

God." It is justly said by M. Bossert, in his valuable sketch of the Reformer,¹ that in those words, "All for the glory of God," is contained the whole life of Calvin, and that his Christian Institutes are but their development. For the glory of God, to make the will of God done upon earth, through the Church which the Son of God had redeemed, was the sole motive of Calvin's life, and it was acted upon with a self-sacrifice which has never been exceeded. It is not necessary to dwell upon his admirable labours as an expositor and preacher. In the exegesis of the Scriptures, with the resources of learning that were open to him, he has never been surpassed—perhaps, on the whole, never equalled; and his power of teaching attracted men to Geneva in thousands, and made it the Protestant University and the great theological training school of his day. It would be worse than ungenerous to dwell at present on his limitations or errors. When commemorating the birth of such a man and such a saint, it becomes us best to say of him what one generous man of the world once said of another: "He was a great man, and I have forgotten all his faults." Let us remember him on this occasion only as one of the great doctors and saints of the Church universal, and pray "that we may have grace to direct our lives after his good example."



Biblical Criticism and its Critics.²

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ORR, D.D.

IF the modern critical view of the Old Testament does not soon gain acceptance all along the line, it will not be for want of books expounding and commending it, or for want of buoyant faith in its advocates that its triumph is near. Others

¹ In the series of "Les Grands Ecrivains Français," published by Hachette and Co.

² "Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought; or, The Place of the Old Testament Documents in the Life of To-day." By W. G. Jordan, B.A., D.D., Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909. Price 7s. 6d. net.

may not share their confidence, may even think they see signs in the times, not to say fatal weaknesses in the case itself, which point to a different conclusion. The stream at present, however, flows the other way, and with a uniformity of iteration almost pathetic in its resemblance to a new traditionalism every fresh writer on the subject sets out with the assumption that the field is swept clear of all serious opposition, and that, while minor points remain for discussion, the great lines on which Old Testament study must hereafter proceed are once for all laid down, and cannot be changed. The Pentateuch problem in particular is held to be as good as solved.¹

The latest work of this class is from the pen of a Canadian Professor, Dr. W. G. Jordan, of Queen's University, Kingston. It is entitled "Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought," and embodies, with some additional chapters, lectures given to a Theological Association in the University in 1906-7. The book is, in general, a contribution to the defence of modern Old Testament criticism, with remarks, in way of rejoinder, to the strictures of opponents. The present writer comes in for a fair share of attention, which makes it perhaps appropriate that he should in turn say a little on the aspect of the case presented by the Kingston critic.

It was not to be expected that a work like "The Problem of the Old Testament" would commend itself to a scholar of Dr. Jordan's standpoint. The inversion of values in everything connected with the Old Testament within the last few decades is so remarkable that hardly anything that appeared reasonable before seems reasonable now, and things that then bore the air of supremest improbability are now vaunted as the perfection of sanity and wisdom. It might perhaps have been expected that, in referring to and criticizing my book, Professor Jordan would have taken some passing notice of the arguments by which its main contentions were supported. That, however, except in a few details, he has not thought fit to do. I conducted, *e.g.*, an elaborate argument in disproof of the key position of the

¹ Jordan, p. 199.

new hypothesis—the post-exilian¹ origin of the Levitical law. On this there is scarcely a word of comment. Yet I should have liked to see a serious reply to what is there urged as to the impossibility of Ezra passing off on the restored community at Jerusalem as old Mosaic legislation a complicated and burdensome system of laws, the essential provisions of which had never before been heard of. Professor Jordan, no doubt, has a right to choose his own ground, and to deal, as this volume does, largely in generalities. But it must be pointed out that it in no way disposes of the case I ventured to state against the critical hypothesis to quote the opinion of the editor of the *Expository Times*,¹ or to represent my argument as chiefly consisting in showing up the inconsistencies of critical scholars.² Curiously, the procedure he condemns is precisely that which he himself employs in dealing with his different opponents. Is it archæology? Then it is shown that authorities like Sayce, Hommel, and Pinches, while rejecting the Wellhausen conclusions, differ in certain points among themselves; and Dr. Driver is invoked to testify that their opposition to criticism is “factitious and unreal.”³ It could easily be established that the cleft goes far deeper than that. It must be confessed, however, that Professor Jordan is not easy to satisfy with evidence. If he were as rigorous in his demands on the critical side, there would not be much left of some of his favourite theories. *E.g.*, he quotes a sentence from my book: “The Biblical account of these matters, in short, is found to rest on far older and more accurate information than that possessed by any scholars prior to the new discoveries”; and he naively asks: “Well, what is the good of this, if our faith in the Bible does not rest on this kind of thing?”⁴ He rebuts the argument from the age of writing as showing that Moses might have written the Pentateuch by the remark: “If the fact that writing is very old is such a powerful argument when taken alone, it might enable you to prove that Alfred the Great wrote Shakespeare’s plays!”⁵ When it is

¹ P. 288.

