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JOURNAL OF
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1913.

540TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE INSTITUTE ON
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH, 1913, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY TOOK THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and signed.

METHODS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM. By the Ven. Archdeacon WILLIAM SINCLAIR, D.D., some time Archdeacon of London, and Canon of St. Paul's, Rector of Shermanbury, and Hon. Chaplain to the King.

Present Position of Higher Criticism.

THE present attitude of Higher Criticism is summarized by Professor Peake as follows:—

“There are four main documents in the Pentateuch. None of these go back to Moses, and it is dubious whether any of them incorporates any writing from his hand. The two earliest, which are commonly known by the symbols J. and E. (from their use of the names Jehovah and Elohim for God), belong to the golden age of Hebrew literature, probably to the period of the Monarchy. These contain the fascinating stories which we find in the narrative sections.

“As an outcome of the work done by the great prophets of the eighth century—Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah—the *Deuteronomic Law* was written. This aimed at purifying the worship of God by abolishing all the local sanctuaries of high places, and centralizing worship at Jerusalem. It was this law which formed the basis of Josiah's Reformation in 621. *The latest portion of the Pentateuch* is the Priestly Document containing some sections in Genesis, and large parts of the legal sections in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. This document carried out the ideas involved in the centralization of the

worship to their logical conclusion, and in doing so rested largely upon Ezekiel. The Pentateuch was for the most part complete by the year 444, in which it was accepted as law by the Jews under Ezra and Nehemiah.

“It is also agreed by the Higher Critics that the prophetic literature is largely composite in character. This is especially true of the Book of Isaiah. It has long been recognized that the last twenty-seven chapters were not written by Isaiah of Jerusalem. They are not even themselves, however, a unity, and the probability is that chapters 40-55 were written in exile, and chapters 56-66 a good while after the return.

“The popular phrase ‘Two Isaiahs’ again rests on the mistaken idea that the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah were written by the prophet of that name, and the last twenty-seven by a prophet in the Exile. It is clear, however, that the first thirty-nine chapters are the result of a very complicated literary process, and that very large sections must be attributed to a much later date. In the case of many other prophets, elements of a later date than the main portion of the book are detected by most critics.”

The dominant school of criticism regards the *majority of the Psalms* as written after the Exile. It places in the same period the Books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. The Book of Daniel is assigned to the Maccabean period.

Effect on the Public Mind.

These views have been so widely promulgated in England, especially at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, that an uncomfortable feeling has grown up in the minds of many, who have not time to examine into these abstruse subjects for themselves, that the Old Testament has been undermined, and rendered generally unworthy of the supreme place which it has held as the record of God’s revelation to man, and the preparation for the divine mission of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Two Kinds of Arguments.

These critics have two kinds of arguments: (1) those which are derived from the language of the books themselves; (2) those which they consider the necessary results of antecedent probabilities, or principles set up by their own hypotheses.

Two Schools of Critics.

There are, again, two schools of the Higher Critics: (1) some who are reverent and devout who do not speak of possibilities

as certainties, who are modest as to their own achievements, and who have no preconceived hostility to the possibility of Miracles, Prophecy, and Revelation. The others give up Miracles, Prophecy, and Revelation, treat the Old Testament as a dead collection, assign dates to its books in order to suit their own theories of history, and proceed in some cases to the natural and inevitable conclusion that the New Testament is of the same unhistorical character.

They speak of the Christian myth or fable, and in one of the most important articles in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* it is asserted that there are not more than nine passages in the four gospels which contain credible elements: of which it is said that these prove that in the Person of Jesus we have to do with an exclusively human being, and that the divine is to be sought in Him only in the form in which it is capable of being found in a man; they allow that these nine passages do prove that He really did exist, and that the Gospels contain at least some trustworthy facts concerning Him. That is the state of mind attained by the more unreasonable members of the second school of the Higher Critics.

The Meaning of Higher Criticism.

And let me here say that the term Higher Criticism is used by inexperienced persons in England in quite a distinct sense from that with which it originated in Germany. It was never intended to mean Superior Criticism: yet that is how it is employed by unthinking persons here. What was suggested was simply a distinction from Textual Criticism. Textual Criticism received the designation of the Lower, and Historical Criticism that of the Higher. The Higher is not in the least superior to the Lower: it is merely that it aims at going deeper into historical surroundings and origins.

The Warning of Dean Alford.

Do not let me be supposed to mean that all the critics who do not belong to the more reverent class have gone as far in fantasy and arrogance as the view just now mentioned; there are many shades of opinion between different writers. But that is the general tone of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, which is the manifesto of the school; and it is time that Christian people were reminded of its existence, its growth and its significance, and also of the real trustworthiness and reasonableness of the more reverent and cautious school. The words

of Dean Alford, written many years ago, are just as true now as when they first appeared. When the advanced critics say that they have made great progress since such a date, and that circumstances are entirely altered, they mean that somebody has made a hypothesis, which has been adopted by others; that these others have gone one better, and that in the end an imposing structure has arisen without any foundation at all.

