

Cheyne's accusation of a "recent change of attitude" toward criticism, he justifies that change on the ground of the vagaries that have been substituted for genuine criticism. After indorsing and commending "criticism"—as "a sober and reverent examination of ancient documents and ancient history, based upon recognized scientific principles, with a due regard to what is ordinarily termed common-sense"—he makes and enforces the following very incisive points:

"First of all, we have learned not only that Moses *could* have written the Pentateuch, but that it would have been something like a miracle if he had not done so.

"Secondly, a study of the literature handed down to us by the Babylonian and Assyrian kinsfolk of the Israelites, tells strongly against the disintegration-theory of the Biblical critics. We find in it no such slicing and fixing together of ill-assorted fragments as has been discovered in the Pentateuch.

"Thirdly, the narratives which the 'higher criticism' had pronounced to be unhistorical figments of popular tradition are being shown by archeological discovery to be historical after all. Contemporaneous monuments are continually coming to light which prove that in the story of the patriarchs and of the exodus we have truth and not legend. The 'higher criticism' was triumphant only so long as the scientific instrument of comparison would not be employed against it."

After presenting these counter-proofs of archeology, Professor Sayce adds:

"And against the counter-evidence of archeology what has the 'higher criticism' to bring forward? Merely linguistic arguments. Lists of words and expressions have been compiled from the imperfect literature of an imperfectly known language, and interpreted by modern Europeans in accordance with certain documentary hypotheses. I have been a student of language and languages all my life, and the study has made me very skeptical as to the historical and literary conclusions that can be drawn from linguistic testimony alone. When we endeavor to extract other than linguistic conclusions from linguistic premises we generally go astray."

These are very striking words, but no more striking than true. Professor Sayce concludes:

"The 'higher critics' never seem to me to realize that their conclusions are opposed to the great practical fact of the existence of traditional Christianity, and that against this fact they have nothing to set except the linguistic speculations of a few individual scholars. It is not Athanasius against the world, but Nestorius against the church. On the one side we have a body of doctrine, which has been the support in life, and the refuge in death, of millions of men of all nationalities and grades of mind, which has been witnessed to by saints and martyrs, which has conquered first the Roman Empire and then the barbarians who destroyed it, and which has brought a message of peace and good-will to suffering humanity. On the other side there is a handful of critics, with their lists of words and polychromatic Bibles. And yet the 'higher criticism' has never saved any souls or healed any bodies."

In the New York *Tribune*, of October 21, the English correspondent

gives a *résumé* of a paper read by Professor Sayce before the Church Congress at Norwich, England, on "The Authority and Credibility of the Old and New Testaments as Affected by Recent Archeological Researches." The correspondent says:

"It was a logical attempt to meet upon their own ground the critics who are seeking to reverse the continuous traditions of the Jewish and Christian churches. He described the new teaching as based upon two assumptions: First, that literary analysis has shown that the Pentateuch is the work of a group of writers of comparatively late date, who have combined their contributions so skilfully as to deceive every one except the higher critic of the nineteenth century; and, second, that events related in the Bible are unhistorical, since its writers lived long after what they recorded in their scriptures occurred, and since, also, they frequently contradict one another. Professor Sayce's main contention in reply was that the higher critics deal with the Old Testament as if no other literature had ever existed in the ancient Oriental world, and while professing to regard the Bible as merely a part of the general history of mankind, they nevertheless treat it as if the Hebrew people had lived by themselves in a desert island.

"The truth," remarked the learned professor, "is that from Egypt, from Babylonia, from Assyria, nay from Palestine itself, old literatures, and inscribed monuments, are pouring in, coeval with the age of the patriarchs and of Moses, and offering numberless opportunities for testing the truth and the antiquity of the Biblical record."

"Then Professor Sayce proceeded to prove that the Mosaic age was as literary as the age of the Renaissance in Europe, and that it would have been a miracle if the Israelites, whether in Egypt or in Canaan, had not shared in the general culture of the time. In the century before the Exodus there was an exchange of correspondence between the banks of the Nile and those of the Euphrates, and this was in a foreign language, and involved the existence all over the East of schools and libraries, of teachers and scholars.

"The antiquity of Babylonian literature was equally great. There were libraries in Babylonia 6,000 years ago, and when Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees, one of its poets was composing an epic in twelve works. Moses could have written the Pentateuch, and those to whom it was addressed could have read and understood it. The Assyrian monuments have shown that the Semitic peoples of the East did not compile their works as the higher critics would now have the world believe, for in most cases the older materials were thrown into shape by the author who employed them. Against the contention of the newer criticism that the narratives of the Pentateuch are unhistorical and legendary, Oriental archeology is raising a constantly growing body of counter evidence. Contemporaneous documents are constantly being discovered which prove that the discredited statements of Genesis are, after all, true and historical."

It is a marvelous fact in God's providence, that the monuments of Assyria and Egypt, after a sphynx-like silence of so many thousand years, should stand forth to speak out their messages of refutation to the world in the very day when the baseless assumptions and assertions of the rationalistic critics require it.