

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

NO. 29.—JULY, 1894.

I. THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN MODERN THEOLOGY.¹

THE aim of the large volume (556 pp.), which we shall review in the study of the theme which it presents, is the recovery of the historical Christ. Criticism, it is claimed, "has placed constructive thought in a more advantageous position than it has ever before occupied in the history of the Christian church. It has done this by making our knowledge more historical and real, and so bringing our thought face to face with fact. But, for the Christian theologian, the most significant and assured result of the critical process is, that he can now stand face to face with the historical Christ, and conceive God as he conceived him. What God signified to Jesus Christ he ought to signify to all Christian churches; and here all can find a point from which to study themselves and their systems." (*Preface*, p. 8.) The claim here advanced for criticism is certainly a very large and a very important one. If it is to be conceded, it must be admitted that, hitherto, the Christian theologian has never been brought fully and clearly face to face with the historical Christ. "The most significant and assured result of the critical process is, that he now sees the Christ of history as he has never before seen him, and through Christ, as thus unveiled, can see God as he has never before been in a position to conceive him." It is not claimed that the Christian theologian has not had hitherto a knowledge of the historical Christ. Even the most advanced critic would hardly put forward such a claim. The thing claimed for criticism is, that it effects a change in theology such as Copernicus

¹ *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology.* By A. M. Fairbairn, M. A., D. D., Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, etc., etc.

III. THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF THE PENTATEUCH.

NOT from a pilgrimage to Sinai have we returned with the original autograph of the Pentateuch, but from the laboratory of the new scholasticism do we come, bearing certain alleged evidence concerning the complete original text of the first five books of the Old Testament. First of all, we discover that in this scholastic workshop the book of Joshua has been welded fast to the Pentateuch, and we are called upon to accept the Hexateuch as the earliest unified cycle of biblical writings. We cannot forget that this same school of scientists were once addicted to the habit of raising stout objection to the consideration of the autograph text of any of the books of the Bible. To the law of a Vatican codex! To the testimony of the Septuagint version! This has been the constant appeal of these scholars when reference was made to a Mosaic original. "Let us limit the discussion," they cried, "to the tangible evidence of our later copies, and not reach out after an original manuscript, which is something high in the air, far beyond the reach of even our minute *spectrum* analysis. Such wild searchings have already led many men into a superstitious bibliolatry, an inconsistent worship of the mere leaves and letters of the Bible, worse than the veritable idolatry rendered to the Virgin Mary." We cannot forget that this was once the position of these new discoverers of the date and character of the original sacred document known as the Hexateuch.

It is claimed that the writer whose manual skill gave final form to the Hexateuch has not transmitted his name to us. He is catalogued among those who are termed anonymous. Moreover, his work was altogether a compilation. Not at all can original composition be ascribed to him, but only the arrangement of documents furnished to his hand. During the captivity of Judah in Babylon, or very soon thereafter, lived and wrought this unknown scribe. That is to say, somewhere in the neighborhood of ten centuries after the time of Moses, the Jewish nation

received from the editorial hand of this compiler, in complete written form, their history and their laws now known as the Hexateuch. A term descriptive of this manuscript is furnished along with its date. The "*Parenetic framework*"¹ of the customs and laws of the Hebrews is the name applied to the finished literary form of the Hexateuch. We understand this as indicating the purpose of the editor to be only hortatory. He desired to address an exhortation to the people of his day, and to this end he arranged the material of the Hexateuch as it has been handed down to our own time. For the sake of convenience, therefore, and without any intention of disrespect toward the new school, we take the liberty of calling this recently-discovered codex the *Pareneticon*.

The editor of the *Pareneticon* made use of several documents previously arranged by editors like himself. Each piece of literary composition used by this post-exilic editor was itself a *parenneticon*. Therefore, the final volume wrought out by the editor of the Hexateuch (*Pareneticon*, written with capital P) was made up of many similar *parennetica*. In the main, however, according to the best consensus of opinion among the scholastics, there were four great historical documents, each a *parenneticon* in itself, cast together in one linguistic framework as the *Pareneticon*. Dr. Driver combines two of these narratives into one, and calls it J E, and otherwise describes the combination as the prophetic narrative. This document deals with the history of the Jewish nation from its earliest beginnings,² and was cast into complete form about the middle of the eighth century B. C., or just prior to the time of the prophets Amos and Hosea. The second series of national traditions published to the nation was the document D, or the book of Deuteronomy. Some *memoranda* handed down from Moses himself were incorporated in this manuscript by its editor. The date of this work was about a century later than that of J E (that is, 650 B. C.), for the scholastic theory demands that D must have been written, must have been deposited in the temple at Jerusalem, and there forgotten, in time suf-

¹ Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 85 and 142.

