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1903.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.*

REV. CANON GIRDLESTONE, M.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following elections were announced :—

MEMBER :—The Right Hon. the Earl of Ducie, D.L., F.R.S., 16, Portman Square, London.

ASSOCIATE :—Charles Little, Esq., Ontario.

The SECRETARY (Prof. EDWARD HULL, M.A., LL.D., etc.)—Letters of regret at not being able to attend have been received, including one from Bishop Welldon, who, I am sorry to say, has been very unwell.

The following paper was then read by the Author, entitled :—

MODERN THEORIES CONCERNING THE COMPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. By Rev. JOHN TUCKWELL, M.R.A.S.

NO one conversant with the religious thought of our own and other Protestant countries during the last thirty or forty years, can have failed to observe that an attitude has been assumed by many minds in Christian circles towards Holy Scripture of an entirely different character from that which formerly prevailed. This is the more remarkable, since it is not due to any fresh light from modern scientific or other discoveries thrown upon the sacred page, but to the adoption of new theories formed to account for its composition. This change, however, although it has come about quietly and unobtrusively, is yet of the magnitude and importance of a revolution. To many it has brought with it as a logical consequence the rejection of some of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, or a new interpretation of them scarcely distinguishable therefrom. A highly commended exponent of this "new theology" has declared that "it holds to the Trinity, though indifferent to the use of the word, but not to a formal and psychologically impossible Trinity (whatever that may mean); to the Incarnation not as a mere physical event, for that has entered into many religions,

* Monday, April 6th, 1903.

but as the entrance into the world, through a person, of a moulding and redeeming force in humanity ; to the Atonement as a divine act and process of ethical and practical import, not as a mystery of the distant heavens, and isolated from the struggle of the world, but as a comprehensible force in the actual redemption of the world from its evil ; to the Resurrection as covering the whole essential nature of man ; to judgment as involved in the development of a moral nature," and so on. Apart from the utterances of professional theologians, we find evidences of this change and its consequences in nearly all the religious literature of our times—hymns, prayers, sermons, magazine articles, popular religious and semi-religious novels and treatises of all kinds up to bulky Bible dictionaries. Richard Le Gallienne ten years ago, confounding things which differ, said, "The Trinity, the Atonement, Infant Baptism, Baptismal Regeneration, the Immortality of the Soul, the Life Hereafter—these and many other dogmas are now seen to be matters of symbolism or personal intuition" (*Religion of a Literary Man*).

That such a change should, whether rightly or wrongly, produce an impression among the non-religious classes, that an excess of reverence has been paid to Holy Scripture and an exaggerated authority over faith and conduct attributed to it, is no more than might be expected. But to what extent the general decline of the religious sentiment among the masses of our fellow-countrymen, indicated, apparently, by the decline of public worship and other symptoms, may be due to this change, is too wide and too delicate a question to be entered into here and now. That the two should synchronize gives reasonable ground for suspicion.

Among the religious classes also it is ominous that the leaders in the various denominations in England, America and Germany should complain loudly of the failure of the churches to accomplish their true mission, and should deplore with one consent the increasing dearth of candidates for the Christian ministry. The German correspondent of an English paper which has done more than any other in the country to promote this change, lately published a table showing that in the various universities of Germany, the number of theological students during the past twelve years had declined from 4,536 to 2,281.

When we view side by side with this change the enormous progress in the knowledge of truth, made during the same period in almost every other branch of research, we shall find ourselves confronted by a problem well fitted to provoke inquiry. And surely no Society could be more fitted to conduct it than one such as this, devoted to the investigation

of those great questions of Philosophy and Science which bear upon the great truths of Revealed Religion. By its leading and most capable advocates, this change, however, is alleged to be an integral part of the general intellectual progress of our race; so that without it the line of advance would be broken, and the Christian Church left in the rear, an enfeebled and neglected factor among the spiritual and intellectual forces of the age. But it must not be forgotten that whilst its advocates have appeared to hold the field and have certainly been eminently successful in obtaining the public ear, a more conservative party has continued to exist. For many years this party appeared to be indifferent to what was transpiring. It was thought possible that new light was breaking on the sacred page, and there was an unwillingness to obstruct it. But the party of change has, within recent years, reached certain conclusions which it regards as "assured." The epoch has been marked by the publication of such works as the *Encyclopedia Biblica* and parts of the *Polychrome Bible*. Although these publications indicate the high-water mark of the change, and do not meet with universal acceptance among its advocates, yet they serve admirably to show the direction of the movement and its probable ultimate objective. They may be taken therefore as indicating also, that the time has now come, when the two parties may wisely and fairly submit their differences to the tribunal of a more public religious opinion, with a view to their adjustment according to the indisputable sovereignty of truth.

In all ages, many thoughtful minds have felt serious difficulties of various kinds to an admission of the claim made for the volume of Holy Scripture as "the Book of God, and the god of books," or in other words, as possessing by its origin and contents a supernatural title to our regard. Hence everyone duly appreciating its worth, must most earnestly desire the removal of all such difficulties as are not from the nature of the case inevitable. It may help us, therefore, to a just perception of the balance of truth between the two sides, to sum up briefly a few of the difficulties which the party of change claims to have more or less successfully dealt with, *e.g.* :—

- i. Alleged mistakes, scientific, historical, theological and literary, made by the sacred writers.
- ii. Alleged irreconcilable contradictions within the different writings themselves, and between one writer and another.

- iii. Apparent interpolations, glosses, etc., showing editorial manipulations of the writings, and destroying the claims to antiquity and unity of authorship made by the writings themselves, or made for them by the older school of expositors.
- iv. High ideals of personal and national life alleged to be impossible to the Hebrew nation in the early stages of its history, calling for a rearrangement and redating of the records in order to a reconstruction of that history.
- v. Advanced conceptions of the nature and attributes of the Deity which require to be accounted for, as the result of a long process of development and training, and which it is alleged cannot be reasonably assigned to the dawn of Hebrew national life.
- vi. The claim to an extraordinary supernatural insight into the past, present and future, and into both the invisible and material worlds made by, or on behalf of, the sacred writers of both Testaments, which do not fall within the limits of the ordinary operations of human reason, and which by the adoption of new modes of critical exposition, need no longer be retained as an integral part of the Christian faith.
- vii. The alleged incredibility of the present exact adjustment of character to life, miracle to doctrine, etc., presented by the New Testament records of the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the alleged unreasonableness of attributing the description of such a transcendent personality to writers in immediate and sympathetic contact with the effete and corrupt Judaism of His day.
- viii. The miraculous and supernatural events and predictions recorded in both Testaments, and the miraculous and supernatural assistance claimed by and for the writers, in the production of the records.
- ix. The exercise of supernatural spiritual power attributed to the Apostles and other early Christians in the practice and promulgation of the Christian life and faith, and the claim made by many professed Christians of the present day to an experience similar in many respects in kind, if not in degree.

