

## THE MOSAIC TABERNACLE.

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WE shall now proceed to evidence of an internal character. In the Pentateuch itself the Tabernacle is mentioned some eighty times. That witness we shall not call yet, but shall proceed to the testimony of the historical books following the Pentateuch.

Hear the evidence of 1 Kings viii. 4: "And they brought up the ark of Jehovah, and the *tent of meeting* ('*ohel mo'ed*), and all the holy vessels that were in the tent: even these did the priests and Levites bring up." The "tent of meeting" was the usual name for the Tabernacle, which is also called *mishkan* or dwelling-place. In the passage before us we read that this tabernacle was brought up to Jerusalem, and deposited in the Temple of Solomon. Wellhausen says he will not accept that evidence, as the passage is an "interpolation." Well, here it is in the Hebrew text, and also in the Greek translation, the Septuagint. How came it into both, if it has no right to be in either? A counsel is not permitted to call in question a man's signature in a document fatal to his client's case unless he can show grounds for believing it to be forged. Here the counsels against the passage are disagreed. Some hold the passage to be interpolated, e.g. Wellhausen and Chapman; but Driver says "the notice, if authentic, cannot refer to P.'s Tent of Meeting." The passage "is the work of a writer who may have preserved a true tradition with regard to the tent erected by David, but may have referred it erroneously to the Tent of Meeting of P."<sup>1</sup> This can only mean that the evidence of this writer, so damaging to the case of the Critics, must either be false, or be construed as meaning quite a different thing from what the man said. Suppose a murder case turned upon the evidence of a witness—charged himself with perjury—and the counsel for the defence said he would object to his evidence on the grounds of his perjury, unless he was understood by the jury to give evidence in favour of his client!

We shall now have the evidence of 1 Kings iii. 4: "And the

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus*, p. 429.

king went up to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. A thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar." The reason for this is given in v. 2—"because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those days." This was before the Temple was finished. And when Solomon was there the Lord appeared unto him in a dream (v. 5). Now why did Solomon go to Gibeon to offer sacrifice? Why was it called a *great* high place? Why was the theophany of Jehovah described as taking place there, by a scribe who wrote after the erection of the Temple, and to whom a high place must have been anathema, unless there was something extraordinarily holy about the place, something that distinguished it from all the other high places in the land? The Critics can give no answer. But those who believe that the Tabernacle existed before the Temple can answer that the Tabernacle was at Gibeon. And this is what the Chronicler says, 2 Chronicles, i. 3.<sup>1</sup> In 1 Chronicles, xxi. 29, we read: "the tabernacle (*mishkan*) of Jehovah, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon." Chronicles is assigned by many Critics, Driver and others, to a date shortly after 332 B.C. (See *Introduction*, p. 486.) But this late date does not condemn the evidence. Think what a useful witness it would have been for the Critics had it said: "there was no tabernacle at Gibeon." Wellhausen, with De Wette and others, belittled this evidence of the Chronicler, whom he accused of making his authorities say what he pleased,<sup>2</sup> because it was against them. But Dillman, another Critic, affirmed that "the Chronicler has worked according to sources, and there can be no talk, with regard to him, of fabrications or misrepresentations of the history." Does not the fact that the Chronicler largely agrees with Samuel and Kings show that when he wrote there was no variant tradition worthy of notice, and that Samuel and Kings, generally speaking, held the field. This is an independent witness of the fact that the Mosaic Tabernacle must have preceded the Temple of Solomon, and that there was no contrary tradition in vogue about it, as there would have been had the priestly writers, who are alleged to have invented the Tabernacle, really invented it. And assuming for the moment

<sup>1</sup> "So Solomon . . . went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tent of meeting of God which Moses had made in the wilderness" (*'ohel mo'ed*).

<sup>2</sup> *Proleg.*, Eng. Trans. p. 49.

that they did invent it, how could they have hindered this fact becoming known through some private channel, when success had crowned the enterprise of the conspirators, and becoming a *rival tradition*. How could they have foreseen that nothing would ever leak out about it? How could they have stopped all such leaks? For if they had any fears of this sort, it would have been wiser not to have attempted the fraud than to risk discrediting their order for ever by failing to cover up all their tracks. And if there was anything to leak out, we may be sure it would have done so, for the secrets of every conspiracy have been revealed soon or late. The fact that history has nothing to tell about this conspiracy, that not the faintest trace of it was ever discovered, is a wonder if such a conspiracy ever existed. The fact remains then that the Chronicler who, according to the Critics, wrote after this wonderful conspiracy had carried through its literary and legal, historical and ecclesiastical reconstruction, has nothing to say upon such points at variance with what had been previously said by the writers of Samuel and Kings, confessedly compiled before this reconstruction took place. This is very strong evidence that no such reconstruction ever took place.

