

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE IV.

DRIVER ON THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT.¹

BY THE REV. W. E. BARTON, B. D., OF WELLINGTON, OHIO.

THIS is the first volume of the "International Theological Library," which is to be published simultaneously in this country and England, and is designed to cover the whole field of Christian theology. Of the twelve volumes already arranged for, six are to be by American and six by English scholars. While the Library is interconfessional as well as international, its authors are for the most part among the advocates of the results of the Higher Criticism, and the editors are Professors Charles A. Briggs, and Stewart D. F. Salmond. From such a series, the Christian scholar has reason to expect much; and the successive issues will be looked for with interest, not unmingled, in the case of some of the volumes, with anxiety.

Canon Driver makes no attempt to set forth the *theology* of the Old Testament,—a book on that subject by Professor A. B. Davidson being one of those arranged for in this library: his attempt is to give an account of the contents, structure, and general character and aim of the several books; and this he does in the main with candor, cogency and conciseness. Whatever one's opinions on the points in controversy, the book is of great value. It would be difficult to name any recent work on the Old Testament con-

¹An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament. By S. R. Driver, D. D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford; formerly Fellow of New College, Oxford. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. (Pp. 522, 3½x6¼.) \$2.50, net.

taining so much that is of interest and value to the Bible student of the present day. In speaking of its characteristic features, general statements must suffice for the most part; as it would be difficult to state the author's views adequately in fewer words than he himself employs, and a satisfactory critique upon it would require a volume at least as large. Yet, that the book may not pass with the necessarily superficial criticism of general statements, we shall indicate briefly but in detail, a few of Dr. Driver's most characteristic positions.

Canon Driver is a higher critic of the moderate type. He believes thoroughly in the methods of the modern school of criticism, and accepts the most important of its results. He is, however, a believer in the supernatural, and while treating the books of the Bible "as literature," recognizes their divine origin. His preface defends his book against the anticipated charge that his conclusions antagonize established truths concerning inspiration: his introduction defends it from attacks on the ground of the supposed sacredness of the canon of Scripture.

On these points he says:—

"It is not the case that critical conclusions, such as those expressed in the present volume, are in conflict either with the Christian creeds, or with the articles of the Christian faith. Those conclusions affect not the *fact* of revelation, but only its *form*. . . . They do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They imply no change in respect to the divine attributes revealed in the Old Testament; no change in the lessons of human duty to be derived from it; no change as to the general position (apart from the interpretation of particular passages) that the Old Testament points forward prophetically to Christ. That both the religion of Israel itself and the record of its history embodied in the Old Testament, are the work of men whose hearts have been touched, and minds illumined in different degrees, by the Spirit of God, is manifest: but the recognition of this truth does not decide the question of the author by whom or the date at which, particular parts of the Old Testament were committed to writing; nor does it determine the precise literary character of a given narrative or book. No part of the Bible, nor even the Bible as a whole, is a logically articulated system of theology: the Bible is a 'library,' showing how men variously gifted by the Spirit of God cast the truth which they received into many dif-

ferent literary forms, as genius permitted or occasion demanded." (P. xi.) "It is sometimes supposed that conclusions such as those expressed in the present volume on the age and authorship of certain parts of the Old Testament are in conflict with trustworthy historical statements derived from ancient Jewish sources. This, however, is not the case. . . . For the opinion, often met with in modern books, that the canon of the Old Testament was closed by Ezra, or in Ezra's time, there is no foundation in antiquity whatever. . . . The opinion referred to is not a tradition at all: it is a conjecture, based no doubt on the passages that have just been cited, [from the Son of Sirach, the Second Book of Maccabees, the Fourth Book of Ezra, and the Talmud,] but inferring from them more than they actually express or justify. This conjecture was first distinctly propounded in the Sixteenth Century by Elias Levita, a learned Jew. . . . But it is destitute of historical foundation; and the authority of Ezra cannot, any more than that of the Great Synagogue, be invoked against the conclusions of critical investigation. . . . The age and authorship of the books of the Old Testament can be determined (so far as this is possible) solely 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." (Pp. xxiii, xxxi.)