These are some of the difficulties, or groups of difficulties, with which modern Biblical exegesis is required to deal, and

with which each party claims to be capable of dealing more adequately and more reasonably than the other. They are all recognized by the new school therefore, and the treatment of them more or less covered by the theories it has adopted to account for the composition of Holy Scripture. That investigations into these difficulties have been followed by many beneficial results need not be denied. Crude ideas have been matured; errors concerning matters of fact corrected; a more diligent search of the sacred records stimulated; the adoption of a more scientifically exact terminology promoted; while ignorant and erroneous exegetical interpretations have been abandoned. But admitting all this, there is still a wide and impassable gulf between the principles held and applied by the two parties even in their nearest approach to each other. A moment's review of these principles will make this plain.

THE MORE CONSERVATIVE VIEW.

According to what, in the absence of a better term, we may call the more conservative view, the volume of Holy Scripture is a collection of writings produced at intervals during a period of some 1400 or 1500 years under the influence of a supernatural, miraculous and divine inspiration. This inspiration is believed to have operated through the personality and the faculties of the several writers, but no one knows exactly how; and since the phenomenon appears to have ceased, its scientific investigation has become impossible. But its effects remain, and are chiefly these—the revelation of truths not otherwise attainable by the human understanding, such as the true nature of the Deity, His methods of dealing with sin, the mysteries of a future life, etc.; and an infallible guidance given to the writers in the selection of such historic or other facts as are best suited to serve the Divine purposes of the volume. It is contended moreover that as the very first condition of any communication coming from God must be its truthfulness, and that as the truth of this volume has in so many instances been established where verification has been possible, there is *primâ facie* reason for maintaining that this condition has been fulfilled. Of course it is recognized that these writings were originally produced by the hand; but that as the originals are lost, like the food and medicine provided by a Beneficent Providence for the welfare of our bodies, the continuance of the supply is dependent on human ingenuity and diligence, though often alas! through the

ignorance, carelessness or even wickedness of man at the cost of purity and wholesomeness. It is admitted therefore that no MS. of either Testament is faultless, and that as a consequence no version can safely be alleged to be absolutely accurate in every word. But there is reason to believe that the painstaking labour of many scholars in this field of "textual" or "lower criticism" has given us texts so approximately accurate as to be absolutely trustworthy concerning every important and fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. With regard to alleged errors and contradictions it is maintained that a sufficient number has been already corrected to justify the conclusion that others would be removed also, could an absolutely accurate text be obtained; while so many alleged scientific and historical mistakes have been found to lie, not in the Sacred Volume, but in the imperfection of human knowledge, that there is reason to believe that those which remain are of a similar nature.

According to this view also, whilst recognizing the obligation of an absolute loyalty to all objective truth, it is maintained that the truth of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith generally, and of the Christian Scriptures in particular, has been established by nearly 2,000 years experience; for wherever they have gone they have elevated and blessed mankind to an extraordinary degree. But nothing has occurred nor been discovered in modern times to remove them from their position of pre-eminence, while all rival or contrary systems have hitherto proved so dynamically inferior, that unless falsehood be mightier than truth, the case of the latter against the former must be regarded as non-proven.

Similarly with regard to the objections raised against the high ideals of life; the advanced conceptions of the nature and attributes of the Deity; the knowledge disclosed by the sacred writers and speakers of things past, present and future, and of both worlds; the accuracy of the records concerning the person and work of Christ; and the presence of a Personal Spiritual Force among those who share the Christian faith and life; it is claimed that since all these difficulties relate to matters supernatural, they must be solved by reference to the supernatural, while the effort to eliminate the supernatural from the Christian Scriptures and from the faith and life to which they relate, if successful, would deprive them of all that gives to them their distinctive character and value.

Hence with regard to the date and authorship of the books of Scripture, where these are deduced from a plain and reasonable

interpretation of their contents, it is held that the abandonment of these deductions would involve in some cases the abandonment of all belief in the divine inspiration of the records, or the acceptance of a new and inadequate theory thereof; in other cases an imputation of untruthfulness to the writers; and in yet others an accusation of ignorance or intentional inaccuracy against Christ or His Apostles. As to the method of compilation, the practical unity of authorship is maintained where authorship is claimed, beginning with Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, and ending with St. John as the author of the Apocalypse. At the same time the existence of editorial additions and other interpolations of more or less value is not denied, nor that the authors in some cases made use of previous writings.

This statement, while intended to commit no one, will, it is believed, be found a generally accurate representation of the position. Moreover, it is believed to afford a stronger and more adequate foundation for dealing with those intellectual and moral difficulties which are alleged to keep many in the present day from an acceptance of the Christian faith than any other that has been proposed.

MODERN CRITICAL VIEWS.

Many professed Christian scholars, however, in the present day have objected to these views, and have deemed the basis they offer for dealing with modern doubt both unsatisfactory and ineffective. As the remainder of this paper must be devoted to an inquiry into the new method to which the old is asked to give way, it will be well to have, in a few brief sentences, the proposals which the new method makes to the old to attain the end in view. Here also, as in the foregoing statement, the non-commitment of those whose views it is believed to represent must be premised, and no intention must be supposed of attributing unanimity to them. Among the proposals made then are the following:—

- i. To give up the traditional authorship of the books of Holy Scripture.
- ii. To give up also the unity of their authorship and accept a theory of compilation instead.
- iii. To give up their traditional dates and accept others more or less modern.
- iv. To give up the belief in their special Divine inspiration and treat them as originating in the same way as

- other human literature, or as the sacred books of other national religions.
- v. To give up the history taught by these books as they now stand, and rearrange the events in a new order more in accordance with a progressive or evolutionary theory.
 - vi. To give up the belief in the strict truthfulness of the records and admit the influence of bias partisanship and pious inventiveness on the part of the writers.
 - vii. To give up belief in the miraculous so far as possible and treat all alleged miracles as legends.
 - viii. To give up belief in such explanations of Scripture doctrines and of the experiences of the devout, as are not verifiable by the more ordinary intelligence and experience of mankind.
 - ix. And some go so far as to ask that all belief in the operation of the supernatural, whether in the production of Holy Scripture or in the higher religious experience of the devout, should also be given up.

In urging these or portions of these requests, it is alleged that the older mode of dealing with the difficulties of the human mind placed needless obstacles in its way and created infidelity, while the new method will disarm the infidel and destroy his infidelity. To which it is objected that the new method is not a conquest but a capitulation.

It will thus be seen that widely divergent views of Scripture distinguish the two methods, and that the crux of the whole question between them lies mainly in the mode of its composition. If composed as the new method affirms, then, speaking generally, the Christian religion for nearly two thousand years was promulgated by false statements of its principles and enfeebled by false interpretations of its doctrines—erroneous modes of speech which eluded the intelligence and moral integrity not only of the great mass of its adherents but of most, if not all, of its most brilliant exponents, and yet in spite of which it achieved its most remarkable triumphs over the human understanding. It cannot but be therefore of the greatest interest to inquire for the origin of the discovery of these remarkable errors, the credit for which the new method takes to itself.

