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*THE CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.*

THE attacks which have recently been directed against critics of the Old Testament and their criticism, though doubtless made with all sincerity, have occasionally been marked with an exaggeration and misrepresentation which their authors appear to regard as equivalent to argument and proof. Whilst one may deprecate the introduction of tactics which, however suitable upon a platform, are out of place in a serious question of this character, it is important to remember, *first*, that the opponents to criticism do not pay sufficient regard to the needs of those who study the Old Testament more especially for the light it throws upon ancient history, custom and thought; and, *secondly*, that the onslaughts are not directed against any new phase of criticism, but against a study which has been before the English public for a quarter of a century. When Robertson Smith published his *Old Testament in the Jewish Church* in 1881, one of his chief aims was to show (which he did with his accustomed lucidity) that "Biblical criticism is not the invention of modern scholars, but the legitimate interpretation of historical facts"; and when the great Dutch critic, Kuenen, wrote his masterly essays on "the critical method" in the *Modern Review* in 1880, he refuted once and for all the various objections which were raised at that period and which a new generation is raising now. It is enough to say, perhaps, that the works of these and other great masters have silenced whatever doubts one may have had regarding the legitimacy of Old Testament criticism, and that those who use the book, for other than devotional purposes alone, find themselves unable to return to the standpoint of pre-critical days.

Now, much as the uncomplimentary estimate of Biblical criticism may be deplored, it seems only just to recognize

that the responsibility for it lies in great measure with those whose position gives their opinions the weight of authority. The ordinary man knows little enough, it may be, of historical criticism, much less of its application to Biblical study, and so long as his religious convictions are based upon a certain conception of the history of Israel, so long must critical results prove an offence to him. For it cannot be ignored that these results often differ most remarkably from the apparently plain statement of the Old Testament itself, and those who have not the patience, or even the inclination, to consider critical methods are sometimes apt to jump at conclusions which are creditable neither to their own sense of impartiality nor to Biblical scholars. Hence, it is scarcely surprising, when uncomplimentary estimates are held by men whose training has ostensibly fitted them to speak *ex cathedrâ*, that many will be more content to rely upon the judgment of those authorities than to endeavour to form an independent opinion for themselves.

The modern criticism of the Old Testament did not owe its origin to anti-semitism or to the Inquisition, as Dr. Reich has vainly argued, but rather to the Reformation and to the general development of thought that followed it. The new desire to understand ancient history intelligently, the curiosity of man to study himself and the records of his early days, combined with a freer though not less reverent study of the Bible itself, were the factors that set in motion the work of criticism. The study of history, like history-writing itself, was of slow growth, and many were the steps to be trodden before the study could make progress. Hebrew scholarship had to sever its dependence upon Jewish exegesis and probe for itself. Long ago one argued hotly over the antiquity of the Hebrew vowel-points, then it became a question of the consonantal text.

Formerly, one relied upon translations, now linguistic research seeks to determine the original text, to decide where the translation can be improved and where it must remain obscure. The text of the Old Testament has been traced back beyond the oldest MSS. (all relatively modern) to the early centuries of this era, and is found to have remained practically unchanged for nearly 1,800 years. At an earlier stage there were other recensions; the evidence of ancient versions, contemporary writings (e.g. the Book of Jubilees), and the Nash papyrus in the University Library at Cambridge prove this. Hence the text which was selected by the Jews many centuries ago must be studied in its relation to the evidence of other texts, so far as they can be recovered; the pursuit is intricate but instructive, and if it be "legitimate," the legitimacy of literary criticism at once follows. The historian, at all events, is inevitably obliged to take into account the existence of these other recensions, and to recognize that, before the Christian era, there was historical material which contains important differences from the accepted text.