Having thus severed all *a priori* considerations, he proceeds to an examination of the books in detail, arriving at the following general conclusions:

"The historical books of the Old Testament form two series; one, consisting of the books from Genesis to 2 Kings, embracing the period from the creation to the release of Jehoiachin from his imprisonment in Babylon, B. C. 562, the other comprising the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, beginning with Adam and ending with the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in B. C. 432. . . . No entire book in either series consists of a single, original work; but older writings, or sources, have been combined by a compiler in such a manner that the points of juncture are often plainly discernible, and the sources are in consequence capable of being separated from one another." (Pp. 2, 3.)

The Book of Joshua, since it includes elements homogeneous with those of the Pentateuch, is to be considered with it. This "Hexateuch" has at least three authors. After Deuteronomy and the Priests' Code have been considered, the remainder appears composite; but the analysis of JE is much less satisfactory than that which establishes the limits of P and D;¹ but "that P and JE form two

¹ To Dillman, De Wette and others, the easiest problem in Pentateuchal analysis seems to have been the separation of J and E. Dr. Driver always

clearly definable, independent sources, is a conclusion abundantly justified by the facts." J and E appear to have cast into a literary form the traditions respecting the beginnings of the nation that were current in the early centuries of the monarchy. (p. 110.) The *terminus ad quem* of Deuteronomy, 621 B. C., is not probably the date of its composition: it is unlikely that its finding in the temple was a ruse of Hilkiah; but it can hardly be older than the reign of Mannassah. (pp. 81-2.) The Priests' Code belongs to the exilic or early post-exilic period: not that it was "manufactured" by priests during the exile; "it is based upon pre-existing temple usage, and exhibits the form which it finally assumed." (p. 135.)

It will be noticed that this is a very different theory from that which regards Deuteronomy a forgery and the Priests' Code a dishonest invention—different at least in spirit,—and for that spirit Dr. Driver deserves credit, even though the results of his theory seem to shade easily into the other. It is in part because of this spirit, and the fact that there is much in the book to be heartily commended, that we may presume to speak with freedom in criticism of a few of those features of the work from which we find ourselves constrained to dissent. There is no other book in which the alleged established results of the higher criticism have been set forth at once so fully, so concisely, so reverently, and so recently; nor is there any which is more accessible or intelligible to the pastor or thoughtful layman. There can be rises from a study of this part of the Hexateuch with the conviction that it is composite, but doubts if it will ever be analyzed satisfactorily. The fact that one critic finds an analysis self-evident does not seem to render it impossible for the next one to hesitate even to pronounce it composite, much less to assert that its analysis is beyond dispute. Such facts are worth considering. What seems to the present critic to indicate very plainly a line of demarcation between two portions of a book may be the one thing which the next generation of critics will feel constrained to deny. In an age when everything else that was once thought to have been established is called in question, the opinions of critics cannot escape counter-criticism.

no fairer method than to let these results stand or fall with this book. An adequate presentation of the facts necessary for such a trial this article does not attempt, but only a few particular points illustrative of general positions.

There are a few things that ought to be said in advance about the competence of ordinary pastors and common Bible students to pass on these questions where doctors disagree. First of these is the fact that the question of authorship, date, etc., is in very slight degree one of language. Where there is a large body of contemporary literature for comparison, linguistic arguments at times are convincing: but where, as in the case of most of the books of the Bible, no such comparison is possible, and the whole theory must be built upon the fact that certain words appear in one place more frequently than in another, with possible conjectures as to the reason, the critic's linguistic tables and subjoined conjectures prove as much as Prof. C. M. Meade has proved concerning the composite character of Romans, and usually no more.¹ It is due to Canon Driver to say that he makes comparatively little use of the argument from language, as is also true of other of the more thoughtful and candid of the higher critics. It is important to remember that the essential questions involved in the discussion of the higher criticism, are questions which may be understood by ordinary students of the Bible, and answered by such a knowledge of it as may be obtained without extensive knowledge of the Hebrew.

