

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR GRAETZ contributes an article to the October number of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* on the "Origin of the Septuagint," which claims attention alike from the importance of the subject and the eminence of the writer. The current tradition on the subject is clearly and briefly stated by Professor Skinner in his little work, *The Historical Connection of the Old and New Testaments*, and it will be convenient to give that first: "The existence of so many Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, and elsewhere, made a Greek translation of the Old Testament almost indispensable. The first impulse to the work seems, however, to have been given by Ptolemy (II.) Philadelphus (B.C. 284-247), who wished to place a copy of the Jewish law, written in Greek, in the great library of Alexandria. According to the Jewish legend, he sent an embassy to the High Priest at Jerusalem to obtain an authentic copy of the Books of Moses, and the services of competent translators. The work of translation was said to have been performed by seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish scholars, hence the name Septuagint or LXX. The remaining books of the Old Testament were translated at various times to meet the wants of the Jewish community of Alexandria, and the whole was completed certainly before the middle of the second century B.C."

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The sources of this tradition have been anew examined by Professor Graetz, and have been found so unreliable that the single undeniable fact about the origin of the Septuagint is that its birth-place was Alexandria. Accordingly, in order to

ascertain the *date* of the translation, he resorts to internal evidence. What, he asks, does the translation itself say about its origin? And he comes to the unexpected conclusion, by a most unexpected argument, that it was made neither in the days of Ptolemy I., called Soter (as some hold), nor in the days of Ptolemy II., called Philadelphus, but in the days of Ptolemy VI., surnamed Philometor, something like a hundred years later than the common tradition has it.

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The external historical evidence which Professor Graetz brings forward to prove that the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch was made so late as the time of Jonathan, the youngest brother and successor of Judas Maccabæus, is slight and inconclusive. He relies chiefly and almost entirely upon the following choice example of internal testimony. One of the main differences that divided the Sadducees and the Pharisees turned on the date of the Feast of Pentecost, and arose out of conflicting interpretations of a text. It is in Lev. xxiii. 15 that the law is found which regulated the date of Pentecost. The words are: "Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall there be complete." The Sadducees understood this to mean that the counting was to be made from the day after the Sabbath of the Passover week, and that, therefore, Pentecost, which was exactly seven weeks thereafter, ought always to fall on a Sabbath. The Pharisees interpreted the law differently. By the word "Sabbath" in the

text they understood the first day of the Passover to be meant, whatever day of the week it might be; so that Pentecost, being exactly seven weeks after, might also fall on any day of the week. Now when we turn to the Septuagint rendering of this verse, we find a remarkable divergence from the Hebrew. Their translation is "the day after the first" (τῆς ἐπαύριον τῆς πρώτης), instead of "the day after the Sabbath." "'The first' signifies," says Professor Graetz, "the first day of the Feast of Passover," and the point is that he believes this rendering was *purposely* chosen in order to favour the Pharisaic interpretation of the passage in question. Therefore the translation must have been made after the antagonism between the Sadducees and the Pharisees in reference to the date of Pentecost had become pronounced; and there is no trace of this antagonism earlier than the days of Jonathan Maccabæus. The argument may seem precarious, but it is much more fully and skillfully presented than we have done; and it deserves, and will receive, the attention of scholars.

In the second number of the *Critical Review*, which one can read throughout and rise with an appetite, Professor Ryle discusses the second volume of Mr. George Adam Smith's *Isaiah*. In a short paragraph, the third from the end of the notice, Professor Ryle characterises Mr. Smith's book well, and, at the same time, expresses pointedly one of the most urgent needs of present-day preaching. "It is almost a commonplace now-a-days," he says, "to assert that the great need of Christian congregations, that of continuous Bible teaching, is rarely satisfied. To be scholarly without being pedantic, to be at all thorough without being wearisomely diffuse, to adapt the teaching of whole sections of Scripture to modern spiritual needs without being superficial or sensational,—these are difficulties of which all of us, whether teachers or taught, have had some bitter experience. Where many have failed, Mr. Adam Smith is conspicuously successful. And the secret of his success is to be found, not in his scholarship nor in his eloquence, but in the union of these indispensable qualities with living sympathy in the modern needs of men, and with the intensest realisation that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'"

