

REVIEWS

AN OXFORD EDITION OF THE HEXATEUCH.

The Hexateuch according to the Revised Version, edited by J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A. London, and G. HARFORD BATTERSBY, M.A. Oxon.: 2 vols. (Longmans, Green & Co.)

THIS work is a critical edition of the Hexateuch, so arranged, by the position in the page and the type, that the reader may see at a glance to which original source any passage, however minute, belongs. It is based upon the labours of a small committee of the Society of Historical Theology in Oxford, who are responsible for 'the method of presentation and the general distribution,' while the actual arrangement in detail, introduction, tables, &c., are the work of the two editors.

The first thing that strikes the reader is the extreme intricacy of many of the problems involved, the second the immense amount of patient labour which must have been expended in both solving the problems and making them clear to the English reader. Whatever individual scholars may feel concerning some of the details, they cannot but realise that they owe a great debt of gratitude for the very lucid way in which the critical views of those concerned have been set forth and argued.

The main sources are, as usual, J (the Jahwist), E (the Elohist), D (the Deuteronomist), P (the Priestly Code). But with each of these there is a school, J^s, E^s, D^s, P^s, of followers who carried on their work. Even J, E, D, P are not necessarily single writers. Thus D itself may be the work of a school of reformers, having some a prophetic, some a more priestly character. Again, they were all probably drawn, more or less, from earlier sources; J and E from long-standing oral traditions, and possibly some written documents; D in part from the already united J E; while P certainly incorporated some earlier codes of laws (P^h and P^t, see below)¹.

The main draft of J is dated between 850-750, while E is assigned to the earlier half of the eighth century. The principal arguments for

¹ In distinction from D^s, P^h, P^t, and P^s, the groundwork or main body of D and P are designated D^t, P^r.

the former are the implied practical subjugation of the Canaanites, which did not take place before the time of Solomon (cf. Gen. ix 25, 1 Kings ix 20), and the rebuilding of Jericho, which belongs to the reign of Ahab (cf. Joshua vi 26, 1 Kings xvi 34); for the latter the ascendancy of Joseph i.e. the Northern Kingdom (Gen. xxxvii 8), elaborate military (?) organisation (Exod. xviii 21), and the reference to Mesopotamian cults (Joshua xxiv 15), which are considered to point to the time of Jeroboam II. J is referred as a whole to the kingdom of Judah, stress being laid upon the prominence assigned to Judah (Gen. xxxvii 26, xliii 8, xliv 16, 18), as contrasted with that of Reuben (Gen. xxxvii 21, xlii 37) in the Joseph cycle. For the same reason and others E is assigned to the Northern Kingdom.

Discussions concerning the origin of J and E suggest to the reader many questions of considerable historical importance; e.g., For how many centuries is it likely that these ancient stories, poems, &c., were handed down orally? What is their exact value in determining the social and religious life of Israel? To what extent, and up to what period, were the local sanctuaries the centres of culture and government? What, if at all, had the Levites originally to do with them? Does the fact that the statutes of E (Exod. xx 24-26) contemplate as a rule an earthen altar, whereas the historical altars were of stones (Joshua viii 31, 1 Kings xviii 30, 31, &c.), suggest for that law (not necessarily for the whole code) a very early period, when an ancient custom was just beginning to be changed?

Another problem of great interest is connected with J^a. In Gen. i-xi there are, apart from P, traces of two independent sources, both apparently Jahwistic in character. The Flood Story hardly accords with the earlier ascription of certain arts of civilisation to the sons of Lamech in Gen. iv; nor the history of the dispersion of a nomad race of mankind after the Tower of Babel, with the settlement which had already taken place in ch. x (cf. verses 19, 30); nor the account of Cain as the founder of a city in Gen. iv 17, with the account of him as an outcast and a nomad in Gen. iv 14; not to mention sundry other difficulties and some curious parallels. The editors have therefore, in common with several other critics, assumed a second J source, to which they have assigned the first of the here contrasted groups of narratives and classed them under J^a, and have recognised its importance by printing it as they afterwards print E when it appears on the scenes in ch. xv 1, 2, 5, 16. The question naturally arises whether the J^a of these early chapters may not, as Dillmann is inclined to think, really belong to E, and the name JHWH be due, as in xv 1, 2, either to JE, or a later Reviser, who intended to change the name throughout for the sake of uniformity. The double name JHWH Elohim in ii 4 b-

iii (LXX ii 4 *b*-viii 21 and ix 12) is often similarly explained (see note on Gen. ii 4).