To the theologian, the question of the Canon now arises; and since he owes it to the Jewish Synagogue, it is necessary for him to inquire whether it was necessarily infallible. For the historian it would be an arbitrary procedure to confine his criticism to those writings which were *not* included in the Canon. It is his duty to use all the available sources to obtain an idea of the land and people in whose midst these writings took their birth. With this object no subsidiary subject can be ignored; the bearings of comparative history, archaeology, sociology, etc., must be steadily kept in view in order to make the Old Testament a living record, and not a dead letter from the past. By systematic study he endeavours to ascertain the internal characteristics of the documents; and if duplicate narratives,

inconsistencies or contradictions prove the hand of compilers in the Old Testament, this is precisely the experience of those who handle the non-canonical writings,<sup>1</sup> and, as Oriental students find, is a familiar trait of those whose methods of composition were not the same as ours. A thorough acquaintance with the general trend of the history and religion of Israel combined with renewed investigation of the literary features shows that in the course of compilation passages of different ages, with different standpoints, have been brought together. Again, when the Book of Chronicles is compared with the Books of Samuel and Kings, it is impossible not to recognize the growth in religious ideas and the different conceptions of history-writing at different periods. The Book of Jubilees is not in the Jewish Canon, but it is no less valuable for the light it sheds upon later developments. In the writings of the Talmud one perceives that the work of evolution has not ceased, and thus one obtains a clear conception of the state of thought at certain definite periods. Impartial study leads to the conclusion that writers represent people or events in accordance with the particular standpoint of their age, and the historian is bound to take notice of this phase.

It has been found that two distinct accounts are given of Saul's election as king; they cannot be reconciled as they stand, and one of them bears the clearest traces of religious views which presuppose a lengthy existence of a monarchy. It is no more than "systematic common-

<sup>1</sup> For example, the problems which are raised by a critical examination of the Ascension of Isaiah presuppose a compilation from three distinct works, and practically all scholars who have investigated the book have been forced to recognize a plurality of authorship. It is noteworthy that the present complicated arrangement of the contents, contrary to chronology, and with many internal inconsistencies, passed unchanged until a Greek writer took it in hand and attempted to reduce it to order (Prof. R. H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, pp. xxxix. sqq.). The Oriental mind, it has been observed, has not the Aryan habits of precision.

sense" which *forces* the historian to prefer the earlier one, which proves to be naturally adapted to the history of the period, whilst the later becomes a valuable document for his conception of thought after Israel had had a sad experience of royalty. Or again, the Old Testament presents three distinct types of David: the valiant warrior and king of the Books of Samuel, the founder of the ritual of Jerusalem in Chronicles, and the religious poet of the superscriptions of the Psalms. There are points of contact, but it is impossible to view them as different aspects of the same character, nor can the three be united in our conception of the David of history. To maintain the hypothesis of the three types would be, as Kuenen says, "a psychological absurdity," and psychological considerations must have weight. Criticism, however, finds the key to the problem in the "ever-increasing appreciation of his person and his work as the unifier of Israel," and can point to changes in the religious convictions of Israel which correspond to the changes in the development of the ancient tradition.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of critical study a number of conclusions have been reached concerning which the opinion of critics is unanimous, and without these results an *intelligent* conception of the history of Israel is impossible. No doubt there have been some who have taken critical views at second-hand and have come to the conclusion that the study is futile and "bankrupt," but there are many more who have

<sup>1</sup> Where the historical critic is unable to institute a comparison with earlier narratives, but has only relatively late records, there is some room for subjectivity, and his conclusions must be based upon the historical continuity of the particular period, and a variety of other considerations. Naturally, accuracy in personal names, topography, local colouring and the like, are not enough by themselves to prove the historicity of a narrative; and although this would be freely admitted in the case of (say) the Book of Judith, the impartial critic will not refuse to apply the principle to a *canonical* work (e.g. Esther, Daniel).

reached critical opinions only with the greatest reluctance, after having fully satisfied themselves that these and the methods by which they are obtained are sound. This fact sometimes appears to be overlooked by those who are opposed to criticism. It must be admitted that there are many tentative judgments attaching to issues of greater or less importance which have not stood the test of time ; and though they may stimulate inquiry in special directions, it seems very certain (from recent controversy) that they are injurious in so far as they are apt to be pilloried as characteristic specimens of Old Testament criticism in general. But one may confidently assert that a view which marks any advance upon the "average opinion" meets with no more rigorous or searching criticism than among Bible critics themselves, and whatever general advance the future may witness will be based entirely upon the general progress of human knowledge.