² Driver's *Introduction*, page 110.

ficient to get itself covered with dust, and then to get itself discovered by King Josiah in the year 621 B. C. The priestly narrative, P, dealt with the history of God's revelation of himself to his people. J E and P made up the material of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers; the first dealing with the story of the race; the second, with the revelations and institutions that lay at the basis of the theocracy.¹ Other *memoranda* of Moses were used by the editor of P, and he cast his material into permanent shape during the time of the captivity in Babylon, say a century later than D, or 550 B. C. Thus it happened that the national legends and customs of the Hebrews were developing into definite, systematic form during the period of almost ten centuries after the exodus; and then arose the editor who selected certain parts of J E, D, and P, and arranged them as the *Purenneticon*.

Now, it may be profitable to follow these scientists along the different paths of investigation, to learn whether they lead us to that alleged point of view whence the new manuscript may be discerned. The first line of search pursued is that of linguistic analysis. The new school has harked back to a well-known canon of literary criticism in vogue in the eighteenth century. This canon affirmed that "every great poem is merely a word-mosaic," and that the business of the literary critic consists chiefly in picking out the fragments and in tracing them back to their original authors. Astruc, in 1753, and Eichhorn, in 1780, ventured to bring the Pentateuch under the ruling of this canon, and the analysis of the sacred narratives began. A fresh energy has filled the modern disciples of this school, and they now confidently claim that they have laid their fingers upon the original fragments of the great mosaic which we have agreed to call the *Purenneticon*. Far be it from our purpose to bandy charges, but in this connection we cannot forbear mentioning a repeated claim set forth by these scientists, that no pre-conceived idea has ever dared to show its head among them. This origin of the analytic method as applied to Scripture would seem to indicate that, after all, the old rejected canon of the last century has found refuge in this new camp, and is now lurking there as a veritable *a priori*

¹ Driver's *Introduction*, page 110.

theory. Secretly urged onward by this concealed demon, whom they claim to have exorcised, these men assert that from variations in language, style, and narrative, they have traced the joints and seams that unite the different documents of the great mosaic, the *Purenneticon*. Lists of words and phrases are adduced to prove types of literary composition, and these typical documents, J E, D, and P, in minute detail, are pointed out to us as the literary fragments, adjusted and pieced into one great manuscript.

We desire to call attention to a single additional principle touching this method of investigation. Canon Driver is probably the leading spirit in the field of analytic research, and it is Canon Driver who makes an important admission concerning his analysis. He combines into one the two alleged documents J and E; or, to state it more accurately, he declares his inability to assign adequate reasons for their separation by analysis. After careful examination of the alleged variations in language, style and narrative, the Canon admits that the process of analysis is sometimes marked by *uncertainty*, "owing to the criteria being indecisive";¹ then, in a later reference, he admits, further, a cause for this uncertainty, that "the similarity of the two narratives [J and E], such as it is, is sufficiently explained by the fact that their subject-matter is (approximately) the same."² Is it not true that Canon Driver here admits the principle that the subject-matter of the narrative affects the criteria of analysis? Where the subject-matter is approximately the same, there is scanty evidence from language and style to show the presence of diverse documents. Conversely, it would seem to follow that difference in the subject-matter accounts for all the variations that are alleged in justification of the analysis. Now, if we apply this principle to the process of separating J E from P, there would seem to be no adequate ground for such analysis. It is alleged that P deals with the creation, the deluge, and the covenants between Jehovah and his people. J E treats of the parents of the race in Paradise, of the story of Cain, the dispersion at Babel, and other events in the growth of the nation of Israel. Here is a wide difference in the general subject-matter of these alleged documents. Does not this

¹ Driver's *Introduction*, p. 12. ² *Idem*, p. 110.

wide divergence in theme give ample foundation for diversity in language and style? The *systematic* recurrence of certain words and phrases, which are spread forth in long catalogues in Canon Driver's work, may be made the basis for an inference exactly the opposite of his own. He arranges these lists like lines of battle facing each other, and then affirms that the differing lines imply different authors. It seems to us that the diversity in the lines is only the natural difference that arises from the varying subjects under discussion, even when those subjects are treated by one and the same individual writer.

In attempting to follow the route marked out by analysis, we have failed to reach a point of view whence we may descry the *Pareneticon*.

