

*Comma* had its birth in Spain, that its author was Priscillian, and that it obtained currency through Peregrinus.

Professor Süderblöm, of Upsala, contributes a handy little work, 'Die Religionen der Erde' (price 40 pf.), to the series of *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher* (Halle a. S.: Gebauer-Schwetschke). In the compass of sixty-four pages the author exhibits in an informing way the character and statistics of the different religions of the world.

We have had the privilege more than once of calling the attention of our readers to the work done by Professor C. Bruston, of Montauban, especially in the fields of Apocalyptic literature and the Agrapha of Jesus. He has lately published a tractate on the three Fragments of Oxyrhynchus and that of Fayum (*Fragments*

*d'un ancien recueil de Paroles de Jésus*; Paris: Fischbacher), which will be found as original and suggestive as his former contributions to this department of study.

No words of commendation are needed for so old and tried a friend as the *Theol. Jahresbericht*, of which the 3rd Abteilung, dealing with 'Das Alte Testament' (P. Volz) has reached us (Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke & Sohn; price M.4.55).

An extremely useful volume for reference has also been published by E. Leroux, of Paris, *Table Générale de l'Hist. des Religions*. It contains an Index to the first forty-four volumes (1880-1901) of the *Revue de l'Hist. des Religions*, which will prove invaluable to the student of Comparative Religion.

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## On Dillmann's Critical Position.

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IT might have been supposed that Dillmann's critical conclusions were sufficiently well known to Biblical scholars; but from the misconceptions of it which have appeared recently in the Dean of Canterbury's *The Bible and Modern Investigation*, this appears not to be the case. As, moreover, these misconceptions have been made the basis of an unfavourable comparison of myself and other English scholars with Dillmann, it may perhaps be worth while to make an attempt to remove the confusion, and to show that the relative position of Dillmann and myself is not in the volume referred to correctly described. The general aim of the parts of the volume which I have here in view is to show that Dillmann, who is praised—and of course justly praised—for his scholarship, judgment, and learning (pp. 21, 33, 45), in spite of his critical principles takes a far more conservative view of the historical value of the Pentateuch than Prof. G. A. Smith and myself do; and that consequently, confronted with such authority, we stand discredited. In point of fact, the Dean has misapprehended, on some important subjects, Dillmann's conclusions; and I anticipate no difficulty in showing that, upon the points here concerned,

there is none on which I have expressed a less conservative judgment than Dillmann, and some on which I have expressed a judgment that is decidedly more conservative. The issue, the reader will bear in mind, is not whether or not either Dillmann's conclusions or mine are true, but simply whether or not my conclusions are, from a historical point of view, less conservative than his.

The first point at which the Dean takes exception (p. 23) is my remark (*Introd.* ed. 6, p. 128) that 'there is a good deal in P which cannot be regarded as historical.' Dillmann, however, the man of 'strong sense and historical capacity' (p. 33), though he uses other words, says exactly the same thing. In *Ex. Lev.* p. 272, *N.D.J.* p. 649 (*bottom*), 650 (*top*), he says that P, in accordance with his fondness for numbers and system, at certain important points in his narrative, where historical *data* failed him, but where nevertheless he desired to place a clear picture before his reader, drew imaginative descriptions (*freie schematische Schilderungen*): his descriptions of the ark of Noah, the Tabernacle, the camp and order of march, the numbers of the tribes, the allotment of the land