D is, of course, identified with the law-book found in the Temple in Josiah's reign, and with the majority of modern critics regarded as having been written very shortly before, on the ground that it was obviously designed to serve as the basis for the new movement. But was the movement so entirely new? Apart from the statement (very possibly exaggerated) of 2 Kings xviii 4, 22, that Hezekiah did remove the high places, the writings of the earlier prophets, notably Hosea and Isaiah, must have tended to throw discredit on local sanctuaries, many of them marred by corruptions from which Jerusalem was comparatively free. The thought of an enemy devoted to destruction as a sacrifice to God had been already suggested by traditions connected with Hormah and Jericho (Num. xxi 3, Judges i 17, Joshua vi 26). The religious policy of Manasseh would have naturally tended to increase this feeling and embitter the priests of Jerusalem; who, deprived of their religious duties, would have had ample time to codify the 'laws of Moses' as traditionally taught in their own sanctuary, and unconsciously modify them according to their lights.

The dependence of D upon J E suggests the inquiry, how far it is possible to recover that compilation where it was abridged, or its parts misplaced, on its subsequent union with P. One very interesting case is given in vol. I pp. 52, 53, &c. Deut. x 1-3 gives the earliest account which we possess of the making of the Ark, a wooden chest to hold the tables of the law, very different indeed to the elaborate structure of P (Exod. xxv 10-22). Now the existence of the Ark is recognised in J E (Num. x 35, 36), and is constantly mentioned in early history, and this passage of Deut. is clearly a recension of Exod. xxxiv 1, 2, 4, assigned to J by the editors. It is therefore contended that the mention of the Ark, as ordered and made, is not an insertion in Deut. x 1-3, but was omitted from Exod. xxxiv 1, 2, 4 when J E was united with P, to make room for P's account of the Ark. But might not the argument be carried further? Is not the whole of Deut. x 1-4 a recension of Exod. xxxiv 1, 2, 4, 28 *b*? But if so, Exod. xxxiv 3, 5-28 *a*, are all insertions into the original text of J E, or at any rate did not occur originally in this place. And this would destroy the contention of a large number of Biblical critics, so often repeated in this book, that Exod. xxxiv 14-26 is J's version of the Decalogue, definitely said in v. 28 to have been written upon the two tables. Several further considerations point to the same conclusion. (1) If v. 28 *b* is a continuation of v. 28 *a*, it was Moses who wrote on the tables, not JHWH, as required by v. 1; whereas if v. 28 *b* is a continuation of v. 4, JHWH might very naturally be understood as the subject. (2) The number of 'Words' in vv. 14-26 is not

ten, and is only reduced to ten by more or less arbitrary arrangements, in which critics cannot be got to agree. (3) The supposed ten Words, both in their selection and arrangement, do not bear the appearance of a collection of important laws designed to be the basis of religious life, but resemble fragments of ancient legislation such as Exod. xiii 11-13, xxiii 14-18, which were afterwards collected into larger codes. Why, for example, is the Feast of Unleavened Bread separated from the other feasts of v. 23, and why, though placed in such a prominent position, is it not like them made a feast of obligation? Why again is one single heathen custom or superstition, boiling a kid in its mother's milk, selected in v. 26, and separated from the prohibition of heathen cults and rites in *vv.* 14-17? It might be further objected against the treatment of Exod. xxxiv in this work, that the opening verses are only assigned to J by the bold expedient of referring the words 'like unto the first,' 'that were on the first,' &c. to that convenient *Deus ex machina*, the Reviser; though it is natural enough that E, having described the breaking of the first tables in xxxii, should have continued to narrate how the loss was made good. Some of these difficulties are fully recognised, and indeed so candidly set forth in the note on v. 28*a*, that to some scholars they will no doubt carry conviction.