We shall summon still earlier witnesses for the historical character of the Tabernacle. In Joshua xviii. 1, we have: "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there." The Hebrew word, "they set up" (*yashkinu*) is from the verb (*Shakhan*) from which is also taken the substantive *mishkan*, the other name for the Tabernacle.<sup>1</sup> It is the same verb that is used in Deuteronomy xii. 11; Nehemiah i. 9; Jeremiah vii. 12, of the place which God has chosen "to cause His name to dwell there," and signifies a more permanent erection than could be made in the days of the wanderings. In Joshua xix. 51, we have the distributions made by lot by Eleazar and Joshua, "in Shiloh before the Lord at the door (lit. opening) of the tent of meeting (*pethah'ohel mo'ed*). In Judges xviii. 31, we have a reference to an image worshipped in Dan "all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh" (*beth-ha Elohim*). Here the taber-

<sup>1</sup> *mishkan ha'edah* (מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת) is the full title in Exod. xxxviii. 21. In Exod. xl. 29 we have "the tabernacle of the tent of meeting" (*mishkan'ohel-mo'ed*). שֶׁכֶּן (*shekhen*) is used in Deut. xii. 5, of the Lord's habitation. It is from the same verb as *mishkan* (tabernacle).

nacle is called the "House of God." In 1 Samuel ii. 22, we have a reference to "the women that did service at the door (opening)" of the tent of meeting. This refers us back to Exodus xxxviii. 8: "the serving women which served at the door (opening) of the tent of meeting" (*pethah' ohel mo'ed*). On this passage Driver wrote:<sup>1</sup> "1 Sam. ii. 22b implies, indeed, that the Shiloh sanctuary was the Tent of Meeting of P. (cf. Exodus, xxxviii, 8, 'door,' also, is here, lit., *opening*): but this half-verse is not in the LXX, and its contradiction of i. 9, iii. 3, 5, in describing as a 'tent' what those verses describe as a 'temple' or 'house,' leaves no reasonable doubt that it is a gloss not yet found in the MSS. used by the LXX translators."

This objection of Driver to my witness is founded on evidence of a sort, but it is questionable if that evidence does not tell against himself. The passage is not found in the Vatican copy of the LXX, but it is found in another copy of the LXX, e.g. the Alexandrine, and is given in Grabe's edition of the LXX.

Is there any reason why the LXX should have omitted it? Yes, it is a passage that does not reflect credit on the priests. Is there any reason why it should have been inserted as a gloss in the Hebrew text by the priestly writers, who had such entire charge of the literary reconstructions and ecclesiastical alterations after the Return? Most certainly not, as it relates conduct unworthy of men, not to say of priests. Then why did they not erase it from the Hebrew text? Because they dared not tamper with the Hebrew text, but the Septuagint translators were in a position to pass it over; they were not bound to translate it.

Is not the evidence offered by Driver against his own case? Would not any sensible judge pronounce it so? Would he not think it more probable that an unpleasant episode should have been passed over by the LXX translators, than that it should have been invented after that translation was made by a scribe of the second century, and inserted by him in all the manuscripts then to be found of the Hebrew Bible? Fancy this scribe going round all the synagogues of the land, and other places where these sacred MSS. were kept, with his pen, and being allowed by the priests to insert this offensive clause of nine words, which would be most difficult of insertion!

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus*, p. 428.

It is also to be noticed that there is a reference in Exodus xxxviii. 8, to the women "at the door of the tent."

This half-verse in question, then, would not be regarded as a gloss by any judge in any court. It describes the sin which brought its own punishment upon the guilty ones. And so there can be no further question that the Shiloh sanctuary is the old Tent of Meeting, as far as this passage is concerned.

The Critics, however, argue that this sanctuary at Shiloh cannot be the Tent of Meeting or Tabernacle because of the names applied to it. It is called in 1 Samuel i. 7, 24; iii. 15, "the house of the Lord," it is twice called the temple (*hēkal*). 1 Samuel i. 9 describes Eli sitting at the doorpost (*mezoozah*) of the Temple, and in 1 Samuel iii. 5 Samuel lies down to sleep in the *hēkal* of the Lord. Now, according to the Scriptures, the Temple of Solomon was modelled after the Tabernacle. And we find in 1 Kings vi. 5, the *hēkal* or temple distinguished from the *debhīr* or oracle, that is, the Holy Place distinguished from the Holy of Holies. Therefore, it would be quite appropriate for Eli to sit at the entrance of the Holy Place, for Hannah to make her offering there, and for Samuel to sleep there. But such an expression as *hēkal*, or temple—Fuerst gives meaning "splendid house," citing Amos viii. 13—would be suitable to the magnificent structure described in Exodus xxxv.—xxxvi. It is also called "the house of the Lord" in an independent document (Judges xviii. 31).

