

THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS CHRIST ON YOUNG MEN. BY THE REV. WILLIAM UNSWORTH. (*Kelly*. Crown 8vo, pp. 248.) If young men can be got to read this book, it will certainly do them good. It will strengthen the faith of those who have any; it will capture and save those who have none. For it starts with the person of Jesus Christ as the Gospels give Him to us, and nothing in the way of evidence is so effective as that, nothing so unshakable. Even the modern 'German' fashion of picking and choosing among the Gospels does not touch it, for the German critics themselves could not have written the things they reject. The only hindrance to the book's acceptance is its length. The serious among our young men will read it through, but those who need it most will be frightened at it. Yet it has to be read through to get at its force, which rises steadily with every chapter and gathers with every page.

THE MYSTIC SECRET. BY JAMES LEWIS. (*Kelly*. Crown 8vo, pp. 237.) Some volumes of sermons have recently come from the Wesleyan Bookroom of most unusual thoughtfulness. If the Wesleyan ministers preach extemporaneously all of them, they do not all preach without previous

preparation. Here is another volume of the same quality, its literary grace being as noticeable as its thoughtfulness. These sermons never suggest what is called culture; it is certain that a quite uncultured audience would enjoy them; yet they could not have been preached if the author had not read widely and carefully. Then they are triumphantly evangelical—the gospel of the blessed God the soul of every one of them.

THE WISDOM LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. BY W. T. DAVISON, M.A., D.D. (*Kelly*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 315.) Professor Davison's name is not far removed from Professor Davidson's, and Professor Davidson will not resent our saying that his work is not far removed either. There is most conscientious scholarship in all Professor Davison does; there is a distinct gift of presentation also; and there is a very wise restraint in the face of unsettled questions. Professor Davidson has also written an *Introduction to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*, with which Professor Davison would not have cared to come into competition. But he does not, since the other is not published alone. This has no rival as it stands, and suggests no rivalry.

## Is the Old Testament Authentic?

BY THE REV. J. ELDER CUMMING, D.D., GLASGOW.

### II.

THESE views as to the origin of the Old Testament books may be set forth by a little more detail as to the theory offered to explain some of their difficulties. That theory is, that the Mosaic law, as we now have it, consists of three codes, of which one is a collection of old customs and traditions committed to writing about the time of Isaiah, but revised and altered by some editor in the time of the Exile; the second is the Book of Deuteronomy dating from the days of Josiah; and the third the Priests' Code, which dates from Ezra, and was probably compiled by him, founded on the statements of Ezekiel.

Now if such a composition and rearrangement of liturgical and ecclesiastical documents took

place, surely the first, or almost the first, aim of the writers would be to make them consistent with each other. Even when we bear in mind that 'difficulties' such as now present themselves to the critics were of much less consequence in olden time and in an Eastern country, yet one or two patent facts, well known to the writers, could not be ignored. If, for instance, it be the case that all the Levites were qualified priests before the time of Ezekiel, and that then, or at the Exile, in accordance with Ezekiel's directions, so radical a change had taken place in the national customs, that only the 'sons of Zadok' were henceforth to be held qualified to offer sacrifices, surely the writers or editors would take care that the codes of

law would be made at least openly consistent on that point. A great historical fact, patent to themselves and all the people of their day, is not like a bit of old history with which few were conversant. If now a radical change was to be made, and only the sons of Zadok were to serve at the altar, and in order to give a colour to this innovation, the old fragments of law were to be edited and amended, that would certainly be done in such a way that no one could doubt the meaning. It was easy to make it plain. How, then, can we explain the fact that it has been stated in such a way as to allow the new critics to argue that there never was such a law till Ezekiel or Ezra made it? Surely no contradiction would be left to the new ordinance? Yet the Priests' Code (P) is said by the new critics to be precise in this matter, and the code of old custom and tradition (J.E.) is decidedly opposed to it; while the Deuteronomic code, for its part, is alleged to be silent altogether on the subject. Observe that the object is to find authority for the new statute in the old code, which is supposed to have said nothing about it. There are three documents, which these people are dealing with, to bring them into conformity, and to give sanction to the new institution. Of the three, one is made all right for the purpose; another is left without a word on the subject; and the third is said (by the critics) to be opposed to it. Could men capable of such blunders, to say nothing of the *morale* of the proceedings, have led a people in their sacred worship, and have written a large part of our Old Testament?