“It is important to observe in these days,” says Dean Alford, “how the Lord (in the Sermon on the Mount) includes the Old Testament and all its unfolding of the Divine purposes regarding Himself in His teaching of the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. I say this, because it is always in contempt and setting aside of the Old Testament that rationalism has begun. First, its historical truth—then its theocratic dispensation, and the types and prophecies connected with it, are swept away; so that Christ came to fulfil nothing, and becomes only a teacher or a martyr; and thus the way is paved for a similar reflection of the New Testament—beginning with the narratives of the Birth and Infancy as theocratic myths—advancing to the denial of His miracles—then attacking the truthfulness of His own sayings, which are grounded on the Old Testament as a revelation from God—and so finally leaving us nothing in the Scriptures, but, as a German writer of this school has expressed it, ‘a mythology not so attractive as that of Greece.’ That this is the course which unbelief has run in Germany should be a pregnant warning to the decriers of the Old Testament among ourselves.”

Dean Alford could hardly have foreseen what mischief this German craze for the building of critical castles in the air would achieve.

Professor Peake's tribute to Professor Orr.

Professor Peake (Professor of Biblical Exegesis in the University of Manchester) states that the most important attack on the advanced school is Professor Orr's (Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology, United Free Church College, Glasgow) *Problems of the Old Testament*. It may be useful to give an outline of his argument. He says that the problem is twofold; religious and literary. To eliminate the religious element is uncritical. We have to make up our mind, how are we to conceive of the religion, whether it is natural or supernatural? Then comes the second question, how are we to conceive of the literature, as to its age, authorship and trustworthiness? The second question depends in part on the first. In many cases the decisions arrived at on

purely literary questions are largely controlled by the view taken of the origin and course of development of the religion: on a different theory, the judgment passed on the age, relations, and historical value of particular writings would be different also. This dependence of many of the conclusions of criticism on the religious and historical standpoint is practically admitted by Wellhausen when he declares that it is only within the region of religious antiquities and dominant religious ideas that the controversy can be fully brought to a definite issue. The question is not simply one between those who accept and those who reject Higher Criticism: it is in reality a much deeper issue: the existence at all of the supernatural element in the religion of Israel.

Our Attitude to the Supernatural.

The fundamental issue, therefore, is the attitude of ourselves and the critics to the supernatural. Now the Religion of Israel has a unique place amongst historical religions: there is nothing to be compared with it. The illimitable influence of a small and obscure people on the history of the world, the unity and coherent development of their teachings, and their obvious culmination in the transcendent personality of Christ, justify its steady unhesitating claim to a divine origin. It is here that Kuenen and the "modern" school of critics part company with us. They insist that Israel's religion is nothing less, but also nothing more than other religions. They deny the supernatural in history and prophecy, and recognize alone "natural development." This is, of course, an instance of the fallacy of begging the question. The critics take a whole series of phenomena, the most important and characteristic of which is the persistent claim to the supernatural, and rule the special part of the phenomena out of court. We insist that the facts offered by religion and history must be impartially examined, and that the rejected phenomena are so integral a part of the whole that it is in the highest degree uncritical to begin by saying that they are impossible. The case is one of competing interpretations of the Old Testament: and the ultimate test of the validity of criticism must be its fitness to meet the facts. The purely natural interpretation has to leave out the greater part of the facts asserted, to rearrange them, and to treat them with the highest degree of arbitrary licence.

The interest of Christian faith in these literary questions is fundamental.

“Christian scholars are no doubt entirely serious in their acceptance of the conclusions of the ‘natural’ theory of the Old Testament, but there must grow up, indeed, there has grown up, a perception of the incompatibility of their belief as Christians in an historical revelation, culminating in the Incarnation, with a set of results wrought out on the basis of a purely naturalistic view of Israel’s history and religion—which, in fact, as will be discovered, reduces the bulk of that history to ruins! . . .”

The late date of the documents composing the Pentateuch is employed to support the contention that the narrative of those books is wholly or in great part legendary; the post-Exilian date of the Leviticus laws is used to destroy the connection of the laws with Moses; the low date assigned to the Psalms is really a corollary from a particular theory of Israel’s development, and used in turn to buttress that theory. In other ways the literary criticism is really and effectively put at the service of the theory. Books are divided up, or texts manipulated and struck out, till the writing is made to speak the language which the critic desires. The hyper-analysis of documents results in the dissipation of everything of grandeur, consistency and truthfulness in the narrative.

