



**The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth**  
**Chapter 8: The Tabernacle in the Wilderness**  
**did it exist? A Question Involving the Truth or**  
**Falsity of the Entire Higher-Critic Theory**

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### INTRODUCTION

The question as to whether or not the old Mosaic Tabernacle ever existed is one of far greater consequence than most people imagine. It is so, particularly because of the very intimate connection existing between it and the truth or falsity of the higher critic theory in general. If that theory is all that the critics claim for it, then of course the Tabernacle had no existence; and this is the view held by at least most of the critics. But if, on the other hand, the old Mosaic Tabernacle did really exist, and the story of it as given in the Bible is not, as the critics assert, merely a fiction, then the higher critic scheme cannot be true.

The question, therefore, to be discussed in the following pages, viz., whether the Mosaic Tabernacle really did or did not exist, is certainly one of great and wide-reaching significance; which significance will become more and more apparent as the discussion goes forward. With this brief introduction we take up the subject; merely premising further, that this article was originally prepared as a booklet, in which shape it contained a considerable amount of matter not appearing here.

### THE DISCUSSION

One peculiarity of the higher criticism is what may be called its unbounded audacity in attacking and attempting to destroy many of the most solidly established facts of the Bible. No matter with what amount of evidence any particular Scripture fact may be capable of demonstration, if it happens to oppose any of the more fundamental notions of the critical hypothesis, away it must go as unworthy of acceptance by so-called "science," or at all events, the entire array of critical doubts and imaginings is brought to bear, in order to cast suspicion upon it, or to get rid of it in some way.

### I. THE BIBLE SIDE OF THE QUESTION

A striking illustration of such procedure is furnished by the peculiar treatment accorded by the critics to that old religious structure which, being built by Moses near Mt. Sinai, is usually named the Tabernacle, or the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. That such a structure not only existed, but was for some five hundred years a very conspicuous object in ancient Israelite history, is a fact to which the Bible itself lends no small amount of evidence. For example, there are found in the book of Exodus alone some thirteen chapters devoted to a minute description of the plan and construction of that building. Then, as explanatory of the Tabernacle's services, its dedication, means of transportation, the work of the priests and Levites to some extent., and various other matters connected with the structure, the entire book of Leviticus with some ten chapters in Numbers may be cited. Besides, scattered all through both the Old and New Testaments there are many allusions and notices - some of them merely incidental, but others more historical in nature - all of which go toward establishing the Tabernacle's historicity. And finally, which is perhaps the most convincing testimony of all, we have given us in the New Testament one whole book, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which concerns, especially explaining from a Christian point of view, the typology and religious significance of that old building.

### II. THE HIGHER-CRITIC VIEW

With so much evidence, therefore, to be adduced, even from the Scriptures, in support of the Tabernacle's historicity, one would think that it requires at least some literary bravery, not to say presumptuous audacity, for any individual or class of men to assail, with the expectation of overthrowing, a fact so solidly established as would seem to be that of the Tabernacle's real existence. Nevertheless, difficult as such task may appear, the critics have not hesitated most vigorously to undertake it. According to their notion the whole story of the Tabernacle, as recorded in the Bible, is simply a fiction, or, more properly speaking, a literary forgery-a concoction gotten up perhaps by some of those priestly scribes who returned with Ezra from the Babylonian exile; their special purpose in devising such a story being to help in the introduction of a new temple ritual at Jerusalem, or perhaps it was also to glorify the distant past in the history of the Israelites.\*

\*As explained by Nodelke, another purpose of this forgery was "to give pre-existence to the temple and to the unity of worship." But this is virtually included in the two purposes above named.

### III. THE QUESTION MORE FULLY STATED

Thus we have presented to us two widely different and opposing views respecting the Tabernacle's existence. One of them, which is the view of at least most higher critics, is that this old structure never existed at all; while, on the other hand, the orthodox and Biblical conception is that not only in the days of Moses but long afterwards this fabric had a most interesting and important history. Which, then, of these two so widely different doctrines are we pleased to accept?

### IV. IMPORTANCE OF THIS DISCUSSION

1. Whichever one is accepted by us, certain it is that an earnest discussion, such as we hope to effect, of the question above stated, is a matter of no little consequence. Such a discussion is important, first of all, because of the light which it will throw upon all the history of God's first chosen people--the Israelites. It will at least tell us something about the kind of civilization this ancient people must have had; and more particularly will it tell us whether that civilization was, as the higher critics represent, one low down on the scale, or whether these Israelites had already made a good degree of progress in all the arts, disciplines, and branches of knowledge which usually belong to a moderately high state of civilization. Surely, then, there is at least some benefit to be derived from the study before us.

2. But another advantage which will come from this same study is that it will help us to a solution of a somewhat curious, but yet important, historical problem; viz., whether as a matter of history the Temple preceded the Tabernacle, as the higher -critics claim, and, therefore, that the Tabernacle must be regarded as only "a diminutive copy" of the Temple; or vice versa, whether, as is taught by the Bible, the Tabernacle went first, and hence that the Temple was in its construction patterned after the Tabernacle. To be sure, at first sight this does not appear to be a very important question; yet when the historical, literary and other connections involved in it are considered, it does after all become a question of no little significance.

3. But the most determinative and, therefore the most significant interest we have in a discussion of the question as proposed, is the bearing which it has upon the truth or falsity of the higher criticism. As is known to

persons conversant with that peculiar method of Bible study, one of its main contentions is that the whole Levitical or ceremonial law--that is, the law of worship. as recorded especially in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers--did not originate, or at all events did not make its appearance, until somewhere near the close of the Babylonian exile, or about the time when Ezra first appears in Jewish history. By thus removing all that part of the Pentateuch down the centuries, from the time of Moses to the time of Ezra, the critics are able not only to deny the Mosaic authorship of this Pentateuchal literature, but also to construct a scheme of their own by which all the separate "documents" into which they are accustomed to divide the Pentateuch can be put together in a kind of whole; each particular document being singled out and designated according to its date, authorship, and other peculiarities, such as the critics suppose belong to it. Moreover, in this way the Pentateuch is all torn to pieces, and instead of its being really a connected, organic whole, such as the orthodox world has always conceived it to be, it is by this peculiar higher-critic method transformed into a mere patch-work, a disjointed affair, having no more divine authority or inspiration connected with it than any other piece of human literature that has come into being through the law of evolution.

Such, however, is exactly what the critics would make of the Pentateuch, and indeed of much else in the Bible, if they could have their way.

But now suppose that after all the old Mosaic Tabernacle did really exist, what effect would that have upon the success of the critical hypothesis? It would absolutely frustrate all attempts to carry this hypothesis successfully through. Such would necessarily be the result, because, first of all, if that portion of the Pentateuch which contains the ceremonial or Levitical law is transferred down to Ezra's time, the old Tabernacle, for the services of which this law was designed, must necessarily come with it. But then, in the second place, a really existing Tabernacle so far down the centuries, or long after the Temple at Jerusalem had been built and was regarded by the Jews as their great central place of worship, would have been not only an architectural curiosity, but an anachronism such as even the critical imagination could scarcely be accused either of devising or accepting.

The only way, therefore, open for the critics, if they are still to hold fast their theory, is for them to do precisely what they have undertaken; namely, to blot out or destroy the Tabernacle as a real existence, entire

story of it, as given in the Bible, in the form of a fiction. This they have really attempted.

But by so doing the critics must, after all, confess that the foundation upon which they build is very insecure, because it is simply an assumption. If, therefore, in opposition to such assumption, this article shall be able to demonstrate that the old Mosaic Tabernacle actually existed, then the underpinning of the critical hypothesis is at once removed, and the entire edifice with all of its many stories must collapse. And if all this is true, then it is not too much to say, as is affirmed in the sub-title of this article, that the whole truth or falsity of the critical scheme depends upon what may be proven true respecting the Tabernacle's non-existence or existence.

And thus, moreover, is made to appear the exceeding importance of the discussion we have undertaken.

## V. QUOTATIONS FROM THE HIGHER CRITICS

But what do the higher critics themselves say with regard to this matter of the Tabernacle's real existence? To quote from only a few of them, Wellhausen, e. g., who is the great coryphaeus of the higher-critic doctrine, writes as follows: "The Temple, which in reality was not built until Solomon's time, is by this document [the so-called Priestly Code] regarded as so indispensable, even for the troubled days of the wilderness before the settlement, that it is made portable, and in the form of a tabernacle set up in the very beginning of things. For the truth is that the Tabernacle is a copy, not the prototype, of the temple at Jerusalem" (Proleg., Eng. trans., p. 37). So also Graf, who preceded Wellhausen in higher-critic work, affirms that the Tabernacle is only "a diminutive copy of the Temple," and that "all that is said about this structure in the middle books of the Pentateuch is merely post-exilic accretion." Once more, to hear from a more recent authority, Dr. A. R. S. Kennedy, in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, has these words: "The attitude of modern Old Testament scholarship to the priestly legislation as now formulated in the Pentateuch, and in particular to those sections of it which deal with the sanctuary and its worship, is opposed to the historicity of P's [that is, the old Mosaic] Tabernacle." The same or a similar representation is given by Benzinger in the Encyclopaedia Biblica; and in fact this is, and must necessarily be, the attitude of all consistent higher

critics toward the matter under consideration. For it would never do for the adherents of the critic theory to admit that away back in the old Mosaic times the Tabernacle, with all its elaborate ritual, and with the lofty moral and spiritual ideas embodied in it, could have existed; because that would be equivalent to admitting the falsity of their own doctrine. Accordingly with one voice the critics all, or nearly all, stoutly proclaim that no historicity whatever must be allowed to Moses' Tabernacle.

