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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

to his father. . . . But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots. . . ." He even told them that, just though they counted themselves, they were farther off from the kingdom of heaven than the sinners. "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." And when one night in the cover of the darkness a just person named Nicodemus came to Him and asked what additional good deed was to be done that he might enter this kingdom of heaven, Jesus told him that he must begin at the very beginning again; that his pile of good deeds must all be taken down; that he must start where the publican and the harlot had to start—at repentance and forgiveness of sins. There are no just persons, He said, except those whom I make just by the words, Thy sins are forgiven thee, and so, being born of the Spirit, go and sin no more.

Professor Ryle's Contributions to Old Testament Scholarship.

By Professor S. D. F. Salmond, D.D., Aberdeen.

For the time being Old Testament questions hold the field both at home and on the Continent of Europe. It is a happy circumstance, therefore, that England and Scotland are alike rich in scholars capable of grappling with the rush of new problems, and of giving shape to opinion in a period of change. In the band of students who are reviving the best traditions of English learning in this great line of inquiry, Professor Herbert Ryle occupies a distinguished place. His contributions to Old Testament scholarship have already won wide recognition. They are valuable in themselves, and they are welcome as the earnest of valuable work to come. The same strong qualities mark them all. They are the qualities of sober sense, definite statement, scientific method, independence of traditional opinion, sympathy with the legitimate processes and best results of modern criticism, all hallowed by a reverential spirit and a profound recognition of the voice of the Spirit of God in the Word.

The edition of the *Psalms of the Pharisees*, prepared with the efficient co-operation of Mr. Montague Rhodes James and issued in 1891, deserves mention as one of the most opportune products of Professor Ryle's studies. This collection, usually known as the *Psalms of Solomon* and unjustly neglected till very recent times, has many claims upon the attention of scholars. "It is the solitary instance," as we are reminded, "of an Old Testament book, which from being merely *ἀντιλεγόμενον* became *ἀπόκρυφον*." It reflects the feeling of Jewish parties in the final stage of the conflict between Pharisee and Sadducee. It forms an interesting link between the literature represented by Ecclesiasticus and the literature in the Apocalyptic form. It has a position entirely its own, in respect of style, among the Jewish books which have come down to us from the last century B.C. It affords us insight into Jewish opinion and belief in the period between B.C. 70 and A.D. 40,—the estimate in which the "Torah" was held, the prevailing idea of the Theocracy, the doctrines taught on the providence of God, the responsibility and freedom of man, the last judgment, and the future life. Above all, it is of importance for the view which it gives of the Messianic expectations which were current in Pharisaic Judaism, immediately before Christ's time. The place which it holds in the history of the Messianic hope is one of the utmost significance, as it is the first indubitable example in *Palestinian* Judaism of the expectation of a *personal* Messiah, and indicates that the conception of this Messiah was that of one uniting in Himself the offices of Priest and King, exercising a holy rule, fulfilling a twofold ministry of destruction and restoration, the possessor of divine gifts, but not Himself divine.

Something had been done in Germany by Hilgenfeld, Fritzsche, Geiger, Dillmann, Wellhausen,

and other scholars, for the exposition of this interesting piece of ancient literature. But England had been supine. This edition, therefore, fills a blank in English theology, and it does it effectively. It is a model of what an edition should be, not only in its treatment of the text, its explanatory notes, and its discussions of literary and critical problems, but in its examination of the ideas embodied in the *Psalms*. It carefully argues out the question of the circle of thought to which these compositions belong, rejecting the opinion that they are the products either of Sadduceeism or of Essenism, and establishing their connexion with Pharisaism. Their teaching on the subject of retribution is carefully investigated, and the conclusion is reached that there is a definite doctrine of eternal life for the righteous, but a less certain view of the lot of the unrighteous. Among other things, the historical significance of the form in which the Messianic belief appears in these writings is made clear—a significance due to the fact that the ideas of the Pharisaic party, which had been limited to zeal for the law, duty to the scribes, and separation from the politics and patriotism of the day, now allied themselves with the popular longing for a Jewish kingdom, and so "obtained an immense accession of moral influence over the people at large."