P, as distinct from P^a, is identified with the 'law of Moses' read by Ezra (Neh. viii). But incorporated with the groundwork of P (P^g), are two earlier codes. The first, the Code of Holiness (P^h), has long been recognised by Bible critics. Besides the greater part of Lev. xvii-xxvi, only Exod. xxxi 13, 14*a*, Num. x 9, xv 38 *b*-41 are assigned to it. It was probably compiled during the Exile. The editors do not consider that the verbal agreements between Lev. xxvi and Ezekiel, when other differences of style are taken into account, warrant the conclusion that Ezekiel was himself its author, but believe it to be the work of a somewhat later writer strongly influenced by his prophecies. But here it is important to distinguish the compiler from his sources, and it is suggested that some of the latter may have been very ancient, possibly laws originally found in J, which perhaps included a judgement-book comparable with that of E. The lists of forbidden intercourse in Lev. xviii-xx are specially instanced, and some comparison suggested between the laws of Lev. xix and E. Great stress is naturally laid upon the peculiar phraseology of P^h, particular attention being called to the insistence on holiness in such phrases as 'I am holy,' 'I, JHWH, am holy.'

Another more conjectural antecedent of P^g is P^t, which is also a body of laws. To this document are referred, roughly speaking, those laws which do not immediately arise out of any historical incident, such as the law of leprosy, Lev. xiv; and it is observed that they fre-

quently commence or conclude with the formula 'This is the Torah of . . .' (Lev. xiii 59, xiv 2, 32, 54, 57).

The most important questions connected with P^s are the dates of the account of the Tabernacle and its furniture in Exod. xxxv–xl and of the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement in Lev. xvi. The editors of the Hexateuch refer the first to P^s, i. e. they place it later than the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah—in its final form possibly as late as the third century. With Kuenen and others, they regard it as a revised edition of chapters xxv–xxxi. Even the latter account has been interpolated, the altar of incense, Exod. xxx 1–10, being in their view a later addition.

The chief argument against including Lev. xvi in P is that there is not only no reference to it in Neh. viii, where we might reasonably have expected it, but that in Neh. ix another day of the same month, the 24th instead of the 10th, is actually set apart as a day of public fasting and humiliation. Some critics have argued that though the rites were some of them ancient, the Day of Atonement was not yet fixed as an annual fast. With this view the editors substantially agree. In the text the larger part of the chapter is ascribed to P^s, portions only, such as that fixing the date of the fast, 29–31, being referred to P^s.

One of the most important chapters in this work is Vol. I ch. xiv, which deals with sources not classed with any of the above. The passages dealt with under this head are (1) 'The battle of the four kings against five,' Gen. xiv; (2) 'The Blessing of Jacob,' Gen. xlix 2–27; (3) 'The Song of Moses,' Exod. xv 2–18; (4) 'The Song,' Deut. xxxii 1–43; (5) 'The Blessing of Moses,' Deut. xxxiii. (1) The first is regarded as an insertion later even than P. Stress is especially laid on the geographical and other difficulties; a number of place-names are introduced which occur nowhere else in the Old Testament, and Abraham is suddenly invested with the character of a warrior and displays military resources and capacity enabling him to overwhelm a league of kings. The archaeological arguments of Dr. Sayce are answered by saying that at the most they only prove that the author of Gen. xiv employed names and perhaps other material ultimately derived from ancient cuneiform texts. But it does not follow that he had personal knowledge of the inscriptions. The archaeological evidence is more fully discussed in chap. xv, on Criticism and Archaeology, which is contributed by Dr. Cheyne, who argues at length that the archaeological argument is made to carry more weight than it will reasonably bear. (2) 'The Blessing of Jacob,' apparently a composite or at any rate a much revised piece, is in the main, like J, a poem of the South, and may have arisen out of a small nucleus, describing the fortunes of some of the more prominent tribes. (3) 'The Song of Moses' of Exod. xv contains

religious ideas concerning the Divine Kingship such as found expression during and after the Exile, and is presumably, therefore, post-Exilic. It should be borne in mind that this criticism does not include xv 1 and 20 assigned to J, nor 19 which is regarded as the insertion of the Reviser. (4) 'The Song' of Deut. xxxii shows a marked literary individuality, containing an unusual number of words found nowhere else, while affinities of thought and language point to an age which possessed the vocabulary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the editor of the Books of Kings: it probably was not written originally in the person of Moses. (5) 'The Blessing of Moses,' a later composition than that of Jacob, has at least affinities with E. In this connexion attention is called to the stress laid, *vv.* 13-17, on the prosperity of Joseph, i.e. the Northern Kingdom, in contrast with Judah, whose isolation (i.e. the schism under Jeroboam) is his great misfortune, *v.* 7. In the text the piece is therefore assigned as a whole to E, *vv.* 2-5 and 26-29 being regarded as later additions showing affinities with later books, Job, Ezekiel, &c.

