

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS

Associates: { E. C. HEGELER.  
MARY CARUS.

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VOL. XVIII. (NO. 11) NOVEMBER, 1904.

NO. 582

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## CONTENTS:

<i>Frontispiece.</i> THE MOSQUE OF OMAR—SITE OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.	
<i>Is the Bible in Danger?</i> An Appreciation and Criticism. REV. GABRIEL OUSSANI. . . . .	641
<i>Stone Worship.</i> (Illustrated.) EDITOR. . . . .	661
<i>Mythopoeic Erudition.</i> G. W. SHAW. . . . .	687
<i>How History is Transfigured by Myth.</i> EDITOR. . . . .	690
<i>The Japanese Floral Calendar.</i> XI. The Chrysanthemum. (Illustrated.) ERNEST W. CLEMENT, M. A. . . . .	695
<i>Stonehenge.</i> A Poem. . . . .	699
<i>Honesty with the Bible.</i> . . . . .	700
<i>Pure Religion and Pure Gold.</i> J. A. RUTH. . . . .	703
<i>Notes.</i> . . . . .	704

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THE MOSQUE OF OMAR—SITE OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

*Frontispiece to The Open Court.*

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## IS THE BIBLE IN DANGER?

AN APPRECIATION AND CRITICISM.

BY REV. GABRIEL OUSSANI.

### INTRODUCTION.

FOUR Sundays ago, there appeared in the *New York Herald* a Biblical Symposium contributed by some leading churchmen and dignitaries of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Churches. The subject was: whether the Bible was in danger? or, rather, a criticism of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament from a Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish point of view. The eminent churchmen who were invited to express their personal or rather denominational view on the subject are the Most Rev. John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York; Rev. Dr. H. A. Braunn, and Rev. A. P. Doyle (Paulist), of the Catholic Church; the Right Rev. Henry C. Potter, Bishop of New York, the Right Rev. William C. Doan, Bishop of Albany, and the Rev. Dr. John P. Peters, of the Episcopal Church; the Revs. Drs. Lyman Abbott, Newell Dwight Hillis, Congregationalists; Rev. Drs. Charles H. Parkhurst, Robert Russell Booth, and Daniel S. Gregory, Presbyterians; Rev. James Burrell, Reformed; Rev. Dr. Minot J. Savage, Unitarian; Rev. Dr. Hayes Ward, Presbyterian and editor of the *New York Independent*; Rev. Dr. Joseph Silverman, Jewish, and Dr. Felix Adler, Ethical Culture.

The theological and critical views of such eminent divines, preachers and thinkers are, of course, of great importance for a comparative study of the attitude of the different Christian Churches towards the vital problem of the relation of the Higher Criticism and the Bible, and they deserve our full appreciation; but from a critical

point of view many of them are subject to some criticism, which is well to point out before the intelligent public.

Without claiming any gift of prophecy, I am convinced that the *Herald's* Biblical Symposium will please neither the Higher Critics nor their extreme opponents; furthermore it will greatly disappoint the general public, which, although it consists neither of higher critics nor of uncompromising apologists, nevertheless is equally entitled to know the best and latest conclusions of sound Biblical criticism. I venture to say, that the time has come when our well informed public press should give more attention to the fair and impartial presentation of the latest conclusions of Biblical researches and discoveries in order that the average intelligent public may be in a position to judge of the relative merits of the two contending schools of theology and criticism.

#### PART I.

It is three and twenty years since the late William Robertson Smith, Oriental scholar and Biblical critic, then a young but exceptionally gifted lecturer and professor at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, startled the whole English public by two courses of lectures on Biblical criticism, delivered in Edinburgh and Glasgow before audiences of not less than eighteen hundred, and given to the public, afterwards, in two volumes under the title of "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," and "The Prophets of Israel," respectively. This distinguished scholar had already previously scandalized the English people with several masterly articles on Biblical subjects in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, on account of which he was condemned and suspended by the commission of the Free Church of Scotland. The aim of his lectures, the author tells us, was to give the Scottish public "an opportunity of understanding the position of the Newer Criticism in order that they might not condemn it unheard." The lectures proved a success, and, ever since, Higher Criticism gained its ground in all the leading English and American Universities.

At that time a distinguished professor of theology in the general Assembly's College of Belfast, Dr. Robert Watts, in a book in which he undertook to refute the views of the Aberdeen professor, openly declared that "Higher Criticism, whether it comes from the pen of a Wellhausen, or a Kuenen, or a Smith, is still the same faith-subverting theory, which no ingenuity of man can reconcile with the history or character of the Old Testament revelation, and



that no one can accept it and continue long to regard the Sacred Scriptures as the Word of God."<sup>1</sup>

It is useless to add that Dr. Watt's verdict on the Higher Criticism twenty-three years ago, is substantially repeated by many in our own days, and will very likely continue to be the motto of the anti-Higher Criticism for many years to come.

