

debarred from considering questions relating to the contents and authorship of the books. But here especial caution is imperatively required. Questions of genuineness nearly always will be found to involve questions of authenticity; and, conversely, questions relating to the authenticity of a record will always materially affect the question of authorship, unless the authorship can otherwise be shown to be a matter of historic certainty.

DEMANDS OF MODERN CRITICISM.

Beaving this well in mind, let us now ask, What are the demands made upon our belief by modern criticism, especially with reference to the Old Testament? Well, first, that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch must, nearly unreservedly, be given up. On what does the demand mainly rest? To a certain extent, on the fact that there appear to be fragments of ancient documents which, it is boldly asserted, are legendary and unhistorical, and which, it is further asserted, could only have appeared in the process of the editing and re-editing which it is assumed that these books silently underwent in later periods of national history. Next, that the precise ceremonial ordinances all belong to the epoch of an established ritual, and could not have appeared at the time at which they are alleged to have been promulgated; and, thirdly, that contradictions and incompatibilities—so it is alleged—are to be traced in all parts of the writings which we are now considering. This is one of the demands made by modern criticism in reference to authorship. Another is, that, with one doubtful exception, not one of the Psalms that have been, or what has been hitherto deemed to be satisfactory evidence, ascribed to David can be ascribed any longer. With the further demands, that there are at least two Isaiahs, and that the Book of Daniel was never written by Daniel, we are all fully familiar.

We are not, however, probably all fully familiar with the further developments which, starting from these and many other highly precarious premises as to authorship, are now pressed upon our acceptance by modern criticism, in reference not only to authorship, but to the general construction of the Old Testament. It is always well to see whether we are ultimately to be led. It is salutary, and it may be monitory, fairly to face what our teaching and preaching is to be—at any rate with regard to the old covenant—if we surrender ourselves to the precipitancy of what are called

"ESTABLISHED RESULTS."

Well, then, what are these results? Briefly as follows:—In the first place, the Old Testament does not consist of an orderly series of historical documents revealing and designed to reveal the knowledge of Almighty God, and of His dealings with mankind, but that it is an amalgamation of various materials, pre-existing and contemporary, traditional and historical, which did not finally assume the form in which now we have them till about 200 years before the birth of Christ. In the second place, that this amalgamation has three principal constituents roughly corresponding to some extent with the three codes of laws—viz., the short code in Exodus, the fuller and expanded code in Deuteronomy, and the ceremonial code of Leviticus and Numbers.

Of these literary constituents, the first, we are told, was completed probably in the early days of the monarchy, under the direction of the prophetic school which was at that time the main depository of the learning and literary ability of the nation. This primary document, the work of many hands, is supposed to have commenced with the origin of the human race as related in the second chapter of Genesis, and to have included the early history of antediluvian and patriarchal times, and the succeeding periods of the history of the nation; the whole having been compiled from very varied mater-

ials, floating traditions, fragmentary records and contemporaneous annals.

The second constituent, commonly assigned to the age of Manasseh and Josiah, is supposed to have been based on the foregoing primary record, but to have included the discourses of Deuteronomy and portions of the Book of Joshua the laws in Deuteronomy being for the most part old, but the rhetorical form in which they are set forth due entirely to the modern editor.

The third constituent, we are told, comprised the ritual and ceremonial code of the Books of Leviticus and Numbers, with some historical portions of the Pentateuch and of the Book of Joshua. On the date of this third document our modern critics do not appear to be fully agreed; some portions of this ceremonial code being, it is said, clearly of earlier date than the code of Deuteronomy, but other portions belonging to a period subsequent to the exile, the whole thus being the ritual accumulations of many successive generations. Out of these three constituents, or portions of them, we are told that the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua were constructed, the first chapter of Genesis, it is said, being prefixed as a suitable preface. To the same sources we are to ascribe the principal historical books, and if we append to the whole of the two Books of the Chronicles, the Books of Job and Proverbs, a slowly accumulated Temple hymn-book, the utterances of the prophets so far they had been preserved, and, lastly the Sapiential books, we have the Old Testament of modern criticism as it finally appeared in the second century before the birth of the Saviour of the world.