under Joshua, the war against Midian in Nu 31 (p. 188), etc., are, for instance, all of this kind: they are ideal representations, not corresponding to the historical reality, but imaginatively developed from the nucleus supplied to him by tradition. Dillmann considers further (p. 649) that the chronological scheme of the Pentateuch is essentially P's construction, and, at least in many features, artificial (cf. his *Genesis*, p. 108). On p. 35 the Dean finds serious fault with me for assigning J and E to 'the early centuries of the monarchy.' But Dillmann, whom in the preceding pages he has been referring to with great approval, assigns E to 900-850 B.C., and J to c. 750. I ask, Is the difference between Dillmann's date and mine so great that the one deserves praise and the other blame? In point of fact, I purposely chose the expression 'the early centuries of the monarchy' in order to leave open as early a date as possible. In the same connexion (pp. 30 f., 32 f., 35 f.) the Dean dwells upon the amount of ancient, and even Mosaic, written sources which according to Dillmann were made use of by J and E. But he here misreads Dillmann. Dillmann assumes no appreciably larger amount of written sources than I do. Those postulated by him for E (*N.D.J.* p. 619) resolve themselves virtually into the code of laws contained in Ex 20-23,—which I also assign naturally to a pre-existent source (*Introd.* p. 122),—the 'Book of the Wars of Yahweh,' from which the poetical fragment cited in Nu 21<sup>14f.</sup> is derived, and an itinerary (Nu 21<sup>12ff.</sup>, Dt 10<sup>10f.</sup>). I do not notice the itinerary; but I mention the Book of the Wars of Yahweh; and in other respects also say generally what Dillmann does about the sources of both J and E (*Introd.* p. 114 f.). The great bulk of these sources Dillmann plainly considers to have been not written but oral (pp. 619, 628). The 'older and better' sources (than E's) used by J (*The Bible*, etc., p. 32; cf. p. 33, *bottom*) amount to very little: all that Dillmann refers to them (p. 630 f.) are the 'highly antique narratives' in Ex 4<sup>24-26</sup>, Nu 10<sup>29-32</sup>, 21<sup>1-3</sup>, Jos 17<sup>14ff.</sup>, and the 'very different accounts from those of E and D about Israel's march to the E. of Jordan and settlement there, of which fragments are perhaps preserved in Nu 21<sup>25, 32</sup>, 32<sup>30, 40, 41</sup>. As regards P (pp. 655-658), the sources of his narratives are essentially consolidations of the once fluid *Sage*,—partly as this was fixed in E, partly (as Dillmann makes P [c. 800 B.C.] older than J) either

an earlier form of J or the sources used by J, partly—for matter which E and J do not contain, or in which P differs from E and J—*independent sources*. 'But what the nature of these sources was cannot be said: that they were throughout written sources need not be assumed: P may still have had oral *Sage* at his disposal' (p. 658). 'The details,' even of such a chapter as Gn 23, 'are the free composition (*freie Ausführung*) of the narrator' (*Genesis*, p. 296). Thus, in spite of the condemnation passed on p. 35 f. upon those who 'talk as if our authority for the ancient narratives of the Pentateuch were no earlier than the literary documents of which it is composed,' this—whether in itself it is right or wrong—is to all intents and purposes Dillmann's view: the written sources which he postulates, whether for the patriarchal or for the Mosaic age, include none of the graphic and picturesque narratives which give its character to the Pentateuch, but are limited to collections of laws, songs, and isolated notices,—in the case of P, the particulars handed down to him, through whatever channel, being often artificially elaborated into ideal pictures. Dillmann also acknowledges, as a matter of course, the existence in the Hexateuch of discrepant representations; for instance, about the Tent of Meeting (on Ex 33<sup>6, 7</sup>), or P's account of the allotment of the land (*N.D.J.* p. 658), or in the narratives of Nu 13-14, 16-17).

With regard to Deuteronomy, Dillmann says (*Ex. Lev. Preface*) that it is 'anything but an original law-book': I not only endorse this statement, but enforce and illustrate it (*Deut.* pp. lvi, lxi; *Introd.* p. 90 f.; and elsewhere). The book itself Dillmann holds to have been written under Josiah (I place it earlier, under Manasseh): the laws embedded in it he considers to have been in some cases ancient, and either Mosaic or, at the time when it was written, reputed to be Mosaic; other laws (such as those in chaps. 12, 13, 17<sup>14ff.</sup>, 18<sup>15ff.</sup>, 19<sup>16-21</sup>, 22<sup>6f.</sup>, etc.) he considers were codified by the compiler for the first time, being not based upon actually existing usage, though developed from Mosaic principles.<sup>1</sup> I say similarly (*Introd.* p. 91; *Deut.* p. lxi) that the bulk of the laws incorporated in Deuteronomy is undoubtedly much more ancient than the time of the author himself; and I speak of a 'continuous Mosaic tradition,' and describe the laws in Deuteronomy as expanded and developed from a Mosaic nucleus (*Deut.*

<sup>1</sup> *N.D.J.* p. 604.

p. lvii; *Introd.* p. 153; Hastings' *D.B.* iii. 66). I am thus not conscious of any material difference between Dillmann's view of Deuteronomy and my own. The statement that, though Deuteronomy may be in form late, 'the material embodied in it is Mosaic' (*The Bible*, etc., p. 31), is ambiguous; and may be understood to signify a good deal more than Dillmann really believed.

