

*THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE VERDICT  
OF THE MONUMENTS.<sup>1</sup>*

THE books of the Old Testament, the literary legacy which Christianity has inherited from Judaism, purport to contain a historical account of the dealings of God with His chosen people in pre-Messianic times; and the Christian Church has received them as being scriptures given by inspiration, to teach us what, in these old days, man had believed concerning God, and the conception entertained by patriarch and prophet as to the duty which God required of them.

It is, however, in accordance with the questioning spirit of the present age to accept no belief which has no stronger ground than tradition, and to put to the test all those writings which claim to be regarded as speaking with authority. It cannot be denied that it is reasonable to expect from such writings that their claims to be accepted as authentic history shall be established beyond dispute before they appeal to us as supreme authorities in matters spiritual and ethical.

Within the last fifty years the aspect of Biblical criticism has completely changed. The Old Testament no longer stands before us as the only work which professes to have come down to us from the earliest historical times. We have now whole libraries of coeval writings, with whose records the historical statements of the Hebrew Scriptures can be compared.

It is a distasteful and disquieting task to apply critical

<sup>1</sup> *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, by the Rev. A. H. Sayce, Queen's College, Oxford. London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1894, pp. 576. 7s. 6d.

methods of inquiry to matters long received as articles of faith, but the interests of truth should be paramount over all our predilections; and it is therefore desirable that all these new aids to the historical criticism of the Old Testament should be used as fully and freely as possible. Its books contain a great variety of writings, and the limits between the portions regarded as canonical and those considered to be apocryphal have varied from time to time. Religious truth has, therefore, much to gain and nothing to lose by the most searching application of honest and unbiassed criticism to these documents.

The higher criticism is, however, regarded with distrust by a very large section of the Christian Church; but this is not surprising, as the attitude of most modern critics towards some of the cherished beliefs of Christendom is one of hostility. In consequence of this, any work, whose object is the criticism of the critics, is sure of a welcome reception from many of those by whom the sacred volume is valued as containing a divine revelation.

The book before us professes to be an examination of the results of the higher criticism as they appear in the light of Oriental archæology, and the tone of Professor Sayce's introduction is, in general, one of antagonism to the dominant critical school. He mentions no names, and leaves the reader to infer that the critics have spoken with one voice. The only example which he gives of the "critical method" appears in a very different light in the correspondence to which it gave rise in the *Academy* for Oct. and Nov., 1893. He speaks of the arrogance of tone with which the critics speak, of their dogmatism, which is as unwarrantable as it is unscientific, of their taking baseless assumptions as if they were facts; and he charges them with putting forward their own prepossessions and fancies as if they were the revelation of a new gospel. The critics, Professor Sayce tells us, are popes, who proclaim the doctrine of their own

infallibility, and he claims that these assumptions and pre-conceptions, with which the higher critics have started, are swept away by the facts which Oriental archæology has brought to light. The object of this volume he states to be the justification of the confidence of the apologist, and the condemnation of the arrogance of the critic.

These are brave words. We shall see how far they are justified by his treatment of the subject. Our space will allow us to refer only to a few points, selected from the many which call for critical review.

As the book professes to treat of such portions of the Old Testament literature as can be brought to the touchstone of history, one naturally turns to those sections which deal with the subjects concerning which the critics and the apologists are most at variance. These are the Hexateuch on the one hand, and the later historical books, the Chronicles, and the small books which follow them, together with the historico-prophetical books of Daniel and Jonah, on the other.

In the section which treats of the older books of the Scriptures, as there are fewer actual points wherein the Hebrew and the other records overlap, the method of critical reasoning is, of necessity, one of inference rather than one based on comparison.

Professor Sayce can, with justice, claim that Oriental archæology has utterly confuted the notion that writing is a modern invention. An eminent philological authority not long since stated that books in alphabetic writing existed nowhere before the seventh century B.C., and that Moses lived a thousand years before book-writing; but we have now in our museums and libraries books as voluminous as any of the component volumes of the Pentateuch, which were extant in Egypt in the days of Moses. The literature of Babylon was probably of nearly equal extent and antiquity. There is reason to believe that the mythical

legends of Gilgames existed in the form in which they have come down to us in the days of Khammurabi, twenty-one centuries B.C. If Glaser's researches be trustworthy, the Minæan inscriptions of Arabia are examples of a genuinely alphabetic writing, which dates as far back as the days of Moses, and in a country not far from the confines of Palestine.