Before entering into any discussion it is well to emphasize the gravity of the situation, which has reached a very acute stage in the last few years in all the branches of the Christian Church. To any one, in fact, who cares at all for the Church of Christ, the present theological situation must be one of unique interest; to many, indeed, it is one of grave apprehension. It is undeniable that there is a great critical movement within the Church, almost within her every branch. What is to be the Church's attitude towards such movement? Shall she welcome it? or fear it? or condemn it? Ignore it she clearly cannot, for the problems are thrust upon her by her own sons, on the right hand and on the left.<sup>2</sup>

The situation is critical, indeed, and the questions cannot be suppressed; for they suggest themselves to all minds which participate, even in a small measure, in the intellectual movement of the age, and it is the Church's task to attempt an answer to these burning questions, for otherwise, she shall no longer powerfully command the conscience of her members.

These problems are urgent and difficult, and the answers to them seem to divide the Church and its most distinguished members. Between the representatives of the two opposing schools there has been, and there is still a conspicuous lack of fairness and sincerity; and seldom has either party been at the pains to understand the other. Both sides have suffered from misunderstanding and misrepresentation, with the unfortunate result that the average public, as a whole, has remained in a state of chaotic doubt and titubation.

The Catholic Church itself has not, and could not possibly escape the beneficial effects of this reactionary movement, which is sufficiently attested by the names of such Catholic scholars as Loisy, Bickell, Clark, Robert, Hummelauer, Ginocchi, Van den Biesen, Semeria, Von Hügel, Von Hoonacker, Zaplethal, and Lagrange, the founder of the Catholic Biblical School at Jerusalem, the author of many valuable books and contributions, who has lately project-

<sup>1</sup> *The Newer Criticism and the Analogy of the Faith*. Edinburgh. 1882. Page x.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. McFadyen's *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*. New York. 1903. Pages 1 ff.

ed a series of critical commentaries of the Bible, of which his own commentary on the Book of Judges was the first installment.

The Catholic Church feels the issue to be serious and the consequences rather discouraging, and a commission, therefore, representative of the Catholic scholarship of many lands, has been appointed by the late Pope Leo XIII "to ascertain the limits of freedom which is allowed to the Catholic exegete in the Biblical questions of today, to point out definitely conclusions that must be maintained in the interest of orthodoxy, others that must be rejected as incompatible with or dangerous to the Catholic faith; as well as the disputable ground between the two where each one is free to hold his own view," for even those Catholic theologians who believe that religion has nothing to fear from the attacks of the Higher Criticism, are yet compelled by the facts to admit that criticism seems to make the Old Testament alike inaccessible and unintelligible to themselves as well as to the people.

Higher Criticism has been unfairly represented to the public, by our conservative Catholic and Protestant theologians, as a recent invention, and that it was arrogant to pretend that it has reached any final or even approximate result. Criticism, said some, was purely of German origin, and that it was foolish to import from Germany what has no root in our own theology and catechism. Criticism, said others, is purely rationalistic in principles, aim and method, and it goes grinding for ever at the same mill, and constructive theology. Criticism, shouted others, is narrow in its method, and that it goes grinding for ever at the same mill, and needs an almost complete reconstruction. In particular, according to many, Higher Criticism dreads archeology; and that it was time for sober theologians to strike out a new method which will have the additional advantage of being scientifically sure and theologically safe. To many, in fact, Higher Criticism, atheism, rationalism and positivism are one and the same thing; and to be higher critic and true Christian is to serve God and Mammon at the same time.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately, however, all these stupid accusations have the disadvantage of being devoid of the most elementary principles of common sense, which is nowadays, unfortunately, so uncommon and so rare; and I think it is time that our sober Higher Critics should take the offensive and directly attack their foes on their own ground, in order that what is substantially true and vital to Christianity be vin-

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Cheyne's *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*. London. 1893. Pages v-vi.

icated, and what is secondary, irrelevant and immaterial be set out in its true light and bearing.

Consequently we squarely deny the unfounded accusation that Higher Criticism has a reckless disregard and contempt for tradition: for it must be remembered that many of those old traditions were never seriously investigated till about a century and a half ago. An unchallenged tradition has no more value at the end of twenty centuries than at the beginning, and its value then is precisely the thing to be investigated.

All traditions should be carefully analyzed and scientifically discussed, and, unless they are capable of standing the merciless, yet logical, hammer of sound criticism, they should be rejected. The records of our religion are historical documents, and they claim the same treatment which has been so fruitfully applied to the other sources of ancient history and traditions. They claim it all the more because the supreme religious significance of this history and traditions gives it an interest to which no other part of ancient history can pretend. Ecclesiastical leaders should never flatter themselves that questions of truth and criticism can be set at rest by an exertion of authority, and by unwarranted, though venerable, traditions; for those who love truth for its own sake cannot well acquiesce in this comparatively easy method.<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastical authority, on the other hand, should never be overlooked or minimized in its other applications. All Christian Churches should be grateful to all those scholars who will continue to examine the history of revelation in its origin, aim, successive evolution and local tendencies, and not to rest satisfied with conclusions and traditions that do not commend themselves to the scientific and impartial investigations of the critic and historian.

