

THE MOSAIC TABERNACLE.

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IN the Mosaic tabernacle we have a test case by which either the falsity of the Pentateuch, or the falsity of the critical theory may be established. If the critics can prove their position with regard to the tabernacle, it follows logically that the Bible account of it is false. But if, on the contrary, the Bible account can be established, then the theory of the Higher Critics, not only regarding the tabernacle, but also regarding the composition of the Pentateuch falls to the ground.

The Higher Critical theory is that this tabernacle had no existence, that it was invented by the priestly circle after the return from Babylon, and that the Temple was its prototype.

The three following passages from the writings of this school will suffice to explain their position :

(1) "The attitude of modern Old Testament scholarship to the priestly legislation as now formulated in the Pentateuch, and in particular to those sections of it which deal with the sanctuary and its worship is opposed to the historicity of P.'s (i.e. the old Mosaic) Tabernacle." (Dr. A. R. S. Kennedy in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 666.)

(2) "All that is said about this structure in the middle books of the Pentateuch is merely post-exilic accretion." (Graf.)

(3) "The truth is that the Tabernacle is a copy, not the prototype, of the Temple at Jerusalem." (Wellhausen, *Proleg.*, Eng. trans., p. 37.)

If it is true that the Tabernacle was only a miniature copy of the Temple, and that all the institutions connected with the Tabernacle were the inventions of post-exilic scribes, it follows logically and conclusively that the Bible records are false. "We do not imply this," the Critics may answer, but they say it, nevertheless, in other words. Dr. A. R. S. Kennedy in the above quoted article says : "The most convincing of the arguments against the actual existence of P.'s Tabernacle is *the silence of the pre-exilic historical writers regarding it.*" The Higher Critics treat all the

passages describing the Mosaic Law and the Tabernacle as portions of P., their priestly document, according to them composed after the Exile, which has no existence, however, outside the writings and imaginations of the Higher Critics. Having, therefore, relegated all references to the Tabernacle to a post-exilic date, they conceive that they are in a strong enough position to assert that there are no references to the Tabernacle in any writing before the Exile, and should such references be found, to be able to say that the text is not "genuine."

See the same article: "The tabernacle of P. has no *raison d'être* apart from the ark, the history of which is known with fair completeness from the conquest to its removal to the Temple of Solomon. But in no *genuine* passage of the history of that long period is there so much as a *hint of the tabernacle*, with its array of ministering priests and Levites" (p. 666).

Dr. Kennedy bases his argument on Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*, p. 39 f. Surely we have a right to ask now, what was the object of the priestly scribes who composed P., and inserted it with such cleverness among other documents that constitute the Pentateuch, and assigned it to the authorship of Moses—a palpable forgery.

The answers to this question are different. According to some (Nödelke and others) it was to "give pre-existence to the temple and to the unity of worship"; according to others it was to help them to establish a new temple ritual in Jerusalem, and to obtain more power for the hierarchy. It is also stated by Dr. Kennedy and others that it was to express the sublime idea of Jehovah's relation to His people by dwelling among them, and that as Ezekiel projects this idea into the Messianic future, P. throws it back into the Mosaic age (p. 667). Accordingly, the whole history of the Tabernacle and everything connected with it was a development of the idea expressed in the words, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Ex. xxv. 8), and this, they argue, is proved by the name *mishkan*, which means "habitation." A similar word, *shekhen* (habitation, R.V.), from the same verb, occurs, however, in Deuteronomy xii. 5. And no hint of such an idea is said to be there.

This theory affects more or less the truth of the whole history Pentateuch. If it is true, just half of this work including portion of Genesis, some thirteen chapters of Exodus, the whole of Leviticus, and

some ten chapters in Numbers are forged and fraudulent compilations—however beautiful the notion of inventing the Tabernacle, etc., for the expression of the union of Jehovah with His people be, if such, indeed, was the purpose of the priestly scribes, and if such priestly scribes were the authors of these portions of Holy Scripture. Moreover, the truth of the Tabernacle is implied in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is a spiritual commentary upon it and its relations to the new order of things (see Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 236 f.), and its Mosaic authorship is specially emphasised. See viii. 5: “Moses is warned of God, when he is about to make the tabernacle.” Also see Acts vii. 44-47: “Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen. . . . But Solomon built him an house.” The New Testament references to the Tabernacle, then, involve the Mosaic authorship of the Tabernacle and its priority to the Temple of Solomon—both facts denied by the Higher Critics. If the Higher Critics are right, the New Testament references must be wrong.