## VI. CERTAIN GREAT PRESUMPTIONS

To come then to the actual discussion of our subject, it might be said, in the first place, that there are certain great presumptions which lie in the way of our accepting the higher critic theory as true.

1. One of these presumptions is, that this whole critic hypothesis goes on the assumption that what the Bible tells us regarding the real existence of the Tabernacle is not true, or, in other words, that in a large part of its teachings the Bible speaks falsely. Can we believe that? Most assuredly not, so long as we have any real appreciation of the lofty system of moral truth which is taught in this wonderful book, a book which, more than any other ever produced, has taught the entire world common honesty, whether in literary work or other acts. Therefore we say, regarding this whole matter of the Bible's speaking falsely, *Judaeus Apella credat, non ego!* Let the higher critics believe that if they will, but surely not we!

Robert Burns has a poem, in which he says of lying in general:

Some books are lies frae end to end,  
And some great lies were never penned;  
E'en ministers, they hae been kened,

In holy rapture,  
A rousing whid at times to vend,  
An' nail it wi' Scripture.

Surely, the higher critics would not undertake to reduce our Christian Scriptures to the level of a book that has in it no truth from beginning to end; and yet it must be confessed that one serious tendency of their theory is greatly to lessen the general credibility of this sacred volume.

2. But another presumption lying against the truthfulness of this higher criticism is, that it makes all the civilized ages from Ezra ,down to the present time to be so utterly lacking both in historic knowledge and literary sagacity, that, excepting a few higher critics, no one ever supposed the whole world was being deceived by this untrue story of the Tabernacle's real existence; when, if the facts were told, all these numerous ages have not only been themselves deceived, but have been also instrumental, one after another, in propagating that same old falsehood down the centuries ! Again we say: *Judaeus Apella credat, non ego!* The higher-critic pretensions to having a greater wisdom and knowledge than is possessed by all the rest of the world, are very well known; but this illustration of that peculiarity seems to us rather to cap the climax.

3. And here, if we choose to go farther, it might be shown that, if this peculiar doctrine is true, then the Savior and all of his Apostles were mistaken. For certainly Christ (see Matt. 12:3, 4) and perhaps all the Apostles without exception, did believe in the Tabernacle as a real existence; and one of the Apostles, or at least an apostolic writer, went so far, in the Book of Hebrews, as to compose what may be termed an extensive and inspired commentary on that sacred structure--on its apartments, furniture, priesthood and services; bringing out particularly, from a Christian point of view, the rich typical significance of all those matters. Now that all these inspired men and the Savior Himself should either have been themselves deceived or should try to deceive others with regard to an important matter of Old Testament history is surely incredible.

## VII. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

1. Just here, however, we desire to introduce some considerations of a different nature. There exists, even outside of the Bible, a small amount of evidence in support of the Tabernacle's existence, and although we have already alluded to a part of this testimony, under the head of favoring presumptions, yet it will bear repetition or rather a fuller consideration. Now, as we conceive of this evidence, it consists, in the first place, of various notices or even of full descriptions of the Tabernacle as ,a real existence, which are found in very ancient writings, some of these writings being quite different from our Christian Scriptures. To be sure, a large part of this literature is copied in one way and another from the Bible,

and none of it dates anything like so far back in time as do at least the earlier books of the Old Testament; and yet, as we shall see, some of it is very old, sufficiently so to give it a kind of confirmatory force in support of what the Bible has to say concerning the matter in hand.

The first testimony, then, of this sort to which we allude, is a full description of the Tabernacle in all its parts, services, priesthood and history, very nearly the same as that which is given in our modern Bibles, which can be found in the earliest translation ever made of the Old Testament--that is, the Septuagint. This translation appeared some two or three centuries before the time of Christ, and therefore it ought to be pretty good evidence of at least what its contemporaries, or those far-off times, held to be true with regard to the matter under consideration. Then another testimony of like character comes from the Greek Apocrypha to the Old Testament, a work which appeared, or at least most of it, before the time of Christ; in which production there are found various allusions to the Tabernacle, and all of them to it as a real existence; as, e, g., in Jud. 9:8; Wis. of Sol. 9 :8 ; Eccl. 24 :10, 15 ; and 2 Mac. 2 :5. Moreover, in his Antiquities, Josephus, who wrote toward the end of the first century, gives another full description of that old structure in its every part, including also something of its history. ( See Antiq., Bk. III., Chs. VI. to XII. ; also Bk. V., Ch. L, Sec. 19; Ch. II., Sec. 9; Ch. X., Sec. 2; Bk. VIII., Ch. IV., Sec. 1.) And finally, in that vast collection of ancient Jewish traditions, comments, laws, speculations, etc., which goes under the name of the Talmud, there are not infrequent references made to this same old structure; and one of the treatises (part of the Bereitha)\* in that collection is devoted exclusively to a consideration of this building.

\*The Bereitha (or Baraitha) is an apocryphal part of the Talmud; but it is very old, and embodies about the same quality of tradition in general as does the compilation made by Jehudah ha-Nasi, which is usually considered the genuine Mishna, or basis of the Talmud.

With so much literature, therefore, of one kind and another, all telling us something about the Tabernacle, and all or at least most of it going back for its origin to very near the time when at least the last part of the Old Testament was written, we have in these various sources, considered as a whole, if not an independent or direct testimony to the Tabernacle's existence, certainly something that points clearly in that direction. Or, in other words, inasmuch as these old writings, containing the various notices

and descriptions which we have mentioned, existed away back so near to Old Testament times, these must have been acquainted with the best traditions of their day regarding what is taught in that part of our Bible; and, therefore, they must have known more about the truth of things as connected with the Tabernacle and its real existence than any authorities existing in these late times of ours possibly could. Or, at all events, they knew more about those matters than any of the mere guesswork speculations of modern higher critics possibly can, or are in a condition to know.\*

\*The value of this evidence is of course only that which belongs to tradition; still it should be remembered that this tradition is a written one, dating away back to near the times of the Old Testament. Moreover, it could be shown that this same kind of written tradition reaches back through the later books of the Old Testament, at least in a negative way, even to 'the time of Ezra; who surely ought to know whether, as the critics say, the story of the Tabernacle as a fact of history was invented in his own day and generation. But inasmuch as Ezra does not tell us anything about that matter, it stands to reason, that as has since been reported by this long line of tradition, most of it being of a positive nature, no such invention ever took place, but that this story is simply a narrative of actual fact. At all events, as said in the text, it is far more likely that this old and long-continued tradition is correct in what it asserts, than is any of the denials of the higher critics.

2. But there is another kind of evidence, of this external nature, which is more direct and independent, and therefore more significant with regard to the Tabernacle's existence. That evidence is what may be called the archaeological contribution to our argument. Part of it will be given later but here we will simply call attention, first, to the fact that in all the region of Mt. Sinai there are to be seen at least some evidences of the possible presence there, even as is recorded in the Bible of the Israelites, at the time when they built the Tabernacle. Moreover, there have recently been made some discoveries in the Holy Land connected with the different places where the Bible locates the Tabernacle during the long period of its history in that country, which, to say the least, are not contradictory, but rather confirmatory of Biblical statements. One such discovery, as we will call it, is connected with a fuller exploration recently made of that old site where for some 365 years, according to Jewish tradition, the old Mosaic

Tabernacle stood, and where it underwent the most interesting of its experiences in the Holy Land. That site was, as is well known, the little city of Shiloh, located near the main thoroughfare leading up from Bethel to Shechem. In the year 1873 the English Palestine Exploration Fund, through some of its agents, made a thorough examination of this old site, and among other of its very interesting ruins was found a place which Colonel Charles Wilson thinks is the very spot where, once and for so long a time, the Tabernacle stood. That particular place is at the north of a rather low "tell," or mound, upon which the ruins are located; and, to copy from Colonel Wilson's description, this tell "slopes down to a broad shoulder, across which a sort of local court, 77 feet wide and 412 feet long, has been cut out. The rock is in places scarped to a height of five feet, and along the sides are several excavations and a few small cisterns." This is the locality where, as Colonel Wilson thinks, the Mosaic Tabernacle once really stood; and as confirmatory of his conclusion he farther says that this spot is the only one connected with the ruins which is large enough to receive a building of the dimensions of the Tabernacle. Therefore his judgment is that it is "not improbable" that this place was originally "prepared" as a site for that structure.