In the second place, the malicious insinuation that Higher Criticism has put the credibility of the Bible at stake should be emphatically rejected. The credibility of the Bible has been neither smashed nor annihilated by the modern scholar of criticism. If the Pentateuch is believed no more to have been the work of Moses, it is for the same reason that we do not and cannot believe that *Romeo and Juliet* had been written by Chaucer, or Milton's *Paradise Lost* by Shakespeare. If mythical and legendary elements are largely interwoven with the narratives of the earlier chapters of Genesis, it is simply because it was a natural consequence that oral traditions which have come down to us after hundreds of generations, and

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Robertson Smith's *The Prophets of Israel*. London. 2d ed. 1902. Pages I-II.

passed through so many national, local and popular stages of literary and religious evolutions, should bear the imprint of this successive and gradual transformation; and if the books which have been long supposed to be, if not contemporary with the events they record, at any rate very early, are brought down to so late a date, this does not weaken their historical value, but it simply gives us the right key for the proper understanding of the events recorded, and to view them from their own writers' view and standing.

What difference, in fact, does it make whether we believe the Book of Job, or Ecclesiastes, or Isaiah, or the Psalms, were written by Job himself, or Solomon, or Isiah, or David, respectively, or rather by some anonymous Jewish writers of comparatively later age, as long as we believe in their revealed or inspired character? Would the names of Job or Solomon or Isaiah or David make them *necessarily* more historical or more valuable even from a theological point of view? And would the second part of Isaiah lose its historical and moral character unless we believe it was written by the first Isaiah? and whether the Psalms were written by David himself, or by half dozen different pious Jews of the Exilic and post-Exilic periods, would that in any way affect or minimize their religious and prophetic value? Not a bit; for not only Moses, or David, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, but also many other pious priests, prophets and kings of Israel could have been equally favored with the divine gift of revelation, inspiration and prophecy.

Furthermore, we explicitly protest against the other not less unjust accusation that the attitude of the Higher Criticism towards the explicit language and testimony of the New Testament, and of the words of our Lord Himself and His apostles is rather irreverent and incompatible with our Christian doctrine as to the divine person of Christ, His divine nature and authority. It can never be too much emphasized that, whatever view our Lord Himself entertained as to the scriptures of the Old Testament, the record of His words has certainly come down to us through the medium of persons who shared the current views on the subject; and that His sayings on the subject participated of that fragmentariness which is a general characteristic of the Gospels.<sup>5</sup> Nowhere in the New Testament our Lord claims for the Old Testament that it is an infallible authority in regard to history, archeology or sciences; and consequently, any appeal to Christ's authority on such points is not only unjustifiable and preposterous, but also dangerous in so far

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Sanday: "Inspiration," *Bampton Lectures*. London. 5th ed. Pages 407-8.

as it mistakes the true purpose of His teachings. That our Lord, as Dr. Driver says, in appealing to the Old Testament intended to pronounce a verdict on the authorship and age of its different parts, and to foreclose all future inquiry into the subject, is an assumption for which no sufficient ground can be alleged.<sup>6</sup> The aim of His teaching was a religious one, and as the basis of His teaching He accepted the opinions respecting the Old Testament current around Him. He assumed, in His allusions to it, the premises which His opponents and hearers themselves admitted! and consequently the purposes for which the Lord appealed to the Old Testament, its prophetic significance and the spiritual lessons deducible from it, are not and cannot be affected by critical inquiries.<sup>7</sup>

But this is not all. It has been common, indeed, to represent the modern critical school of Criticism as antagonistic to the idea of revelation and of the supernatural in general; but this is far from being a fair representation of the truth; for it touches only that class of critics who approach their studies with a bias against the supernatural; and this statement is so far from being applicable to all critics that many of them have indignantly spurned it; for they firmly believe that, unless the supernatural is admitted, the phenomena of Israel's history become utterly inexplicable. A good confirmation of this my statement can be had by reading the innumerable protests raised by the most respected Higher Critics of Germany against the two well-known but ill-fated lectures on *Babel and Bible* delivered before the German Emperor two years ago by the distinguished Assyriologist Frederick Delitzsch, of the University of Berlin. Natural development and religious evolution may account for a great many facts, but they utterly fail in reducing Old and New Testament history and religion to a gradual and unconscious development, and in substituting all along the line, evolution for revelation. And as an eminent Higher Critic says, "Criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament; it presupposes it, it seeks only to determine the conditions under which it operates, and the literary forms through which it manifests itself; and it thus helps us to frame truer conceptions of the methods which it has pleased God to employ in revealing Himself to His ancient people of Israel, and in preparing the way for the fuller manifestation of Himself in Jesus Christ.

<sup>6</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. 9th ed. London. 1899. Page xii

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.* Page xiii.

Furthermore, should not pass unnoticed the signally false, absurd and ridiculous charge that Higher Criticism has found in Oriental archaeology its most fatal and deadly enemy and that the archaeological discoveries made in Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and Palestine in the last fifty years, while on one hand have almost upset every conclusion of the modern school of Biblical criticism, on the other hand have admirably confirmed the strictly historical character of the Old Testament narratives.