The consequences of this conclusion would be disastrous for the authority and inspiration of Holy Scripture. The Pentateuch would be reduced to a patchwork, and a forgery, having no more literary value and worth than any other literary work which was produced or was evolved in any other nation, the Vedas and such like, no matter how lofty the ideals of the compilers were. It therefore behoves us to examine with all care and diligence the destructive arguments of the Higher Critics, and to accept no assumption or statement of theirs on the grounds of either their superior ability, or superior learning, or superior daring. In the first place, it is to be noted that the only evidence the Critics can adduce on behalf of their position is *internal*, based altogether upon vocabulary and style which can be shown to be a very weak foundation for their skyscraping edifice. On the other hand, the defenders of the Bible have strong external evidence for their case.

We shall now call the witnesses for the truth of the Pentateuch and, incidentally and inferentially, of the Bible against the Critical theory. The first to be examined is the Septuagint translation. This is the Greek translation of the Old Testament begun in the middle of the third century in Alexandria. “It is all but certain

that the Torah was the first part translated." ¹ From Dr. Swete's *Introduction*, p. 23, we learn that it is admitted that the Pentateuch was the first part of the Old Testament to be translated into Greek. Now the Septuagint contains a very full description of the Tabernacle, its history, services, priesthood, etc., differing in but a few chapters in Exodus from the Hebrew Bible and the ancient versions. What a formidable witness the Septuagint would have been, and how mercilessly it would have been used by the Higher Critics if it was against us! Their case would have been proved up to the hilt at one stroke. As it is against them, they profess to ignore its evidence.

Our next witness is the Samaritan Pentateuch. The small body of Samaritans at Nablus, the ancient Shechem, possess a Roll of the Law. And it is this people and their Roll that are now in the witness-box. Jesus the son of Sirach (*Ecclesiasticus* I. 26), writing some 250 years after the return from the Babylonian captivity, says his soul abhorreth "them that sit upon the mountain of Samaria and that foolish people that dwell in Sichem." Without calling this writer into the box, it will suffice to state that he also could give evidence for the traditional belief. In the Prologue the translator writes: "Many and great things have been declared unto us by the law and the prophets, and by others that have followed their steps, for the which things Israel must be commended for learning and wisdom . . . my grandfather Jesus when he had much given himself to the reading of the law and the prophets and other books of the fathers . . ." Notice the old threefold division, "the law, the prophets, and the writings," twice adhered to here. Notice also the priority twice given in the course of a few lines to the law. As the translator mentions the 38th year of Euergetes king of Egypt, it is calculated that he wrote about 130 B.C., and his grandfather about 190 B.C. Thus the evidence of *Ecclesiasticus* is not to be despised. It would have been used against us had it stated "the prophets and the law." Notice also how the translator distinguishes "Israel" from the "Samaritans." In his praise of the fathers he gives a brief sketch of the events in the Pentateuch as recorded in our Hebrew version.

The Samaritans were a mixed people. When the ten tribes were deported by the Assyrians, men from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva,

¹ E. Nestle, *Hastings' D.B.*, "Septuagint," IV. 1439.

Hamath, and Sepharvaim were placed in the cities of Samaria (2 Kings xvii. 6, 24, 26; Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 14. 1). These men were called "Samaritans" (2 Kings xvii. 29). In Ezra iv. 9, 10, we read of fresh colonists sent by Assur-bani-pal (Osnapper). Josephus says they were called "Cutheans" in Hebrew, but "Samaritans" in Greek. A captive Jewish priest was sent by order of the King of Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 27), and he came and taught them "how they should fear the Lord." In consequence, they adopted the Jewish ritual combined with the worship of graven images (2 Kings xvii. 41). "They feared the Lord and served their graven images." When the Jewish exiles returned in 536 B.C. and commenced to rebuild the Temple, the descendants of these people, "the adversaries of Judah," came and said, "Let us build with you: for we seek your God as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, which brought us up hither" (Ezra iv. 2). The Jews refused the help rudely. And the "people of the land" in consequence hindered their work for sixteen years (520). These may have included others, but all were instigated by the "adversaries" of Judah. This was the beginning of the feud, which increased with the years. After the accession of Artaxerxes in 465 these people made a protest against allowing the Jews to rebuild the city walls. This was made by foreigners: "Dinaites, Apharsathchites . . . Elamites, and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnapper brought over, and set in the city of Samaria, and in the rest of the country beyond the river" (Ezra iv. 9, 10). Then, when Nehemiah came in 444 to rebuild the city, he was opposed by Sanballat the Horonite, with whom was "the army of Samaria," Tobiah the Ammonite, and the Arabians, and Ammonites, and Ashdodites (Neh. iv. 2, 7). Sanballat was called the "Governor of Samaria" by Josephus and the Elephantine Papyrus. Here we have three attempts by Samaritans to interfere with the Jews. The feud began with the refusal of help. And it is distinctly stated in three places in Scripture that these people with whom the Jews quarrelled were Samaritans, and that the first quarrel was on religious grounds, the Jews refusing to recognise the Samaritans as worshippers of the same God. The feud culminated eventually in the institution of a rival religion, with a rival priesthood and temple. In Nehemiah xiii. 28, we are told: "And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest,

