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CRITICAL NOTICES.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel, with an Introduction on Hebrew Palæography and the Ancient Versions and Facsimiles of Inscriptions. By the Rev. Prof. S. R. DRIVER, D.D. (Clarendon Press, 1890, pp. xcvi. 296.)

PROF. DRIVER has succeeded in the seldom-accomplished task of producing a work adapted to the needs of very different classes of readers. It is hardly intended for beginners, yet it does not necessarily presuppose advanced proficiency in the reader to pronounce the book likely to prove of the utmost use to him. On the other hand, the notes and introductions are in the strictest sense scientific, and abound in critical discussions which the most mature scholar will find full of fruitful suggestion and easily accessible help.

In examining a new edition of a text so admittedly difficult and corrupt as that of the Books of Samuel, one's first thought runs in the direction of verbal emendation. Here, at a first glance, it would appear as though Prof. Driver had done little beyond subjecting the suggestions of his predecessors—more especially of Wellhausen and Klostermann—to careful criticism. Even were this wholly the case, the part of the editor would have been a significant one. On the one hand it would familiarise English readers unacquainted with German—and, alas! these are still the large majority—with some of the most brilliant work of recent times, for nowhere is Wellhausen seen to better advantage than in his commentary on Samuel. Many other commentators, more or less completely unknown in England, are, in a similar way, introduced to the notice and regard of the student by Prof. Driver's copious quotations. But, in the second place, the editor does not merely *quote* these writers; he examines their results with an acute and balanced judgment which is of the very essence of profitable emendation, and applies their method towards a number of original suggestions, the relatively small number of which is by no means a reason for complaint. Amid the multitude of alternatives already proposed, the student feels strongly the need of a guide who will direct his choice rather than one who will lead him deeper into the maze and add to his perplexities by guesses, however ingenious. Prof. Driver rightly, and almost consistently, refuses to *guess*. Often the utmost limit to which one can safely go is merely the negative result that the text is inaccurate, and that "the error is too deep-seated for a restoration to be proposed with confidence." (Cf. also pp. 79 and 117.) It must, on the whole, be said that Wellhausen's *Samuel* is marked by a similar moderation; but it appears to me that, despite the cautious principles enunciated in his preface, this distinguished critic was sometimes too ready to adopt the LXX. readings as preferable to the Massoretic text in cases of difficulty. Yet in many passages he displays an even brilliant discrimination.

Prof. Driver discusses the questions presented by the Septuagint in his

full and valuable Introduction. "On the whole," he maintains, "the purer text was undoubtedly preserved by the Jews" (Introd. xxxix.); but in many individual cases, "purer readings are preserved to us by the Septuagint." So far is clear enough; but the treatment of variations is a matter of great difficulty. "There are *three* precautions which must always be observed: We must reasonably assure ourselves that we possess the Version itself in its original integrity; we must eliminate such variants as have the appearance of originating merely with the translator;" and with the rest we must be guided chiefly by the intrinsic merit of the rival readings.

Origen's labours unfortunately tended towards complicating the matter by his preferring in his *hexapla* those readings of the LXX. that approximated most closely with the Massoretic text. Lagarde has certainly formulated canons for the recovery of the genuine text (xlvii.), but they are not of much practical use; for, as Prof. Driver justly remarks (Introd. xlix.), "It is the judgment and acumen displayed in handling the more difficult cases which arise under these two heads" [viz., whether the reading that differs from the M T. is really based on a divergent text, and if so whether it be a superior reading or not], "that mark a textual critic of the first order, and distinguish, for example, Wellhausen in a conspicuous degree, both from Thenius on the one side and from Keil on the other." Now and then even Prof. Driver seems to me to prefer the LXX. when the M T. is perhaps defensible, as *e.g.*, in i. 28. Here the editor's exposition of the grounds on which the LXX. reading may be regarded as superior, is admirably lucid, but when all is said I am not convinced that the M T. is not as good. The subject of *ישתחו* may well be Samuel, and, considering the life to which he was to be devoted, it is possible and even natural that, though so very young, he had been taught by his mother the act of prostration. Elkanah's *coming* is not mentioned because Hannah was the chief agent in bringing the child (cf. v. 23); afterwards, on the *return home*, Elkanah resumes his position as of the first importance in his family, and hence his participation in the return is distinctly noted (ii. 11). Again, take iv. 4, where the LXX. omits *שם*; this mere excision is hardly enough to alter the sense without the addition of some other verb; the meaning still would be "and the sons of Eli were with the Ark" (viz., at Shilo). Against the acceptance of the LXX. reading, I would quote the fact, too, that in vii. 6 *שם* is again omitted where it is very unlikely that it can have crept into the M T. wrongly. (In the latter case, while Wellhausen notes the LXX. version, Prof. Driver passes it over silently, but evidently rejecting it.)