The analytic method belonged to the earlier stage of biblical criticism, and might now be regarded as a bit of ancient history, were it not also made the basis of the later stage of investigation. This stage assumes the *literary* analysis as an established fact, and by the *historical* method seeks to find a date for the various documents. The historical stage is illustrated by the announcement of the supplementary and the development theories. The central point in the supplementary theory is De Wette's view, announced in 1805, that the "book of the law" found in the temple in King Josiah's reign was the Book of Deuteronomy; and this discovery is taken as proof that the book itself had been written only a short time before, within the life-time of the same king. The development hypothesis was set forth by Reuss in 1833, and further elaborated by his disciples: by Kuenen in 1861, and by Wellhausen in 1878, and again by Reuss himself in 1881. This theory now holds the field among the new scholastics. It assumes the existence of the alleged Pentateuchal documents; it assumes the supplementary theory that Deuteronomy was written in the time of King Josiah; and then, upon the hypothesis of a natural *development* in the Jewish system of religion, it asserts that the document J E was written *before*, and the document P *after*, the composition of the Book of Deuteronomy. The *Pareneticon* was developed, therefore, in this three-fold order, about the time of the return of the captives from Babylon.

The pivot of the entire theory of development is the old claim of the advocates of the supplementary hypothesis, that the "book of the law of Moses," found in Josiah's reign, was the Book of Deuteronomy. This claim is based upon two propositions:

(1.) "The description of the book shows that in its most conspicuous features it was in close agreement with the contents of Deuteronomy."

(2.) "The historian who has preserved to us the narrative of the finding of 'the book of the law,' himself quotes directly from 'the law' in two passages, and in both instances from Deuteronomic writing."¹

These assertions are altogether untenable by reason of two facts: Not one "historian," as assumed by Ryle, but two "historians" have given us the narrative of the finding of the law. These are the writer of the Books of Kings and the writer of the Chronicles. Even Dr. Driver himself cannot rise to the height of assuming that the Chronicler is unhistorical, although he does seek to cast the shadow of a doubt upon the integrity of the books.² Dr. Briggs declares that he "cannot consent to the denial of the historical sense of the Chronicler for the sake of any theory."³ The chronicler had the facts of Josiah's reign before him, and his description of the celebration of the passover that followed the finding of the book of the law in the temple renders it clear that this book contained the passover regulations recorded in Exodus and Leviticus.⁴ The description of the book in the narrative of the chronicler cannot be limited as a reference to the single Book of Deuteronomy.

Further than this, the author of the Books of Kings, incorrectly assumed to be the sole historian of the period, in his phraseology and line of thought constantly shows a minute knowledge of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, as well as of Deuteronomy. The story of the dedication of the temple by Solomon (1 Kings viii.) reflects a clear acquaintance with nearly the entire Pentateuch. Not by means of the two unsound propositions advanced by Ryle can the existence of the *Paraneticon* be established.

¹ H. E. Ryle, quoted in Briggs's *Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, pp. 16-20.

² Driver's *Introduction*, p. 484 *et seq.*

³ *Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, p. 115. ⁴ 2 Chron. xxxv.

The next line of argument attempted by the new scholastics is connected with the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah. They aim to show that Deuteronomy is a kind of literary bridge, spanning the period between these two prophets. The method of the argument is to prove that Isaiah knew not the Book of Deuteronomy; that Jeremiah did know this book, and from these alleged facts a leap is made to the conclusion that Deuteronomy sprang into existence between the two. Isaiah's supposed ignorance of Deuteronomy cannot be demonstrated; his real knowledge of the book is the great barrier opposing such demonstration. In the first two chapters of his prophecy, Isaiah's description of Israel as not seeking to understand the law of the Lord, and as adopting heathen customs, and also his warning of judgment to come are evidently based upon Deuteronomy xvii., xviii., xxviii. and xxxii. Another reference to God's law in chapter xxx. 8, indicates Isaiah's knowledge of that portion of the law recorded in Deuteronomy. At the other end of the supposed bridge we find Jeremiah freely referring to Numbers and Leviticus as well as to Deuteronomy. The latter book was not the only ancient sacred record known to him. It is very clear that in the days of Isaiah, as well as in the days of Jeremiah, the Book of Deuteronomy was already ancient history.

The same method is followed in the attempt to fix the order of the other documents in the literary evolution. J E is named as the earliest, because known to Isaiah, Hosea and other prophets preceding Josiah's age. P, the document containing the history of God's revelations to his people, is placed *after* Deuteronomy, in exact reversal of the order that seems most natural, viz., that Deuteronomy is based upon P (Leviticus, etc.) and itself comes after P. These attempts to fix the date and the relative order of the books of the Pentateuch from the internal evidence, illustrate the fact that literary analysis may be carried beyond the bounds of reason. Chiefly, however, in connection with the history of the Hebrew nation, do we find the crowning objection to the development theory. This hypothesis is in conflict with the facts that belong to the tragedy of the ten tribes and the tragedy of Judah.

