

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

of the canonical Ezra and Nehemiah to other literature; on which, however, we should have welcomed a larger discussion of the questions connected with First Esdras.

The volume more than sustains Professor Ryle's reputation. It is written with a just appreciation of the interest and importance of these books—books

which, as Professor Ryle observes, "record no mighty miracle, no inspiring prophecy, no vision, no heroic feat of arms," but which touch the historical foundations of Judaism, and teach great lessons on the Divine promise, the discipline of disappointment, the hallowing of common life, and the preparation of the Messianic age.

Mayor's "Epistle of St. James."¹

BY THE REV. G. H. GWILLIAM, B.D., FELLOW OF HERTFORD COLLEGE, OXFORD.

THE February number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES contained a short notice of Dr. Mayor's exhaustive commentary on the Catholic Epistle of St. James; we are glad to avail ourselves of the editor's kind permission, to insert in the present number a fuller account of this excellent work.

Of such an author as Dr. Mayor (the bearer of an honoured name, and the possessor of high academical distinctions) we expect great things; in the work before us, our expectations are entirely satisfied. There are, of course, statements and conclusions not a few, from which many of us would dissent; but distinct utterances on matters of controversy are, like original views, points of excellence in any treatise; and excellently does our author set forth the opinions to which his studies have led him. From the thoroughness of those studies is derived the great value of the present volume. The author has limited himself to a small portion of the Holy Scriptures. This portion has been his constant study during very many years. Researches in many directions have combined to elaborate the details of a well-matured plan. The result is a book, which the author can hardly himself improve, and which will long serve as a model of laborious and exhaustive biblical commentary. From such a work, we may ourselves learn how to work in kindred studies.

On the threshold of Dr. Mayor's treatise, we are brought into the presence of controversy; but we do not intend in this review to enter into controversy. (1) In the Preface he states that the text through which he will comment on St. James is almost entirely that of Westcott and Hort. (2)

¹ *The Epistle of St. James.* By Joseph B. Mayor, M.A., Litt.D. Macmillan.

In chap. i. the discussion of the authorship of the Epistle necessarily introduces a well-known ecclesiastical question. The pious belief (if indeed it be not something more) about the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is not shared by Dr. Mayor; for he concludes, after an exhaustive examination of the evidence, that the author of the Epistle was the Bishop of Jerusalem, who was called the brother of the Lord, and that that term is to be understood in the usual sense, and does not mean the half-brother, or the cousin. And it must be admitted that our learned doctor has argued with much acuteness for the Helvidian view, which is the one he adopts, even if, in face of other considerations, we do not yet see our way to depart from the position of Pearson and of Mill.

As regards the question of Greek text, it would seem from the dogmatic confidence wherewith some handle the subject (and, I may add, from certain results of Oxford teaching, which have recently come to my knowledge) that there are not wanting many who think that the question has passed out of the region of controversy—that Dr. Hort was right, and that those who do not share his admiration for Codex B, or accept his theory about the revision of the Syriac, are wrong. Again, we do not intend to argue, but will, for the present, content ourselves with reminding younger readers of this paper, that there is another side to the question; and that the arguments of the late Dr. Hort have not convinced all who have studied the history of the present text of the Greek Testament. It should be added that Dr. Mayor has at times exercised an independent judgment in the choice of readings. For examples, the reader may refer to the critical foot-

notes on the variants in chap. ii. 3 and 26. It will be seen that the editor more than once prefers the marginal readings of Westcott and Hort to that which has been admitted to the text of Westcott and Hort. Although Dr. Mayor modestly speaks of his dependence, as regards the text, on the labours of others, we may feel confident that such a scholar as he is, has carefully weighed the evidence; and his acceptance, on the whole, of the text of Westcott and Hort is, whether we agree with him or not, an acceptance of the principles on which that text is constructed. Scholarly readers of the work will be interested in the different forms of the Latin, which are set out by the side of the Greek text.

It is chiefly from the internal evidence of the Epistle itself, and of passages in other parts of the New Testament, that the person who addresses us in the name of Jacobus is identified; there remains, however, still the question, whether the Epistle be really authentic, or whether it be not a later forgery, ascribed to the apostle, as Brückner, Davidson, and others have held. To the solution of this question Dr. Mayor applies himself with vigour, and with marked success. The objections to the authenticity of the Epistle are clearly stated and fully answered. The external evidence is well set forth. The date, the occasion, the relation to other writings, are discussed. No point of importance seems to be overlooked; and certainly a very strong case is made out for the conclusion that not only is the Epistle a genuine production of the Apostolic age (as the Catholic Church has always held), but that it is to be classed amongst the earliest writings of the New Testament Canon. Chapter iv. contains a most instructive collection of resemblances between *St. James* and other parts of the New Testament. It is contended that other writers quote St. James rather than that he quotes from the other Epistles. Internal considerations point to about A.D. 45 as the probable date; and so this Epistle may be prior to even the earliest Gospel, at least in the form in which the Gospels are extant in the Canon.

