
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

A Layman's Thoughts on Old Testament Criticism.

By P. J. HEAWOOD, M.A.

II.

WE have examined some examples of "doublets" put forward by Professor G. A. Smith.[1] We pass on to various other cases of much interest, beginning with some which are merely supposed to indicate different "hands" or the use of different "documents," or some incoherences in the Old Testament narrative as we have it.

It is said that in certain "documents" the "*mountain of the law* is always Sinai"; in others, "always Horeb." This is, however, a very inaccurate statement. The actual mountain which Moses ascended, *but where the people were not allowed to come*—the scene of God's revealed presence—is always Sinai, not only in the Pentateuch, but elsewhere (Judg. v. 5; Neh. ix. 13; Ps. lxviii. 17). So (appropriately) special communications of God to Moses are described as spoken unto him in Mount Sinai. So Sinai occurs in Acts vii. 38 and (symbolically) in Gal. iv. 24, 25. On the other hand, Horeb is a far wider term. At Rephidim the rock is "the rock in Horeb" (Exod. xvii. 6); and in later allusions Horeb is not the mountain which Moses ascended, but where *the people* were at the giving of the law, where God's covenant was made with *them*. So, too, they provoked the Lord "in Horeb" (Deut. ix. 8); they made a calf "in Horeb" (Ps. cvi. 19); the two tables of stone were put in the Ark "at Horeb" (1 Kings viii. 9). And having "dwelt long enough in this mountain," they "journeyed from Horeb" (Deut. i. 6, 19). Horeb is twice described as the Mount of God, in connexion with Elijah (1 Kings xix. 8), and Moses in Midian (Exod. iii. 1), but there is nothing to show that the actual Sinaitic peak is intended. That the people were to serve God upon this mountain (Exod. iii. 12), and that Aaron met Moses

[1] In "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament."

"in the mountain of God" (Exod. iv. 27), suggest the wider sense. Significantly, the law is said to have been commanded *unto Moses in Horeb—only in the latest prophet* (Mal. iv. 4).

Thus, the uses of Horeb and Sinai stand out distinct. Even in Deuteronomy, where Sinai occurs but once, it is not Horeb, but "the mountain," which takes its place, as often in Exodus (so Heb. viii. 5, xii. 20). The only real "overlapping" is that, while the scene of encampment is more particularly described as "the Wilderness of Sinai" (so Acts vii. 30), it is subsequently alluded to more generally as "in Horeb." So slight are the residual grounds for tracing the variation of name to the "source."

Again, the statement that "the mountain which Moses ascended in Moab is called Pisgah" in such and such sections, while the supposed "priestly writer names it Nebo," is very misleading, as most of the references have nothing to do with Moses. In *both* passages referring to the scene of his death it is called Nebo (Deut. xxxii. 49, xxxiv. 1), though in one of these it is also described as "the top of Pisgah" (answering to Abarim in the other). But Pisgah must, in fact, have included the wide district of which Nebo was the highest point. The Israelites journeyed "to the top of Pisgah" (Num. xxi. 20); and the south end of the Arabah lay under the "slopes of Pisgah" (Deut. iii. 17, iv. 49; Josh. xii. 3, xiii. 20, R.V.). Thus all is quite harmonious; otherwise Deut. iii. 27 need not refer to Moses' death at all.

To say that the valley "in the field of Moab" (Num. xxi. 20), where Israel camped *before descending into the Jordan Valley*, is called in Deuteronomy the valley "opposite Bethpeor" (iii. 29, etc.) seems a mere blunder. For this is after the conquest of Sihon and Og, which apparently just preceded the descent (Num. xxii. 1). Further, the sin of Baalpeor was while "Israel abode in Shittim" (Num. xxv. 1-5). Compare Josh. xiii. 20. Still more plainly incorrect is the identification of the "field of Moab" (Num. xxi. 20), before the descent, with the "plains of Moab" (Num. xxii. 1, etc.). Questions arise about the two lists

of stations on Israel's route (Num. xxi. 12-20, xxxiii. 44-49); but there must obviously have been a double line of advance—against Sihon and direct to Jordan. Deut. ii. 13-18, *leading up to the attack on Sihon*, agrees with Num. xxi. 12-15.

