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Bishops, and we find it wanting. It is inaccurate in its statement of facts, and illogical in the conclusions that it draws from them. The immediate result of the Report has been to cause much distress and anxiety to many faithful Churchmen. The hands of those who have set the law, as expounded in the King's Courts, at defiance, and of many who have disregarded the admonitions of their Bishops, have been strengthened. There is reason to believe that the number of persons using the Vestments has been increased. Some may rejoice in this (see the paper read by the Dean of Lichfield at the Church Congress last year), believing that an increase in numbers makes their position more secure, without apparently reflecting upon the certain fate of a "house divided against itself."

What the end of this movement may be we cannot foresee. The duty of loyal Churchmen seems to be plainly this: to examine with all pains and diligence the new proposals to introduce a ceremonial into the Church, which shall divide Churchmen amongst themselves, and in some degree at least tend to undo the work of the Reformation. We can but remember the words of St. Paul, spoken of zealous but misguided Christians: "To whom we gave place, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."



## A Layman's Thoughts on Old Testament Criticism.

By P. J. HEAWOOD, M.A.

### IV.

**I**T remains to look a little more closely at the attitude towards revelation, involved in these views of the history and religion of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Strangely at variance as they seem with those of the Old Testament, it is claimed that (accepting

<sup>1</sup> As stated in Professor G. A. Smith's "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament."

them) we yet find there "an authentic revelation of the One True God," that "the notes of grace—of Divine redemption and guidance—were in the religion of Israel from the very first," and that "Jahweh was . . . never discredited by any new conception of truth, or by any strange experience in their history." The spiritual development of human character is thus traced to the true source of spiritual strength.

But when direct ministry to man's spiritual needs is less obvious, all is changed. In revulsion from the ideas of those who "without moral insight or real devotion have heaped" upon Our Lord "indiscriminately all the titles of Old Testament History," or who would measure the worth of any portion of the Old Testament by the amount of direct typology or Messianic prophecy to be found in it, the unity of Divine revelation, of which such ideas were a mistaken expression, seems lost sight of, and these elements are disparaged or ignored. The idea is curtly dismissed that Isa. ix. 6 is applicable in any special way to Jesus Christ. "Isaiah's Messiah is an earthly monarch, of the stock of David, and with offices that are political, both military and judicial." Does this preclude the application to Him "Who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. i. 3), Who Himself claimed to be the King coming unto Zion (Matt. xxi. 5, etc.), Who "must reign until all His enemies are put under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25), and to Whom is given authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man" (John v. 27)? It is added, "He is not the Mediator of spiritual gifts to His people." But there is room for all aspects of Christ's person and kingdom, and what "is not" cannot be so peremptorily decided, merely because such spiritual functions are not plainly stated, or not visibly present to the prophet's consciousness. The presence of words of mightier import than the immediate occasion would suggest might put us on the very track which seems barred against us. We are thereby led to look beyond the prophet's immediate horizon. Until we do so the passage is not itself explained.

The Messianic import of the Servant of Jehovah is vaguely

admitted ; but it is thought that in Isa. liii. "the vision is partly inspired by the nation's appreciation of the meaning of Jeremiah's life"! The leading idea is that of Israel *as purified by the experience of the exile*, out of which "was born that conception of One sent from God, righteous and blameless ; misunderstood by the world, and deemed to be lying under God's displeasure, by Whose sufferings sinful men are redeemed, and by Whose stripes they are healed." It is surely only if we insist on tracing everything to the lessons of human experience that we shall be satisfied with an explanation based on this fanciful blending of the lessons of the exile and of Jeremiah's life, dragged in to explain the individual traits. So far as the Servant of Jehovah stands for Israel, it might seem to be Israel in the ideal purpose of God, rather than Israel at any actual stage of history ; and as the national features are mysteriously merged in those of an individual, we remember that the Divine purpose, shown long before in the choice of Israel, was yet only to be fulfilled in and through the Christ. Thus it is not "typically," but in the truest sense, that we apply the words to Him. It is only in a fanciful way they can be referred to Israel.

Stress is laid on the ethical value of the prophets' teaching, as brought out by their "*historical interpretation*"; *i.e.*, that "*with which Modern Criticism provides us.*" We might have thought that the appreciation of this ethical element was independent of any special views or theories ; and if it is specially emphasized by those who disparage other aspects of the prophets' teaching, they can claim no monopoly of interest even in the needs and aspirations of the prophets' day. But the main issue is confused by a false antithesis. This "*historical interpretation*" is continually opposed to "*allegorizing,*" as though all remoter applications of the prophets' words, even where they refer to the future, were a fanciful attempt to import into them something not really there. If we look at their utterance as in any sense the message of God to His people, we shall necessarily find it both deeper and wider than the immediate occasion might have prompted—related to the one Divine purpose running on through eternity.

