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### CHRIST AND CRITICISM.

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In his "Founders of Old Testament Criticism" Professor Cheyne of Oxford gives the foremost place to Eichhorn. He hails him, in fact, as the founder of the cult. And according to this same authority, what led Eichhorn to enter on his task was "his hope to contribute to the winning back of the educated classes to religion." The rationalism of Germany at the close of the eighteenth century would accept the Bible only on the terms of bringing it down to the level of a human book, and the problem which had to be solved was to get rid of the element of miracle which pervades it. Working on the labours of his predecessors, Eichhorn achieved this to his own satisfaction by appealing to the oriental habit of thought, which seizes upon ultimate causes and ignores intermediate processes. This commended itself on two grounds. It had an undoubted element of truth, and it was consistent with reverence for Holy Scripture. For of the founder of the "Higher Criticism" it was said, what cannot be said of any of his successors, that "faith in that which is holy, even in the miracles of the Bible, was never shattered by Eichhorn in any youthful mind."

In the view of his successors, however, Eichhorn's hypothesis was open to the fatal objection that it was altogether inadequate. So the next generation of critics adopted the more drastic theory that the Mosaic books were "mosaic" in the sense that they were literary forgeries of a late date, composed of materials supplied by ancient documents and the myths and legends of the Hebrew race. And though this theory has been modified from time to time during the last century, it remains substantially the "critical" view of the Pentateuch. But it is open to two main objections, either of which would be fatal. It is inconsistent with the evidence. And it directly challenges the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as a teacher; for one of the few undisputed facts in this controversy is that our Lord accredited the books of Moses as having divine authority.

#### THE TRUE AND THE COUNTERFEIT.

It may be well to deal first with the least important of these objections. And here we must distinguish between the true Higher Criticism and its counterfeit. The rationalistic 'Higher Criticism,' when putting the Pentateuch upon its trial, began with the verdict and then cast about to find the evidence; whereas, true criticism enters upon its inquiries with an open mind and pursues them without prejudice. The difference may be aptly illustrated by the position assumed by a typical French judge and by an ideal English judge in a criminal trial. The one aims at convicting the accused, the other at elucidating the truth. "The proper function of the Higher Criticism is to determine the origin, date, and literary structure of an ancient writing." This is Professor Driver's description of true criticism. But the aim of the counterfeit is to disprove the genuineness of the ancient writings. The justice of this statement is established by the fact that Hebraists and theologians of the highest eminence, whose investigation of the Pentateuch problem has convinced them of the genuineness of the books, are not recognized at all.

In Britain, at least - and I am not competent to speak of Germany or America - no theologian of the first rank has adopted their "assured results." But the judgment of such men as Pusey, Lightfoot and Salmon, not to speak of men who are still with us, they contemptuously ignore; for the rationalistic Higher Critic is not one who investigates the evidence, but one who accepts the verdict.

#### THE PHILOLOGICAL INQUIRY.

If, as its apostles sometimes urge, the Higher Criticism is a purely philological inquiry, two obvious conclusions follow. The first is that its verdict must be in favour of the Mosaic books; for each of the books contains peculiar words suited to the time and circumstances to which it is traditionally assigned. This is admitted, and the critics attribute the presence of such words to the Jesuitical skill of the priestly forgers. But this only lends weight to the further conclusion that Higher Criticism is wholly incompetent to deal with the main issue on which it claims to adjudicate. For the genuineness of the Pentateuch must be decided on the same principles on which the genuineness of ancient documents is dealt with in our courts of justice. And the language of the documents is only one part of the needed evidence, and not the most important part. And fitness for dealing with evidence depends upon qualities to which Hebraists, as such, have no special claim. Indeed, their writings afford signal proofs of their unfitness for inquiries which they insist on regarding as their special preserve.