To overthrow the results of criticism it would be necessary to prove that the Old Testament originated in a manner which finds no parallel in the literature of the ancient Orient ; that the ordinary methods of research which are habitually applied to other historical studies are ineligible when the Old Testament is concerned ; and that the cumulative evidence from the whole of the Old Testament (and not from one portion only) cannot stand before the cumulative evidence from the departments of comparative religion, anthropology or archaeology. Quite apart from theological questions, the Old Testament is a unique mine for the student of ancient thought, and those who are opposed to its criticism should consider on what grounds the scientific and comprehensive methods which are usually employed in other branches of research should be withheld in this one particular instance.

Now, it is a not uncommon belief that archaeology has

destroyed literary criticism and its results, that the spade has overthrown the critics' house of cards, that the archaeological method is objective, resting upon a basis of verifiable facts, whilst literary criticism is subjective, resting on the unsupported and unsupportable assumptions of modern scholars; and, finally, that the only test of the truthfulness of ancient history which is scientifically acceptable is that of contemporaneous evidence. Such statements on examination prove to originate in an ignorance of the history and the methods of criticism, from an insufficient acquaintance with archaeological evidence, or from incorrect or illogical inferences from the facts.<sup>1</sup> In many cases they are made with unjustifiable dogmatism, and are clothed in suitable technical terminology; thus they purport to be entirely conclusive, and consequently often prove irresistible to those who do not look much below the surface. Further, it is singularly noteworthy that those who are the first to condemn the methodical study of the Old Testament are often most prone to employ a system of haphazard and arbitrary criticism of their own without discrimination, or even depth of learning.

It must be perfectly plain that scientific research compels us to modify the familiar views which have so long been held regarding the early chapters in Genesis. Archaeological discoveries, in their turn, have proved that the same chapters are not trustworthy *historical* records. If the permanent value of the Old Testament has not been impaired by the light of science and archaeology upon Genesis i.-xi., there is little reason to fear the results of

<sup>1</sup> This has been rightly pointed out by Prof. Driver in his essay on "Hebrew Authority" in Hogarth's *Authority and Archaeology*, pp. 143 sqq.; by Dr. G. B. Gray, in his criticism of Prof. Sayce's *Early History of the Hebrews*, in the *EXPOSITOR*, May, 1898; and by Prof. A. A. Bevan in his criticism of the same production in the *Critical Review*, 1898, pp. 131-135.



criticism. It must be recognized that *some* criticism is demanded by the facts. The familiar view that the Khabiri of the fifteenth century B.C. were the Israelites ignores the testimony of Exodus; the equally prevalent identification of Khammurabi of Babylon with Amraphel the contemporary of Abraham does violence to the chronology of Genesis, and those who believe that the Purusati of the Egyptian monuments were the Philistines must explain the appearance of this people in the days of Isaac. It is easy to strike out arbitrarily here or there, but the critical "theory" had assigned the chronology of Genesis to the post-exilic age independently of the evidence of archaeology, and Genesis xxvi. had been ascribed in its present form to about the eighth century before the archaeologists had renewed their interest] in the Philistines. No single archaeological view of the Exodus of the Israelites does justice to the literary traditions preserved in the Bible, although by arbitrary selection of the data and by plausible reasoning *a route* may be confidently discovered. But the anarchy of criticism, which archaeological writers often favour is futile; and the anxiety to maintain certain traditional standpoints (sometimes of no essential importance) leads to the perpetration of—as Wellhausen has said—"a number of heresies by way of gratification."<sup>1</sup> By fallacious argument, by confusion of fact and tradition, of truth and deduction, much harm can be and has been done in the name of archaeology; and the halo around the evidence of contemporary monuments and the "tangible" objects unearthed by the spade has frequently led unthinking minds to the conviction that the peculiar construction which has been placed upon them is as real as the precious objects themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Prof. Bevan's remarks upon the attempts of apologists to reconcile the results of the criticism of Daniel with orthodoxy (*Daniel*, p. 7 seq.).