The time at our disposal is wholly insufficient to permit an adequate inquiry at first hand, we must be content therefore to accept the explanation given by one of its foremost and most capable exponents. Canon Cheyne, in his *Founders of Old*

Testament Criticism (p. 2), attributes it to English deism of the eighteenth century, which found so many apt disciples in Germany. "It was not merely," he says, "a new constructive stage of German theoretic theology and a keener psychological investigation for which deism helped to prepare the way, but also a great movement which has in our own day become in a strict literal sense, international, concerned with the literary and historical criticism of the Scriptures." This movement had as one of its earliest promoters in Germany Professor J. G. Eichhorn, of Jena and Göttingen (A.D. 1752-1827), who, as Canon Cheyne says, wrote in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, "My greatest trouble I had to bestow on a hitherto unworked field—on the investigation of the inner nature of the several writings of the Old Testament with the help of the Higher Criticism"; upon which the Canon remarks, "By 'higher criticism' he means the analysis of a book into its earlier and its later elements." It is by this name, now more widely applied, that the modern development of this movement is best known, and if its ancestry be correctly represented, it may without disrespect be admitted that it will hardly be commended to devout English Christians by its connection with the notorious deists Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, Collins and Toland, Woolston and Tom Paine.

Let us, however, overlook as far as possible any discredit which it may derive from its unfortunate ancestry—nothing and nobody can be held responsible for his ancestry—and pass on to consider some of its leading principles.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPOSITE AUTHORSHIP.

Eichhorn's work may be said to have started with an endeavour to account for the Book of Genesis upon this principle. He supposed it to consist mainly of two authors, one of whom has been termed the "Jehovistic" and the other the "Elohistic." But the theory did not originate with Eichhorn. Some fifty years earlier Jean Astruc, a French physician, had noticed that although the Book of Genesis relates throughout to events which transpired before the Divine name in its full form of "Jehovah" had been assigned to the use of the Israelites through Moses (Exodus vi, 3), yet both that name and "Elohim" appear in the said Book. Jean Astruc therefore published a volume in 1753 A.D. entitled *Conjectures sur les mémoires Originaires dont il paroît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse*. But the *conjectures* of Jean Astruc have become the "assured conclusions" of the higher

criticism of to-day. The theory thus started however was not confined to the Book of Genesis; it was applied by Eichhorn to the rest of the Pentateuch, and has since been extended to the whole volume of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Hence, *e.g.*, the Book of Genesis is said not to have assumed its present form until the time of the Exile, say 500 B.C., and to have been put together by a series of "Rédacteurs" or "Editors." The first of these is supposed to have become possessed in some unknown way of the writings of the unknown "Jehovistic" and "Elohistic" authors, "J" and "E," and to have combined them into another document "J E." Then it is supposed that a priest wrote an independent narrative "P" upon which a second editor fitted "J E" and added his own editorial "adjustments" and so on. We thus have no less than five writers to deal with in the Book of Genesis alone. The Book of Exodus is assumed to have originated in much the same way, and the priest is supposed to show his hand by a jealousy for his class in those parts which make Aaron co-operate with Moses before Pharaoh while "J" represents Moses as acting alone. But Chapters xx, 23—xxiii, 33, are without any apparent reason separated from the rest of the Book and called "The Book of the Covenant." The Book of Leviticus is assumed to be throughout part of a so-called "Priest's Code." But Chapters xvii—xxvi are for some unknown reasons separated from the rest of the Book and called the "Law of Holiness" ("H"). Where "P" obtained it the critics do not know. The Book of Numbers is treated in the same way. The Book of Deuteronomy has a still less credible origin assigned to it. It is represented as written in the days of Josiah, secreted in the temple, and then said to have been "found" by Hilkiah the priest (see 2 Kings xxii and 2 Chronicles xxxiv), notwithstanding the statement that it was "the Law of the Lord by Moses" (see Canon Driver's *Introduction*). For this new version of the story or for limiting the "find" to the Book of Deuteronomy there is not the least historic foundation, nor for the further arbitrary restriction of the term "Book of the Law" to Chapters xii—xxvi.

It would be impossible in this brief paper to trace out the results of the application of this theory to the rest of Scripture. It must suffice to say that upon the same principle as Moses is got rid of from the authorship of the Pentateuch and a series of capital letters obtained in his place—"J," "E," "J E," "P," "H," "D," "D¹," "D²," "D³," etc., so Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Daniel, the Evangelists and Apostles, and even our Lord

Himself fade almost entirely out of the remainder, leaving us in their places a series of unknown editors piecing together with innumerable blunders and contradictions fragments of hitherto unheard-of writings of an indefinite multitude of nameless authors.

Moreover the carelessness with which these compilations were made leaves no room for inspiration, and would bring a well-merited castigation upon the proverbial school-boy. For instance, Prof. Geo. Adam Smith, in his *Modern Criticism and the Teaching of the Old Testament*, in dealing with what are called "doublets," and which are supposed to afford evidence of the compilation theory, cites the Book of Joshua. He says, "In the story of the crossing of the Jordan as told in Josh. iii and iv, there are two accounts of the monument set up to commemorate the passage. One of them builds it at Gilgal on the west bank with stones taken from the river-bed by the people; the other builds it in the bed of the river with twelve stones set there by Joshua." It is difficult to believe that Prof. G. A. Smith could have read the story through when he wrote these words. Let us take two verses—"And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded them, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there unto this day" (iv, 8 and 9). Comment is needless. Again, in the account of the capture of Jericho he says that two stories have been interwoven: "One which relates how Israel marched round Jericho on seven successive days," and another which relates: "That a portion of the armed men marched round the city seven times on the same day." Now it would be surprising enough to find that any ordinary reader could have failed to see that the narrative is a perfectly consistent account of a military demonstration which took place once on six successive days and was repeated seven times on the seventh day. But it is still more surprising to find a Biblical critic and a professional theologian, ready to convict a man with intelligence enough to compile the Book of Joshua, of being such a stupid blunderer as to piece together in this careless way fragments mutually contradictory of each other. But it is most surprising of all that it should have taken intelligent readers more than two thousand years to find out the blunders.

It has been commonly supposed that these "results" are due to a more exact knowledge of the Hebrew than the ordinary English reader possesses. But such is not the case. Indeed, a critical examination of the Hebrew gives "results" quite opposed to these. For instance, the Hebrew of Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel—the time of the Exile—abounds with Aramaisms, but the Hebrew of the Pentateuch is the purest in almost the whole volume of the Old Testament, and does not contain a single chapter which could on these grounds be assigned to the same period as the Exilic Books. With regard to the New Testament, the personality of the Evangelists, and with it their personal testimony, almost disappear. The original source is supposed to be, in some cases, certain undiscovered and possibly imaginary *logia*, or the first and third Evangelists are supposed to have copied from the second. Thus in the Gospel of St. Matthew 816 verses out of the total of 1,068 are supposed to have been taken from St. Mark, or from the same original source, while of St. Luke's 1,149 verses, 798 are said to have been derived from the same source, and this in spite of the fact that St. Luke himself absolutely disavows—if words have any meaning at all—having made use of any such sources (i, 1-3).

