch (pp. 1-150), the books of which are taken up one by one, and the leading divisions noted, with a summary of the contents and a critical analysis of each division. In view of the daily increasing attention which is being paid by all sections of the Church to questions of Old Testament criticism, I propose to devote the present notice of Dr. Driver's *Introduction* to a short *résumé* of his results as regards the problem of the Pentateuch, results which, as will presently be seen, are in substantial agreement with those of the so-called Graf-Wellhausen school.

Now the critical questions connected with the Pentateuch, which have engaged the attention of several generations of Old Testament scholars, may for our purpose be reduced to two:—I. The question of the documents employed in the composition or rather compilation of the Pentateuch; II. The question of the dates and mutual relations of these documents.

<sup>1</sup> The International Theological Library, edited by S. D. F. Salmond, D.D., and Charles A. Briggs, D.D.

I. *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, by Professor S. R. Driver, D.D. [First Notice.]

<sup>2</sup> The italics are mine.

I. As to the first of these, the question of the documents, Old Testament critics are now practically unanimous that the first six books of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Hexateuch) are, in the main, a compilation from *four* distinct and independent sources. These are most frequently cited as:—

P or PC (the *Priest's Code*, the document which supplies the framework and greater portion of the Pentateuch, and is distinguished from all the others by a phraseology and style peculiar to itself; first extract, Gen. 1, 1-2, 4<sup>a</sup>).

J (so-called from its author's use of the Divine name *Jahweh*, in English better *Yahweh*; first extract, Gen. 2, 4<sup>b</sup>-3, 24).

E (in which the Divine name *Elohim* is preferred; first extract, Gen. 20, 1-17); and

D (nearly co-extensive with our Book of *Deuteronomy*). For detailed proof of the existence, extent, and characteristic features of these different documents, the reader is referred to Canon Driver's book. Briefly put, the grounds on which this critical dissection of the Pentateuch is justified are these:—(1) The same event is doubly recorded; (2) the language, and frequently the representation as well, varies in different sections. Thus 1, 1-2, 4<sup>a</sup> [from P], and 2, 4<sup>b</sup>-25 [from J], contain a double narrative of the origin of man upon the earth" (p. 6). On a closer study, differences of language and style reveal themselves. "The style of 1, 1-2, 4<sup>a</sup> is unornate, measured, precise, and particular phrases frequently recur. That of 2, 4<sup>b</sup> ff. is freer and more varied." Then as to difference of representation, it will be observed that in P, the order of creation is: vegetation, animals, man; in J: man, vegetation, animals, woman. Now precisely similar differences of language and representation recur from beginning to end of the Pentateuch, and can only be satisfactorily accounted for on the hypothesis that the recurring sections are derived from originally independent documents. I have already referred to the striking linguistic peculiarities of P, peculiarities so strongly marked, and so easily recognised, that a comparison of the analyses carried out by Nöldeke, Kuenen, Dillmann, Wellhausen, and Driver shows us that these scholars, however much they may differ in other respects, are in essential agreement as to the limits of the *Priests' Code* or *priestly narrative*.

What remains in the first four books after P is

subtracted, Driver is frequently content to assign to the "prophetical narrative" (JE), *i.e.* to the narrative formed before the date of the Deuteronomist (see below) out of the two originally independent narratives J and E, which so strongly resemble each other both in language and representation, that it is now impossible to distinguish with accuracy which parts belong to J and which to E. One of the most striking illustrations of successful analysis is afforded by the narrative of the spies (Num. 13 and 14), which may serve here as an example of Driver's method. His analysis of these chapters is as follows (p. 57):—

{ P	13, 1-17 <sup>a</sup> .	21.	25-26 <sup>a</sup> .	(to <i>Paran</i> ).
{ JE	17 <sup>b</sup> -20.	22-24.	26 <sup>b</sup> -31.	
{ P	32 <sup>a</sup> .	14, 1-2	(in the main).	5-7.
{ JE	32-33.			
{ P	10.	26-38	(in the main).	
{ JE	8-9.	11-25.	39-45.	