Professor Ryle's most important work undoubtedly is his book on *The Canon of the Old Testament*, published in 1892. This is at once the most complete and the most novel treatise on the subject which English scholarship has yet produced,—altogether a fearless, yet reverent and discreet discussion of a weighty and difficult question. Coming at the time when the old traditional idea of the Canon is fairly broken with even in England, and accepting as it does the main positions of recent criticism as to the dates and authorships of the Old Testament books, it is a seasonable attempt to give a strictly historical account of the way in which a certain number of books came to get a place apart, and to be accepted as authoritative. Starting with the classification of the writings which appears as far back as the Book of Ecclesiasticus, and taking this long established division as the embodiment of an ancient and credible tradition, which points to the gradual formation of the collection of sacred books in three successive stages, his object is to make it historically good that this was the course pursued, and that the Canon as we now have it is the final outcome of a selective process which had resulted in the presentation of three distinct Canons or collections. He holds it probable that before Josiah's day several collections of laws had been made, some of which became lost to view, while others are still distinguishable in the Pentateuch. But he finds the beginning of a *Canon*, in the proper sense, only at a later period, in the position given to the Book of Deuteronomy, a book which may have been written in Hezekiah's time, but which did not rank in any sense as authoritative Scripture until the period of Josiah's reformation. He recognises the guiding hand of God in the circumstance that at a remarkable juncture in the history of the Hebrew people this book, the People's book, had the attributes of sanctity and authority ascribed to it. "We cannot but feel," he says, "that it was no mere chance, but the overruling of the Divine wisdom, which thus made provision for the spiritual survival of His chosen people, on the eve of their political annihilation. The generation of Hilkiah had hardly passed away, when the deportation of the citizens of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple seemed to menace the extinction of pure worship. But Josiah's reign had seen the dawn of that love and reverence for Scripture, with which the true Israelite, whether Jew or Christian, was destined ever after to be identified. The coincidence is instructive. The collapse of the material power of the house of Israel contained within it the soul of its spiritual revival, in the possession of the indestructible Word of God."

The process first clearly discernible in the case of the Book of Deuteronomy, issued in course of time in the formation of the "first Canon." This is understood to have been substantially the Pentateuch as we have it. The reasons for thus defining its extent are mainly these—the fact that from the earliest times the *Law* is mentioned as a distinct thing; the reverence given to it in the post-Exilic books of the Old Testament; the like reverence paid it by Jews of after times; the reading of these books, and these only in the first instance, in the synagogues; the later use of the term *Law*, as a term including all Scripture; and the exclusive place given to the Law by the Samaritans.

The earliest Canon was the product of what had been taking place among the Jews of Babylon

in the way of collecting and codifying the priestly ordinances. It was completed by uniting these ordinances with the Book of Deuteronomy and the historical narratives of the Jehovist and Elohist. It was brought to Jerusalem by Ezra in B.C. 457, and was publicly given to the people on the arrival of Nehemiah in B.C. 444. The event was one, the importance of which can scarcely be overrated. That is thoroughly recognised and fully stated by Professor Ryle. "The publication of the work," he says, "heralded a radical change in the religious life of the people. The People's book was no longer to be confined to prophetic reformulation of laws, which had once so deeply aroused Jewish thought, and influenced the Jewish literature. The priesthood was no longer to possess the key of knowledge as to the clean and the unclean, the true worship and the false (cf. Ezek. xliv. 23, 24). Their hereditary monopoly was to be done away. The instruction of the people was to pass from the priest to the scribe. Not what 'the Law' was, but what its meaning was, was henceforth to call for authoritative explanation. The Law itself was to be in the hands of the people."

The second stage in the formation of the Old Testament Canon is concerned with the definition of the prophetical writings, and was completed before the beginning of the second century B.C. Here we enter, it is confessed, on a less certain region of inquiry. We depend on the limited external evidence furnished by Ecclesiasticus and the Book of Daniel, and on internal considerations furnished by the books themselves, the hints which they give of the way in which they reached their final form, the dates of compilation and revision inferred from certain phenomena in them, the state of the Septuagint text. Carefully weighing the evidence which comes from these sources, Professor Ryle judges it sufficient to show that, while many of the writings of the prophets were in circulation much earlier, they were not brought together in a single collection till somewhere between B.C. 300 and B.C. 200. In this way and at this date the "second Canon" came into existence.

