

offered, and such an attempt to make a false peace would only lead to a far more bitter war. Those who feel with me have no idea of willingly abandoning our place in a Church of which we believe our principles to embody the true spirit. We may be driven out, but until we are we will resist with the utmost determination any measure which is inconsistent with the Scriptural and primitive Churchmanship which is our pride. Maintain in our liturgy and services that primitive, and in some respects neutral, character which has hitherto marked them, and we can trust to the inherent truth of Scriptural and primitive principles, and to the permanent pressure which they must exert through the Prayer Book to throw off the feverish symptoms of a passing Roman malaria. But once break down the barrier which those primitive and neutral services establish, and we must struggle with a new and unremitting energy to extirpate what we should then regard as the poison, not only of a dangerous, but of a critical disease.



### True History or Literary Invention ?

BY THE REV. W. FISHER, M.A.

THE Old Testament in its great stages and main outlines presents a story intelligible and consecutive. The Creation is followed by the Fall and the Flood; the call of Abraham and the patriarchal period are followed by bondage in Egypt, the Exodus, the Covenant at Sinai, the conquest of Canaan, the settlement of the tribes, the rise and division of the monarchy, the captivity of Israel and Judah, with the eventual return of Judah. We have here the national records of a people. Is this a true record of actual events, or, whatever religion and patriotism have done, is it but literary manufacture? It must be historically true or historically false. If these great stages are true in record, the quarrel induced by modern criticism of the Old Testament comes to an end, for

they practically command the position. Granted the route and length of a railway, no question about the plant that runs on it can compromise the argument drawn from its existence.

Say, then, the narrative is unhistorical—a literary manufacture of raw, legendary material, with insufficient verity, if any at all, to give historical value of any sort—what follows ? There is the story : how did it come about ?

One answer is as decided as it is elaborate and as decisive as unanimous with those who give it—that the story did not originate as it pretends nor as the simple reader would suppose, but by a most remarkable complexity of authorship and penmanship and a hopeless tangle of date. To estimate this answer, some mental vision must be formed of the narrative concerned, its outstanding events and particulars, and the multitude of associated statements, the product of many hands and many minds, of numberless editorial actions and many centuries. Men wrote freely, but for their prejudices, uncontrolled by fact or history, without anchorage or guidance of aught unquestionable. What, then, inspired them ? What united and unified their efforts ? By what common impulse came so much diversity, so widely distributed in time, locality, and penmanship, into such organic structure ? Accepting the answer given, how did the story come about ? With the best abilities and the longest life, it were no small miracle had one man, with the unity of his one mind and one soul, produced a result so compact and so consistent. That miracle is greater still the moment we exchange that man for a host of writers, diverse in character, ability, and circumstance. That miracle grows, again, when those writers are divided, not only by class and culture, but by space and centuries. With no hard facts to govern and combine, writing independently, ignorant of unwritten parts, whence the inspiration whereby largely, if not entirely, from sheer imagination, a volume is produced that has no sort of duplicate ? This is not the exquisitely simple thing it is taken to be. Had the book been evolved in one spot under these many hands, the common consent century after century, the endless

visits paid century after century, were nothing short of miraculous. The marvel is tenfold or a hundredfold greater when the writers have no such spot, are so distributed and so dislocated, and when their writings are surrounded by kindred and other writings.

It is vain to invent authors to simplify the problem. The more they multiply, the more the miracle grows. We may pick the lock of every difficulty with the pen of an improvised author, but each one means an additional mind, an additional contribution to the common consent—not of a body, but of dissipated units; not for a day, or a time, or an age, but for ages. We may grant the workmen, we may grant the material indefinitely; we have yet to explain the structure. No amount of granite, graved and polished; no amount of stone, hewn and chiselled, and no number of workmen, will explain the erection of a Great Pyramid or a Gothic cathedral. Somewhere was principle of unity, scheme, conception—a master mind. Honestly compared, the most complex of these is but simplicity itself in comparison with our cathedral; lines, form, proportion, have no such complexity as moral and spiritual truth. Such multitudes of separate incidents, detail, and statement, of simple and lofty utterance, so intense in sympathy, so one in policy and principle, could not possibly be built up an organic whole without some all-sufficient presiding genius. The Bible building is far too immense, far too multitudinous in details, far too sensible and symmetrical, whatever its enemies may say, to be shaped into its present stateliness and comeliness by the unregulated deposits of sundry literary carters shot heedlessly into some waste place. It is as rational to believe that an army of masons without instructions might eventually build an Alhambra as that a number of scattered writers could produce an Old Testament. Gold ornaments may be flung into the fire, but if there be no craftsman there will come out no golden calf. Whence the craftsman that resolved those literary ornaments? What inspired and unified those literary workmen? Verity of fact had suggested it were God, but God inspiring men to invent a