Unique Place of the Old Testament in the History of Theology.

The tendency of purely critical study is to obscure the view of the unique place of the Old Testament in the economy of Revelation. First there is the Organic Unity of the various parts composing the whole: there are many books, but structurally they are one. There is no such unity in the Pagan Scriptures, the Koran, the Buddhist Canon, the Zendavesta, the Vedas. The Bible has an organic character, marked by plan, purpose and progress; and the unity grows out of history and religion. Then there is the fulfilment of the Old Testament in the New. The Bible is in two divisions, of which the second is in the simplest and most natural manner the counterpart and completion of the first. The Ideal Servant of Isaiah liii has its only fulfilment in Christ. The Religion of Israel is one of hope, looking forward to the future, and to a happier day; the Messiah is the supreme figure which the teachers of Israel anticipate; and the New Testament realizes the hopes and promises of the Old. This relation is by no means casual or mechanical; it is inward and vital. Again the history of Israel is animated by a purpose; not a purpose consciously imputed to it by the writer, but

an advancing and comprehending aim in the events themselves ; a development which cannot fail to be traced in every stage of the history, primitive, patriarchal, Mosaic, and in later days.

“There is then displayed throughout the whole of these Old Testament Scriptures an historical continuity, a firmness and coherence of texture, a steadily-evolving, and victorious, self-fulfilling purpose, which has nowhere, even in the remotest degree, its parallel in the history of religions.”

The Truth about the Names Jehovah and Elohim.

With regard to the use of the names Jehovah and Elohim in the Pentateuch, of which so much has been made, until the text becomes a literary patchwork which is absolutely unique in the history of writing, Orr quotes Klostermann, who illustrates the phenomenon from the Psalms. There are groups of Psalms using the name Jehovah, and there are groups using Elohim. Some of the Psalms obviously are recensions of others, or contain quotations. The obvious conclusion is that there was a period when the compilers and makers of recensions shrank from using the name Jehovah, and substituted that of Elohim ; and then that later compilers again employed both recensions. So it evidently was in the Pentateuch. There was a recension of old documents by two sets of compilers, one preferring Jehovah, the other Elohim.

“When the final editing of the Pentateuch took place texts of both recensions were employed, and sections taken from one or the other as was thought most suitable. In other words, for the Jehovah and Elohim *documents* of the critics Klostermann substitutes Jehovah and Elohim *recensions* of one and the same old work. To him, as to us, the piecing together of independent documents, in the manner which the critical theory supposes, appears incredible. If hypothesis is to be employed, this of Klostermann's, in its general idea, seems to us as good as any.”*

Professor Orr on Deuteronomy.

With regard to Deuteronomy, Professor Orr adduces solid and well considered arguments for the following propositions :—

1. The discovery of the Book of the Law in Josiah's day was a genuine discovery, and the book then found was already old.
2. The age of Manasseh was unsuitable for the composition of Deuteronomy, and there is no evidence of its composition in

* Orr, 228.

that age. The ideas of Deuteronomy no doubt lay behind Hezekiah's reformation, but there is no evidence of the presence of the book, or of its composition, at or about that time. Had it been newly composed, or then appeared for the first time, we should have expected it to make a sensation, as it did afterwards in the time of Josiah. The question also would again arise as to its Mosaic claim, and the acknowledgment of his by Hezekiah and his circle.

3. From Hezekiah upwards till at least the time of the Judges, or the immediately post-Mosaic age, there is no period to which the composition of the book can suitably be referred, nor is there any evidence of its composition in that interval.

4. The Book definitely gives itself out as a reproduction of the speeches which Moses delivered in the *Arabah* of Moab before his death, and expressly declares that Moses wrote his addresses ("this law"), and gave the book into custody of the priests.

5. The internal character of the book, in its Mosaic standpoint, in its absence of reference to the division of the kingdom, and the archaic and obsolete character of many of its laws, supports the claim to a high antiquity and to a Mosaic origin.

6. The supposition that Deuteronomy is a "free reproduction," or elaboration, of written addresses left by Moses, by one who has fully entered into his spirit, and continues his work, while not inadmissible, if the facts are shown to require it, is unnecessary, and in view of the actual character of the book, not probable. The literary gifts of Moses were amply adequate to the writing of his own discourses in their present form. This is not to deny editorial revision and annotation.

7. There are no conclusive reasons in the character of the laws or of the historical retrospects for denying the authorship of the discourses, in this sense, to Moses.

8. It seems implied in Deuteronomy xxxi, 9, 24-26, that Deuteronomy originally subsisted as a separate book. It may have done so for a longer or a shorter period, and separate copies may have continued to circulate even after its union with other parts of the Pentateuch. It was probably a separate authentic copy which was deposited in the temple, and was found there by Hilkiah.

