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GENESIS \*

Our study of Genesis is purely homiletic. Questions of higher and lower criticism, of text and unity and authorship, do not concern us here. It is our purpose simply to inquire how the book as it lies before us may be studied in the closet and treated in the pulpit, and how the truth which it is designed to teach may be most clearly and effectively presented.

Genesis means beginning. The origin of all things is here disclosed—the heavens and the earth, man, sin, salvation, arts, industries, society, government, civilization, the church.

Genesis portrays the beginning as the Revelation portrays the end of all things. One unveils the eternal past, the other the eternal future. Scripture opens and closes with the vision of paradise. Here is the earthly paradise, soon forfeited by sin; here is the heavenly paradise, the home of the children of God, from which they shall go out no more forever. Here is man created, fallen; here is man redeemed, restored. Here is God the Creator, with the world in rebellion against Him; here is God the Redeemer, with the universe prostrate at His feet. Here the divine purpose is declared, the divine promises are given; here purpose and promises are fulfilled.

The account of the creation is not scientific but pictorial. So far as we can see, this is the only way in which the story could be told so as to convey essential truth, and at the same time be understood by men of every age. If it had been written in terms of modern science, it would have

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

SAMUEL ROLLES DRIVER\*

Dr. Driver died on the 26th day of February, 1914, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. He was born in Southampton on October 2, 1846, and was educated at Winchester College and New College, Oxford. In 1874, while Fellow of New College, he published *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, which attracted the immediate attention of Hebrew students to his scholarship. By this book he first made his name. Whatever one may think of the desirability of speaking of the moods and tenses of the Hebrew verb, Dr. Driver's vast collection of examples and happy arrangement of them have splendidly exhibited the methods by which the Hebrews expressed those thought-relations which the Greeks more sharply distinguished by the moods and tenses of their verb, both alone and in combination with particles. The appearance of this book was followed by his appointment in 1875 to be Tutor of Hebrew in New College and by his choice for membership in the Old Testament Company for the revision of the Authorized Version of the Bible, a position which he retained until the completion of the work in 1884. He was now known as a proficient Hebrew scholar, and in 1882 was made Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, in succession to the celebrated Dr. Pusey.

In 1891 Dr. Driver gave to the public *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. In its pages he made the first definite announcement of his attitude towards the three schools of Old Testament criticism, and his allegiance to the school of Graf-Wellhausen. There had been previous indications of the trend of his thoughts; for in a modest little book entitled *Critical Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons from the Pentateuch, 1887*, in the introductory remarks he definitely accepted the literary analysis of the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua into the four sources known as

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\* *The Life-Work of Samuel Rolles Driver*. A sermon preached in Christ Church Cathedral on March 8, 1914, by W. SANDAY, D.D., F.B.A., Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1914. Pp. 12. Price sixpence net.

J, E, D, and P, but he used great caution in referring to the dates of these writings (so also in *Contemporary Review*, Feb. 1890; pp. 217-219, and 229; comp. *Journal of Philology*, 1882). In 1890 his *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* appeared. This work is really an introduction to textual criticism, using the books of Samuel to illustrate method; but in the comments on the text some evidence is given that the author has adopted the Grafian dating of the Pentateuchal codes and assigned P to a time after Ezekiel (see 2 Sam. vi. 1; viii. 18; xv. 24, 27). It was in the *Introduction*, however, where Dr. Driver was first explicit in regard to his acceptance of Graf's theory of the origin of the Pentateuch. In this volume he also commits himself to the late date and unhistorical character of the Book of Daniel, and pronounces his judgment upon many of the minor problems that engage the attention of students of the Old Testament. The book at once took its place as the leading introduction to the Old Testament for English readers. Within a year three editions were exhausted and a fourth was published, the ninth Edinburgh edition came from the press towards the end of 1913, and a thirteenth New York edition in 1910. Mainly through this publication, but with his reputation enhanced by the *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 1895, and the three volumes in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Dr. Driver became the most influential representative of the school of Graf-Wellhausen in Great Britain and throughout the English-speaking world. In the opinion of Professor Kautzsch of Halle it was chiefly Dr. Driver who "conquered England for the scientific criticism of the Old Testament" (*Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1897, col. 42).