In the same number of the *Critical Review* we come upon a geographical note by Professor Sayce of great interest. "Dr. Jensen"—he is reviewing Dr. P. Jensen's recently issued *Kosmologie der Babylonier*—"points out in an Appendix that the Persian Gulf was called by the Babylonians the *nâr marratim*, or 'river of bitterness.' It was therefore considered by them to be not only a river, but the main stream into which flowed the four great rivers—Euphrates, Tigris, Kerkha, and Karun. Here, then, we have at last an explanation of that most difficult passage in Gen. ii. 10, where it is said that 'a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.' Eden, as is now well known, was Edinu, the plain of Babylonia, the 'garden' of which stood in the neighbourhood of Eridu, on the shores of the gulf. The 'heads' will have been not 'sources' in the ordinary sense of the word, but the mouths of the rivers where the *nâr marratim*, or main stream, seemed to flow into them. It must be remembered that in the inscriptions the rivers are regarded as deriving their waters from the sea."

"The authenticity of John's Gospel," says Dr. Paton Gloag in his newly published *Introduction to the Johannine Writings* (Nisbet, 10s. 6d.), "is the great question of modern criticism, and must be regarded as still unsettled." He points out that the greatest theologians in Germany are nearly equally divided on the question. Weiss, Zahn, Luthardt, and Beyschlag maintain the Johannine origin of the Fourth Gospel; while Schürer, Harnack, Pfeiderer, Weizsäcker, and Hilgenfeld still rank among those who deny it. But in this country the case is quite otherwise. No great British theologian, with the single exception of Dr. Samuel Davidson, denies the authenticity, unless Dr. E. A. Abbott should be added, by his *Encyclopædia Britannica* article. For the present, at least, it may be considered settled here; and the interest of younger scholars is transferred to the problems of the Synoptic Gospels. Will it come up again? It may be that the very Synoptic question will bring it up. It may be that St. John's Gospel has been discussed too exclusively as a separate problem from that of the first three Gospels. There may be intercrossings of the two

great questions which will yet weave them into one, whether to complicate or to simplify, it were hard at present to say.

If the authorship of the Fourth Gospel is not yet finally settled, as Dr. Gloag says, we suppose we must look for it to come up again. And we ought to be prepared for it. The best preparation will be a sincere study of the book itself. Not so much to forge weapons for its defence, though it is most likely that the question will be finally decided from the contents of the book itself, but in order to assure ourselves that its inspired profitability does not depend upon its authenticity. There may be incompleteness in Dr. Dale's discovery of the seat of religious authority in that which comes home to me, to my human need and aspiration; but the thing which "finds" me in that highest sense (it must be an authoritative word, and no scribe's guessing) is, after all, the thing which is most truly divine to me, and most independent of persons and of date. The Fourth Gospel has "found" men from the beginning,—found them and reformed them, let us say,—and will so find them to the end. To be fully assured of that, is to keep clear of all panic. It is the Christian condition of proving all things, and holding fast that which is good.

The contest may be nearer than we think. We have been so secure in our position that a short paper in the current issue of the *Critical Review*, which combats one point of the positive argument, comes upon us as an unwelcome surprise. But the author, who is the Rev. John A. Cross, M.A., of Little Holbeck, Leeds, says, wisely enough, that we ought not to commit the case to any reasonings which are not entirely relevant and valid, inasmuch as "weakness in any point selected as a point of defence is apt to be taken to imply weakness along the whole line." The book under review is Dr. Salmon's *Introduction*, and Mr. Cross selects for criticism the arguments which Dr. Salmon (following Dr. Sanday) relies upon to prove that the writer of the Fourth Gospel must have been a Jew of the time of Christ. These arguments are seven in number, and we do not think that Mr. Cross has overthrown any one of them utterly, much less destroyed the cumulative

effect of them; but his criticisms certainly deserve the attention which must always be given to reverence and scholarship.

"Cicero says: *Appropinquante morte [animus] multo est divinior*. It is an experimental fact that precisely through the approach of the night of death the most intense effulgence flashes through the human spirit which has sprung from the being of God."