All this is very remarkable, and the astuteness claimed by means of which these supposed different documents are discriminated is an unprecedented phenomenon of the human intellect. Hence when the scissors are passed between the ך and the ך of the word ךךך (Genesis xxii, 20), and Professor W. H. Bennett professes to have detected the junctions of nineteen different scraps or snippets on one page of the Polychrome Bible, we begin to wonder whether the length of rope claimed has not resulted in the proverbial suicide of the principle. It is necessary to remember also that although these various documents are spoken of with as much confidence as though they lay side by side snug and safe in the British Museum, not one of them has ever been found, nor the least fragment of one, nor the remotest allusion to one among all the known writings of antiquity, nor was their existence ever conceived of by the human mind until their invention became necessary by this theory of composite authorship.

As to the manner in which these imaginary documents are used by modern criticism, let us hear a whilom expert. "Such theories," says Professor Ramsay in *St. Paul the Traveller*, "usually assign varying degrees of accuracy to the different older documents; all statements which suit the critic's own views on early Church history are taken from an original

document of the highest character; those which he likes less belong to a less trustworthy document, and those which are absolutely inconsistent with his views are the work of the ignorant botcher who constructed the book. But this way of judging, common as it is, assumes the truth of the critic's own theory, and decides on the authenticity of ancient documents according to their agreement with that theory."

Enough has been said to explain this theory of composite authorship, and, it is hoped, without the least desire to display any other partiality than a partiality for truth. There is, however, one fact which ought not to be passed over. It has been possible in one solitary instance to test it. We have in addition to the Biblical story of the Deluge, the Assyro-Babylonian account, current with the parent stock of the Israelites for nearly two thousand years at least, and perhaps for much more, before the time, when according to these theories, the story assumed its present form. The same so-called elements, marked "J" and "E," are as distinctly discoverable in the one as in the other, and in almost the same order. Thus in both, the instruction to build the ark or ship (E) precedes the collection of the cargo (J); the entry into the ark or ship (E) and the story of the storm (E) are followed by the account of the destruction of life (J); the abating of the storm (J) by the resting of the ark or ship upon the mountain (E) and the sending out of the birds (J); the quitting of the ark or ship (E) by the presentation of the offerings (J) and the oath or covenant (E).* It is therefore not too much to say that a theory which is not inductive but purely *à priori*, and which breaks down upon the first possible test, ought not to be accepted as a "scientific" explanation of so unique and mysterious a problem as that of the composition of Holy Scripture.

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF HISTORIC PROGRESS.

Another principle relied upon is that of historic progress. The problem to be solved by this principle, is the plain fact that Holy Scripture does beyond denial appear to present us with a precise and literal record of events which it treats as genuine history, during the period from the Creation to the close of the Apostolic Age. It uses in many places symbolic

* For a more detailed table of the parallelism see the author's little book, *A Plea for the Old Faith* (Stockwell). The professed dissection of the Biblical Story is taken from Driver's *Introduction*.

and figurative language, but never appears to betray the least recognition of any detailed use of myth, legend or fable. The story of the world before man; the creation of man himself; his rebellion against his Maker; the corruption of the antediluvian world; the Deluge; the re-populating of the earth; the rise of the great nations of antiquity; and the history of the Israelitish nations, whatever forms of speech are used, are all treated as matters of historic fact.

But the human mind is supposed to stumble at some of these things, and so it has been offered relief on the principle of historic progress.

First with regard to the pre-Israelite world. It is premised that since history and the exact description of scientific facts are comparatively modern developments of literary ingenuity, these records may all be treated as legendary. But fortunately it has been possible to test this negation at more than one point. The remarkable progress of modern science has enabled us to see that Genesis i, is, allowing for certain verbal formulæ, an exact orderly and precise account of the creation of the world from its gaseous condition to the close of the Quaternary period. Or again, tested by modern geological research, the Deluge is found to have been a fact and not a fable.

Then with regard to the later records mainly concerned with the history of the two Israelitish nations and the founding of the Christian faith, no unbiassed reader can deny that from Abraham down to the seer of Patmos the Scripture does profess to give us exact history. The story of the Patriarchs; the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt; their settlement in the land of Canaan; their national histories; the ministries of their prophets; the personalities of their great men—Saul, David, Solomon and Hezekiah; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea and even Jonah and Daniel, are treated as strictly historic. Even the New Testament writers and speakers never betray the least suspicion that their supposed ancestors were mythical “eponymous heroes” or the records concerning them, legends or fables.

Why these records should not continue to be read as historic in the absence of any inexorable evidence from newly discovered truth it is not easy to see. But for those unable to do so it has been premised on the principle of historic progress that the Hebrew nation could not possibly have started its national existence in the way described. It is premised that originally they must have been only a small obscure nomadic tribe highly susceptible to the superstitions supposed to be begotten of a

desert life, having only the crudest religious ideas, and these of a polytheistic order, and probably practising the horrid rite of human sacrifice. Thus Abraham, Isaac and Jacob if not Canaanitish heroes engrafted at a later period on the Hebrew stock, are not to be viewed in the light of the glorified descriptions of the Book of Genesis, for was not that book on the composite document theory compiled some 1,000 or 1,500 years after their shadowy personalities had slept with their fathers? Moreover, since upon this principle it is impossible that the Hebrew nation, however extraordinary, should have started upon its free national existence with such a constitution as that of the so-called Mosaic Legislation—therefore the bondage in Egypt; the mission of Moses to Pharaoh; the passage of the Red Sea; the giving of the Law at Sinai; the journey through the wilderness; and the conquest of Canaan, are not to be regarded as the accurate accounts of sober history. Much of the professed history of the kings must on the same principle be similarly treated, and we are even warned that David himself, the man after God's own heart, the "sweet singer of Israel," and the alleged ancestor of our Lord, being described as of "a ruddy countenance," may turn out after all to be only "a solar myth." As to the prophecies of Scripture they are for the most part pre-dated history, or where this theory will not work, as in the case of the prophecies of Isaiah, we must suppose two Isaiahs or whatever larger number may be necessary, while with regard to the exilic stories of Esther and Daniel, Esther was a sort of "Fairy Queen," and Daniel was not—there was no Daniel and no den of lions, and no Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and no fiery furnace, and no "Form of the Fourth like unto the Son of God," causing the proud king in humble and penitential tones to exclaim, "Ye servants of the Most High God, come forth and come hither." If it be objected that in the New Testament the writers and speakers treat the records of all these events and persons as historic, we are told by one learned divine at least, and he the principal of a theological college in London, that even with regard to our Lord, "historically we know more of the Old Testament than He did"!

To establish these premisses then it was deemed necessary to reconstruct the history. But how to do this without rejecting or destroying the records was a difficulty. The new theories, however, have accomplished the task. Eduard Reuss (1804–1891 A.D.) declares that the solution came to him rather as an intuition than as a logical conclusion, and it was this—"that the prophets are earlier than the Law and the Psalms later

than both." No doubt theories of the greatest value may flash upon a thoughtful mind with great suddenness. But the next thing the scientifically trained will do is to ascertain whether the facts are as the theory supposes. This, however, Reuss does not appear to have done, but instead thereof to have immediately turned the Old Testament records topsy-turvy. He assumed that the elaboration of a nation's laws must, of necessity, be the result of long experience; and that the higher the moral level of those laws the longer the period required for the nation to rise to it. But he did not take the pains to inquire whether, even if the rule be admitted, exceptional conditions may not have existed in Israel's case undetected by his intuition. Had he done so he would no doubt have been led to very different conclusions. Now since this is the "working hypothesis" of the principle of historic progress, it may be well to submit it to a brief examination.