It is comparatively easy to misunderstand things, and still easier to misrepresent them; but it is not so easy to prove them. If the enemies of the Higher Criticism think to have found in Oriental archaeology their *refugium peccatorum* and their Gibraltar of defence, it will not take them very long to find out that sooner or later they will have to surrender to the evidence of facts. The results proved by archeology have, in their bearing upon Biblical criticism, been not only greatly exaggerated, but also completely misunderstood by scholars like Hommel in Germany, Vigouroux in France, Brunengo and De Cara, s. j., in Italy, by Sayce in England, and by the Princeton School in America, and the attempt to refute conclusions of criticism by means of archeology has signally failed. It will not be out of place to quote here the pertinent remarks of two of the most distinguished Biblical critics of England, Dr. Driver of Oxford, and Dr. G. Adam Smith of Glasgow. The former frankly asserts that "the archeological discoveries of recent years have indeed been of singular interest and value; they have thrown a flood of light, sometimes as surprising as it was unexpected, upon many a previously dark and unknown region of antiquity. But, in spite of the ingenious hypotheses which have been framed to prove the contrary, they have revealed nothing which is in conflict with the generally accepted conclusions of critics. I readily allow that there are some critics who combine with their literary criticism of the Old Testament an historical criticism which appears to me to be unreasonable and extreme; and I am not prepared to say that isolated instances do not exist, in which opinions expressed by one or another of these critics may have to be reconsidered in the light of recent discoveries; but the idea that the monuments furnish a refutation of the general critical position, is a pure illusion."<sup>8</sup>

While the latter, in his "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament,"<sup>9</sup> speaking of the light archeology has

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.* Page xviii.

<sup>9</sup> New York. 1902. Pages 99-102 and *passim*.

thrown on the narrative of Genesis, says: "Nor can archeology furnish us with contemporary evidence of the Patriarchs and their careers. Archeology has indeed restored much of the life to which they belong. It has shown us that in the time of Abraham, whom the documents assert to have come out of Mesopotamia in Palestine, there was constant traffic between these countries.

The city, to which the early home of his family is assigned, has been identified and explored. Ur of the Chaldees lies on the borders of Arabia and Babylonia. The settlement there of a nomadic Arabian tribe, such as the earliest records of Israel prove them to have been in genius and temperament; their contact for a time with civilisation; their half-weaning from the desert and subsequent migration northwards along the Euphrates to Harran and then south into Canaan, are all illustrated not only by archeology but by the drift of Arabian tribes upon Mesopotamia and Syria within historical times. These last also make possible the wanderings of such a half-settled family as Abraham's upon the desert borders of Southern Palestine and Egypt. The four Mesopotamian kings, of whose invasion of Canaan and pursuit by Abraham we are told in Genesis xiv, "were really contemporaries; and at least three of them ruled over the countries which they are said in Genesis xiv to have ruled; and their invasion of Palestine was "in the abstract, within the military possibilities of the age." The existence of the names Jacob and Joseph has been discovered in Palestine at an earlier age than the Exodus; the name "Israel," as of a people, in touch with Egypt, has been deciphered upon a stele of the Pharaoh under whom the Exodus probably took place. And not only does the story of Joseph reflect the social customs, the economic processes, and the official etiquette of the kingdom of the Pharaohs; but the settlement of a semi-nomad tribe in Goshen, at first in favor with the court of Egypt and then, on the succession of another dynasty, oppressed and enslaved, has also been proved to be perfectly possible in the history of Egypt between the eighteenth and fourteenth centuries.

"But, just as we have seen, that in all this archeological evidence there is nothing to prove the early date of the documents which contain the stories of the Patriarchs, but on the contrary, even a little which strengthens the critical theory of their late date, so now we must admit that while archeology has richly illustrated the possibility of the main outlines of the Book of Genesis from Abraham to Joseph, it has not one whit of proof to offer for the personal existence or characters of the Patriarchs themselves.

Where formerly the figure of the "Father of the Faithful" and his caravans moved solemnly in high outline through an almost empty world, we see (by the aid of the monuments) embassies, armies and long lines of traders crossing, by paths still used, the narrow bridge which Palestine forms between the two great centres of early civilisation; the constant drift of desert tribes upon the fertile land, and within the latter the frequent villages of their busy fields, the mountain-keeps with the Egyptian garrisons, and the cities on their mounds walled with broad bulwarks of brick and stone. But amidst all that crowded life we peer in vain for any trace of the fathers of the Hebrews; we listen in vain for any mention of their names. This is the whole change archeology has wrought; it has given us a background and an atmosphere for the stories of Genesis; it is unable to recall or to certify their heroes." Consequently, Oriental archeology is so far from being in antagonism with the main results of Biblical criticism that Professor Sayce himself does not hesitate to confess that "it must not be supposed that Oriental archeology and Higher Criticism are irreconcilable foes. On the contrary we shall see that in many respects the learning and acumen of the long line of critics who have labored and fought over the words of the Scripture have not been altogether in vain. Much has been established by them, which the progress of Oriental research tends more and more to confirm. There are narratives and statements in the Old Testament as to which the scepticism of the critic has been shown to be justified. The judgment he has passed on the so-called historical chapters of the Book of Daniel has been abundantly verified by the recent discoveries of Assyriology. The same evidence and the same arguments which have demonstrated that the scepticism of the Higher Criticism was hasty and unfounded in certain instances have equally demonstrated that it was well founded in others."<sup>10</sup>

Finally, another objection against the Higher Criticism is that it is arbitrary in its method, too subjective in its inquiries, deficient in harmony, short of materials upon which to build, and above all fluctuating and not unanimous in its conclusions. This accusation has been too often insisted upon and refuted, but it seems that it is never too often repeated.