Take, for example, Professor Driver's grave assertion that the presence of two Greek words in Daniel (they are the names of musical instruments) demand a date for the book subsequent to the Greek conquest. It has been established by Professor Sayce and others that the intercourse between Babylon and Greece in, and before, the days of Nebuchadnezzar would amply account for the presence in the Chaldean capital of musical instruments with Greek names. And Colonel Conder, moreover, - a very high authority - considers the words to be Akkadian, and not Greek at all! But apart from all this, we can imagine the reception that would be given to such a statement by any competent tribunal. The story bears repeating - it is a record of facts - that at a church bazaar in Lincoln some years ago, the alarm was raised that pickpockets were at work, and two ladies had lost their purses. The empty purses were afterwards found in the pocket of the Bishop of the Diocese! On the evidence of the two purses the Bishop should be convicted as a thief, and on the evidence of the two words the book of Daniel should be convicted as a forgery!

#### **HISTORICAL BLUNDER.**

Here is another typical item in the Critics' indictment of Daniel. The book opens by recording Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim, a statement the correctness of which is confirmed by history, sacred and secular. Berossus, the Chaldean historian, tells us that during this expedition Nebuchadnezzar received tidings of his father's death, and that, committing to others the care of his army and of his Jewish and other prisoners, "he himself hastened home across the desert." But the German skeptics, having decided that Daniel was a forgery, had to find evidence to support their verdict. And so they made the brilliant discovery that Berossus was here referring to the expedition of the following year, when Nebuchadnezzar won the battle of Carchemish against the army of the king of Egypt, and that he had not at that time invaded Judea at all. But Carchemish is on the Euphrates, and the idea of "hastening home" from there to Babylon across the desert is worthy of a schoolboy's essay! That he crossed the desert is proof that he set out from Judea; and his Jewish captives were, of course, Daniel and his companion princes. His invasion of Judea took place before his accession, in Jehoiakim's third year, whereas the battle of Carchemish was fought after his accession, in the king of Judah's fourth year, as the biblical books record. But this grotesque blunder of Bertholdt's "Book of Daniel" in the beginning of the nineteenth century is gravely reproduced in Professor Driver's "Book of Daniel" at the beginning of the twentieth century.

#### **CRITICAL PROFANITY.**

But to return to Moses. According to "the critical hypothesis," the books of the Pentateuch are literary forgeries of the Exilic Era, the work of the Jerusalem priests of those evil days. From the Book of Jeremiah we know that those men were profane apostates; and if "the critical hypothesis" be true, they were infinitely worse than even the prophet's inspired denunciations of them indicate. For no eighteenth century atheist ever sank to a lower depth of profanity than is displayed by their use of the Sacred Name. In the preface to his "Darkness and Dawn," Dean Farrar claims that he "never touches the early preachers of Christianity with the finger of fiction." When his story makes Apostles speak, he has "confined their words to the words of a revelation." But the authors of the Pentateuch "touched with the finger of fiction" not only the holy men of the ancient days, but their Jehovah God. "Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying." This and kindred formulas are repeated times without number in the Mosaic books. If this be romance, a lower type of profanity is inconceivable, unless it be that of the man who fails to be shocked and revolted by it.

But no; facts prove that this judgment is unjust. For men of unfeigned piety and deep reverence for

divine things can be so blinded by the superstitions of "religion" that the imprimatur of the church enables them to regard these discredited books as Holy Scripture. As critics they brand the Pentateuch as a tissue of myth and legend and fraud, but as religionists they assure us that this "implies no denial of its inspiration or disparagement of its contents."

### **ERRORS REFUTED BY FACTS.**

In controversy it is of the greatest importance to allow opponents to state their position in their own words; and here is Professor Driver's statement of the case against the Books of Moses:

*"We can only argue on grounds of probability derived from our view of the progress of the art of writing, or of literary composition, or of the rise and growth of the prophetic tone and feeling in ancient Israel, or of the period at which the traditions contained in the narratives might have taken shape, or of the probability that they would have been written down before the impetus given to culture by the monarchy had taken effect, and similar considerations, for estimating most of which, though plausible arguments on one side or the other may be advanced, a standard on which we can confidently rely scarcely admits of being fixed."* ("Introduction," 6th ed., page 123.)