Though Dr. Driver sometimes found himself unable definitely to accept critical views which were propounded while the *Introduction* was passing through its repeated editions, yet he "deemed it only proper to notice and describe them, so far as space permitted" (*Introduction*,<sup>9</sup> p. xv). All of them, however, and some notable ones, did not obtain mention (Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, pp. 294 f, 303 f, 372; Siegfried, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1892, col. 124). A friend of Dr. Driver's, and a fellow-worker in the field of

Old Testament criticism, has expressed his disappointment at some such omissions, and has attributed Dr. Driver's silence on these matters to a possible feeling on his part that theories which he omitted to mention or neglected to discuss were "critical extravagances with which time might be left to deal" (A. S. Peake, *Expositor*, 1914, p. 397). This is a surmise, the suggestion of one who knew Dr. Driver well, and it is not unreasonable, especially when along with the limitations of space a chief characteristic of Dr. Driver's is remembered. He had no leaning to mere speculation; he always sought for tangible evidence. The lack of such support fully accounts for the omission of reference to a theory in the pages of the *Introduction*. It certainly and justly ruled out some views that originated not far from Oxford itself.

Naturally, then, Dr. Driver did not belong to the radical section of his school. Both Professors Cheyne and Kautzsch have spoken of him as being at times too cautious. It is quite possible that, as Professor Cheyne asserted, in consequence of Dr. Driver's "long devotion to the more exact, more philological study of the Hebrew Scriptures" he "could not see his way as far nor as clearly as those critics of a wider range, who had entered on their career at an earlier period" (*Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, p. 260). But the main reason for Dr. Driver's moderation ordinarily was found in one or both of two causes, in the lack either of tangible evidence of some sort or of a manifest compulsion of the theory. To use his own words, he made it his "aim to avoid speculation upon slight and doubtful data" (*Introduction*, p. ix or vi). Where the two grounds for an opinion were wanting, he allowed full weight to impressions. For example, he thought that the literary phenomena of the early books of the Bible indicated their composite origin, and therefore he accepted that view. He knew that archaeology, so far at least as it has yet spoken, does not declare the existence of the patriarchs, but only testifies to the correctness of the historical background, and therefore he denied the authority of archaeology at the present time to speak as a witness for the personality of the forefathers of Israel. But on the other hand he was impressed by "the amount of personal incident and detail in the patri-

archal narratives" and regarded these features as justifying the opinion "that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob [and Joseph] are historical persons, and that the accounts which we have of them are in outline historically true" (*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, articles Jacob and Joseph). Notwithstanding the goading of Professor Cheyne that he date the Book of Ruth after the beginning of the exile, he declared that "it seemed" to him "that the general beauty and purity of the style of Ruth point more decidedly to the pre-exilic period than do the isolated expressions quoted to the period after the exile."

Characteristically, then, Dr. Driver was not an innovator, but a judge (Peake, *Expositor*, 1914, p. 397), calm, cautious, careful. Possibly the chief limitations to the finality of his judgments are the narrowness of his gaze, which was fixed too exclusively on the literature of the Old Testament and in its historical range did not extend sufficiently beyond the confines of ancient Israel; and coupled with this, strange though it may seem in view of the long lists of words which formed the basis for many of his arguments, an occasional incomplete induction of facts.

Dr. Driver "came to the New [Testament] as a disciple and a believer" (J. Hope Moulton, *London Quarterly Review*, 1914, p. 310). His own confession of faith regarding the New Testament is found in the preface to his *Introduction*, in each edition from the first to the last. "While in the Old Testament," to quote his words, "there are instances in which we can have no assurance that an event was recorded until many centuries after its occurrence, in the New Testament the interval at most is not more than 30-50 years. Viewed in the light of the unique personality of Christ, as depicted both in the common tradition embodied in the Synoptic Gospels and in the personal reminiscences underlying the fourth Gospel, and also as presupposed by the united testimony of the Apostolic writers belonging almost to the same generation, the circumstances are such as to forbid the supposition that the facts of our Lord's life on which the fundamental truths of Christianity depend can have been the growth of mere tradition, or are anything else than strictly historical." (For references to "the God-man" and to "the central truths of Christianity," see

*Sermons*, pp. 186, 199, and *Christianity and Other Religions*, pp. 40, 44.) And among Dr. Driver's favorite hymns were "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" and "Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me".

Dr. Driver married in middle life, in 1891. Four children, two sons and two daughters, blessed the union. Dr. Sanday, his colleague and intimate friend, gives a beautiful picture of his home life. "Absolutely simple, absolutely sincere, absolutely without guile, single-minded and at the same time humble-minded, the Bible and the Home were the two centres of his being, and in both he had the fullest satisfaction. A happier or more united home could not easily be. Beyond the little vicissitudes of everyday life, undisturbed by external events, not wholly without and yet with less rather than more of the common lot of sorrow and trouble,

'Along the cool sequester'd vale of life  
He kept the noiseless tenour of his way.'

It was such a career as a scholar would wish for himself, such a career as those who loved him may rejoice to look back upon, now crowned and made perfect in death" (p. 5).

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