9-10 The historical laws and narratives which Deuteronomy presupposes must, in some form, have existed earlier than the present book, if not earlier than the delivery of the discourses. These also, therefore, are pushed back, in essentials, into the Mosaic age. They need not, however, have been then completed, or

put together in their present shape ; or may only have furnished the basis for our present narratives.

Professor Orr on the Priestly Code.

Professor Orr deals in a like reasonable and candid manner with the Priestly Code and the Priestly Writing, to which however, I can only refer you very briefly :

“We have sought,” he says, “to show on both moral and historical grounds, and, by positive proof to the contrary, that the theory of a post-Exilian origin of the Levitical Code cannot be upheld. Its main stronghold is the argument from silence ; but that silence is neither so complete as is alleged, nor are the inferences drawn from it warranted. By a similar argument, if Deuteronomy were left out of account, it might be proved that the Book of the Covenant also, as a written Code, was not known before the Exile. Yet Deuteronomy shows how erroneous would be such an inference. . . . The theory that the Priestly Code took its shape in the hands of the priests about the ninth century B.C., or between that and the time of Deuteronomy, but only as a quasi-private document, a programme struggling for recognition, and very imperfectly attaining it, and receiving changes and additions as far down as the Exile, is wholly unsatisfactory. It encounters all the difficulties of the older theory, arising from the supposed silence of the history and alleged conflict with Deuteronomy, and has none of its compensating advantages. For the law presents in no sense the aspect of a private priestly programme, struggling, without success, for recognition and acceptance. It rests on very definite principles and ideas, gives itself out in all seriousness as a Code of wilderness legislation (why, it may be asked, should ninth-century priests throw their ‘programme’ into this form ?) and presents not the slightest trace of hesitation or doubt in its demands . . . It is involved in what has been said that we come back to the older position of a substantially Mosaic origin of the laws. It is not necessarily implied in this that Moses wrote all these laws, or any one of them with his own pen ; or that they were all written down at one time ; or that they underwent no subsequent changes in drafting or development ; or that the collection of them was not a more or less gradual process ; or that there may not have been smaller collections, such as that lying at the base of the Law of Holiness (Leviticus xvii-xvii), in circulation and use prior to the final collection, or codification, as we now have it . . . However this may be, there appears no good ground for assuming that the general codification was not completed at a very early date, possibly before the relapse in the time of the Judges, and probably not later than the early days of the monarchy. There is nothing we can discover

which points to a later date ; though it does not follow that there may not have been minor modifications and adjustments after."

Professor Orr on the Priestly Writing.

With regard to the Priestly Writing, it is recognized that there is a writing, partly historical and partly legislative, running through the Pentateuch and Joshua, which, from its linguistic and other traits, has been variously described in the course of opinion as the Primary Document, the First Elohist, the Priestly Writing, the Priests' Code, or simply P. At first the whole of the Elohim matter was ascribed to the Priestly Writing; but when it was seen that the greater part of this matter had a closer affinity to the Jehovah transcriber, it was removed from P. and attributed to J. Professor Orr gives good reasons for believing that in the Genesis and other narratives the work of the Priestly Writer is not independent, complete and separate, but rather a framework to the Jehovah and Elohim matter. His arguments are strongly and clearly conclusive (1) that Genesis, as we have it, is a unity; (2) that the unity is destroyed by breaking it up into separately existing Jehovah, Elohim and Priestly Documents; (3) that the unity is too close to be the work of a redactor piecing together such separate documents; (4) that to secure the unity, we do not need to go beyond the book we have; *i.e.*, what the Priestly Writer lacks, the Jehovah matter supplies, and *vice versa*. In brief, whatever the number of pens employed, the phenomena would seem to point, not to late irresponsible redaction, but to singleness of plan, and co-operation of effort in the original production.

The Mosaic Character of the Pentateuch.

On the whole Pentateuch, Professor Orr inclines to the view of essential Mosaic character in origin, though there may have been repeated editions and redactions.

"In the collation and preparation of the materials for this work—some of them perhaps reaching back into pre-Mosaic times—and the laying of the foundations of the existing narratives, to which Moses by his own compositions, according to constant tradition, lent the initial impulse, many hands and minds may have co-operated, and may have continued to co-operate, after the master-mind was removed, but unity of purpose and will gave a corresponding unity to the product of their labours. So far from such a view being obsolete, or disproved by modern criticism, we hold that internal indications, external evidence, and the circum-

stances of the Mosaic age itself, unite in lending their support to its probability."

