

to the contrary, there may have been a Christian community in Malta as early as the period of Antoninus, 138-161 A.D., or even earlier. What the local tradition asserts with regard to a sojourn in the island by St. Venera of Marseilles (fl. 143 A.D.) and St. Agatha of Catania (fl. 249 A.D.) may have a foundation in fact: some Gallican or Sicilian Christians may have fled to the comparatively sequestered Melita in these days of trouble, and 'spoken the word' there with abiding effect. Native legend, indeed, goes farther, and boldly claims St. Paul himself as the first preacher, and Publius as the first bishop, in Malta, in spite of the complete silence of the narrative in the Book of Acts regarding any direct evangelizing or conversions in connexion with the apostle's stay in the island. In the matter of local catacombs, one is on firmer ground, with some tangible evidence and positive data to go by. It is not likely that all memory and knowledge of the places where their forefathers had first worshipped Christ and were laid to sleep in His name would be completely lost among a population proud of their island's accidental connexion with St. Paul, and of the mention of it in one of the N.T. books, and

so tenacious of their Christianity that even the long Saracen occupation of Malta from 870 to 1090 A.D. did not convert them into Mohammedans. It was probably during that period that the local Christian monuments were pillaged and defaced by the Arab conquerors, who appear to have kept the natives of the island in a state of servitude, and to have been heartily hated by them.

One thing may be regarded as certain, namely, that the ancient town of Città Vecchia represents the primitive centre of Christianity in Malta, and that two at least of its present ecclesiastical sites—that of the Cathedral and that of the parish Church of St. Paul—are very closely connected with the early days of Christian faith there. It is around the latter that the catacombs of Città Vecchia cluster most closely.

Thus, taking all the facts into consideration, we may reasonably conclude that, like those elsewhere, the catacombs at Malta are of Christian origin. Their existence is an additional proof of how Christianity percolated even to small outlying spots in the Roman Empire, and sometimes suffered the same vicissitudes in these as in more important places.

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## The Original Book of Deuteronomy.

BY REV. J. A. SELBIE, D.D., MARYCULTER, ABERDEEN.

THE PURPOSE of the present paper is to give a general account and estimate of an important work that has been recently published on the above subject. In this book, whose title is given below,<sup>1</sup> there are no doubt embodied the results of years of study and thought. Mr. Cullen argues very ably in support of a somewhat novel theory.

The Book of Deuteronomy, it has long been felt, is in many ways the key to the Hexateuch. By universal admission it was this book in some form that was read before king Josiah, and that formed the basis of his reforms. It is pretty generally admitted, moreover, that however much of older material it contained, Josiah's law-book

was of recent origin, having been composed either in his own reign or in that of Manasseh. There is more diversity of opinion on the question of the original dimensions of the book. Many critics follow Wellhausen in holding that chapters 12-26 are the kernel of the present Book of Deuteronomy and were originally the whole, and that chapters 5-11 and 1-4 were subsequently prefixed by way of prefaces to new editions. Others, of whom Kuenen and Driver may be named as representatives, decline to separate 5-11 from 12-26, regarding chapters 5-26, along with chapter 28, as substantially a unity, and as having constituted the book found by Hilkiah. They differ somewhat as to the origin of the other chapters in the present Book of Deuteronomy.

Now, Mr. Cullen emphasizes the fact that his inquiry in the work before us is strictly limited to

<sup>1</sup> *The Book of the Covenant in Moab: A Critical Inquiry into the Original Form of Deuteronomy.* By John Cullen, M.A., D.Sc. Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons. Price 5s. net.

the one question of the *literary* composition of Deuteronomy. 'It does not include any attempt to expound the teaching of the book as a whole, or to investigate the question of its date, or to describe its relations to the rest of the Hexateuch.' We may remark, however, that Mr. Cullen has not been able to avoid doing, and doing well, some of these other things. Assuming, then, the ordinary critical position that in Deuteronomy we have the literary precipitate of a religious movement under Josiah, he sets himself to deal with the question, 'Is it possible to determine what part or parts of it constituted the pioneer document of this movement, and from the point of view thus attained to give an intelligible account of the subsequent process of growth by which the book reached its present condition?' Mr. Cullen himself would be the last to claim that he has given the final answer to this question, but it will be admitted by those who have kept in touch with Deuteronomic problems that his book is a notable contribution to the literature, and will materially help the solution of those problems.

