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THE
CHURCHMAN

JUNE, 1892.

ART. I.—MODERN OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

No. IV.—PROFESSOR DRIVER.

I COME now to the English disciple of the school to which these articles have been devoted who, by reason of his reverence, moderation, and learning, exercises most influence upon English theological thought. I mean Canon Driver. Professor Cheyne has been so recently and, I may add, so ably dealt with in the CHURCHMAN by Canon Meyrick, that I may be excused from discussing his writings. His extreme opinions with regard to the Psalter, though they would seem a necessity of the case, if the new criticism is to be logical as well as ingenious, will hardly, one would think, be likely to secure the acquiescence of the English religious world. But it is the candour, the religious earnestness, of Canon Driver, combined with an indisposition to push matters to extremes, which has won for him the commanding position he at present unquestionably occupies in the domain of Old Testament criticism in this country.

Yet, for critical acumen and ability to grasp the true nature of the question at issue, the palm, I must honestly confess, seems to rest with Professor Cheyne. He has justice on his side when he asks, as he has lately done, why Canon Driver, if he goes so far, has not the courage to go farther. For it is the weakness, and not the strength, of Canon Driver's critical position that has won for him the commanding position of which I have just spoken. In England extreme views are unpopular. Moderation is the invariable condition of success. The whole history of English politics, for instance, has been a history of compromise. He is in the highest esteem as a practical man who has an expedient always ready to bridge over a difficulty, to soothe the animosities of con-

flicting sections of society. Macaulay, who, perhaps, of all our historians is the most intensely national, boasts of this tendency to sacrifice logic to circumstances, as displayed in the momentous document which formulated the principles of the Revolution of 1688. Our strong religious antipathies have until lately prevented this principle from being regarded with equal favour in the department of theological controversy. But it has at length been welcomed there also, and he is the most popular divine who, in the conflict of opinion, is happy enough to have struck out an apparently plausible and workable middle course. Such a course, whether logical or illogical, is hailed in the nineteenth, as it was in the fourth century, by those who desire to avoid the painful necessity of strife. I fear it must be added that the policy of compromise is as certain to defeat the hopes of those who have thus hailed it in this century as in that. There is, unfortunately, no Athanasius at present to discern the true principle at stake, and to defend it with eloquence and insight equal to his stubborn tenacity of purpose. Nevertheless, now, as then, it is a controversy on a fundamental question which is raging, and now, as then, it may continue to rage for not less than half a century. Then it was the Divinity of the Son of God which was disputed; now it is the authority of the written Word. It has already been pointed out in these pages how English critics are accustomed to adopt the conclusions of German criticism in regard to that Word without accepting its premisses. The premisses are that there has been, and can be, no revelation, no special Divine guidance, in the history of Israel. Judaism and Christianity, says Kuenen, as we have seen,¹ have neither of them any claim to a revelation of truth "in any way special and peculiar." In his view, the occurrence of alleged miraculous events in a narrative may be taken as a proof that it is separated by a considerable interval of time from the events narrated. It is on this basis that the theory of the later origin of the Pentateuch has been raised. But Canon Driver, while he accepts the conclusions of men like Wellhausen and Kuenen, does *not* accept their premisses. His "criticism," he tells us, does not "banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament: it *presupposes* it."² He lays down no postulate concerning the possibility or impossibility of miracles, so that his theory of the Old Testament is deprived of its chief supports, and, unlike that of his Continental allies, rests on the insecure foundation of criticism alone.

¹ CHURCHMAN, May, 1892, p. 394.

² "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," Preface, p. xix.

I should be very sorry to do the least injustice to Canon Driver's motives. If I have described his middle course as a "plausible" one, it is not because I wish to impute insincerity to him. No one can fail to have the greatest respect for his candour, his industry, his wide and profound Hebrew scholarship, and his high character as a Christian and as a divine. Nor, if this were a mere matter of pure linguistic criticism, or of the interpretation of any particular passage of Holy Writ, should I venture for a moment to cross swords with him. But the question at issue between the adherents and the opponents of the new criticism is a far wider one. It is concerned with the whole plan and purpose of revelation, with the part miracles and special providences play in the history of Israel, with the principles of literary and historical investigation in general. On such points as these others beside profound Hebrew scholars and skilled textual critics may claim to form and to express an opinion. We may venture to go further. It is not too much to say that the importance of the question to the moral and spiritual life of Christendom demands that every man, according to his ability, should examine the methods recommended to us, and accept or reject them according to his view of their intrinsic excellence or worthlessness.