In the Introduction in Vol. I is a very complete vindication of the Higher Criticism. The analogy of the different versions and recensions of the Saxon Chronicle is singularly happy. Interesting parallels might also be adduced from the Icelandic Sagas. But it is important to emphasise the fact, that though the phenomena dealt with by Biblical criticism are what might reasonably have been expected in ancient documents, yet the conclusions of critics were not originally based upon such *a priori* expectations, but upon peculiarities and difficulties in the text which required explanation. It is sometimes stated, very unjustly, that some German theorists first cut up the poems of Homer, and then arbitrarily applied the same method to Bible books. The history of criticism, as here given, clearly refutes such an imputation. The only serious quarrel one feels inclined to make with these chapters is that in form and order there is some confusion between the History of Bible Criticism and the arguments for the position now assumed by critics. Part of the latter are, for instance, welded in, in v § 2-vi, between the views of Astruc and Eichhorn. There is again a long similar digression in vii §§ 1-3, the historical review being again continued in vii § 4. Here, as elsewhere, the divisions and headings of sections are somewhat arbitrary and artificial. The reader may wonder how far these phenomena may be due to composite authorship or to the work of the Reviser.

Appendix A contains lists of words and phrases peculiar to or characteristic of the different documentary sources. There is no part of the critical argument which requires more delicate care, or is of more importance when properly used, than that drawn from such

evidence. So much depends upon both the actual and relative frequency of the occurrence of a word or phrase, whether it is necessitated by the character of the subject treated of, whether it is a synonym of another word generally preferred by other documents, and (what adds greatly to the difficulty) whether the use of such a word or phrase may not be already the very ground for assigning an otherwise doubtful passage to the particular source. The danger of thus arguing in a circle is obvious. Speaking generally, we may say that, whereas the philological argument tells strongly for the distinction of D and P from J and E, and from one another, it is far more precarious and more difficult to apply in distinguishing J and E. A mere mechanical use of the tables, as though every word had the same value as argument, might be very misleading. At the same time some distinctions in the vocabulary of J and E are clearly made out. For example, the phrase 'here am I,' in answer to a call, occurs three times in Gen. xxii and again in xxxi 11 and xlvi 2 [3]—all E passages—and also in xxxvii 13 b, which is probably an E passage. On the other hand, it occurs in no certain passage of J. The use of the phrase in Gen. xxvii 16–18 a suggests, therefore, the probability that these verses belong to E, even though the greater part of the chapter belongs to J. It should be understood, of course, that the composite character of the latter chapter is primarily argued on other grounds.

Appendix C contains an elaborate comparison of the various codes, together with passages bearing upon them in the narrative, showing in detail the light which they throw upon the religious and social life of the periods with which they deal. It is full of suggestions of great value to the student of Hebrew history.

Two objections may occur to the reader of this work. The first is that the editors make out too much. Every sentence, every phrase, or even word, is assigned to one or other source, or their schools, or various editors or revisers. But there is, after all, a good deal to be said for this method. For though, especially in the unravelling of J and E, and in the constant reference to the Reviser, there is much that is doubtful (and the editors themselves constantly recognise the provisional character of their conclusions), the work thus shows more clearly than it could in any other way the processes by which the Hexateuch gradually took shape.

The other objection has a wider reach. 'Is not,' it may be asked, 'the whole argument of the critics a vicious circle? They are constantly saying that such and such passages point to some later custom or some later stage of religious thought, and therefore must be referred to a later author. But is not this to construct an imaginary history, and then make the critical analysis conform to it?' Now this objection

has just an element of truth which makes it difficult to answer. Sometimes, in fact, the argument does appear to be applied too arbitrarily; but it is hardly ever employed as an *a priori* argument. The general outline of progressive customs, habits of thought, &c., is obtained in the first instance from literature the date of which is practically fixed *on other grounds*. When once this outline has been made out, it is at least logical to apply its details, especially when supported by other arguments, in ascertaining the date of unknown documents or parts of documents. It is in the convergence of different lines of evidence that the great strength of the critical argument lies.

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