

# Principles of Biblical Criticism: The Real Issue

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*(In the "Church Gazette" of February last, "Ignoramus" stated, "It cannot be denied by anyone acquainted with the facts that the present position of Evangelicals is unsatisfactory. They are still divided on the Biblical issue, on which no advance towards unity has been made in the last thirty years." This article points the way to Reconciliation.)*

MUCH harm is wrought by want of thought. In many fields of life the old adage is true, but in none more so than in the seemingly academic, but in reality extremely important field of Biblical Criticism. Biblical criticism is a subject upon which it is difficult to hold sane and thoughtful views. All the forces at work in the life of a man, upbringing, education, Christian experience, even from a worldly standpoint Bible reading, tend to give him either a deep-rooted prejudice against it, or an even more unreasoning, wildly extravagant satisfaction in it. To take an example which brings us very close to the heart of the matter, the modern theological student will either be an opponent of Biblical criticism, in spite of certain grudging concessions which he cannot help but make, or more likely he will quite frankly be a sceptic, and in most cases a jubilant and happy sceptic, in matters of Biblical accuracy. And in either case his attitude will be one of unreasoning prejudice, indicative of a basal failure. In either case there has been the failure thoughtfully to estimate criticism for what it is truly worth and to grasp the important principles which must underlie it.

This failure is not on one side only. It is characteristic of both Evangelicals and Modernists alike, to adopt the invidious antithesis of current terminology. In the past Evangelicals have been wont to lay the whole blame for the

modern distrustful attitude to the Bible at the door of the Modernists (and, of course, there is much justification for this view), but, on the other hand, they themselves have not been wholly free from guilt. Evangelicals are to blame in that they have not only fought sceptical criticism, but also they have denied and decried criticism itself. Their attitude has been purely negative and destructive. Instead of meeting the scepticism of hostile critics with a sane and constructive work they have tried to fence in the world of the Bible, to isolate Biblical, or sacred, history from ordinary secular history, and to answer historical criticisms with dogmatic assertions. This attitude of prejudice has reaped its own reward in a more hostile criticism and in a withering contempt of Evangelical theology.

The time has surely come when the bitter and unreasoning controversy must be brought to a close. Prejudice must be put on one side and the whole matter of Biblical criticism thoughtfully and quietly reviewed. By both Evangelicals and Modernists alike an effort must be made to put criticism in its proper setting, to understand its true nature and functions, and to enunciate and apply the true principles which all sound criticism must observe. It was the great French writer, Ernest Renan, himself an early and hostile critic, who saw in the history of thought three broad stages: the stage of a primitive syncretism, that of criticism, and the final stage of synthesis.<sup>1</sup>

In the sphere of Biblical criticism there is a valuable lesson here. The old unquestioning view of the Bible has been shattered by an attitude of ruthless enquiry, which seems to have destroyed its unity. But although the work of analysis is by no means completed, although we are only on the fringe of a true historical appreciation, yet there is hope that an age of synthesis is not far distant, when faith and knowledge will meet, to their mutual enrichment. But if this synthesis is to come, it can only come when criticism is acknowledged by all and when it is set upon a truly historical basis. Hence the need at this time to re-examine the position in a bold and thoughtful spirit.

In the first place, what is really implied by Biblical criticism and how far is it a legitimate process? It is at this elementary point that the confusion begins and the gulf is

<sup>1</sup>Renan: *L'Avenir de la Science*, pp. 301 f.

fixed. For the average Evangelical criticism suggests an interference of reason in realms from which reason ought rigidly to be excluded, and carries with it the further suggestion of scepticism. Criticism is therefore condemned out of hand as illegitimate, or at most condoned as a necessary and unpleasant evil forced upon us by ungodly agnostics. Even with the younger men, many of whom would dissent from this view, there still remains the feeling that criticism must be undertaken for apologetic reasons, but not in and for itself. With the Modernist the case is entirely different. The Modernist also sees in criticism an applying of reason to faith, but he rejoices in it. Criticism is a purging of faith by the God-given faculty of reason, the bold dispelling of superstitions and false traditions, the correction of religion along the lines of scientific investigation. Criticism is not only legitimate: it is an imperative duty.

