

De letterkunde des Ouden Verbonds naar de tijdsorde van haar Ontstaan
Dr. G. Wildeboer
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Dr. Wildeboer is known to the readers of this Review by his *Origin of the O.T. Canon*, the German translation of which was noticed by Prof. Bissell in the July number of 1892. The present book is distinguished from the ordinary works on Introduction by its chronological method. It deals with the contents of the O.T. in the order of their composition. By the very arrangement of his material the author wishes to exhibit how modern criticism conceives of the origin of the O.T. The custom of retaining, even in the most radical treatment of the O.T. books, the traditional order in which the Bible presents them, requires a strong effort of the imagination to visualize the intricate process which criticism claims to have traced; while a mere glance at the heading of Dr. Wildeboer's paragraphs is sufficient to place this process before our eyes in its general movements. In so far the author's method has a decided advantage. It will greatly facilitate the labor of such as wish to familiarize themselves with the critical views, and have neither the time nor the endurance to work their way through the great masses of material piled up in Kuenen, Cornill or Driver. Perhaps the book may also render service in a way not intended by the author. The destructive tendency of this newest phase of criticism is most clearly seen by a simple, chronological portrayal of the evolution of the Bible such as Dr. Wildeboer gives us. On the other hand, the method here followed, however simple in itself, is beset with great difficulties in its application. The critics assume such repeated and such continuous transformations and manipulations of the original writings, that it becomes absolutely impossible to follow all these processes chronologically; and Dr. Wildeboer finds himself compelled every little while to abandon his own principle by anticipating or repeating important parts of the discussion out of their chronological order.

We are not left in doubt as to where the author stands. In the Introduction he tells us, that all writings of the O.T. without exception are in their present form postexilic, although a mild protest is entered against the extreme form in which this theory has been developed by Seinecke and Vernes. The Decalogue, in a much briefer form than the two Pentateuchal versions, is assigned to the Mosaic period. The objection that the Ten Words represent a higher plane of development than can be ascribed to Moses, Dr. Wildeboer characterizes as *dogmatic* in distinction from purely *historic* criticism. And yet, in the same connection, the second commandment is thrown out as a later addition for reasons not definitely stated. Other fragments of the same antiquity are Num. 10:35, 36, and the pieces of song preserved in Num. 21. In Ex. 15 also there is a kernel of Mosaic origin. This is all that has come down from the time of Moses. The Song of Deborah, the fable of Jotham, and parts of the blessing of Jacob belong to the period of Judges. There are no Psalms that can be ascribed to David with any degree of certainty; but David was probably the author of the "Song of the bow" (2 Sam. 1:19-27), and of the lament for Abner (2 Sam. 3:33, 34). Some Mashals may be Solomon's, although this is a matter of mere conjecture; and the only words of which the Solomonic authorship can be affirmed are those spoken at the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs. 8:12, 13).

In regard to the oldest historical portions of the O.T., the author shares the view that they are based on legendary material usually connected with some sacred tree, or well, or heap of stones, or grave. Mythical stories were also current at one time, some of which have later been deposited in Gen. 1-11. The beginnings of history-writing in Israel are to be sought in the so called guilds of the prophets, and

with the Mazkirim. The earliest books of which any trace has been preserved were the Sefer Hajjashar and the Sefer Milchamoth Jahve of the ninth century. About the same date there must have existed a writing, which afterwards became the basis of the Jahvist source of the Hexateuch. This primitive Jahvist the author calls J1. The history of the times subsequent to the conquest of Canaan was also recorded by these early writers. Judges 9, e. g., is a piece dating from the ninth century.