With these words the late Professor Delitzsch opens the second chapter of his *Messianic Prophecies in Historical Succession* (T. & T. Clark, 1891, 5s.). The whole book is a striking witness to the truth of the saying. The proofs, the translator tells us, were read by Dr. Delitzsch while he lay on his death-bed; the last printed sheet was laid on his bed the day before he died. Yet the volume thus brought forth in the midst of death is full of life. "It is a delightful theme," says the author with enthusiasm, "a joyful work in which we propose to be absorbed. The Lord is in the process of coming in the Old Testament, in drawing near, in proclaiming His presence; and we design to transport ourselves into this Old Testament period, and follow the steps of the One who is coming, pursue the traces of the One who is drawing near."

In a time like this it is just such a book we need. Principal Moule of Cambridge is not a man given to panic or wild words; yet even he betrays deep uneasiness at the thought of what criticism may work on a cherished Messianic prophecy. Writing in the *King's Own* for March, on Nathan's promise to David, "it is quite easy," he says, "for the 'naturalist' critic, on his own selected premises, to explain this away. It is easy to say that it was an outcome of Nathan's 'insight,' this reversal of his words of yesterday; that it came, not of nocturnal revelation, but of nocturnal quiet thought. It is easy to say that it had no real scope beyond the temporal fortunes of the Davidic dynasty; that its 'for ever' was relative; that its 'Son of God' was but an Oriental hyperbole of majesty. But such assertions are based on *selected* premises." These words are true, though they manifest anxiety and apprehension; they are true and unexaggerated. Delitzsch, who vividly discerned the gravity of the present crisis, used much

stronger language to describe the "naturalist school of criticism." "There is a crisis in the domain of the Bible, and especially in that of the Old Testament, in which the evening of my life falls. This crisis repels me on account of the joy of its advocates in destruction, on account of their boundless negations and their unspiritual profanity." And, like Mr. Moule, it seems to be just in presence of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament that he is most deeply moved by the thought of their profanity.

Does Delitzsch reject all criticism then? Does his new book follow the order and arrangement of the Old Testament Scriptures as they have been handed down to us? No. It is emphatically the work of a higher critic. With less hesitation, and to greater breadth than elsewhere, he employs the principles and gathers in the results of a so-called "Higher Criticism." Is there no criticism but an unbelieving anti-supernatural one? He hears that question asked; and he answers it with this book. We may reject its criticism wholly, as we may refuse much of its interpretation; but we cannot separate either from the book itself or from the reverence, the faith, the spirituality, which breathe in every page. One of its most radical pieces of criticism is the relegation of Isa. xxiv.-xxvii. to the days of the Return, and to a later prophet than even the so-called Deutero-Isaiah who wrote chapters xl.-lxvi. Yet this is what we read on a well-known text there—Isa. xxvi. 19, which Delitzsch thus translates: "My dead shall live again, my corpses shall arise; wake up and rejoice, ye who lie in the dust! For the dew of the heavenly bodies is thy dew, and the earth shall bring forth shades."—"It is the entire New Testament Apocalypse which we have here before us *in nuce*, only that, as also in 1 Cor. xv., the discourse is exclusively concerning the resurrection to life, and is also limited to the narrow frame of the 'first resurrection' (Rev. xx. 5). In general, that which is magnificent in these chapters (xxiv.-xxvii.) is that the redemption is conceived of as radical, spiritual for mankind. So that the end of the history of redemption is bound together with the beginning, which is written upon the first pages of Genesis." These are not the tones of an unbeliever.

No, they could not well be the tones of an unbeliever being authentic words of Delitzsch. He who will read the brief memorial which Professor Ives Curtiss has just issued (*Franz Delitzsch: A Memorial Tribute*. With Portrait. T. & T. Clark, 3s.), will receive an indelible impression of the long distance that lay between this man of God and the "unspiritual profanity" of rationalism. We have rarely been able to read with profit the printed prayers which are now so frequently met with in pulpit periodical literature; but there is a prayer here which one is the better for the reading. It is found at the end of an article, says Professor Curtiss, written only two months before his death. How far it is from any course with the boundless negations of naturalism!