First of all. Is it true that an advanced code of laws necessarily presupposes a long period of previous national history working up to it? Had Reuss investigated this question he would have found reason to doubt the universality of the hypothesis. He would have found that it is never true of Colonial nations. Turning his eyes westward he would have seen two great nations, the Canadian and the American, with an advanced code of laws of a high moral level with yet a very brief national history. Or among the nations of antiquity he would have found Assyria, one of Israel's contemporaries, upon a level with Babylonia the mother country of both. It is quite true that comparatively little was known of the history of Babylonia and Assyria when Reuss formed his hypothesis, but enough was known to have kept even him from the errors into which he fell, and more than enough is now known to check his followers from the adoption of his fallacious intuition and from persisting in his erroneous conclusions.

Moreover, the Scripture history of Israel is perfectly consistent with itself, and does not need reconstructing. Abraham is not represented as a rude and savage sheik nurtured in the wild life of the desert, the progenitor of a tribe of wild nomads wandering into Egypt, captured, enslaved, breaking forth a horde of semi-savages, and adopting a constitution of a highly moral and religious tone. On the contrary it represents him as a devout citizen of a great and ancient city, of whom the Almighty said, "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him," a man therefore who could not but have carried forth with him and transmitted to

his posterity the very best elements of the civilization and culture in which he himself had been brought up. How true this is which the Scripture records quietly take for granted as a thing not needing to be said, the recently recovered laws of Khammurabi, the contemporary of Abraham, and many other modern discoveries amply testify. In Egypt also both the people and their leaders were brought into contact with one of the greatest and foremost nations of antiquity. A shipload of English people going to America or Australia do not need to revert to an imaginary prehistoric savagery before they establish a national constitution; why then should it be thought necessary to doubt the veracity of a record which does not assert that an offshoot from Babylonia did so? And why should it be thought necessary to conciliate an irrational unbelief by breaking up the Scripture records into inexplicable fragments and rearranging them in an incredible order?

Next we may be permitted to inquire whether such indubitable facts as are known to us and a legitimate use of the Scripture records themselves will bear out this hypothesis. In spite of Professor Delitsch's lecture on *Babel und Bibel*, no Assyriologist in the world has yet been able to disprove that the historical records of Holy Scripture have received great and remarkable confirmation from the recent discoveries of archæology. If this be not so let us be told categorically the historic errors which archæology has discovered. Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh, the cities over which even Nimrod ruled; Asshur, Nineveh and Kalah the first cities of Assyria; Karchemish, the great Hittite capital, and other cities without number are all found in the very localities indicated by the Biblical records, while historic events almost innumerable connected with other nations contemporary with the Hebrews, with their chief promoters and actors, are directly or indirectly confirmed. Thanks to Dr. Pinches, Chedorlaomer, Arioch, and Tidal have started up out of the buried records of the past, while Sennacherib and Hezekiah, Mesha and Ahab, Sargon and Merodach-Baladan, Shalmaneser and Jehu, "the noble Asnapper," and Artaxerxes, Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, possess the same features, speak in the same tones, and display the same characters in the records of archæology as they do upon the pages of Holy Scripture. No more striking instance of the careless theorizing on the basis of this principle of historic progression could perhaps be found than that afforded by the moderate and temperate Canon Driver.

In his commentary on the Book of Daniel—that last refuge of the Higher Criticism—in the *Cambridge Bible* as well as in his *Introduction*, referring to the old musical instrument controversy he says: “Anyone who has studied Greek history knows what the condition of the Greek world was in the sixth century B.C., and is aware that the arts and inventions of civilized life streamed then into Greece from the East, not from Greece eastwards.” Now I venture to say that no one who has studied Greek history “is aware” of anything of the kind. Our histories of Greece tell us that “the sixth century B.C.” was “the most brilliant in the history of Greece.” It was the age in which Cræsus, the famous King of Lydia in Asia Minor, adopted the Greek language and customs, and Greek sages swarmed “from Greece eastwards” to his Court; it was the age of the building of the first temple of Diana of the Ephesians, reckoned one of the wonders of the world; it was the age of the philosophers Thales, Anaximander, and Pythagoras; it was the age of the poets Sappho, Alcæus, and Anacreon; it was the age of the legislators Solon and Pisistratus. Moreover, it was also one of the most brilliant ages in the history of Babylon. The statement, therefore, that in such an age, one of the most brilliant in her history, Greece had no “arts and inventions of civilized life” to give to Babylon in the East, in one of the most brilliant of hers, displays an obliquity of vision in the application of this historical hypothesis as extraordinary as that of his predecessor Reuss himself.

Such facts as we know therefore forbid us to suppose that these records, compiled with such precise geographical and historic knowledge, and covering a period of more than a thousand years, could have been hacked out of the records of unknown writers by mere butchers and trimmers, and patched together in the bias of pride or partisanship.

Finally we may be permitted to ask whether the chief actors in this reconstructed history could by any moral possibility have taken the places assigned to them by this hypothesis. It is quite true, as the late Dean Farrar pointed out, that we miss in the historic records of Kings and Chronicles any definite account of the observance of the Day of Atonement and of the Jubilee Laws. But it must be remembered that for several hundred years after the death of Moses the disorganized state of the nation made the maintenance of these institutions practically impossible. It was struggling for its life and in constant and deadly conflict with powerful and treacherous

foes. Then under the monarchy the schism soon came, and a series of unfaithful kings and priests caused in both nations so serious a lapse into idolatry as ultimately brought both down to irreparable ruin. It was during this latter period for the most part that the ministry of the prophets took place.

Now if the prophets preceded the Law, not only must we abandon all faith in the veracity of the records which describe the giving of the Law, but we must assign to the prophets themselves a *rôle* which honest men of God could never have taken. They were chiefly of the non-sacerdotal classes, and their missions were largely to rebuke both kings and priests and people for their unfaithfulness to the Divine Laws—Laws which with one voice they attribute to Moses. They call for a return to the loyal obedience of those Laws, and utter solemn threats of national disaster and final ruin if disobedience be persisted in. "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib," said Isaiah, "but Israel doth not know, and my people doth not consider." Ezekiel the prophet of the Exile, says in the name of the Lord, "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes and showed them my judgments, which if a man do he shall even live in them. . . . But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments . . . then I said I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them" (xx, 10-12). Now if the hypothesis under consideration be correct, there is not a word of truth in this statement, and we must conclude that such language was mere prophetic chicanery, rulers and people being rebuked for disobedience to Laws which had never been given, and browbeaten into the observance of Laws which had yet to be enacted.

On the whole then it must be concluded that the hypothesis for the reconstruction of Old Testament history which places the prophets before the Law, and treats the earlier records as legends, creates more difficulties than it removes, and makes larger demands upon our credulity than the most miraculous event recorded upon the sacred page.