No one denies the importance of archaeology in Old Testament study; and if the welcome extended to it has sometimes been tardy, the explanation must be sought in the fact that the critical method requires that its evidence should be reliable. But archaeology is of all studies one of the most recent to be pursued scientifically; it has had to contend with enormous difficulties, its progress has been slow, and in its earlier stages, at least, there was necessarily an absence of finality in its conclusions. To rely implicitly upon the interpretation of inscriptions would have been rash; and until knowledge of pottery and forms of art had advanced, it would have been precarious to set archaeological theory above the evidence of the literary documents. Hence Biblical criticism, without neglecting the provisional results of archaeology in the past, has pursued its way independently, and constantly checking its conclusions in the light of external evidence has not found itself obliged to modify anything of importance.

It must be remembered that even archaeological and monumental facts are based partly upon the results of cumulative evidence and partly upon the literary criticism of monuments themselves, and in this and in other respects there is a similarity of method between Biblical and archaeological research. There is nothing esoteric about the study; neither the archaeologist nor the Biblical critic lays claim to secret knowledge to which he alone has access. Herein lies the root of the not infrequent objection to Biblical criticism when opponents protest that they fail to see in the Old Testament the evidence upon which the critics base their views, although they will readily grant that archaeological research requires a special training of its own. It is self-evident that no one who has not made the necessary preliminary study is in a position to estimate correctly the true significance of unearthed objects, or of a

half-excavated site ; and if this requires a trained eye, why should it be doubted that historical study is something deeper than the mere reading of documents ? It is true that strong religious convictions and presuppositions are not conducive to the impartial investigation of history ; but the contempt which has sometimes been poured upon the critic's discovery of novelties in records which have been in the hands of everyone for ages is as generous as to ridicule that science which treats of the constitution and structure of the earth's crust, and to ignore the fact that the spirit of scientific investigation is of modern growth and that nowhere are the data so complicated as in the study of human thought. And it follows from this that if the literary critic is incompetent to express an opinion upon archaeological facts unless he possess the necessary knowledge, the archaeologist or expert in another branch of research who resorts to literary evidence is not *de facto* gifted with historical judgment. Perhaps an honest recognition of this would remove the mutual suspicion between archaeology and Old Testament criticism, which, so far as the latter is concerned, is extended, not to facts and undisputed evidence, but to the deductions and inferences sometimes based upon them. It is to be added also that whilst there are unfortunately only comparatively few trained archaeologists, the number of Biblical critics is not inconsiderable ; and whilst it seems only reasonable that a certain amount of weight should be laid upon the unanimity of the latter in the leading issues, there is no little divergence of opinion among the former in the important matters of Biblical interest. Hence, although one is anxious to express one's appreciation of the work of archaeological experts, it is only natural that the critic should make a mental reservation in those cases where he finds that the expert has little or no support among his colleagues. This elementary principle is fre-

quently overlooked, with the result that the inferences of one isolated archaeologist will obtain more credence than the unanimous view of literary critics of all sects and schools simply because there has been a failure to perceive that there is no logical connexion between reliable facts and unreliable inferences.