Now whether the general judgment of men either at present or in the future will coincide with Colonel Wilson as to the matter in hand we do not know; but we will simply repeat Colonel Wilson's words, and say that it is not improbable that this site, as indicated, is a real discovery as to the place where the old Tabernacle once stood. We need not dwell longer here on the matter, but will only observe that if the very ruins of the old Tabernacle, so far as its site is concerned, can still be seen, that surely ought to be pretty good evidence that this building once existed.

## VIII. POSITIVE BIBLICAL EVIDENCES

But to come now to the more positive and conclusive evidences regarding the matter under consideration, we may observe that these consist particularly of various historical notices scattered throughout the Old Testament; and so numerous and clear in their testimony are these notices that they would seem to prove, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the old Mosaic Tabernacle really existed.\* However, the critics claim here that it is only the earlier historical books of the Old Testament that can be legitimately used for proving a matter so far in the past as was this structure.

\*According to Bishop Herve, in his Lectures on Chronicles (p. 171), mention is made of the Tabernacle some eighteen times in the historical books following the Pentateuch--that is, in Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1. and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles; and in the Pentateuch itself, which the higher critics have by no means proven to be unhistorical, that structure is mentioned over eighty times.

## 1. TESTIMONY OF FIRST KINGS

Complying then with that requirement, at least in part, we begin our investigation with the First Book of Kings. This is a piece of literature against the antiquity and general credibility of which the critics can raise no valid objection; hence it should be considered particularly good evidence. Moreover, it might be said of this book, that having probably been constructed out of early court-records as they were kept by the different kings of Judah and Israel, those original documents, or at least some of them, take us away back to the very times of Solomon and David, or to the period when, as we shall soon see, the Mosaic Tabernacle was still standing at Gibeon. This was also, it may be observed, the general period during which the Tabernacle, having been taken down, was removed from Gibeon and stored away in Solomon's temple at Jerusalem; and it is to the account of this transference that our attention is now, first of all, directed. In 1 Kings, Chap. 8, v. 4, we read: "And they brought up the ark of Jehovah, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; even these did the priests and Levites bring up." A mere cursory reading of these words gives one the impression that the "tent of meeting," which was brought up from somewhere by the priests and Levites, was nothing else than the old Mosaic Tabernacle; and as to the place from which it was brought, that is not told us in the Scriptures; but a comparison of texts (see 2 Chron. 1 :3; 1 Kings, 3:1, 4) would seem to indicate that the Tabernacle was first transported from Gibeon to Mt. Zion, where the ark of the covenant was at this time, and then afterwards it was, with other sacred matters, carried up to Mt. Moriah, where it was put away in the temple.

All this seems to be sufficiently clear; only now the question arises whether, after all, this was really the old Mosaic structure or some other tent, as, e. g., the one built by David in Jerusalem, and which seems, at this time, to have been still in existence (See 2 Sam. 6:17 and

7:2; 1 Chron. 15:1 and 16:1. Cf. 1 Kings 1 :29) Most of the critics, including even Wellhausen, are agreed that the words, "tent of meeting" (ohel moed), as used in this and various other texts of Scripture, do really signify the old Mosaic structure; and one reason for their so holding is that those words form a kind of technical expression by which that old structure was commonly, or at least often, denoted in the Bible (The words ohel moed seem to have been used first to designate the smaller tent (see p. 37 with footnote) which Moses used as a place of communion between Jehovah and his people; hence it was called the "tent of meeting." But afterwards, when the regular tabernacle became such a place, the words were applied also to that structure which was carried by the priests and Levites up to Mt. Moriah and stored away in the temple, was really the old Mosaic Tabernacle). Only one other term is used as frequently as this is to indicate that structure; this other term being, in Hebrew, mishkan, which is usually translated, in our English versions, "tabernacle," and means "dwelling-place." Now if this rendering of those words is correct, we would seem to have already reached the goal of our endeavor. That is to say, we have actually found the Tabernacle in existence. It existed, as an undeniable reality in the times of David and Solomon, or at least in those of Solomon; and a positive proof of that matter are these words we have just quoted from 1 Kings 8:4.

But the higher critics, or especially Wellhausen, are not so easily to be caught with an admission as to an interpretation of words; for even though Wellhausen does concede that the words "tent of meeting" signify as we have stated; nevertheless he undertakes to get rid of their real force by asserting that in this passage they are an interpolation, or that they do not belong to the original Hebrew text. However, neither he nor any other higher critic has ever yet been able to give any textual authority for such an assertion; they only try to argue the matter from internal evidence. But internal evidence alone, and especially such slim evidence of that kind as the critics have been able to adduce in this connection, is insufficient to establish the end desired. Besides, those words, "tent of meeting," are certainly found in our present Hebrew text, as also in the Septuagint version; both of which items being so, it is not at all likely that Wellhausen's ipse dixit will have the effect of changing them. Such being the case, we may conclude that the structure which was carried by the priests and

Levites up to Mt. Moriah and stored away in the Temple, was really the old Mosaic Tabernacle.

We quote only one other passage from this First Book of Kings. It is a part of the account of Solomon's going to Gibeon, and of his offering sacrifice there. The words are found in v. 4, Chap. 3, and read as follows: "And the king went to Gibeon, to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place." Then in the second verse of this same chapter the king's conduct in thus going to Gibeon is farther explained by the statement that the people sacrificed in the high places, because "there was no house built for the name of Jehovah until those days." The "days" here indicated are, as is explained by the preceding verse, those in which "Solomon made an end of building his own house and the house of Jehovah;" and the entire passage then would signify that at least one reason why Solomon offered sacrifice in Gibeon was because this was the customary way among the people. They offered sacrifices in the high places before the temple at Jerusalem was built, but not ordinarily, or legitimately, afterwards. Then there is another reason indicated why Solomon went particularly to Gibeon--because this was the "great high place." Why it was so called, must have been because of some special fact or circumstance connected with it; and among the explanations given none appears so natural or to accord so well with other teachings of Scripture as the suggestion that this distinction was applied to Gibeon because the old Mosaic Tabernacle, with the brazen altar, was still there. That would certainly be a sufficient reason for accrediting peculiar eminence to this one of all the many high places which at that time seem to have existed in the Holy Land. Accordingly, Solomon went over to Gibeon, and offered sacrifice there; and then we read that, in the night following this devotional act, the king had a dream in which Jehovah appeared unto him and made to him very extraordinary promises. Now this epiphany of Jehovah at Gibeon is really another reason for one's believing that the Tabernacle was located at this place. For it is not to be supposed that any Jewish author, writing after the temple was built (when this account of Solomon's dream was written), would allow it to be said that the great and idolatry-hating God of the Israelites had made a gracious and extraordinary revelation of himself at any of the common high places in the Holy Land, half-heathenish and largely devoted to the service of idols, as these places generally were.

But if it must be admitted that the Tabernacle was really located at Gibeon, then all becomes clear, both why Solomon went there to offer sacrifice, and why Jehovah made at this place a gracious revelation of himself; also why this, of all the high places in the Holy Land, was called emphatically "great:" Then, moreover, it might be said that we have surely demonstrated the existence of the Tabernacle, not only as taught by this passage from First Kings, but also by the other one which we have noticed.

## 2. TESTIMONY OF CHRONICLES

But now turning over to the two books of Chronicles; we find here quite a number of passages which teach in the clearest and most positive manner that the Tabernacle existed at Gibeon not only in the time of Solomon, but also before. These two books of Chronicles, it should be remembered, are really a kind of commentary, or an extension made, upon Samuel and Kings. Such is the opinion of many competent scholars; and one reason for their so holding, is that very evidently the books of Samuel and Kings were among the principal sources from which the author of Chronicles drew his information; although it must be acknowledged also that he used still other sources besides those named. Writing then at a somewhat distant date, say one or two hundred years from the time of the final composition, or redaction, of Kings and Samuel, (It is claimed by the critics that all the historical books of the Old Testament underwent a revision during the exile; and according to the best authorities, Chronicles was composed shortly after the Persian rule, or about 330 B. C. Selecting, then, about the middle of the exilic period {586 to 444 B. C.} as the date for the final revision of Kings and Samuel, this would make the composition of Chronicles fall near 200 years after that revision. But of course Samuel and Kings were originally composed, or compiled, at a much earlier date; the former appearing probably about 900, and the latter about 600 B. C.) and doubtless having at his command a considerable amount of tradition, besides his written sources, the Chronicler must have been in very good condition to write what may be considered a kind of interpretive commentary upon not only the books of Samuel, but also upon the First Book of Kings, two passages from which we have just noticed. If that was so, and the two books of Chronicles are to be understood then as giving us some additional information as to what is found in