Before we proceed to a more detailed examination of these methods, we may remark on the position in which the Old Testament narrative, as a whole, is placed by Canon Driver's theory. On critical grounds chiefly, without the assumptions we have referred to as universal among German critics, yet supported by some instances of alleged discrepancies,¹ he divides the sources of the Pentateuch into four main currents. First, there are the Jehovist and Elohist, who, as he tells us, "cast into a literary form the traditions respecting the beginning of the nation that were current among the people—approximately (as it would seem) in the early centuries of the

¹ If these alleged discrepancies are not treated in these articles, it is from no intention to misrepresent Canon Driver or any other critic. But if we devoted ourselves to an examination of them we should have space for nothing else. A brief statement of them will be found in Canon Driver's "Introduction," in pp. 129 *et seq.* It cannot be denied that the contents of the Pentateuch present some difficulties on what is generally known as the "orthodox" theory. But (1) it is possible that fuller information might avail to clear up those difficulties; (2) they form a very slender foundation for the support of so vast a fabric as modern criticism proposes to rear upon them; and (3) the theory of modern critics regarding the Hexateuch is confronted with difficulties at least as serious as the theory they bid us renounce. The object of these papers, let it be clearly understood, is not so much to maintain the traditional view, as to point out the difficulties in the way of our acceptance of that which we are at present asked to substitute for it.

monarchy,"¹ and whose narrative has been combined by a later writer. Then there is the Deuteronomist, who must be supposed to have composed his account of the institutions of Israel in the reign of Manasseh.² Then there is the "completed Priestly Code," which, he tells us, "is the work of the age subsequent to Ezekiel."³ With regard to this last, it has obviously no historical value whatever on Canon Driver's hypothesis. Written not less than a thousand years after the events it professes to record, and resting, so far as we know, upon no authentic information, it must, of course, be dismissed in any inquiry concerning the early history of the Jewish nation and its institutions. Though Canon Driver regards the ritual of the Priestly Code as clearly "based upon *pre-existing Temple usage*" (the italics are his own), he gives us not the slightest information as to the date to which this "Temple usage" may be supposed to extend backward.

Under any circumstances whatever, the religious ceremonies of a given age can hardly be regarded as any very sufficient guide to the ceremonies of a period from nine hundred to a thousand years before it. Nor can statements of historical events, made nine hundred or a thousand years subsequent to those events, be depended upon, unless they can be distinctly shown to be based on earlier authentic information. Thus the Priestly Code, though no doubt important for the period immediately succeeding the return from captivity, and perhaps, to a limited extent, for an earlier period, is historically worthless for the events of the Mosaic age. The main portion of Deuteronomy, however, we are told, can be traced back to the information found in the mingled Jehovistic and Elohist narrative which has just been mentioned. And this, as we have seen, is simply a record of "traditions" which were current in Israel about five centuries after the events to which those traditions refer. Now, it is quite true that there are traditions *and* traditions—traditions which are authentic, and traditions which can lay no claim whatever to such a character.⁴ But what importance can be attached to traditions which at the very nearest are divided by a period of five hundred years from the events to which they relate? If the analogy of other history is to be trusted, they are useless to the historian. We find ourselves

¹ "Introduction," p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 135. But it is remarkable that in Neh. viii. 14, which Canon Driver admits to be authentic, Levit. xxiii. 40 is spoken of as already existing in a written form.