The scepticism of archaeologists towards literary criticism is due chiefly, perhaps, to a failure to appreciate the methods of historical criticism. The nature of literary evidence *per se*, however, is fully admitted. Professor Sayce, himself a champion of archaeology *versus* literary criticism, has observed, "as every one knows who has studied the historical books of the Old Testament, the position of a narrative is no indication of its right chronological place; the compiler, in arranging his material, never scrupled to subordinate chronological to other considerations."<sup>1</sup> Although Professor Sayce may not hold this opinion to-day, the evidence upon which it is based remains the same and presents the same complexity. His attitude in recent years has been to deny the possibility of analysing a composite source. But to base objections upon the limitations of one's personal knowledge or ability is not argument, and Professor Sayce exemplifies his absolute failure to understand the subject he criticizes when he challenges Englishmen to distinguish the several portions of the composite labours of a Besant and Rice. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the two cases are not parallel, and that it is from the fact that the Pentateuch contains the marks of different styles, separate representations and the like, that criticism has been able to make progress.

The so-called "proofs" which Professor Sayce has been

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Review*, Jan. 1884, pp. 158 sqq.; cf. his *Monuments*, pp. 31, 34; *Hist. of Heb.* 129; *Mon. Facts*, 45. See also Prof. Petrie, *Methods and Aims in Archaeology*, p. 138.

accustomed to adduce (for many years past) are singularly wide of the mark. Again and again he proclaims to the world the antiquity of writing, as though the work of the literary or historical critic were nullified by his discovery. His assertion that literary (and consequently historical) criticism is based upon an assumption which denies the antiquity of writing is so baseless that it would deserve contemptuous silence were it not so repeatedly stated. To point to indubitable ancient monuments as a proof that "the critical theory crumbles into dust" is fallacious, for Biblical criticism has never proceeded upon the assumption in question, and it is illogical to suppose that the fact that writing was known in the time of Moses proves that he wrote the books which Hebrew tradition has ascribed to him. This confusion of "monumental facts and fancies" defies logic and ignores the repeated denial and repudiation of critics, and one can only find comfort in the thought that the insistent popularization of misstatements and misrepresentations, like criticism itself, can never destroy the truth.

Professor Sayce has very truly observed, on one occasion, that it is impossible to "understand the literature of the Orient aright without becoming Orientals ourselves, or interpret the history of the past without divesting ourselves as it were of modern dress." The reproduction in oneself of the intuitions of the past by throwing oneself back into antiquity, which Littré demanded and Renan claimed, is naturally indispensable; but Professor Sayce has the knack of failing to recognize the natural concomitants of his principles, since, as Littré has insisted, it is equally indispensable that the "spirit should remain modern." Without the "modern spirit" it is impossible to understand the different types of David or the numerous instances of varying traditions, whilst it is only by "becoming Orientals ourselves" that we appreciate their significance and can read

them in the light in which they appealed to contemporaries. In point of fact, an acquaintance with Oriental methods fully justifies critical results; and it is hardly necessary to add that the archaeologist must inevitably display the "modern spirit" when he determines the historical value of Egyptian papyri, or finds the same "tendency writing" which, when the Old Testament is in question, raises protests.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, when Professor Sayce complains that the Old Testament is criticized as though it were the production of a modern European, he is really objecting to the application of principles of modern research employed by all historians and even by archaeologists.

As an interesting example of archaeological *versus* critical argument, the much debated question of the patriarchal period may be selected. The Hebrew tradition that the Hittites were in Canaan in Abraham's day seems to find support in Professor Sayce's argument from Egyptian evidence that the Pharaohs were destroying the "palaces of the Hittites" at the beginning of the twelfth dynasty, and in his statement that "archaeology has shown that the painted pottery discovered in the earlier strata of Lachish and Gezer had its original home in Northern Cappadocia, and is an enduring evidence of Hittite culture and trade."<sup>2</sup> On the Babylonian evidence, the record in Genesis xxiii. has been regarded as a faithful picture of Babylonian commercial transactions such as only existed "in the Abrahamic age," and what capital has been made of the testimony of the monuments to the accuracy of the great invasion in Genesis xiv. is only too well known. Considering that Biblical critics still maintain that the Hebrew narratives in their present form are several centuries later,

<sup>1</sup> An extremely interesting example is given by Professor Petrie in his *History of Egypt*, ii. p. 69 seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Contemporary Review*, August 1905, p. 274; cf. *Biblical World*, xxvi. p. 30.

it would be perhaps scarcely astonishing if some people were content to reject the claims of Biblical criticism without subjecting the arguments on one side or the other to an impartial scrutiny.