It is particularly in his view of chapters 5-11 that the distinctiveness of Mr. Cullen's position shows itself. To begin with, he differs *in toto* from those who look upon these chapters as introductory to chapters 12-26, which, with their requirement of a *central sanctuary*, are supposed to form the kernel of Deuteronomy. He argues that the first-named group of chapters contain no indications that they are an *introduction*, but much the other way. Moreover, he finds in the emphasis they lay upon the exclusive *object* of worship, namely, Jahweh, an element far superior in importance to the emphasis laid in chapters 12-26 upon the *place* of worship, namely, Jerusalem. Is not the prescription regarding the *place* likely to have come in afterwards as a means of securing the better fulfilment of Israel's duty to the *object* of their worship? Mr. Cullen, by patient examination, discovers that the essential element in the original Deuteronomy was the idea of a Covenant made with Israel in the plains of Moab. This Covenant and the 'Commandment' (*mizvah*) underlying it he discovers in chapters 5-11 (with the additional passages to be mentioned presently); whereas the 'Law' (*tōrah*) makes up chapters 12-26. *After the Book of the Covenant in Moab had been a short time in existence*, the Book of the Law (Dt 12-26) was published, he holds, at

*first separately and as a self-contained whole*. It is on the establishing of this distinction between *mizvah* and *tōrah*, 'Commandment' and 'Law,' 'Covenant' and 'Legal Code,' that Mr. Cullen spends his strength. Josiah's reforms were, according to him, inaugurated with the publication of the Book of the Covenant; their subsequent progress, which Mr. Cullen believes to have been slower than is sometimes supposed, was aided and regulated by the *after* publication of the Book of the Law.

Here we may pause to say that Mr. Cullen appears to us to score heavily against those who make Dt 5-11 an *after* introduction, or *merely* an introduction to 12-26, but not to touch seriously the position of those who regard 5-26 as a unity all dating from the same period, and not to be divided up into introduction and kernel.

But Mr. Cullen has a much more detailed account to give, both of the original Deuteronomy and of the Book of the Law. For reasons, which cannot be stated here, he finds the real commencement of the Book of the Covenant in Dt 29<sup>1-14</sup> [Heb 28<sup>69-29</sup>], for which 5<sup>1ff</sup> (the Décalogue having been wanting in the original book) was afterwards substituted. Other parts of the present book are drawn by Mr. Cullen (always for reasons assigned) from the position they now occupy, and placed where he tells us they stood at first. Even a passage from Exodus (24<sup>4-8</sup>) finds a place in the original Book of the Covenant. Now, it is easy to indulge in cheap sarcasm at such feats in the way of piecing together ancient documents or parts of them. We have no sympathy with such a disposition, which is due largely to laziness and largely to imperfect knowledge. All the same, we cannot help confessing that, as we read Mr. Cullen's book, we have every now and then the feeling that he is just a little too skilful in finding the bits of the puzzle and putting them together; and that his explanations of how the *dissecta membra* came to occupy their present places are almost too plausible to be true. Not a few will feel that it is a thousand pities that men were not content to leave the original Book of Deuteronomy alone, and the Law-book alone, instead of publishing, as Mr. Cullen tells us they did, a combined edition of the *mizvah* and the *tōrah*, and supplementing this by the 'Decalogue edition' and the 'Minatory edition.' Their editorial efforts have not been a success, and they have laid a heavy burden on

modern scholars who seek to restore the original. What Mr. Cullen has given us is an immense improvement on the present Book of Deuteronomy (see his three appendixes, containing the Book of the Covenant in Moab *in extenso*, the original environment of the Law-book, and an outline of the first combined edition). The logical connexion, the consistency, the harmony of the different parts are faultless. Yet somehow we are not satisfied. We have a pretty strong conviction that we shall never know so exactly as is here laid down what were the original contents of Deuteronomy. It is comparatively easy to separate off exilic and post-exilic additions, and to detect the hand of the P redactor. Here Mr. Cullen's conclusions are perfectly reliable, but we cannot follow him entirely when he rearranges the Book of the Covenant in Moab thus—