Kings, then the historical notices in First Kings which we have examined become as it were illuminated and made stronger and more positive in their nature than when considered alone. For instance, in First Kings we were told that Solomon went to Gibeon and offered sacrifice there, because "that was the great high place ;" bilt now in I Chron. 1 :3 we have it all explained, both how Gibeon came to be so called, and what was Solomon's special reason for going there to offer sacrifice. It was, as is taught very plainly here in Chornicles, because "the tent of meeting of God which Moses the servant of Jehovah had made in the wilderness" was at that time in Gibeon. Thus the rather uncertain mention of matters at Gibeon which is given in First Kings is made clear and positive by what is said in Chronicles. So also in 1 Chron. 21:29, which is a part of the account given of David's offering sacrifice on the threshing-floor of Ornan, we have again stronger language used than is found in Kings, telling us of the existence of the old Mosaic Tabernacle. For in explaining David's conduct the Chronicler says as follows: "For the tabernacle of Jehovah which Moses made in the wilderness and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon:" Whatever of uncertainty, therefore, or lack of positive indication, may exist as connected with the passages we have quoted from Kings, there is no such uncertainty or lack of positive ness here in Chronicles. On the contrary, these two books, which give us quite an amount of information respecting the Tabernacle, are always, or at least generally, very clear and positive; and on this account, it might be added, the statements made in Chronicles have sometimes been taken as a kind of guide to the study of the Tabernacle history in general.

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But here again the critics make their appearance, and are "all up in arms" against any use to be made of these two books of Chronicles

for determining a matter of ancient history. Of all the untrustworthy historical literature to be found in the Old Testament there is nothing quite so bad, so the critics tell us, as is in general Chronicles; and Wellhausen goes so far as to say that one special purpose served by these two books is that they show how an author may use his original sources with such freedom as to make them say about what he pleases, or anything according to his own ideas. (See Proleg., Eng. trans., p. 49.) So also Graf, DeWette, and others, have very energetically attacked the credibility of these two books. But over against all that is said by the critics as to the Chronicler's lack of veracity and his violent dealing with his sources, we will simply, or first, put the testimony of one of the higher critics themselves. It is what Dillman, who in point of learning and reliability is acknowledged to be among the very foremost of all the critics, says with regard to this very matter in hand: "It is now recognized," affirms that eminent critic, "that the Chronicler has worked according to sources, and there can be no talk, with regard to him, of fabrications or misrepresentations of the history." So also Dr. Orr observes that there is no reason for doubting "the perfect good faith" of the author of Chronicles; and Prof. James Robertson, of Glasgow University, farther adds that all such matters as the critics have urged against the Chronicler's veracity or misuse and even invention of sources, are "superficial and unjust;" and that "there is no reason to doubt the honesty of the author in the use of such materials as he has command of, nor is there any to question the existence of the writings to which he refers."

We take it, therefore, that these two books of Chronicles embody not only the best historical knowledge, but also the best traditions still in existence at their date; and such being the case, it is clearly incontrovertible that, as is so unmistakably taught in these books, the old Mosaic Tabernacle must have existed. And so long as the critics are unable to impeach the testimony of these books, which would seem to be impossible, that testimony must stand.

(It is claimed by the critics, and especially by Wellhausen, that during the exile the Jewish notions respecting the past of their national and tribal history underwent a radical change, so much so that nearly all the religious features of that history were conceived of as having been very different from what they really were. Or in other words, the Jewish writers of the exilic period were, so the critics tell us,

accustomed to project religious and priestly matters belonging to their history in a much later period away back to the earliest times. Consequently the general ideas of the temple and of the temple service were thus projected back even to the days of Moses; and in this way, it is explained, the notion of a Mosaic Tabernacle with an elaborate ritualistic service came into being. But really there is no evidence in all the Old Testament writings, or at all events no evidence that the Jews knew anything about, that such a change ever took place. Hence the critics are decidedly wrong when they represent that the author of Chronicles was only influenced by the spirit of his age when he undertook to misrepresent, as it is claimed he did, numerous matters connected with the past history of this people. The truth is that the Chronicler was either a base falsifier, or what he tells us in his history must be received as genuine facts.)

### 3. TESTIMONY OF SAMUEL

Now, however, let us give attention to the books of Samuel. Here is certainly another piece of literature against the general credibility of which the critics can have but little to say. And what do these books tell us respecting the Tabernacle's history? Very much, indeed; far more than we shall have space here fully to examine. In the first place, these books tell us that during at least part of the times which they in general describe, the Mosaic Tabernacle was located at Shiloh, up in the Ephraimite district. Then next we learn that at least one of the great festivals connected with the Tabernacle services-the "yearly sacrifice" it is called-was still being observed. Also we learn that this is the place where Samuel's parents, Elkanah and Hannah, went up every year, in order to take part in that sacrifice. Moreover, it was in the sanctuary at Shiloh, or in some one of its apartments, that Samuel slept at the time when he had those extraordinary revelations of Jehovah talking with him, and where also he came into such intimate and important relations with the aged Eli and his house.

And among still other items reported in those books there is one that invites our special attention. In 1 Sam., Chap. 2, v. 22, mention is made of certain "women that did service at the door of the tent meeting." And it was with these women, as we farther learn, that Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, committed at least a part of their wickedness, for which they were so severely condemned, and

afterward punished by Jehovah. Now whatever else this passage may signify, it certainly intends to teach, by its use of the words "tent of meeting," that in the time of Samuel the old Mosaic Tabernacle was in existence at Shiloh. For, as we have already seen, those words, "tent of meeting," formed a characteristic expression by which in Old Testament times the Tabernacle was, quite often at least, designated and known. This much, as we have already noticed, even Wellhausen is willing to admit.

However, the critics raise here two objections. One of them is that the sanctuary at Shiloh was not really a tent or tabernacle, but rather a solid structure, built perhaps out of stone, wood, or some other material; and the special reason given by the critics for this view is that, in Samuel's account of the structure at Shiloh, there are "posts," "doors," and some other matters usually indicative of a solid structure mentioned. But this difficulty can be very easily explained from a statement made in the Jewish Mishna, (See Conder's "Tent Work in Palestine,"- Vol. 2, p. 84.) which is that the lower part of the sanctuary at Shiloh "was of stone," but that above this there was a tent. Or a more decisive answer to this objection is that in various Scriptures (such as 2 Sam. 7:6; Psa. 78:60; 1 Kings 8:4; Josh. 18:1, and still others) the structure under consideration is positively called "a tent" and "a tabernacle."

Then the other objection raised by the critics is that these words, "tent of meeting," as found in 1 Sam. 2:22, are an interpolation, or that the whole passage containing those words is spurious. The reason which they give for such an assertion is that this passage is not found in the Septuagint. But in reply to such objection it may be said, first, that this is not the only passage in the Bible in which mention is made of these women "at the door of the tent of meeting." In Ex. 38:8, like mention is made; and, as Dr. Orr has observed, it is inconceivable even on the supposition, which he does not accept, of a post-exilic origin of the last indicated passage, that just this one mention of the matter alluded to should occur, unless there was behind this matter some old and well established tradition; or, in other words, the genuineness of the text in Exodus argues for the genuineness of the text in Samuel. Besides, as Dr. Orr has again suggested, there may have been some special reason of delicacy or of regard for the good moral reputation of the Israelites, on the account of which the makers of the Septuagint

version threw out this item respecting the wickedness of Hophni and Phinehas as connected with these women. Then, moreover, as an offset to the Septuagint's authority--which, owing to the known faultiness of its present text and its general inexactness as a translation, is surely not great--it can be urged that the entire clause containing the words "tent of meeting" is found alike in the old Syriac or Peshita version, in the Vulgate, and in the only extant Targum (that of Jonathan Ben Uzziel) on this particular passage; all of which very ancient authorities (The Targum on Samuel, which is attributed to Jonathan Ben Uzziel, is commonly believed to have been produced some time during the first century; the Peshito version of the Scriptures is thought to have been made somewhat later, probably in the second century; while the Latin Vulgate, by Jerome, was completed between the years 390 and 405 A. D.) render it as certain as anything of a textual nature could well be made, that the old original text in 1 Sam. 2:22 was exactly as it is now in our present-day Hebrew Bible.

And, finally, as perhaps the crowning feature of this array of evidence for the genuineness of the text under consideration, it can be affirmed that, for English readers at least, there exists one authority, easy to be consulted, which would seem to put beyond all reasonable doubt the genuineness of this text. That authority is our Revised English Version of the Scriptures--a literary work that in point of scholarship and general reliability stands perhaps second to none produced in recent years. And now, if anybody will take the trouble to consult this Revised Version, he will see that this entire disputed passage is retained, or that the many eminent scholars, both English and American, who wrought on this translation are agreed that the words, "tent of meeting," or *ohel moed*, as in Hebrew, are genuine, and properly belong to this passage.