That these two attitudes should clash was a foregone conclusion, but the tragedy is, not that they have been unable to understand each other, but that in neither case has criticism itself been truly understood. Of course there have been the many exceptions, but in general this statement is true. Perhaps the word criticism is itself unfortunate, since it carries with it from the outset the suggestion of scepticism, but at any rate criticism has been misunderstood on both sides as scepticism. With the Evangelicals it is an attack upon faith, to be denounced out of hand. The Evangelical has seldom stopped to ask whether it is criticism itself or only a perversion of it which should be denounced. With the Modernist it is a weapon to break down an unreasoning faith, to emancipate the human mind from the shackles of a dead orthodoxy and superstition, in some cases to destroy faith altogether. The Modernist has seldom stopped to ask whether it is criticism itself or only a perversion of it which truly serves this purpose. In neither case has criticism been understood and the result has been a wholly unnecessary struggle, a sullen defensive hostility on the one hand matched by a provocative scepticism on the other.

Biblical criticism itself, however, is not scepticism, and a little thought will show that it is a wholly healthy and legitimate function. That it has largely been interpreted as scepticism is due to the Evangelicals themselves, who

ought much earlier to have realized that there is a place for sound Biblical criticism and that it is a legitimate and even necessary process to which they ought to apply themselves. That criticism is not scepticism is amply proved by the way in which the labours of true scholars, who have arrived at orthodox conclusions, have been respected, if not always accepted by the more liberally disposed. It is an idle fiction to suppose that any work which is conservative will be rejected out of hand. Otherwise how are we to explain the presence of Bigg's masterly defence of the Petrine authorship of 2 Peter in the International Critical Commentary, to cite but one example of many? It is only slight, unreasoning, biased, unscholarly and denunciatory books, of which there are, alas, only too many, which will fail and deservedly fail to gain a hearing. The time has come when Evangelicals must recognize the crying need for a sound criticism and apply themselves to it without prejudgments and in a spirit of devoted scholarship.

Already the need for the "lower" textual criticism has been universally acknowledged. Obviously it is of importance that the original text of Scripture should as far as possible be ascertained and the versions and translations corrected. And yet even in this field the use of the admittedly imperfect but more correct Revised Version is still regarded with suspicion in many quarters. Granted that for purposes of public reading it is inferior, its use is indispensable if we wish more correctly to know and to understand the original text. And further research which will lead us closer to the original word ought to be encouraged by all who profess to love the Word of the Living God.

Historical and even literary criticism is a no less legitimate function, and it is difficult to understand why there should still exist prejudice against them. Just as the original words must be a subject for research, so also the manner of writing, the circumstances, the events recorded, the persons portrayed must be regarded as a proper field for literary and historical investigation. Even from a superficial point of view it is clear that in the Bible we have a collection of documents which if genuine are of supreme importance, and which must be studied and assessed by the historical investigator. From first to last the Word of God treats of historical events. Large sections are historical records pure and

simple. Granted that the study of history is itself legitimate, then it is obvious that Biblical history, which must be of such tremendous significance for the understanding of the Ancient World, is also a proper field for historical research. Indeed such historical study is vitally necessary even for a proper understanding of much of the Bible itself, notably of the prophetic books, where there are so many references to contemporary events, customs, fashions, etc., quite unintelligible without a knowledge of the background in which they are set. Biblical criticism in its true sense, extricated from the tangle of false doctrinaire questions which has been woven around it, means quite simply the study, evaluation and interpretation of Biblical events as history, and to a lesser degree the assessment of the Biblical books as literature. Once the true nature of criticism is grasped, it is difficult to see why so useful and necessary a process, which has such a valuable contribution to make even to faith, should be shunned and feared on the one hand or prosecuted solely as a branch of sceptical thought on the other. Is it too much to ask that our neurotic fears and perversions should be abandoned and the way paved for a prosecution of Biblical criticism as a department of general historical and literary investigation?

This then at root is the true nature of Biblical criticism; it is an investigation into the events recorded in the Bible as history. But if this is so, then it is clear from the outset that its functions are strictly limited. The misunderstanding of criticism has led in many cases to a gross overstepping of these functions and to a consequent abuse of criticism as a whole. For this liberal writers are in the main responsible. They have failed to realize that true criticism, which is historical investigation, cannot and must not be treated as a weapon in the war of dogmatic ideas. That it will have its repercussions, and possibly serious repercussions upon such questions as that of Inspiration or the doctrine of the Resurrection is of course inevitable, but it must not be fashioned into and used as a weapon in doctrinal controversy. To use it in this way is radically to mistake its function, to misuse it.