"Lord Jesus, help us through the Spirit of promise to recognise Thee and Thy Father whose name is in Thee, and in faith to embrace Thee, and to love Thee, though we do not see Thee with the eyes of sense. How else could we return to God in our separation from Him except through Thee? 'Thou art the Way.' How could we be delivered from the pain of doubt and the instability of human opinion except as we hold on to the Word of God through Thy divine mouth. 'Thou art the Truth.' And how could we joyfully go into death if Thy pierced body were not, as it were, the rent veil of the other world? 'Thou art the Life.' Thou hast overcome death and Hades. Thou hast opened heaven for us. We kiss in spirit the marks of the nails in Thy pierced body for us, and cast ourselves at Thy feet which were fastened to the cross for us, and pray to Thee as the Incarnate Love who hast shed Thy blood for us, and cry with Thomas, treading all doubting thoughts beneath our feet, 'My Lord and my God.'"

Why did Delitzsch become a higher critic? "It certainly was a remarkable spectacle," says Professor Curtiss, "but entirely in harmony with the character of the man, that after he had reached the age of nearly threescore years and ten he should have the courage to change his critical views. *It came from an earnest desire to hold that which he deemed truest and best.*" One thing is made clear,—he touched upon it elsewhere himself, and now Professor Curtiss makes it clear in

this little book,—the change was not lightly or easily made. “Few have been called upon to pass through a more trying experience. To put the Torah (the Law of Moses) on the critical dissecting table gave him almost as much pain as Abraham felt when he bound his son to the altar. His religious nature rebelled against the process. It was not so much that he feared the inconsistency of change, as that he feared the effect of these views. His spirit bowed with the deepest reverence before the Scriptures. To him they were like a sacred sanctuary.”

What, then, were the considerations which drove him so reluctantly into this position? We cannot always answer. No man can himself tell all the forces that bear upon him in a great change of position,—forces sometimes too minute for apprehension, sometimes too dispersed and impalpable. But in one prominent instance, Delitzsch names two leading reasons in this his latest book, the

*Messianic Prophecies.* It is of the authorship of Isaiah, and he says: “1. If we hold that Isaiah is the author of xl.–lxvi., we must maintain a phenomenon which otherwise is without a parallel in the prophetic literature, for otherwise it is everywhere peculiar to prophecy that it goes out from the present, and does not transport itself to the future without returning to the ground of its own contemporary history; but Isaiah would live and act here in the exile, and address the exiles through twenty-seven chapters, without coming back from his ideal to his actual present. 2. The recognition of the divinely ordered training and progress of salvation demands the origin of these addresses under the impulses given by the exile. Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel would represent an incomprehensible retrogression if the author of Isaiah xl.–lxvi. were not younger than Jeremiah, younger even than Ezekiel, and did not have the last third of the exile as his historical station.”

## The Early Narratives of Genesis.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR HERBERT E. RYLE, M.A., CAMBRIDGE.

THE national history of Israel may be said to date from the era of the Exodus and the Covenant of Mount Sinai. The beginnings of the Hebrew race are described in the narrative which tells us of the call of Abraham and records the selection of the family with which are identified the names of the three great ancestors of the chosen people.

But the Hebrew narratives, and the traditions from which our Book of Genesis was compiled, went back into ages infinitely more remote. It was natural for the Hebrew historian to preface his record of the origin of the chosen people with a record of the origin of all nations, the origin of the human race, and the origin of the universe. The materials for such a preface were to hand. He has placed them before us in their simplicity and beauty, making selections from his available resources, so as to narrate in succession the Hebrew stories of the cosmogony, the primæval patriarchs, the Deluge, and the formation of the races.

The fact that we have in these eleven chapters a

narrative compiled from two or more different sources is now so generally recognised, that there is no need here for any preliminary discussion upon the subject. This only needs to be stated, that the two principal threads of tradition incorporated in the opening section of Genesis are termed by scholars “Jehovistic” and “priestly,” according as they correspond respectively to what may be called the “prophetic” and “priestly” treatment of the early religious history of Israel. But besides these larger and more easily recognised sources of information, the compiler obviously makes use of materials of which the archaic character is evident both from the style and from the subject matter.

THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE (i. 1–ii. 4a). The matchless introduction to the whole history is taken in all probability from the priestly writings or some similar literary source. Evidence of this is obtained from characteristic words and phrases, and from the smooth, orderly, and somewhat redundant