Again, it is well to be on one's guard against a too ready acceptance of whatever is believed by a great man, though he be a specialist in the department of knowledge concerned. One has but to examine in the order of their appearance, the commentaries extant on a controverted book to see how narrow a field even great men are able

¹ *Romans Dissected. A New Critical Analysis of the Epistle to the Romans*, by E. D. McRealsham. A valuable satire.

to work thoroughly. A man has new, and as he believes, important views regarding a certain book, and puts them into print. The work attracts attention, and its author is soon quoted as authority on the entire book of which it treats. But a careful comparison shows often that his own line of research has been a limited one, and that he has, in the main, appropriated the results of his contemporaries or predecessors. Often an error can be traced through a whole shelf of commentaries of great and "original" authors, each of whom was original in a few points only, and followed, in the main, his predecessors, who in their turn followed others except as their studies led them to conclusions of their own in other and comparatively limited fields. And, even when an idea is clearly original, and its discoverer a great man, those who are wont to take all matters of opinion on the basis of "expert testimony," need the warning of a noted scientist, whose observations in his own field apply with equal force to matters of biblical criticism: "No one who has attentively studied the results of the numerous investigators in this field of research, can help being struck by the want of harmony, and even positive contradictions, among the conclusions which apparently the same experiments and the same facts have led to in different hands." ¹ Wisdom did not begin, and it is not likely to die with the critics. Their results are themselves subject to the higher criticism of the common sense of the ordinary, intelligent students of the Bible.

It is also true that when a man adopts, even tentatively, an hypothesis, he is likely to undergo a temptation to cease to be impartial in his research. It may almost be said that with some men a theory is fatal to investigation. Once adopted, the facts must adjust themselves to the theory or suffer the consequences. The ease with which the higher criticism makes an assumption and states that there is noth-

¹ Ferrier's *Functions of the Brain*, p. xxi.

ing in the Old Testament to conflict with it, treating as interpolations whatever passages seem to contradict their sweeping generalizations, is as good an illustration of this as of the circle which their reasoning as frequently displays. The method of the doctor in Mrs. Stowe's story, "The Minister's Housekeeper," is not unknown to them: "He was great on texts, the doctor was. When he had a p'int to prove, he'd jest go thro' the Bible, and drive all the texts ahead o' him like a flock o' sheep; and then, if there was a text that seemed agin him, why, he'd come out with his Greek and Hebrew, and kind o' chase 'round a spell, jest as ye see a fellar chase a contrary bell-wether, and make him jump the fence arter the rest. I tell yeu, there wa'n't no text in the Bible that could stand agin the doctor when his blood was up!" "Oldtown Stories." (Pp. 58-9.)

One of the best places to test the criticism of Dr. Driver's book and its school, is in regard to the authorship and date of Deuteronomy. Our author begins about it thus:

"Even though it were clear that the first four books of the Pentateuch were written by Moses, it would be difficult to sustain the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. . . . For, in Deuteronomy language is used implying that *fundamental institutions of P are unknown to the author*. Thus, while Leviticus xxv. 39-43 enjoins the release of the Hebrew slave in the year of Jubilee, in Deuteronomy xv. 12-18 the legislator, *without bringing his new law into relation with the different one of Leviticus*, prescribes the release of the Hebrew slave in the seventh year of his service." (P. 77.)

To test the connection of these statements let us place these two passages in parallel columns:

LEVITICUS XXV. 39-43.

39 And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant:

40 But as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee:

DEUTERONOMY XV. 12-18.

12 And if thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:

41 And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

42 For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen.

43 Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor; but shalt fear thy God.

14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.

15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;

17 Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

By what process can a contradiction be wrung from these passages? The seventh year and the fiftieth might both be years of emancipation. The law which provides that a laboring man may have July 4th as a legal holiday probably says nothing about the fact that every seventh day already belongs to him. This does not prove that the authors of these statutes were mutually ignorant of each other's work, nor even that the two laws interfere in their operation. The laboring man has his Sunday, and his holiday, whether they coincide or not. The year of Jubilee, and the Sabbatical year, were each marked by joy and enlargement of freedom. In the founding of the Hebrew commonwealth the design was prominent of having a nation of freemen, and every possible opportunity consistent with the character of the people was taken of enlarging the area of freedom and equalizing the distribution of wealth among the people. With a law already in operation for a general emancipation once in fifty years, and with a return to the possessions of the family, what is more likely

than that the establishment of another year of joy, more frequently recurring, would bring with it another, though somewhat less complete emancipation? The two are not only not contradictory, since they involve no conditions inherently improbable, but more than this, they are just what our knowledge of the Hebrews and the intent of the Mosaic legislation would lead us to expect. Not even Dr. Driver's unqualified statement and his unstinted use of italics, prove or even make it appear likely that any other than the traditional view is the correct one.