fictitious volume is inconceivable. Again, whence their inspiration? We may imagine explanation in "sources," piously supposed by the writers to be historical, but that leaves the *inspiration* just where it was. It simply alters the quarry—old records instead of their own imaginations. It would tell *where* they dug, *but it does not tell us why they dug*, and that is what we want to know. Antiquarian ramblings we can understand, but "sources" of any and every sort do not tell us what impelled and inspired an incongruous and unassociated company to such cohesion and concord. No; that inspiration has yet to be explained, and if the non-natural is miraculous, it is a miracle, and a miracle that can be accounted for neither by earth nor by heaven.

Nor will patriotism offer any escape. By what mysterious means have we so many writers, with such intricacy, without sign of intending it, combined in such full agreement, to make the chief glory of their people consist in their greatest shame? On their own confession, they resist, deny, and forsake God: they trample on privilege and mercy beyond all nations. Rebels on the very morrow of Sinai, rebels repeatedly, they close their political career in banishment, leaving Temple and nationality in ruins. This is the undisguised story in large letters, a story without parallel in any State annals. Ancients, and Orientals too, proud of race, jealous of honour, they yet put more national blots on a single page than Assyria or Babylonia put into whole volumes. Here, then—true to the foreword of Moses, to the afterword of Stephen—are the records of an essentially and disastrously "stiffnecked people." If they were actual events—the rebellions of a chosen people, a spectacle to all humanity, stages in the process of a Divine purpose—we can understand them. If not, whence the miracle of those pious patriots who, in the permanence of sacred writings, dishonour their country beyond the power of deadliest enemies? No manipulations of authorship, however minute, however numerous, can cancel or lessen the bald fact that Hebrew historians, in defiance of truth, deliberately combined in most complicated toil to render their

people sinners against Heaven beyond all others. What Englishman would do it for England? What Englishmen would believe it? What other Englishmen would afterwards make it part of their Bible? The rational explanation is that these dishonouring stories were recorded because they were true, were accepted because they were hard facts, became Biblical because they enshrined a Divine counsel—in a word, that the Old Testament is historical.

Maintaining an unhistorical origin for the Old Testament, further miracle is involved in that prevailing and permanent consent whereby a history has been produced so disjointed, so full of the most abrupt breaks, so contradictory of natural development. Shift date and authorship as we like; and chapters, verses, and words as we will, those gaps are gulfs that are fixed. Abraham the progenitor is neither startling nor offensive. Peaceful episodes of patriarchal life offer no challenge to doubt. There are many narratives that any might allow, while, if we will, much or all of the miraculous we may attribute to the abandon of patriotic imagination, heated with piety. It is far otherwise with those great cross-roads, those garden-paths that end in the desert, the midday sun that so persistently sinks into midnight. Having begun with charming stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, what freak of imagination invents Egyptian bondage for the descendants of men so highly favoured of God? Having made God mighty on their behalf in dramatic deliverance, by what law of mental or literary evolution are they set to wander forty years in a wilderness, complaining, murmuring, sinning again and again against the God of their deliverance, till the bones of every one, with two exceptions, are left in the keeping of that wilderness? Having conquered Palestine, whence, again, the vagrant caprice that tells of naught but alternate oppression and deliverance and a nationality that goes to grass in peaceful, uneventful anarchy? Exalted by steady stages through Saul and David to magnificent monarchy in Solomon, whence the utterly eccentric impulse that immediately divides that monarchy,

gives to each kingdom for the most part kings "that did evil in the sight of the Lord," renders each hopelessly apostate, and banishes the one for seventy years and the other indefinitely? By what bent of literature have we this people doubly destined—destined to mercy and blessing, destined to downfall and dispersion? Notwithstanding Abraham, the Red Sea, Sinai, David, Solomon, and prophets that have no counterparts, we are left eventually with a nationality in ashes and ruins, without a single benefit possessed and enjoyed by itself beyond its records. What inexplicable element—literary, religious, political, or patriotic—evolves an Abraham into a friend of God and heir of the world, and of that Abraham evolves a nation overwhelmed in desolation and disaster? If these are veracious narratives, we can understand them, for the key is in God. If they are literary inventions, confessedly we are face to face with a miracle in psychology that has neither God nor man to account for it.