It is in favour of the view we defend that it is in line with the Bible's own constant tradition of the Mosaicity of the Pentateuchal books, which the modern hypothesis contradicts at every point. The Biblical evidence on this subject of Mosaic origin is often unduly minimized, but it is really very strong and persuasive. Apart from the assumption of the existence of a "Book of the Law of Moses" in passages of the historical books and the implication of its existence in passages where it is not expressly mentioned, apart also from the firm belief of the Jews in the days of our Lord and His apostles—a belief which our Lord Himself shared—there can be no question:

1. That all the *three Codes*—the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic discourses, and the Levitical Code—profess to come from Moses, and the first and second profess to have been written by him.

2. That the Deuteronomic discourses imply the existence, in substance, and in part in written form, of the Jehovah and Elohim history, and that the Priestly Writing also presupposes that history, with which, in its narrative part, it is parallel.

3. That King Josiah and the Jewish people of his day received Deuteronomy as a genuine work of Moses, and that the nation ever after regarded it as his.

4. That the Jewish people of Ezra's time similarly accepted the whole Pentateuch—including the Levitical legislation—as genuinely Mosaic.

5. That the Samaritans received the Pentateuch at the hands of the Jews as an undoubtedly Mosaic book.

To these firm strands of tradition we may with much confidence attach ourselves, without feeling that "traditionalist" in such a connection is any term of reproach. As has happened in the case of the New Testament, so it may be predicted it will prove also in the case of the Old, that greater respect will yet come to be paid to consentient tradition than it is now the fashion to accord to it.

*The Literature of Egypt, Babylonia, and Palestine,
1,000 years before Moses.*

I have a few words to say as to the literary culture in the age of Moses.

The chief argument with regard to these five books is that they show too high a literary experience and ability for the age

of Moses. When German Rationalism first found favour in England, it was vitiated by an extraordinary blunder, the results of which have since rendered its conclusions unsound. It was assumed that history began with the Greeks, and that what were then considered prehistoric times were barbarous. It was therefore held to be incredible that such a marvellous literature as the Mosaic books could have originated 1,000 years before Herodotus. To-day, however, history dates back to ages far remote, especially in Egypt and Babylonia, and it is known that a thousand years before Moses literature flourished. We are told on high authority that in the century before the Exodus, Palestine was a land of books and schools.

Early Egyptian Civilization : Tel el-Amarna.

On a Sunday afternoon in April, 1904, I was standing in the great National Museum at Cairo, surrounded by the magnificent relics of the early civilization of the Egyptians in its many different stages. And I was assured by Professor Sayce, who makes his home in Egypt during the winter, and devotes himself to the discovery and explanation of Egyptian antiquities, that the farther you go back the more marvellous does the civilization both of Egypt and of Babylonia appear. The farther you go back, the less trace does there emerge of the beginning. Only in the last few years a buried and forgotten stage of Egyptian civilization of the remotest antiquity has been unearthed; and it seems as completely organized as its distant successors. Another discovery, made in 1887, was that of the Tel el-Amarna tablets—Tel el-Amarna is a city on the banks of the Nile, which was the capital of a reforming and monotheistic King of Egypt. His reforms were disliked, and his city razed to the ground after his death. This preserved the correspondence of his foreign office with the governors of the subject provinces of Canaan and Syria, and the Kings of Babylon, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor. This correspondence is in the writing of Babylonia, and for the most part in the Babylonian language, which was evidently the language of diplomacy in those early days even in Egypt. The variety of the places from which the tablets come show that there must have been schools and libraries like those of Babylonia itself, in which the literature of Babylonia was studied, and its language and system of writing taught and learned. The legal code of Amraphel, or Khammurabi, King of Shinar, the contemporary of Abraham, recently discovered, makes it clear that Babylonian law was also known in the west.

“The Mosaic age, therefore,” says Professor Sayce, “instead of being an illiterate one, was an age of high literary activity and education throughout the civilized East. Not only was there a widespread literary culture in both Egypt and Babylonia which had its roots in a remote past, but this culture was shared by Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, and more especially by Syria and Palestine.”

Literary and Documental Evidence from Crete.

Not only that. Thanks to recent wonderful discoveries in Crete we now know that long before the age of Moses there was an advanced literary culture in what was to be in after days the great world, and that the Egyptian and Babylonian characters were not the only writings there—Crete had three, if not four, wholly different systems of writing. From one end of the civilized world to the other, in those remote ages, hundreds of years before the time of Moses, men and women were reading and writing and corresponding with one another: schools abounded and great libraries were formed in an age which the “Higher Critics” only a few years ago dogmatically declared was almost wholly illiterate.

Egyptian Scribes: Moses.