So also the statements which Dr. Driver makes concerning the priests and Levites, appear stronger than the text warrants. "In the laws of P in Leviticus and Numbers a sharp distinction is drawn between the priests and the common Levites: in Deuteronomy it is implied (18:1^a) that *all* members of the tribe of Levi are qualified to exercise priestly functions." (P. 77.) But if the margin of the Revision is correct, as seems probable, the same distinction is made here in Deuteronomy xviii:1^a between the Levites who are priests and those who are not. "The priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi shall have no portion nor inheritance with Israel." That Deuteronomy xviii. 6 is in conflict with Leviticus vii. 32-34," appears as certain as would be the case if the church records were to show that a minister receives a stipulated salary, while the local papers chronicled a donation party at his house. In other words, where there is no direct contradiction in the Old Testament statements in different parts, the presumption is in favor of harmony; and our ignorance of much that belongs to the history, justifies such harmony where it can be brought about by a reasonable hypothesis.

Of course, Dr. Driver divides Isaiah, "There is no thought in this prophecy [chs. xl.-lxvi.] of the troubles or dangers to which Judah was exposed at the hands of Sargon or Senacherib; the empire of *Assyria* has been suc-

ceeded (B. C. 607) by that of *Babylon*: Jerusalem and the Temple have long been in ruins (58, 12; 61, 4, 'the old waste places;' 64, 10); Israel is in exile (47, 6; 48, 20, etc.)." (p. 217). There is no occasion to discuss these points: they have received full consideration in recent numbers of the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA. There are many men to whom these arguments seem cogent and who would accept them without hesitation if they could rest there: but once having admitted the composite authorship of Isaiah, and having assigned the date of the last twenty-seven chapters to the time of the exile, one must next begin to split up the first part, and find another author for the thirteenth chapter, and send the twenty-third in search of the man who wrote it: and a conservative man must be indulged in some reluctance to assent to even the more plausible of such conclusions until he ascertains where his method is likely to land him.

Space forbids the consideration of any of the other prophets at length. We venture to allude, however, to his views of the Book of Jonah. Holding to its historic basis,—that Jonah was a real character, that he actually preached in Nineveh and that a great reformation followed—the author considers the facts which make it appear to him that it cannot be regarded as entirely historical, and states, apparently with approval, and in as concise and satisfactory a manner as we have seen anywhere, the allegorical interpretation of Kleinert and others:

"According to this view, Jonah does not merely represent the unspiritual Israelites, he symbolizes Israel as a nation, and the narrative is an allegory of Israel's history. Israel, as a nation, was entrusted with a prophetic commission, to be a witness and upholder of Divine truth; but Israel shrank from executing this commission, and often apostatized: it was in consequence "swallowed up" by the world-power, Babylon (see esp. Jer. 51, 34), as Jonah was swallowed by the fish; in exile, however, like Jonah (c. 2), it sought its Lord, and thus was afterward disgorged uninjured (cf. *ib.* v. 44); after the return from exile, there were many who were disappointed that the judgments uttered by the prophets did not at once take effect, and

that the cities of the nations still stood secure, just as *JONAH* was disappointed that the judgments pronounced against *NENEVEH* had been averted." (p. 304.)

In his treatment of the Psalms, the author is usually suggestive rather than dogmatic: and where his conclusions seem,—as they sometimes seem to the present writer,—to be unsupported by the facts as we have them in the Psalter, the reasons for the author's views are usually given, so that the reader may judge for himself of their merit. Of the general considerations which have influenced him, Dr. Driver says, "It is to be owned that these criteria are less definite than might be desired, and that when applied by different hands they do not always lead to identical results. Nevertheless, some conclusions may be fairly drawn from them. It may be affirmed, for instance, with tolerable confidence, that very few of the psalms are earlier than the seventh century B. C." (p. 362). The psalms in Books I–II alluding to the king (Ps. 2, 20, 21, 28, 61, 63, 72,) are presumably pre-exilic. Of the psalms describing the sufferings or persecution of the writers (which are numerous in these two books) a few may be pre-exilic, but most were probably written by contemporaries of Jeremiah, or possibly in some cases spring from the early part of the Persian period (B. C. 536–C. 400). Psalms 44, 74, 79, and perhaps 83, appear to belong to the Maccabean period, and it may be that there are other psalms dating from this period; "but there is no sufficient reason for supposing this to have been the case on the scale supposed by Olshausen and Reuss," and we may add Cheyne. "Had so many psalms dated from this age, it is difficult not to think that they would have borne more prominent marks of it in their diction and style. Reuss' exegesis is arbitrary." (p. 364.)