Of the broad statements as to the History and the Institutions of the Old Testament, there is a test at hand which the critics cannot refuse, but which they would appear not to have fully considered. I refer to the testimony given by the prophet Amos to the Levitical system as existing in his day, and referred to, not as a system then beginning, but in full observance and of unquestioned authority. Here are some of the references in that prophet which surely go far to establish the fact that the entire Levitical system of the books of Moses was then observed. The second chapter of his short book refers to the law and commandments as a whole (ch. ii. 4); to the forty years in the wilderness (ch. ii. 10); and to the law of the Nazarites (ch. ii. 11, 12). He bears testimony to the fact that prophets have been

known in Israel long before himself (chs. ii. 11, iii. 7, vii. 14). He indicates the separation of Israel from all other nations (ch. iii. 2), a principle which is at the very root of the Mosaic system. In the fourth chapter he tells us that Gilgal has been a holy place (ver. 4); he refers to the morning sacrifices (ver. 4); to the tithes paid every third year (ver. 4); to the sacrifices of thanksgiving (ver. 5); and to the prohibition to offer leaven (with its singular exceptions), of which the Book of Leviticus speaks; and in the same verse to the freewill offerings alluded to in that book. In the fifth chapter we have testimony to the feast days of Israel and their solemn assemblies (ver. 21); to the burnt-offerings (ver. 22); the meat-offerings (ver. 22); the peace-offerings (ver. 22), with the portions of the fat that were burnt in them; to the Minchahs and the other sacrifices (ver. 25); and to these having been offered in the wilderness during the forty years' sojourn. In the seventh chapter we have testimony to the high places where Isaac offered (ver. 9), and to the sanctuaries where Jacob worshipped. In the eighth chapter we have testimony to the songs of the temple (ver. 3), which show us that there were at least many liturgical psalms in use in his day; to the observance of the new moon (ver. 5) and of the Sabbath (ver. 5); to the observance of feasts (ver. 10), and of songs in connexion with them (ver. 10); to the belief that God had been in the habit of speaking to Israel (ver. 11); and to the historical fact of the idolatrous altars erected in Dan and Samaria (ver. 14). In the ninth chapter we have a testimony to the existence of the altar of burnt-offering (ver. 1), and to its being the solitary altar acknowledged of God. From these various references it is possible to construct almost the entire Levitical system as already in existence, fully acknowledged and observed in the days of Amos, one hundred and fifty years before the Exile.

The argument above stated stands as it was written in substance some two years ago, ere Professor Robertson's book was published, or I had known that he had entered on a similar line of reasoning. And the following attempt to systematise the above references is also elaborated without consulting his careful and accurate statement. It may be held, therefore, to have the additional force of a second independent testimony.

I. *The History of Israel* is implied by Amos.1. *Their Religious History*—

They had a law from God Himself, consisting of separate commandments, ii. 4.

Which they did not keep, but despised, ii. 4.

Their fathers did also so, ii. 4.

They were greedy and oppressive, ii. 6.

They were impure (ii. 7), idolatrous (ii. 8).

They had earlier prophets, ii. 11, vii. 14, viii. 11.

God had spoken by these, viii. 11.

They were the only race that knew God, iii. 2.

Bethel and Gilgal had been places of transgression, iii. 14.

2. *Their Internal History*—

The people had once been one, iii. 1.

Now, Zion was not grieved for the trouble of Joseph, vi. 6.

High places of Isaac were known (Moriah and Beersheba, etc.), vii. 9.

David's instruments of music, vi. 5.

Bethel was the king's chapel, vii. 13.

3. *External History*—

Brought out of Egypt, ii. 10, iii. 1, ix. 7, v. 25.

In the wilderness forty years, ii. 10, v. 25.

Amorites destroyed before them, ii. 9, 10.

Idolatry in the wilderness, v. 25, 26.

Covenant with Tyre, i. 9.

Gilead destroyed, i. 13.

Sodom, iv. 11.

Much of David's dominions lost, ix. 11.

II. *Sacrifices of Mosaic Law referred to*—

Burnt-offerings, iv. 4, v. 22.

Meat-offerings, v. 22.

Peace-offerings, v. 22 (only the fat to be burnt).

Thank-offerings, iv. 5.

Freewill offerings, iv. 5.

Feast days and solemn assemblies, v. 21.

New moon service, viii. 5.

Sabbath law, viii. 5.

Law as to debt, viii. 6.

Law as to Nazarite, ii. 11, 12 (touching wine).

Law as to baldness for dead, viii. 10.

The altar of burnt-offering, ix. 1.

These give thirty-four references, more or less precise, to earlier history, as contained in the Pentateuch.

Is it needful to add that for a system so detailed and so exact, both in requirement and in prohibition, there must have been a formal institution and a law of observance? Custom alone can explain neither its beginning nor its continuance. Custom might account for one or two leading ceremonies; but not for the minute and difficult details of such a system as that of Moses. And if a law and code be, therefore, implied in Amos, why must we reject the one which we possess in order to substitute a conjectural one, which is only now suggested? Amos himself gives strong testimony to the historical truth both of the system of Leviticus and of the code that regulated it.