In i. 23 the LXX. reading *רברך* for *רברי* is obviously preferable; but in ii. 33 the suggestion *ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ ἀνδρῶν* does not seem very probable, for the word *אנשים* would be unnecessary. The phrase *בחרב אנשים* does not elsewhere occur, though the contrasted use in Isaiah xxxi. 8

might be quoted against me. The substitution of *לפניך* for *לפניכם*, which Wellhausen proposes in ix. 12, is not in itself necessary, as the change of number is quite explicable. A similar variation, when, as in the present passage, there are several interlocutors, one of whom at times takes the lead, but at others sinks to the general level, may be noted in Genesis xviii. 3, 4. As to x. 22, *איש* is not indefensible. "Is there any other man come hither (besides those visible before us)?" gives a fair meaning, as Prof. Driver points out, though he seems on the whole to incline to the LXX. *האיש*. Basing his view partly on the omission of the LXX., the editor explains the difficulty in xiii. 1 by supposing that this was "originally, perhaps, a marginal note, due to one who desiderated in the case of Saul a record similar to that found in the case of subsequent

kings." This hardly explains, however, the *defectiveness* of the marginal addition. I believe that it was S. D. Luzzatto who first suggested that a ך had dropped out after בן, making Saul fifty years old at his accession! The text here is hopelessly corrupt. It is not quite clear to me that אה in xvii. 34 is a redundancy. The bear and the lion would naturally not come together, but on different occasions; for ואת we should, perhaps, read ואת as in the Targum. Prof. Driver has no hesitation in accepting the LXX. reading in xviii. 28, and a more beautiful variant it would be hard to discover. It quite lights up the whole verse, and gives real point to it. On the other hand, his unrivalled knowledge of Hebrew idiom enables Prof. Driver most emphatically to defend the M T.'s reading למה (xix. 17) as "thoroughly idiomatic" against the impossible לא אה suggested by Thenius. A more interesting variant occurs in xx. 5, where the LXX. reading ישב לא אשב is adopted by Wellhausen and, apparently, by Prof. Driver; the לא not belonging to the M T. I can scarcely agree that this change is an improvement. David does not quote the fact of its being New Moon as the *reason* for his joining the king's table; he merely says: "To-morrow is the New Moon, and I usually sit with the king to eat [how much more ought I to do so on a feast-day like to-morrow], but thou shalt let me go." This, which is substantially Kimchi's view, tends to meet Wellhausen's objection to the M T. Prof. Driver is right in inserting ביום before השני in xx. 27, and, with a keen eye for a good suggestion, prefers Lagarde's rendering of בן נעות הכריות, "son of a woman gone astray from discipline," to the reading of the LXX. In xxiii. 6 the use of ירד might be justified on the ground that the ephod was only accidentally brought down, and not intentionally (הוריד). The LXX., "certainly rightly," reads לריב לאיבי רור (xxv. 22). It is remarkable, however, that in the Talmud such euphemisms are of frequent occurrence, the "enemy of Israel" being used for Israel. In 2 Sam. iii. 15 Prof. Driver is equally positive in preferring the LXX. reading of אישה for איש. When he is so dogmatic, there is no question that his view must be accepted. To show, however, with what consistency Prof. Driver exercises his own independent judgment, he does not accept the LXX. reading in 2 Sam. xi. 11, though the Hebrew is probably wrong, unless we may imagine that the courtly Uriah adds וחי נפטר, as a hint that the king's is no ordinary life. Besides, however, this valuable and careful examination of the suggestions of the LXX. in detail by Prof. Driver, there is another important service in respect of the LXX. variations that the present edition performs, viz., the frequent displaying of the full *Hebrew* equivalent for the Greek reading. It is only by putting the Hebrew and the Hebraized Greek side by side in this way that one can really judge the relative value of the two texts. I regard this point of so much importance that I here note some of the chief of the longer variations in which Prof. Driver has turned the Greek into Hebrew—iv. 1; xiii. 15; xiv. 24 and 41; xx. 15, 16; xxix. 10; Book 2, vii. 23; xi. 22; xiii. 21 and 34; xvii. 3; xxiv. 15; and many others. Several of these readings are irresistibly attractive, and besides these Prof. Driver very rightly prefers the LXX. readings in ix. 25, 26, and the opening of x. A very valuable note is appended to page 105 on the interchange of the Greek γ and the Hebrew ך.