⁴ It were much to be wished that when writers on the Old Testament speak of traditions, they would tell us whether they mean the one or the other.

debarred from writing the history of the savage races of Polynesia because of the absence of written records. We reject almost instinctively the traditions contained in the Welsh Triads or in the pages of Geoffrey of Monmouth, because we not only find them improbable in themselves, but unconfirmed by anything approaching to contemporary authority. And we do this not because there is actually no truth whatever in statements handed down by word of mouth, but because we feel it to be a hopeless task to sift the accounts, and to separate truth from falsehood. This is precisely the position in which we are placed on Canon Driver's hypothesis in regard to the history of Israel. We cannot be sure that the accounts which have come down to us are anything more than a mass of pure fiction; whereas on the traditional theory the evidence is continuous and contemporary, or all but contemporary, throughout. It is true that there *may* have been written records before the Jehovist and the Elohist—though even this is contested by some of the highest of the authorities Canon Driver bids us follow¹—but Canon Driver himself does not attempt to decide the question whether there are such written records or not. In other words, in writing an "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," he is content to take us as far back as the eighth or ninth century B.C., and there leave us.² Thus when we endeavour to settle the question whether there is any evidence for the belief universally held, at least from Nehemiah's time, that, to use the words of St. John, "the law was given by Moses," we find ourselves entirely without information beyond a mass of traditions—most probably oral—accumulated during at least five centuries. We may, therefore, be said to be without trustworthy evidence that any law whatever was given by Moses, and certainly without any authentic information about its contents. One alternative, certainly, is open to us, if we still cling to the ancient doctrine of revelation and inspiration. We may believe that some of the details of the Law of Moses were miraculously revealed to the Elohist or Jehovist, or both, in the days of the earlier kings, and that they recorded them for the benefit of future ages. And if we reject such an alternative, as in the present stage of belief on inspiration we certainly must, what remains to us, on Canon Driver's theory, of that inspiration which he "presupposes" ?

¹ Wellhausen, "History of Israel," p. 393.

² He tells us in p. 118 that "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." And he seems to imply that before they appeared the Jews depended on oral tradition.

Certainly not an inspiration which gives us a clear, accurate and authoritative history of a Divine revelation delivered, as has been hitherto believed, in the infancy of the world, by the mouth of a prophet and sage whose career and character stand apart from any other. We do not find in it even a definite conception of the character and Being of God, for this we first learn from the Deuteronomist, who is supposed to have written in the reign of Manasseh. We have simply a collection of precepts, handed down in a narrative bearing a certain pietistic flavour, which by a stretch of language may be credited with inspiration, but which certainly can hardly be said to amount to, scarcely even to contain, a Divine revelation. The origin of these precepts, moreover, no one can tell us. Canon Driver does not make the attempt. So far as we can learn from him, we are in the dim cloudland of tradition till the days of the early kings, when we meet with the first endeavour to tell coherently the story of the Israelitish nation. Nor do the authorities he bids us consult give us much more definite information. Some of them think that all Moses gave the Israelites was the Ten Commandments in their "original form."¹ What that may have been we do not precisely know.² Others assign more or less of the institutions now known as Mosaic to Moses as their original author.³ Thus the history of Jewish institutions, so far as the critical school is concerned, is at present in a very chaotic state, and sorely needs some critic of superior powers who will bring it into somewhat more definite shape. Of the original Mosaic institutions we are, as far as Canon Driver can inform us, altogether in the dark, though we may derive much

¹ Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," ii. 7.

² See p. 460.

³ We gain no information whatever from Canon Driver's "Introduction" as to the amount of legislation or distinct religious teaching which must be ascribed to Moses. This, he tells us, is because his aim is to deal with the *literature* rather than the *history* of Israel. But all we find concerning the fragment Exod. xx.-xxiv., which is supposed by the critics on all hands to contain Israelite institutions in their earliest stage, is that "the Decalogue was derived by E from a pre-existing source" (p. 30), and that the same was the case with the "Book of the Covenant," *i.e.*, Exod. xx. 20 to xxiii. 33 (p. 33), though, he adds, the "form" (of these laws) "in particular cases is due to the compiler who united J and E into a whole." And, again (pp. 144, 145), we learn that "it cannot be doubted that Moses was the ultimate founder of both the national and religious life of Israel," that "he provided the people with a nucleus of a system of civil ordinances," and "with some system of ceremonial observances," and that "it is reasonable to suppose that the teaching of Moses on these subjects is preserved, in its least modified form, in the Decalogue and the 'Book of the Covenant.'" In other words, it is only "reasonable to suppose" that we may possibly find in the Bible some approximation to correct information as to a very small part of what "Jehovah commanded Moses."

more definite information on the point from Kuenen and Wellhausen, whom, for reasons he does not assign, he does not here appear to follow.