The Tel-el-Amarna tablets furnish important evidence in this respect, more especially those of them which were written from Palestinian cities, such as the despatch from King Ebed-Tob of Jerusalem. These show that not only were documents in the cuneiform character extant in Palestine before the period of the Exodus, but that the Babylonian language was used for purposes of international correspondence. There is, therefore, no longer any *a priori* difficulty in believing that parts, at least, of the earlier books of the Bible might have been written at the time in which they profess to have been produced, and in a Semitic language.

In treating of the early existence of collections of books in Palestine, we have a good example of the ingenuity with which Professor Sayce assumes the certainty of a conclusion based on hypothetical premises. Starting from the vassalage of Judah to Assyria, he argues, from the statement that a sundial had been set up by Ahaz, that he had adopted the Assyrian civilization; but one feature of Assyrian culture was the existence of libraries wherein scribes were employed to copy books. The men of Hezekiah are said to have copied the proverbs of Solomon. It is *certain*, therefore, he says, that there was a royal or public library in Jerusalem. If such a library existed, it must have been badly kept, for what should have been one of its greatest treasures, the book of the law, had got out of its place in the days of Josiah.

Professor Sayce has treated very fully of the Babylonian

element in the book of Genesis, especially in the narratives of the Creation, of the Deluge, and of the Dispersion of mankind. He argues fairly that as the Tel-el-Amarna tablets show the Babylonian language to have been in use in Palestine and known in Egypt before the days of Moses, it was likely that any one in those days, who possessed sufficient literary culture to write, would be acquainted with the literature of the neighbouring countries, and would be able to use the historical material which was then well known in Babylon. This is more especially true, as we know that at least one Babylonian myth had found its way to Egypt before that time. It is equally true that the same material was accessible to the scribe in the days of Ezekiel. In the subsequent paragraphs the parallelisms between the several Chaldæan myths and the two sections, Jehovist and Elohist, of the Genesis narrative of creation are set forth, and the Babylonian origin of the name, at least, of the Sabbath is maintained. In like manner Professor Sayce compares the two elements of the Deluge story of the Hebrews with those of the Chaldæans, and shows that the differences are chiefly due to the local colour of those versions which are of Palestinian origin, and to the pure monotheism which pervades them, which contrasts strongly with the polytheism of the Babylonian stories. He declines however to pronounce any opinion on the date at which the Hebrew version was written.

The 10th chapter of Genesis is considered by him to be not genealogical, but geographical, to be a descriptive chart of the countries around Palestine; and from the mention of Gog or Gyges, and of Gomer or the Cimmerii, he attributes it to a period not earlier than the 7th century B.C. The Ludim, who are described as sons of Mizraim, he believes to be the Lydian allies of Psammetichus. But the whole structure of the chapter, like that of the similar chapters in 1st Chronicles, is evidently genealogical; and the paragraph

concerning Nimrod, as well as the statement in verse 5, makes this clear. To get rid of this and other difficulties he regards the interjected passage referring to Nimrod as a later interpolation, probably of the Elohist author. The critics represented by Wellhausen attribute it to the older Jehovist writers.

The invasion of Palestine by Chedorlaomer and his allies is an episode upon which Babylonian monuments might be expected to cast some light, and there are certain inscriptions which show that such an invasion was not an improbable event. Prof. Sayce however makes the rash statement that this campaign has been *proved* to be historical. Naram-sin, king of Accad, who lived more than thirty centuries before Christ, tells us in an inscription that he conquered Apirak and Magan, the latter being possibly Egypt, or Midian. A later king, Ammi-ditana, the ninth king of the third dynasty of Berôssus, who lived probably a little earlier than the date usually assigned to Abraham, calls himself king of the land of the Amorites. Between these two dates there lived a certain Kudurmabuk, probably about B.C. 2,300, who calls himself Father of the land of the Amorites. His name is on a clay cylinder in the British Museum, on a bronze canephorus in the Louvre, and in an inscription from Mugheir (W.A.I., 1 P. 2. iii.), which tells us that he had a son Eriaku, king of Larsa. These names are sufficiently like those in Genesis to suggest some connexion, but the dates are so hopelessly discordant that they effectually forbid identification. The names of Amraphel, Chedorlaomer, or Melchizedek, do not occur on any monument, and, if Winckler be correct, the name of the king of Larsa should be read Rim-sin, not Eriaku.