In general, Dr. Driver allows himself considerable latitude in his conclusions with regard to the dates of the psalms, with a tendency to unsettle views usually held rather than to give definite views of his own. But the "wide

limits" which he gives are narrower than they seem, as in the following: "There is no doubt that the psalms upon which Ewald's critical tact has thus fastened are marked by a freshness and poetic force and feeling and a certain brightness of language and expression which distinguish them from most of the others attributed to David; and if Davidic Psalms are to be preserved in the Psalter, we may safely say that they are to be found among those which Ewald has selected. At the same time, it must be admitted that the aesthetic criterion upon which Ewald relies is a *subjective* one. . . . On the whole, a *non liquet* must be our verdict: it is possible that Ewald's list of Davidic psalms is too large, but it is not clear that none of the psalms contained in it are of David's composition." (p. 358.) Now, we submit that this, under color of allowing the widest possible choice, really forces the reader into very narrow limits. Ewald assigned to David ten psalms (3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 15, 18, 29, 32, 101) with portions of two others (19: 1-6; 24: 1-6, 7-10), and three fragments imbedded in later psalms (60: 6-9, 68: 13-18, 144: 12-14.) Upon what ground may we "safely say that if there are Davidic psalms preserved in the Psalter that they are to be found among those which Ewald has selected"? Why may there not be as many more which upon other than aesthetic grounds may be assigned to him? Dr. Driver himself warns us that Ewald's subjective criterion is unreliable: is it reliable enough to determine beyond a peradventure the widest possible limit of Davidic psalmody, and not reliable enough to afford any bar to further diminution? May we upon the basis of "the freshness and poetic force and feeling and a certain brightness of expression" which we may imagine to have characterized David, assume first that no psalm which does not bear these characteristics is David's, and second that any psalm bearing these characteristics may, notwithstanding, be anyone's else than David's? We believe that Dr. Driver

means to be candid: but this is only one example of what seems to us an unconscious lack of candor. Why may not the rule work as well, nay far better, the other way, and enable us to say that psalms exhibiting the characteristics described seem certainly to belong to David, and that the list may be increased indefinitely on other grounds? It is more than absurd to attempt to define the widest possible range of an author's work by the marks which distinguish some portions of it. There is "a freshness and poetic force and feeling and a certain brightness of language and expression" in L'Allegro not to be found in "Samson Agonistes"; in "The Princess" and not in "In Memoriam;" in "Tam O'Shanter" and not in "The Cotter's Saturday Night;" in "A Fable for Critics" and not in "Commemoration Ode;" in "The Bells" and not in "The Raven." A man may study the character of Cowper until he becomes tolerably sure that certain poems which have come to him anonymously betray some moods characteristic of that poet: is he therefore justified in the assertion that if there are any writings of Cowper extant they are to be found among a dozen or fifteen poems and scraps culled from his "Olney Hymns"? Judged by such standards, what would become of "The Task" and "John Gilpin"? Who could ever collect Gray's poems if he submitted each one to subjective tests derived from a study of his "Elegy"? The fault in the method is in the application: it may be used in helping to determine in part what may be, but becomes extremely unreliable when used to determine *what may not be* an author's work. "An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog" is just as characteristic of Goldsmith as "The Traveller": "A Vision of Judgment" is as characteristic of Byron as "Childe Harold": "Maud Muller" is as characteristic of Whittier as "Stanzas for the Times"; the twenty-third psalm is probably as characteristic of David as the twenty-fourth.