Criticism in its early days, centred, as it was bound to do for lack of other material, around the Biblical documents themselves and it was quickly discovered that

there were many difficulties and seeming discrepancies in the texts, not all of which could be ascribed to errors in transmission. The deduction was made that much of the documentary evidence was unreliable and that the whole picture presented by the Bible, and more especially the Old Testament, was false. On the basis of such evidence as existed this was not altogether an unfair but it was certainly a rash and hasty judgment. A truly scientific investigation would have jumped less readily to conclusions. But criticism was over-reaching itself, as is clear from the fact that these early and tentative critical results were immediately pressed into service against cardinal points of the Christian faith. Even more significantly, Hebrew history was itself reconstructed, foolishly and without any evidence at all, in accordance with the philosophical views of the critics, who, sharing the optimistic progress-view, felt that the Hebrew nation must have evolved out of very primitive scattered tribes. There were of course many patient investigators who had the wisdom, whilst noting the difficulties, not to commit themselves to such engaging but wholly unhistorical theories, but rather quietly to continue in the search for truth. On the whole, however, the function of criticism was gravely abused, and criticism transformed from a necessary scientific investigation into a weapon of theological and philosophical controversy.

At the present time it must be noticed that the evangelicals themselves are in grave danger of similarly abusing the functions of criticism. After many years in which the tide seemed to run strongly against the Bible, modern archaeological investigation has overthrown much over-hasty theory and re-established facts of Biblical criticism hitherto questioned. The temptation is strong to use the evidence of archaeology in support of the doctrines of faith, but this is a temptation which must be resisted. The function of archaeology, as of criticism, is not to support any doctrines, but to ascertain the truth. If at certain points there is no doubt but that the Biblical record is substantiated, then the fact may be noted, but archaeology must not be prosecuted solely for apologetic reasons, nor must its findings be deliberately misapplied in that direction.

Historical criticism is only legitimate in so far as it remains an investigation into the actual events, as they happened,

irrespective of doctrinal or other implications. The Evangelical, of all men, has least to fear from such an investigation, and least reason to pervert it, if he truly knows the Bible as the Word of God. He can push forward confidently with a true and impartial study, not rushing hastily into ill-founded theories but waiting patiently until the work is completed, allowing the facts to speak for themselves. The pity of it is firstly, that he has been so backward, so timid, so hesitant in undertaking such a task ; secondly, that when once the tide turns in his favour he rushes at once into the same misapplication as did the Modernists, overreaching himself in the same way, imperilling the whole course of future investigation, inviting the retribution which historical research inevitably metes out upon those who mistake her functions.

Biblical criticism is a study of the Bible from a historical point of view. Its function is to give a reasonable, clear, accurate and well-substantiated picture of the events of the Bible as they actually happened, and in their relation to the larger questions of world history. The further and perhaps most important question remains to be considered : What are the main principles which will and must underlie all such criticism ? This question, it will be noticed, is one which follows naturally upon, and is closely bound up with the question as to the function of criticism, and it is one which will enable us to a large extent to determine the real character and value of all critical work.

And here again it is clear at the outset that the majority of critics have been gravely at fault through a failure to notice, let alone to observe, the principles of serious investigation. It is almost incredible that the glaring weakness of the Modernist method should not long since have been exposed, but for the most part Evangelicals have been content to decry the results, and the hostile spirit from which they sprang, without concerning themselves with the curious methods by which they were obtained. In consequence the historical study of the Bible, taken as a whole, has never been conducted on the sound lines of true historical research, and the Evangelicals themselves give little indication of commencing such sane and thoughtful investigation. The need is urgent to pick out and to emphasize these main principles, not only as a means of exposing false work, but

in order to help Evangelical scholars—and the way is clearing for a revival of Evangelical scholarship—to avoid the old pitfalls.

In the first place it is clear that the investigator must as far as possible approach his material without bias. It is inevitable that he should have a point of view, which will give him a predisposition towards certain conclusions. If he has found the Scriptures to be the Living Word of God to his soul, he certainly will not expect to find them unreliable or faulty in secular matters. If he has been nursed in rationalism he will have a desire to overthrow the authority of the Bible (which is the great bulwark against rationalism) by demonstrating its "obvious" inaccuracies. This predisposition cannot be avoided—indeed investigation would be completely soulless without it—but at any rate it must be rigorously held in check lest it degenerate into a prejudice which affects the strictly impartial assessment of evidence. Once an investigator begins to guide his researches into channels which will give desired results, then at once his work is brought under suspicion and its value lost.