Nor have we exhausted this miracle. These unnatural disjunctions, so consistent in perpetual contrast, occupied by mysterious consent the minds of many writers separately and independently, and yet, like trees planted in a park, they grew very much together—some quicker, some slower: first the sapling idea, then the tree story, later, and gradually, the foliage. By slow processes, with countless literary touches, these great events come to their verbal maturity. Without plan or direction, by what power existing among men were these unhistorical contrasts developed through lengthy periods and yet largely synchronous workmanship? Had they produced moral, philosophic, or even literary marvel, some power thinkable to common sense might be imagined; but no such power is conceivable when their labours, apart from antiquity, have no interest whatever except they be true.

It may be said there was an indefinite groundwork of authentic detail, but too indefinite for historical value. There is concession here, but it cannot stop at the indefinite. Problem and challenge remain. These disjunctions, so defiant of human

instinct and patriotism as of Oriental habit, so black and shameful, so continuous, and, finally, so disastrous, demand explanation. Either they are true history or they are miraculous, for psychologically they are unintelligible and impossible. Let anyone honestly look them in the face in all their unnaturalness; let him try to form some mental vision of their growth, the occasional and erratic touch, each disjunction gradually enlarging, and taking centuries, maybe, in the process; let him recognize the contrast all this presents to any other national records, and then ask, if they be not authentic, whence this miracle of multiplied and distributed ingenuity that conceived it all, this miracle of an external conception so perpetually operating, and this miracle of universal credulity that accepted it? What holds up and elaborates the visions of those gulfs as by the hand of one in a million with all the fortunes of editing and redacting, the stray details gradually accumulating? Mere literary fortuitousness is unthinkable.

Denying its Divine origin, the Old Testament is confessedly a series of inexplicable miracles—the miracle of a superintending conception, manifold in parts, unique in character, particular in choice, defiant of distance, time, and circumstance, unregistered, but undying; the miracle of perpetual and virulent slander blackening the national record in almost every page, and with unquestionable patriotism exalting its country above all others by the very depths of its disgrace; and the no mean miracle of that literary caprice whose constant goal is chaos and whose invariable journey is from Paradise to Hades. The old-fashioned believer in the Bible may be credulous, but the blindest credulity would not allow him to accept this. With all its simplicity, his faith has intelligent warrant in the consciousness of a manifestly unique literature, belonging to a unique people, revealing unique truths, and commending itself without violence to his best and his deepest self as the letter of a Divine plan and purpose, for the Hebrew in particular and for the world at large. The simple miracle of Divine inspiration is to him intelligible. A labyrinth of miracles, void of supernatural power, explicable by naught known to men, is absolutely

incredible. For between these two there can eventually be no logical halting-place for the honest mind. Either in the Old Testament we have genuine history—the record of Divine dealings with a chosen people—or we have literary creation, the inspiration and origin of which cannot be explained.



### The "Te Deum" as a Missionary Hymn.

BY MRS. ASHLEY CARUS-WILSON, B.A.

THE *Te Deum*, the great hymn of praise of the Western Church, as the still more ancient *Gloria in Excelsis* in the Communion Office is the great hymn of praise of the Eastern Church, has for centuries been recognized as the noblest and completest expression of all that worship means to believers in Christ. The average worshipper of to-day, descended from many generations of Christians in a Christian land, is vaguely conscious of its uplifting grandeur, but misses much of its import unless he inquires into its origin and history, and looks beyond his own religious life and his own little bit of Christendom.

Our Prayer Book quotes its opening words in Latin, and immediately mistranslates them. To the student of Church History or Comparative Religion this mistranslation is as significant and instructive as is the difference in the wording of the First Commandment in the Bible and in the Church Catechism. For it means that the sixteenth century failed to understand the *Te Deum* fully, having outlived the hopes and conflicts which gave it birth. But we are privileged to live in an age when similar hopes are reawakened for regions beyond Christendom, in which old conflicts are renewed as they have scarcely been renewed for fifteen hundred years. We shall understand it best by endeavouring to enter into its meaning for a Hindu, a Japanese, a Chinese, or an African, newly won to the faith, and still surrounded by the symbols of Hinduism, Buddhism, or Paganism.

Its missionary import is not to be seen by applying a few of