As to the Wisdom literature, what calls for special notice is the exaggerated way in which the teaching of these books is opposed to that of others. We hear of "revolt against the orthodox dogmas of the day," and "contradiction of principles affirmed by other Scriptures," without any special justification, and with little sense of that many-sidedness of the truth which is enforced in the Book of Job itself. In a somewhat fanciful way, a form of wisdom immemorial (we might have thought) in the East is represented as the growth of a special period, and assigned to a definite class, of whose rise Jeremiah is thought to have shown impatience, "as if they were hostile to the prophetic word." This is on the strength of passages which in themselves suggest no more than that the men of education, the men of light and leading, were (as so often happens) no better in a religious point of view than the rest.<sup>1</sup> There is an instance of subtle assumption in the representation of the prophets as battling for principles, which in the wise men are *already won*; ignoring the natural impression that the prophets were urging on the disloyal principles well known and accepted by the true servants of God. Such a battle is never won; men must fight for these principles all through the ages.

Where so much in the view is human, we are not surprised to hear that "in the forms of animal sacrifice" certain truths found "their favourite popular expression"; while there is no idea of a Divinely appointed "copy and shadow of the heavenly things."<sup>2</sup> And curiously, the recognition in the Scriptures that "the origin of . . . all common virtue and common knowledge" is "by the inspiration of Almighty God," that His providence is universal,<sup>3</sup> and that "courage, wisdom, justice, wherever found, are of His Spirit," are spoken of, not as following naturally from the fact that the God of the Hebrews is the God of the universe, but as in some way limiting the prerogatives which might be claimed for Israel. They will do so only if we cease to believe in the

<sup>1</sup> Compare Jer. v. 4, 5 (without the word for "wise").

<sup>2</sup> Heb. viii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Amos ix. 7.

reality of those manifestations of God to them, which were their true prerogative.

We are prepared to find an impatience of miracles. "The series of curious marvels attributed to Elisha" are spoken of as "of no importance to the Christian preacher," and the signs following the word (in the Old Testament narrative) "were not always," it is said, "consonant in character to the message with which they were associated." To the Semitic mind their absence rather than their presence would be a difficulty; and so "it was a recognized thing in Israel that when a prophet arose he should give the people a sign or wonder." There is no admission of any truth in this idea; it is set in opposition to the teaching of the prophets that "Jahweh is a God of law and order." They "delight to illustrate the regularity of His methods in history by the regularity of His methods in Nature." Yet the essence of a miracle consists in the moral or spiritual connexion of the "sign," not in its opposition to the order of Nature. It was not less a miracle, if Elijah's sacrifice on Carmel<sup>1</sup> was kindled by a flash of lightning, which was a natural precursor of the storm. Moreover, the rigid physical uniformity so often assumed is not, after all, so obvious; and we are hardly in a position to say what is or what is not a breach of law. An aurora might seem contrary to Nature in a region never before visited by it. The strangest miracle may be no more a breach of order in a view which embraces the whole Universe of God.

The attitude we have been illustrating is shown in a very subtle way in connexion with the prevailing silence of the Old Testament about the life beyond the grave. This is traced to Semitic want of interest. "The writers of the Old Testament display towards the future of the individual beyond the grave a steady indifference." And not only is reserve identified with "indifference" in a way which would not be fair from a purely human point of view, but this is taken to carry with it a positive attitude towards the other world for which there is little warrant—a view of it as a "cheerless . . . reflection of the mere surface

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 38.

of human existence, but without God or hope." By a morbid interpretation of the most natural language, all wish for and interest in continued life and all shrinking from death are twisted into expressions of hopelessness in the life beyond. Not only so, but by a strangely narrow mode of thought, every happiness and satisfaction in the things of this life is treated as indirectly disparaging the life to come. Job's wish for vindication in this present world and the revival of his fortunes are regarded as a falling back from the confidence before expressed in the experience of God's justice beyond the grave,<sup>1</sup> as though there were not room in His providence for both.<sup>2</sup>

But what is specially noticeable is that silence is throughout attributed to the human attitude, without any consciousness that it rested with God and not with man to break through the veil. It might be supposed that it only needed a little human interest and imagination to pierce the mystery of the grave. Indeed, all means of attempting it, fair or foul, are put on the same footing; and the fact that the meddlings or pretences of wizards and necromancers were sternly forbidden seems regarded, not as keeping the world of the dead sacred from bad and unworthy associations, but as dissociating them from God's thought and care. "That world," it is somewhat ambiguously stated, "*is outside of religion*; the traffickers with it are wizards and necromancers, whom the servants of Jahweh seek to drive from the land." And so a reserve which might seem appropriate to one of the "secret things" which "belong unto the Lord our God"<sup>3</sup> is thought of as implying that "the future state was *outside Jahweh's providence*."

