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The Report proceeds to say that "there is no trace whatever of any publication of the Advertisements for the Province of York."

But this error is corrected on the very same page, for we read that Archbishop Grindal (the Queen having promised that the Advertisements should go to York) "adopts the language of the Advertisements," and we further read that they took effect in the Diocese of Durham.

The only portion of the Advertisements really peculiar to the Province of Canterbury is the fourth Advertisement, touching licences in that province.

If we were fortunate enough to possess a copy of the Advertisements as sent, according to the Queen's promise, to York, we should expect to find in it a similar admonition respecting licences in that province.

It thus appears that the first contention of the Report, that the Advertisements were not "other order" authorized by the Queen, cannot be substantiated.

Whether their second line of defence—*i.e.*, that the Advertisements were only intended to secure a "minimum" of order—can be successfully held, and whether, failing this, their last resort—*i.e.*, the position that all previous orders were superseded by the Rubric of 1662—can be maintained, are matters which seem to require further elucidation.



A Layman's Thoughts on Old Testament Criticism.

By P. J. HEAWOOD, M.A.

III.

WE have now examined several arguments put forward in support of the extreme critical view. We must be excused for saying that we have not found them very convincing. Many of them depend upon inaccurate statements or

gratuitous assumptions—if they go to the root of the matter at all. The more definite the conclusion, the cruder the argument generally seems. Some cases are of even more serious significance, where the drift of a passage is boldly stated, as though lying on the surface, when it is quite foreign to its natural meaning. If such a misuse of words is possible where their substance can be tested, can better be expected of a critic on ground where few can follow, and which he claims as his own? We shall be told that the conclusion does not really depend on such arguments as those examined, and, of course, we have not sounded the profundities of Higher Criticism. Yet we might expect it to make a better show even on common ground. Critical analysis, we are told, “depends not only upon differences of vocabulary, phrase, and idiom, but still more upon differences of fact and substance in narratives which relate the same events.” But the critic has an extraordinary eye for contradictions. It is said that in one document Judah “is the chief of his brethren,” and in another Reuben, because the latter, who is the elder, sometimes attempts (not very successfully) to play a prominent part—a sufficiently natural occurrence in actual life. We may be told that the trained critic must be the judge of such matters; but *everything depends on the alternatives between which he is deciding.*

The phrase “It is impossible to believe that these came from the same hand” may merely mean that two stories cannot have been *invented* by the same person, and the assumption of invention may vitiate the whole argument. Assumptions of all sorts seem so common that what we might take for the main question is often made the basis of reasoning. Thus a late date is taken for granted where it might seem to be the very point at issue. “We have in the stories of the Hebrew Patriarchs just what their late date would lead us to expect.” The reasons given for such dating are of the vaguest. “On the whole, the religious atmosphere of the Jahwist and Elohist stories throughout Genesis is that of the early kingdom of Israel.” The clever (but somewhat shocking), though now familiar, suggestion that

the book of the law "found" under Josiah was not really an old copy hidden during Manasseh's idolatrous reign, but a recent forgery, is assumed from the outset. The unanimity which critics have reached is perhaps exaggerated. But there would be no limit to the amount of common error that might result from a common false assumption. And there have been startling changes of front. It is said (without much justification) that the Priestly document "cannot be understood, except in the light of the exile." Yet it "has many archaic features," and was by former critics "considered the earliest of the four."

The additional stress laid by the Chronicler on matters of organization and ritual is certainly remarkable, yet the difference is not greater than that between one orthodox Churchman and another at the present day; and the vividness and freshness of detail often give an impression of first-hand information (*e.g.*, 2 Chron. xxi. 20, xxvi. 6-10, xxxii. 2-8, xxxiii. 23). Considering the frequent brevity of the Judean narrative in Kings, its silence counts for very little. The brief reference to Josiah's passover (2 Kings xxiii. 21-23), the greatest "from the days of the Judges," shows how little we can expect to hear about lesser occasions. In 1 Sam. i.-ii. we get, perhaps, the most vivid incidental picture of the sanctuary and its worship—the priesthood, the ark, the lighted lamp, the sacrifices, the yearly feast—yet, humanly speaking, it is only their unusual connexion with one striking personal history which brings them into the narrative. It is, however, confirmed by many scattered hints in Samuel-Kings, *if we may take these books as they stand*.¹ If the law is cut up, and sections expunged from the history at the critic's fancy, the text may be made to prove anything. We are told of "proofs, derived from the history of Israel itself, that the Pentateuchal legislation was not in existence in the time of the judges or earlier kings." From the nature of the case, the history can only show that it was not strictly adhered to. We

¹ 1 Sam. xxi. 6; 1 Kings ii. 3, viii. 2-9, 53-65, ix. 4, 25; 2 Kings xii. 4, xiv. 6, xvi. 15, xviii. 6, xxi. 8, xxiii. 21-23. See Jer. vii. 12-14, xxvi. 6, 9; Ezra ii. 62.

may remind ourselves that there are not only canons which have never been repealed, but rubrics printed in our Prayer Books, which either are not, or for long periods of time have not been, generally obeyed or enforced. When we consider the unsettled periods of oppression, and Israel's grave lapses into idolatry, we need hardly expect that even reformers should begin by enforcing such a "counsel of perfection" as the restriction of sacrifice to one central sanctuary. It would not be without parallel if we supposed that the rigidity of later observance betokened the revival of a ritual of the past.