Driver, however, objects to the mention of post and doors, *dalthoth* (1 Sam. iii. 15), in connection with the Tent of Meeting, which is described as having an opening, *pethah* (Ex. xxxviii. 8). This objection is easily answered. The tent must have had some kind of opening. And if the Tabernacle had five pillars of acacia or shittim wood for the hangings over the Tabernacle door (Exod. xxxvi. 36 f.), why should not one of these pillars (*ammud*) act as a doorpost (*mezoozah*)? Why should not an "opening" have "doors" here as well as in 1 Kings vi. 31: "And for the *opening* (*pethah*) of the oracle he made doors (*dalthoth*)." It is most probable that the lower portion of the structure was made as solid as possible. The statement in the Mishna is that this portion was "of stone."<sup>1</sup>

Driver, however, said "the sanctuary at which Eli is here mentioned as being the priest cannot be the Tent of Meeting, whether of

<sup>1</sup> Conder's *Tent-work in Palestine*, Vol. 2, p. 84.

J.E. or P. In other respects Samuel in the duties discharged by him reminds us strongly of Joshua in E. (Ex. xxxiii. 11) : the Levites and priests of P. are conspicuous by their absence." <sup>1</sup>

Let us hear his reasons :—

(1) It is a *hēkal* or temple, and has a more imposing entrance than a mere "opening," such as the "opening" of the tent in Exodus xxvi. 36 ; xxxiii. 8.

We have already disposed of this statement, and unless one is able to produce a plan of this sanctuary, the objection should not be allowed.

(2) "Joshua remained in the Tent of Meeting. Samuel remained in the Tabernacle of Shiloh. Therefore their duties were similar." Take a modern parallel. A servant of X remains indoors. A servant of Y does the same. Therefore X's servant "in the duties discharged by him reminds us strongly" of Y's servant. It turns out, however, on investigation, that X's servant is a carpenter and Y's is a cook!

(3) In answer to the statement that the priests and Levites of P. were absent, we say that Eli and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas and doubtless many other priests—were there. There too was the altar on which sacrifices were offered. There too was the priestly ephod. There too the priests burned incense. There too, the "lamp of God" was left burning at night. There too the people went up to offer the meal-offering and the sacrifice, and the priests received the burnt-offerings. Now where are all these things instituted? Marginal references back to Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are to the very portions assigned by the Critics to P.! Consequently the Tabernacle mentioned here must be the Tabernacle of P.

To call another witness in favour of the Tabernacle :—In 2 Samuel vii. 6, there is a reference to this Tabernacle showing its priority to the Temple. "Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even unto this day, but have walked in a tent and a tabernacle." (Here we have the *'ohel mo'ed* and the *mishkan*.) Is this passage a gloss?

In Jeremiah vii. 12-14 we read :—

"But go ye up now unto my place which is at Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first,<sup>2</sup> and see what I did to it for the

<sup>1</sup> Exodus, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Shikhanithi*; Piel of *Shakhan* (שָׁחַן), whence *mishkan* (מִשְׁכָּן) tabernacle.

wickedness of my people Israel. Therefore will I do unto the house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you, and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh."

In Jeremiah xxvi. 6 we have another reference:—"Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all nations of the earth."

Are these references glosses or interpolations made by redactors or editors, and if so, why are they in the LXX? Was the prophecy of Jeremiah not written before the Exile, and if so, is it not a complete refutation of the Critical theory that the Temple preceded the Tabernacle, and that the latter was the invention of the priestly party?

In Psalm lxxviii. 60, "He forsook the tabernacle (*mishkan*) of Shiloh, the tent (*'ohel*) which he placed<sup>1</sup> among men." If the Tabernacle came after the Temple, what was the sense of the people being warned in these three passages that the fate of the Tabernacle of Shiloh would overtake the Temple unless they repented?

Again, after the ruin of Shiloh, we have in 1 Samuel xxi. and xxii. references to Nob. There must have been a sanctuary of some kind there, for there the shewbread and an ephod was kept (1 Samuel xxi. 1-6). There too was the tent (*'ohel*) in which David had placed the sword of Goliath (1 Samuel xvii. 54). There too were the priests, so that it was called "the city of the priests" (1 Samuel xxii. 18, 19). Of these Doeg the Edomite slew eighty-five "that did wear a linen ephod," but Abiathar escaped to David.

Here we have P.'s regulations as in the case of the Tabernacle of Shiloh. Consequently the Tabernacle here was also the Tabernacle of P. In a following paper I hope to discuss the evidence of the ark and David's tent of meeting, and to examine into the case of what I hold to be the provisional tent of Moses on which the Higher Critics base their argument.

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<sup>1</sup> שִׁכָּן (*Shikken*).

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"When was it built?" The question at once occurs to the mind when visiting a cathedral or other old building. The patient study of a delightful little manual, *Back to the Old Stone's Age*, by Captain G. Christian Neech, A.I.F. (*Robert Scott*, 2s.), will enable the reader to answer the question for himself. The characteristics of the different styles of architecture are simply and faithfully described.