The tragedy of the ten tribes is a drama that extends over the

period from 975 B. C. to 721 B. C. In the latter year, Sargon of Assyria captured Samaria, the capital city, and carried away these tribes into a captivity from which they never returned. This destruction came upon the nation, says the sacred historian, because the people *rejected* God's "statutes and his covenant . . . and his testimonies."¹ Now, the development theory asserts that no part of the law was extant before (*circa*) 750 B. C., and at that time only the race-annals in J E were written. Here was an entire nation cast into the pit of punishment for disobeying God's law when that law had not yet been set before them in written form! The document J E had been written about a generation before, but that contained not the important legislation of D and P, but only a sketch of the history of the Jewish race! The spirit of God's word gives no support to a theory like this, which denies the long-suffering mercy of Jehovah. No single nation has he ever yet destroyed upon thirty years' notice!

It must be said that Dr. Briggs recognizes this dilemma, and seeks to escape it by asserting that the priestly traditions were in existence all the while, from Moses onward, but that they were not codified until the publication of the documents already named. The *Paraneticon* was a re-codification of prior documents, and these were only codes containing well-known systems of priestly tradition, all issued as exhortations from the priesthood. These traditional systems continued to grow in definiteness until the needs of the nation demanded their publication as formal codes. At the climax of a long course of "theological reflection" these were sent forth, as the expression of the chastened spirit of the priests liberated from Babylon, a complete system of laws and ritual known as the Hexateuch or *Paraneticon*.

But we affirm that this modification of the development view does not save these scholars from the dilemma. For in the kingdom of the ten tribes there was no Levitic priesthood. When Jeroboam set up the rebel government, "he made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi."² He set up idolatrous altars at Bethel and at Dan, and God sent a messenger from Judah to utter a curse against those altars as an

abomination in his sight.¹ Ahab brought in priests of Baal, but Elijah slew them in the name of the Lord. If the prophets Hosea and Amos, sent to the northern kingdom, carried a message based upon traditions that had developed among the priests of Judah, what authority was stamped upon the message? Even the document J E, upon this theory, was a product of priestly tradition at Jerusalem, and was unknown to the ten tribes. Such modification of the hypothesis does not alter its inevitable conclusion that the northern kingdom received no adequate warning of the dire destruction that came because they had "forgotten the law of God."² If that law grew up in large measure after they cut themselves loose from Judah, at what time did they know it? When did they forget it? According to this theory, there were no adequate means whereby the people of the ten tribes might learn God's law. So much of the law as had been developed was the exclusive secret of the priests at Jerusalem! The northern kingdom sank into ruin because these priests failed to reveal their professional system! The only theory sustained by the facts, is the view that God's law had been known to all the people of the twelve tribes of Israel, in written *authoritative* form, since a period long antedating the rebellion of Jeroboam.

The same difficulty confronts the development theory in its attempt to explain the captivity of Judah. The king of Babylon was God's agent in punishing Judah for disobedience of his law and profanation of his temple. It is asserted that the only parts of the legislation of the Pentateuch known to Judah at that time in codified form were the statutes in Deuteronomy. Of course, they had also the history of the race in J E. The substance of the priestly legislation of P was known to them through the priests themselves. But the chronicler asserts, and likewise all the prophets of Judah, that "all the *chief of the priests*, and the people, *transgressed* very much after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord."³ The priests and the people all sinned the same sin against God's law. They were all punished with the same punishment. And yet, Dr. Briggs would have us believe that the people were punished for

¹ 1 Kings xiii. 2.² Hosea iv. 6.³ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

not obeying the traditions that grew up among these same priests!

The real basis of the development theory is, after all, naturalistic. Reuss, Kuenen, and Wellhausen boldly place the ancient Jewish religion on the same plane with Greek mythology, or the worship of the sun in old Egypt. They deny the existence of the supernatural in Judaism, and deny the historical character of the books of the Pentateuch. They look upon these sacred records as only so much folk-lore and legend. Moreover, Wellhausen's view is professedly based upon Vatke's Hegelian theory that there were three great stages in the development of the Old Testament religion. This three-fold period of growth is now accepted by this entire school. Dr. Briggs acknowledges the soundness of their Reussian faith, with the single exception already noted.¹ We have shown how this proposed modification does not alter the leading features of the hypothesis. Almost the entire band of new scholastics stand to-day in Reussian garments, although denying a part of the Reussian logic. They make use of the telescope of Reuss, of his data and his calculations; above all, they look through his eyes, and then affirm that the new luminary sends forth divine rays. Reuss affirms that the beams are altogether of earthly origin, and so far forth is Reuss correct. Never through his naturalistic methods can any divine star be discerned. It seems likely, therefore, that Reuss, the supposed friend and ally of this school, will, after all, become its Nemesis. Since his creed is the foundation of belief in the existence of the *Parenneticon*, it must inevitably follow that the *Parenneticon* itself is of human origin, the offspring of the heated and disordered imaginations of the critics themselves.