Now if these two sets of verses are read consecutively, the following remarkable phenomena will be at once apparent—(1) "In P the spies start from the wilderness of *Paran*;" in JE presumably from *Kadesh* (cf. 13, 26 and 32, 8). (2) "In P they explore the whole country to *Rehob* in the far north;" in JE, only as far as *Hebron*. (3) "In P they represent the country as an impoverished land, not worth conquering (13, 32); in JE, as a fertile one, which the Israelites have not the means of conquering (13, 27-31)." And finally (4) in P, both *Joshua* and *Caleb* are named among the spies, both pacify the people, and both are to be allowed to enter *Canaan*; in JE, *Joshua* is not named as one of the spies, while *Caleb* alone stills the people, and is in consequence to be allowed to enter the *Promised Land* (Dr. p. 58). Facts such as these are clearly fatal to the tradition that *Moses* or a contemporary wrote these chapters as they stand, but find a full and sufficient explanation in the hypothesis that we have here a compilation from two (or rather three) originally independent sources, which the compiler has but imperfectly succeeded in harmonising.

To a study of the leading characteristics of these documents—the prophetical (JE), priestly (P), and Deuteronomic narratives—Canon Driver has devoted some most interesting and instructive pages, while special pains have been bestowed on the compilation of lists of words and phrases peculiar to P and D. Indeed, these lists are one of the most valuable features of the book.

II. While critics of diverse schools are, as we have seen, practically agreed as to the *limits* of the three sources just named—the only divergence of opinion being the minor point as to the respective limits of J and E—opinion is still divided as to the *dates* of the respective documents. Let us now see by what methods this *questio vexatissima* may be answered.

The best starting-point for our investigation is afforded by the Book of Deuteronomy, inasmuch as, with respect to the date of this source, at least, there is an approach to unanimity.<sup>1</sup> There is scarcely any room for doubt that Deuteronomy, in substantially its present form (less a few chapters at the end), is to be identified with the law-book that was discovered in the temple by Hilkiah (2 Kings 22, 8 ff.) in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah. That this newly-discovered law-book, which supplied the guiding principle of the immediately following reformation, cannot have been our completed Pentateuch is evident on many grounds, the length of the latter, if nothing else, being an insuperable objection (cf. 2 Kings 22, 10 and 23, 2). It must have been composed, therefore, not later than 621 B.C., not immediately before this date (so Kuenen, Reuss, and Cheyne), but more probably in the troublous days of Manasseh (p. 82).

From this, as a secure base of operations, we may now advance to a determination of the dates of the remaining sources. One thing is certain, to begin with, namely, that D is younger than JE, *à fortiori* younger than J and E as separate narratives. Driver's opinion as to the date of these two documents is characteristically cautious: "All things considered, a date in the early centuries of the monarchy would seem not to be unsuitable both for J and for E; but it must remain an open question whether both may not in reality be earlier" (p. 118).

The crucial problem of the sources still remains, the determination of the date of P. The argument from language, strange as it may appear, is not decisive either way. The question can only be decided by a critical study of *the history and development of the civil and religious institutions of the Hebrews*, as these may be traced in the sources already enumerated. I am precluded by considera-

<sup>1</sup> An attempt has recently been made by a few French scholars to prove that Deuteronomy is post-Exilic. See my notice of M. Vernes' *Essais Bibliques* in the current number of the *Critical Review* (T. & T. Clark).

tions of space from giving more than a single illustration of the results to be gained by this line of research—first started by Graf and since worked most successfully by that rarely-gifted scholar, Julius Wellhausen—viz. the laws relating to sacrifice. These deal, so far as concerns us here—(a) with the place of sacrifice, and (b) with the persons authorised to offer it (see Driver, pp. 80–81, 130–133). Now a comparison of the injunctions laid down in the three sources JE, D, and P regarding the place where alone sacrifice may be offered with acceptance has brought to light the following remarkable facts: In the collection of laws incorporated in JE (Ex. 20, 22–23, 33), and known as the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex. 24, 7) (which, if not entirely Mosaic, contains more Mosaic elements than any other part of the Pentateuch except the Decalogue), it is implied that sacrifice may be offered "*in every place*" where Yahweh shall record His name (Ex. 20, 24<sup>b</sup>). With this principle the practice of the early period of Hebrew history is in complete accord. "In D the law respecting sacrifice is unambiguous and strict; it is not to be offered in Canaan, 'in every place that thou seest,' but only at the place chosen by God, 'out of all tribes, to set His name there' (Dt. 12, 13, 14. etc.), *i.e.* at some central sanctuary." In compliance with this command, Josiah suppressed the local sanctuaries, and sacrifice was henceforth offered only at the central sanctuary at Jerusalem. In D, then, "the centralisation of worship is insisted on with much emphasis as an end aimed at, but not yet realised." When we turn to the legislation of P, which occupies the whole of Leviticus and parts of the adjoining books, we find this centralisation everywhere "presupposed as already existing." There are thus three clearly defined stages in the development of the law regulating the place of sacrifice, and it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the three stages mark a corresponding chronological succession in the documents recording them; in other words, that *P is the youngest of the sources of the Pentateuch.*