We have, it is true, a Deuteronomist writing, as we are told, some seven or eight hundred years after the Exodus, who gives us his view of what Moses might be supposed to have meant or said, and whose inspiration must be held to consist in the undeniable and most magnificent expansion of the very uncertain germ of ceremonial enactment and moral teaching we are enabled to trace to a Mosaic origin. And then we have another portion of the Mosaic narrative which by the vast majority of German critics is held to be the *Grundschrift*, or earliest portion of the narrative, but which Canon Driver, here following Kuenen and Wellhausen, makes the latest, though he admits that "there are still scholars" who cannot agree with him on this point.¹ The whole question of the origin of Jewish institutions is therefore at present in the profoundest confusion. It is true that from Eichhorn downwards there has been a gradual growth of a distinct conception among German critics with regard to the supposed contents of what is known as the Priestly Code.² But Ewald stands loftily apart from the crowd of critics of his school. He recognises the strong archaic flavour of certain passages in which other Hebraists detect no archaic flavour at all, and his "Book of Origins," which corresponds partly, though by no means entirely, with what others have picked out as the *Grundschrift*, or Priestly Code, he ascribes boldly to the reign of David or of Solomon. Let

¹ Canon Driver's reasons will be found in pp. 129-135 of his "Introduction." Most of them have already been examined in the articles on Wellhausen and Kuenen. It is curious to find Canon Driver ("Introduction," p. 132) in the course of his argument interpreting Ezekiel's phrase, "the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok" (Ezek. xliv. 15), of the *Levites generally*, especially when there is a distinct statement to the contrary in Ezek. xl. 46.

² Canon Driver describes the Priestly Code as the "framework of our present Hexateuch" (p. 8). On the supposition that it was the *Grundschrift*, or original narrative, this is intelligible enough. It has not been made quite so clear why the redactor, with plenty of older materials *ex hypothesi* ready to his hand, should have set them in a framework of so recent a date. Especially it is not clear why he should so continually have interrupted the freer and more flowing narrative of J and E to insert what we are repeatedly told are the drier and more formal details of the Priestly Code. This remark can hardly, however, be understood without a reference to the very singular way in which, according to the critics, the various narratives are, not fused or blended, but pieced together. The reader should certainly consult the analysis of the Priestly Code in Canon Driver's "Introduction," p. 150. It would help him to appreciate its critical value if he were to mark it out in a copy of the Old Testament.

it be remembered that the Priestly Code contains the whole Book of Leviticus, and it will at once be seen how far removed from certainty we are, on the principles of the new criticism, as to the real character of the revelation, if any, which God gave by the hand of His servant Moses.

So much must suffice for the general principles advocated and applied to the Old Testament by Canon Driver. It will, I think, be widely felt, here as in Germany,¹ by practical persons who have to teach Scripture to the people at large, that we are left by them in a position eminently indefinite and unsatisfactory. The early history of Israel has been reduced to chaos, but when it comes to the reconstruction of the history on the new basis, it is found that no very definite results have been attained. One thing may be regarded as certain, that few people will be able to remain where Canon Driver has left them. They must either go further, and with Kuenen and Wellhausen deny altogether the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch in its present shape, or, if they have any deep religious sympathies, any personal dealings with men's souls, they will find themselves forced to return to something far more closely resembling the old traditional view.

Some illustrations of Canon Driver's method when applied to details will now be given. But it is necessary, in the first instance, to do full justice to the spirit in which he has approached the problem. There can be no doubt of the transparent honesty in which the task has been undertaken, and the few words of self-vindication on this point in the preface² must be regarded as fully borne out by the whole tenor of the book. Everyone must admit that Canon Driver is fully convinced, and that after careful inquiry, of the soundness of the methods he has been led to adopt. But, as an honest seeker after truth, he cannot be offended if others are unable to agree with him on this point, nor even if they see, or think they see, in his own pages, evidence that those methods cannot implicitly be trusted.