Such being the case, the critics are put in a bad plight; and anyway it does not argue much to the credit of their hypothesis when, in order to carry it through, it becomes necessary so often to make the claim of interpolation. Of course, anyone can make what he pleases of any passage of Scripture, provided he only has the privilege of doctoring it sufficiently beforehand. And with regard to this particular passage it may be said that neither Wellhausen nor any other higher critic can do anything to alter it; because so long as those words *ohel moed*, or

"tent of meeting," remain in the various textual authorities which we have quoted, so long it will be impossible to expunge them from our present Hebrew Bible; and no matter what authorities the critics may be able to quote as omitting these words, the preponderance of authority, as matters now stand, will always be in favor of their retention. We claim then a real victory here, in being able to substantiate so conclusively, as we think we have done, the genuineness of this text in Samuel.

But what now is the general result of our examinations with regard to the testimony which Samuel gives us? If our conclusion with regard to the passage just examined is correct, and we are fully persuaded that it is, then we surely have demonstrated in the clearest way that not only in the days of Samuel, but probably long before, the Tabernacle did exist, and was located at Shiloh.

#### 4. TESTIMONY OF JEREMIAH AND PSALM 78

And here, if we care to go still further in this investigation of passages, we might find some very interesting testimony to the Tabernacle's historicity in Psalm 78 and in the prophecy of Jeremiah. But since we wish to be as brief as possible, while not neglecting the real strength of our argument, we will simply indicate, or quote, the Scriptures referred to, and leave the discussion or interpretation of them to the reader himself. One of these passages is found, as said, is Psa. 78, VS. 59, 60, and reads as follows: "When God heard this he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men." Another passage, from Jer. 7:12-14, reads thus: "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. Therefore will I do unto the house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust [the temple at Jerusalem], and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." Still another passage may be found in Jer. 26:6, and reads: "Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city (Jerusalem) a curse to all nations of the earth."

(These passages in Jeremiah are very important as evidence in favor of the Tabernacle's real existence, since even the higher critics must admit that the chapters containing them were written a considerable

time before the exile; and therefore these passages could not, except upon the violent theory of redaction, have been affected by writings appearing either during or after the exile. And as to Psalm 78, which is even more explicit about the structure at Shiloh's being the old Mosaic Tabernacle, it is much easier to say, as the critics do, that this Psalm is post-exilic, than it is to prove such assertion.)

All these passages, it should be observed, compare the Temple at Jerusalem with the Tabernacle at Shiloh; and they express the threat, that, unless the Israelites repented, God would destroy the Temple at Jerusalem as he had long before destroyed, or removed, the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

## 5. TESTIMONY OF JUDGES AND JOSHUA

Yet once more, in order to make our story of the Tabernacle complete, it is necessary for us to go back somewhat in history; and so we now quote from the books of judges and Joshua. In Josh. 18 :1 we read: "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there." Then, turning over to Judg. 18:31, we again read, about the idolatrous images set up in Dan, that these continued there "all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh." From these two passages we learn not only how the "house of God" came to be located at Shiloh-because the children of Israel, probably under the leadership of Joshua, set it up there but we learn also that the two descriptive terms, "tent of meeting" and "house of God," signify the same thing; for it is hardly possible that the "tent of meeting" erected at Shiloh in the days of Joshua had been replaced in the time of the judges by another structure, different in kind, and now called the "house of God."

## 6. ARGUMENT FROM HISTORY OF THE SACRED ARK

But now yet, before we give the entire story of the Tabernacle, we desire to notice another kind of argument, which is drawn from the history of the sacred ark. There does not seem to be any notice of the Tabernacle as a structure by itself in the book of Deuteronomy; but in the tenth chapter of this book, verses 1 to 5, there is given an account of the construction, not of the Tabernacle, but of what must be considered as its most important piece of furniture, that is, the Ark of

the Covenant, as it is usually called, or as the critics prefer to term it, the Ark of Yahweh (Jehovah). Now, although the critics take a very different view regarding the date and authority of Deuteronomy from that which has always been accepted by orthodox scholars, yet especially upon the ground of the passage referred to, they are willing to admit that at least some kind of a sacred ark was constructed even in the days of Moses. Moreover, if consistent with the facts as recorded in the Bible, the critics cannot deny that this same sacred ark, whatever was its form or purpose, was not only carried by the Israelites on all their journeys through the wilderness; but was also finally located by them at Shiloh; whence, after undergoing various fortunes, it was deposited in the .holy of holies of Solomon's Temple. This the critics in general admit; and they are compelled to do so by their own accepted documents of "J," "E," etc.

Now, that being the case, it follows that if the history of the sacred ark can be traced all the way through, or rather all the way 'back from the days of Solomon's Temple to the days of Moses, somewhat the same thing can be done also with the Tabernacle. For the Tabernacle, as is very evident from what the critics call the Priestly Document, was built, among other purposes, for the housing of this sacred ark; and the same documentary evidence which establishes that fact establishes also the farther fact that for a long period such was really the case. That is to say, the sacred ark and the old Mosaic Tabernacle went together, according to Biblical history, down to the times of Shiloh; and they were, after some period of separation, even brought together again at the dedicatory services of Solomon's Temple. To be sure, not all of this is admitted by the critics; but they cannot deny that the same old ark, which, according to Deut. 10:1-5, was built by Moses, was finally deposited in Solomon's Temple (Wellhausen positively states that according to the Law, that is, the Priestly Document, the Tabernacle is "the inseparable companion of the ark," and that "The two things necessarily belong to each other." He also admits, on the ground of other` Biblical evidence, that toward the end of the period of judges there are distinct traces of the ark as existing: moreover, that this same "ark of Jehovah" was finally deposited in Solomon's Temple. (See Proleg., Eng. Trans., pp. 41, 42.). With this much conceded, all the rest that we have claimed must necessarily follow; or, in other words, the admitted history of the Ark of Jehovah establishes also the historicity of the Mosaic Tabernacle, or at least helps to do so.

## IX. ENTIRE STORY OF THE TABERNACLE

Now then we are prepared to give the entire story of that old structure which was built at Mt. Sinai; only one item being still lacking. This we can learn from 1 Sam., Chaps. 21 and 22; and it is, that for a brief period the Tabernacle seems to have been located at Nob, some distance south of Shiloh. With this item then supplied, our story may go forward. As vouched for by the different historic notices we have been considering, it is as follows:

Built by the Israelites near Mt. Sinai, it was afterward carried by that people all through the wilderness. Then, having crossed the Jordan with them, and being set up at Shiloh, it seems for a long time to have remained in that place. Next, for a brief period, it would appear to have been located at Nob, down in the Benjaminite country; and from this point being carried a little to the north and west, it was set up at Gibeon, where it seems to have remained for many years. And finally upon the erection of the temple in Jerusalem, it was transferred to that place, and stored away there for safe-keeping; and this is the last notice which the Bible gives of it as a matter of history. It had served its purpose, and the time came now for it to be laid aside as a memorial, or to give place for another and a more imposing structure.

## X. INTIMATE CONNECTION OF THIS STORY WITH OTHER BIBLICAL HISTORY

Speaking somewhere of the extraordinary influence exerted by Christianity in our world, Renan says that any attempt to separate this religion from the history of humanity would be like "tearing up the tree of civilization by its roots." Very much like that, it seems to us, is the intimacy of relation existing between the history of the Tabernacle and all the rest of the history recorded in the Old Testament. Any attempt, therefore, such as that which is made by the critics, to remove the Tabernacle as a matter of fact from Old Testament history, or to turn it into a mere fiction, would necessarily result in failure. It would do so because the effect of it would be really to destroy all the surrounding and connected history given in the Old Testament; which is, of course, impossible. The very extravagance, therefore, of this higher-critic theory, or the vastness of its undertaking, is a sure proof of its inherent falsity. Dr. Valpy French,

considering only the peculiar construction of this Tabernacle story, how wide reaching it is, and how it is made to conform so accurately with many details of archaeology and topography, pronounces it, if viewed as a mere fiction, "a literary impossibility;" and he suggests that a simpler method to be employed by the critics, in getting rid of this troublesome story, would be for them "to credit the last redactor with the authorship of the whole Old Testament Scriptures." So also Professor Sayce affirms that, regarded as an invention, the Tabernacle story is "too elaborate, too detailed to be conceivable."

## XI. OBJECTIONS OF THE HIGHER CRITICS

It remains for us yet, in order to render our discussion really complete, to notice a few of the many objections which the higher critics have brought forward against the Tabernacle's historicity. These objections, however, are, for the most part, so very frivolous in character, or so utterly lacking in support either from fact or reason, that they do not really deserve an answer. Nevertheless, to furnish the reader with some notion of their real character, we will undertake to give them a cursory examination.