This conclusion is strengthened when we examine in the same way the regulations with regard to the persons authorised to offer sacrifice. In the Book of the Covenant it is implied that the rite of sacrifice may be performed by *any* Israelite (Ex. 20, 24 ff.), and in the Books of Judges and Samuel we find sacrifice offered repeatedly by men who were neither priests nor Levites, without a suspi-

cion entertained by themselves or imputed to them by others that they were transgressing the divine ordinances. In D, however, the right of sacrificing is restricted to the members of the tribe of Levi, while "in P this right is strictly limited to the descendants of Aaron," a limitation which first appears in the historical books written *after the exile*. In JE, D, and P, therefore, we again meet with three successive phases of Hebrew legislation, confirming the hypothesis, otherwise probable, that these documents appeared in the above chronological order.

Another problem of vital importance for determining the date of the completed Priests' Code (P) is its relation to the ideal legislation of Ezekiel (chaps. 40-48), and the relation of both to the remarkable *corpus legum*, now incorporated in P, and known as the "Law of Holiness" (H), Leviticus 17-26. The subject is too technical for adequate treatment here. It must suffice to refer to Driver and the authorities cited by him (pp. 43 ff. 138 ff.). His own opinion is that the order of succession is H (which is pre-Exilic), Ezekiel, P, which last becomes, in its final shape, a product of the age immediately succeeding the Exile. This view of the date of P, it must always be borne in mind, does not imply that the code was manufactured *en bloc* by the priests during and after the Exile. It is rather a re-formulation and re-codification, with a view to changed civil and religious conditions, of former legislation, which had its roots in the far-distant Mosaic times, and which, from one age to another, had advanced "from precedent to precedent."

A review of Canon Driver's book on lines other than those of the present article ought to devote considerable space to the valuable discussion (pp. 140-144) of the mutual relations of D, H, and P. If the author's contention can be upheld, that only the parenetic framework of H dates "from the closing years of the monarchy," while the *laws* of H are "considerably earlier" (pre-Deuteronomic?), as against Wellhausen, Kuenen, and others, who assign H *in toto* to the period of the Exile, we shall

be brought at least considerably nearer the final solution of the still unsolved problems of Pentateuch criticism.

It is to be regretted, however, that Professor Driver has not given us the natural complement of his careful analysis, and shown us how, from the above and other (minor) sources, our present Pentateuch was gradually built up, defining at the same time, as nearly as may be, the work of the final Redactor or Redactors. Notwithstanding this and other seeming errors of omission (for which the author in his Preface has tendered an apology in advance), one need have no hesitation in saying that the volume before us is out of sight the most valuable contribution which English scholarship has yet made to the study of the Pentateuch. It is not a book for babes, certainly, nor, on the other hand, is it written solely or chiefly for students of the original. Every student of the English Bible, with only such helps as may be afforded by, say, the Queen's Printers' Bible, may use it with perfect ease. An ample bibliography up to date (July 1891) is prefixed to each book to stimulate to further study.

I should like, however, in concluding this notice to make a couple of suggestions, which, if carried out, will greatly enhance the ease with which a student may consult Dr. Driver's work. The first is that, for the second edition, the author would provide an index of at least the more important passages discussed, such as Professor Kuenen has given in his *Onderzoek*; this is especially needed for the Hexateuch, where the same passage may be discussed in two or three sections of the book. The second suggestion is the desirability, where so many references have to be given together, of distinguishing the chapters from the verses by a heavier type.<sup>1</sup> Whoever will take the trouble to compare the contents of the Priests' Code, according to Wellhausen, as given by Professor Strack in his *Einleitung* (ed. 2), with Dr. Driver's list on page 150, will see at once how much is gained by this simple arrangement.

<sup>1</sup> As has been done in the present article.