Dt 28<sup>69</sup>-29<sup>13</sup> 5<sup>2</sup> 4<sup>10-16a</sup>. 19-26 5<sup>29</sup>-8<sup>18</sup> 26 8<sup>19</sup>-9<sup>6</sup> 10<sup>12-21</sup> 27<sup>1b</sup>. 30b.-31a. 5-7 11<sup>8-28</sup> 28<sup>1a</sup>. 2a. 7-14. 15. 20-25a. 43-45 30<sup>11-20</sup>, Ex 24<sup>1-8</sup>, Dt 32<sup>45-47</sup>.

All the different constituents of this scheme are arrived at by a process of close reasoning; but it is this very logical, mathematical exactness that awakens our suspicions. It is not the way of ancient Hebrew writing to lend itself to such exactness. Diffuseness, repetition, ill arrangement of their material, overlappings, and even real or apparent inconsistencies are far from rare, either in the Old Testament or the New. The present Book of Deuteronomy is disappointingly diffuse and ill arranged, but so are the Pauline Epistles. In both instances world-wide effects have been produced by the contents, although the authors were such poor masters of method. A modern writer, using St. Paul's own language and simply rearranging it, could greatly improve upon the apostle's work as far as order and clearness are concerned. But the fact remains that the present arrangement is the original one. Why should it be otherwise in Deuteronomy? The diffuseness and repetitions and want of system in the book are a direct temptation to a clear logical mind like that of Mr. Cullen. Yet the scheme he imposes on the book is, we are persuaded, to a large extent arbitrary. Whatever may be the case with chapters 1-4 and with some of the chapters at the end of the book, we see no reason why 5-26, with chapter 28, should not have been a unity from the first, and have come down to us in *substantially* their original form and arrangement.

We may add one or two minor criticisms. We are not sure that Mr. Cullen is quite just in his appreciation (p. 2 f.) of the attempts of 'Staerk & Steuernagel' [why this symbolism, which suggests a limited liability company trading under these two names?] to carry out an analysis of the sources of Deuteronomy upon the ground of the distinction in the use of the 2nd person singular and the 2nd person plural, when the subject of address is the nation. It may be that both Staerk and Steuernagel have used this key to open locks for which it was never intended, but to speak of it as 'a trifling item of literary technique,' as Mr. Cullen does, is surely going too far. Allowance must no doubt be made for the tendency of redactors to secure uniformity by smoothing out the above distinction, and also for a reasonable licence to the original writer in the way of passing from the singular to the plural pronoun, and *vice versa*; but with these and similar reservations there is no reason why the clue followed by Staerk and Steuernagel should not be as reliable as that supplied by the varying use of 'Jahweh' and 'Elohim.'

The argument (p. 16 ff.) that the narrative of 2 K 23 is 'a telescoped account of a series of reforms, stretching, it may be, over a period of some years, a mixing together of things which were done at different times and possibly in a different order,' is perhaps a little forced.

We are not inclined to allow even the slight weight he himself claims for it, to Mr. Cullen's argument (p. 19 f.) from Jer 7<sup>21f.</sup>: 'I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning the matter of burnt-offerings or sacrifices,' etc. It was in an evil hour that the prophet penned these verses. Like figures, they may be used to prove anything. We might apply to them the saying regarding Scripture in general—

Hic liber est in quo quaerit sua dogmata quisque,  
Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua.