With regard to the patriarchal period, the Dean writes (p. 42): 'Dillmann accepts the historical truth of the narratives in Genesis respecting the Patriarchs'; and remarks (p. 45) that he does not treat Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the 'dim shadows which are all that is allowed to us by such writers as Professor G. A. Smith.' I cannot understand how this position can be maintained. In the introduction to Gn 12 ff., in the last edition (1892) of his commentary, Dillmann says (p. 217), 'It is self-evident to us moderns that all the stories about the patriarchs belong not to strict history, but to the realm of legend (*Sage*).' He proceeds, indeed, to combat the theory that the patriarchal narratives rest upon *no* foundation in fact; but the foundation which he finds for them is to a very small extent personal, it is *tribal*: he regards the patriarchs as representatives—or, apparently, in the case of Abraham, as a leader—of large bodies of Semitic immigrants who passed through Canaan in pre-Mosaic times. Thus he says (p. 219; cf. pp. 316, 403): 'Isaac and Jacob are in later times quite common designations of the people of Israel; as in the case of<sup>1</sup> Lot, Ishmael, Esau, and their sons, it is sufficient [as opposed to the view that they represent deities] to regard them as ideal personal names, taken from particular groups within the limits of the nation, or from the whole at different stages of its development.' Of Abraham he says: 'The possibility that in Abraham there may be preserved the memory of some important personage who took part in the Hebrew migration (Ewald; Kittel, *Gesch.* i. 155 ff.) cannot be denied. Naturally nothing can be proved, especially if Gn 14 be regarded as fiction; the statements of Josephus (about his being king of Damascus), and Berosus, have no historical value. Even, however, though he were an ideal character, a personification of the still undivided body of Hebrew immigrants, it is certain that all the Pentateuch writers regard him as the founder of the religious characteristics

<sup>1</sup> These words (*wie bei*) are not correctly rendered in the English translation, ii. 3 f.

of their nation.' The narratives about him (p. 220) 'consist chiefly of domestic and personal incidents, in which he more and more approves himself, and on his part makes possible the providential growth of Israel in its beginnings, and therewith the salvation of the world. Undoubtedly the living popular legend (*Sage*) had already begun to take this direction. But the ideal elaboration of his portrait, and the collection and arrangement of the materials in the legend relating to him, can be due only to those who committed it to writing.' J is in particular distinguished (p. 629) for numerous examples of the free expansion or development of a traditional nucleus (*e.g.* Gn 24); and the many conversations (*Redeverhandlungen*) in his narratives ('*e.g.* Gn 18-19. 24. 43-44, Ex 4<sup>1-16</sup> 7<sup>8</sup>-11<sup>10</sup> 32-34, and elsewhere') can be only regarded as peculiarly his own work (*als sein eigenes Werk*).

The actual personal element in the patriarchal narratives, according to Dillmann, is thus very small: not only Lot and Ishmael, but also Isaac and his descendants are the personifications of tribes: in Abraham there is an indeterminate personal element; but most of the details about him are due either to popular *Sage*, or to the narrators. Dillmann certainly does not accept the 'historical truth' of the patriarchal narratives, in the sense in which any ordinary reader would understand the expression. Nor can I understand how the figures of the patriarchs are less dim and shadowy to Dillmann than they are to G. A. Smith: observe especially the arguments advanced on p. 106 f. of the latter's *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the O.T.*, in favour of the existence of individual elements in these narratives. It is remarkable that the argument for the historicity of the patriarchs drawn from the religious position of Moses, and his appeal to the God of the fathers, which had stood in the first, second, and third editions of Dillmann's *Commentary* (1875, 1882, 1886), and which has also been used by Kittel (p. 157); Eng. tr. p. 174), and myself (*Genesis*, p. xlvi), is dropped in his last edition (1892), published two years before his death (contrast p. 219 here with p. 217 in ed. 1886). For my own part, I have rejected the view that sees in the patriarchs the personification of tribes (except in the case of such subordinate persons as Canaan, and the sons of Ishmael, Keturah, Esau, etc.), and have declared my belief that though the characters are to some extent idealized, and coloured by the associations

