

The Bible and Science

AND

The Bible & Recent Discoveries.

Two Addresses given to Young Men at Edinburgh,
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THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE. ARE THEY FRIENDS OR FOES?

AN ADDRESS GIVEN TO YOUNG MEN AT EDINBURGH, DEC., 1907.

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding . . . oppositions of science falsely so called.”

I TIM. VI. 20.

WHAT a name to conjure with is “science”! With many it has become a positive fetish, before which everything else must bow and cringe. “Thus saith science” is to them an end of all controversy, and no one must say a word after she has spoken.

But what is this thing that so imperiously insists on our submission? Is it infallible? Does it never contradict itself and never throw its followers into confusion? And why speak of it in connection with the Bible? Why raise the question as to whether it is a friend or foe?

In answering, let it be said that science simply means “knowledge,” more especially the knowledge of things in nature. As generally employed the term denotes the sum of human learning and discovery in the great realm of God’s material creation.

But, not content with *facts*, the “science” of to-day deals largely in theories, speculations, and inferences. These are often found

to be erroneous, and have to be abandoned. Others take their place, and in their turn are discredited and disproved, and cast into the limbo of exploded theories.

Now amongst those who claim to speak in the name of "science," there are some who say that their conclusions clash with the statements of the Bible, and they demand that a "Thus saith science" shall have precedence over a "Thus saith the Lord." Thus the question is raised as to whether, in point of fact, the Bible and science are at variance. And it is of no avail for the believer in the Holy Scriptures to shirk the issue, and to refuse to look facts in the face.

Here let me say that the Scriptures are not to be regarded as a literary storehouse from which men may derive knowledge of the facts of nature. If they are God-given and God-inspired writings, as we most assuredly believe them to be, we shall certainly not find in them anything that contradicts what nature teaches. But the Bible treats of far higher and more important subjects. Its theme belongs to eternity, and it reveals that which no human intellect could ever discover. It brings to us the knowledge of God Himself, as revealed in Christ, for the unspeakable blessing of those who receive that revelation.

All this is, however, called in question nowadays. It is asserted that we cannot give full

credence to the Bible because its statements do not tally with the pronouncements of modern science. But the reader shall judge for himself as to the nature of the “science” which the Bible contradicts, whether it is *true* science—that is, true and accurate *knowledge*—or “science falsely so called.”

I.

Sir Charles Lyell, the famous geologist, studying the mud-deposits at the mouth of the Nile, reckoned that it must have taken some thirty thousand years for such an accumulation to have formed. In these deep beds of hardened mud a piece of pottery was found at a great depth. Here was a discovery indeed! If deposits covering that piece of pottery had taken thirty thousand years to accumulate, then the man who made it must have lived thirty thousand years ago! That is *quite* clear, is it not? Yet the Bible teaches that man has only existed on the earth for about six thousand years. Here then was a plain contradiction between “science” and the Scriptures, and, of course, the Scriptures were pronounced wrong, because this precious piece of pottery and Sir Charles Lyell’s calculations had now *proved* that man had existed for thousands of centuries!*

This wonderful discovery naturally enough aroused much interest until the fragment of

* Collett’s “Scripture of Truth,” 4th edition, page 201.

pottery was recognized by an expert as a specimen of rather modern *Roman* workmanship, and therefore only a few hundred years old at most !

It is not with this kind of "science" that the Bible agrees.

II.

"Evolution," as taught by Darwin, is largely answerable for placing "science" in antagonism to the Scriptures. This famous doctrine, however, is largely losing its hold upon the scientific world of to-day. It was at first supposed that facts would be brought to light that would support the theories spun by Darwin and others. But the facts have not been forthcoming, and the theories are being fast thrown to the dogs.

Not altogether, though, for there are pulpit orators who still wear the old discarded clothes of the scientists. *They* hold, tenaciously enough, to the effete speculations which so flatly deny the account of the creation in Genesis. Many ministers and clergymen yet believe that man has gradually advanced from a primitive ape-like ancestor to his present more perfect condition. And if one asks the advocates of this degrading theory for something in the nature of *proof*, they give the old, well-worn reply, "*The coccyx!*"

This coccyx, be it known, is a small bony appendage to the human spine. They say it

serves no useful purpose, but is only a rudimentary relic of the time when man was an ape.