III. THE THEORY OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION.

No account of these modern theories could be regarded as approximately adequate which passed over the theory of spiritual evolution. The facts dealt with are briefly these:—Upon the earlier pages of the Sacred Volume the religious

truths recorded are more dimly perceived and described than upon its later, while the general moral and spiritual level of the subjects of their influence is considerably lower. Moreover even at the middle period of the history some of the characters most approved and most exemplary in their devoutness shock our moral sensibility by the enormity of their words and deeds. To account then for the upward movement of truth and life which appeared to take place, the theory of evolution is introduced into these spiritual spheres.

It is not always easy to discover whether the term is intended merely to indicate an amplification of truth and life analogous to the evolution of the individual from the germ; or whether it is used in the far more difficult sense of the origination of a higher species from a lower. Probably some attach one idea to it and others the other. But in whichever sense employed it is beyond doubt intended to displace the idea of a divine inspiration communicated to the writer *ab extra*, or from a source not himself, and then operating within him through his mental and moral faculties. Nor do those writers who resort to the theory always make it plain whether the process is supposed to apply to the *events* recorded or to the *record* of the events, or to the *truths* intended to be conveyed by the record, or even to *Him* to whom legislators and historians, poets and prophets, apostles and evangelists, all alike bear witness. But to whichever applied, it seems in every case to be equally inappropriate. Broadly and generally, the term evolution indicates that the living power which produces new forms is within, and operates within the original, under the favourable conditions of a suitable environment. Manifestly, therefore, to use it to indicate that one set of *events* followed another, as shall we say, that the forty years of wandering in the wilderness came by a process of evolution from the false report of the spies, is to use it without any due appreciation of the proper function of words. May it then be applied to the *record*? This surely would land us in absurdities equivalent to that of saying that Macaulay's *History of England* was followed by that of Froude by a process of evolution. Or if it be applied to the *truths* intended to be taught, the term is no less scientifically inadmissible, since the truths themselves at the end of the period covered by the record were neither more nor less than at the beginning. They had not altered. The alteration and progress was in human knowledge and experience, and by no conceivable application of the term can the advance of human knowledge and experience be

described as evolution. But worst of all is that use of it which describes Christianity as the last result in an evolutionary process from the earliest forms of religious faith of the Old Testament Scriptures or elsewhere. Christianity is the Personal Christ in the active exercise among men of His supernatural and divine grace. Unless, therefore, His miraculous conception, His virgin birth, and His divine nature be denied, we must accept His own declaration of His pre-existence—"I came forth from the Father and am come into the *kosmos*, again I leave the *kosmos* and go unto the Father," and we must therefore frankly confess as utterly inadmissible the term "evolution."

But in every employment of the term and in whatever sense used, it appears to contemplate a degree of religious ignorance in the earlier period of our race which did not exist and a measure of progress therefore which could not have taken place. That the religious knowledge conveyed to the mind of man by the New Testament is in advance of that conveyed by the Old is no new discovery. But there is no truth in the New which may not also be found in the Old. Moreover we are almost daily being forced to the conclusion that the amount of religious knowledge in the very earliest ages of mankind of which we have any record was far greater than a few years ago had ever been supposed. It would seem therefore not improbable that the Scriptures of the Old Testament especially were given for the preservation of truth as well as for its revelation.

What shall we say to such admonitions as these current probably among Abraham's contemporaries and related as uttered to mankind by its Creator:—

"Every day will thy God be gracious to thee;
Sacrifice, prayer, the best of incense,
For God, in purity of heart shalt thou have—
That is the delight of the Divinity.
Prayer, supplication, and bowing down the face,
Early shalt thou offer Him.

Sacrifice increaseth life,
And prayer releaseth thee from sin.

Against friend and companion speak no evil,
Speak not low things, do right,
If thou promise then give, withhold not."*

Surely if such precepts as these were in circulation in the

* See *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records, etc.*, by T. G. Pinches, LL.D., M.R.A.S. (S.P.C.K.)

nation from which Abraham came and long before his time, there was not much room, especially on the ethical side of human life, for the operation of any principle of evolution from the days of the patriarch at least until He came in whose name the new dispensation was founded.

From these principles applied by modern criticism to account for the composition of Holy Scripture, it is evident that throughout the supernatural is being lost sight of. But every system of religion offered to the acceptance of man hitherto, has been offered with a view to his safe guidance into the supernatural and eternal life of the future. How this can be done by a religious system shorn of its supernatural origin and stripped of its supernatural power not even the most brilliant exponent of the Higher Criticism has yet explained. We wait to know.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sure I may thank Mr. Tuckwell in all your names for his most lucid account of the conflict that is now going on amongst us, in which we are all more personally interested than we sometimes think, because the literary side of Christianity is a very important one. God has chosen, in His providence, to give us a literary side to it. It might have been otherwise. The whole of Truth might have been confined to tradition, but it is not so, for as Mr. Tuckwell says, in one of his later pages, "It would seem, therefore, not improbable that the Scriptures of the Old Testament especially were given for the preservation of truth as well as for its revelation." We owe a great deal to that. Perhaps Mr. Tuckwell's paper has the effect, rather, of destroying the destroyer. My own personal aim is to be constructive rather than destructive. I have thought it might be well for us to consider what is the best method of dealing with this great subject for practical purposes. It seems to me that the first thing is to assure ourselves of the historic Christ, to stand firmly on His work and mission, and to make sure of the New Testament before dealing with the abstruse subjects of the Old Testament.

But when you have the historic Christ, you find yourself in possession of the Old Testament, which was always recognized by Christ and His followers as the basis of their mission, and you cannot avoid it. Thus you are compelled, as soon as you have accepted Christ, to push back your inquiry into the books that precede our Lord's time, and you soon find yourself back in the age of Nehemiah, about 400 years B.C., the age in which the Old Testament drew near to its conclusion and completeness; and about the books so completed Josephus says, that all the writings are the work of prophets, and there are none after the age of Artaxerxes. You next start back from Nehemiah and push your investigation up to the age of Moses, or Abraham. But you have this difficulty, that you have no contemporary literature before Nehemiah, so that you are cut off from the natural materials for discussing your subject.

What have you got, then? you have got the books themselves—those wonderful books of the Old Testament. You speedily find that they are of different kinds and materials in many ways. They are not isolated, and it is in this way that you work back from the age of Nehemiah to Moses. Take Ezra and Nehemiah, what books did they possess? You find they had, to a large extent, the books that compose the Old Testament. Then you go back to the days of David's Bible again, and to the days of Joshua, and you ask, was there a pre-Joshua Bible? And you find there was. Moreover the whole of the Exodus was carried out by God because of certain promises made to man which constituted his *Magna Charta*. And so you find your way back to Genesis, and if you believe in what Christ believed you believe in the mission of Moses, and when you use your own Bible you have a strong literary argument upon which you can rely.

The third argument is archæological. The German Emperor has rushed into the conflict where professors might fear to tread, perhaps, but I would recommend you to invest sixpence in a little book just published by the Christian Knowledge Society entitled *Babylonian Excavations and Early Bible History*, by Professor Kittel, of Leipzig. It is a good thing if you can correct one German professor by another, and it is curious that Dr. Kittel discusses nearly all the points that Mr. Tuckwell has gone into. In this matter there appears to be an Anglo-German Alliance for truth. But I will not

say more upon the archæological test, because I see some here who are experts in the matter, except this, that people say, "Is it really thought that Genesis is Babylonian"? I say yes, of course it is, for Abraham came from that part of the world.