They may all be divided into four classes. The first class embraces all those objections which are based upon the idea that the account given in the Bible of the Tabernacle's construction and services, is very unrealistic or impractical in its nature.

A second class proceeds on the notion that the Mosaic Tabernacle is altogether too costly, highly artistic, and ponderous an affair, to have been produced by the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, and afterward carried by them all through the wilderness.

Another of these classes--which is really only one objection--represents that in the very oldest sources out of which the Pentateuch was, according to the critic notion, constructed, there is mention made of another tent, much smaller than was the Mosaic Tabernacle, and different from that structure also in other respects; and that, therefore, this second tabernacle, as it may be called, being better substantiated by literary documents than is the Mosaic structure, it is not consistent with an acceptance of all the facts in the case to allow that the larger or Mosaic tent really existed.

And finally, there is still one class, or a single objection, which makes bold to affirm that in all the earlier historic books of the Old Testament, even from judges to 2 Kings, there is no sure mention made of the Tabernacle as a real existence.

Now, if we were to try to answer all these objections, it might be said of the last one, that it is already answered. We have answered that objection by showing not only that there is mention made in those earlier historic books of the Old Testament of the Tabernacle as a real existence, but also that this mention is both sure and abundant. The many historical notices which we have examined, all telling about the Tabernacle's construction and history, is positive proof to that effect.

Then, furthermore, with regard to the alleged fact that in the earliest sources, out of which according to the critic theory the Pentateuch was constructed, there is mention made of another or second tent, different from the Mosaic structure, we have to say with respect to this objection, first of all, that it is far from being proven that there are in the Pentateuch any such oldest sources as the critics allege. That item is only a part of the still unproven theory of the higher critics, in their interpretation of the Old Testament (The fact of the higher-critic theory being as yet in an unproven state might be, urged as one important consideration in favor of the Tabernacle's real existence; and especially could such an argument be legitimately made, inasmuch as the proof of the correctness of that theory does not all come from an assured non-existence of the Mosaic structure. But since an argument of that kind would be, to some extent at least, "reasoning in a circle," we do not make use of it.). And then, secondly, we might say, respecting this objection, that it is a difficulty which orthodox scholars have often noticed and which they have explained in various ways. Perhaps the best explanation is to allow the reality of the difficulty and to attribute it to some obscurity or even seeming contradiction existing in the Pentateuchal notices. But whatever the real difficulty may be, it certainly is not insuperable; and a very good explanation of it is that there were really two tents, but one of them, that is, the smaller tent, was only a kind of provisional structure, perhaps the dwelling-place of Moses, which was used also for religious purposes, while the larger or Sinaitic Tabernacle was being prepared (Notices of such smaller tent seem to be made in Ex. 33:7-11; Num. 11:16; 12:4, 5, and Deut. 31:14, 15; and from these various passages the critics claim that they can discover at least three points of difference existing between this smaller tent and the larger or

Levitical one. These differences are as follows: (1) The smaller tent was always pitched outside the camp; but according to the priestly or Levitical history the larger tent was located within the camp. (2) The smaller tent was only a place of Jehovah's revelation, or of his communing with his people; but the larger or priestly structure was, besides, a place of most elaborate worship. (3) In the Levitical or larger tent the priests and Levites regularly served, but in the smaller structure it was only Joshua, the "servant" of Moses, who had charge of the building. All these differences, however, are easily explained by the theory, given above, of there having been really two tents. Besides, it should be observed that after Moses' death no further mention is made in the Scriptures of this smaller structure; which fact would seem to be a strong proof that the smaller one of the two tents was, primarily at least, a private structure used by Moses.) . With some allowance for one or two statements made in the Pentateuch which seem not fully to accord with this view, it will answer all the real exigencies of the case. Or, at all events, nearly any explanation which preserves the integrity of the Pentateuchal literature, and tries to reconcile its seeming differences of statement, on the ground that this literature deals with facts, and is not in large share pure fiction, is vastly preferable to any of the theories which the critics have thus far advanced with regard to this matter.

There remain then only two classes of objections which need still to be answered. And with regard to one of these classes, that is, the first in our list, it may be stated that although the objections put forward under this head are quite numerous, yet a single illustration of them will show how utterly lacking in substantial character or reasonableness each and all of them really are. The illustration of which we will make use is taken from Bishop Colenso's famous attack upon the truthfulness of the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. In that attack he puts forward the singular objection that the Tabernacle was, in its dimensions, far too small to accommodate all the vast host of the Israelites standing before its door, as the Scriptures seem to indicate was the case with them on a few occasions.\* That vast host must have numbered, according to the data given in the Pentateuch, as many at least as some two millions of people; and now Colenso makes the objection that this great host, standing in ranks, as he would make it, of nine, one rank behind another, in front of the Tabernacle door, would have formed a procession some sixty miles long; which, surely, would have been not only a practical impossibility so far as their gathering at the door of the Tabernacle was concerned, but

would have been also a complete demonstration of the untruthfulness or unreliability of this Pentateuchal record.

\*Vid. Lev. 8:35; Num. 10:3, and 27:18-22. Also comp. Num. 16 : 16-19.

But there is one thing connected with this record which Bishop Colenso seems not to have understood. It is that when the author of it was speaking of the whole congregation of Israel as standing, or gathered, in front of the Tabernacle door, he was speaking only in general terms. His language then would imply, not that every individual belonging to the vast Israelitish host stood at the place mentioned, but only that a large and representative multitude of these people was thus gathered. Or the words might signify that even the whole congregation of the Israelites was, on a few occasions, gathered about the Tabernacle, as it had been gathered around Mt. Sinai when the law was given-not all the people near the Tabernacle door, but only the leaders, while the great body of the congregation stood behind them, or around the structure, like a great sea of human beings stretching away in the distance.

Either of these explanations would meet all the demands of the language used; and, as Dr. Orr has remarked, some least particle of common sense must be allowed to the writer of this Pentateuchal record; otherwise, with the "crude absurdities" attributed to him by Bishop Colenso, he could never have written anything in the least degree rational, or that would bear a moment's reflection even by himself. Besides, as Dr. Orr has noticed, it is only a customary way of speaking to say that a whole town or even a large city was gathered together in mass-convention, when the place of such meeting was perhaps only some large hall or good-sized church. Before attacking, therefore, so eagerly with his arithmetical calculations the truthfulness of the Biblical account, this higher-critic bishop would have done well to have reflected a little upon the common use of language. That would have saved him from falling into a bigger blunder than he tries to fasten upon the writer of this Pentateuchal record.

## **XII. GREATEST OF THE OBJECTIONS**

But there is still one objection raised by the critics which seems to be more serious in nature. It is an objection based upon what may be called a physical impossibility, or the incompetency of the Israelites, while at Mt.

Sinai or journeying through the desert, either to construct or carry with them such a ponderous, highly artistic and costly a fabric as was the Sinaitic Tabernacle. These people in the desert and at Mt. Sinai, we are told, were the merest wandering Bedouins, having but little civilization and being "poor even to beggary;" and of course such a people possessed neither the means nor the intellectual capability necessary for the construction and transportation of the Tabernacle.

This peculiar objection, however, rests upon at least two mistakes. The first one is that the Israelites at this time were in such extreme poverty. The Bible tells us that when the children of Israel left Egypt they went out "every man armed;" and they carried with them all their herds and flocks, leaving "not a hoof behind." Moreover, by means of the many gifts, or exactions of "jewels of silver" and "jewels of gold" which they received from the Egyptians, they "utterly spoiled" that people. Such is the representation given in the Bible. And then, too, when these Israelites came to Mt. Sinai, here also, according to the reports of modern travellers and explorers, they could have found various materials necessary for constructing the Tabernacle, such as an abundance of copper existing in mines, various kinds of precious stones, as well as, growing in this region in considerable abundance, the shittim-wood or acacia tree, out of which the boards and pillars and most of the furniture of the Tabernacle were actually constructed. So far, therefore, as possessing, or being able to get, the means necessary for a construction of the Tabernacle was concerned, these people would seem to have been pretty well supplied.

And then, with regard to the other mistake made by the critics, viz., that these Israelites were intellectually incompetent to build the Tabernacle, this assertion also is not substantiated by facts. For, in the first place, it should be remembered that all these Hebrews had from their birth dwelt in Egypt, a country which, of all lands in the world, was at that time the most advanced in all kinds of mechanical, architectural and industrial art. This, e. g., was the country where the great pyramids had been produced, and where existed, at that time, at least most of the magnificent temples, tombs, obelisks, statues and palaces, the ruins of which still remain. Accordingly, when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they must have brought with them a good amount of the architectural and mechanical wisdom peculiar to that country. Moreover, we are taught in the Bible that these people, while in Egypt, dwelt in houses; which, of course, they must have built for themselves; also that, as slaves, their lives

had been made bitter by "all manner of service in the field," and by "hard service in brick and in mortar," and that they had built "store-cities," such as Pithom and Raamses. Putting, therefore, all these experiences which the Israelites had in Egypt together, it can be easily seen how they could have learned, even from the Egyptians, sufficient wisdom to construct and transport the Tabernacle.