It should be borne in mind that critical and scientific investigations in any department of knowledge is never an easy thing, and to understand rightly the method and process by which Higher

<sup>10</sup> *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments.* London. 5th ed. Pages 27-28.



Criticism attains its results requires time, patience, sympathy and, above all, a thorough scientific training which is, unfortunately, so conspicuous by its absence in our Anti-Higher Critics; and only those who have learned how to use its tools and have employed them with the best masters are in a position to competently judge of its methods and conclusions.

Human science and knowledge are necessarily limited and consequently subject to illusions and errors, and I do not know of any science the conclusions of which are unanimously accepted by all its representatives. The many fluctuating theories, systems and conclusions of theology, philosophy, biology, physiology, anthropology, geology, and other natural sciences, are well known; still no one would object to call them sciences on account of the lack of a unanimous consent in many of their conclusions.

The Higher Criticism is, *consideratis considerandis*, infinitely more unanimous in its conclusions than philosophy or theology proper. Look at the hundreds of Christian sects and churches from the beginning of Christianity till our own days; and, apparently, each one of these sects and denominations claims to build its theological system on the same Bible and on the same Gospel. Disagreements there are, there have been, and there will always be among the Higher Critics, just as in any other science, but, in spite of all these rather minor differences, an astonishing unanimity has been independently reached as to the principal problems of Old Testament Criticism.

My learned teacher, Dr. Paul Haupt, of the Johns Hopkins University, is in the habit of asking, occasionally, his advanced students, whether there is any difference between Catholic and Protestant mathematics, or between Christian and Jewish physics, or between Episcopal and Presbyterian chemistry; and then he would add: "Why then is there so much divergence between Catholic and Protestant theology and exegesis?"<sup>11</sup> Evidently only one interpretation of the Bible can be correct; and the very existence of so many different Christian denominations shows that the Bible is not studied scientifically and is not rightly understood, although its study may be made just as exact and just as scientific as any other branch of science. Consequently this lack of unanimity in interpreting the Bible is infinitely more apparent and real in the ranks of devout and conservative theologians than among the higher critics.

<sup>11</sup> *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*. Vol. XXII, No. 163. Page 51. Baltimore. 1903.

Gladstone, himself, who was a greater statesman than Biblical critic, used to complain of the fact that there is not the same unanimity, continuity and ascertained progress in Old Testament studies that there is in the natural sciences. If the principles were sound, it is argued, the divergences between those who maintain them should not be so serious; therefore the whole Higher Criticism is rejected and condemned. We all are aware of this fact, and for the sake of truth and honesty we are compelled to say that this accusation is substantially false, and is only true *secundum quid*; for the complaint clearly shows the one-sidedness and the complete misunderstanding of the facts and of the conditions of the things.

The distinguished professor of Old Testament literature in Knox College, Toronto, Dr. John Edgar McFadyen, in his valuable book on *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, admirably sums up and discusses this important question, and I prefer to quote his own words:

"Every one who has tried carefully to concatenate the facts presented by the Old Testament is compelled to admit that there is a good deal about which it would not be safe to dogmatize; and many of the Higher Critics themselves have expressed themselves with the most becoming reserve, especially with regard to the more obscure and difficult details. No doubt many of the critics have been unduly dogmatic, just as many of their opponents have been; but it would be unfair to overlook the majority for the minority. There are some, if not many, on both sides of the controversy, who, under the constraint of facts, would be willing to admit that some of the main points at issue are of such a nature as not to admit, at least for the present time, any final settlement. To the scholars who have been over all the ground of Higher Criticism, nothing is so certain as that there is much that is uncertain.

"These very divergences of opinion among the Critics enable them to act as a constant check upon each other. Every important book receives the most minute and searching attention and criticism, either in subsequent books or in the great scientific and theological magazines, especially in Germany.

"No critic has it all his own way. His interpretations are subjected to the severest tests, his errors and mistakes are publicly exposed and scientifically refuted, while his correct conclusions and discoveries are heartily welcomed and approved. No great movement is ever wholly in vain. As critic keeps watch on critic, it is reasonable to expect an ever approximation to the truth. This expectation is all the more reasonable that we already notice signs of

what we might call a conservative reaction, and the higher criticism of the near future is likely to be more conservative in its tendency than it has been, or at least to do fully justice to the positive data than it has been done.

"The errors and extravagances of criticism will be corrected in time by a criticism that is more alert and penetrating. Theories whose inadequacy can be proved will be modified or rejected, and the fittest ones only will survive, and theology will become far more international and interconfessional. Men will begin to compare notes the whole world over, and extravagances and aberrations will be struck off on this side and on that. Before this great tribunal of sound criticism, eccentricities cannot stand.

