

468), containing eight lectures, ought not only to convince Mr. Spurgeon that Congregationalists in England are on the up, rather than on the down grade, but also to make manifest the fact, too seldom realized, that the Union embraces scholarship that can stand side by side with the brightest and the fairest which England's proud Establishment can produce.

We have one or two adverse criticisms to make; we shall dispose of them first and briefly, and then to our more grateful duty.

As in very many theological treatises, the writer appears to us too much in the character of a barrister, who, having a brief placed in his hands, feels bound to make the most of it at all hazards; and thus an air of absolute certainty is assumed which is not always warranted by the facts presented. We give one example: The almost universal possession by the nations of a tradition of the deluge, and of a primitive Eden, is justly brought into court. We are then told that "No possible eclecticism could have constructed Genesis from these traditions." Perhaps not, but why? A hint is given that the Genesis record is pure, and therefore primitive. *A non sequitur*. As well say that the expurgated editions of the classics used in our schools are the original, because purged of the grosser element. There may be, we believe there are, considerations from comparative philology, from chronological hints, which point to the priority and greater trustworthiness of the Genesis record, but our author at this stage contents himself with strong assertions. They whose preconceived views are corroborated will naturally fall in with the reasoning. We fear that the thoughtful sceptic will scarcely feel his difficulties in this respect lessened by such induction.

Having thus pointed out the fly in the pot of ointment, we may now enjoy the more pleasant duty of opening up its fragrance. What is known as the Higher Criticism, has been very free of late in its work with the Old Testament, and reconstructed histories of Israel in accord with the scientific craze of these later days (evolution) are sufficiently plentiful to show the shadow of the chaos towards which we are being led. The Pentateuch, especially, has been assailed as to both its authenticity and its authorship. Genesis is legendary, Deuteronomy belongs to the time of the later kings, Leviticus is *post exilic*. Moses wrote little, unless it be the "Ten words" which form the basis of what are called the Ten Commandments. The rest is composed of legends, edited, altered, adapted, till we have a literary mosaic of gems antique and modern, not always well fitted or artistically formed. Like to the Talmud or the Vedas, we have an interesting collection of a people's literature, which, critically read, indicates how a religious culture grew, and how a tribal

deity became, in the hearts of his worshippers, gradually exalted to the position of Creator of all things, and Lord of the whole earth. Principal Cave confronts this Higher Criticism with a reading and culture equal to that of its best exponents. Admitting freely that in Genesis there are two records, indicated chiefly by the titles given to Deity, LORD (Jehovah) and GOD (Elohim), and that there are good grounds for believing that here and there notes have been added to make plain the text, *e.g.*, "Which are in Hebrew," Gen. xiii : 18; our author advances weighty reasons for holding Moses to be the Jehovist scribe, and the Elohist portions to have been an earlier revelation, written or oral, which he properly preserves, incorporating with his own. Thus all demands of a lawful criticism are met, and the integrity of the Mosaic authorship preserved. The principal consideration in this connection is, that to Moses, Ex. iii : 14, God was first revealed as the I AM, or Jehovah. We heartily commend to students this part of Principal Cave's work.

Having thus settled the authorship, and with it the substantial trustworthiness, historically, of the Pentateuch, the lecturer gives in ample detail how, both in the record of creation, in moral law and in spiritual teaching, these most ancient records anticipate all that true science, high culture and exalted conceptions of God and man have attained unto; and that the prophetic teachings, both in their moral power and predictive aspect, stand unique in the religious history of nations. Can such results have been reached and God been afar off? Emphatically, Principal Cave says No, and most cordially we join him therein. "The Bible is not the book of an age or of a class. It appeals to all, and, like the greatest of whom the Bible speaks, the common people hear it gladly." No book or collection of books has, or ever had, the same power to speak with the voice of the living God to the quickened hearts of needy men; and though "that the record is absolutely devoid of mistakes, we do not know, yet. As said the Psalmist: *The sum of Thy Word is truth.*"

To the poor, emphatically, by our English brethren, the Gospel is being preached; the cultured are not neglected, and this scholarly and thoughtful contribution to the defence of evangelical truth is worthy of its place on the roll as "The Seventh Congregational Union Lecture." It is the work of a furnished scribe, bringing out of his treasures things new and old.

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GIVE an hour to a respectable book; give a year to a great book; and don't give a minute to a poor book.—*Sir Francis Bacon*.