was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite : therefore I chased him from me." Josephus (*Ant.* xi. 7. 2, 8. 2) tells us that this priest was Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua ; that the Jews commanded him to divorce his wife, or not to approach the altar ; that the high priest, his brother, drove him away from the altar ; that Manasseh laid the matter before Sanballat his father-in-law, and that he promised to make him high priest, and to build a temple for him upon Mount Gerizim. From that time (shortly after 432, Josephus wrongly dates it in the days of Alexander the Great) there were two rival Jehovah religions in Palestine, with rival temples, and rival books of the Law.

The Samaritans had the same five books attributed to Moses, with certain paraphrases, grammatical mistakes and many alterations, e.g. Gerizim for Ebal in Deuteronomy xxviii: 4, and in the old script, not in the square or newer Assyrian character, said to have been introduced by Ezra (*Talmud, Sanhedrin 221b*). Now it is to be remembered that the breach with the Samaritans began in 536 B.C. and reached its climax in 433 B.C. The Higher Critics, as we have seen, maintain that P., containing the Levitical Law, and the account of the Tabernacle, its services, priesthood, etc., was composed by the priests after the return from Babylon, a considerable time after the breach with the Samaritans in 536. If the Samaritan Pentateuch did not contain this P. we can imagine what a formidable witness it would be against us, and how it would have been used ! But the Samaritan Pentateuch contains all P. And surely it must be allowed to be an equally formidable witness on behalf of the opponents of the Critical theory. For it proves that the Pentateuch did contain all P. already before the returned priestly scribes could have set to work to compose it. The Samaritans are proved to have respected this portion of the book P. as much as the rest. And they surely would not have done this had it emanated from those people who refused to acknowledge them as servants of the Lord, and to accept their help in rebuilding the Temple. The fact that they did accept the Law of Moses affords a very strong presumption that such law did not proceed from their Jewish enemies, but was in their hands previously to the quarrel. Would it not be a strange and incredible thing for Manasseh and his priests to take away with them to Gerizim an edition of the "Law" freshly compiled by his own enemies, containing

a recent law that condemned their conduct (Levit. xxi. 15), and if they had done so, would it be credible that the Samaritans to whom they ministered would have accepted a work that rested on the authority of Ezra and Nehemiah, their foes? Would Sanballat, for example, allow a book to be taught which expressly condemned Manasseh for marrying his daughter, if the law that did so was recent?

The Higher Critics, however, attempt to explain away this evidence. Mr. Chapman¹ asserts that the men who offered to help with the rebuilding of the Temple were "Israelites," that "when the Jews came back from Babylon they found a religious community established in Jerusalem," that "the Babylonian Jews wished to exclude these Israelites from joining in the work," but "the children of the Captivity, with their strict views of preserving the holy seed and a pure worship, regarded these Israelites as defiled by contact with their heathen neighbours, and refused their proffered help."²

These statements are conjectures, and are confuted by the evidence of Scripture. Would Israelites who had "remained faithful to the Lord God of Israel" have said: "We seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, which brought us up hither" (Ezra iv. 1, 2)? Is not this what might have been said by the descendants of the Assyrian colonists who had been taught "how they should fear the Lord" by a captive priest sent to them by the king of Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 28). In Ecclesiasticus we find the people of Samaria and Sichern distinguished from Israel. (See Prologue and c. 50, 26.)