The Book of the Covenant, the first codification of Israelitish law, preserved for us by the Elohist, was written at the end of the ninth or the beginning of the eighth century. Other pre-Deuteronomic laws are Ex. 34:10-28, 13:2, 11-16, 3-10, and a source on which the Deuteronomist (chap. 21-25) and the author of Levit. 17-26 (P1) were dependent for their material. The oracle on Moab quoted by Isaiah (chaps. 15-16:12) is the oldest piece of Hebrew prophecy we possess. It was written 780 B.C. Next come Amos and Hosea; in both books the genuineness of the sections relating to Judah is maintained by Dr. Wildeboer. Between the date of these two prophets and that of Isaiah and Micah may lie the composition of the Jahvist J2, and of the Elohist, and in regard to the latter a distinction must be made between E1 and E2. As to J3 and J4 the author is non-committal. J2 was written between 850 and 700, the Elohist about 750. The combination of J and E (Jehovist in distinction from Jahvist) took place after Deuteronomy. Besides these there existed a pre-Deuteronomic book of Judges and a pre-Deuteronomic history of Samuel-Saul-David, though there is no proof of the identity of their authors with the Jahvist and Elohist. The history subsequent to David was not written as a continuous whole before the Deuteronomic period. In regard to the prophecy of Micah, Dr. Wildeboer is conservative, and admits but a few interpolations. Of Isaiah 1-39, the following sections are denied to the prophet: 11:11-16, 12, 13:2, 14:23, 21:1-10, 23:15-18, 24-27, 32:1-8, 9-20, 34, 35, 36-39; the last four chapters, however, containing some genuine words of Isaiah. On the other hand, the author admits the Isaianic authorship of the much-disputed nineteenth chapter, and dates it after the defeat of Sennacherib.

Deuteronomy 12-26 was probably written during the reign of Manasseh, so that it is unnecessary to resort to the *pia fraus* theory. This code very soon passed through two editions, in one of which there was added the discourse chaps. 5-11, Dp (parenetical) according to Cornill, in the other chaps. 1-4, Dh (historical). For several ages Deuteronomy was subjected to repeated interpolations. Zephaniah prophesied before the finding of Deuteronomy, Nahum after 621. The historical sections of Jeremiah are neither almost worthless legendary matter, nor must we expect to find in them the accuracy of a journal kept by the prophet himself. A book was composed during the latter half of the captivity as a life of Jeremiah. The Septuagint text is based on a manuscript standing nearer to the original than our Hebrew text. On the question of later origin of the oracles against the Gentiles the author renders a somewhat hesitating verdict of "not proven," but thinks that many interpolations must be assumed. Of Habakkuk's prophecy only chaps. 1-2 are genuine, the rest of chap. 2 and the Psalm of chap. 3 are later additions. The greater part of the historical writings of the O.T. were brought in their present form between the years 621 and 444, that is to say they are of a Deuteronomic character. The history as it existed in the ancient sources has been entirely transformed by the pragmatism of the Deuteronomic period. Here we meet with D2, D3, D4, and it becomes apparent that the Chronicler is not the only one who has rewritten history from this later point of view. As a matter of fact, all the historical writings of the O.T. are worked over in this sense. The history of the Kings was written in this Deuteronomic spirit between 621 and 586; a little later the Deuteronomic Book of Judges, which contained also Samuel's history. Subsequently, in or after