There is one fact, however, which militates against this very naïve supposition. If our ancestors were primitive ape-like men, we should expect that in ancient fossilized human skeletons, such as have been found in various parts of Europe, this rudimentary feature would be much more developed than it is in the present generation. *But such is not the case.* Besides all that, the coccyx is by no means a useless part of the human body, but, as every anatomist knows, gives firm attachment to certain ligaments and muscles.

A further disproof of the doctrine of the gradual evolution and improvement of the human race is found in the ancient skeletons already referred to, and which are evidently the remains of men who lived before the Deluge. Describing one of these, Sir J. W. Dawson says :—

“The skull proper, or brain-case, is very long—more so than in ordinary modern skulls—and this length is accompanied with a great breadth; so that *the brain was of greater size than in average modern men*, and the frontal region was largely and well developed.”

Thus the “science” that set itself against the accuracy of the Scriptures, and which numbered its votaries by tens of thousands,

has been proved to be no true science at all. Teachers of religion may cling to it, but we Christians can thank God for the way that science itself has, in this matter, now come into line with the inspired Word.

III.

The representatives of modern science have yet to explain how it is that Holy Scripture is abreast of the most recent discoveries in physics, in geology, in astronomy, and in other branches of knowledge. The language of other ancient books is hopelessly out of date. One searches them in vain for a single statement, the truth of which is confirmed by the discoveries of the past fifty years. But with the Bible it is not so. It contains statements which have in bygone days been ridiculed as "unscientific" and "antiquated," but which are *now* seen to be perfectly true.

Let us consider some instances of this.

Genesis i. has been contradicted because it states that while the sun was formed on the fourth day, light was called into existence on the first. "Science," on the contrary, has taught that "the sun is the source of *all* light," and that there could be none apart from it (see *The Heavens*, by Guillemin, edited by Prof. Lockyer, F.R.A.S.). But *later* science is not so bold. It is now known that *motion* can be translated into light. This is thoroughly

in accordance with Genesis 1. 2, 3. "The Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." The Spirit of God caused light to break forth at His word when He had *moved* upon the waters, and this in a way quite in harmony with science in its most recent findings.

IV.

It is amusing to read, in old books on astronomy, the various computations as to the number of the stars. Each observer of the stellar heavens had his own idea on the subject, and figures are given of the approximate estimate by one and another. With improved instruments hosts of fresh stars have become visible. The "thousands" of ancient astronomers have become "millions" to-day. But with the application of photography to astronomical science the stars are seen to be what the Bible twenty-five centuries ago declared to be the case—absolutely innumerable! No one in the scientific world guessed the truth as to this, but there it stands on the inspired page: "the host of heaven *cannot be numbered*" (Jer. xxxiii. 22). Who could have put that there? It is a fact which scientists could not and did not discover until they had in their hands the most perfect modern instruments. Yet all the while the fact was in the Bible! Who put it there?

V.

In Job xxvi. 7 we read: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place."

For many a long year scientists have railed at this passage. Sceptical astronomers swept the northern skies with their telescopes and found no "empty space." They declared that "Job knew nothing about the geography of the heavens" when he uttered these words. Theologians could offer nothing in the shape of a reply, save a futile suggestion that "Job evidently referred to the north pole"! And "science" mocked.

But recently, Professor Loomis, of Yale University, has thrown some light on the matter, and the Scriptures, as usual, are fully vindicated. Dr. Munhall quotes him as saying, in the course of a conversation:—

"By the use of the largest telescope in the northern hemisphere, in the Naval Observatory at Washington, a great vacuum, corresponding to the empty space of which Job wrote, has been discovered in the depths of the northern heavens."

And science, falsely so called, has had again to eat its own words, and to yield the palm for accuracy to the Scriptures.

VI.

We are most of us familiar with the ancient theory as to rain. It was taught that the evaporated water accumulated in great clouds, till they became too heavy to hold up any

longer, and fell, by sheer force of gravitation, as rain upon the earth. An improvement upon this theory was that the vaporous masses were attracted by mountain ranges and condensed by contact with them into water.