The difficulties of the Book of Joshua are very summarily dealt with. It is said that some parts of it represent the conquest and division of the land to have been thorough, and others show it to have been far from complete. The continued existence of various sections of population side by side is not perhaps sufficiently taken into account as explaining the recrudescence of hostilities. If the Jebusites still held Jerusalem in David's reign (2 Sam. v. 6), it is not strange to find some jostling of peoples after the land was first divided. Recent experience in South Africa might teach us that all difficulty is not over when a territory is "conquered" and "possessed."

More definite inconsistency is found in 1 Kings ii., where the reference to the law of Moses is naturally a stumbling-block. It is said that the author of vers. 13-46 "could not have known of vers. 5-9, for he gives other grounds for the slaughter of Joab"! As vers. 5 and 32 both connect it with his murder of Abner and Amasa, it is not easy to see what this means. Possibly that Adonijah's rebellion was the occasion of it (vers. 28-31). Yet how is this an objection? The whole point seems to be that by his part in this he found due punishment for earlier crimes. So of Shimei. *And the reference to Solomon's wisdom in ver. 6 prepares us for the event.* To see the hand of "a legal school in Israel, which enforced the extermination of the enemies of the pious," seems very far-fetched when we remember what these men had done.

So far, though all is vaguely spoken of as tending in the same direction, we have only had hints of the more serious issues involved, and little that bears on that utter subversion of the history which is the goal of "criticism." More directly bearing on the historical character of the narrative are supposed indications of date in certain parts of the Pentateuch.

Thus, the use of "mountains of Abarim" in reference to the

mountain wall of Moab is thought to show the limitation of view of a post-exilic author, this being "the only part of the eastern range which was opposite the shrunken territory of his people." We might urge that there is no very clear *restriction* of the name, were it not that there seems no evidence of its supposed earlier *extension*. Jeremiah (xxii. 20) mentions successively Lebanon, Bashan, Abarim (R.V.). But if *mountains* of Abarim is meant, there is nothing in this mention of typical outlying heights, where the stress of invasion had been already felt (compare 2 Kings x. 32, 33), to point to a more general or more northerly reference. Still less does Ezek. xxxix. 11 (also referred to) help the case. For Abarim (if correct) is there east of the sea, and therefore *not* farther north. If there is nothing to go upon but a preconceived idea that the name *might* apply to the whole range "on the other side," we need hardly think about the (supposed) shrunken ideas of a (supposed) post-exilic writer.

More plausibly it is urged that in 2 Sam. (except one doubtful reading), 1 Kings, Isaiah, Micah, and once in Jeremiah, the Euphrates is simply "the river," while in 2 Kings, Jeremiah (generally), and the Apocrypha the proper name is used. Its occurrence is therefore a mark of late date. But, as a counterbalancing fact, the avowedly post-exilic books—Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah—never have "Euphrates," always "the river." Both occur in Chronicles and the Hexateuch. In default of evidence, there seems no reason to suppose that it was at any time nameless, any more than "the great King" (of Persia), often merely called βασιλεύς by the Greeks.

It is urged that in certain sections of Genesis "the patriarchs sacrifice in many places, like Elijah and Elisha," as contrasted with others assigned to priestly writers, who, "with their strict views of the confinement of ritual to the central sanctuary, never make any allusion to the licence of sacrifice which the Jahwist and Elohist impute to the patriarchs." All this seems very gratuitous with respect to days when there was no central sanctuary, and when objections to sacrificing elsewhere could