Now, without taking any extreme attitudes, without denying that there may be some threads of truth in this tissue of speculation and assumption, we may still seriously ask ourselves whether such a heterogeneous compilation as here has been presented to us can possibly be spoken of as—to use the language of our Prayer Book—the most Holy Word of God? Can a literary conglomerate, in which it is distinctly maintained that "the more spiritual or moral conceptions of later times are mixed up with some of the earlier narratives, and that whole codes of teaching have been bodily transferred to anterior epochs, to which they do not historically belong"—can such a medley be regarded as writing for our learning, and as designed by Almighty God to reveal that progressive teaching of Himself and His moral government of the world which we are now recognizing with increasing clearness in the Scriptures of the Old Testament? What are we to say? Can it be other than this? That to teach and to preach such views is, to say the very least, utterly irreconcilable with the whole tenor of the teaching of the Prayer Book, and that to attempt it would be to imperil the salvation of thousands of souls. The very advocates of this so-called higher criticism seem to feel the jeopardy of such a course, and themselves advocate reserve until these results have become absorbed in the general estimate of the nature of revelation.

Our duty then is plain. We must neither teach such things nor preach such things. Those of us who are qualified to do so may take knowledge of these results, only that we may the more clearly realize the silent modifications and changes which these theories will as certainly undergo as that these words are now being spoken. There are some of us old enough to remember the imaginary primitive documents out of which the Gospels were said to have been constructed, and the somewhat pitiful ingenuity with which each of the first three evangelists was duly credited with his precise amount of appropriation from hypothetical records and documents that never existed. They did their fractional good in making us study more exactly the structure and characteristics of the Holy Gospels. They quickened observations, and helped to call out healthful and reverent criticism. But they are now dis-

sipated and forgotten. And as it was with them, so, to a large extent, will it be with the hypotheses and imaginary recensions which modern criticism has dignified with the provisional title of "established results." Established they are not, and never will be. They are just the exaggerated deductions and overdrawn conclusions into which earnest inquirers are constantly led when entering into a new domain of critical investigation. When more matured and reverent thought exercises its just supremacy they will speedily, as in the case of the imaginary constructions of the New Testament, be reduced to their proper dimensions. Meanwhile they will not be without some measure of usefulness. They will stimulate us more carefully to study these ancient and inspired records. They will awaken a fresh interest in the structure and interdependence of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They will necessitate the acquisition of a competent knowledge of the language in which they are written; for without it the question of the probable date of the component parts of the Old Testament can never adequately be discussed. —The Church Worker.

CODEX "B."

The famous library in the Vatican, dates from the fifteenth century, and from the Pontificate of Nicholas V. Unlike his immediate predecessors, this pope was a munificent patron of literature, and for his virtues, no less than on account of his learning, merits the praises and thanks of succeeding generations. Gibbon a fair witness here, remarks of him, "the influence of the Holy See pervaded Christendom, and he exerted that influence in the search, not of benefices but of books. From the ruins of the Byzantine libraries, from the darkest monasteries of Germany and Britain, he collected the dusty manuscripts of the writers of antiquity; and whenever the original could not be removed, a faithful copy was transcribed and transmitted for his use." That Nicholas should have exerted himself so successfully as to store upon his shelves over five thousand volumes before his short tenure of the See came to an end has always been subject for congratulation among scholars. For in the storm of reform, which was even then gathering head, to break in unreasoning iconoclastic rage against the whole monastic system, there was danger of the permanent loss of the treasures upon the shelves of many a monastery library. It was perhaps a collaborator of this Pope who secured we know not how or precisely when, the gem of the whole collection, the priceless number 1209, known as Codex B; or Vaticanus. This is not the oldest or most perfect of the codices, for while the majority of those qualified to judge, ascribe it to the last half of the fourth century, some respectable critics believe it to be the work of the fifth. Tischendorf's claim for the first half of the fourth century, for the Codex Sinaiticus is not now seriously contraverted. But the Vatican manuscript easily takes second place as an authority, for the original text of the New Testament. It contains the Septuagint review of the Old Testament, but has lost the first forty-seven chapters of Genesis, and does not contain some of the Psalms. In the New Testament it lacks from Hebrews ix, 14 to the end of book—the four pastoral epistles and Revelations. Many of these defects some later hand has attempted to supply.

It would be interesting at least, to narrate here the stories of some of the pilgrimages made to Rome by New Testament students, and of their unsuccessful endeavours to thoroughly examine this manuscript. As Mr. Scrivener says, (Introd. &c.) "Tischendorf says truly enough that something like a history