Now, the critics do not deny that a document may contain historical material centuries older than its present setting, and should excavation unearth a cuneiform record<sup>1</sup> containing the above, the critical position would not be endangered. The present internal peculiarities which critics have observed would not be removed by this interesting discovery if it consisted merely of a cuneiform original of existing documents. Robertson Smith, whose qualifications to pronounce upon Oriental custom are undeniable, has stated that "if we accept the picture presented in Genesis literally, it displays a miraculous life"; for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to have wandered as aliens from their own kin without becoming the protected dependents of another kin "is a standing miracle, and on this miracle everything else in the history of Genesis depends." Can cuneiform tablets be expected to remove this, when the very Amarna Letters themselves have proved that in the fifteenth century, at least, Palestine was in a state of internal confusion in which there is no room for the quiet and peace-loving patriarchs? And when one considers the archaeological arguments, it appears that the translation of the Egyptian inscription is unsound (so Professor Breasted); and the evidence from the pottery is extremely precarious, partly because one could infer in the same way the presence of Baltic tribes in Egypt from the amber that has been found there, and partly because the ware has not

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Reich in the *Contemporary Review*, Jan. 1906; and for his confident anticipation in the near future of "a copy of Genesis in cuneiform script, dating from the thirteenth or twelfth century, B.C.," see *Failure of the Higher Criticism*, p. 186.

been proved to be specifically Hittite.<sup>1</sup> The evidence from Babylonian contracts has more than once been shown to have no bearing upon the Biblical narrative of the sale of the cave of Machpelah, and expert Assyriological opinion points out that there are noteworthy differences between the two usages. Finally, as regards Genesis xiv., no conceivable discovery can remove the inherent difficulties of the existing narrative upon which critics have based their views; no external evidence has yet been found in support of its genuineness, and the statements to the contrary ignore the more recent testimony from Assyriology itself.<sup>2</sup>

It is not difficult to perceive occasionally a reluctance to admit that Biblical narratives contain internal difficulties, and by contesting this or that theory which has been framed to explain them it is believed that Biblical criticism has been overthrown. The conclusion that very many of the laws of Moses are post-Mosaic rests upon archaeological and sociological grounds, upon historical considerations, upon a careful study of the whole of the Old Testament, upon the development of law and custom (continued outside the Canon)—in a word, upon a mass of cumulative material which it is impossible to withstand. There can be no doubt that the discovery of Khammurabi's laws (circ. 2250 B.C.), with their remarkable parallels to the Mosaic legislation, is a shock to the traditional view of Moses;

<sup>1</sup> *Amer. Journ. of Sem. Lang.*, 1905, p. 153 sqq. The whole question of pottery-dates, based as it is upon a variety of cumulative evidence of varying value, finds an interesting analogy in literary criticism.

<sup>2</sup> It would have been interesting to sketch briefly the true history of the treatment of Gen. xiv.; but reference may be made to Professor Driver in Hogarth's *Authority and Archaeology*, pp. 39-45, his *Genesis*, pp. 156 sqq., 171 sqq., to Professor Bevan, *Critical Review*, 1897, p. 410 seq., and to Carpenter and Harford-Battersby, *The Hexateuch*, chap. xiv. seq. The misrepresentation of Professor Nöldeke's views which Professor Sayce has permitted himself (*Monumental Facts*, p. 54 seq.) is exceedingly unjust: to ascribe to a scholar views which he had expressly repudiated is most unsportsmanlike.



and it is scarcely credible that Professor Sayce could regard it as a weapon against criticism and should offer an extraordinary compromise of the tradition in the new light in a way that defies the laws of sociology and the internal evidence of the Mosaic code itself. But his *Monumental Facts and Higher Critical Fancies* unfortunately abounds in colossal misrepresentation and fallacious argument, and his attacks upon literary criticism are utterly inconsistent with his own methods of historical criticism, which are extremely "advanced" and not rarely excessively rash.<sup>1</sup>