Our first criticism on a point of detail will be the way in which Canon Driver deals with the interesting passage in 2 Macc. ii. 13-15, which gives us an account of the efforts made by Nehemiah to collect and preserve the ancient literature of Israel. On all the "ordinary principles by which

¹ See Herr Wurm's remarks quoted in the last paper. Those remarks have a special significance when read in the light of a paragraph, which has gone the round of the newspapers during the last few weeks, stating that the number of persons in Germany who describe themselves as of no religion at present is *fourteen times* as great as the number who so described themselves in 1871. This is a remarkable practical comment on the effects and tendencies of the new criticism.

² P. xi.

history is judged and evidence estimated,"¹ this is a most important statement. Yet how does Canon Driver deal with it? First of all he endeavours to show that it has nothing to do with the question of the Canon, but refers rather to Nehemiah's efforts towards the collection and preservation of national literature generally. He is no doubt perfectly right here. There seems no ground for contending that the writer ascribes to Nehemiah any intention of promulgating a Canon of Scripture, though something of the kind must almost certainly have been for some time in existence three hundred years later, when the Septuagint was translated. But even if the passage has nothing to do with the formation of a Canon, it is nevertheless extremely important by reason of the testimony it gives to the care which was taken at a critical moment to preserve the ancient literature of Israel. There is nothing improbable in the account in itself—quite the contrary. It agrees exactly with the character ascribed to Ezra and Nehemiah in the books bearing their names. From those books we gather that there was an ancient Israelite literature known to them, and that this literature was held in deep reverence, so that the people gathered together "from morning until mid-day"² to hear it read. No "ordinary" historical or literary critic, we may be sure, would dismiss so interesting a passage with the curt remark that "the origin of the statement is too uncertain, and its terms too indefinite, for any far-reaching conclusion to be founded on it."³ On the contrary, he would regard such a passage, taken in connection with the whole history of Israel, and the belief entertained in the days of Nehemiah of the Divine origin of the Mosaic Law, as supplying very strong evidence of the care taken at the return from the captivity to hand down the literature of earlier days unimpaired to future ages. Nor does the fact that the account from which this passage is extracted plainly contains legendary matter entitle Canon Driver to argue that it is "discredited" thereby. The admirers of Professor Freeman will remember that this is not the way in which he deals with a narrative of the battle of Brunanburh, with which legendary matter, in the course of time, had become involved.⁴ That is to say, the founder of the principal school of historical research among us does not countenance the wholesale rejection of stories in which legendary matter is embodied, but prefers the careful and

¹ "Introduction," p. xiv. ² Neh. viii. 3. ³ "Introduction," p. xxx.

⁴ Neither does he dismiss Alfred as a myth because of the story of the burnt cakes and the housewife's rebuke in the Isle of Athelney, with which the facts have been embellished by later hands.

patient disentanglement of the legend from the facts round which the legend has grown. No first-rate historian would reject a statement so intrinsically probable as the endeavour on the part of Nehemiah to preserve the ancient literature of Israel, on the ground that in the course of years it had become encrusted with legend. Nor should we fail to note that the absence of this legendary matter in the books of Jeremiah and Nehemiah is a distinct evidence of their greater antiquity.

We cannot, again, implicitly trust Canon Driver's method of discovering different sources for a narrative in the occasionally varying details he finds in different portions of the history. He assumes somewhat too readily, many will think, that "the Hebrew historiographer, as we know him, is essentially a *compiler* or arranger of pre-existing documents"—not "an original author"; and that the "documents or sources can generally be distinguished from each other, and from the comments of the compiler, without difficulty."¹ His whole system of critical analysis is based on this assumption; yet the only historical foundation for it is that the author of Chronicles frequently, though by no means always, transfers the contents of Kings bodily to his pages. Critically, too, this theory can hardly claim to be established beyond doubt; for though there are unquestionable evidences of later editorial additions, and even, so far as Genesis is concerned, of the transcription of documents, yet the incapacity to distinguish satisfactorily between the narrative of the Jehovist and the Elohist, which is frequently admitted by Canon Driver,² supplies at least a presumption against his theory of compilation as just stated.