This crowning instance of perversity is only the final outcome of that steady subordination of the Divine to the human, which seems to underlie every argument. What is said about a true revelation from God may blind us; but this really involves no idea of that which God imparts in His own time and way, and at times the bareness of what is intended appears plainly enough. The author of Gen. iii. "was the acute and faithful reader of

<sup>1</sup> Job xix. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Mark x. 29-31.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xxix. 29.

his own heart." "The prophet . . . makes predictions . . . not through any magic vision of the future, but by inference from the religious principles with which God has inspired him, and by application of these to the political circumstances . . . of his own time." "What the prophets saw in Israel's making is what every people with the prophets' faith may see in their own past." It is a very different view that the Old Testament brings before us. The prophet is always the Divine messenger, sent to speak, not his own word, but the word of Jehovah. It is not that his religious sense and spiritual insight are keener, but he has a message to deliver, and he delivers it in God's name. In the language of Balaam, he has no power at all to speak anything. The word which God puts in his mouth, that will he speak (Num. xxii. 38). Not only he who prophesies in the name of other gods, but he who speaks a word in God's name, *which God has not commanded him to speak*, shall die (Deut. xviii. 20). Of the false prophets in Jeremiah's day it is said (as defining their false position): "The prophets prophesy lies in My name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake I unto them" (Jer. xiv. 14). The people are not to hearken to such prophets, because "they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Jehovah" (Jer. xxiii. 16). So elsewhere: "Woe unto the foolish prophets that . . . have seen nothing . . . that say the Lord saith; and the Lord hath not sent them" (Ez. xiii. 3-6). The question is whether they have or have not a genuine message from God to deliver. "He that *hath My word*, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the straw to the wheat? saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 28). And "the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos iii. 7). Thus "Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spake in the Lord's message unto the people" (Hag. i. 13). And so in earlier days. "If," says Micaiah to Ahab, as the climax of his message—"if thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me" (1 Kings xxii. 28).

The New Testament is equally explicit. It is God Who "of



old time spake unto the fathers in the prophets" (Heb. i. 1). "No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). The Scriptures are profitable because "God-inspired" (2 Tim. iii. 16). The Gospel was "promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures" (Rom. i. 2). So far was it a message from outside themselves, that they "sought and searched diligently . . . what time . . . the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (1 Pet. i. 10, 11). If some of these passages could be explained away, the tendency of all cannot be mistaken; and so only can we understand Christ's teaching to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, when, "beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 27); or the like words of Apostles (Acts iii. 18, 24, x. 43); so that indeed "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10).

We may, indeed, sympathize with the wish to make easier the idea of inspiration, and to remove the stumbling-blocks which so many find in the way of the reception of the gifts of Divine grace; but we may well ask whether a view presents the minimum of difficulty which accepts the Scriptures as containing a Divine revelation, yet not only takes the history of Israel in a way flatly contrary (even in outline) to their tenor, but requires us to understand their inspiration in a way which makes many of their statements wholly unintelligible.

And there is not only the contradiction of what is set forth in the Scriptures which must be faced, if we emphasize the human element in them till we almost exclude the Divine. The very smallness of the residuum is itself a difficulty. It is not always easier to accept a part than the whole, and the great professions which we find in the Bible, joined to such small performances as some would allow us to see there, tend to make the whole seem ridiculous. It is emptied of all point and meaning if we are to look there rather for studies of human

character than for that God-given vision of the Divine glory, of which "he who has beheld the least fragment . . . will have a confidence and a power which nothing else can bring."<sup>1</sup>

And, after all, such an attitude does not seem to be consistent with those wider views of Divine providence which give, perhaps, the best external evidence for the truth of the Divine word. That wonderful correspondence between the view of the Divine purpose, as given in the Scriptures, and the circumstances of the Jews up to our own day is, perhaps, the most striking thing in history, the more so that that purpose has been fulfilled not by, but in spite of, them. It was no mere enlightened conscience or spiritual insight which foresaw the blessing of all nations in Israel—brought about in a way so absolutely opposed to their own ideas and desires; while we still find them, as so graphically described in Deuteronomy, scattered "among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth,"<sup>2</sup> and their city (as Christ foretold) in such a peculiar sense "trodden down by the Gentiles."<sup>3</sup> It is this which gives us confidence that the holy men of old, who spoke of all these things, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost";<sup>4</sup> and while yet "the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God,"<sup>5</sup> such a view justifies us in looking still forward with assurance to those "times of restitution of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began."<sup>6</sup>



### John Mulso's Letters to Gilbert White of Selborne.

BY CANON J. VAUGHAN, M.A.

THERE was published not long ago a series of letters, extending over a period of nearly half a century, written by his "most intimate friend" John Mulso to the naturalist of Selborne. The first mention of this correspondence, which

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, "Christus Consummator," p. 171.    <sup>2</sup> Deut. xxviii. 64.  
<sup>3</sup> Luke xxi. 24.    <sup>4</sup> 2 Pet. i. 21.    <sup>5</sup> Rom. viii. 19.    <sup>6</sup> Acts iii. 21.