the captivity, our canonical Judges, Samuel, Kings were made out of these two books. The canonical redactor who accomplished this, did not know the priestly laws, and therefore must have lived before 444. Ezekiel probably left behind him two writings out of which the later scribes made our canonical book. The unity of the so-called Deutero-Isaiah is not denied; chaps. 40-48 were written in Babel; chaps. 49-62 in Judea probably by the same author; the remaining four chapters contain fragments of his prophecies worked over and added by his pupils. Lamentations is divided into three parts of different hands and varying ages; chaps. 2 and 4 are oldest, next come chaps. 1 and 5, youngest of all is chap. 3; all were composed towards the end of or immediately after the captivity. Obadiah dates from the period after 530; the opening series of the prophecy are not dependent on Jeremiah 49, but both drew from a common older source. The priestly elements of the Hexateuch are distributed as follows: P1 (Levit. 17-26) belongs to the circle of Ezekiel; the great priestly work, P2, was written in Babel between 500 and 475, and introduced by Ezra 444; about 420 it was combined with the older writings. But even after this the whole was subject to transformations, as is seen from a comparison with the Samaritan Pentateuch. The division of the Hexateuch into the Pentateuch and Joshua is the work of Rp, that is the redactor who united J, E, + D and P. Malachi is a symbolic name; the prophecy is anonymous. Both Jonah and Ruth belong to the period after Ezra. The former is a sort of apology intended to explain why many prophecies had not been fulfilled, at the same time a protest against the Jewish exclusivism of this period. Ruth is a tendency-writing of the same character and represents the party which did not favor the priestly reforms introduced by Ezra. Joel, Is. 24-27, Zech. 9-14, are three post-exilic eschatologies. Joel and the chapters of Isaiah belong to the latter half of the Persian period; the concluding chapters of Zechariah are to be assigned with Stade to the Greek era \pm 280 B.C. Proverbs as a whole and in its present form cannot be older than the second half of the Persian period. Job is even younger than this and approaches the Greek period. Dr. Wildeboer seems inclined to uphold the genuineness of the Elihu discourses. The Psalter is essentially a hymn book prepared for liturgical use in the worship of the second temple; the oldest collection may have been made in the days of Nehemiah, the youngest is much later, though not necessarily post-Maccabean. There are Maccabean Psalms in the Psalter, but they may have been inserted in collections already extant. Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah are of one author, who used as his sources for composing them a Midrash on the books of Samuel and Kings and the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah; he wrote about 250 B.C. in a thoroughgoing pragmatic manner; nevertheless the new material which Chronicles contains in distinction from the older historical books, is not necessarily fictitious and unreliable in all its parts; Dr. Wildeboer quotes some instances in which the cuneiform inscriptions have vindicated the historical accuracy of this much slandered writer. The Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes are works belonging to the Greek period. Daniel and Esther are the latest of all O.T. books. The latter breathes a spirit which should have excluded it from the Canon.

We have stated at some length the views of Dr. Wildeboer, because this chronological survey will show how radical a subversion the modern school makes of the historical ideas embraced by the O.T. writers themselves. Evidently the author thinks he can hold all this and combine with it a certain form of supernaturalism. But the fact remains that such a collection of writings as Dr. Wildeboer makes the Bible to be, is very little adapted to be the record of a historic revelation, for the simple reason that its historical conceptions are vitiated throughout. We have the author's own testimony to this. The true history must be read "between the lines" (p. 52). Even prophets like Isaiah and Micah have idealized, and in so far misrepresented, the past history (p. 53). Of the Deuteronomic writer we are assured that "he has not wholly succeeded in effacing the historical figure of David" (p. 276).

The author tries to argue himself into a very moderate appreciation of Ezekiel's prophecies, but the effort is painful (p. 297). And yet he tells us in his Introduction that the writings of the O.T., even when read in the light of historic criticism, "point forward to Him, who has fulfilled and realized the deepest expectations and promises of the Old Covenant." How these things can go together, we do not fully understand. Perhaps the solution lies in the following words, in which Dr. Wildeboer characterizes the author of Ecclesiastes: "We should say: From this it follows, that no God exists, and, if there be one, that He does not rule the world, at least does not rule it in wisdom and justice. But our author (Ecclesiastes) does not at all draw this conclusion. He would think it foolish and impious. He lives equally well in a different world, which reveals itself in his conscience, and for this reason is unwilling to part with the faith of his childhood" (p. 492). Whether there be something of a self-confession in this or not we need not decide; but it is evident that a dualism similar to that here ascribed to Ecclesiastes, accounts for much of the unconcern wherewith truly pious men adopt the results of an evolutionary criticism which strikes at the very roots of supernatural revelation, not to say of theism.