But if we are required yet to name any one particular achievement, ever accomplished by these people, that was great enough to warrant the belief of their being able to construct and carry with them all through the wilderness the Sinaitic Tabernacle, then, both with promptness and high appreciation, we point to that very extraordinary conquest which they made of the Holy Land, and also to the almost equally extraordinarily long march made by them through the wilderness; and we wish to say that any people who could accomplish two such prodigious deeds as were these could easily have accomplished the so much easier task of building and transporting the old Mosaic "tent of meeting".

Our conclusion, therefore, is that, all teachings of the higher critics to the contrary notwithstanding, those Israelite people were abundantly competent, both in point of intellectual ability and of material supplies, to accomplish each and all of the works which are accredited them in the Bible.

### **XIII. MARKS OF EGYPT AND THE DESERT**

But this line of argument is one that can be pursued to a much greater extent, and it can be shown that instead of the conditions surrounding the Israelites at Mt. Sinai and while they were in the wilderness being against the truthfulness of the Biblical record appertaining to those matters, such conditions are really in favor of that record's truthfulness, as well as of the Tabernacle's real existence. For illustration, we are told in the Bible that the wood out of which a large part of the Tabernacle was constructed, was not taken from the lofty cedars growing in Lebanon, nor from the sycamores growing in the Palestinian valleys, but from the humble acacia or shittim-wood tree, which, as we have already seen, flourishes quite plentifully in the Sinaitic region; all of which particulars accord fully with the topographical facts in the case. So also, if we are to believe in the testimonies of ancient Egyptian monuments and the results of modern Egyptian explorations, there is many a resemblance which can be found to

exist between matters connected with old Egyptian temples, their structure; furniture, priesthood and services, and other like matters appertaining to the Tabernacle. Indeed, some of these resemblances go so far in their minute details as to an arrangement of buildings according to the points of compass--a peculiarity which was found both in Egypt and in connection with the Tabernacle; different apartments in the structure, graded according to sanctity; the possession of a sacred ark or chest, peculiarly built and located; strange winged figures, which as existing in the Tabernacle were called "cherubim;" a gradation of the priests; priestly dress and ornaments; the breast-plate and mitre worn by the high-priest; different animals offered in sacrifice; the burning of incense, etc., that the impression left upon the mind of a person who knows about these things as existing in ancient Egypt and then reads in the Bible about similar matters connected with the Tabernacle is, that whoever wrote this Biblical account must himself have been in Egypt and have seen the old Egyptian worship and temples, in order to make his record conform in so many respects to what was found in that country. (Prof. Sayce undertakes to show that the foreign influences affecting the structure of the Tabernacle and the nature of its services came rather from Babylonia and Assyria than from Egypt, yet, so far as all the topographical items mentioned above are concerned, they can all be abundantly substantiated by facts from history and archaeology.)

So also if we give attention to the peculiar experiences had by the Israelites during their march through the wilderness, we shall see from what the Bible tells us about their setting up and taking down the Tabernacle; about the wagons furnished for its transportation; about the pillar of cloud going before it or resting upon it, in connection with their long march; also about the necessity of going outside of the camp in order to perform some of the Tabernacle services,-from all these and various other indications given in the Bible, we can surely perceive that the conditions of these people were such as to warrant the belief that they did indeed, as the Bible represents, journey through a wilderness, and that they carried with them their tent of worship.

In his book, entitled "Nature and the Supernatural," Dr. Horace Bushnell tells of an important legal case that once was gained by one of the lawyers noticing, in the web of a sheet of paper which he held in his hand, certain "water-marks" which had been made in the paper during the process of its manufacture. These water-marks being indelible, they served as the

best kind of proof of certain facts which it was desired to establish. And so we would characterize all those evidences coming from a correspondence of the Bible account with archaeological facts, which have to do with the Israelites being in Egypt and their journeying through the Sinaitic desert, as so many water-marks left indelibly, not upon, but in the very web of the Biblical record; proving not only the undeniable truthfulness of this record, but also the real existence of the Tabernacle.

#### **XIV. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT**

To sum up then the different points which we have endeavored to make in our argument, it will be remembered that, in the first place, after having outlined our general proposition, and after having from various considerations shown the importance of its discussion, we affirmed that there are certain great presumptions which lie in the way of our accepting the higher-critic theory as true. Next we introduced some archaeological and other testimony external to the Bible, which we found to be helpful in proving the Tabernacle's historicity. And then, by quite an extended examination of the many historical notices respecting the Tabernacle, or respecting the sacred ark as connected with it, which are found in the Old Testament, we established, we think, as a matter beyond all reasonable doubt, the actual historicity of this structure; showing how it was built near Mt. Sinai and then was known to exist continuously for some five hundred years, or from the time of Moses unto the time of David and Solomon. And then, finally, to make our argument as complete as possible, we noticed, somewhat briefly and yet with considerable fullness, the many objections which the higher critics have raised against the Tabernacle's existence, showing that none of these objections is really valid, and turning the last one into a positive proof on our side of the question.

#### **XV. CONCLUSION**

And now, if there remains yet anything which needs to be said, it seems to us it is only the assertion that, whether the higher critics will admit it or not, the old Mosaic Tabernacle, surely did exist. Or if there are persons who, in spite of all the numerous important testimonies which we have adduced from the Bible and other sources to the Tabernacle's historicity, still persist in denying such evidence, and in saying that the whole matter was only a priestly fiction, then what the Saviour says, with respect to

some of the skeptics living in his day, is quite applicable: If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead." Or to state the case a little differently and somewhat humorously, it might be said that the fact of any person's denying the real existence of the Tabernacle, when so much positive evidence exists in favor of it, reminds one of what Lord Byron says with regard to Bishop Berkeley's philosophical denial of the existence of matter:

When Bishop Berkeley says it is no matter.  
Then 'tis no matter what he says.

But if the Tabernacle in the wilderness did really exist, then what becomes of the peculiar theory of the higher critics? That necessarily falls to the ground, or is proven to be untrue; for, as was shown in the early part of this discussion, the entire critic hypothesis rests upon, or has for one of its main pillars, the assumed non-existence of the Tabernacle, or what amounts to the same thing, the alleged late origin of the Mosaic ritualistic law. Both of these premises being now demonstrated to be unsound, the Tabernacle "which Moses made in the wilderness" will very likely remain where the Bible puts it--among the great undeniable facts of the world's history, and not, as the critics would have it, among fictions or forgeries.

#### **ADDENDA - VARIOUS FACTS RESPECTING PLACES WHERE THE TABERNACLE WAS BUILT OR LOCATED**

##### **I. MOUNT SINAI ITS LOCATION AND PRESENT APPEARANCE**

Dr. J. W. Dawson, in his "Modern Science in Bible Lands," gives the following facts with regard to the location and present appearance of the mountain near which the Tabernacle was built.

"The actual position of Mount Sinai has been a subject of keen controversy, which may be reduced to two questions: 1st, Was Mount Sinai in the peninsula of that name or elsewhere? 2d, Which of the mountains of the peninsula was the Mount of the Law? As to the first of these questions, the claims of the peninsula are supported by an overwhelming mass of tradition and of authority, ancient and modern.

"If this question be considered as settled, then it remains to inquire which of the mountain summits of that group of hills in the southern end of the peninsula, which seems to be designated in the Bible by the general name of Horeb, should be regarded as the veritable 'Mount of the Law?' Five of the mountain summits of this region have laid claim to this distinction; and their relative merits the explorers [those of the English Ordnance Survey] test by seven criteria which must be fulfilled by the actual mountain. These are: (1) A mountain overlooking a plain on which the millions of Israel could be assembled. (2) Space for the people to 'remove and stand afar off' when the voice of the Lord was heard, and yet to hear that voice. (3) A defined peak distinctly visible from the plain. (4) A mountain so precipitous that the people might be said to stand under it and to touch its base. (5) A mountain capable of being isolated by boundaries. (6) A mountain with springs and streams of water in its vicinity. (7) Pasturage to maintain the flocks of the people for a year.

"By these criteria the surveyors reject two of the mountains, Jebel el Ejmeh and Jebel Ummalawi, as destitute of sufficient water and pasturage. Jebel Katharina, whose claims arise from a statement of Josephus that Sinai was the highest mountain of the district, which this peak actually is, with the exception of a neighboring summit twenty-five feet higher, they reject because of the fact that it is not visible from any plain suitable for the encampment of the Israelites. Mount Serbal has in modern times had some advocates; but the surveyors allege in opposition to these that they do not find, as has been stated, the Sinaitic inscriptions more plentiful there than elsewhere, that the traces of early Christian occupancy do not point to it any more than early tradition, and that it does not meet the topographical requirements in presenting a defined peak, convenient camping-ground, or a sufficient amount of pasturage.

