

by the Egyptologist and Assyriologist would be surprising to those who are not specialists in their branches of study, while the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets has poured a flood of light upon the ancient world, which is at once startling and revolutionary. As in the case of Greek history, so too in that of Israelitish history, the period of critical demolition is at an end, and it is time for the archæologist to reconstruct the fallen edifice.

But the very word "reconstruct" implies that what is built again will not be exactly that which existed before. It implies that the work of the "higher criticism" has not been in vain; on the contrary, the work it has performed has been a very

needful and important one, and in its own sphere has helped us to the discovery of the truth. Egyptian or Assyrian research has not corroborated every historical statement which we find in the Old Testament any more than classical archæology has corroborated every statement which we find in the Greek writers; what it has done has been to show that the extreme scepticism of modern criticism is not justified, that the materials on which the history of Israel has been based may, and probably do, go back to an early date, and that much which the "higher" critics have declared to be mythical and impossible was really possible and true. The justification of these assertions must be deferred to another article.

Christ's Appeal to the Old Testament.

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From the Preface to *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1891.

It is objected that some of the conclusions of critics respecting the Old Testament are incompatible with the authority of our blessed Lord, and that in loyalty to Him we are precluded from accepting them. That our Lord appealed to the Old Testament as the record of a revelation in the past, and as pointing forward to Himself, is undoubted; but these aspects of the Old Testament are perfectly consistent with a critical view of its structure and growth. That our Lord in so appealing to it designed to pronounce a verdict on the authorship and age of its different parts, and to foreclose all future inquiry into these subjects, is an assumption for which no sufficient ground can be alleged. Had such been His aim, it would have been out of harmony with the entire method and tenor of His teaching. In no single instance (so far as we are aware) did He anticipate the results of scientific inquiry or historical research. The aim of His teaching was a religious one; it was to set before men the pattern of a perfect life, to move them to imitate it, to bring them to Himself. He accepted, as the basis of His teaching, the opinions respecting the Old Testament current around Him; He assumed, in His allusions to it, the premises which His opponents recognised, and which could not have been questioned (even had it been necessary to question them) without raising issues for which the time was not yet ripe, and which, had they been raised, would have interfered seriously with the paramount purpose of His life.¹

¹ See especially the discussion of our Lord's reference to Ps. cx. in the seventh of Mr. Gore's "Bampton Lectures." It does not seem requisite for the present purpose, as, indeed, within the limits of a Preface it would not be possible, to

consider whether our Lord, as man, possessed all knowledge, or whether a limitation in this, as in other respects—though not, of course, of such a kind as to render Him fallible as a teacher—was involved in that gracious act of condescension, in virtue of which He was willing "in all things to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17). On this subject a reference to the sixth of the lectures just mentioned must suffice. The questions touched upon in the latter part of the preceding Preface are also thoughtfully handled by Bishop Moorhouse in his volume, entitled *The Teaching of Christ* (1891), Sermons I. and II. And since this note was in type, there have appeared two essays, one by A. Plummer, D.D., in the *Expositor* for July 1891, on "The Advance of Christ in *Σοφία*," the other, *An Inquiry into the Nature of our Lord's Knowledge as Man*, by the Rev. W. S. Swayne, with a Preface by the Bishop of Salisbury, each meriting calm and serious consideration.