Of general arguments it is hard to assess the value of such as are based on vague suspicions, engendered by coincidence between the names and characters of individuals and those of tribes. The ground seems very uncertain for saying that Jacob and Laban "plainly represent two peoples." It is admitted that many patriarchal names are not names of tribes, and that their characters contain many individual traits. Simeon and Levi, whose history was in such marked contrast, are coupled together in Genesis in respect of their personal conduct (Gen. xxxiv. 25-30, xlix. 5-7). Of a different kind is an inference from Jacob's words about bringing down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, that "the state in which a man enters Sheol is his state for evermore." Is this to be taken seriously? He said once, "I will go down to the grave to my son mourning" (Gen. xxxvii. 35). On the view taken he might rather try to find some comfort first!

It is arguments like this which seem least respectable. They are used to support the foregone conclusion that "to whatever heights the religion of Israel afterwards rose, it remained before the age of the great prophets not only similar to, but" in many points "identical with, the general Semitic religion" — based, it seems, on analogies between Jewish customs and those of other Semitic peoples, of which an imposing list is given. Many of these are trivial, others (as the "discovery of the Deity's will through dreams") too common to deserve a place among Semitic peculiarities. The most

serious, "the presence of human sacrifices with as much infrequency and sense of the awful crisis that demands them as elsewhere in the Semitic world," is certainly not justified. The proposed sacrifice of Isaac arose out of no crisis; that of Jephthah's daughter (if she was sacrificed) was the unintended consequence of a rough chieftain's rash vow. Whether the real parallelisms justify the inference that Israel in the ninth century was only just emerging from a state like that of their Semitic neighbours, or that because they were the special people of Jehovah He was in their eyes much what Chemosh was to Moab, is another question! It is puzzling to learn that "Micaiah Ben Imlah breaks away from the racial idea that the tribal god must necessarily give his tribe the victory"; for the crudest tribal idea must surely involve conditions of loyalty, *not then fulfilled in Israel*. What we are evidently meant to understand is that such conditions were not of a moral or spiritual type. It is said that the "popular religion of Israel," though involving ideas of covenant with Jehovah, "did not therefore become ethical." We find the amazing idea emerging that the abuses against which (*e.g.*) Amos protested were in some sense the measure of what religion had attained to before his days; that he introduced quite new ideas of faith and morals, "new notions of the terms on which Jahweh made His covenant." This runs quite counter to the prophet's words. The men of Judah "have *rejected* the law of Jehovah." Israel has been false to the purpose for which He brought them up "to possess the land of the Amorite," and they receive the final warning, "the end is come upon My people Israel. I will not again pass by them any more" (Amos ii. 4, 10, viii. 2, etc.). It is once admitted that "it would be unscientific to wholly doubt" the prophet's "testimony that the principles which they enforce were not new in Israel." Yet the view drifts in a direction which makes their denunciations unmeaning and unfair. As well might we take those whom an Apostle denounces as "holding a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 5), as representatives of early Christian morality.

It is not strange that from such a standpoint it should be necessary to cut up and rearrange the books of the Old Testament. The view apparently fails to recognize that in every age the preacher has to inveigh against serious deficiencies of faith and morals, combined with an external or superstitious religionism, which are no measure of what religion has really done for morality. It seems that religious misconceptions may have more to do than at first appears with critical conclusions.

On other lines the extravagance of their pretensions is sufficient in itself to cause deep distrust. It is hard to take seriously the claim that the critic can analyse the Pentateuch into its component parts in a way which involves the splitting of verses and even of sentences. And not only so, but that the parts can be dated. We are told in an off-hand way to what centuries different parts of the patriarchal narrative belong; and if we wish to select the "contemporary, or nearly contemporary, documents" in Samuel-Kings, "any modern translation or commentary will enable" us to do so. The blessing of Joseph (Gen. xlix. 22-26) might seem sufficiently general and figurative, but the critic knows exactly to what the verses refer. They "reflect the experiences of Northern Israel during the Aramean wars of the ninth century." One sentence throws some light on the attitude which can assume such certainty on such seemingly uncertain ground: the main conclusions "are as solid as the results can be of a science at work upon so remote a period of history." We catch here a glimpse of an idea which seems to be the bane of modern science, as it pushes its researches into the unknown, beyond the limits of verification. It seems to be thought that, in default of sufficient materials for a true scientific induction, a true result will emerge if we proceed on scientific lines with what we have. And the confidence with which such results are stated seems often to be in inverse ratio to the grounds on which they are based, and measured only by the difficulty of disproof.