This assumption, then, that the Pentateuch was too advanced for Moses is wholly dispersed by recent archæological discovery. Not only could Moses have written the Pentateuch, but it would have been little short of a miracle if he had not been a scribe. The scribe in Egypt was the most honoured personage next to the king. In every room of the great museum at Cairo, and from every Egyptian dynasty, beautiful life-like statues of scribes stare you in the face. Moses had been brought up in all the learning of Pharaoh’s Court: he was a law giver, and the elders and overseers of his brother Israelites in the land of Goshen would themselves have been required to know how to read and write. Egypt, where the Israelites dwelt so long, and from which they fled, was a land of writing and literature; more so still was the Canaan which they invaded. In Palestine these literary cultures met together: the culture and writing of Egypt, the culture and writing of Babylonia, the culture and writing of the Philistines from Crete. The assumption on which more than half the attack on the Five Books of the Pentateuch rests is absolutely arbitrary and unhistorical.

Dean Wace on the Tessellated Pavement Theory.

No one will ever be able to tell us exactly who wrote the whole of the first five books in the Old Testament: there is no claim in

the books themselves to be written by Moses. But the Jewish tradition pointing that way is so persistent and so universal, that it is extremely probable that it rests on some foundation of fact. Nobody would deny that the books of the Bible have been edited and re-edited in different ages. Nobody would deny that all the historical books of the Bible profess to be compilations. But to insist that the greater part of those five books is a late and fabricated compilation is contrary to all probability. Perhaps the ablest and truest verdict on this subject has been pronounced by the present Dean of Canterbury :

“The origin and composition of the Pentateuch, according to these theories, is of so unexampled and extraordinary a character that the most positive historical evidence would be required to justify our acceptance of the results of it. There is no instance of an ancient book of history being composed like a tessellated pavement; in which several unknown sources are dovetailed into one another, sometimes in the most minute pieces. Still less is there any instance of an elaborate historical and legislative work being composed with the object of confusing, if not preventing, a nation's traditions of its own history and its ancient laws; still less of such a work succeeding in the attempt. If such a scheme were difficult with any nation, it would be tenfold more difficult in the case of the Jews, one of whose chief characteristics, at once their strength and their danger, is their intense tenacity, and who were always, for good or for harm, ‘a stiff-necked people.’ But it is impossible not to add that most improbable, if not most monstrous of all, is the supposition that such a pious fraud was committed at the instigation of the God of truth, and that the books which are its record and its instrument can be regarded as inspired by Him.”

True Points in Reverent Criticism.

There are, of course, many important points on which we can agree with the reverent and Christian school of critics. We can insist that Holy Scripture was intended to teach morality and religion, not science; we insist in fact with St. Paul that all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable also for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness and not for scientific purposes. We can maintain a fact which ought never to have been overlooked, that it is a library of books covering a period of 2,000 years, not one single book. We are bound to remind critics as well as ordinary readers that, as I have already stated, every historical book expresses its obligations to existing records;

the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, the Chronicles of Gad, Nathan, and the different prophets, seers and scribes: the Book of the Heroes, the Book of the Wars of the Lord, and the like. We may point out that so vast a variety of subjects—History, Biography, Poetry, Philosophy, Morals and Prophecy, however distinct their essential unity, would naturally be treated in very different ways by different writers. We had better at once agree that many parts are less important; the pedigrees, the minute social laws, the misfortunes of the Kings of the Ten Tribes, and the like. We had better at once agree that the theory of literal verbal inspiration which once prevailed is absolutely untenable, and has created more unbelievers than any attacks of outside opponents. We are quite willing to consider the question of the authorship of the books, about which very little is told us, and to listen to serious and reasonable suggestions on the subject; provided always that these investigators do not approach their very solemn and responsible task with minds full of preconceived prejudices, armed against any admission of the miraculous, or of divine intervention and guidance, or attempting to raise their own arbitrary guesses into axiomatic laws.

The German Emperor's Account of Revelation.

On the question of Divine guidance, some persons are perplexed because they see a similar kind of illumination in the teaching of some of the great heathen sages, such as Socrates, Plato, Cicero and the other Roman philosophers, Confucius and Buddha. I do not know that the question of special Hebrew inspiration has been better put than by the present German Emperor:

“I distinguish,” he says, “between two different kinds of revelation—one continuous, and to some extent historical, and one purely religious, a preparation for the later appearance of the Messiah.

“With regard to the first kind of revelation I have to say that there is, to my mind, not the slightest doubt that God constantly and continuously reveals himself to the human race, which is His own, and which He has created. He has ‘breathed His breath’ into man, that is to say, He has given man a part of Himself, a soul. He follows with fatherly love and interest the development of the human race: in order to lead it, and to advance it further, ‘He reveals’ Himself now in this, now in that great sage, whether it be priest or king, whether it be among heathens, Jews, or

Christians . . . The works of great spirits have been bestowed by God upon the peoples, in order that they may model their development upon them, and may continue to feel their way through the confused labyrinth and the unexplored pathways of their earthly lot. God has certainly 'revealed' Himself to divers persons in divers ways corresponding to the position of a nation and the standard of civilization it has attained; and He still does so in our day. For just as we are most overwhelmed by the grandeur and might of the glorious character of the creation when we contemplate it, and as we contemplate, marvel at the greatness of God which it reveals, so surely may we recognize with gratitude and admiration, in everything really great and glorious which an individual or a nation does, the glory of the revelation of God. He thus acts directly upon us and among us.