A somewhat similar argument might be founded on the Book of Hosea, whose date is admitted, and who is one of the three (possibly the four) early prophets reckoned the earliest authorities for the faith and worship of Israel. In his short book of fourteen chapters, there are at least ten references to the Book of Deuteronomy (which is supposed not to have been forged till 120 years afterwards); and these are not so precise as to make it possible that they were inserted in Deuteronomy to give it authority in the eyes of the Jews. In Hosea iv. 4 we have the sin of striving with the priest when the latter is on God's side (Deut. xvii. 12); in v. 15 we have the picture of Israel in affliction and affliction returning to God (Deut. iv. 29, 31, xxx. 1, 3); in vi. 1 we have God represented as wounding and killing, but afterwards healing and making alive (Deut. xxxii. 39); in viii. 1 the foe is represented as attacking like an eagle (Deut. xxviii. 49); in viii. 7 we have strangers eating the fruit of the ground (Deut. xxviii. 33); in viii. 12 we have Israel as a great nation possessing a mighty law (Deut. iv. 6-8); in viii. 14 we have Israel forgetting the God that formed them (Deut. xxxii. 18); and in ix. 6, viii. 13, we have the remarkable prediction that Israel is to return in captivity to Egypt found also in Deut. xxviii. 68. One of the most remarkable of these references to Deuteronomy is in ch. xi. 8, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?' These cities are certainly mentioned in Gen. xiv. 2 as being near to Sodom; but the only place it tells us of their destruction is Deut. xxix. 23.

But, apart from these individual references,

there are certain broad facts in the teaching of Hosea which seem entirely to contradict the conclusions of the new critics.

1. There is, *e.g.*, the assertion made over and over again that Israel has *gone back* from its former worship of the true God. Instead of the truth being that Hosea was one of three who for the first time taught Israel the knowledge of the true God, and led them from idolatry and nature-worship to that better state—the prophet rests his whole position on the charge that Israel is a backsliding people, who at one time were much better and more obedient than they have now become. They have ‘forgotten God’ (xiii. 6, viii. 14); they have ‘forgotten the law of thy God’ (iv. 6); they have ‘rejected knowledge’ (iv. 6); and are urged to ‘return’ (vi. 1, xiv. 1, 2, vii. 10, 16). Specially, it is declared that God had made in time past a ‘covenant’ with them; and had not only given them a ‘law,’ but had ‘written to him the ten thousand things of my law’ (viii. 12, R. V. marg.); but that they had ‘transgressed’ and ‘trespassed’ against both law and covenant (viii. 1). All these things are incompatible with the idea that Hosea was seeking for the first time to bring Israel to the knowledge of the true God. They mean, indeed they say, that Israel had formerly known Him, and had gone back; and that the prophet was now urging them to return to their former state.

2. We have also a statement that the people had known and worshipped *the same God* from the time of their captivity in Egypt—‘I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt’ (xii. 9, xiii. 4)—the repetition of the statement adding considerable force to the argument.

3. We have an assurance that there had been many prophets of God in Israel at a time earlier than Hosea. ‘I have also spoken unto the prophets; and I have *multiplied visions*; and by the ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes’ (xii. 10). And these prophets have been

full of reproof and warning. ‘I have blessed them by the prophets; I have slain them with the words of my mouth. . . . But they, like Adam (or like “men”—it does not touch this argument which translation be preferred), *have transgressed the covenant*; there have they dealt treacherously against me’ (vi. 5, 7).

4. Certain feasts of the Lord were well known in Hosea’s day. ‘Her feasts; her new moons; and her Sabbaths; and all her solemn assemblies’ (ii. 11). ‘The day of the solemn assembly, and the day of the feast of the Lord’ (ix. 5). Drink-offerings are known, ‘They shall not pour out wine-offerings unto the Lord’ (ix. 4). The ‘solemn assemblies’ were probably those mentioned in Lev. xxiii. 2, 37; and if so, they included ‘the burnt-offering, the meat-offering (the peace-offering), and the drink-offering, each on its own day.’

5. Besides these, there are frequent references in Hosea to the facts of the history of Israel recorded in the historical books, and especially to those in the Pentateuch; and these references are often very minute. That made to the destruction of the cities of the plain (xi. 8) has been already mentioned; then we have the story of Jacob, at his birth (xii. 3); at Bethel (xii. 4); at Padan-Aram, while serving for *both* wives (xii. 12); and at Penuel (xii. 4); the story of the Exodus (xi. 1); of ‘the prophet’ by whom the Lord led them out (xii. 13); and the prophet by whom He kept and led them in (xii. 13); of the wilderness (ii. 5, ix. 10, xii. 5); of the sin of Baal-Peor (ix. 10); of the valley of Achor (ii. 15); of the sin of Gibeah (ix. 9, x. 9); of the demand for a king to be like other nations, and the result of their request (xiii. 10, 11). These are surely strong testimony to the fact that the history and the institutions of Israel (as now known to us) were currently known in the day of Hosea; and contravene the notion that the books in which so many minute things are recorded were not written till long after his time.