This modest reference to "literary composition" and "the art of writing" is characteristic. It is intended to gloss over the abandonment of one of the chief points in the original attack. Had "Driver's Introduction" appeared twenty years earlier, the assumption that such a literature as the Pentateuch could belong to the age of Moses would doubtless have been branded as an anachronism. For one of the main grounds on which the books were assigned to the latter days of the monarchy was that the Hebrews of six centuries earlier were an illiterate people. And after that error had been refuted by archaeological discoveries, it was still maintained that a code of laws so advanced, and so elaborate, as that of Moses could not have originated in such an age. This figment, however, was in its turn exploded, when the spade of the explorer brought to light the now famous Code of Khammurabi, the Amraphel of Genesis, who was king of Babylon in the time of Abraham. Instead, however, of donning the white sheet when confronted by this new witness, the critics, with great effrontery, pointed to the newly-found Code as the original of the laws of Sinai. Such a conclusion is natural on the part of men who treat the Pentateuch as merely human. But the critics cannot have it both ways. The Moses who copied Khammurabi must have been the real Moses of the Exodus, and not the mythical Moses of the Exile, who wrote long centuries after Khammurabi had been forgotten!

### **AN INCREDIBLE THEORY.**

The evidence of the Khammurabi Code refutes an important count in the critics' indictment of the Pentateuch; but we can call another witness whose testimony demolishes their whole case. The Pentateuch, as we all know, and the Pentateuch alone, constitutes the Bible of the Samaritans. Who, then, were the Samaritans? And how and when did they obtain the Pentateuch? Here again the critics shall speak for themselves. Among the distinguished men who have championed their crusade in Britain there has been none more esteemed, none more scholarly, than the late Professor Robertson Smith; and here is an extract from his "Samaritans" article in the "Encyclopedia Britannica":

"They (the Samaritans) regard themselves as Israelites, descendants of the ten tribes, and claim to possess the orthodox religion of Moses \* \* \* The priestly law, which is throughout based on the practice of the priests in Jerusalem before the Captivity, was reduced to form after the Exile, and was published by Ezra as the law of the rebuilt temple of Zion. The Samaritans must, therefore, have derived their Pentateuch from the Jews after Ezra's reforms." And in the same paragraph he says that, according to the contention of the Samaritans, "not only the temple of Zion, but the earlier temple of Shiloh and the priesthood of Eli, were schismatical." And yet, as he goes on to say, "the Samaritan religion was built on the Pentateuch alone."

Now mark what this implies. We know something of racial bitterness. We know more, unfortunately, of the fierce bitterness of religious strife. And both these elements combined to alienate the Samaritans from the Jews. But more than this, in the post-exilic period distrust and dislike were turned to intense hatred-"abhorrence" is Robertson Smith's word- by the sternness and contempt with which the Jews spurned their proffered help in the work of reconstruction at Jerusalem, and refused to acknowledge them in any way. And yet we are asked to believe that, at this very time and in these very circumstances, the Samaritans, while hating the Jews much as Orangemen hate the Jesuits, and denouncing the whole Jewish cult as schismatical, not only accepted these Jewish books relating to that cult as the "service books" of their own ritual, but adopted them as their "Bible," to the exclusion

even of the writings of their own Israelite prophets, and the venerated and sacred books which record the history of their kings. In the whole range of controversy, religious or secular, was there ever propounded a theory more utterly incredible and preposterous!

#### **ANOTHER PREPOSTEROUS POSITION.**

No less preposterous are the grounds on which this conclusion is commended to us. Here is a statement of them, quoted from the standard textbook of the cult, Hasting's "Bible Dictionary": ., *"There is at least one valid ground for the conclusion that the Pentateuch was first accepted by the Samaritans after the Exile. Why was their request to be allowed to take part in the building of the second temple refused by the heads of the Jerusalem community? Very probably because the Jews were aware that the Samaritans did not as yet possess the Law-Book. It is hard to suppose that otherwise they would have met with this refusal. Further, anyone who, like the present writer, regards the modern criticism of the Pentateuch as essentially correct, has a second decisive reason for adopting the above view."* (Professor Konig's article, "Samaritan Pentateuch," page 68.)