But this has only too evidently been the case in matters of Biblical criticism. On the Evangelical side, there is scarcely a writer who has not approached problems of history with the result already firmly established in his own mind. The Evangelical has sifted the evidence only in order to find points in support of that result. Consequently from an historical point of view Evangelical writings are in the main worthless, and a greater service is rendered the Evangelical cause by those independent investigators who do happen to have arrived at "conservative" conclusions.

But the Modernists themselves are not blameless in this matter. In some cases by way of reaction, in order to show their complete impartiality, in others out of a complete hostility to the Bible and in support of a non-Christian Weltanschauung, they too have approached the Scriptures with the verdict already given against the sacred record; and with a spirit intent on destruction they have picked out and emphasized only the evidence which supports their own contention.

True Biblical criticism is not undertaken in a partisan spirit, or in support, conscious or sub-conscious, of theological or philosophical ideas. It has no preconceived ideas.

It does not start with its conclusions. True Biblical criticism is an impartial survey, undertaken by honest and scholarly men, with the sole object of establishing the historical truth or error of events recorded in the Bible, of reconstructing Biblical history, and of interpreting it in its relation to the larger history of the nations as a whole. It is a mystery that Evangelicals have not had the faith themselves to undertake such an examination, confident that the evidence, impartially reviewed, will in no wise prejudice their acceptance of the Living Word. If only scholars would be content to rest upon the facts, and be done with their own shaping of the facts for other purposes, how history and faith alike would benefit! But no: the impatient mind of man must leap beyond the facts to some hurried and often fictitious conclusion upon which he may build, and the result is a wide tangle of words from which neither history nor faith can ever profit.

First, Biblical criticism must be an impartial investigation. Secondly, it must be patient. The study of any branch of history demands perseverance. Facts are not made plain in a moment, nor may details be dovetailed together at any given time. Material is often painfully slow in coming to light, and the sifting of it is the work of many years. The brilliant conclusion which resolves the whole issue is almost certainly a quack conclusion. History (and particularly ancient history) knows few assured results, at any rate in the sphere of detail. But how few scholars have the patience to wait until all the material is available. They must rush into print with what at most can only be interim results, and announce them as authoritative and final, often to the confusion and delay of a thorough investigation. Of course results must be published before all the material is available, otherwise there could be no progress at all, but the patient investigator will frankly recognize their interim character and eschew the folly of erecting general theories upon them.

Investigation must be impartial and patient, and it must also be scrupulous. All material must be given its due weight and thoroughly tested. Results must not be obtained by sleight-of-hand and cunning tricks, by the over-emphasizing of one point at the expense of another, by the ignoring of unsuitable evidence. The writings of the Modernists make

pitiful reading in this respect. Only too often awkward evidence is spirited away, or supporting facts produced from nowhere, merely at the whim of the writer. Only too often the flimsiest conjectures upon a stray text are adduced with solemn protestations as conclusive proof. Now an undesirable text is mutilated, or glossed away ; now a false antithesis is made ; now two theories are left hanging in the air, tied together and each supporting the other. Much so-called criticism is nothing more than a clever, academic juggling of this nature, an instrument which, once one has mastered the technique, may be used to prove anything or everything, quite apart from historical reality at all. The true Biblical critic guards himself against this temptation. He is always scrupulously careful in his use of evidence. He does not gloss away on *a priori* grounds. He does not base one theory upon another. He gives to every point of evidence its full weight, and if the result does not conform to a preconceived pattern, he is content to wait, and if necessary to revise the pattern ; he does not shape the results to fit the pattern.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that the true critic will be strictly honest, and yet the human mind is so tortuous, so easily self-deceived, that perhaps a word or two on this subject would not be out of place. The matter of honesty is of course one upon which we cannot speak for each other, but only for ourselves. If certain obvious dangers are pointed out, it will be clearly understood that no particular examples are in mind, since there is no evidence available. Now it is obvious that every critic enters the field with an underlying honesty of purpose to discover the truth, but from the very outset, quite apart from preconceptions, there is one consideration which is likely to cause him to swerve ever so slightly from the path of strict honesty, namely, that of his personal reputation. Other factors are at work, but this is perhaps the most potent and the most subtle. He commences his research with a thesis for some degree, and the temptation is great to bring out some new and startling theory on the basis of very slight evidence, or perhaps to play for safety by adopting views which will be acceptable in professorial circles. Or his reputation is established by some solid piece of research, and then new evidence comes to light which overturns his whole work. How he struggles against the evidence instead of welcoming it as a further valuable

contribution! Professing himself unable to accept it, when all the time, subconsciously, he is unwilling. These are practical considerations—and there are of course many more, personal jealousies, instinctive reactions, etc.—which the honest critic will take into account, watching himself lest he should be deflected at any point. How easily the whole course of criticism may be imperilled by slight subconscious dishonesties, the perverting or ignoring of evidence, which have as their aim the obscuring rather than the establishing of truth.