Unfortunately there is no space for full details on the critical methods, apart from questions of language and style, by which the various sources of the narrative are supposed to be indicated. One or two instances must suffice as specimens. We are told how the promise of a son to Sarah is twice related, and that three different, or at least independent, accounts are given of the origin of the name Isaac. There is no sort of incompatibility between the two accounts of the promise, nor are three explanations given of the name. Sarah's remark in Genesis xxi. 6 may as easily have been suggested by the name Isaac, as the name by the occurrence referred to. Again, we are told that "the section Genesis xxvii. 46—xxviii. 9 differs appreciably in style from xxvii. 1-45, and at the same time exhibits Rebekah as influenced by a different motive in suggesting Jacob's departure from Canaan."³ The difference in style between the two narratives is by no means so marked as to pre-

¹ "Introduction," p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, pp. xii., 12, 14, 17, 36, and the final summary in pp. 109 *et seq.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

clude all difference of opinion on the point, while the criticism which here discovers a discrepancy between the accounts of Rebekah's motive displays a strange ignorance of human nature. Is it a thing altogether unknown, it may be asked, for a wife to give one reason to her husband for wishing a thing, while in point of fact she is really actuated by another? And if, beside, that husband were blind and all but bedridden, would it be in the least degree surprising that a sensible woman should carefully conceal from him circumstances which would be certain to alarm him? Where, in fact, the "higher criticism" sees a difference of sources, less cultivated intelligences may be content to see that "touch of nature which makes the whole world kin," and to find in it the plainest proof of the unity of the narrative. But all through the Pentateuch it is just the same. The striking, distinct, glowing pictures of individuality which live before us in the sacred story, and have been felt to do so from time immemorial, are taken ruthlessly to pieces and assigned authoritatively to different sources. The history of Noah as now found in Genesis was partly written, according to Canon Driver, six hundred, and partly a thousand, years after Moses. We find from his analysis that chapters vi. 1-8, vii. 1-5, 10, 12, 16*b*, 17, 22, 23, viii. 1-3*a*, 6-12, 13*b*, 20-22, ix. 18-27 are from J E; while chapters vi. 9-22, vii. 6-9, 11, 13-16*a*, 18-21, 24, viii. 3*b*-5, 13*a*, 14-19, ix. 1-17, 28, 29 are from the Priestly Code. From what and what kind of sources the author of the Priestly Code derived his information we are not told. The history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and the Exodus, the wanderings in the wilderness, are all treated in the same fashion. Yet if this theory of compilation, which would seem at once intricate and clumsy, does really represent the way in which the narratives were put together, it is not a little surprising that the results are found, from a purely literary point of view, so strikingly successful. If Abraham be, as Wellhausen tells us he is, "a free creation of unconscious art," we cannot but be astounded to find so finished a picture produced by so exceedingly rough a mosaic.

Unfortunately there is not space to discuss other portions of Canon Driver's analysis; but one more specimen may be given from Genesis xxxiv. The story of Dinah's seduction and Simeon and Levi's revenge is divided pretty fairly between J E and P. The grounds for assigning different sources to the narrative are stated as follows: "The motives and aims of the actors seem not to be uniformly the same. In verses 3, 11, 12 Shechem himself is the spokesman, and his aim is the *personal* one of securing Dinah as his wife; in verses 8-10 (*cf.* 16, 21-23) his father Hamor is spokesman, and