On the famous subject of the relation between the teaching of St. Paul and of St. James our author has delivered himself wisely and well. If there be no striking originality in his remarks, it must be conceded that perhaps all which can be spoken about the "faith" of the one and the "works" of the other has been already often re-

peated from the different standpoints of different critics. Our author's conviction of the priority of St. James' Epistle to those of St. Paul allows him to assume a clear position. "St. Paul," he says, "writes with constant reference to St. James, sometimes borrowing phrases or ideas, sometimes introducing a distinction for the purpose of avoiding ambiguity, at other times distinctly controverting his arguments as liable to be misapplied, though conscious all the while of a general agreement in his conclusions" (*Introd.* pp. lxxxviii, lxxxix; cf. *Comment.* pp. 201-205). We quote Dr. Mayor's words, but the reader should peruse the elaboration of the argument; and he will find that, though our author speaks of the later writer as controverting the *arguments* of St. James, he does not suppose that there was any contrariety in essentials of doctrine, or any formal opposition, as some have imagined between a Pauline and a Jacobean school of thought.

The grammar, diction, and style of St. James are subjected to a careful examination, worthy in all respects of the scholarship of the editor. He is "inclined to rate the Greek of this Epistle as approaching more nearly to the standard of classical purity than that of any other books of the New Testament, with the exception perhaps of the Epistle to the Hebrews" (p. clxxxix). Of the style he writes in glowing terms, noting its rhythm, its energy, its vivacity, its "Miltonic organ voice." He rightly argues that such Greek must be original; it has not the marks of a translation (chap. x.). But in saying this, he does not commit himself to the unreasonable opinion that Greek was the common language of Palestine, but only supposes that James, as others, including possibly our Lord Himself, had acquired Greek in addition to their Semitic vernacular (p. xli).

The arrangement of a *Paraphrase* and *Comment*, as distinct from the *Text* and *Notes*, has many advantages in affording a clearer view of the meaning of the sacred writer, and the connexion of thought between the several parts of the Epistle. In the *Comment* will be found many interesting remarks in application of the teaching of the apostle to present day needs and controversies. One can hardly refrain from a smile at discovering on p. 199 "smoking" classed with the sins of "betting and drinking." Perhaps here the writer's prejudices find almost unconscious utterance. So on a greater subject there seems

a touch of anti-sacerdotalism in what is said about the Anointing of the Sick (p. 219).

We must not omit to call the reader's attention to the remarkable list of works in chap. xi., which the author has studied in preparation for his own edition. We ought not, perhaps, to complain, because in chap. xii. (*Apparatus Criticus*) he repeats the stock assertion about the revision of the Peshitto in the fourth century. We would venture,

however, to invite his attention to what has been written on this subject in the third volume of *Studia Biblica*. We heartily thank Dr. Mayor for giving us this valuable edition of St. James. It is a work replete with matter of interest for the scholar, and of instruction for the student. It will be helpful to the teacher, whether in preparation for lecturing to the class, or for preaching to the parochial congregation.

The Old Testament in the Light of the Literature of Assyria and Babylonia.

BY THEO. G. PINCHES, BRITISH MUSEUM.

IN the articles which have appeared in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES under the above title, I have brought forward the passages in the Babylonian versions of the Creation-story which seem to show parallels with the Biblical accounts in the first two chapters of Genesis. In many cases the parallels are striking, but in a few they have to be sought out, and, when examined, do not prove to be wholly satisfactory. Nevertheless, those which have been noted are most interesting and important, and show a close connexion between the two nations with whom they arose.

So far, however, I have only brought forward the passages which agree in sense with similar verses of the Bible story. A certain number of lines have been taken from their context, and compared with the corresponding passages in the Biblical account. Our examination of the Babylonian records has therefore been a one-sided one, and would naturally be incomplete without at least a few words on the other side of the question, namely, the *differences* between the Hebrew and Babylonian versions.

As is well known, there are in Genesis two accounts, one occupying the whole of the first chapter and the first three verses of the second (thirty-four verses in all), the other taking up the remainder of the second chapter (twenty-two verses), whilst chapter three is devoted to an account of the temptation and fall (twenty-four verses). The Biblical accounts are, therefore, short, and told in as few words as is possible consistent with the amount of detail which the

inspired writer has been able to put into them; in fact, five pages of the Hebrew Bible, in fair-sized type, hold the whole.

Shortness is not, however, a peculiarity of the longer Babylonian account, for it must have covered about seven closely-written tablets, making fourteen pages of much larger size and more compressed matter than the Hebrew account has, and the forty lines of the recently published Akkadian version almost equal, in themselves, one of the first three chapters of Genesis. In bulk, therefore, we find at the outset a great difference, the Babylonians carrying off the palm as far as amount of text goes.

The longer of the two Babylonian accounts (that wholly in the Assyrian or Babylonian language), regarded as having covered about seven tablets, began with a description of the time when heaven and earth were not,¹ when everything existing was brought forth by Mummu Tiamat² (Moumis-Tauthe), but was without order or completeness. This period was followed by that in which the creation of the gods took place.

In the break which follows (the text being very imperfect in parts) there was probably described the creation of further deities, as well as the introduction to, and account of the origin of, the fight between Merodach and Kirbiš-Tiamat,³ or Bel and the Dragon.⁴ Word of the hostility of Tiamat to

¹ See THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for Jan. 1892, pp. 165-167.

² A better transcription would probably be Tiawat, a form which would account for the Greek Tauthe.

³ See THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for March 1892, p. 267 (col. 1, text and note 2). ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 269, note 3.