But I will pass to another topic which is hardly ever touched on. Mr. Tuckwell touched on it on one page, viz., the linguistic side. So little is said about the linguistic side of this matter. Any student would naturally expect that the oldest part of the Old Testament would show marks of its age, and that the later part would show marks that it is later. I have devoted a great deal of my spare time to this particular question, investigating the linguistic side of the subject, and I have found, almost to my surprise, and to my intense satisfaction, a very strong linguistic evolution, as I will call it for convenience, running from Genesis onwards, so that you have a number of non-technical words there, which are afterwards dropped out, and another series of words rising up in the days of the Kings, and a still further series in the days of the Captivity. Just let me give you, for a moment or two, one or two instances. It is often thought remarkable that "clean" and "unclean" beasts should have been referred to so long ago as the days of the Deluge. What did they know about clean and unclean beasts? The curious thing is that when you examine your text carefully you find that expression "unclean" is not used, but the non-technical expression "not clean."

Again, how remarkable it is that the month *Abib*, the month of the Passover, is so called in Exodus, but it drops out in the later books, and the name *Nisan* is substituted for it. *Abib* is an Egyptian word and therefore is in its place in Exodus, but it drops out afterwards because the people got to Assyrianize their words more.

Another instance is the shewbread used in Exodus and other books. You can trace the word up to the time of David, and from that time onwards it is totally different. The word is in the Bible, although, unfortunately, our revisers have not noticed the change. They ought to have put *Shewbread* in the one case and *Rowbread* in the other.

I hope the days will come when our critics will spend more time in studying what the words mean than in substituting their own ideas. I feel sure that the paper that has been read will be a great

encouragement, and that you will feel you are not following "cunningly devised fables" when you believe the Old Testament.

Mr. MARTIN ROUSE.—The manly and interesting sketch that Canon Girdlestone has just given bears out, in a remarkable manner, an observation I recently ventured to make as to one book alluding to the other. Isaiah recalls the overthrow of the Midianites by Gideon; and in Joshua we find quoted a commandment of God given only in Deuteronomy, Moses' successor building and inscribing an altar, etc., precisely as Moses commanded (Judges vii, 25; Is. x, 26).

I would mention, too (and no doubt Canon Girdlestone will accept a slight correction), that it is in Deuteronomy that the month *Abib* is mentioned. I do not know whether it is mentioned in Exodus as well.

Rev. CANON GIRDLESTONE.—Yes, I think so. (See Ex. xiii, 4, etc.)

Mr. MARTIN ROUSE.—But in Deuteronomy also, which is declared to be so recent, the same month is called *Abib* (xvi, 7). When we pass further on we come in the prophets to the title "the Lord of Hosts," over and over again. But never is God so-called in the first eight books named of the Bible till Samuel's time. Of course, if these books were written after the Captivity, they would have called God the Lord of Hosts, or still more likely the God of Heaven, which is the favourite title in Ezra and Nehemiah. We are told that Isaiah is a double book. In the first part of the book we get the kingdom of Christ dealt with; we also get the miraculous birth spoken of, "A virgin shall be with child" (vii, 14), and then, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (ix, 6), (two of which titles are conclusive against any Unitarian view). But in the latter part, from the 40th chapter onwards, we get the preaching of John the Baptist foretold, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," and also the ministry of Christ, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street"; this is one of various passages quoted thence in the New Testament and plainly referring to the Saviour's

ministry. And true it is that "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law." A little later on, in the 53rd chapter, we get the rejection and vicarious sufferings of Christ. The just preceding words are, "So shall He sprinkle" [Revised Version, "or startle"] "many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see"; which describe the final triumph of His kingdom.

We are told that the Old Testament develops spiritual doctrine up to the New, not, as we might well think, that there was a fuller revelation of God in the New Testament, but that, somehow or other, there was an evolution in men's minds of their estimate of the character of God. We are daringly told that Abraham and Jephthah, in their days, thought it quite right to offer human sacrifices. I would say that this theory is quite incompatible with the theory which places these old books as being written after the Babylonian Captivity. If they were written after the Babylonian Captivity, how can they show the earlier stages of development in religious thought? That, of course, is an absurdity.

Dr. THEO. PINCHES.—I feel that I cannot speak very closely to the subject. It is true that I have written a book concerning the Old Testament and the cuneiform records; but I have written it on parallel lines, and not with reference to the higher criticism at all, trying to illustrate the Old Testament, as far as possible, from what I have read in the inscriptions I have studied so long.

It is needless to say that I quite agree with what Mr. Tuckwell has said with regard to the existence among other nations, before the Jews, of a great deal of enlightenment, such as we might call, in fact, knowledge of divine truth, and one cannot help coming to that conclusion. All of us have read, no doubt of Professor Delitzsch's recent lectures on "Babylon and the Bible," and there is one point he touches on therein, viz., the monotheism of the Babylonians. That, I may remark, is one of the subjects referred to in a lecture that I gave before this Society, and I referred to it rather prominently.* He says he has always insisted on the polytheism of the Babylonians, and I would say the same thing; but there must have

* *The Religious Ideas of the Babylonians*, read on the 16th of April, 1894. (See the *Journal of Transactions*, xxviii, pp. 1-38.)

been amongst them, it seems to me, a class or section of the more enlightened of the people, who had a purer and better knowledge of the Deity than the Babylonians as a whole possessed. But I find it very difficult to speak on the points that Mr. Tuckwell has touched on. I consider this to be a most valuable paper, and I have listened to it with a considerable amount of interest. It puts the matter before us plainly, and it shows one (I speak quite as a layman on such a matter as this) how inconsistent such theories as the higher critics bring forward can be ; but, at the same time, we must admit that these higher critics have done a great deal of good, and that when we come nearer to the end of these controversies we shall be able to see how far they have helped forward the subject, and enabled us to come to a true conclusion with regard to the documents with which we have been familiar so long.

I must ask you to pardon the imperfection of my remarks. It is not a subject that I have studied, but I have tried to say just a few words from the archæological point of view, as requested by the Chairman.

Dr. A. T. SCHOFIELD.—Might I say that we always hear everything against the higher critics and everything bad of them, and no doubt they deserve a great deal of it. They seem, certainly, from the perusal of many of their researches, to display what seems to us to be an extraordinary amount of incredulity and of invention and facilities for raising more difficulties than we can take in. But the point to which I speak is one of conscious irreverence, or conscious stupidity.

It seems to me we must give some of these men credit for their earnest endeavours to arrive at the truth, and that we must also give them an immense amount of credit for the value of their textual criticisms in many places. Professor Margoliouth called my attention to some, some time ago, and it is one part of their work.

It seems to me that their work is of two characters, that where it is legitimate criticism it is of real value, that where it is mere speculation of the human mind concerning what professes to be the word of God, their wisdom seems suddenly to become foolishness.

Professor LANGHORNE ORCHARD.—I am sure we shall all be glad if the "higher critics" will adopt Dr. Schofield's suggestion, and, leaving "higher criticism," confine themselves to the more useful, if less ambitious, work of textual criticism.