The tablet of Ebed-tob, discovered at Tel-el-Amarna, has thrown light on the position of the priest-king of Jerusalem, who seems in the time of Khuenaten to have been in many respects like his predecessor Melchizedek in the days of

Abraham. There are few points in the history of Abraham, or that of his son, for which we can expect to find monumental corroboration, but the ancient records give us sufficient information of a kind which confirms the claims of the narrative to be regarded as history, and discredits the theory that these patriarchs were eponymous heroes and not real persons. The argument from the place-names Jacob-el and Joseph-el, which has been used in this connexion, seems to be very feeble.

Prof. Sayce's treatment of the list of the kings of Edom is characteristic. The lists are detailed, and are therefore an extract from the official annals of Edom: Edom therefore must have had its scribes, as well as Canaan. The use of Edomite documents is therefore said to be proved, and upon this basis further hypotheses are founded.

The period of Egyptian history which covers the lifetime of Joseph is one of the most obscure, and one of which we have few monuments. Since the discovery of the tale of Anpu and Bata by De Rougé it has been supposed that there is in it some reference to the story of Potiphar's wife; and, as the D'Orbiney papyrus which contains it was written about 1,300 B.C., several centuries after Joseph's death, and under another *régime*, it is quite possible that the tradition of this episode may have been used by the novelist, as the central point in the story, which he lengthened and disguised by the incidents of the talking cattle, and the wearisome mythological details of the transformations of the younger brother.

The tablet of the seven years' famine referred to by Prof. Sayce is, as he has admitted, of very late, probably indeed of Roman date; and was engraved as a kind of pious fraud to furnish an ancient precedent for the temple privileges of the priest. Even were it genuine, it professed to be of too great an antiquity; for the king, from whose reign it is dated, was the third king of the third dynasty; and reigned

about thirty-eight centuries B.C. The tablet of Baba, from El Kab, which is given by Brugsch in his history, and which dates from the early days of the 17th dynasty, is more nearly synchronous with Joseph's famine; but is probably a little later.

Prof. Sayce considers that the word *Abrek*, the proclamation before the triumphant Joseph, was a Sumerian word, meaning, "the seer." It is scarcely fair to say that the hieroglyphic dictionary has been tortured to no purpose to find terms into which it could be resolved. The word suggested by Canon Cook *ab-rek* in the sense "rejoice!" does no violence to the Egyptian idiom. Mr. Renouf has found this word in a hieratic papyrus, used in an invocation *abrek seutá háuk*, "rejoice; may thy flesh be preserved sound."<sup>1</sup> There is also a less probable, though equally possible interpretation which is sanctioned by Brugsch, derived from a ceremonial temple-formula which Dümichen has copied, in which occur the words *barek na en uat tek*, "we bow before thy double throne," and the first word of this might have furnished the Hebrew writer with his imperative, which would accord more closely with the meaning ascribed to it by the Vulgate and by Aquila. Either of these is more probable than the view that in a proclamation intended to be "understood of the people" a foreign word, which has never been found in any Egyptian inscription, should be used. There is more difficulty in understanding the meaning of the first syllables of Zaphnathpaaneah, whose transliteration into the Egyptian character has not yet been satisfactorily made out, and is wisely not attempted by Prof. Sayce. On the date of the oldest element in the Joseph-story, Egyptology has not yet spoken

<sup>1</sup> It is right to note here that Mr. Renouf has stated a little difficulty in connexion with this transliteration, as he considers it can only be done by suppressing the thematic vowel *u*, but this being a short unaccented vowel, not represented in the Egyptian script, might easily be abraded in the transliteration. The hypothesis that *abrek* represents *abarakku* requires even more violent changes.



conclusively. The view that the names in the history can only have originated after the period of Osorkon is very far from having been proved.

