

critics they have no foundation whatever in fact. Again, 'sober history cannot venture to admit that Ahab really destroyed the altars of Yahwe and slew his prophets. Again it is said: 'The figure of Nathan has too perilous a resemblance to Elijah to be accepted with much confidence; his name may indeed be historical, and also his adhesion to the party of Solomon, but beyond this we can hardly venture to go.' 'Melchizedek,' says Canon Cheyne, 'has the singular fate not only of being an imaginary personage, but of owing his ideal existence to a scribe's error.' 'That the Jews in the time of Christ believed in a suffering and atoning Messiah is, to say the least, unproved and highly improbable,' say the late Robertson Smith and Professor Kautzsch, to which Canon Cheyne adds the suggestion that 'it is historically very conceivable that a Babylonian belief may be the real parent both of (the Buddhist expectation of a King of Righteousness) and all other Messianic beliefs within the sphere of Babylonian influence.'

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The New Testament fares even worse; and the results which these 'eminent critics' claim to have reached are entirely inconsistent with the great cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. The story of the raising of Lazarus is declared to be 'non-historical like the History of the Creation in Genesis, and like the records of the other miracles in the Fourth Gospel.' And these writers not only reject the story of the virgin birth of Our Lord but actually in plain terms deny His divinity. 'In the person of Jesus,' writes Professor Schmiedel, 'we have to do with a completely human being. The divine is to be sought in him only in the form in which it is capable of being found in a man.' Even the Pauline Epistles—once regarded by Protestants as the great bulwark of their theology—are criticised out of existence by these representatives of Protestant Rationalism. In the article 'Paul,' by Professor van Manen, of Leyden, it is stated that criticism 'is unable any longer in all simplicity to hold by the canonical Acts and Epistles, or even to the Epistles solely, or yet to a selection of them.' This is further amplified by the statement that 'we possess no Epistles of Paul; that the writings which bear his name are pseudepigrapha containing seemingly historical data from the life and labors of the apostle, which nevertheless must not be accepted as correct without closer examination.' The reason advanced for doubting the genuineness of these Epistles is thus stated: 'We never come upon any trace in tradition of the impression which the supposed letters of Paul may have made—though of course each of them must, if genuine, have produced its own impression—upon the Christians at Rome, at Corinth, in Galatia. . . . And from this slender premise the following sweeping conclusion is deduced: 'With respect to the canonical Pauline Epistles, the later criticism here under consideration has learned to recognise that they are none of them by Paul; neither fourteen, nor thirteen, nor nine or ten, nor seven or eight, nor yet even the four so long "universally" regarded as unassailable. They are without distinction, pseudepigrapha' (or false writings).

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It may be admitted that the authorities above quoted are amongst the more advanced of the higher critics; and they have been cited, not as indicating points on which the whole body of the critics are agreed, but as showing the general and inevitable trend of the movement. But in order that we may not be accused of basing our case on the utterances of mere extremists we shall quote briefly from authorities that are universally regarded as moderate and conservative, and whose views have been, and are, endorsed by ministers in New Zealand. And a member of the New Zealand Wesleyan Conference shall be our guide. In an address on the Higher Criticism delivered (by request) at the Wesleyan Conference, Dunedin, 1893, the Rev. C. H. Garland claimed that the portion of the Old Testament generally known as the Pentateuch or Books of Moses was 'but a compilation from preceding documents or traditions, concerning which we are left totally in the dark, no man knowing why, when, or by whom they were written, so that the first chapters of Genesis cannot be to us what they once were.' The Book of Esther, he continues, 'receives but slight recognition and scant courtesy from the higher critics. Whatever inspiration may belong to other parts of the Old Testament, they admit there is no inspira-

tion here.' The Book of Job 'is, without doubt, a drama probably born about the time of the Babylonian captivity.' According to Mr. Garland Ecclesiastes is not the work of Solomon, and it is called by Dr. Clifford, another 'moderate' critic, 'a cowardly moan.' 'The Song of Solomon,' says Mr. Garland, 'seems to be destitute of any spiritual significance or insight. . . . The prophecies are still under severe examination. The Book of Daniel is, perhaps, the battlefield of the Old Testament, and we must be content to stand aside till the able combatants have measured their strength.' And so on. On the general question of the authority—or, rather, lack of authority—of the Bible, the Wesleyan Conference representative is quite explicit. 'Higher criticism,' he says, 'has not stopped at the consideration of dates and authorship and modes of construction; it has looked with keen eye on certain statements and difficulties, and, not suffering us to gloss them over, has openly and loudly condemned them—or rather has adduced them in condemnation of our traditional Bible theories, for it pronounces them errors, misstatements, inaccuracies, defects, and concludes that the Bible is not an infallible book.' The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, a well-known Methodist preacher of the day, is quoted as saying: 'The higher criticism of the present day has undermined what I am obliged to call a Protestant error—the infallibility of the Bible.' And the author of the Conference sermon sums up the whole position thus: 'What the Church has been to the Roman Catholics the Bible has been to the Protestants, and the researches of higher criticism prove this position to be untenable.'

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After three hundred years of the great principle of private judgment this, then, is what the Protestant Bible has come to—this is the dark background to these tercentenary jubileations. The one sole authority with which Protestantism started has been sapped and undermined; and on Protestant principles there is nothing to put in its place. How much of the Bible will the Protestant layman have left to him after another three hundred years shall have passed—yea, after another century shall have gone? Catholics probably do not realise at all adequately the evils they escape by being members of a Church which—like its Divine Founder—speaks, on these great questions, 'as one having authority.' In the Catholic Church alone—with its unerring, infallible guidance—are the claims both of reason and of revelation adjusted and harmonised. 'Contemplate Christ,' says an old Catholic writer, and, as it happens, a German at that, 'in, and with His creation—the Church; the only adequate authority; the only authority representing Him, and thou wilt then stamp His image on thy soul. Should it, however, be stated, in ridicule of this principle, that it were the same as to say—"Look at the Bible through the spectacles of the Church, be not disturbed, for it is better for thee to contemplate the star by the aid of a glass, than to let it escape thy dull organ of vision, and be lost in mist and darkness. Spectacles, besides, thou must always use, but only beware lest thou get them constructed by the first casual glass grinder, and fixed upon thy nose."'

Notes

The Fashions: A Protest

Emma Carleton, in the *Independent*, thus voices what is—in these days of Merry Widow hats, hobble skirts, and harem skirts—the sensible woman's very natural protest:

The styles are too much with us; late and soon,
Gazing and choosing we lay waste our powers;
Shop windows show us little that is ours—
For we have frittered taste away—a useless boon;
Freak hats that tower upward to the moon—
High heels that tilt us forward at all hours—
Queer frocks that flash us past, like crazy flowers—
In these—in all things—we are out of tune.

It wears us out. Great Pan, I'd rather be
A dowdy peasant weeding in the corn—
A Dryad, draped in mosses from a tree—
A gypsy, garbed in gaudy rags forlorn—
A mermaid, flaunting fishtail in the sea—
Than hark Dame Fashion blow her foolish horn!

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