In all this there is no intention of urging that the facts adduced are of no interest or importance because we take

exception to conclusions drawn from them. Often they suggest questions or present problems which have, perhaps, been too much neglected; some of them may point to certain modifications of what, for want of a better term, we may call traditional views; and there may even be a gain in a certain freer moral and intellectual attitude.

(a) A minute investigation of the Old Testament brings more clearly before us the necessity of admitting some minor inaccuracies or uncertainties in the narrative. Many tend to disappear on closer inspection, but where Kings says 40,000 and Chronicles 4,000, there must be a mistake somewhere, at least according to our present text. It is no novelty to admit such uncertainties. They are involved in the very existence of various readings or uncertain renderings. The strange thing is that in some cases we get over so easily what disturbs us in others. When in Acts vii. 16 Stephen speaks of the tomb which "Abraham bought . . . of the sons of Hamor in Shechem," we see that either he, or his narrator, or some copyist, has made a mistake. And we do not much care which! Such cases, though not denied, are sometimes unfairly slurred over. But they do not suggest the turning of the history topsy-turvy. We may perhaps come to see that they do not really diminish the amount of Divine revelation which we recognize in the Scriptures; though we may be constrained to admit that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels"¹ in a sense which those who value the treasure have been sometimes loath to do.

(b) More serious in its influence has been the effect of modern discoveries in the history of religion. Things in Jewish doctrine and worship which once stood out clear and distinct are seen to have their background in the practices of other nations, and nothing at first sight pulls us up more sharply, or suggests more urgently some change in our point of view. Yet in principle there is nothing new in this. Jewish and Gentile conceptions of sacrifice challenge comparison in the pages of Scripture itself, and it has always been known that circumcision, the fundamental

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

condition of admission to the privileges of the Jewish covenant, was not peculiar to the Jews. Further discoveries only emphasize this principle, as opposed to the (non-Biblical) view of a ritual invented, cut and dried, for the edification of the chosen people. But if we find a deeper underlying unity, this does not prevent us from recognizing that Jewish ritual was used by God for their education in a special way. It does not detract from the most sacred rite of Christianity that it is connected by analogies with the customs of many countries and many ages. It seems to be God's method thus to use common things, and we may recognize true ideas underlying even heathen sacrifices.

What no doubt repels people is the thought that God should be pleased with the slaughter of animals. But consider the attitude of the worshipper. This really involves a deeper sense than we always maintain of the sacredness of life. To sacrifice life was to sacrifice the most sacred thing the world contained, too sacred to be commonly used, except in explicit recognition of its Divine source.

Some ideas mentioned as merely Semitic—the recognition of God in the phenomena of the natural world—are expressions of profound truths now too much lost sight of. It is only our cramped materialism which prevents us from instinctively seeing in a tree a striking embodiment of the Divine gift of life.

(c) More important still than any specific discoveries is the effect of the general scientific attitude, which insists on tracing in everything a coherent and orderly development. Though the principle that no change takes place *per saltum* must be applied with caution, the idea of development (not altogether a new one) is seen to have its place in the history of revelation. What seems too common is the determination to find not merely development, but development of a special kind, which we may perhaps term naturalistic. It is this that turns the whole course of the Old Testament upside down, which hardly tells in its favour. In the narrative, as we have it, we trace an orderly development, but of a very different kind, passing upward from the naïveté of childlike simplicity to the full growth of enlightened

spirituality ; but not necessarily from baseness and polytheism to virtue and monotheism (as seems often supposed), as though it followed from the analogy of backward races in historical times. Some, perhaps, feel a difficulty in admitting that the Jewish Church were in a superior position—with respect to immediate communications from God—to ourselves under the dispensation of the Spirit. Yet may we not say, as has been often said, that the definite aids are now less needed? The reason of the human agent is superior to the instinct by which the bird builds its nest, yet the latter is, so far as it goes, more precise and unerring, and in some respects more wonderful. As we pass upwards there is something that is lost.

In the Bible atmosphere is there not a natural progress? The freshness of morning hangs about the Book of Genesis ; the tone becomes more strenuous and solemn in the record of the Exodus and the giving of the Law, and it culminates in the sunny and glowing optimism of Deuteronomy (in spite of its tremendous warnings). How different all this from the atmosphere of any of the later stages : the first flush of success under Joshua, followed by the troublous times of the Judges, passing on through the brief glories of David and Solomon to the chequered history of the two kingdoms, lit up by the occasional splendours of prophetic vision, but ending in irretrievable disaster. How changed, again, is the commonplace atmosphere after the exile, as seen in the avowedly post-exilic books. And though the prophet's bright visions for the future still continue, there hangs over the present a tinge of sadness. The old men's tears at the laying of the temple foundation (Ezra iii. 12, 13) seem typical. It is all that the later prophets can do to revive the people's drooping hearts (Hag. ii. 1-9 ; Zech. iv. 10). How different is the prelude in the Pentateuch! And as we pass on to the higher dispensation (which again has its full measure of sadness mixed with triumph) we recognize how each preceding stage has its fitting place in the revelation of God's purpose. We do not "bring to naught the law through faith. . . . Nay, we establish the law."¹

¹ Rom. iii. 31.