"But to suppose that the whole critical movement is invalidated because the results of its various supporters are not unanimous, is completely to mistake the comparative unanimity that prevails in many of the larger issues, and in attitude to the critical or historical methods as a whole. Two blacks do not make a white. It is still the fashion today, as it was twenty years ago, to deride the Higher Criticism as the mere product of individual caprice, or to exaggerate the discrepancies of its results, and to imagine that they can be got rid of like positive and negative quantities in an equation by setting one against the other. But it is a mistake to suppose that this process, however far it may be carried, necessarily helps the traditional view of things. Criticism is making its sure way from destruction to construction, from negative to positive results. There is much that is still uncertain; there is much that may never be certain; but there is a great deal more that is certain."

It should be remembered that pentateuchal criticism in its main and essential points is nowadays unanimously accepted by the critics of all schools; its composite character, its three codes of legislation, the date of Deuteronomy, their relative age and historical value, the progressive stages of revelation, the evolution and progress of the same, the religious and literary importance of the Babylonian exile, the sharp contrast between prophet and priest, the date of the closing of the canon, and many other conclusions are scientifically demonstrated and unanimously accepted. The composite character and authorship of Isaiah, the non-Davidic authorship of the Psalms as a whole, the very late date of many of the historical and prophetic books, the many historical, liturgical and theological, glosses, interpolations, transpositions, and additions, the secular and purely philosophical value of the Book of Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and the so-called wisdom literature, are well established facts; and

if we consider the scantiness of the available materials upon which the critics had to work, we will be surprised to see the astonishing unanimity which prevails as to the main conclusions; and as Dr. Steuernagel says, "In by far the largest number of cases the judgment of specialists *in the main points* is unanimous; and for this, one may rightly demand the same recognition from the non-expert as he would willingly accord to the judgment of the historians of art."<sup>12</sup>

## PART II.

Let us examine, now, the contents of the *Herald's* Symposium contributed by the eminent clergymen of both Christian and Jewish Churches. As I have remarked above, the theme is of exceptional gravity, and of unusual interest to both clergy and laity.

In the introduction to the Symposium, which is supposed to give us the outlines of the discussion and to determine the *Status Quaestionis*, the situation is well described and the points of debate are admirably stated; but, to my own, as well as to many others' surprise, the answers of many of the distinguished members invited to express their personal views on the matter are, as a whole, far from being convincing or satisfactory. In some cases the main features of the problem are either overlooked or intentionally avoided, while in others the answers are extremely one-sided and uncomplimentary; not to say that in some cases they are altogether out of place.

Dr. Parkhurst, although an acknowledged authority on city politics, I hardly think his personal opinions on Biblical and theological matters are of paramount importance or of undisputed authority; for the eminent clergyman has given too much of his time, and, otherwise laudable, energy to the reform of police administration than to the study of the complicated problems of Higher Criticism.

Dr. Gregory's answer is precisely what was expected from the secretary of the Bible League of America, (organised for the sole purpose of combatting Higher Criticism), i. e., a bitter denunciation of the modern school of Biblical Criticism without the slightest consideration for the valuable services rendered by it to the better understanding of the Bible.

He denounces our age "as peculiar for its monumental lack of reverence for density of ignorance (I suppose himself included) of

<sup>12</sup> *Allgemeine Einleitung*. At the end of his commentary on Deut. and Joshua. Page 260.

the Bible that exists in high and low places, and for a critical method made out of German material (sic!) that has taken the Bible apart into bits and scraps and scattered it to the ends of the earth." Then he goes on saying that "A campaign (probably alluding to the Bible League of which he is general secretary) of organization against this so-called Higher Criticism is imperative—a campaign at all centres for the purpose of carrying forward the work of maintaining the sacred integrity of the Scriptures."

It is useful to remind Dr. Gregory and his associates in this wonderful propaganda of scriptural integrity, that, instead of recurring to the methods of misrepresentation, abuse and ridicule, let them earnestly study the methods and conclusions of sober Higher Criticism, and oppose them, if they can, with scientific arguments, which they seem to have remarkably failed to accomplish. Ridicule may have its place; but that place is hardly within the limits of science. Ridicule may provoke, but it will seldom convince.

It is amazing to read how an anti-Higher Critic once defined the Higher Critics. "I mean by professional Higher Critic one who spends his time and strength, his energy and brain in trying to find some errors or discrepancy in the Bible, and if he thinks he does, rejoiceth as one who findeth great spoil; one who hopes, while he works, that he may succeed, thinking thereby to obtain a name and notoriety for himself."

Smart writing on Higher Criticism is comparatively easy, but, if the conclusions of Higher Criticism are to be effectually refuted, it must be by some one who, instead of insulting, should go into the case with at least that same diligence, patience and competency employed by his antagonists. The time is unquestionably gone when Christian apologists could afford to treat with ridicule the prolonged and painstaking labors of scholars of exceptional ability and scientific standing. To despise or ridicule the marvellous work of a whole century conducted by scholars mostly of real honesty of purpose, great talent, extensive erudition, rare acquaintance with Hebrew and Oriental languages, is a shameful outrage to which very few real men and scholars will feel tempted to subscribe.

To ridicule the patient and indefatigable toil with which German critics repeat their experiments and accumulate their facts and observations shows from the part of their critics a very poor and degenerate taste. An argument, though it came from Germany, might be just as good as if it had come from Zululand or from the Philippine Islands. Its being German has simply nothing to do with its intrinsic value.