Biblical research, however, must also be bold and imaginative. Historical study cannot be purely academic, since it deals with the doings of people, not with abstract principles or mathematical equations. The sifting of meticulous detail may even confuse, unless it is accompanied by an imaginative feeling for the personalities concerned. Historical study is only truly successful when it can reconstruct: in this connection it is significant that the debt of modern historical study to the Romantic Movement is so large. So to know a period, so to immerse ourselves in it, that we can catch the spirit of it, that is the aim of all true historical study. Of course this bold, imaginative spirit will lead us into mistakes. But the very mistakes will be a means of advance, so long as they are not allowed to harden into dogmas. And time after time apparently irreconcilable discrepancies of the letter of evidence will be found to possess an inner harmony of spirit. May it not be that discrepancies such as those in the Saul narratives are only the formal discrepancies which occur when two accounts, an official and a more personal, or biographical, run side by side? Is it not true that many of the difficulties of the Bible are due to the fact that the documents are treated rather like mathematical equations or jig-saw puzzles than living narratives about living people?

One word of caution is, however, necessary at this juncture. There is a false imaginativeness as well as a true. In the first place imaginativeness must not be allowed to degenerate into unbridled speculation, with the aim of producing spectacular results. History must be felt and relieved, but an imaginative reconstruction is only possible on the basis of thorough and patient investigation. Secondly and above all reconstruction must not be determined by intellectual concepts. The fashionable reconstruction of the Hebrew Conquest, as

stated by Oesterly and Robinson in their standard text-book<sup>1</sup> is an example of the historical method falsified, since it rests on only a few scraps of real evidence, artificially and academically isolated from the Biblical text, and is predetermined by the critics' own views of what ought to have happened.

First, criticism must be impartial, secondly patient, then scrupulous and strictly honest, fourthly bold and imaginative, and last of all, in many ways the most important point, it must be conducted along certain fixed and proper lines of enquiry. Up to the present time, it has been sadly true that the bulk of criticism has been conducted along false lines. The reason for this has been the lack of corroborative outside evidence which would enable investigators to make a thorough study, such evidence having been extremely slow in coming to light. Even yet the Bible is upon many points our sole evidence, and of course as long as there is no confirmation either way, speculation will continue to run riot usurping the name and functions of a proper enquiry.

What then are the marks of a true enquiry? In the first place surely it accepts such evidence as there is until other evidence comes to light either to contradict or to substantiate. And even if in the available evidence there are discrepancies, unless the solution is obvious judgment will be suspended until there is further evidence which will either resolve the discrepancy or enable to distinguish between the true and the false. In any case, where the available evidence is so slight, it is surely the grossest folly to build up an "authoritative" and "assured" reconstruction upon the tattered ruins of that evidence.

Yet that is what has happened in the field of Biblical criticism. With the Bible as the only evidence, investigators have made it their business to discredit the Bible, to set it against itself, to ruin such evidence as it does afford, and then calmly and shamelessly, on the basis of a few stray texts (the inner core of truth) and the theories of Professor X to give a complete and unbiased account of what did happen, for which there is absolutely no true evidence at all.

The root of the trouble all along has of course been the lack of corroborative evidence. For want of something

<sup>1</sup> History of Israel I.

better to do, active minds have been forced to work upon the Bible itself, and minutely to examine the text in the hope of reaching from that alone some final conclusion. But without corroborative evidence final conclusions are out of the question, and likely to be grossly misleading, as in the case of the fall of Jericho, to take but one example. If only the brains and ingenuity had been expended upon useful preparatory tasks rather than upon idle destructive speculation, a sane textual criticism, a tabulation of discrepancies to be resolved or balanced, a listing of points for archaeological or other verification, a more diligent enquiry into other possible lines of evidence, a general attempt to understand the historical, intellectual, social and cultural picture as we have it in the Bible as a whole, as well as possible amendments required, then the ground would have been cleared for a true reconstruction once the evidence began to come in, as it is doing to-day, and there would have been no cumbering tangle of useless, unsupported theory to impede advance.