The conclusion of Prof. Sayce's study of Genesis is characteristic. "We have seen that in many instances Oriental discovery has shown that such (ancient) documents actually exist in it"; and yet he has not, from first to last, proved in a single instance the undoubted incorporation of a single document. In the case of the Creation and Flood narratives there are close parallelisms and a few words possibly may have been adopted from the Chaldæan source, but, although Prof. Sayce has shown that Oriental archæology illustrates and explains the Genesis narrative, he has failed to prove the real incorporation in it of any documents. He considers that there is ground for reconsidering the literary analysis of the book; and proposes that a fundamental division according to sources should precede the partition on philological grounds according to supposed authorship; the result being that it will cease to be "a mere literary plaything to be sliced and fitted together according to the dictates of modern philology." It is Oriental archæology which, according to him, should be the primary arbiter as to the slicing and refitting of the parts.

In the discussion of the Exodus Prof. Sayce has not added anything to the well-worn theme. The Egyptian monuments are as yet silent on the subject, and we have no guide but tradition. Prof. Sayce has pointed out that the absence of the proper name of the Pharaoh is so contrary to Egyptian custom that it is an argument against the Mosaic authorship of the Book of the Exodus. He has adopted the traditional opinion that Rameses II. was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and Menepthah the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Prof. Petrie's explorations of Pithom have added to our knowledge of Egyptian domestic history, but nothing material concerning the oppression of Israel.

There is no archæological evidence for the view, first put forward by Mr. Greene, which Prof. Sayce takes of the site of the mountain of the law-giving. It is for purely geographical considerations that he departs from the traditional belief in Serbal, or its neighbour, and believes that the genuine mount Sinai lay eastward, and was one of the hills of the mount Seir range.

At this point it would be natural for the Oriental archæologist to take up the consideration of the relation of the ceremonial and civil codes which profess to have been delivered to Israel in the wilderness, and to compare them with the corresponding laws and rituals of other neighbouring peoples at that point of time. There may be something in Prof. Sayce's excuse that the time has not yet come for a systematic comparison; but even with our present knowledge, if the information which can be obtained from the available monuments were judiciously arranged, an interesting chapter might have been written on the comparative morphology of the Hebrew ceremonial observances. There is one advantage in leaving this subject aside, that it becomes unnecessary to refer to the question as to the date of the Deuteronomic code, one of the most burning of the controversies raised by the higher criticism.

Passing by the intermediate periods of the history, we come to the second portion, around which the critical war has been most hotly waged. In the case of the books of Chronicles, Professor Sayce admits, at the outset, that the statements of its author are not exact; that his use of his material was uncritical, and the inferences which he drew were unsound: he so consistently exaggerates numbers, that his unsupported statements must be received with caution. "He cared as little for history, in the modern European sense of the word, as the Oriental of to day, who considers himself at liberty to embellish or modify the narrative he is repeating in accordance with

his fancy, or the moral he wishes to draw from it." These charges he justifies by quoting instances, the mis-spelling of names, the gross exaggeration of the numbers of the armies of Ahaz, Uzziah, and Zerah, and the ignorance that Pul and Tiglath-pileser were two names for the same person.

Nevertheless he wishes, in some sort, to rehabilitate the Chronicler, and so he discusses several of those statements which have been regarded by the critics as of doubtful authenticity. The Chronicler relates that Manasseh, King of Judah, was carried away captive to Babylon, not to Nineveh, by the King of Assyria, and that subsequently he was restored to his kingdom. This happened in the days of Assurbanipal, and Professor Sayce proceeds to show how these statements may possibly be true. Assurbanipal *may* have for some time lived in Babylon, as his father had rebuilt it. He had given Babylon to his brother Samassum-yukin as his province, and he had rebelled against Assurbanipal; and among those who aided him in his revolt were the Kings of Syria and Palestine. One of these, Professor Sayce tells us, was Manasseh. The contemporary compiler of the annals, however, knew nothing of Manasseh. He enumerates the rebels as the people of Akkad, of Aram, and of the sea coast from Akaba to Babsalimitu, Ummanikas, King of Elam, the Kings of Goim, Syria, and Ethiopia, the people of Borsippa, Babylon, Sippara, and Kutha.