That great master of electrical science, the late Lord Kelvin, has, however, taught us differently. He ascertained that rain falls as the result of electrical action in the air. The explanation of this would be too technical for a paper of this sort. But it is interesting to observe that the Bible was first in the field with this statement. Psalm cxxxv. 7 tells us "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; *He maketh lightnings for the rain.*"

It was only the other day that Lord Kelvin taught his class at Glasgow University that lightning produced rain, but that fact was recorded hundreds of years ago in the Bible. I ask, *by whom*, if not by the God of truth Himself?

VII.

This paper would hardly be complete if no reference were made to the two great stock objections on the part of "science" to the accuracy of the Scriptures. Of course, I refer to Jonah being swallowed by the whale, and the sun "standing still" at the command of Joshua.

It is objected that Jonah could not possibly

have been swallowed by a whale, for the whale's gullet is too small to allow of a man passing through it. Theologians used to meet this argument by pointing out, truly enough, that the Bible does not positively assert that it was a *whale*. In the book of Jonah we read that "the Lord prepared *a great fish*"; and in Matthew XII., where the Lord Jesus Himself authenticates the narrative, the word translated "whale" might just as well be rendered "sea-monster."

But, after all, it is highly probable that the great sea-monster which swallowed the prophet was a whale. There are, however, more kinds of whales than one. No less than sixty species have been counted, and of these, *only one kind*, the Greenland whale, is incapable of giving passage to the body of a man through its throat. "Scientists," being more familiar with the Greenland whale than with any other, argued from their knowledge of *it!* They were really arguing from the exception rather than the rule.

The sperm whale, for instance, has a gullet of very different capacity. Cuvier, in his *Règne Animal*, describes this kind of whale as frequenting the Mediterranean Sea—the very sea upon which Jonah embarked upon his voyage. And Beale, a surgeon who wrote a book on the natural history of the whale, states that it has a throat quite capacious enough to allow of its swallowing a man.

The following testimony will be still more convincing. Frank Bullen, in his well-known book *The Cruise of the Cachalot*, describes the capture of one of these huge sperm whales. He says that they have a habit when dying of ejecting the contents of the stomach. In the case of the captured whale, he observed these ejected masses of partially digested food floating about. They were of enormous size, and on measuring one of them he found it to be two feet longer than a tall man, and equal in breadth and depth to the bodies of several men rolled into one ! What kind of "science," then, must that be which affirms the impossibility of a whale swallowing a man ?

In stating these facts I have no wish to cast doubt upon the miraculous element in the story. If it was no miracle for the whale to swallow Jonah, it was a miracle that kept him alive for so long in its belly. This is no difficulty at all to the man who believes in the *Almighty God*. The incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Christ are the greatest of all miracles. If we believe *these* it is easy to believe in the wonderful preservation and deliverance of Jonah.

VIII.

The question of the sun standing still remains to be considered. And here I quote from an able book, *The Scripture of Truth*, by Sidney Collett, Fourth Edition, page 285 :—

“No man really knows *how* this long day of

Joshua's was accomplished ; but it must have been accomplished somehow, for astronomy demands that something of the kind must have happened, while history declares that it actually took place.

Professor Totten, of America, has studied this subject from an astronomical point of view, and has published the result in an elaborate mathematical calculation, with the following remarkable conclusion, that by taking the equinoxes, eclipses, and transits, and working from the present time backwards to the winter solstice of Joshua's day, it is found to fall on a *Wednesday* ; whereas, by calculating from the prime date of creation onwards to the winter solstice of Joshua's day it is found to fall on a *Tuesday* ; and he argues that by no possible mathematics can you avoid the conclusion that *a whole day of exactly twenty-four hours* has been inserted into the world's history. . . .

The statement, too, in Joshua x. 14 that ' there was no day like that before it or after it ' is equally accurate ; for there is no room mathematically in the world's history for another such long day. Professor Totten affirms that ' not before nor since . . . has there been a date which will harmonize with the required relative positions of the sun, moon, and earth, as conditioned in the Sacred Record.' "

On page 287 it is further stated :—

" It is well known that the three great record-keeping countries of the world were Greece, Egypt, and China, and *these together with Mexico, have all had the record of a long day.*

Herodotus, the father of history, who lived 480 B.C., himself a Greek, has left it on record that

the priests of Egypt told him of a time when 'the sun had four times risen out of his usual quarter, that he had twice risen where he now sets, and twice set where he now rises.' This is believed to be a reference (though distorted and exaggerated) to Joshua's long day. . . .