"The second kind of revelation, the more strictly religious, is that which leads up to the appearance of our Lord. From Abraham onwards it is introduced slowly but with prescient vision, infinite wisdom, and infinite knowledge, or else mankind would have been lost. And now begins that most marvellous operation, the revelation of God Himself. The seed of Abraham and the nation developed therefrom, regarded with iron consistency the belief in one God as their holiest possession. They were obliged to cherish and form it. They were disintegrated during the captivity in Egypt; Moses welded together the separate fragments for the second time, and they always persisted in their endeavour to preserve their 'monotheism.' It is the direct intervention of God which makes it possible for this people to emerge once more. And so the process continues through the centuries until the Messiah, foretold by prophets and psalmists, at last appears. This was the greatest revelation of God in the world, for he appeared in the Son Himself: Christ is God: God in human form: He delivered us: He inspires us: He attracts us to follow Him: we feel his fire burn in us, His compassion strengthens us, His displeasure destroys us: though at the same time we feel that His intercession rescues us. Assured of victory, relying on His Word alone, we endure labour, scorn, wretchedness, distress and death: for we have in Him the revealed Word of God, and God never lies."

You have then absolutely nothing to fear from the more rash and destructive school of the Higher Critics. From the devout, serious, and reasonable school you have everything to learn. You will be able to study the Old Testament more intelligently, to teach it to your children more usefully, to obtain its comfort and teaching more effectually for your own souls. Remember always that it was to the Old Testament that Christ and the early Church appealed in proof of His Divinity. "Search the

Scriptures," said our Lord, "for they are they which testify of Me." It was in them that the life and death, the resurrection and the work of Christ were foreshadowed and predicted, and upon this fact He laid His claim to be believed.

Was Christ mistaken?

Well may we ask with the Egyptian scholar, Was our Lord right? or must we hearken to the modern critic when he tells us that the endeavour to find Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, in the sense in which Christ and His Church understood the phrase, is an illusion of the past? We cannot serve two masters; either we must believe that in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah we have a real far-off portraiture of Christ, or else that Christ was mistaken, and that the portraiture was only read into the chapter in later days. The words of our great lamented teacher Canon Liddon, in reference to the destructive theory of the origin of the Pentateuch, still hold good:

"How is such a supposition reconcilable with the authority of Him Who has so solemnly commended to us the Books of Moses, and whom Christians believe to be too wise to be Himself deceived, and too good to deceive His creatures?"

DISCUSSION.

Mr. SIDNEY COLLETT criticized the acceptance of the view that there were two Isaiahs, calling attention to John xii, 37-41, where quotations are made from Isaiah vi and liii, both of which are attributed to one and the same Isaiah. He also disagreed with the words "less important," on p. 113, l. 9, and also with the lecturer's giving up the theory of verbal inspiration (see ll. 11 and 12). He pointed out that St. Paul (Galatians iii, 16) based an important argument on a single letter, "seed," not "seeds," and our Lord in Matthew xxii, 32, proved the doctrine of the resurrection from a single tense, "am" not "was."

Chancellor P. V. SMITH said: Every one is at liberty to hold his own views as to the doctrine of verbal inspiration, but I cannot myself believe in it. The suggestion that the contradictions on immaterial points, which undoubtedly exist in the Scriptures, as we have them, are due to errors which have crept in since they were first written, and would not be found in the original documents, can obviously neither be proved nor disproved, but it has no probability in

its favour. Of the two instances quoted by the last speaker, one is irrelevant and the other is rather adverse to the doctrine. He urged, in favour of it, the stress to be laid on the present tense in the declaration "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," but I believe that the original Hebrew has no verb at all, neither "am" nor "was." With regard to the quotation from Galatians iii, 16, "He saith not, and to seeds, as of many," as indicating the inspiration of a single letter, it is observable that, though St. Paul, in that passage, bases his argument on the singular "seed," as referring to one, Christ, yet in Romans iv, 16, 18, and ix, 7, 8, he most distinctly treats the singular "seed" as referring to a multitude, and the singular unquestionably does so in Genesis xiii, 16, which is the original passage. His remark in Galatians iii, 16, can scarcely, therefore, be called an inspired argument or proof. It was merely an illustration or analogy such as is acceptable to the Eastern mind, but does not harmonize with Western modes of thought.