In a Jewish Review some few words will naturally be expected on the subject of Jewish commentaries on Samuel, and the use made of them by Prof. Driver. As was to be anticipated from the editor of a *Rabbinical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*, attributed to Abraham Ibn Ezra

(Clarendon Press, 1880), Prof. Driver frequently alludes, in the course of his work, to Jewish authorities, both modern and mediæval. Professor Graetz, so prolific of brilliant emendations (see pp. 104, 108), Geigel and Reifmann are among others quoted with respect. On 2 Sam.

vii. 21, the latter's suggested transposition of אַחַת כָּל־הַנְּדוּלָה הַזֹּאת to the end of the verse "is certainly an improvement." Reifmann's claims to recognition are far too little appreciated generally, but Prof. Driver generously speaks of him, in the work already quoted a few lines higher, as of "a born critic, whose native genius enabled him to overcome great disadvantages of birth and position," and "who has made himself known as the author of a series of acute suggestions on the text, both of the Old Testament itself and of later Jewish writings." This appreciation is the more generous since Jewish commentators have on the whole contributed but little in recent times towards the understanding of the Old Testament. Prof. Driver quotes the older Jewish commentators with greater frequency. Saadiah is cited in the longest note in the whole book (p. 227) on the meaning of an Arabic word; and so are Rashi, Kimchi, and of course the Massoretic writings. Though far inferior to his work in commenting upon the Talmud, Rashi offers many good suggestions, and for their small bulk his notes are remarkably fruitful. In xviii. 26, the explanation quoted by Prof.

Driver as Keil's of the words וְלֹא מְלֵאן הַיָּמִים is really due to Rashi. Kimchi's merits are widely known, but I must confess to some disappointment in the case of Abarbanel. Dipping frequently into his discursive pages I have found very little that repaid the labour; and yet his reputation for his commentary on Samuel is high. I must suppose the fault to lie with myself. In 2 Sam. vi. 22, Abarbanel suggests rather than propounds a fair alternative rendering, "With God I would humble myself even more; but before the handmaidens I will look after my honour." Both the rendering of Wellhausen and of the R. V., however, give better sense. In 1 Sam. xiv. 47, the view of Kimchi might have been noticed in the present edition. Comparing Job xxxiv. 29 (which on this view would be rendered "When he giveth quietness, who then shall cause disquiet?") Kimchi takes רִשְׁעֵי in the latter sense, and I think that a comparison with Isaiah lvii. 20 would strengthen his case. Wellhausen's explanation of the difficult וְעָלִי נִשְׂאָר (v. 4), "only his *fishy part* was left" is anticipated by the Biur, and so is the attempted reconciliation of vi. 4 and 18, referred to in a foot-note to page 48. In passing I must note the general failure of many of the attempted reconciliations by Jewish commentators of different versions of the same occurrence, such as the narratives of the appointment of Saul as king, and the accounts of his first acquaintanceship with David. The theories propounded will mostly not bear examination. But I must take leave of the older Jewish commentators with the general remark that they usually do not concern themselves with explaining passages whose *meaning* is clear, but where the main difficulty lies in getting that obvious meaning out of the words, while precisely in such cases Prof. Driver's greatest strength is displayed. Thus in xiv. 16 occurs the impossible וְיִלְךְ וְהָלַם. Rashi makes no attempt to explain it, though he tacitly interpolates a verb; Abarbanel is quite silent; Biur reads, it is true, וְהָלַם וְיִלְךְ. Prof. Driver's suggestion of הָלַם for יִלְךְ (after the LXX.) is very happy. (Several other variants of the LXX. in this chapter are preferable to the M. T.) Again, in verse 34,

Rashi is not concerned, like Prof. Driver, at the unique use of the adverb to mean "that night," but whether slaying the animals was in accordance with the Levitical law. As regards emendations of the text, the Jewish commentators (I am leaving Ibn Ezra out of account) naturally do not suggest them in so many words, but *practically* they often do so. Thus the reading אֲבָן for אֲבָל (vi. 18), which the LXX.

and the Targum give, is accepted by Rashi; so, too, the חֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף אִישׁ (verse 19), which, as Prof. Driver says, "moderns generally reject as a gloss," was practically explained away as a Midrashic gloss. On xiii. 8 even Rashi and Kimchi admit that the text is defective. It will usually be noticed that we find the most fanciful theories of the Midrashic order in places where the text is so difficult that no "plausible etymology can be proposed." (Comp. 2 Sam. vi. 19.)