And, as an illustration of the workings of this method

of criticism, let us ask, what becomes of the twenty-third psalm under its manipulation? We do not find the answer directly given in the volume before us. It is not included in Ewald's list: we are to infer therefore, that it cannot possibly be David's. Why not? We must infer the answer from some vague allusions. It is one of those numerous psalms in the first and second books which represent their authors as suffering: for it speaks of the Psalmist's enemies. It was probably written then, we infer, by a contemporary of Jeremiah. (p. 363.) Again, it refers to the "House of the Lord:" this must indicate a later period than the time of David's life and reign. (p. 353.) We infer this, though neither of the references cited designate this particular psalm. But had David no persecutions, that all psalms alluding to sufferings or enemies must be assigned to some other man, and of course to another time, and equally of course to a later time? What of his flight for his life from the court of Saul, of his residence in the cave, of his exile among the Philistines, of his conflict with Saul, of his strife for the conquest of his land, of the rebellion of Absalom, of the troubled later years of his reign in which the sword never departed from his house? Were the incidents of his life so barren of strife or of persecution or of suffering that every psalm which betrays a tinge of these qualities must forthwith be wrenched from its associations and sent down the ages on a hopeless hunt for an author and a place in history?

In the face of such passages as Gen. xxviii. 17 can we affirm that "the house of the Lord" of necessity refers to the temple? And if it does, was the hope of being permitted to erect a house for the Lord so foreign to the thought of David that any psalm which expresses thought of dwelling in the house of the Lord is forthwith to be cut off from

further consideration as Davidic? (See 2 Sam. vii. 2 *seq.*; 1 Ki. v. 3; viii. 19, 2 Chron. vi. 7.)

If it be objected to this process of reasoning that it does not apply to the work before us, since it is based on inferences from general statements instead of particular affirmations, the answer is that the desired particular affirmations are largely wanting, and that such inferences constitute of necessity the reviewer's criteria.

But, judged entirely on the ground of its internal evidence there is not in the whole Psalter a psalm which fits more accurately into the place which the critics assign it than this psalm fits into the time in David's life when he was fleeing from Absalom, and was fed by Barzillai the Gileadite. (2 Sam. xvii. 27-9.) Let the historic imagination reproduce the scene when the king, having left Jerusalem, barefoot and weeping, forsaken by his friends, persecuted by his son, plotted against by his counsellor, and with the memory of Nathan's prophecy in his mind, comes at length, through a way beset with dangers, and through plots against his life, to Mahanaim, where he is provided with all that he needs for himself and his followers. It is not enough to ask whether he might have thought such thoughts as this psalm expresses; *must* he not have thought them? "I am no longer a king: I am not even a shepherd: I am only a sheep. Yet I am not shepherdless. I wander where my Shepherd leads. I am in his wide pasture, and I shall not want. He has given back my life, which seemed to have been taken from me: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. I walk in the midst of dangers, and in a valley shadowed with death, but I fear not, for he is with me. Even in the presence of my enemies he provides for me with such lavish care that I have more than I could wish. Not adversity alone, but his goodness and mercy follow, and shall follow me. He who provides for me shall still care for me; and I shall return to Jerusalem, and dwell in God's

house to the end of my life." No more natural or characteristic thoughts can be imagined for David, and no more appropriate historical setting could be desired for the psalm.

This is a consideration of the question of the data and authorship of the psalm "solely upon the basis of the internal evidence supplied by the book itself, by methods such as are followed in the present volume;" and nothing more clearly in harmony with its Davidic authorship could be expected or even desired. Nor is there anything in the psalm or out of it to set aside these considerations. Is it not violent to take this psalm from such a setting and such an author on the basis of mere conjecture, and without even the meager compensation of finding for it elsewhere a local habitation and name? If one-fourth as much of its language and spirit as, fairly interpreted, seem characteristic of David and in harmony with his experience, fitted the life and time of Jeremiah, or Simon Maccabæus, would not the critics assign it without hesitation to the time of the Exile or the Maccabees and to the appropriate author?

Upon grounds equally slight other psalms are wrested from their time-honored associations. "Psalm 90 in dignity and deep religious feeling is second to none in the Psalter: but it may be questioned whether it does not presuppose conditions different from those of Moses' age; and had Moses been the author, it is natural to suppose that it would have been more archaic in style than it actually is." (P. 358.) As throughout the book, the fact that "it may be questioned" settles the case with the author at once and forever. Is the fact that a thing may be questioned, enough to set at rest all opposing considerations? Does the fact that a document does not display characteristics which a critic who lives thousands of years afterward finds it "natural to suppose" might have been those of its alleged age, together with the fact that the critic has previously, and on equally

satisfactory grounds, relieved himself of all assistance which might have come to him by a comparison of the style of the document in question with that of other documents alleged to have been by the same author, justify the unequivocal decision that the alleged author was not the real author, and that the work is to be attributed to no one and to no time in particular? There is in such reasoning much that reminds one of the only fact which the detectives in search of Mark Twain's lost white elephant could at first determine with certainty,—namely, that the great hole in the side of the building was *not* the aperture through which the animal had effected an egress.