² P. 290.

³ Cf. chap. iii., *passim*.

⁴ P. 252.

⁵ P. 50. For the rest, he argues that the Hebrews were “nomads,” etc. The point is discussed in my volume.

claimed that Shakespeare's plays originated in the age of Alfred, it will be time to consider the parallel. I am credited with finding it "most objectionable that anyone should attempt to prove that a document is late because it contains 'late ideas.'"¹ I do nothing so absurd. The question is, *Are* they "late ideas," or are they only *affirmed* to be so?

To illustrate the change of standpoint and reversal of older ideas, Ps. li. has been thought by men not destitute of religious or historical insight to be a most appropriate expression of David's state of feeling after his great transgression. Commentators like Delitzsch and Perowne ascribed it without hesitation to David. Carlyle, who knew something of human nature and history, wrote: "David's life and history, as written for us in these psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below."² F. D. Maurice and numberless others gave the same sympathetic interpretation. Professor Jordan has a different opinion, and he rests it on his knowledge that David was not a man who *could* have written such psalms. "If a man says," he tells us, "that he cannot see why David could not have written Ps. li. and cxxxix., you are compelled to reply as politely as possible that if he did write them, anyone can write anything. It is not a mere matter as to what David might think or write; we know from the historical books what he thought and how he acted."³ Insight into the real David, in other words, is restored now that criticism has generously relieved him of the saintly garb with which the "theocratic narrator" had clothed him. Or take Moses. Moses could not have had the lofty conception of a universal, spiritual God. "The evidence," it is said, "all points the other way"—viz., to the idea of a local, tribal god, a god who had his seat at Sinai.⁴ It may be enough to reply that all the evidence we have points to Moses, and to Abraham before him, as having a very exalted conception of God. It was the one God of heaven and earth, the Creator, who

¹ P. 186.

³ Pp. 191, 192.

² "The Hero as Prophet."

⁴ Pp. 194, 195.

redeemed His people from bondage, and entered into covenant with them as a nation. The imaginary Moses of the critics is not the Moses of the Old Testament. On the same lines we are assured that the first chapter of Genesis—like the priestly history generally, which could only be written when the Hebrew people had “come into contact with nations more cultured than themselves”¹—is “one of the latest parts of this wonderful collection”; and “in order to gain a scientific view of the growth and advancement of Hebrew religious thought and life, the material must be arranged in a form quite different from that which we find in our ordinary Bibles.”¹ (The last sentence, at least, is indisputable.) Yet Dr. Franz Delitzsch, whom it is the fashion to speak of as having come round to the modern critical view,² upholds in his “New Commentary on Genesis” the antiquity of the Creation story. “No appeal,” he says, “can be made to the account of the Creation for relegating the origin of this historical work to the period of the Exile. It is in any case a tradition reaching back to the Mosaic period, which the account of the Creation reproduces.”³

What has happened that all these older standards of judgment are so summarily reversed? Dr. Jordan will answer, It is because a new historical sense has been created, and new and more scientific methods have been adopted. Dr. Jordan is impatient of the supposition that the question of the supernatural has anything to do with modern critical results. This, he thinks, is not a “religious,” but a “theological” or “philosophical” question, on which men may differ without effect on their critical procedure.⁴ The “literary and historical” questions must be settled before the “theological” can be profitably approached. The position I have taken up, on the other hand, is, that the attitude to the supernatural, and the general theory of religion resulting from it, are not, indeed, the whole—I have

¹ P. 201.

² “My view of the circumstances differs essentially and in principle from the modern one” (*op. cit.*, i., p. 27, E.T.).

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 67, 68.