Conformably with the maxim, אֲחֲרָיו אֲחֲרָיו חֲבִיב, I have left for the last the mention of the most striking merit of Prof. Driver's book. For myself, I can hardly find terms sufficiently expressive of my gratitude. The study of his Commentary is in itself a liberal training in Hebrew grammar. Here the editor is *facile princeps*. It is not so much that he offers new theories to account for or to explain away rare and exceptional words or difficulties. Sometimes the editor's help is so bountiful in such passages that the student cannot be expected to carry away a very clear result. But Prof. Driver's strength lies in the *logical* explanation of constructions, in the unravelling of the real significance of idioms—at once so simple and yet so perplexing that their adequate investigation calls for the deepest insight into the genius of the language. Prof. Driver's reputation as a grammarian, high as it already was, must be enhanced by his present work. No new edition of Kautzsch, *e.g.*, can afford to omit taking full account of it, and it is a pity that this could not possibly be done in the recently-published and largely-improved twenty-fifth edition of that grammar. Prof. Driver's remarks would have made several corrections easy, especially in the syntactical portions; for, as was only to be expected from the accomplished writer of the *Hebrew Tenses*, the new commentary abounds in helpful notes on that same intricate topic. To give one or two instances—the first that come to hand, not the most important. The use of אָהָרָה for "a" would not have been so strongly pronounced as occurring chiefly in late passages had Kautzsch (page 388) taken into consideration Judges ix. 53, xiii. 2, which Prof. Driver very rightly cites. So again with verse 4. Kautzsch (page 318) emphatically declares the text corrupt, but by explaining verses 4b-7a as a parenthetical description of Elkanah's usual procedure, Prof. Driver renders this supposition unnecessary, for (וְנָתַן) need not refer to the special incident which is being related in the text, and this seems to be the view also of Klostermann.¹ I started by attempting a list of Prof. Driver's happiest grammatical suggestions, but I soon gave up the task, for scarcely a page passed unrecorded on my notes, and my list assumed portentous magnitude. Fortunately, the editor himself has supplied an index, but it by no means conveys a true idea of the wealth of information contained in the body of the Commentary.

In the non-grammatical notes, Prof. Driver's exposition is marked by lucidity and grace. In this respect the treatment of the Second Book is superior to the First, and contextual explanations strike one as

¹ In the same manner, Prof. Driver occasionally corrects Wellhausen on points of grammar (see *e.g.* on 1 Sam. xii. 3).

being rather more abundant in the latter part of the Commentary. To some extent one appears to get a glance behind the veil that hid the labours of the Old Testament Revisers from the public gaze. Shall I be very wrong in attributing to Prof. Driver some of the best of the new translations which distinguish the R. V. from the A. V. of Samuel? Not that he always agrees with the later version; see *e.g.* on 2 Sam. v. 8, while on page 145 he makes the very just observation—so just that I wish it could be pressed home on those readers who confine themselves to the English translation solely—that “A. V. (and occasionally even R. V.) sometimes conceals a difficulty by giving a sense that is agreeable with the context, regardless of the fact that the Hebrew words used do not actually express it; *i.e.*, they implicitly adopt an emendation of the text.” This remark expresses far more clearly than I have done above what I meant to say of the Jewish commentators. I do not remember missing a note on a single difficulty in the whole of Prof. Driver’s book except perhaps in I. Sam. ch. xxviii. 11, 12, where the context seems to me to need some justification. I must conclude this very inadequate notice by expressing the hope that the Clarendon Press will regard Prof. Driver’s book merely as the first of a series. It would be a great service to students of Hebrew if all the historical books were dealt with by Prof. Driver himself with the same brilliant scholarship, sound judgment, subtle power of grammatical analysis and terse lucidity, as he has so markedly displayed in his edition of Samuel.

I. ABRAHAMS.

THE RABBIS OF LEMBERG.

Klilath Jofi, enthaltend die Geschichte der Rabbiner der Stadt Lemberg.
By C. N. DEMBITZER. (Cracow, 1888.)

THE history of the Jews in Poland is still in a very unsatisfactory state. All that reaches us through the medium of general histories is just enough to excite our curiosity, but too insignificant to gratify our desire for closer knowledge. We hear, for instance, that the Jews in Poland from time to time were wont to hold great synods; but we know little about their procedure and transactions. We read, also, that the whole of Poland was divided into four Provinces (ארבע ארצות), the Chief Rabbis of which exercised jurisdiction over all the Jews in the kingdom, but even after the contributions of Harkavy, Perles and Gurland, there is still much that is obscure in the life and labours of the Chief Rabbis, who, as their position would suggest, must have been great both in learning and in piety. We possess descriptions of the great persecution by Chmelniezky, in which the Polish Jews suffered as much as their brethren in other parts of Europe in the age of the Crusades, but we are told very little about the lives of these sufferers. Were those thousands of Jews who were murdered by the hands of the Cossacks, but who could have saved their lives and fortunes by joining the religion of the conquerors; or those 300 martyrs of Polonnoie, who, guided by their Rabbi and dressed in their shrouds, patiently awaited the supreme moment when they would be able to sanctify the name of God; or that