of a later age, a substantial personal nucleus underlies the narratives about them (*D.B.* art. 'Jacob,' pp. 533-535, in 1899; more fully in my *Commentary on Genesis*, pp. xlv-xlvii, lv-lix, in 1904). Even in his *Theologie des Ates.*, from which the Dean quotes,<sup>1</sup> Dillmann points out (p. 17 f.) that the traditions about the patriarchs, which were first written down in the post-Mosaic and prophetic age, 'have been greatly transformed (*stark umgebildet*) and idealized, that in particular tribal history has been largely recast into family history, and that it is for us now very difficult, and in part impossible, to distinguish the actual facts from the ideal truth which has been put into them.' These considerations, however, he continues, do not justify us in pronouncing all the patriarchal narratives to be pure fiction: many of the names in Genesis are indeed only those of the eponymous ancestors of tribes or peoples; but this will not have been the case universally; and it is of the essence of ancient popular *Sage* to 'depend *substantially* upon good historical recollections.' Do, however, these conclusions respecting the patriarchal narratives differ so very materially from those expressed by myself in the article in *D.B.* just referred to, p. 534<sup>b</sup> (where, moreover, in the footnote, I *praise* Dillmann's discussion of the subject)? As I said above, my object in the present paper is not to argue either that Dillmann's critical conclusions or mine are correct; it is simply to show—as I venture to think I have shown—that on the points with which the paper deals, his authority cannot, in the interests of a conservative view of the history, be invoked against me: in my general view of the Pentateuchal narratives of the Mosaic age I am at least not less conservative than he is, while in my view of the narratives of the patriarchal age I am more conservative than he is in his *Com-*

<sup>1</sup> The *Theologie* was published posthumously, from the MS. of Dillmann's lectures; and in view of the cautions expressed both by the editor, Kittel (Preface, p. iv. ['Mosaic' to be often understood in it merely in the sense of 'Old-Israelitish']), and by Baudissin in his art. 'Dillmann' in *P.R.E.*<sup>3</sup> (p. 667, l. 28 ff.), it is doubtful how far it can always be taken as expressing the conclusions which he finally reached: certainly where the *Commentary*, as revised by himself two years previously, differs from it, the *Commentary* would seem to deserve the preference.

*mentary*, and not less conservative than he is in his *Theologie*.

Criticism, as A. B. Davidson has said, 'is the effort of exegesis to be historical'; and the great value of criticism lies in the historical inferences which follow from it, and in the light which it sheds upon the historical circumstances under which different parts of the Old Testament originated, and on the stages by which, *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*, God revealed Himself to Israel. Dillmann was a critic, both literary and historical, in the genuine sense of the word: he accepted all the ordinary critical conclusions respecting the Old Testament—about Isaiah and Daniel, for instance, not less than about the Hexateuch. It is thus difficult to understand with what hope of success he can, any more than Kittel or König, be brought into the field against the critics to whom the Dean of Canterbury opposes him. As Baudissin, his successor at Berlin, has pointed out in his article upon him in *P.R.E.*<sup>3</sup> (p. 668), Dillmann differed from traditionalists in principle: he was separated from them, namely, by his historical sense, the authority of which they would not admit. From Wellhausen, on the other hand, even in his view of the history, he differed 'not in principle, but only in a different application of the same principles': as a follower of Ewald, he could not see his way to the conclusion that the Priestly Code (though he admitted the introduction into it of many later elements)<sup>2</sup> was, in the form in which we have it, of exilic or post-exilic date; in other respects, to put the difference in one word, he was more conservative than Wellhausen in the application of his critical principles, and more circumspect in his historical judgments. These characteristics of Dillmann's criticism, however, do not make him more conservative than many English scholars are, who in regard to the date of P agree with Wellhausen; for it is quite possible to accept on this point Wellhausen's general position, and yet on many questions of detail to arrive at more conservative conclusions than he does.

<sup>2</sup> If the later date for the written Code appears to me more probable, it will be remembered that I not only admit, but insist upon, the presence in it of many ancient elements. (*Introd.* p. 135 ff.; ed. 6 or 7, p. 142 ff.).