Dr. Brann's contribution is critically untenable, and rather out of date; and, although his system is prevalent in many Catholic colleges and seminaries, it is safe to say that it is, if not inadequate, certainly antiquated. *A priori* arguments, from a critical point of view, will never settle questions and problems eminently critical, for they are seldom convincing. It is unknown to me that "Higher Critics start out with the assumption that the Bible is the product of human genius *alone*, (sic!) and then proceed to prove it a divine inspiration, which, alas! they never do." I have already stated above that the Higher Critics do not believe the Bible to be the product of human genius alone, but they believe that the records of our religion, although inspired, are necessarily historical documents, and they consequently claim the same treatment which has been so fruitfully applied to the other sources of ancient history. They claim it all the more because the supreme religious significance of this history gives it an interest to which no other part of ancient history can pretend.

To start out, as Dr. Brann suggests, with the assumption that the Bible is inspired, and then proceed to apply to it the approved methods of the lower criticism, is exactly the opposite of what Dr. Brann thinks it would. And, in fact, the partial or total, verbal or formal inspiration of the Bible, its nature and limits are attested to us, according to Dr. Brann's system, by the infallible magisterium of the Church. But we must not overlook the fact that this divine origin and infallible magisterium of the Church are historical facts, and, as such, are subject to the same treatment as any other historical fact and document; and even its dogmatic interpretation must be in accordance with its historical origin, circumstantial environment, local development, and religious significance; hence, we have to appeal, willingly or not, to the methods of Higher Criticism in order to determine the historical or non-historical character of what Dr. Brann supposes to be the fundamental rule of our religion. The same method, of course, should be applied to all ancient Jewish and Christian traditions, canons, practices and dogmas.

Bishop Potter, Dr. Booth, Dr. Ward and Dr. Adler's contributions are rather generic and in some cases not *ad rem*.

Still it is of great importance what Bishop Potter points out as to the Human and Divine Element in the Bible. "Progress," he says, "lately made in understanding what the Bible is and what it is not, has brought to light two things, namely: that the Bible has in it a human as well as a divine element; that it is the story not only of

a divine disclosure, in many ways, and under widely different conditions—divine as revealing alike the mind of God and the wonderful order of His providence—but also a human document, in that it is the story, and sometimes the illustrations, of the imperfect and therefore, inaccurate vision of man. These two things are now coming to be widely and, on the whole, helpfully recognized.”

Bishop Doane of Albany and Dr. Burrell are rather adverse to Higher Criticism on account of its destructive character. Sure enough, Higher Criticism had to be destructive, for it could not be otherwise. We must bear in mind that the real critic is essentially an interpreter, but an interpreter who strives to enter into sympathy with the thought of his author and to understand his thoughts as part of the life of the author and of his time. In this logical, yet painful, process the occasional destruction of some traditional opinion is mere accident; consequently the true critic's aim is not so much to destroy as to build up; but how can he build up a system on an interpretation unless he destroys the one which he is compelled to oust? Criticism is thus on the one side *destructive*, for its office is to detect the false, eliminate it and destroy it, and though this is a rather painful process, nevertheless it is indispensable for the proper understanding of the truth; for the destruction of error opens up a vision of the truth.

But criticism is also *constructive*, for it tests and finds the truth, and re-arranges the facts in their proper order and harmony. The assertion, therefore, of Bishop Doane, that “men are rushing into speech and print with an apparent love of something bizarre and sensational, rather than devoutly seeking after the truth, all in the way of destruction rather than to build up something to take the place of that which they are subverting,” is unwarranted.

Father Doyle the Paulist, Rev. Hillis and Dr. Silverman are rather prudent in their verdict on Higher Criticism. They wisely distinguish between destructive and constructive Higher Criticism, and frankly admit that it has destroyed nothing vital to Christianity, and that consequently Christian faith has remained substantially undisturbed. Dr. Hillis says: “It has destroyed nothing that is true, but it gave us a new Bible, it strengthened its powers of inspiration and made it stand forth more clearly as the Book of Life, the Guide to Right Living, the Book of Providence, running through the ages and the Book of Immortality.” Dr. Silverman on the other side acknowledges that the Jewish Church standing has not been affected by Bible criticism; and remarkable is the following rather bold and sweeping statement of his: “The Jewish students of the Bible have

always been the severest critics, and that they are not compelled to substantiate alleged miracles, nor is it vital to the devotion of the Jew to his religion that he believes in the letter of the Scriptures, or in the interpretation of certain events, like the crossing of the Red Sea, the revelation at Sinai, and the standing still of the sun and moon on Ajalon, causing them to appear as miracles. He still remains a Jew, whether he believes in the letter of the Scripture or whether he takes a broader and more liberal view thereof. Judaism is not based on any miracle and therefore Higher Criticism, even though it destroy some of the former beliefs, does not invalidate the essential teachings of the faith." I would hardly subscribe to Dr. Silverman's views, even from a Jewish point of view; he evidently is wrong when he says that "Judaism is not based upon any miracle," for he confuses between Judaism as religion and Judaism as a historical fact. Judaism as a religion is essentially supernatural; while Judaism as a historical fact or racial phenomenon is not *essentially* based on miracles, although it will always remain in a singularly unique phenomenon.