On the other hand, the language of Jer 11<sup>1ff.</sup>, with its references to a 'covenant,' goes a long way towards justifying Mr. Cullen in placing Dt 28<sup>69</sup>-29<sup>13</sup> at the head of the supposed original 'Book of the Covenant in Moab,' or, as we prefer to say, at the head of the larger book which we believe to have existed from the first. There is much to say, of course, in favour of the view that the Decalogue now found in Dt 5 was wanting at first.

The principal merits of Mr. Cullen's book appear to us to be two. He has greatly strengthened the position of those who find it impossible to hold that Dt 5-11 was written after 12-26 and as an introduction to these chapters; and he has done good service in exposing the over-emphasis so often laid on the *centralizing of the worship*, as if this were practically the one important point in the book, to the neglect of the great truth of the

exclusive claims of Jahweh, as embodied in the Shêma. Further, there are many particular points on which Mr. Cullen throws light, especially from the linguistic and exegetical points of view. Even those who cannot assent to some of his conclusions in the sphere of literary criticism, will readily pay their tribute of admiration to the patient argument and accurate scholarship of Mr. Cullen's book.

## Point and Illustration.

ONE of the strangest things in the history of Scotland is the way in which the people have persisted in believing in the Covenanters. They have read Sir Walter Scott. They have him in every home; they laugh over his Ephraim Macbriar and his Habakkuk Mucklewrath. They even read a very little of Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. J. H. Millar. But they never cease to believe in the Covenanters.

A book has been published by Mr. Melrose which the people of Scotland will enjoy. It is written by the Rev. Alexander Smellie. It is *The Men of the Covenant* (7s. 6d. net). The book is illustrated, and the people like illustrated books; we do not say that they will not at first be startled at the primitive simplicity of these illustrations, for they have forgotten how their fathers loved to make portraits of one another. But the book does not need its illustrations. It is the book of the Covenanters for the people, and the people will read it.

Take the words which open the chapter on Alexander Peden—'Puir Auld Sandy' the title of the chapter is. Or best of all take a little paragraph of description. Its interest is greater where it lies. But it will do to say that it refers to Donald Cargill and the Earl of Rothes, who were comrades at St. Andrews University, and both signed the Solemn League and Covenant. But Rothes took to profligacy and drunkenness, and he 'went out into the night,' crying for such as Cargill, his own ministers being 'good to live with but not to die with'; while the evening after, Cargill witnessed a good confession at the 'Mercat Cross':

High up in the Alps are two small lakes, which lie in such proximity that it is possible to throw a stone from one to the

other. The one is Lago Bianco, the White Loch, because its waters are light green in their colour; its neighbour is Lago Nero, or the Black Loch, for its appearance is gloomy and forbidding. But, although they are so close, they are on different inclines of the watershed. Lago Bianco sends its overflow to the Adriatic, while Lago Nero is connected with the Black Sea. We look at the one, and think about the sunshine of Italy; at the other, and are transported to the wintry Crimea. So men whose lives begin in intimate union, with the same aspirations and opportunities, pursue their sundered courses, 'breaker and builder of the eternal law'—

One to lone darkness and the frozen tide,  
One to the crystal sea.

**Probation.**—'In no part of his solemnizing and overawing book does Butler more solemnize and overawe his readers than in his chapter on probation. "The conception," says Canon Spooner, "which in these chapters Butler has elaborated, of our present life being a period of probation for a future state of existence, has probably affected English thought more than any other part of the *Analogy*." This life is not an end in itself and to itself; this life is meaningless and purposeless, it is a maze and a mystery, it is absolutely without explanation or justification to Butler unless it is the ordained entrance to another life which is to be the completion and the compensation of this life. But, then, grant that this present life is but the schoolroom and the practising-ground to another life, and what a grandeur straightway invests this life! What a holy fear, and what a holy hope, thenceforward take possession of the heart of the probationer of immortality!'

That is from Dr. Whyte's new book. Its title is *Bishop Butler, an Appreciation, with the best*