his aim is to secure an amalgamation between his people and Jacob's. In verse 30 Jacob expresses dissatisfaction at what his sons have done, while from verse 5 it would be inferred that they had merely given effect to their father's resentment."¹ This kind of criticism might safely be left to the intelligence of any sensible person. It is a point on which the judgment of mankind in general is quite on a level with, if not actually superior to, that of the most finished Hebrew scholar. But we may be allowed just two observations. The motive of an intending bridegroom in proposing to a young lady is very seldom indeed precisely identical with that of his family in approving of the match. His desire is generally to possess the lady, and it is to be hoped that this is at least not usually an aim which his father shares with him. A father, again, may feel the keenest resentment at the dishonour of his daughter, without thinking it desirable or prudent to avenge it by a ferocious and treacherous massacre. Canon Driver, too, seems to have overlooked the fact that neither verse 5 nor verse 30, according to his own analysis, are to be found in the narrative of the author of the Priestly Code. This kind of criticism may fairly be denominated *psychological*. For it has its origin, not in facts or principles, but in the bent of the critic's own mind. He is on the look out for discrepancies, and his imagination supplies him with what he seeks. Those whose minds are not "heated by the chase," will be inclined to be critical where he is imaginative, and will see only a plain straightforward narrative where he sees the plainest traces of the mythical J E or P. We may add that the successive interferences of Reuben and Judah on behalf of Joseph in Genesis xxxvii. are regarded as indicative of northern and southern Israelite sources respectively. It seems difficult to explain this theory of the sources of the story of Joseph except on the ground that each writer has coloured the details so as to suit his own local or tribal prejudices. Perhaps, on the whole, it is quite as easy to believe that this not very improbable story has its sources in fact.

In Canon Driver's analysis of the Ten Commandments the "original form" of the Decalogue is supposed to be that portion of them only which is found in *both* Exodus and Deuteronomy. This may or may not be the case. But we may be permitted to point out that similar canons of criticism, when applied to the New Testament, are rejected by most competent critics; that on such grounds St. Mark must be supposed to give us the true title on the cross, and not, as is generally believed, St. John; and that on this principle we should be compelled

¹ "Introduction," p. 15.

to reject words in the institution of Holy Communion to which the whole Christian Church has set her seal—the words “Do this in remembrance of Me.”¹

It is chiefly in his criticism of the Pentateuch that Canon Driver's analysis fails to convince us. In his criticism of other books of the Bible, if he is not always right, he is at least moderate, and even fairly conservative, save where the tenor of their contents is adverse to his theory of the Priestly Code. But it will surprise no one to find that the narrative in Joshua has been “expanded” by a Deuteronomic editor,² or that Judges was “set” by a “Deuteronomic compiler in a new framework, embodying his theory of the history of the period.”³ He approves of the remark of Dr. Davidson, that this framework is “hardly strict history, but rather the religious philosophy of the history.”⁴ All we are concerned with is the fact that the reconstruction of the *whole history of Israel* as we now have it—for the same principle is applied, though to a less extent, to the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles—is necessary to the establishment of his theory. That theory may or may not be correct, but at least it must be admitted that this expedient is a violent and, on ordinary historical principles, an unusual one. And when we find, as we do find,⁵ the prophet Ezekiel gently rebuked for his undue severity to his countrymen in chapters xvi., xx., xxiii., on the ground that he “is not wholly just to the past, and that he has transferred to it unconsciously the associations of the future,” one is irresistibly impelled to ask which was the more likely to be correctly informed on the history of Israel—Ezekiel, writing in 592 B.C., or the English and German disciples of the Higher Criticism in A.D. 1892?⁶

This brief sketch of Canon Driver's now widely-known work is as unsatisfactory to the writer as it will be insufficient for the reader. But, as has already been said, all we are at present concerned to do is to enter a *caveat* against the tendency now too common to take all the assertions of this

¹ It is noteworthy that an allusion to an historical statement, concerning God's resting on the Sabbath Day, which according to the critics is first found in a document subsequent to the Exile, occurs in the version of the Fourth Commandment contained in Exod. xx., one of the earliest portions of the Pentateuch, according to Canon Driver. This is only one specimen of the endless difficulties which confront the new criticism when it betakes itself to construction.