Here are two "decisive reasons" for holding that "the Pentateuch was first accepted by the Samaritans after the Exile." First, because "very probably" it was because they had not those forged books that the Jews spurned their help; and so they went home and adopted the forged books as their Bible. And, secondly, because criticism has proved that the books were not in existence till then. To characterize the writings of these scholars as they deserve is not a grateful task but the time has come to throw off reserve, when such drivel as this is gravely put forward to induce us to tear from our Bible the Holy Scriptures on which our Divine Lord based His claims to Messiahship.

#### **THE IDEA OF SACRIFICE A REVELATION.**

The refutation of the Higher Criticism does not prove that the Pentateuch is inspired of God. The writer who would set himself to establish such a thesis as that within the limits of a Review Article might well be admired for his enthusiasm and daring, but certainly not for his modesty or discretion. Neither does it decide questions which lie within the legitimate province of the true Higher Criticism, as the authorship of Genesis. It is incredible that for the thousands of years that elapsed before the days of Moses, God left His people on earth without a revelation. It is plain, moreover, that many of the ordinances divinely entrusted to Moses were but a renewal of an earlier revelation. The religion of Babylon is clear evidence of such a primeval revelation. How else can the universality of sacrifice be accounted for? Could such a practice have originated in a human brain? If some demented creature conceived the idea that killing a beast before his enemy's door would propitiate him, his neighbours would no doubt have suppressed him. And if he evolved the belief that his god would be appeased by such an offensive practice, he must have supposed his god to be as mad as himself. The fact that sacrifice prevailed among all races can be explained only by a primeval revelation. And the Bible student will recognize that God thus sought to impress on men that death was the penalty of sin, and to lead them to look forward to a great blood shedding that would bring life and blessing to mankind. But Babylon was to the ancient world what Rome has been to Christendom. It corrupted every divine ordinance and truth, and perpetuated them as thus corrupted. And in the Pentateuch we have the divine re-issue of the true cult. The figment that the debased and corrupt version was the original may satisfy some professors of Hebrew, but no one who has any practical knowledge of human nature would entertain it.

#### **INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE.**

At this stage, however, what concerns us is not the divine authority of the books, but the human error and folly of the critical attack upon them. The only historical basis of that attack is the fact that in the revival under Josiah, "the book of the law" was found in the temple by Hilkiah, the high priest, to whom the young king entrusted the duty of cleansing and renovating the long neglected shrine. A most natural discovery it was, seeing that Moses had in express terms commanded that it should be kept there (2 Kings 22:8; Deut. 31:26). But according to the critics, the whole business was a detestable trick of the priests. For they it was who forged the books and invented the command, and then hid the product of their infamous work where they knew it would be found.

And apart from this, the only foundation for "the assured results of modern criticism," as they themselves acknowledge, consists of "grounds of probability" and "plausible arguments"! In no civilized country would an habitual criminal be convicted of petty larceny on such evidence as this; and yet it is on these grounds that we are called upon to give up the sacred books which our Divine Lord accredited as "the Word of God" and made the basis of His doctrinal teaching.

## **CHRIST OR CRITICISM?**

And this brings us to the second, and incomparably the graver, objection to "the assured results of modern criticism." That the Lord Jesus Christ identified Himself with the Hebrew Scriptures, and in a very special way with the Book of Moses, no one disputes. And this being so, we must make choice between Christ and Criticism. For if "the critical hypothesis" of the Pentateuch be sustained, the conclusion is seemingly inevitable, either that He was not divine, or that the records of His teaching are untrustworthy.

