

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

PROFESSOR ROBERTSON SMITH AND HIS CRITICS.

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I am surprised to read the weak apologies and wavering replies made to the Rationalistic critics regarding Moses and the Hebrew Scriptures. Some able replies have indeed been made, like that by Prof. Green and by Rev. J. Urquhart on the Jehovistic and Elohist theories ("British and Foreign Evangelical Review," April, 1882); but others are so weak and prone to surrender, that they show deplorable want of spiritual insight.

Permit me at present to remove the three grand objections of Rev. Washington Gladden.

1st. The objection that the Pentateuch was written in Palestine, because its Hebrew names for "West" and "South" signify "Seaward" and "Negebward," is quite futile; for those names are a part of the Hebrew language. And that language was not invented by Moses in the wilderness or in Egypt—it was used for ages before the Exodus, while Abraham and his race were sojourners in Syria and Canaan. Every linguist knows how easily local terms become specialized and generalized. Is "sycophancy" used only among *smugglers of figs*?

2nd. The objection that the books of Judges, Ruth, and Samuel do not mention the law of Moses, or any written literature in Israel, corrects itself; for it is certain that such writings existed. Moses, trained in the wisdom of Egypt, certainly did write something for Israel and posterity, as also did Samuel (1 Sam. x. 25, Heb.) "in the book" laid up before the Lord. Now, if no mention of Moses' law or writings is found in Judges, etc., it merely shows that some books do not mention everything. Surely it does not require a ghost or a critic to reveal that! Does the omission of God's name in Esther imply that it was never known in Israel, or even that it was lost? Not at all. Some critics seem to have lost all common sense in their speculations. Surely an omission is not a denial. It is crucial insanity to repudiate the Pentateuch, and yet preserve the books of Judges, Samuel, etc., as sacred. As well might you cut off a man's head, and then try to preserve his shoulders alive. Take, for instance, the first chapter of Judges. It tells of the death of Joshua, the lots of the tribes, the father-in-law of Moses, and the direction of Moses (by name) to give Hebron to Caleb. Take again the 11th chapter of Judges, from the 12th verse, giving an exact outline of the Exodus, and of the conquest of Perea by Moses; and all this is rehearsed 300 years after the events took place. Now, if you repudiate the Pentateuch, how can you vindicate these later books? To set them in opposition to the Pentateuch is gratuitously absurd as well as insanely unnatural. What else would you call this attempt to set the hands to cut off their own head? But it will utterly fail. GOD'S word will not commit suicide. It leaves that mania to its enemies.

But there is a very satisfactory explanation, thoroughly consistent with all we know. I wonder greatly that none of the critics have discovered it before. It will form the proper answer to the next objection.

3rd. "The Levitical laws were not observed in the times of the Judges and early Kings of Israel."

True. And was not this the very fate foretold by Moses to rebellious Israel? Read his warnings in Deuteronomy, chapters xxix., xxx., xxxi., xxxii. Read also how it began to happen in Joshua xxiv. 31, and Judges ii. 6-13. Israel had utterly broken the Mosaic covenant after the death of Joshua and his Elders; hence its promises were forfeited and lost. The service of the tabernacle at Shiloh was dying away into a profane sham, until neither people nor priests knew the Lord (Judges ii. 10, and 1 Sam. ii. 12). Therefore the *Levitical Priesthood was changed*, NECESSITATING A CHANGE ALSO OF THE LEVITICAL LAW (Heb. vii. 11, 12).

This change came by regular but sure steps, although its early details are very briefly indicated. Thus while Phinehas, the High Priest who survived Joshua, is recognized as such, yet none of his offspring is recognized as such for many generations, by God's Word; although a covenant of everlasting priesthood had been given to him and his seed in Numbers xxv. 13. This text very clearly shows two important truths: (1) That the covenant of the priesthood was

broken and forfeited by the house of Phinehas; and (2) That the book of Numbers was written *before* the rejection of the house of Phinehas and the substitution of Eli and his house.

God then changed the priesthood and its law (Heb. vii. 11, 12), and restored the Patriarchal order of Judges (Judges ii. 16-20), uniting the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King in one chief, like Abraham or Melchizedek. Eli himself was such a Judge-Priest, as well as Samuel and the rest. But Eli's sons so shockingly profaned their sacred charge that God at length passed sentence of doom not only upon Eli's house, but upon the Aaronic priesthood as a whole (see 1 Sam. ii. 27-36, especially verses 27, 28, 30, 33, 35), tolerating for a time the condemned house, but appointing a new priesthood "for ever," after the order of Melchizedek (Psa. cx. 4, with Heb. vii. 11-28).

These facts, properly understood, remove at once and forever almost all the historical objections against the Levitical books, with all the seeming inconsistency of the later books.

No doubt David and Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah, tried to restore the Levitical order in a *modified form*; but the efforts were still a failure, for Israel's heart was far from God, and they would not look to the spirit and end of the law—viz., LOVE in God our Saviour. Even the final and rigid ritualism of Ezra and his order appears a piteous failure in the end. But really there was no failure in the Divine plan; for by these very failures and tribulations the Word of God was written, "not for themselves, but for us," to be the Adamantine foundation and jasper wall of God's Church for ever and ever! (Eph. ii. 20, Rev. xx. 12, and 1 Pet. i. 12.) Is not the everlasting result worthy of the millenniums of weary and dreary foundation-laying?

The truth is coming to be understood, and every book of the Bible is found to confirm the others, and to agree with all truth in nature and in history, in spite of some errors of scribes and expounders, which must be corrected as soon as possible.