Lord Kingsborough in his great work on the American Indians . . . states that the Mexicans have a record that the sun stood still for one entire day in the year known to them as 'Seven Rabbits,' which corresponds almost exactly with the year in which Joshua was conquering Palestine!"

A similar, and still more striking tradition is to be found in the ancient Chinese records.

Thus both modern science and history and traditions current in places so far apart as China and Mexico, unite to confirm the truth of the wonderful narrative in Scripture. To doubt it nowadays is really to brand oneself as unscientific and unhistorical. Yet, alas, even Christians have wavered in their allegiance to the truth of divine inspiration with regard to this passage and have spoken of it as a mere poetic figure of speech.

Our task is ended. It has not been one of the highest kind ; but it is *necessary* sometimes to expose the fallacies of "science falsely so called," which sets itself against the Scriptures, and finds unholy pleasure in undermining the faith of weak and unestablished souls. We may be sure that no *true* know-

ledge, no *real* science, will lift up its voice in opposition to any statement in the Bible. Let us then be true and loyal to this God-given book. Let us read it diligently, believe it whole-heartedly, obey it implicitly. Instead of criticizing it, let it criticize us. And may its holy pages be the means of deepening the communion of our souls with God.

APPENDIX.

With reference to the supposed "Evolution" of man, the following quotations, given by Mr. Collett, in "The Scripture of Truth" are most instructive.

"Those who hold the doctrine of evolution are by no means ignorant of the uncertainty of their data!"—*Professor Tyndall*.

"It must be admitted that the factors of the evolution of man partake largely of the nature of *may-be's*, which have no permanent position in science."—" *Ideals of Science and Faith*.

"The plain truth is that, though some (professors of science) agree in this and that, there is not a single point in which all agree. Battling for evolution they have torn it to pieces; nothing is left—nothing at all, on their showing, save a few fragments."—*Times Literary Supplement, June 9th, 1905*.

"Professor Post . . . visited the British Museum of Natural History in 1885, and being in company with the late Mr. Etheridge, who was esteemed as one of the foremost experts in that great institution . . . asked Mr. E. to show him, in that museum, some proofs of Darwin's evolution theory, and he was astonished when so great an expert said: 'In all this great museum there is not a particle of evidence of transmutation of species. . . . It is not founded on observation and facts. The talk of the antiquity of man is of the same value; there is no such thing as fossil man. I have read all their books, but they make no impression. This museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of such views.'"

Forlong's "Inspiration of the Bible."

THE BIBLE AND RECENT DISCOVERIES.

ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN; EDINBURGH, DEC., 1907.

(Read Jeremiah XXXVI. 14-25.)

MY object on this occasion is to deal with the way the Scriptures have been criticized and attacked on the one hand, and gloriously vindicated on the other. But I shall be sorry if our talk has no further result than to remove doubts and difficulties from your minds. That in itself is a great thing, but something more is to be desired. For a man may believe the Bible from the first word to the last, without necessarily being a true believer in Christ. No one can reach a place by clinging to the finger-post which indicates the right road to it. One may talk about a finger-post, and be willing to defend it with the last drop of one's blood. But the object of the finger-post is not attained unless the man who seeks direction from it *treads the road to which it points*.

The Bible is like a finger-post. We may have to defend the accuracy of its statements, and contend for the truth of the revelation that it brings to us, but let us see that we not only admire it and cling to it, but follow its directions, and turn to the blessed Saviour to Whom it bears witness from beginning to end. Unless our faith in the Scriptures leads us to

living faith in Him Who is their theme and topic our belief will have been in vain.

II.

We are not now concerned to combat the infidel notions of the Paines, Voltaires, Ingersolls, and Bradlaughs. Views such as are commonly associated with their names do not prevail to-day to nearly so great an extent as they did fifty years ago. Their arguments may still appeal to a certain set of foolish and ignorant people, but, on the whole, those who read and think do not need to be warned against the blatant and blasphemous assertions of rank atheism.

On the other hand, attacks upon the Bible, and upon Christianity itself, are to be found not only in the secular press, but in religious journals and in the writings of "reverend" professors and divines. Pulpits, once the strongholds of orthodoxy, are now the high places of an antichristian propaganda. Their occupants (wolves in sheep's clothing) are doing far more to undermine the faith of men than all the wild talk of the Paines and Ingersolls.