The "third Canon," consisting of the *Kethubim*, is supposed to belong to the period B.C. 160–B.C. 105. It is admitted that some of these books achieved a distinct and quasi-authoritative position at an earlier date. Professor Ryle speaks of certain of them as constituting, perhaps, a kind of "informal appendix to the Canon of the Law and the Prophets," as early as the close of the third century B.C. But he thinks it a "not unnatural supposition" that the Maccabean revival was the occasion of a movement to "expand the Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures by the addition of another, a third group of writings," and that the immediate impulse to this was given when Antiochus issued his order to destroy the copies of the Law. Hence he places the collection, and at least the *popular* recognition of these "writings," between the high priesthood of Jonathan and the death of John Hyrcanus.

The final conclusion is that no book can have been admitted into the Canon later than the beginning of the first Christian century, but that there was no official definition of the writings constituting it till some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Jewish authorities, with Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Gamaliel II. at their head, pronounced upon its contents.

The question of the construction of the Canon of the Old Testament is one of the utmost importance, not only in itself but also in its relation to the question of the formation of the Canon of the New Testament. Professor Ryle's account of it may be far from a final solution of the problem. The evidence on which it rests is confessedly meagre and uncertain at some points, and much must be left to inference. But it is as reasonable an account as seems open to us, with the knowledge we at present possess, and on the basis of the main position of the newer criticism. It follows the historical method faithfully, and keeps in view the distinction between the *circulation* of books and their recognition as authoritative. It makes it very clear that the history of this matter is the history of no sudden creation or instantaneous acquisition, but of a slow development in the human recognition of the Divine message which was conveyed through the varied writings of the Old Testament; and it reverently confesses the "operation of the Divine love in the traces of that gradual growth by which the limits of the inspired collection were expanded to meet the actual needs of the chosen people."

The question remains, Can we get further than this? On two things at least we should rejoice to have more light. One of these is the relation between the *popular* recognition of the Canon and

the *official*. As the great statements of Christian doctrine which were ultimately registered in the Creeds, were in the minds and language of the people before they were in the symbols, and found their place in the latter only because they had already obtained a place in the former, so it is natural to conclude that the books in question achieved an authority with the people before they were defined as Canonical. How does it stand with the historical verification of this, and how long did the former authority exist before the latter was given? The second question is of still greater importance. What was the *principle* of Canonicity? On what ground—authorship, intrinsic excellence, historical function or other—did certain writings receive the seal of sanctity and authority, while others were denied it? This is the final question as regards the Canon, whether of the Old Testament or of the New. But it is a question rarely grappled with in treatises on the Canon.

In his volume on *The Early Narratives of Genesis*, published in 1882, Professor Ryle faces a different, but not less difficult task. Granting that the traditional interpretation of those chapters has broken down, it is his object to show that there is a way of dealing with them which will at once do justice to the results of science and criticism, and conserve the position due to these narratives as part of the written Word. The difficulties attaching to the two narratives of Creation in the first two chapters of Genesis cannot be met by any "reconciliation" theory, or any of the old devices. The facts amount to a non-homogeneity which indicates difference in the sources, and points to the working up of two distinct cosmogonies in the one narrative. A comparison with the Babylonian stories of creation leads to the further conclusion that the narratives in Genesis are versions of ancient traditions common to the Semitic race, purged of their polytheistic elements and brought into the service of the pure religion of Israel,—popular non-scientific accounts of the origin of things, vivified by the large principles of a monotheistic faith, but not meant to express more than these.

The story of Paradise is examined with particular care. The problem created by the fact that there is but the slightest reference to it, if any, in the writings of the earlier prophets is fully recognised. But Professor Ryle does not think it a necessary inference that this narrative was simply borrowed from Babylonia, and did not receive its literary form till after the Captivity. His reasons for so thinking are chiefly these: the improbability that pious Jewish captives should thus take over for religious purposes the legends of their captors; the circumstance that the narrative of the Fall is shown by criticism to belong to a particular group of writings which are known to have existed before the Exile, and to have characteristics which connect it with the earlier section of the Jehovistic writings; and the fact that the indefiniteness of the reference to Assyria in ii. 11–14, the allusion to the *fig-tree* (which was not a native Assyrian tree), and similar details, do not favour the supposition of direct derivation from Babylonian mythology. In the story of Paradise, therefore, as in others of these early narratives, we have the Hebrew version of a tradition common to the Semitic peoples, which went one way with the Babylonian section and connected itself with polytheistic crudities, and another way with the Hebrew, and was made by the Spirit of God the medium of spiritual instruction.