The able author of the paper just read has done good service in exposing, without unfairness, the nature and the method of much of present "higher criticism." These critics remind us of the scientists in Bacon's time, who, instead of going for their theory to nature and fact, spun the theory out of their own "inner consciousness," and then tried to make the facts suit the theory. If the facts proved amenable, all was well; if they did not fit, then "so much the worse for the facts." Bacon's noble protest did away with this vicious method, a method re-introduced by the "higher critics." These gentlemen, themselves being witnesses, start with a preconceived theory of evolution as one of the crutches of their system; and they find the other crutch in imagination.

Cornill affirms that the "various stages" of the Hebrew religion "are now regarded as steps in a process of organic evolution," and Graf regards the "Mosaic law-giving as it now presents itself before us, as the evidence and product of a gradual evolution out of a fertile germ, in conformity with all nature and all analogy." Cheyne (*Founders of Old Testament Criticism*) admits that he has "enlisted the imagination in the service of history," and, with charming *naïveté*, asks, "Why should we not do so?" and, referring to Hilkiah's finding of the "Book of the Law," says "it is impossible not to endeavour to fill up *lacunæ* with the help of the imagination."

Yet Dr. Cheyne might have reflected that what is permitted to the writer of a fairy tale may be denied to the inventor of a *soi-disant* scientific theory. Driver, writing about the earliest dates of certain documents, says that certainty is unattainable, for "conclusive criteria fail us and we can only argue upon grounds of probability derived from our view of the progress of the art of writing," etc. "Our view" being made both judge and jury, can we wonder at the verdict?

The author gives some instances of "higher critical" *carelessness*. Many others might be cited, *e.g.*, Wellhausen's blunders, obviously due to *inattention*, over the Hebrew words *soleth* and *kemach* and *chattath*, to which attention has been drawn by Dr. Baxter (in *Sanctuary and Sacrifice*), and the confusion by Dr. Robertson Smith, of the tent in which Moses sat to judge the people with the Tabernacle of Jehovah afterwards erected.

It is difficult to feel admiration for critics of this description. Nor does it lessen the difficulty to find that in Wellhausen's

“translation” of the Psalms, a translation which Dr. Cheyne pronounces to be “exquisite,” one well-known passage is *cut out* because it is “inexplicable,” and another is *cut out* because it is “unsuitable”!

Our thanks are due to the author for his valuable paper.

Professor F. J. CANDY observed that 2 Kings xix, 29, which is identical with Isaiah xxxvii, 30, was spoken in a seventh sabbatical year, to be followed by the year of Jubilee and the first common year. If you read Isaiah lxi and lxii, without a break, you will see that the ideas of restoration, deliverance, and marriage, are interwoven; showing that the prophecy was written in the year of Jubilee, that followed the deliverance from Sennacherib; on the occasion of the marriage of King Hezekiah with his Queen Hephzibah, the mother of Manasseh. (See 2 Kings xxi, 1.)

The SECRETARY.—I am unwilling to intrude on an occasion when a subject is before the Institute which may be considered the peculiar property of theologians. But when the question of the truthfulness of the Bible, both as an historical document and as a revelation of God’s purposes towards mankind is in question, I feel that it is as much a matter which concerns a layman as it does a theologian, and from this point of view I venture to offer a few observations. And first, let me say how much I admire and appreciate the manner in which Mr. Tuckwell has treated his subject, in which he shows not only erudition, conciseness, and plainness of arrangement, but deep conviction of the overwhelming importance of the subject upon which he treats. Necessarily restricted by space and time, he has placed his arguments in so clear a manner that they may be comprehended by the most illiterate reader, and I hope will be extensively read.

And now let me ask if any book ever written and purporting to be an historic document, as is the case to a large extent with the Bible, has ever been treated in so ruthless a manner as have the Old Testament Scriptures by the German, and I regret to say some English critics, belonging to the school of Eichhorn and Jean Astruc? Has Herodotus, or Pliny, or Tacitus been treated in this manner? These works dealing with ancient history have doubtless been found to contain inaccuracies; but when investigations carried on at the present day in Egypt, Greece, or Italy have shown that there is a large amount of truth at the bottom of their historical statements

(as for instance Schliemann's discoveries in Troy), immediately these disclosures are welcomed by the whole intelligent world, and we are called upon to put more and more faith in the accounts they give of the nations of the ancient world. But in the case of the historical portions of the Bible it is different; for when Egyptologists and Assyriologists bring to light remarkable points in corroboration of the accuracy of the Biblical accounts, the critics in question either pass over them in silence, or endeavour to explain them away on some hypothesis conjured up from the depths of their own fertile imagination. As Mr. Tuckwell has well observed, the investigations carried on amongst the Assyrian tablets and in Egypt by such laborious workers as Dr. Pinches, Prof. Sayce and Prof. Petrie, and in Palestine by the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Society, all go to confirm the wonderful accuracy of the accounts even of the earliest books of the Old Testament; and the evidence from day to day and year to year being cumulative, amounts at the present time to demonstration such as all fair-minded men might be supposed to admit without hesitation. Witness, for instance, the remarkable case of the discovery of the Moabite stone, and its verification of the history of the Book of Kings (2 Kings iii). And here I might be allowed to add my own humble testimony as regards one very important epoch of Israelitish history, that of the Exodus, which has called forth, perhaps, more adverse criticism, on the ground of the miraculous element which pervades the entire narrative, than any other part of the Old Testament. Now, it will be admitted that there is no series of events recorded in the Bible which depend for their outcome on the topographical features to the extent of those connected with this wonderful migration from Egypt to Canaan as narrated in the Book of Exodus. The whole series of events is associated with topographical details, such as the crossing of the *then arm* of the Red Sea, the camping grounds, the valleys amongst the mountains of Sinai, which were the only highways for a great multitude of men, women, and children; the giving of the law from Sinai itself, the camping ground at its base, the streams of water for supplying drink, the Gulf of Akabah (or Ezion Geber), the Arabah Valley, the camp at Mount Horeb, Kadesh, the mountains of Edom and Moab, the crossing of the Jordan, and the plain of Jericho. It would have been impossible to construct such a narrative as that of the Exodus unless the writer of it had been

perfectly familiar with these topographical details, with places which still preserve their traditional names, with the distances between them, and special events which are minutely described both in Exodus and in Deuteronomy. It is inconceivable that any writer other than one who, like Moses, was himself a witness of the events recorded, could have written the narrative of the Exodus with the accurate topographical details which we are at this day in a position to confirm or deny by personal investigation. Now nearly all these recorded localities can be identified, and have been identified at the present day. I myself have visited the greater number; and I can speak with the utmost confidence of the accuracy of the details, and of the manner in which the events recorded fit in with the conditions of the topographical features. Could there be a more convincing proof that the events recorded were written by one who was personally present, and took a leading part in the events themselves? Moses himself claims to be the author on the ground of his own personal participation in the events, though these may have been dictated to an amanuensis. On all these grounds I claim for the history of the Exodus the same amount of credit which is yielded to the events recorded, say in Carlyle's *History of Frederick the Great*, or any similar work purporting to be a narrative of historical events.