King Jehoiakim, of whom we have read, may be called the leading "higher critic" of his day. There was much that was distasteful to him in the roll that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, so, seizing the document,

he cut it to pieces with his knife, and finally flung it into the flames. There were not found wanting men who besought the king to treat the Word of God with more reverence. Let us mention their names with respect : Elnathan, Delaiah, Gemariah ; but their entreaties were of no avail.

There are many Jehoiakims in our day, who cut and slash at the Scriptures. It is not difficult to discern the reason. The Bible is like a mirror. In it the portrait of men is seen, drawn by an unerring hand. It shows them the blackness of their hearts, and tells them plainly what is going to become of them if they do not turn to God in repentance. This is more than they can tolerate, so they cry, " Impugn it ! Criticize it ! Deny its accuracy ! Affirm that it is only the work of erring men ! Anything to get rid of its unpalatable statements ! " Depend upon it, there is a *moral* reason for the persistent efforts to detract from the force and value of the Scriptures.

III.

Sometimes it is asked : " Why may we not treat the Bible as we treat any other book ? It comes to us just as Homer, or Virgil, or Shakespeare, or any other classic, ancient or modern, comes to us, with certain claims as to its authorship, etc. Why not subject the Bible to the same canon of criticism ? Why not

make it run the gauntlet of competent investigation as other books have to do ? ”

I do not think we could object to that, however sorry we might feel for those who sit down to criticize the Word of God instead of letting it criticize them.* But let us ask the critics their own question. Why do they *not* treat the Bible as they do other books ? Why vent their venom upon it so persistently ? Why judge the Bible by a different criterion ? The usual principles of literary and historical research are fair enough. Why, then, should they not conduct their examination of the Scriptures in accordance therewith ?

IV.

There are three parts of the Bible which more than any others have been made the subject of desperate and repeated attack. They are the Pentateuch (i.e. the first five books), Daniel, and Jonah. In former days the New Testament came in for its share of opposition, but on the principle of “once bitten twice shy,” it is now comparatively unassailed. Having burnt their fingers severely, the critics leave it well alone. The gospels, epistles, etc., have been shown to stand upon a foundation, as to their genuineness and their authorship, that cannot be overthrown. So in recent years

* In Heb. iv. 12 we read that the Word of God is a *critic* (κριτικός) of the thoughts and intents of the heart. That is the best kind of criticism ! Let *it* criticize *us* !

it is the Old Testament that has become the battle-ground, and my desire is now to show how wonderfully the spade of the excavator and the discoveries of the explorer have come to our help. The critics have been beaten on their own ground, their sophistry and ignorance have been exposed, and the testimony of Scripture has been confirmed in an altogether unexpected way. To God be the praise !

It is worthy of remark that these discoveries have been made *just at the right time*. Why were not the tablets and cylinders, the sculptures and inscriptions, which have done such valiant service in the cause of truth, brought to light long years ago ? Why were they not unearthed in the eighteenth century, or the seventeenth ? Why did not men discover them hundreds of years back, when those eastern lands were nearer the centre of civilization, and therefore more accessible to the explorer than they are to-day ?

We may surely trace the hand of God in this. For it is only during the last century that the school of criticism has arisen, basing its inferences and deductions upon imaginary history. The archæological relics of bygone times in Babylonia and Assyria would have been mere subjects of academic interest if they had been discovered two hundred years ago. But now they are *weapons*, mightily effectual to the pulling down of the strong-

holds of rationalism and unbelief. Is it not wonderful that God, in His providence, should keep all this invaluable evidence buried beneath the surface of the ground, and cause it to have a marvellous resurrection *just at the time when it can be of most use?*

v.

There is another very noteworthy fact. The three parts of the Old Testament most bitterly assailed are the three parts most emphatically confirmed and authenticated by Christ Himself in the gospels!

Take the writings of Moses, the books known to us as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is sometimes asked: "After all, what does it matter whether Moses wrote these books or not? Suppose that some scribe wrote them a thousand years after Moses had died, what difference does it make? The books are in our hands, and they bring us their message all the same, whoever wrote them. Why make all this fuss about their authorship?"