Which alternative shall we adopt? If the second, then every claim to inspiration must be abandoned, and agnosticism must supplant faith in the case of every fearless thinker. Inspiration is far too great a question for incidental treatment here; but two remarks with respect to it may not be inopportune. Behind the frauds of Spiritualism there lies the fact, attested by men of high character, some of whom are eminent as scientists and scholars, that definite communications are received in precise words from the world of spirits. And this being so, to deny that the Spirit of God could thus communicate truth to men, or, in other words, to reject verbal inspiration on a priori grounds, betrays the stupidity of systematized unbelief. And, secondly, it is amazing that any one who regards the coming of Christ as God's supreme revelation of Himself can imagine that (to put it on no higher ground than "Providence") the Divine Spirit could fail to ensure that mankind should have a trustworthy and true record of His mission and His teaching.

### **A MORE HOPELESS DILEMMA.**

But if the Gospel narrative be authentic, we are driven back upon the alternative that He of whom they speak could not be divine. "Not so," the critics protest, "for did He not Himself confess His ignorance? And is not this explained by the Apostle's statement that in His humiliation He emptied Himself of His Deity?" And the inference drawn from this (to quote the standard text-book of the cult) is that the Lord of Glory "held the current Jewish notions respecting the divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament." But even if this conclusion - as portentous as it is profane - could be established, instead of affording an escape from the dilemma in which the Higher Criticism involves its votaries, it would only serve to make that dilemma more hopeless and more terrible. For what chiefly concerns us is not that, the Lord's doctrinal teaching was false, but that in unequivocal terms, and with extreme solemnity, He declared again and again that His teaching was not His own but His Father's, and that the very words in which He conveyed it were God-given.

A few years ago the devout were distressed by the proceedings of a certain Chicago "prophet," who claimed divine authority for his lucubrations. Kindly disposed people, rejecting a severer estimate of the man and his platform utterances, regarded him merely as a profane fool. Shall the critics betray us into forming a similarly indulgent estimate of -- My pen refuses to complete the sentence!

And will it be believed that the only scriptural basis offered us for this astounding position is a verse in one of the Gospels and a word in one of the Epistles! Passing strange it is that men who handle Holy Scripture with such freedom when it conflicts with their "assured results" should attach such enormous importance to an isolated verse or a single word, when it can be misused to support them. The verse is Mark 13 :32, where the Lord says, with reference to His coming again: "Of that day and hour knoweth no one; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." But this follows immediately upon the words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

### **THE WORDS OF GOD.**

The Lord's words were not "inspired"; they were the words of God in a still higher sense. "The people were astonished at His teaching," we are told, "for he taught them as one having exousia." The word occurs again in Acts 1:7, where He says that times and seasons "the Father hath put in His own exousia." And this is explained by Phil. 2 :6, 7: "He counted it not a prize (or a thing to be grasped) to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself"- the word on which the kenosis theory of the critics depends. And He not only stripped Himself of His glory as God; He gave up His liberty as a man. For He never spoke His own words, but only the words which the Father gave Him to speak. And this was the limitation of His "authority"; so that, beyond what the Father gave Him to speak, He knew nothing and was silent. But when He spoke, "He taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes." From their scribes they were used to receive definite teaching, but it was teaching based on "the law and the prophets." But here was One who stood apart and

taught them from a wholly different plane. "For," He declared, "I spake not from Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. \* \* \* The things, therefore, which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak" (John 12:49, 50, R. V.).

And let us not forget that it was not merely the substance of His teaching that was divine, but the very language in which it was conveyed. So that in His prayer on the night of the betrayal He could say, not only "I have given them Thy word," but "I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me."\* His words, therefore, about Moses and the Hebrew Scriptures were not, as the critics, with such daring and seeming profanity, maintain, the lucubrations of a superstitious and ignorant Jew; they were the words of God, and conveyed truth that was divine and eternal.