The testimony of Peter in Acts ii to Psalm xvi is not regarded by Dr. Driver as establishing its Davidic authorship, nor does Peter's opinion seem to weigh greatly against the critical conclusions which would assign it to a later time. The New Testament use of Psalm cx is harder to account for, since the testimony is not only definite and necessary to the argument, as is true also in its use of Psalm xvi, but the words are those of our Lord himself. Driver asserts, however, that "In the question addressed by our Lord to the Jews (Mt. xxii. 41-46; Mk. xii. 35-37; Luke xx. 41-44) his object, it is evident, is not to instruct them as to its *authorship* of the psalm, but to argue from its *contents*; and though he assumes the Davidic authorship, accepted generally at the time, yet the cogency of his argument is unimpaired so long as it is recognized that the psalm is a Messianic one and that the august language used in it of the Messiah is not compatible with the position of one who was a *mere* human son of David." (p. 363.) The psalm may be ancient, Driver thinks, and apparently does belong to the period of the monarchy, but can hardly be Davidic. But we do not yet see that the Davidic authorship of this psalm is not involved of necessity in our Lord's argument; and it still appears to us that the Jews might easily have worsted

Jesus in the controversy, had they possessed the wisdom of Dr. Driver's book. If it is really true that David did not write this psalm, it is well for us to know it; but it is not well for us to accept the theory with the quiet assurance that it will make no difference with our belief. Such conclusions will necessitate a very considerable readjustment of faith:—a readjustment which must be made if truth compels it, but not needlessly nor hastily nor yet without thought of the consequences.

We do not care to quarrel about the question of titles: we are ready to admit that the title of Psalm xxxiv.—“*A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed*”—fits the contents as ill as any that could easily have been devised. David had not at this particular time been blessing the Lord; deceit, and not praise had been in his mouth. He had not been righteous and had not cried to the Lord and had not been delivered; his tongue had not been kept from evil nor his lips from speaking guile; he had acted the part of a fool, and had been turned away by the king—who was not Abimelech—and had been left by God to suffer the consequences of his folly. But do this and a few other, though less evident instances, justify the “question” (which is treated at once as though it were a demonstration) whether the titles “are more trustworthy in the instances that remain”? (P. 356.) If Longfellow did not write the little ditty about the turnip growing behind the barn, does the untrustworthiness of the tradition which ascribes it to him, raise (and, for that matter, settle) a question as to his having written anything else that has been ascribed to him?

This article has already exceeded its proper bounds. In a closing word it is possible only to express our high appreciation of the many excellent qualities of the book, and to wish that its defects were absent. Much of what it brings to us is true and good: while some of its positions seem hardly

worth the dignity of the appellation, guess-work. The final effect of the book will be good. Its theories, true and false alike, are those which are "in the air," and the Church may far better receive them from reverent Christian scholars than from violent infidels. Let the work of investigation go on. Let every fact, and every conjecture which can throw light on the truth contained in the Bible, and truth concerning the Bible, be given a hospitable reception and a careful analysis. But let us not mix the facts and the conjectures; and let us not mistake the weather-cock for the compass. Truth is better than any theory; however ancient or widely believed, and the Church can suffer nothing from it. But assumption is not always truth; and assertion is not demonstration; and the new is not always the true theory. This is not an esoteric matter. A due regard must, it is true, be entertained for the opinions of scholars; and the theories of experts ought to receive, and rarely fail to receive, that respectful consideration and high regard deemed appropriate toward their authors, and often somewhat higher than the theories might seem to merit, if unsupported by great names. But these are not questions of names, but of facts; and these facts are intelligible to ordinary Bible students. It is not courteous for the ignoramus, however reverent and honest, to decry as infidels or rationalists all who do not agree with him: but it is in order for every man who has an accurate knowledge of his English Bible to search the Scriptures for himself, and see whether these things are so. The final judgment of the church at large will be more trustworthy than the conjectures of the critics. What is needed is a wider study of the questions involved: that need will be met in part by this volume and the study to which it will incite.