There is a very grave reason, however, for laying stress on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of Moses, distinctly said, "*He wrote of Me*" (John v. 46). If Moses did not write the books ascribed to him, then the omniscience and deity of Christ are at once impugned.

Of course, the force of this argument has been felt. To weaken it men have invented the blasphemous doctrine of what they call the *Kenosis*.* They say that the Lord voluntarily curtailed His knowledge and spoke from the standpoint of an ignorant Galilean peasant, often saying that which was incorrect and untrue. See to what lengths the theories of "higher criticism" lead! You cannot give them a place in your mind without derogating from the glory and majesty of the Person of Christ.

The book of Jonah also is authenticated by the Lord Himself. Sceptics ask: "How could Jonah be in the whale's belly for three days and nights? Impossible!" But the Lord Jesus emphatically says: "*Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly*" (Matt. xii. 40). Who are these men who dare to discredit what is so distinctly affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ?

So, too, with Daniel. None can call that book in question without casting a slur upon Christ. For *He* calls him "Daniel the prophet," and quotes from the book that bears his name, stamping it as the genuine writing of that selfsame Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 15).

* The term is derived from the word *ἐκένωσε* (Phil. i i. 7), translated "made! [himself] of no reputation," or "emptied [himself]." But this refers to the Lord's divesting Himself of the outward majesty of the Godhead, and appearing in humility as Man. It affords no basis for the profane assumption that He laid aside any of His inherent qualities such as omniscience.

V.

Now we come to the subject of the recent discoveries in the East, and the way they confirm the accuracy of the Scripture records.

Upon what do the adversaries of the Bible base their assertion that the Pentateuch was not and could not have been written by Moses?

To put their reply in a nutshell, it is this: At that early stage of the world's history when Moses lived, fifteen hundred years before Christ, the art of writing had not been invented, or, at all events, had not attained such perfection as would make the writing of the Pentateuch possible. The Israelites of that day, they tell us, were a mere horde of illiterate nomads, and could neither read nor write. And if there were no writers and no readers, it is clear that Moses could not have written the books that bear his name. They must have been the production of some scribe hundreds of years later.

When all this was affirmed, as if it were established fact, believers in Christ and in the Scriptures hardly knew what to say. They knew it was all wrong. They would rather believe the Lord Jesus Christ when He said that Moses wrote these books than all the learned professors of the day. But they could not say people *could* read and write fifteen hundred years B.C.

Ah ! but we can say so now. Recent discoveries have brought to light a world of scribes and readers, of books, libraries, and schools, which stretches away into a past that was already remote in the days of Abraham. The world into which Moses was born has proved to be one of high literary culture, and the wonder would be not that he should have known how to write, but that any one in his position should not have been able to do so.

M. de Sarzec, a French excavator, has discovered at Tel-loh, in Southern Chaldea, a whole library of tablets, more than thirty thousand in number. This library dates back hundreds of years before Moses. The inscriptions upon these tablets are in the most ancient language known to men, and they show conclusively that even in the remote past almost everybody could write and read. There are letters written by soldiers and merchants. Others were written by women. Even boys and girls could write ; they went to school and had clay " copy-books."

In the light of all this, what becomes of the assertion that writing was the invention of a much later age ?

Moses did not, of course, live in Chaldea, but in Egypt. The Egyptians did not write on baked clay like the Chaldeans, but on papyrus, a much more perishable material. In spite of this, however, certain very ancient

Egyptian writings have been discovered. One of them is a treatise on mathematics dating from the age of Abraham ; there is also a collection of model letters, and a description of a traveller's adventures in Palestine, written in the time of Moses !

Yet learned professors, who ought to be ashamed ever to show their faces again, have sought to shake the faith of believers in the Holy Scriptures because, forsooth, nobody could write or read so long ago as the days when Moses lived ! Recent discoveries have amply and finally refuted such wild statements. But what of those who have been robbed of their confidence in the Word of God thereby ?

VII.

What have the Jehoiakims of to-day, the gentlemen who cut and slash, to say about the book of Daniel ?

They tell us, first of all, that it could not possibly have been written by Daniel. It may have been written by almost anybody else that you like, and at any later date that you please, but it could not have been written in Daniel's day.

When we ask why they make these assertions, they give us several reasons which *seem* to be very convincing. But the violence of their hostility makes us suspect that Daniel is particularly obnoxious to the critics.