A leading figure among the new scholastics is Dr. Cheyne. The self-appointed task to which he has devoted his life is the "hallowing of criticism." The odor of *unsanctity* which clings to the *Parenneticon* by reason of the German contingent in the ranks of the critics, Dr. Cheyne would remove by creating an atmosphere of piety around the new manuscript. Now, we doubt not for a moment the reality and the sincerity of Dr. Cheyne's

¹ *Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, page 128.

own individual piety and earnest Christian zeal. We call not in question the sincerity of his motives. But we assert that he has attempted the impossible when he sets forth the *Pareneticon* as a sure foundation for evangelical piety in the soul. He offers a foundation of sand when he invites his disciples to build their personal faith upon the development theory. At this vital point in its history, the *Pareneticon* inevitably dissolves into thin air. Its discoverers have followed methods of research that must make it, if it exists at all, the basis of a natural and not of a divine religion, and yet the earnest piety of some of these men would fain set it to working after the fashion of things supernatural. Dr. Cheyne calls the *Pareneticon* the fruit of the ripest priestly reflection and aspiration, and then would fain have it recognized as the best revelation that God could make. He wants to call it naturalistic in its character and origin, but wishes it to bring forth the divine fruit of piety. Here we find the central fallacy of the development theory. Dr. Cheyne recognizes this as the weakest point in his lines, and virtually acknowledges his failure to strengthen it. He makes this acknowledgment in calling for some younger man to take up the question and solve it: "When will some young adherent . . . of evangelical principles, set himself to think out in his own way the relation of biblical criticism to vital Christian truth?"¹ If the young man here invoked shall ever begin the task, he will undoubtedly fail, as Dr. Cheyne has failed, to show any foundation for vital piety in the new criticism, so long, at least, as this criticism retains the form given it by Dr. Cheyne and his associates. When he announces the history of Abraham as a myth, a bit of Hebrew folk-lore; denies to David the authorship of any of the psalms, and makes them only the lyric expression of the aspirations that grew up in the Jewish church; takes away the divine agency in calling the prophets, and virtually makes them shrewd Jewish statesmen and nothing more—when Dr. Cheyne does all this, we are not surprised that consistency should require him to declare his "belief in the permanent religious value of mythic and legendary narratives in the Old Testament." But we do affirm that the attempt, first, to take all the religion out of the Bible by analysis, and

¹ *The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter*, p. xxvi.

then afterwards to breathe religion again into the Bible by sympathy, is the Titanic task that men cannot accomplish. Yet this is the logical programme of the scholastics, and they claim to have carried it out in the alleged discovery of the *Pareneticon*! The fallacy brought to light in the attempt to make this supposed document the basis of vital religion is surpassed only by the fallacies involved in the methods of investigation already shown. Claiming to lay aside all preconceived ideas, and to rest upon scientifically ascertained facts alone, these scholars have assumed the absolute truth of Hegel's system of philosophy as applied to Jewish history, when the majority of philosophers have not yet accepted Hegel as master; they have assumed a naturalistic growth and development in the Jewish religion, when such growth is contravened by the Bible itself and by the majority of the Christian world; they have used an exploded canon of literary criticism as valid in connection with the sacred Scriptures; they have distorted and denied the plain facts of Jewish history as given in the sacred annals; they have denied the historical credibility of part or of all the historical books of the Old Testament, whenever it seemed necessary to substantiate their theory. Upon all these preconceived and untenable theories does the theory of the *Pareneticon* rest.

We prefer still the theory of an original autograph of the Pentateuch by Moses. This theory does not deny the credibility of Old Testament history; it accepts the story of the Jewish race in the order in which it was recorded by inspired scribes; it calls not for assistance from any philosophical or linguistic hypotheses; it accepts the testimony of the church as strong evidence in support of its claims, though not inspired and conclusive evidence. Moreover, a belief in the Mosaic autograph underlies the piety of many princes in Israel, of the past as well as of the present. Perhaps the old belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was the foundation of the piety of some of the scholars who swear allegiance to the *Pareneticon*. Yea, verily, when we speak of God-like piety, it must needs be true that the new manuscript can neither give it nor take it away.

HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE.

Washington and Lee University.