not be supposed to exist. Yet, although the argument for this supposed priestly intention is purely negative, it is thought that this "clinches the proof that the stories of the patriarchs have reached us as told by later generations, who reflected upon them their own conditions, experiences, and beliefs." It is said, indeed, as helping to date the composition of the narratives, that patriarchal sacrifices were chiefly made "at the shrines to which in the eighth century, as Amos and Hosea tell us, the Israelites resorted: Beersheba, Bethel, Gilgal by Shechem—*the terebinth of Moreh*—and Mizpah of Gilead"; but the parallelism depends largely on fanciful hypotheses.[1] Beersheba, indeed, is prominent in Genesis—quite naturally in connexion with patriarchal visits to Philistia and Egypt. Later, the recurring phrase, "from Dan to Beersheba," shows its continued importance as a frontier town; and a royal connexion (2 Kings xii. 1) may have brought a shrine there into vogue. The case of Gerizim shows how enduring such sacred associations may be. Bethel is too constantly referred to for its mention to have any special significance. For the rest, it is perfectly arbitrary to suppose that the Gilgal of the prophets is "by Shechem," or connected with the terebinth of Moreh (Gen. xii. 6, 7), even supposing (which is not likely) that the Gilgal of Deut. xi. 30 is there connected with Moreh. Naturally, it is Gilgal in the Arabah. Again, why should Mizpah of Hosea v. 1 be Mizpah of Gilead? After Jephthah's judgeship the references seem all to Mizpah west of Jordan (1 Kings xv. 22, etc.). Of other scenes of patriarchal worship, "the mountain in the land of Moriah" (Gen. xxii. 2, 9) is never mentioned, unless in 2 Chron. iii. 1. Mamre is never alluded to again, and Hebron, so great in patriarchal history and prominent in David's reign, appears again only in a list of cities built by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 10). And so far from suggesting the atmosphere of the time of Amos, the simple record of patriarchal piety seems separated by a great gulf from days when those who seek Jehovah must "seek not Bethel nor enter into Gilgal"; while the "way of Beersheba" is

[1] For a more striking parallelism, see 1 Sam. vii. 16, viii. 2.

coupled with the "sin of Samaria" (Amos v. 5, viii. 14). They who swear by these "shall fall, and never rise up again."

The blessing in Gen. xlix. is thought too definite to have been written before the occupation of the promised land. It is pretended that it "describes the geographical disposition of the twelve tribes after their settlement in Palestine." Yet there is really only one such geographical reference: "Zebulon shall dwell at the haven of the sea . . . and his border shall be upon Zidon" (ver. 13). *And this does not strictly agree with the event*, for Asher secured the lot seawards, stretching "unto great Zidon" (Josh. xix. 24-28; Judg. i. 31, 32). Zebulon came next inland. So "Zebulon . . . jeoparded their lives . . ." (Judg. v. 17, 18), while "Asher . . . abode by his creeks." Yet the blessing gives no hint of Asher's position by the sea.

More serious is the attempt to depreciate the ideas of God found in (supposed) earlier books. It is argued that David's words (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), "They have driven me out this day . . . saying, Go serve other gods," show that Israel "regarded the power of Jahweh as limited to their own territory, and His worship as invalid beyond it." Surely the connexion between banishment to a strange land and the worship of its gods (amid heathen influence or compulsion) is too natural to require any such astounding assumption. In Deut. iv. 28, 29 captivity is pointedly connected with the serving of other gods, but coupled with the assurance "if from thence thou shalt seek Jehovah . . . thou shalt find Him, if thou search after Him with all thy heart. . . ." The following verse, "Let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of Jehovah" (1 Sam. xxvi. 20, R.V.), may perhaps express a natural repugnance to dying in exile. It certainly cannot imply that he would be less protected there, for he was leaving his land merely to escape from danger. In fact, we find that in exile David "strengthened himself in the Lord his God," and, inquiring of the priest with the ephod, recovered what the Amalekites had taken in their raid (1 Sam. xxx. 6-8). Is this to be relegated to another source?

Still more astonishing is the idea that in Deut. iv. 19 ("lest . . . when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars . . . thou be drawn away and worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all the peoples under the whole heaven"), "the idols . . . are still subordinate deities, whom Jahweh has *assigned to all the nations under heaven.*" To begin with, it is not idols which are mentioned, but the great works of God's hand, which should excite our reverence (Ps. viii. 3, lxv. 8). How can this reminder that the rulers of day and night have been distributed to all imply that they have been assigned as deities or objects of worship? The only excuse (though not mentioned) seems to be that in Deut. xxix. 26 the calamities coming upon Israel are attributed to their worship of "other gods . . . whom they knew not, and whom He had not given unto them" (where "given" is the same word as "divided" above); and it might seem as though God *might* have given *them*, or *had given* to *others* gods besides Himself. But these words occur in the *heathen explanation* of Israel's sufferings. When "the nations" ask, this is what "men shall say"—men, we may suppose, who, while not acknowledging Jehovah as the one true God, are yet able to see in their fate the fruit of disloyalty to Him; the gods of the nations are alluded to in a very different way in verses 16, 17. Apart from the mention of gods, "given" or "divided" has no religious import; and in iv. 19 the sense supposed does not even suit the argument. It would not tell strongly against the worship of the host of heaven that they have been allotted by God to all nations *to worship;* while the fact that they have been distributed to all as the gift of His bounty is so natural a reason for not treating them as gods that the other interpretation is unreasonable as well as gratuitous.