This insurrection was quelled by Assurbanipal, whose capital was Nineveh. "What more likely, therefore, than that the disaffected Jewish prince was punished, like so many other princes of his time, by being led into captivity?" "Babylon would have been the most natural place to which the Jewish King could have been brought." But we have in the annals the account of the captivity of other Kings. It was to Nineveh the rebel Kings of Egypt were

brought; to Nineveh, Mergallu, King of Tubal, brought his daughter as a hostage; to the same place came the King of Cilicia and the eldest son of the King of Minni; to Nineveh were brought the Governor of Bitimbi, Vaiteh, King of Arabia, and the spoils of Elam. The annals make no mention of the bringing of any prisoners to Babylon.

The critics having commented on the improbability of Manasseh's having been liberated, Professor Sayce instances Necho the King of Sais, who was restored to his province by the Assyrian King. "Assurbanipal himself had caused Necho to be deposed, and to be brought to Nineveh in iron chains, and yet a little later he allowed him to return to Egypt, and assume once more his royal power." The story in the annals does not quite accord with this. It was the generals of the King who took Necho and brought him to Nineveh; and when he was brought into the presence of Assurbanipal, he at once granted favour, costly presents and honours to Necho, and sent him back to his kingdom of Sais.

Although the monuments are thus silent concerning Manasseh's imprisonment and release, there is nothing improbable in the story itself, except the substitution of Babylon for Nineveh. But when, a few pages farther on, Professor Sayce refers to his bundle of hypotheses as "the corroboration of the account of Manasseh's captivity," and founds on it an argument in support of the acceptance of the Chronicler's history, the basis of his argument seems to be as much an assumption as anything that the critics have said on the other side.

In discussing the book of Esther, Professor Sayce speaks with no uncertain sound. "The woman Esther can have had no existence save in the imagination of a Jewish writer; and the identification of Hadassah with the old Babylonian goddess Istar, would have been the work of an age which had forgotten who Istar was." Ahasuerus he identifies

with Xerxes ; but the only wife of Xerxes known to history was Amestris, daughter of Otanes, married to him before the third year of his reign, and who continued his queen until his death. "Only one conclusion, consequently, seems to be possible. The story of Esther is an example of Jewish Haggadah which has been founded upon one of those semi-historical tales of which the Persian chronicles seem to have been full." In other words, he regards it as a pure fiction of late date.

The book of Jonah is dismissed with a similar verdict. He considers that, from the use of the name King of Nineveh, it must have been written after the complete destruction of the Assyrian Empire, and, therefore, could not have been the work of the contemporary of Jeroboam II. He only suggests Dr. Trumbull's hypothesis, that the whole episode is a variant of the story of the monster Oannes, given by Berossus.

As his conclusion with regard to the book of Daniel is to the effect that it is not historically accurate, the Tract Committee have appended a short note to the effect that some authorities take a different view ; and they refer to the late Professor Fuller's articles in *THE EXPOSITOR*, 3rd Series I., II.

The portion of the book first tested by Professor Sayce is the account of the capture of Babylon. The inscriptions of Cyrus show that Babylon was taken without any fighting. The king Nabonidus had made himself unpopular, and consequently Cyrus made an easy conquest ; so much so that business in Babylon was not suspended, as we know from the existence of contract tablets dated a few days before and a few days after that event.

