CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE POSITION IN 1965

This may be variously estimated. In a letter to the writer in 1960, H. H. Rowley summed up the situation as follows. Modifications have been made in some details of the Grafian hypothesis.

"Archaeology has shown that the pentateuchal narratives of J and E reflect the customs of the age with which they deal, and while it has not proved the accuracy of the history, it has disproved the dictum of Wellhausen that they give us little knowledge of the age about which they write but much of the age in which they were written. This is reinforced by the arguments of the oral tradition school, which are relevant for the period between the events and their deposit in literature, but insufficient to establish that writing did not take place until the post-exilic age. The sharp line between the priests and the prophets is disputed by many scholars today, but this does not mean the collapse of literary criticism. The recognition that much of the ritual of P was ancient has always been made by the literary critics and the evidence in support of this is stronger today than it ever was".

On essentials, however, Rowley thinks that the Grafian hypothesis still stands.

"What none of the critics has shown is that there was any centralization of the cultus before Hezekiah (who appeals to no law book) and Josiah (who does). This is not an argument from silence, since there is ample evidence of a multiplicity of shrines throughout the period from the settlement to Hezekiah, and again between Hezekiah and Josiah. Again what none of the critics has shown is that there was an exclusively Aaronite priesthood before the exile, whereas it can be shown that there was not. It seems inescapable that on the priesthood the sequence JED Ezekiel P is established. Again no critic has seriously overthrown the view that D shows knowledge of JE both in its law and in its history, but not of P".

Rowley’s conclusion is that “none of the rival views can accommodate so many of the facts, or can escape far more difficulties”. 1)

For the period since 1960 a wealth of material has become available through a series of major publications. The early 1960s have seen a spate of publishing not unlike that of the decade around 1900. Some

of the great reference works produced near the latter date \(^1\) have been rewritten, and they, together with new dictionaries, provide ample materials for a statement of the present position. The works to be referred to are the new editions of the *Hastings One Volume Dictionary* \(^2\) and *Peake's Commentary* \(^3\) and the *New Bible Dictionary* \(^4\) and the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. \(^5\)

A. Views of the Religious Development

The three areas of sacrifice, sanctuary and priesthood canvassed by Wellhausen and his predecessors are the subject of articles, which are in the main confirmatory rather than critical, although in each case at least one dissentient opinion is found.

On sacrifice, T. H. Gaster in the *IDB* takes no particular issue with Grafian views, except in his rejection of Robertson Smith's commensal theory. \(^6\) N. Porteous in the *New Peake* thinks that the prophets presuppose amphictyonic law \(^7\) and that substitution, although not present in the legislation, must have been in the mind of the worshipper. \(^8\) J. Barr in the *New Hastings* thinks the post-exilic origin of sin offering and guilt offering unlikely. \(^9\) While the element of expiation was increased by the Exile, it was not new then. \(^10\) P is, however, post-exilic, but the difference before and after the Exile was not expiation, but centralization. \(^11\)

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1) See above p. 70.