And such is, indeed, the case. The reason is not far to seek. Of all the books of the Bible, Daniel contains the most detailed and minute prophecies, not only of times yet future, but of events which were near at hand when the book was written. These latter prophecies in due time were fulfilled to the letter. So evident is this that Porphyry, an anti-Christian writer of the third century (A.D.), declared that Daniel was history and not prophecy; that is, that it must have been written after the events prophesied of had happened. Certainly the prophecies and the subsequent history fit into one another like a hand into a glove.

“ Oh,” cry the critics, “ nobody could foretell things in such a marvellous way. It would be a miracle ! ” Now, miracles these learned gentlemen will by no means believe in. Nor do they credit such a thing as inspired prophecy. How, then, can they account for the wonderful accuracy of the predictions in Daniel, save by assuming that the book was written at a date subsequent to the events referred to? So they fixed its date at about 160 B.C.—that is, about two hundred years after Malachi, the last of the prophets. Thus they eliminate prophecy and have history in its place.

Unfortunately for these fine theories, they do not square with certain well-established facts. The reader probably knows that, unlike most other books in the Bible, the book of

Daniel was written in two languages. Broadly speaking, half of it is in Hebrew, the sacred language of the Jews; the other half is in Aramaic (otherwise known as Syriac, or Chaldee). There are spiritual lessons to be learned from this fact. But it is with the fact itself that we are now concerned, as affording a very clear refutation of the theory that would date the book about 160 B.C.

We have scriptural proof that *prior to their captivity* in Babylon the Jews did not understand the Aramaic language. For when Rabshakeh shouted out his abusive words in Hebrew, in the ears of the people on the wall, he was requested to desist, and to speak in Aramaic (or Syriac), which certain nobles could understand, but which was unintelligible to the people generally (2 Kings XVIII. 26).

Scripture also shows that *after their captivity* in Babylon the Jews had lost to a large extent their own language, Hebrew, and for the most part only understood Aramaic. When Ezra read the law in the hearing of the assembled people, certain Levites had to interpret it. The sacred Hebrew had become a dead language to many of the Jews who had returned from Babylon (Neh. VIII. 7).

Now, the book of Daniel, though full of instruction for us, was written primarily for the comfort and encouragement of God's people who lived in his day. If it had been

written, as the critics affirm, about 160 years B.C., then it would have been written at a time when about half of it would be quite unintelligible to many who were intended to profit by it. The only date in the whole of Jewish history when the book of Daniel could be read in its entirety by the Jewish people was the period of their captivity before they had lost their own language, and after they had begun to speak the language of their conquerors. Thus the fact of the two languages being used proves the book to have been written during the Captivity ; that is, *at the time when Daniel lived.*

VIII.

The two chief objections to Daniel on the part of the "higher critics" are in connection with what they call (1) the Belshazzar, and (2) the musical instrument difficulty. Modern discoveries, however, have utterly overthrown and discomfited the objectors.

The "Belshazzar difficulty," briefly, is as follows : The Bible states that on the night when Babylon fell, its king, Belshazzar, was slain (Dan. v. 30). "But," say the critics, "we know Babylonian history well enough to say that no king named Belshazzar ever reigned over Babylon. The fall of the city is a historic event, but when it took place the reigning king was Nabonidus, not Belshazzar. Moreover, he was hundreds of miles away

from Babylon and we read of him afterwards a prisoner in the hands of the Persian conqueror." Here was a clear case of conflict! Christians knew not what to say. They could only wait. Nor have they waited in vain.

In 1854 Sir H. Rawlinson discovered in the ruins of the ancient city, Ur of the Chaldees, some terra-cotta cylinders containing an inscription by that very King Nabonidus, who was reigning at the time when Babylon fell. In this inscription he speaks of "Belshazzar, my eldest son." This proves two things :

(1) There was a royal person named Belshazzar.

(2) He was son of Nabonidus,* and therefore lived at the very time that Daniel says he did.