In vain we looked for the valuable opinion of Dr. Peters on the subject; for, although his name is mentioned and his portrait is prominently visible, his answer seems to have been omitted or overlooked; and his view would have certainly been of certain weight; for, properly speaking, he is the only real Biblical scholar of prominence in the whole list, and who has made valuable contributions to the cause of sound Biblical and Oriental scholarship and archeology.

Dr. Lyman Abbott and Dr. Savage's contributions are models of accurate and sound judgment; for, although they openly declare themselves in favor of the main results of Higher Criticism, yet their religious convictions remain rockfast. Dr. Abbott rightly observes that "Biblical criticism is taking away the reliance of those who rely upon the letter, substituting a clever, better and more intelligent understanding of the spirit, a new broader and deeper spiritual meaning being given to the entire collection of Biblical books; intellectual difficulties disappear, more difficulties likewise, books fallen into disuse are given a new meaning; books that had become a burden to faith when read as history become a delight, and the whole Bible, from being a collection of texts imposed on men from without as a substitute for life, like the maxims of Confucius, becomes a collection of resplendent literature, inspiring life from within and conducting the reader to the God of Abraham, of Isaac,



and of Jacob, of David, of Isaiah, of Paul, to find in Him the same grace and power and redeeming love that they found."

It gives me always pleasure to read and to quote Dr. Savage's words. "Higher Critics," says he, "are simply the representative scholars of the world. They are the great scientific thinkers, leaders, teachers and archeologists who have uncovered the records or old times and long buried civilisations, the critics who have studied the history of ancient religious life and who have particularly studied the Bible. Now, the men who are supposed to be assailing the Bible, assailing God's truth, undermining revelation, are precisely those who are patiently seeking after light and trying to find out just what is the truth. They have little respect indeed for what people fancy, imagine, dream, particularly when they assume that these fancies, imaginations and dreams are infallible and attempt to impose upon the intellectual life of men. These critics are simple, earnest, devout truth-seekers. They are trying to find the way, and patiently, day by day, year after year, they sift over the dust heaps of the past, grateful if they find one gem of any value—anything that will help build up and lead the world, making it better and happier."

These noble utterances are particularly true of that class of sound and reverent critics of whom we are going to speak.

Archbishop Farley's answer is short but dignifying, and it strikes, I think, the real keynote of the whole discussion. His Grace wisely distinguishes between sound and wrong criticism, which is a vital distinction for a better understanding of the actual conflict between the so-called Higher Criticism, and conservative theology. "Sound Criticism," says he, "of the Bible, confining itself to scientific facts and sober inferences, is not prejudicial to higher religious thought and duty." Still of more significance are the following remarks: "I am not aware that Higher Criticism has to any appreciable extent produced in the ranks of the Catholic laity, those undermining effects which cause alarm in some other religious bodies. Rather it has served to comfort and reassure many earnest believers to whose thoughtful minds certain received notions concerning the Bible had become of different acceptance." Admirable words worthy of all consideration, for they admirably define the two-sided aspect of the controversy and set up religious convictions, with devout yet independent judgment.

It is undoubtedly true that the present acute and lamentable condition of affairs in the controversies between our modern theologians and critics is due to a complete misunderstanding of the simple

fact that reverent, sober and cautious criticism has nothing to do with that irreverent, extravagant, hypercritical and ultra-radical school of criticism which has lately become a fashion in many German Universities. What a tremendous difference is not to be noticed between the reverent and judicious criticism of scholars like Delitzsch, Dillmann, König, Kautzsch, Cornill, Driver, Davidson, Ryle, Briggs, Moore, G. A. Smith, Ramsey, H. P. Smith, and that of critics like Kuenen, Wellhausen, Stade, Winckler, Vernes and Cheyne. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that criticism does not stand for a school or for a definite set of results; it stands for a method which patiently collects and impartially examines all the available facts and allow them to make their own impression upon the mind of the investigator. We are all well aware of the fact that there is very little Christianity in scholars like Wellhausen and Stade, and still less Judaism in scholars like Kuenen; but neither Wellhausen nor Stade nor Kuenen are the Higher Criticism. We freely admit that Higher Criticism in the opinion of certain very distinguished scholars has proved rather fatal, extravagant and utterly destructive in many of their researches and conclusions, but these conclusions are far from being universally accepted. The extremes always touch; and once for all we must say that neither ultra-conservative nor ultra-radical critics are in the right track, if not in all, certainly in many of their gratuitous and unfounded interpretations and criticism. *Virtus stat in medio*, and we must not shrink from the responsibilities of the arduous task of becoming searching yet cautious, critical yet sober, impartial yet charitable, exacting yet reverent interpreters of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore whatever the deficiency of the individual critics may be, Higher Criticism is certainly compatible with a reverent appreciation of the Bible as a revelation of God; and it is impossible to resist the impression that this reverent criticism is destined to conquer and subdue all its future enemies; for if we do not identify the cause of Criticism too closely with any particular school or theory, there is no doubt of its being the winning school; for the race belongs to the swift and the battle to the strong.