Such arguments are brought to support conclusions based on more general grounds. Those "strata" of laws in the Pentateuch which imply settled conditions must, it is thought (ignoring Egyptian experiences and Palestinian prospects), belong to much later days; and differences in Deuteronomy are

urged (as a new discovery) as though the most literal interpretation did not interpose between it and Exodus a momentous forty years. But the ruling idea seems to be that "the religious leaders of Israel from Gideon to Elisha behaved as if there were no such laws in existence as those . . . of Deuteronomy and the priestly Code." Yet such irregularities as we find seem naturally accounted for by the unsettled period of the Judges, the loss of the ark from Shiloh, and (later) the division of the kingdoms. The silence of Kings on points of ritual is supposed to suggest that the Chronicler "has *imputed* to the period of the monarchy" practices really subsequent to the exile. We may forget how briefly the kingdom of Judah is dealt with in Kings, and that Mosaic ordinances play an important part even there, *unless expunged by the critics.*

As telling against Mosaic ritual, a passage of great interest is noticed: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. . . ." (Jer. vii. 22). This is represented as implying that "Jahweh gave *no commands* to the fathers of Israel *concerning these;* His commands were *ethical only.*" The note of time is quite ignored. Of course the "day" cannot be limited to that 15th of Abib when "all the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt"; but the words immediately quoted as God's positive commands to Israel (Jer. vii. 23) are found (substantially) *in close connexion with the Exodus* (Exod. vi. 7, xv. 26), where sacrifices are not enjoined. And, looking onwards, the tenor of the whole narrative strikingly bears out the prophet's words. Burnt offerings are but once mentioned (and that as offered by Jethro, xviii. 12) up to the conclusion of that great covenant between God and His people, which, though inaugurated with sacrifices, was based entirely on injunctions of a moral or social cast.[1]

[1] Once "burnt offerings" and once "sacrifices" are mentioned (xx. 24, xxiii. 18), but to prescribe some detail (taking them for granted), not to insist upon them.

Quite in harmony with this, Deut. iv.-v.[1] reiterates in glowing words the moral basis of the law. Sacrifices come in later; and, indeed, they are not left out by Jeremiah himself in his picture of restored Israel (xxxiii. 18). But it is not surprising that in his witness for righteousness he should recur again and again to the moral basis of the Pentateuchal covenant, which is prominent in Exodus and Deuteronomy alike (Jer. xi. 4, xxxi. 31-34, xxxiv. 13). In the last passage, the longest of the Old Testament quoted in the New (Heb. viii. 8-12), the temporary features of the old dispensation are recognized, *not in its ceremonial accompaniments, but in its failure to secure obedience.* The new covenant, which God will make in days to come, differs, not in its essential basis (which is the knowledge of God), but in its spiritual power—in the fact that God will write it in men's hearts.

Modernism in the Mission-Field.[2]

By the Rev. G. T. MANLEY, M.A.

THE essence of Mr. Bernard Lucas's clever little book is an attempt to apply the modern standpoint to the missionary problem in India. From the home point of view he begins with the statement that "the missionary enterprise appeals with less force to the Church as a whole than it did fifty years ago" (p. 1). In the foreign field he considers that, though Christian missions have been anything but a failure in their attempt to reach and win individuals, there has been a failure "to affect the thought and feeling of the Hindus as a nation" (p. 14).

Acting upon these two assumptions, which he ascribes to the influence of the older theology, he looks to the adoption of the modern standpoint, with its acceptance of modern criticism and a revision of our ideas of sin in accordance with the Evolution theory, to change all that, and, arousing a new enthusiasm at home, to direct the efforts in the mission-field to the permeation of Hindu society, and especially the caste people, with Christian ideas from which as much as possible that is likely to cause offence to them has been eliminated.

[1] Deut. v. agrees most closely with Jer. vii. 23*b*.

[2] "The Empire of Christ," by the Rev. Bernard Lucas. London: Macmillan and Co. 2s. 6d. net.