Secondly, any real enquiry will be marked by a determination to discover and to make use of any available lines of evidence. Instead of idling away the time in a constant rehashing of unprofitable, because wholly unsupportable theories, it will seek to broaden the field, testing the documents available, not only by the more fallible internal methods, but also by the surer external. In this respect archaeology, with its opening up of ancient documents and inscriptions, its verifying of historical fact, its sidelights upon sociology and culture, its opportunities for the study of comparative philology, is of central importance. Only as further facts do come to light in this way will it be possible to study the Bible from a truly historical point of view and to gain a clear and accurate understanding of the Ancient World. It is along these lines that a true assessment of Biblical history will proceed, not along the old false lines of a continuous juggling with the text in order to support *a priori* theories.

Again a true enquiry will be marked by a use of only non-subjective methods. Personal intuitions have a certain limited value in historical study, in that they often give the clue which leads to the solution of a problem (this is true, of course, in all branches of science) but, on the other hand,

they cannot replace objective evidence. This is a fact which ought to need no emphasis at all, but unfortunately many critics have seen fit to ignore it in the field of Biblical criticism. Time and time again, particularly in the matter of disputed authorships and passages, personal intuitions, subjective judgments, have been allowed to usurp the place of concrete evidence. The bulk of the evidence adduced in support of composite authorship is, strictly speaking, of this character, depending in the last resort upon impressions, and possibly misunderstandings, rather than upon real evidence. Passages are pronounced late, because they are felt to be late, and certain words, often rare words, are found not to have occurred in earlier writings, just to give the argument an appearance of reality. In a strict enquiry these subjective impressions are bound to remain, but they must not be allowed to influence conclusions in any way without the full support of concrete evidence.

Finally, all enquiry must be marked by the reserve characteristic of true scholarship. Evangelical scholarship has always been too confident of ultimate results for reserve (perhaps Modernism has taught a lesson here) but after all there is no real antithesis between the confidence of faith and reserve in historical knowledge. Faith often knows without seeing. Modernism for its part has also been conspicuously over-confident. Like some noisy ebullition of impatient immaturity, having noticed a few awkward facts and conceived a few philosophic fancies, it advanced to take the world by storm with assured results.

This stage has almost passed. Investigators have begun to see that our knowledge of the Ancient World is so fragmentary, so imperfect and probably so prejudiced that there is little indeed that we do know with certainty. Before we can fully appreciate the story of the Bible, a long road of difficult investigation must be travelled, and even then many difficulties may never be cleared. But the difficulties are after all due to our lack of knowledge rather than to ignorance on the part of the writers, and on such matters there can be no voice of assurance. We can only keep our own convictions and wait upon the evidence as it is slowly accumulated and woven into pattern. Above all we must not try to hurry the matter. Our understanding of the

Ancient World must be of slow growth, but it will be none the less sure in the long run.

These then are the main principles of Biblical criticism. A necessary historical investigation, it must be conducted without ulterior dogmatic ends, a patient, scrupulous, honest and imaginative study, in which the evidence is properly weighed, corroborative evidence sought, merely subjective judgment excluded and a proper reserve kept to forbid all hasty and ill-considered pronouncements. Properly understood and properly conducted, there is no reason why criticism should not cease to be a stumbling-block and become an indispensable companion of faith. The realisation of this ideal is in our own hands. It is we who must understand and we who must conduct. The opportunity is present. Already a different spirit is abroad. Surely in this sphere at last Evangelicalism will assert itself, to the advancement of human knowledge and the vital enrichment of faith.

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#### OUR BIBLE AND THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS.

By Sir Frederic Kenyon, G.B.E., K.C.B. (*Eyre & Spottiswoode.*)  
10s. 6d.

This book would be an excellent one to study in connection with the above article and the one which follows. It tells how the text of Scripture has come down to us and is illustrated by a large number of photographs of ancient papyri, manuscripts and early printed versions.

In this day of criticism we are thankful for a man of first-class scholarship to champion the accuracy and uniqueness of God's Word. Many have written of these things, but, as the *Spectator* says, "Few indeed could claim the authority of one who has had many years of service as the Director and principal librarian of the British Museum. There are many who are anxious to learn how far the Bible is still trustworthy and Sir Frederic is at pains to show that nothing has happened that need disturb the faith of the weakest."

This was written in connection with Sir Frederic's latest book, "The Bible and Archaeology" (Harraps, 15s.). But it applies equally to both.

The real point is, are we who realize that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" using these books? Specially the lecturers at our Theological Colleges? Facts are fuel to faith.