² “Introduction,” p. 97. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 157. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁶ We may further ask, What does Canon Driver mean by Ezekiel “transferring to the past the associations of the future”? Does he mean that Ezekiel was divinely inspired to foresee the establishment of the Priestly Code, and that he blamed Israel by anticipation for not having conformed to it before it was definitely embodied in legislation?

school for granted. There are many who imagine that the critics are simply confining themselves to the establishment of the proposition that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses or in the age of Moses. If that were all, little or no objection would or even ought to be raised against it. But as has been seen, this is *not* all for which they contend. The principles on which they proceed would not only disprove the Mosaic authorship and date: they would deprive the narrative of all sound historical foundation whatever. This would result, if not in depriving it of all title to inspiration, at least in destroying altogether its claim to be considered as veracious history. It is for this reason that I have given some specimens of the methods pursued. The removal of all contemporary or in any sense trustworthy evidence of the nature of Moses' legislation cannot, as far as the Law is concerned, be regarded as other than fatal to the belief in revelation. For revelation is not merely the preservation of a high moral tone, nor even the gradual evolution of sound conceptions of God. It is something more. It is the direct communication of Divine truth by God to man. The true meaning of the term "inspiration," and the question whether the word can in any sense be applied to writings whose source is such as Canon Driver pronounces those of the Old Testament to be, may be a matter for debate. But there can be little doubt that, on his view, definite supernatural revelation there was none, at least until the coming of Christ. It is here that the higher criticism at present in vogue among us appears to involve danger. It is not that it admits the presence of a human and fallible element in the Scriptures. It is impossible for any fair and candid-minded man any longer to deny that such an element *is* to be found in them. It is in the exaggeration of this element out of all proportion to the Divine, in which the danger lurks. It is not the admission of occasional mistakes which must be ultimately fatal to the authority of the Old Testament in the eyes of thinking men, but their manufacture to such an extent that the historical credibility of the whole narrative is impaired, if not destroyed. It is the attempt, just *because* the Scriptures claim a Divine origin, to apply canons of criticism to them rejected alike by historians and literary critics in ordinary historic and literary investigation which everyone who desires to maintain the honour of Scripture in the world at large feels bound to protest.¹ It is the doctrine inseparably

¹ Dean Milman, whose reputation as a historian, a poet, and a man acquainted with literary problems will not be contested, writes as follows in the preface to the third edition of his "History of the Jews," published in 1863: "I must acknowledge, as regards the modern German schools of criticism, profane as well as sacred, that my difficulty is more

involved in the critical method, that no supernatural revelation was made to man, save in the Person of Jesus Christ, to which we are bound to take exception. The more we regard the Incarnation and Mission of Christ as an isolated fact, without either root in, or definite connection with God's previous treatment of mankind, the more we weaken the moral and spiritual evidence for Him.

Yet we need not fear for the ultimate issue.

"Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day, and cease to be."

The present fashion of Old Testament criticism will pass away, as other fashions have done before it. Even Canon Driver himself may well be haunted by a doubt whether the Old Testament literature of to-day, like "the older literature" on the Old Testament to which he refers, may not once more, in time to come, be "largely superseded by more recent works."¹ The fate which has attended former schools of interpretation will in turn attend that of which we hear so much at the present time. Thus will our descendants be provided with yet another illustration of the truth of words which are destined to outlive as many more generations and schools of critics as they have outlived already. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God endureth for ever."

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often with their dogmatism than with their daring criticism. If they destroy dominant theories, they rarely do not endeavour to compensate for this by constructing theories of their own—I must say in general on the most arbitrary conjecture—and assert these theories with as much certitude, and even intolerance—contemptuous intolerance—as the most orthodox and conservative writers." After paying a tribute to Ewald's learning, industry, and acumen, and lamenting the "dogmatism," "contemptuous arrogance," and "autocracy" with which it was allied, he goes on to admit that inquiry into the age and composition of the Hebrew records is a legitimate subject of inquiry. He admits, too, that there may be occasionally "discernible marks and signs of difference in age and authorship." "But," he adds, in words which deserve to be remembered, "that any critical microscope, in the nineteenth century, can be so exquisite and so powerful as to dissect the whole with perfect nicety, to decompose it, and assign each separate paragraph to its special origin in three, four, or five, or more, independent documents, each of which has contributed its part—this seems to me a task which no master of the Hebrew language, with all its kindred tongues, no discernment, however fine and discriminating, can achieve."

¹ "Introduction," p. 1.