Mr. Chapman asks: "Is it likely that those who would describe themselves as of heathen descent would wish to assist in building the Temple?" This is a pertinent question, but it can be answered in the affirmative, for the Samaritans were always ready to claim relationship with the Jews when they thought it would help them. See Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 14. 3 and xi. 8. 6, where it is said "the Samaritans who had Shechem for their metropolis, seeing that Alexander had greatly honoured the Jews, determined to profess themselves Jews, and when they made their request for privileges, and Alexander asked them who they were, they said they were Hebrews." On the occasion in question they evidently wanted to

¹ *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, pp. 277-294.

² *Ibid.* p. 297.

please Cyrus, who had ordered the rebuilding of the Temple. The men who opposed the rebuilding of the city in Ezra iv. 9, 10, were certainly not Israelites, and the opponents in Nehemiah iv. 7 were the Governor of Samaria and his people. There is no mention anywhere of "seceding Jews" in the Scriptural passages. Mr. Chapman, however, assumes that it was "seceding Jews" who quarrelled with the Jews from Babylon, and who took "away with them the Book of the Law which had been newly compiled by Ezra and Nehemiah, because they would not wish to magnify the points of difference between themselves and their brethren who remained at Jerusalem."¹ But would it not have been in their interest to discredit the work of their enemies, Ezra and Nehemiah? Would they not have been able to deal a deadly blow to Ezra and his party if they could have said: "We have the genuine Law, the Law of Moses, not the Law invented by the priests of Ezra. All the Israelites will, therefore, follow us"? But if they could not do so, it was because the Law of the Jews had not been invented by Ezra and his scribes.

If the Higher Critics desire to establish their case, they must call evidence to prove that the schism between these Samaritans who, according to them, were "Israelites," and the Jews began after the return of 444 B.C.; that the Samaritans, who were "Israelites," for the first time received the Law fresh from the hands of Ezra, when Manasseh fled, a discarded priest, to his Samaritan father-in-law, to officiate in a Samaritan temple as a Samaritan high priest, and that they were not acquainted with it previously. The fact that the Samaritan text has variations from the Massoretic recension only proves that the Hebrew text, on which the Massoretic was based, was older than the Samaritan text. The question is when did the latter come into existence? It must have been before 432 B.C., at all events.

The fact that the Book of Joshua is not included with the Samaritan Pentateuch² is an argument against the Critical theory that the Pentateuch is a compilation of several sources (including Joshua) which they call the Hexateuch, not completed before 444 B.C. And

¹ *Introduction*, p. 293.

² The fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch agrees with the Massoretic text against the Septuagint in passages in Exodus (xxxv.-xl.) only proves that the latter followed a slightly different original, not that it was prior in time to the Samaritan Pentateuch, as Mr. Chapman asserts.

the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch, containing the Law of Moses and the cultus of the Tabernacle, at least dating from 432 B.C., is a proof that the Critical theory of the "fiction" of the Tabernacle is wrong.

We have now called up two witnesses, the Septuagint translation and the Samaritan Pentateuch, for the real existence of the Tabernacle. We have also the Greek Apocrypha, which has many references to the Tabernacle, Judah ix. 8; Wis. of Solomon ix. 8; Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 10, 15; 2 Macc. ii. 5. We have also a full account of the Tabernacle in the *Antiquities* of Josephus, and in the Talmud, where one treatise, the Bereitha, is given up to a description of it. And in all these works it is treated as a real historical structure, not as an "ideal." In Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 7 f. it is treated in connection with the Law of Moses. We have already referred to this evidence. In Wisdom of Solomon ix. 8, we have: "Thou hast commanded me to build a *temple* upon thy holy mount and an altar in the city, *an imitation of the holy tabernacle* which thou hast prepared from the beginning." Of course this book may not be older than the first century B.C. At the same time, if it had said that the Tabernacle was an imitation of the Temple, what a formidable witness it would have been for the Critical theory. It is not so much what such writers say themselves, as the tradition that lies behind their writings—in this case a written tradition that goes back to the days of Ezra, and to the truth of which they testify—that is important. The external evidence for the Tabernacle is strong.

Before we proceed to take up the evidence of the Old Testament itself, there is another important piece of external evidence which is not in favour of the Critics—the Elephantine Papyri. The letter to Bagohi dated 407 B.C. proves the existence of a colony of Jews in Egypt who had a temple there, before the entry of Cambyses in 525. This letter also shows acquaintance with the meal and burnt offering, the word *degel* for standard, said to be characteristic of P., and the use of frankincense, etc. If P. was a post-exilic work, how were these things so well known in Egypt about the same time as it is said to have been compiled?

(To be concluded.)

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