For sound historical criticism, the evidence of the Old Testament, and that from Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt or Arabia must each be viewed independently in the first instance. For example, the Biblical account of Sennacherib's invasion in B.C. 701 presents certain internal difficulties upon which the records of Assyria and Egypt may be expected to throw light. Several intricate questions are involved and Biblical critics are obliged to appeal to the special experts of these lands. Egyptologists are divided as regards the possibility that Tirhakah was king of Egypt at that date, whilst several Assyriologists admit the possibility that Sennacherib invaded Palestine a second time after 701. If the latter could be proved, the critic would be able to explain certain features in the Biblical

<sup>1</sup> The statement that the Babylonian code "has shattered the critical 'theory' [an *informed* writer would say 'conclusion'] which would put the Prophets before the Law" and similar pronouncements, put forth with all the authority of an archaeologist, have perhaps found credence here and there in spite of their fundamental inaccuracy, but the hopelessness of arguing a lost case has rarely been more vividly illustrated. (His recent *réchauffé*, "Archaeology and Criticism" in *Essays for the Times*, No. vi., claims to give the result of a "scientific" comparison between the *facts* of archaeology and the *assumptions* of literary criticism. It contains his familiar misconceptions and illogical inferences and exemplifies more clearly than ever the writer's isolated position among Biblical scholars.)

narrative which cannot be reconciled in a natural manner with the events of 701, and the allusion to Tirhakah would become more intelligible. But when Professor Petrie, in his *History of Egypt* (p. 296), endeavours to show that Tirhakah was acting as king in 701, and then states that "there is no need whatever to resort to a theory of two campaigns," it is evident that our Egyptological expert has not advanced the problem one whit. The Assyriological possibility still remains, the Biblical narrative continues to be difficult, and one is obliged to recognize that other leading Egyptologists regard the chronology of the period differently.

As another specimen of cross-purposes we may take the Biblical account of the invasion of Zerah the Cushite in the time of Asa. It appears only in the Book of Chronicles, and records the destruction of one million men in order to show that the Lord will give victory to those who trust in Him, and that mere numbers cannot prevail against those who rely upon His aid and do not seek foreign alliances. The parallel but earlier records in the Book of Kings do not mention the event, but it would be rash to reject it for this reason alone: the *argumentum e silentio* is a dangerous weapon, whether it is used to cast doubt upon a statement, or in order to maintain the traditional view that the Mosaic law was observed throughout the period of the judges and the kings.<sup>1</sup> Now, since it is known that when Israel came against Judah, Asa bribed the king of Syria to create a diversion, the historical connexion does not favour the Chronicler's story of this overwhelming victory. But many of the much-abused "destructive" critics have refused to treat it as an invention and have observed that

<sup>1</sup> The mere silence of an authority is no guide by itself; several considerations require to be carefully weighed; see Professor Briggs, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (1899), pp. 101 sqq.

Cush does not always refer to Ethiopia, but is also the name of certain Arabian tribes, including the Sabeans (Gen. x. 7); and, indeed, Cushites and Arabians are mentioned as neighbours in 2 Chronicles xxi. 16. Hordes from north Arabia frequently troubled Palestine, and the very name Zerah has found its equivalent in old Arabian inscriptions. Hence the moderate critical estimate may be summed up in the words of Professor Barnes: "If by Zerah the Ethiopian a Sabean prince be meant, the only real difficulty of the narrative is removed."<sup>1</sup> For many years attempts were made to identify Zerah with the Egyptian Uasarkon I. or II. of whom the latter has a vague reference to the subjugation of Palestine. But the manifold difficulties have led to its rejection by practically all scholars. Notwithstanding this, Professor Petrie, in the book referred to, harks back to the identification with Uasarkon I., glides over the fact that Egyptian names could be faithfully reproduced in Hebrew (or were perverted in such a way that their un-Semitic origin was obvious), "stiffens" the difficult Biblical chronology to agree with the equally difficult Egyptian data, and supports his view by a kind of argument that would prove the genuineness of the legends of King Arthur or of the early days of Rome. By a contemptuous reference to the theory of an "unrecorded person of a dubious Cush in North Arabia," it would seem that this is to be regarded as archaeological proof of the genuineness of the Chronicler's record, and of the untrustworthiness of critical theory, the Arabian Cush apparently being attributed to the lively imagination of the critics! And unfortunately tradition is soon deprived of its ally; for, instead of reconciling the "Ethiopian" Zerah with the usual