Mr. HOWARD said the difficulty which had arisen was due to the absence of a definition of "verbal inspiration." The fact is, human words are inadequate to express even human thought and infinitely more Divine thought, and these discussions on minutiae of language are not profitable. The minds of the East and the West though meaning the same things will probably express them quite differently.

Lieut.-Colonel ALVES thought that none of the Higher Critics, indeed no Englishman, and probably very few Jews, possessed that mastery of Hebrew necessary for a literary critic. Such a critic needed not only a knowledge of words and grammar rules, but also of the idiom and genius of the Hebrew mind and language.

Mr. MARTIN L. ROUSE disputed the claim of the Higher Critics that the Book of Deuteronomy resulted from the labours of the Prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, by showing that a passage from this Book was quoted a whole generation before the earliest of these prophets, see II Chronicles xxv, 4.

The CHAIRMAN said: We have wandered in our discussion too much into details, and I wish to revert to the broad arguments of the paper. But in passing I would say that the real transgressors in the direction of verbal inspiration are the Higher Critics themselves, who build up their arguments on the verbal accuracy of the Massoretic text. This recoils on the critics themselves, for these

texts, though most valuable, are not perfect nor so old as the LXX, which is older than any of the Hebrew MSS. Mr. H. Wiener urges that the J. and E. passages in the Massoretic text are different in the LXX. He, with great acumen, has discussed these points so effectively that his influence is felt in Germany to-day, and a German pastor, Dahse, in an elaborate examination of all the critical material on the Pentateuch, shows that the original foundations of the J. and E. theory can no longer be depended on. A whole generation has been discussing this question without a proper examination of the text on which it is all founded, and which is now proved to be unreliable. Again, even in 1870, Bishop Harold Browne, in the *Speaker's Commentary*, had to defend the fact that Moses could *write*. Now everyone knows that Khammurabi, a contemporary of Abraham, wrote a whole code of laws; but at that time all the scholars in Europe were in the dark about the age when writing was first in force. That all the details of Genesis should have been dictated to Moses would be an incredible miracle, but now that we know that writing was common long before his day it is clear that he had written documents to go upon, and therefore his work is brought within the range of the usual methods of inspiration. In the same way, St. Luke under the Spirit of God may have selected documents and put them together in writing his books. Prof. Liddon referred to "the inspiration of selection," and this appears to me the greatest wonder of all.

What was the influence which selected the books of the Bible? They all coalesce to produce a perfect unity. The solution is to be found in the influence of the Divine Spirit. Think of the time of Abraham: why should he have been selected from so many to have his life handed down in such detail for all time? Clearly it was under the inspiration of the Spirit. And so was it in selecting incidents recorded in the Gospels. When we have evidence of inspiration on this vast scale, it is not worth troubling about verbal inspiration. We have not got, for example, the exact words that Jeremiah spoke. But of course in special grand expressions, burning words, embodying divine thoughts, you get verbal inspiration there, and these abound throughout Scripture, but it is unwise to assume that every detail was superintended by the same authority. The Spirit of God himself guards us against this, *e.g.*, we do not know the exact words used by our Lord in instituting the Holy

Communion: we know the substance but not the minute details of the words.

I am grateful to Dr. Sinclair for asserting the value of open criticism. The Bible must stand criticism, it is only reasonable, and we don't object to it at all. What we object to is *bad* criticism. It is a thoroughly erroneous basis to begin by rejecting all tradition; there is an immense amount of truth in the substance of tradition, and it cannot be discarded. That Ezra imposed on the Jews a false account of their history is perfectly preposterous. Stubbs always held that it was wrong to go against the main lines of tradition, though it might need correction in details.

He concluded with proposing and putting to the meeting a hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Sinclair for his most useful paper.

Archdeacon SINCLAIR, in acknowledging the vote of thanks, thanked also the speakers who had taken part in the discussion, and especially Dean Wace, whose remarks he welcomed as a valuable addition to his paper.

SUBSEQUENT COMMUNICATION.

Dr. IRVING writes: It is to be hoped that the Kaiser's incisive and logical statement of his personal convictions will carry weight with many a serious and open-minded German, as well as among the English-speaking races of the world; and we welcome his earnest emphasis of the great "Messianic hope," which runs as a golden thread right through all that is essentially contained in the moral and religious teaching of the progressive library (*τὰ βιβλία*) from the call of Abraham to Christ. The very relapses and regenerations of the inspired race (each time with a larger and higher field of vision) seem to many of us to testify to Providential spiritual leading, in fact to *directive evolution* in the direction of the realization of a purpose with which is bound up the ultimate destiny of mankind: and on this we base a rational faith in the future, without presumptuously forecasting the form of future development, of that fuller "manifestation of the sons of God" for which "the whole creation painfully waits" (Romans viii).