When in the dark days of the Exile, God needed a prophet who would speak only as He gave him words, He struck Ezekiel dumb. Two judgments already rested on that people - the seventy years' Servitude to Babylon, and then the Captivity - and they were warned that continued impenitence would bring on them the still more terrible judgment of the seventy years' desolations. And till that last judgment fell, Ezekiel remained dumb (Ezek. 3 :26; 24:27; 33:22). But the Lord Jesus Christ needed no such discipline. He came to do the Father's will, and no words ever passed His lips save the words given Him to speak.

In this connection, moreover, two facts which are strangely overlooked claim prominent notice. The first is that in Mark 13 the antithesis is not at all between man and God, but between the Son of God and the Father. And the second is that He had been re-invested with all that, according to Phil. 2, He laid aside in coming into the world. "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father," He declared; and this at a time when the proofs that "He was despised and rejected of men" were pressing on Him. His reassuming the glory awaited His return to heaven, but here on earth the all things were already His (Matt. 11:27).

#### **AFTER THE KENOSIS.**

The foregoing is surely an adequate reply to the kenosis figment of the critics; but if any should still doubt or cavil, there is another answer which is complete and crushing. Whatever may have been the limitations under which He rested during His ministry on earth, He was released from them when He rose from the dead. And it was in His post-resurrection teaching that He gave the fullest and clearest testimony to the Hebrew Scriptures. Then it was that, "beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And again, confirming all His previous teaching about those Scriptures, "He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."

And the record adds: "Then opened He their mind that they might understand the Scriptures." And the rest of the New Testament is the fruit of that ministry, enlarged and unfolded by the Holy Spirit given to lead them into all truth. And in every part of the New Testament the Divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, and especially of the Books of Moses, is either taught or assumed.

#### **THE VITAL ISSUE.**

Certain it is, then, that the vital issue in this controversy is not the value of the Pentateuch, but the Deity of Christ. And yet the present article does not pretend to deal with the truth of the Deity. Its humble aim is not even to establish the authority of the Scriptures, but merely to discredit the critical attack upon them by exposing its real character and its utter feebleness. The writer's method, therefore, has been mainly destructive criticism, the critics' favorite weapon being thus turned against themselves.

#### **A DEMAND FOR CORRECT STATEMENT.**

One cannot but feel distress at having to accord such treatment to certain distinguished men whose reverence for divine things is beyond reproach. A like distress is felt at times by those who have experience in dealing with sedition, or in suppressing riots. But when men who are entitled to consideration and respect thrust themselves into "the line of fire," they must take the consequences. These distinguished men will not fail to receive to the full the deference to which they are entitled, if only they will dissociate themselves from the dishonest claptrap of this crusade ("the assured results of modern criticism"; "all scholars are with us"; and so on- bluster and falsehood by which the weak and ignorant are browbeaten or deceived) and acknowledge that their "assured results" are mere hypotheses, repudiated by Hebraists and theologians as competent and eminent as themselves.

### **THINGS TO FEAR.**

The effects of this "Higher Criticism" are extremely grave. For it has dethroned the Bible in the home, and the good, old practice of "family worship" is rapidly dying out. And great national interests also are involved. For who can doubt that the prosperity and power of the Protestant nations of the world are due to the influence of the Bible upon character and conduct? Races of men who for generations have been taught to think for themselves in matters of the highest moment will naturally excel in every sphere of effort or of enterprise. And more than this, no one who is trained in the fear of God will fail in his duty to his neighbour, but will prove himself a good citizen. But the dethronement of the Bible leads practically to the dethronement of God; and in Germany and America, and now in England, the effects of this are declaring themselves in ways, and to an extent, well fitted to cause anxiety for the future.

### **CHRIST SUPREME.**

If a personal word may be pardoned in conclusion, the writer would appeal to every book he has written in proof that he is no champion of a rigid, traditional "orthodoxy."

With a single limitation, he would advocate full and free criticism of Holy Scripture. And that one limitation is that the words of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be deemed a bar to criticism and "an end of controversy" on every subject expressly dealt with in His teaching. "The Son of God is come"; and by Him came both grace and TRUTH. And from His hand it is that we have received the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

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