In 1876 Sir H. Rawlinson discovered more than two thousand tablets upon the site of Babylon itself. One of these contained an account by the Persian King Cyrus of the invasion and capture of Babylon. Nabonidus is mentioned as having fled and been made prisoner. Mention is also made of *a certain night when "the king" died.*

It appears, then, that there were actually two persons who at the same time were kings

* He is called in Scripture the son (or grandson) of Nebuchadnezzar. There is ground for believing that Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. In that case Belshazzar would be rightly spoken of as son, or grandson, of Nebuchadnezzar, though actually the son of Nabonidus.

of Babylon. Nabonidus, the supreme monarch, was absent from his capital city, and it seems that he had left his eldest son, Belshazzar, in Babylon as a deputy king or regent during his absence. So that in very truth Belshazzar was "the king," *the only king* that could possibly have been slain on that terrible night of Babylon's capture.

This fact throws light on a statement in the Bible which otherwise is somewhat difficult of explanation. It was not uncommon in ancient times for signal services to be rewarded by exaltation of the man who rendered them to a place in the kingdom second only to the king himself. Thus Joseph was rewarded by Pharaoh, Mordecai by Ahasuerus, Daniel by Nebuchadnezzar. But in Daniel v. 29 Belshazzar commands that Daniel should be, not the *second*, but the *third*, ruler in the kingdom. Why the third? Sir H. Rawlinson's discoveries enable us to answer this question. Belshazzar himself, though king in Babylon, was only the second ruler, Nabonidus his father being the first. Hence the highest place that he could offer Daniel was that of *third* ruler.

How accurate, then, is the language of Scripture! How the attacks of the critics recoil upon themselves! How the book of Daniel comes unscathed and triumphant out of the ordeal to which it has been subjected! May God give repentance and self-judgment to the

men who have set themselves to discredit and belittle His Word.

IX.

There yet remains the question of the musical instruments, upon which the critics have laid great stress.

When Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image in the plain of Dura all kinds of musical instruments are said to have been employed (Dan. III. 5). "But," say the critics, "four of these instruments—the harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer—were of *Greek* origin, and could not have been in use in Babylon at such an early date. This shows that the book of Daniel is the production of a much later age." So reason Dean Farrar and others of the rationalistic school.

Unfortunately for their theories, Strabo, a geographical writer who lived at the beginning of the Christian era, distinctly states that two of these instruments, the harp and sackbut (*κίθαρῖς* and *σαμβύκη*), were not Greek, but Asiatic in origin. The pages of Strabo were as accessible to Dean Farrar as to any one. He could read Greek with facility. What excuse had he for remaining in such ignorance of the subject upon which he wrote?

But what about the other two instruments, the psaltery and dulcimer? They are very possibly Greek in origin, as is asserted. But about fifty years before the time of Daniel, the

great Assyrian monarch, Assur-bani-pal, built a huge and splendid palace for himself. This palace, with the sculptures upon its walls, has been laid bare by the spade of the excavator. In one of the designs there has been found a representation of one of those very Greek instruments which we are told could not possibly have been known in Babylon until five hundred years later !

The fact is, it is conclusively proved that a brisk trade was carried on between Greece and Babylon long before Daniel's time, and opportunities were abundant for instruments of music to find their way from one country to the other.

So, once again, the critics are convicted of bearing false testimony ; and the Scriptures are cleared of the aspersions which have been cast upon them.

It is impossible to acquit the "higher critics" of the charge of showing bias and prejudice in their handling of the sacred writings. Their methods deserve the sternest condemnation. Nor are they to be commended who condone their conduct by remaining in church fellowship with them.

The path of the Christian, who desires to be loyal to Christ and the Scriptures, is clear. He is not to bid God-speed to any who bring not the doctrine of Christ. He is to have no manner of fellowship with such, and is not

even to receive them into his house (2 John 10, 11).

My earnest counsel to you is never to sanction by your presence the preaching of any "higher critic," no matter how great his name. Retain no link with congregations who tolerate them in the pulpit. Contribute to no societies which accept their patronage. Be clear, at all costs, of this great evil. You may find yourself in a small minority. Never mind. Better to be few in number and loyal in heart than to march shoulder to shoulder with traitors in the ranks of the majority.

To any reader that has fallen under the influence of anti-scriptural theories let me say a word in closing. Do not believe that the critics have a monopoly of learning. Men as learned as they have considered their theories and have deliberately cast them aside, not only as unscriptural, but as unhistorical and unphilosophical. Men of the greatest scholarship have been and are devout and enthusiastic believers in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. If *they* find no difficulty in this, why should you or I?

"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Jer. VIII. 9).

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