⁴ Pp. 38, 40, 109, 230, etc.

always recognized that a genuine scientific impulse is at work¹—but a dominating factor in the determination of many even of the historical and literary questions. The above examples are themselves a proof of this. As well argue that a Macaulay could write his “History of England” without being influenced by his Whiggism, or a Sir Archibald Alison his “History of Europe” without being influenced by his Toryism, as contend that anti-supernaturalistic writers like Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, Duhm, Stade, and other chiefs of the new critical school, could write a history of the religion of Israel without leaving out of it most of the elements which the Bible itself regards as vital. If it be replied that the believer in supernatural revelation also brings his presuppositions to the study of the Bible, it is to be pointed out that he at least seeks to interpret the Bible in the light of *its own* presuppositions, whereas the other side works with presuppositions which are the opposite of those of the Bible; which cannot, therefore, yield the true key to its religion.

Professor Jordan objects to my methods, but he does not show that I have in any instance given a mistaken representation of the critical theory or its results. His volume is, in truth, a vindication of the essential correctness of my statements on that head: only that which I take to be a surrender of what is most vital in the Bible, he thinks to be the way to a far nobler and more helpful view of the Bible. In resiling from some of the extreme views of the critics (as, *e.g.*, in questioning the presence of totemism, ancestor-worship, human sacrifice, etc., in early Israel), in carrying back a prophetic element into the period before Amos and Hosea, in giving a higher view of God in “pre-prophetic” times than is customary, he is not confuting anything I have stated, but so far acknowledging the justice of parts of my contention. In the essence of the matter, however, the broad difference remains. Westphal, the French critical scholar, has written: “Little by little the abyss has been dug

¹ Professor Jordan repeatedly misrepresents me on this point (pp. 38, 219, etc.). See my “Problem of Old Testament,” pp. 8 *et seq.*, 195, 196, etc.

between the catechism of the Church and the theology of the school: the day is coming when we shall be faced with two Bibles—the Bible of the faithful [*du fidèle*] and the Bible of the scholar.”¹ Professor Jordan goes as far when he says: “It is no use attempting to minimize the difference between the traditional view and the critical treatment of the Old Testament. The difference is immense: they involve different conceptions of the relation of God to the world, different views as to the course of Israel’s history, the process of revelation, and the nature of inspiration.”² “I accept the full responsibility,” he says, “for these words” (quoted from an older article); but he proceeds to explain that the gulf between the two conceptions is not impassable. I think, however, that it is, and cannot see that anything Professor Jordan has advanced makes the chasm less deep. Does he or anyone else really suppose that, if we could persuade ourselves that a nobler, more spiritual, more tenable, view of the Old Testament—one leading more directly up to Christ and His Gospels—emerged from these critical theories, many of us would not gladly welcome them, at whatever cost to older opinions? But the mental feat is beyond our competence. A theory which lays practically the whole history of revelation as we have it in our Bible in ruins, and substitutes for it another based on premises totally alien to the Bible’s, will never commend itself to the general body of the Christian people. Nor does closer scrutiny of the new theory furnish reason for thinking that it *should* commend itself.

Professor Jordan has a good deal to say on “revelation,” but it is no way easy to understand what he means by this term. He complains frequently of what he calls the “vagueness” of my positions. But no vagueness of mine, I am sure, can compare with his own indefiniteness on this cardinal idea. At times he speaks as if some direct supernatural factor entered into Israel’s religion. He discards the idea of a regular development “from Animism to Ancestor-Worship, from this

¹ “Jehovah, les Étapes de la Révélation,” preface, p. 3.

² P. 216.

to Polytheism, and then on to Monotheism," and grants that "the ministry of living, God-inspired men broke in upon what we would call the 'natural order.'"¹ He says: "We see that Moses was a prophet who brought to the people a message which he received from God."² He speaks of Yahweh "revealing" Himself to the prophets and the people; but then in many other places—indeed, as the prevailing strain in the volume—we find quite another conception. "Revelation" is treated as something not essentially different from "providential guidance," "psychological development," the growth of men's thoughts through enlarging experience; and any distinctively supernatural entering of God in word and deed into human history seems ignored.³ Wellhausen, Kuenen, Stade are taken to be as good advocates of "revelation" as any others; most of the history with which the Bible connects the process of revelation is treated as legend. But then the problem recurs: On what data did prophetic minds proceed in rising to their truer, purer conceptions of God, in being persuaded that the living God was speaking in and through them, in grasping His world-purpose and His message to the people of their time? The prophets themselves were not conscious of bringing in new ideas of God. They believed in a very positive revelation of God to their fathers, and in the history of their people, and in this they rooted their confidence in God and in His faithfulness. A curious passage on this head occurs in Stade's recent "Biblical Theology of the Old Testament." "It is characteristic of these prophets," he says, "that they had no inkling [*Ahnung*] of how new and unheard-of their thoughts were. They give them out as if they were self-

¹ Pp. 101, 165, 281.