Apart from the question of the validity of some of its conclusions, the great merit of this book is that it shows so clearly how completely the viewpoint from which these questions have to be studied has changed, and how they have become in the first instance *literary* questions.

His most recent work, a *Commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah*, makes a worthy addition to the scholarly series to which it belongs, the "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." The original unity of these two books, the variations in the name, the process of their composition, their date and authorship, their relation to *Chronicles*, the language in which they are written, are made the subjects of admirably careful and concise statement. The date, it is held, can "hardly be earlier, and is very possibly later, than 320 B.C."; and the evidence is given at length which favours the supposition that the compiler of Chronicles was also the compiler of Ezra and Nehemiah. The notes are clear and informing. An excellent sketch is furnished of the history of the period, which is followed by a useful chapter on the "Antiquities" of the books, the Persian government, the satraps, the council, the social condition and religious organisations of the Jews, and the like. Not the least valuable section of the book is the chapter on the relation

of the canonical Ezra and Nehemiah to other literature; on which, however, we should have welcomed a larger discussion of the questions connected with First Esdras.

The volume more than sustains Professor Ryle's reputation. It is written with a just appreciation of the interest and importance of these books—books which, as Professor Ryle observes, "record no mighty miracle, no inspiring prophecy, no vision, no heroic feat of arms," but which touch the historical foundations of Judaism, and teach great lessons on the Divine promise, the discipline of disappointment, the hallowing of common life, and the preparation of the Messianic age.

Mayor's "Epistle of St. James."[1]

By the Rev. G. H. Gwilliam, B.D., Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford.

The February number of The Expository Times contained a short notice of Dr. Mayor's exhaustive commentary on the Catholic Epistle of St. James; we are glad to avail ourselves of the editor's kind permission, to insert in the present number a fuller account of this excellent work.

Of such an author as Dr. Mayor (the bearer of an honoured name, and the possessor of high academical distinctions) we expect great things; in the work before us, our expectations are entirely satisfied. There are, of course, statements and conclusions not a few, from which many of us would dissent; but distinct utterances on matters of controversy are, like original views, points of excellence in any treatise; and excellently does our author set forth the opinions to which his studies have led him. From the thoroughness of those studies is derived the great value of the present volume. The author has limited himself to a small portion of the Holy Scriptures. This portion has been his constant study during very many years. Researches in many directions have combined to elaborate the details of a well-matured plan. The result is a book, which the author can hardly himself improve, and which will long serve as a model of laborious and exhaustive biblical commentary. From such a work, we may ourselves learn how to work in kindred studies.

On the threshold of Dr. Mayor's treatise, we are brought into the presence of controversy; but we do not intend in this review to enter into controversy. (1) In the Preface he states that the text through which he will comment on St. James is almost entirely that of Westcott and Hort. (2) In chap. i. the discussion of the authorship of the Epistle necessarily introduces a well-known ecclesiastical question. The pious belief (if indeed it be not something more) about the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is not shared by Dr. Mayor; for he concludes, after an exhaustive examination of the evidence, that the author of the Epistle was the Bishop of Jerusalem, who was called the brother of the Lord, and that that term is to be understood in the usual sense, and does not mean the half-brother, or the cousin. And it must be admitted that our learned doctor has argued with much acuteness for the Helvidian view, which is the one he adopts, even if, in face of other considerations, we do not yet see our way to depart from the position of Pearson and of Mill.

As regards the question of Greek text, it would seem from the dogmatic confidence wherewith some handle the subject (and, I may add, from certain results of Oxford teaching, which have recently come to my knowledge) that there are not wanting many who think that the question has passed out of the region of controversy—that Dr. Hort was right, and that those who do not share his admiration for Codex B, or accept his theory about the revision of the Syriac, are wrong. Again, we do not intend to argue, but will, for the present, content ourselves with reminding younger readers of this paper, that there is another side to the question; and that the arguments of the late Dr. Hort have not convinced all who have studied the history of the present text of the Greek Testament. It should be added that Dr. Mayor has at times exercised an independent judgment in the choice of readings. For examples, the reader may refer to the critical foot-

[1] *The Epistle of St. James.* By Joseph B. Mayor, M.A., Litt.D. Macmillan.