But is it not ludicrous to see the very critics who reject as "an interpolation" every text that refutes their theories, yet greedily grasping at every straw of doubt or difficulty, with no doubt of its infallible genuineness? As if no marginal note could creep into the text by mistake of some copyist; or as if no "Dan" existed before Jacob's son; as if the *Jordan* itself were not called after an earlier "Dan," or Judge; as if Moses was not himself "king in Jeshurun" while writing of the earlier kings of Edom; as if no Jew ever speaks of himself in the third person, though Jesus did so, as "the Son of man," habitually, as also the Jews did constantly in the phrases "Thy servant" and "My Lord," etc., no less than Moses did; or, finally, as if every *ancient parable* must be understood as a *dead literalism*!

Knowing the value of your time and space, I have condensed to the utmost. I hope I have fulfilled my proposal, and even more. Many other most important corrections I must now omit. But if you permit, I will yet give them with equal brevity and clearness to your readers.

FARMING IN CALIFORNIA.

MR. EDITOR,—Though I have gathered items of interest to your readers on many subjects, in many lands, almost since the outstart of your paper (and withal to the "manor born"), yet I have never furnished anything specially devoted to the benefit or pleasure of the chief and most influential class of your patrons—the farmers and their families. Of course, I regard the yeomanry as the mainstay, or backbone, of Church and State, and the vocation, with all its environs, as the most honourable and conducive to virtue, independence or true manliness of character of any of the secular professions.

But I do not wish to digress to write a eulogy upon farm life, much less to give free rein to imagination—to paint it, as some have done, as a mode of life after the style of Eden—brimful of poetry, music and beauty, with "warbling birds" and "milkmaids' songs," "lowing kine" and "whistling ploughboys," etc.

It is safe to assume that the writers of such fanciful pictures of rural life have never whistled after a plough drawn by a fiery team, in stony soil, when a stone meeting the plough point throws the handles against the ribs of the "ploughboy," or lifted him off the ground by a hoist under the "oxters," nor

listened to the music of a barnyard orchestra—a symphony of cackling hens, bleating sheep, and squealing pigs, blending with the refrain from ducks, geese and turkeys in their best tone and style! It may seem too bad to spoil so fine a thing, but I must add, that the shading of these pictures touching on the moral aspect of rural home life is also too highly coloured. As noted on a rather wide range of observation, I have never met any of these faultless boys—as in Sabbath school books—who died young, who never "schemed" school to go a-fishing, or hid the lynch-pin of a neighbour's waggon, or played pranks on the school teacher, parent, uncle, aunt or neighbour, and escaped the greeting, "You young rascal, YOU!—you'll catch it!" The writer may have had the misfortune of the pastor who had no additions to his church in his various charges, and complained of not being located where any of the *claret lived*.

FARMING ON A LARGE SCALE.

One of the great sights of California, aye, of the continent, is big ranches and farming operations. The whole process is truly colossal. Nevertheless, the most absurd, even ludicrous exaggerations get abroad. For instance, an item copied in THE PRESBYTERIAN stated that on the Glenn farm sixty men with guns, mounted on mules, were employed keeping off the wild geese! Some time ago I was driven over this ranch from end to end—twenty miles, nearly all in wheat. Crowds of Chinamen are employed, but not a half-dozen in that way, and that only temporarily. Dr. Glenn's ranch is the largest in the State—60,000 acres; perhaps three-fourths under crops. The crop of wheat is expected this year to yield 400,000 sacks (140 lbs to a sack). Grain is measured on the farm by the sack, and sold at so much per lb, averaging about one and a half cents per pound, at the farm. Railway freight rates are so exorbitant, owing to the monopoly, as to almost eat up all profits. The most novel and interesting of all is the harvesting. It can only be briefly outlined. A steam thresher, a "Header," thirty men and the same number of horses, six or eight header waggons, with others to carry wood for the engine, and water for it and the teams, are needed to complete the outfit—to carry on the work of cutting, drawing, and threshing all at the same time and farm. There is also a kitchen on wheels with a dining-room, and all culinary utensils, which is moved about as the whole "kit" above changes from one part of the ranch to another, for there are no fields or fences, or barns for grain, nor direct roads, sidelines or townships. Winding, un-macadamized thoroughfares, run through ranches to the nearest town or depot. Some of the more public of these are fenced with wire; rarely is a rail worm fence seen in days of travel. Highways near towns are macadamized.

The "Header," the machine peculiar to California, needs some explanation. It is a large machine *shoved* ahead before five or six horses pulling behind. It cuts usually fourteen feet in width, as a reaper; about a foot of the straw is taken off with the wheat heads; these are taken up by carriers—as on a reaper and binder, and thrown into waggons with large boxes. These waggons are driven alongside the header; when one is full, another is at hand to fall in line under the elevators without stopping the header. The loaded waggons are driven to the thresher, when the contents are emptied by forks (hand) into carriers or rollers emptying into the cylinder. The grain is caught at a spout, in sacks, and sewed up by hand. The sacks are drawn away and piled up at the railway track, if near; if not, they are left near the place of work, in vast piles like cordwood. The weather is so dry—there having been no rain for six months—that these bags of grain can lay out all season. No barn, no granary, no watchman night or day! 3,000 bushels can be cut, threshed, and piled up in a day, by the latest machinery. Something depends on the weather. A damp day or a heavy dew will retard the threshing part of the operation, but either of these are very rare in harvest in most wheat regions of this State.

It takes large capital as well as a large ranch to run the whole work at once. When this is not possible, the heads are put in stacks and threshed afterwards. Wheat has been in the field standing one day, and in *bread* on the breakfast table the next morning! The straw and stubble are burned before, the land is ploughed again. No manure is used. Little change of crops is needed. Scarcely any sum-