² P. 139.

³ Pp. 183, 230, 231, 234. Professor Jordan thinks I am guilty of "rationalizing" also (pp. 177, 185, etc.). But my rationalism is, it seems, of a peculiar kind. "It seems to proceed upon the supposition that we are dealing with a literal history of 'real men,' and of God's revelations and dealings with them. Thus, we have Professor Orr's way of rationalizing the story," etc. (p. 185). So I cause "irritation" by adopting "the tone of the superior person who is exactly right on every point!" (p. 291). Do I go further than Professor Jordan's reminders to his opponents that they "are spending their time and energy in fighting a hopeless battle"? (pp. 219, 288, 289, etc.).

evident to their hearers, and had been earlier the recognized content of the religion of Yahweh. They knew no other conception than their own, which flowed to them from Divine revelation."¹ The prophets, it appears, were wrong in this; but what if they were right? And, with all respect, they probably knew their own history as well as the critics do.

The question is brought to an issue by asking what is intended when Yahweh is described as speaking to Moses or Israel, or revealing His will to them. Is Yahweh, to begin with, a real being at all? He is a local God, whose seat is at Sinai. Moses and the Israelites attach higher ideas to Him. But this is a very different thing from a real Being, Yahweh, revealing Himself to Israel. Or does reality gradually develop out of unreality? If the Yahweh of the prophets was the true God, who had revealed Himself to Moses, and guided the people in their after-history, we must seek a different account of His origin from that which this and similar books give. Much of the discarded history will need to be restored.

The plan of Professor Jordan's book does not lead him to enter into details of critical theory. Though there is a chapter on the documentary theory, the latter is rather founded on as a thing settled than treated as a matter to be proved. It is recognized, however, that the theory has undergone great development, and that what were taken at first for "documents" of individual writers (J, E, D, P) are really "schools and periods of history."² How they should be this, and yet it be true that "each document has its own individual character—linguistic, theological, and historical,"³ is not explained. Neither are the difficulties which cluster and multiply as this documentary theory is "expanded and developed" attempted to be met. These are points, however, that need not be gone into here. The disintegration that goes on is really the death of any sane theory.⁴ More serious is the altered standpoint which the new theory requires us to assume on the moral development. Hard things

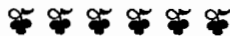
¹ "Bib. Theol. des A. T.," p. 206.

² P. 204.

³ P. 206.

⁴ Cf., e.g., on Cain, p. 259.

are said of the defective morality of parts of the Old Testament ; but think of such a passage as this, quoted, with seeming approval, from Todd's "Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel"—the subject is the application of the word *kodesh* ("holy") to the harlots of the temples : "These were not loose women whose presence was winked at ; they were part of the regular establishment, sacred to the god, Kodesh. A vast amount of virtuous horror has been expended on this 'frightful' and 'debasing' institution, all of which might very well have been spared. The prostitutes of our Christian streets will afford us ample food for moral reflection, without worrying about these Syrian girls of 3,000 years ago, when sex relations were understood quite differently. The simple fact is that primitive man understood worship as 'rejoicing before his god,' and accordingly enjoyed himself in his own way in the temple courts, with abundance of roast meat and wine, and the society of one of the women of the shrine. If our idea of 'joy in the Lord' is something very different, it is because we stand at the end and he at the beginning of a vast education and development."¹ On this Professor Jordan, while reminding us that there were Canaanitish importations into Hebrew religion, remarks : "The preacher who is to expound this literature and make it interesting to his people must accept the principles of development in this full and hearty fashion," etc.² Perhaps we may be excused, in closing, for saying, "God forbid !"



A Preacher's Poet.

BY THE REV. CANON G. S. STREATFEILD, M.A.

YOUNG'S "Night Thoughts" is to-day a tradition, not a poem known and read of all men as it was a century ago. We quote his lines in writing and in conversation without a suspicion of their origin, and are surprised when we learn that

¹ Todd, p. 41.

² P. 190.