"There only remains the long-established and venerated Jebel Musa-the orthodox Sinai; and this, in a remarkable and conspicuous manner, fulfils the required conditions, and, besides, illustrates the narrative itself in unexpected ways. This mountain has, however, two dominant peaks, that of Jebel Musa proper, 7,363 feet in height, and that of Ras Sufsafeh, 6,937 feet high; and of these the explorers do not hesitate at once to prefer the latter. This peak or ridge is described as almost isolated, as descending precipitously to the great plain of the district, Er Rahah, which is capable of accommodating two millions of persons in full view of the peak, and has ample camping ground for the whole host in its

tributary valleys. Further, it is so completely separated from the neighboring mountains that a short and quite intelligible description would define its limits, which could be easily marked out.

"Another remarkable feature is, that we have here the brook descending out of the mount referred to in Exodus (Ch. 32:20), and, besides this, five other perennial streams in addition to many good springs. The country is by no means desert, but supplies much pasturage; and when irrigated and attended to, forms good gardens, and is indeed one of the best and most fertile spots of the whole peninsula. The explorers show that the statements of some hasty travelers who have given a different view are quite incorrect, and also that there is reason to believe that there was greater rainfall and more verdure in ancient times than at present in this part of the country. They further indicate the Wady Shreick, in which is the stream descending from the mount, as the probable place of the making and destruction of the golden calf, and a hill known as Jebel Moneijeh, the mount of conference, as the probable site of the Tabernacle. They think it not improbable that while Ras Sufsafeh was the Mount of the Law, the retirement of Moses during his sojourn on the mount may have been behind the peak, in the recesses of Jebel Musa, which thus might properly bear his name."

## II. SHILOH - ITS RUINS AS RECENTLY INVESTIGATED

Colonel Sir Charles Wilson thus describes the present ruins of Shiloh, in "Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement" for 1873, pp. 37, 38:

The ruins of Seilun (Shiloh) cover the surface of a 'tell,' or mound, on a spur which lies between two valleys, that unite about a quarter of a mile above Khan Lubban, and thence run to the sea. The existing remains are those of a fellahin village, with few earlier foundations, possibly of the date of the Crusades. The walls are built with old materials, but none of the fragments of columns mentioned by some travellers can now be seen. On the summit are a few heavy foundations, perhaps those of a keep, and on the southern side is a building with a heavy sloping buttress. The rock is exposed over nearly the whole surface, so that little can be expected from excavation. Northwards, the 'tell' slopes down to a broad shoulder across which a sort of level court, 77 feet wide and 412 feet long, has been cut out. The rock is in places scarped to a height of five feet, and along the

sides are several excavations and a few small cisterns. The level portion of the rock is covered by a few inches of soil. It is not improbable that the place was thus prepared to receive the Tabernacle, which, according to Rabbinical traditions, was a structure of low stone walls, with the tent stretched over the top. At any rate, there is no other level space on the 'tell' sufficiently large to receive a tent of the dimensions of the Tabernacle.

The spring of Seilûn is in a small valley which joins the main one a short distance northeast of the ruins. The supply, which is small, after running a few yards through a subterranean channel, was formerly led into a rock-hewn reservoir, but now runs to waste."

To the above items Major Claude R Conder, R. E., in his "Tent Life in Palestine;" Vol I, pp. 81, 82, adds as follows:

There is no site in the country fixed with greater certainty than that of Shiloh. The modern name Seilûn preserves the most archaic form, which is found in the Bible in the ethnic Shilonite (1 Kings 11:29). The position of the ruins agrees exactly with the very definite description given in the Old Testament of the position of Shiloh, as 'on the north side of Bethel (now Beitin), on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah' (Lubbin) (Judg. 21:19). It is just here that Shiloh still stands in ruins. The scenery of the wild mountains is finer than that in Judea; the red colour of the cliffs, which are of great height, is far more picturesque than the shapeless chalk mountains near Jerusalem; the fig gardens and olive groves are more luxuriant, but the crops are poor compared with the plain and round Bethlehem. A deep valley runs behind the town on the north, and in its sides are many rock-cut sepulchres.

The vineyards of Shiloh have disappeared, though very possibly once surrounding the spring, and perhaps extending down the valley westwards, where water is also found. With the destruction of the village, desolation has spread over the barren hills around."

### III. NOB - SITE OF THE VILLAGE IDENTIFIED

So thinks Rev. W. Shaw Caldecott. See his treatise on "The Tabernacle, Its History and Structure," pp. 53, 54:

Four miles to the north of Jerusalem, and at the distance of a quarter of a mile to the east of the main road, is a curiously knobbed and double-topped hill, named by the Arabs Tell (or Tuleil) el-Full. The crown of this hill is thirty feet higher than Mount Zion, and Jerusalem can be plainly seen from it. On its top is a large pyramidal mound of unhewn stones, which Robinson supposes to have been originally a square tower of 40 or 50 feet, and to have been violently thrown down. No other foundations are to be seen. At the foot of the hill are ancient substructions, built of large unhewn stones in low, massive walls. These are on the south side, and adjoin the great road.

If we take the Scriptural indications as to the site of Nob (height), this hill and these ruins fulfil all the conditions of the case.

"(a) Nob was so far regarded as belonging to Jerusalem, as one of its villages (thus involving its proximity), that David's bringing Goliath's head and sword to the Tabernacle at Nob was regarded as bringing them to Jerusalem (1 Sam. 17:54).

"(b) A clearer indication as to its situation is, however, gained by the record of the restoration towns and villages in which Nob is mentioned, the name occurring between those of Anathoth and Ananiah (Neh. 11:32). These two places still bear practically the same names, and their sites are well known. In the narrow space between Anata and Hanina stands the hill Tell el-Full, which we take to be ancient Nob.

"(c) Another indication is contained in Isaiah's account of Sennacherib's march on Jerusalem, the picturesque climax of which is, 'This very day shall he halt at Nob; he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem' (Isa. 10:28-32). There are only two hills on the north from which the city can be seen, so as to give reality to the poet's words. One of these is Neby Samwil, and the other is Tell el-Full."

### IV. GIBEON - IDENTITY OF ANCIENT CITY WITH EL-JIB, ALSO THE "GREAT HIGH PLACE," OF I KINGS 3:4, INDICATED

In Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Art. Gibeon, J. F. Stenning says as follows:

The identity of Gibeon with the village of El-Jib, which lies some six or seven miles northwest of Jerusalem, is practically beyond dispute. The modern village still preserves the first part of the older name, while its situation agrees in every respect with the requirements of the history of the Old Testament. Just beyond Tell el-Full (Gibeah), the main road north from Jerusalem to Beitin (Bethel) is joined by a branch road leading up from the coast. The latter forms the continuation of the most southerly of three routes which connect the Jordan valley with the Maritime Plains. \* \* \* Now just before this road (coming up from the Jordan valley) leaves the higher ground and descends to the Shepheleh, it divides into two, the one branch leading down to the Wady Suleiman, the other running in a more southerly direction by way of the Bethhorons. Here, on this fertile, open plateau, slightly to the south of the main road, rises the hill on which the modern village of El-Jib is built, right on the frontier line which traverses the central range to the south of Bethel. It was the natural pass across Palestine, which in early times served as the political border between North and South Israel, and it was owing to its position that Gibeon acquired so much prominence in the reigns of David and Solomon. A short distance to the east of the village, at the foot of the hill, there is, further, a stone tank or reservoir of considerable size, supplied by a spring which rises in a cave higher up."

This spring, the explorers tell us, was probably the ancient "pool of Gibeon" mentioned in 2 Sam. 2:13.

Also, respecting the "great high place," Smith's Dictionary has the following:

The most natural position for the high place of Gibeon is the twin mountain immediately south of El-Jib, so close as to be all but a part of the town, and yet quite separate and distinct. The testimony of Epiphanius viz., that the 'Mount of Gibeon' was the highest round Jerusalem, by which Dean Stanley supports his conjecture (that the present Neby Samwil was the great high place), should be received with caution, standing, as it does, quite alone and belonging to an age

which, though early, was marked by ignorance and by the most improbable conclusions."

Some additional facts, as given by Rev. W. Shaw Caldecott (ibid. pp. 60-62), are as follows:

El-Jib is built upon an isolated oblong hill standing in a plain or basin of great fertility. The northern end of the hill is covered 'over with old massive ruins, which have fallen down in every direction, and in which the villagers now live. Across the plain to the south is the lofty range of Neby Samwil. \* \* \* Gibeon was one of the four towns in the division of Benjamin given as residences for the sons of Aaron (Josh. 21:17). It was thus already inhabited by priests, and this, added to its other advantages, made it, humanly speaking, a not unsuitable place for the capital of the new kingdom. No remains of (very ancient) buildings have been discovered, such as those of er-Ramah and Tell el-Full."

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