But Daniel says nothing whatever of a siege. He only tells us that Belshazzar was slain that night. This is not the real difficulty of the passage, which lies in the names Belshazzar and Darius. Belshazzar (Bel-sarra-utzur) was

the eldest son of the King Nabonidus, but he never reigned, nor was he co-regent, nor was he even of the same family as Nebuchadnezzar. Prof. Sayce indeed makes a feeble attempt to make as much as possible of the prince by supposing that while his father Nabonidus remained in the capital busied with his antiquarian pursuits and with his endeavours to centralise the kingdom, "Belshazzar showed himself to the world as a man of action." The only ground for this last statement is that, according to a contract tablet, published by Strassmaier, his steward once made a sale of some wool, and on another occasion one of his servants presented for him some cattle to Bet-Uri at Sippara. The only other reference to him in the monuments is a prayer of his father's, wherein Nabonidus asks that Sinu may fix firmly in his son's heart a sense of awe of the divinity.

Professor Sayce sums up this discussion by the statement of his belief that "the name of Darius and the story of the slaughter of the Chaldean King are alike derived from that unwritten history which in the East of to-day is still made by the people, and which blends together in a single picture the manifold events and personages of the past,"—in plain language, that it is not history at all. With regard to the apocalyptic chapters of Daniel, he regards them as compositions later than the reign of Alexander.

We must pass by Professor Sayce's treatment of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the difficulties concerning which he puts very clearly. They are compilations of the same date as the Chronicles, and not older than 350 B.C.

In conclusion, looking over the entire work, there are two points of view from which we may judge it. In the first place, as to its intrinsic worth as a contribution to Biblical literature, it is a readable exposition of some of those discoveries in Oriental archæology which illustrate the Old Testament, and, as such, it is of considerable value. There are many minor details in which many of those in-

terested in Egyptology and Assyriology will probably not agree with Professor Sayce; but these do not affect the general value of the work in this respect. A considerable part of the book is, as far as the purpose of the work is concerned, little better than padding; for example, the story of the Mohar, the tale of Sineha, and the disquisitions on Palestinian anthropology and on the origin of the alphabet.

The second point of view from which this book must be judged is its relation to the purpose for which it has been written. That object was to test the results of the higher criticism by the discoveries of Oriental archæology. When we compare the general results at which the archæologist has arrived with those of the critics, there is not much to choose between them. Professor Sayce is, of course, at perfect liberty to make what conjectures and inferences he thinks his authorities warrant. He has carefully guarded his position by telling us he writes as an archæologist, and not as a theologian; but one cannot help inquiring, if the archæologist pronounces whole books to be unhistorical, and others to be distorted and falsified, what becomes of the theology which they teach?

If we discount the tendency to assume that his hypothetical conclusions are proved facts, and a certain want of perspective in his treatment of some parts of his subject, we might regard much of his criticism as fair, if it had not been heralded by such a strong and scarcely qualified condemnation of those critics who had gone before him. In his introduction he has told us that the period of scepticism is over, and the period of reconstruction has begun; that the explorer and decipherer have given back to us the old documents and the old history in a new and changed form; but nevertheless substantially the same. If by the old documents and the old history he means the Scriptures and the story contained in them, it can scarcely be claimed

that, as a narrative of the Divine dealing with men, they have fared any better at the hand of Professor Sayce than they have at the hands of any other critics. He has come into the field to show the fallacy of the conclusions of the critics, and has ended by adopting a position not dissimilar from theirs. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge have, like the King of Moab of old, summoned their Balaam from the literature of the East to curse the critics, and lo! he has blessed them altogether.

ALEXANDER MACALISTER.

## ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

### XVII. THE ELECTION OF ISRAEL.

WE have now to consider the Pauline apologetic in relation to the last of the three topics on which it bears, *the Election of Israel*. The materials available for our purpose are contained in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

The subject is very abruptly introduced. There appears to be no connection between the close of chapter eighth and the beginning of chapter ninth. And there is indeed no *logical* connection, but there is a very close *emotional* one. The subject is suggested to the writer's mind on the principle of contrast. He has been expatiating with impassioned eloquence on the peace-giving faith, and inspiring hope of believers in Christ. But when he has ended his song of triumph and paused for a moment to recover breath, the bitter reflection suddenly suggests itself—in all this peace and joy of faith and hope most of my countrymen have no share. It is a reflection most painful to his feelings as a Jew who loves his race, and takes pride in their national prerogatives and privileges. But the fact that