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Bible: Chronicles*, p. xxxi. The numbers of the troops (e.g. 540,000 from Judah and Benjamin!) are obviously unreliable, but it is the *possibility* of such an invasion which is conceded, and not the Chronicler's representation of it.

Libyan origin of Uasarkon's dynasty, the writer tells us that the dynastic names point to a Babylonian or Persian origin, since Sheshenk (Shishak) is "man of Shushan" or Susa, and Uasarkon's name is from the great Sargon. Biblical history and its difficulties could scarcely be handled in a less scientific manner.<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly necessary to multiply further examples of methods which have all the appearance of being based upon mistaken ideas of orthodoxy or tradition, and certainly labour under a misapprehension of the work of Biblical criticism. Since there is every reason to believe that the future of archaeological research will be as prolific as its past, it is not a cheering outlook if, as evidence accumulates, the time-worn arguments and objections, without the novelty of freshness or the sincerity of impartiality, are hurled anew against critical work. There will always be those whose aim it will be to pursue the study further with the help of the new knowledge; and unless the rights of criticism are acknowledged, the breach between the critical and traditional positions may become wider. Kuenen, in his unfortunately much neglected essay, to which we have more than once referred, observes that "many of the reproaches, apparently well founded, which have been cast

<sup>1</sup> Professor Petrie's treatment of Shabaka, so far as Biblical history is concerned, is equally inconclusive, and does not advance the question, despite his dogmatic insistence upon "facts" (p. 283). A narrative and its statements are not "facts" until they have been proved to be authentic in a natural manner. Contemporary records, particularly such "tangible" evidence as monuments and inscriptions, obviously stand upon an entirely different footing, but even these must be subjected to criticism; for example, the list of Palestinian towns conquered by Tirhakah is of little value, since it is a mere copy of an earlier list (Petrie, p. 297). Professor Petrie appears to confuse the *representation* of the past, with what actually took place, regardless of the circumstance that even early historians and writers were often under the influence of recognizable tendencies.

in ancient and modern times against the saints of Israel, fall away as soon as the narratives concerning them are cast into the crucible of criticism." The present article has not concerned itself with this aspect of the question, but one has sometimes heard the opinion that those who condemn criticism can scarcely be aware that they would remove one of the strongest weapons with which the bitter and often shrewd attacks upon the Bible by freethinkers or atheists can be repulsed.

To sum up: the criticism of the Old Testament is the comprehensive study of the Bible in the light of modern knowledge, conducted upon the same lines as all other studies which depend upon written sources. It is demanded by the requirements of modern research in order to render the Bible intelligible to modern needs—the needs not merely of the theologian, but of the historian and of all students of primitive thought. It has silenced scoffers, and relieved the perplexities of those who were unable to reconcile many of the Biblical statements with their conscience. It has justified itself in a variety of ways: in the character of its numerous adherents, in the agreement of independent testimony, and in the impossibility otherwise of using Biblical evidence in scientific research. Archaeology has so far supported it, and by mutual co-operation the progress of both may be furthered. *But*, the criticism of the Old Testament has frequently been condemned and misrepresented; it has been attacked by arguments which have been answered repeatedly in the last five and twenty years, and no small responsibility must rest upon those who, by means of unsupportable or erroneous statements, or by conscious or unconscious obscurantism, influence the opinion of others less capable than themselves of judging its merits.

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