

through, in the confidence—to be increased and strengthened by enlarging knowledge and experience—that His purposes are good even where we cannot see all that they mean, or where they are apparently contrary to the general tenor of His character. There are hard things in nature; there are hard sayings in the Bible; none but a fool would deny them: but all things and all sayings are not hard. Some we know to be true; some we know to be good. Our Father's government of the world is educational all through, and He feeds us with His truth and His goodness as we are able to bear them. Not all at once does He blind us with the full glare of the meridian sun of His truth; not all at once does He fill us with keen despair by revealing the perfection of His boundless love: but bit by bit, now here and now there, now by success and now by failure,

now by life and now by death, now by experience and now by inspiration, now by the joy of friendship and love, and now by the sorrow of desolation—in many parts and in divers manners—He does teach us, feed us, guide us, He does make us ever more and more strong, pure, loving, tender, patient, forgiving, faithful, true, and so fit us for the ever-widening and deepening revelation of His love. He has not yet spoken His last word to His Church or to His world. He still proclaims, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Even so, Lord! But when Thou dost break Thy silence and reveal the hidden counsels of Thy perfect wisdom, may we in humility and faith and joy, trembling before the marvel of the new light, answer Thee—

"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

The Teaching of our Lord as to the Authority of the Old Testament.

BY THE RIGHT REV. C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D., BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL.

CONCLUSION.

WE have now concluded our consideration of the momentous subject which I have felt it my duty to bring before you.

What now remains to be done is very briefly to recapitulate; to gather up the results at which we have arrived, and to draw a few deductions which may fairly be drawn from them, and may afford some guidance, whether monitory or directive, in the grave controversy into which the imprudence of fellow-churchmen has unhappily involved us.

The circumstances which have necessitated the choice of the subject we have reviewed in the opening paper. It has been there proved to us beyond, I trust, the possibility of dispute, that the necessity is real and urgent. Had I not felt it to be so, I should not, on this occasion, have chosen such a subject as the present, involving, as it has done, long-continued study, widely-extended reading, and closely-applied thought, when there is so much of a simpler and more practical nature that may seem to be inviting our attention. But when views of the Old Testament, such as we have discussed in the foregoing articles, have been put

forward not merely by opponents, but by earnest members of our own Church; when we are told that we must be prepared to make considerable changes in our literary conception of the Scriptures¹—that the earlier narratives, for example, before the call of Abraham, are of the nature of myth²—that we may regard the writings of two of the prophets as dramatic compositions worked up on a basis of history;³ and when, finally, it is asserted that the modern development of historical criticism which teaches us such things leads us, where it is fairly used, to results as sure as scientific inquiry,⁴—then surely it becomes a paramount duty to ask if it be possible that these things are so, and that we may teach them and preach them consistently with a belief in the veracities of God's holy Word.

The need being thus urgent, we next made it our care plainly to set forth the two competing views of the Old Testament—the Traditional and the Analytical; and then to state as fully as our limits permitted the two arguments on which a choice between the two views must ultimately turn—the

¹ *Lux Mundi*, p. 356 (ed. 10).

² *Ibid.* p. 357.

³ *Ibid.* p. 355.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 357.

intrinsically greater probability of the truth of the Traditional view than of the truth of the Analytical view, and the claim that the Traditional view can make of accordance with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. To this it would have been easy to add the testimony of the writers of the New Testament, but, for our present purpose of reassuring disquieted minds, it seemed sufficient to rest upon a full and valid demonstration of the teaching and testimony of Christ. Before, however, this demonstration could be made, it was necessary to establish the rightfulness of the appeal to Christ, and the absolute certitude of His judgments where-soever they could be shown to have been either made, or to be justly inferable. This being done, there remained only to set forth fully and in detail the teaching of the Lord—first as regards the earlier books and the law, and next as regards the historical and the prophetic Scriptures. This has now been completed, with a due regard to the consideration that the Lord's authority cannot rightfully be claimed in any given case, unless careful investigation shall have first shown that His words either do express an authoritative judgment, or, as is most commonly the case, can be shown to involve it by a just consideration of the circumstances and the tenor of the passage.

Such is a brief recapitulation of the foregoing articles, and of the general current of the argument. We have now to consider the general results we have arrived at, and the teachings and the warnings which they involve. And the first result would appear to be this—that the active principle in the genesis and development of the Analytical view is disbelief in, or inability honestly to accept, the supernatural. This has been patent throughout. In some cases it has been distinctly stated at the outset, and made a postulate before any investigation was entered into, or any discussion commenced. Writers like Professor Kuenen have done us unconsciously a great service by honestly avowing the position they take up, and the principles on which they estimate the history or the prophecy that they criticise. They deserve, too, our gratitude for another reason. Having made the avowal, the writer we have mentioned and some others of his school commonly write in a temperate, and sometimes almost a reverential, spirit when taking up extreme positions, or carrying, as they often do, their criticism into the very citadel of Christian belief. Only too commonly, as

in the case of Wellhausen and others that might be named, a tone is adopted in the criticism of events involving or in any way tinged by the supernatural that is most painful and most repulsive, and is utterly unworthy of the indisputable ability, and unique ingenuity as well as patient industry, that mark especially the writer we have just mentioned. To return, however, to our point—aversion to, or, to put it in the mildest form, disinclination to accept the supernatural, is the characteristic in a greater or less degree of all the more pronounced supporters of the Analytical view.

In regard of those with whom we are more particularly concerned,—English writers who have adopted many of the results of these foreign critics, though neither their tone nor their postulates,—it may be fairly said that, if not for themselves yet for others, they have yielded so far to the dangerous bias as obviously to be not unwilling to concede very far too much if by doing so succour could be brought “to a distressed faith.” And yet it is certain that it will ultimately be in vain, and worse than in vain. The simpler souls in Christ, now startled and shaken by these profitless concessions, will become the distressed many, while the few for whom this perilous venture has been made will inevitably, after a brief pause, find themselves again swept into the current of the anti-supernatural, and borne far beyond the succour of minimising concessions or “disencumbered” faith. It is frequently said that such anticipations as these will not in the sequel prove to be correct, and that the heavy current will at last find its way into the broad peaceful mere; or, to adopt another simile used by a recent writer, that there will be a sort of landing-place at the foot of the inclined plane down which criticism is now passing, where it will of its own accord come to rest.¹ We ask eagerly what this landing-place can be; and we are told that it is the consciousness of the sacred writers themselves—the consciousness that they are writing under the inspiration to which they lay claim.

But will this arrest the course of modern criticism? Will a declaration such as the familiar “Thus saith the Lord,” or “The word of the Lord came,” or the very frequently repeated “The Lord spake unto Moses, saying,” impose silence or even reserve on Analytical inquiry? Nay, rather, will it not even the more call it out and stimulate it? The writer of the Book of Jonah begins with the

¹ Sanday, *The Oracles of God*, p. 61 (Lond. 1891).

declaration that the "word of the Lord came unto Jonah"; but have these words prevented the Book of Jonah being denounced as a fiction, or the symbol of the great fish as "a shrivelled-up myth."¹ When it is said, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying," what is it that a singularly sober and impartial writer plainly tells us?² Why, that "an historical statement is made to lend its form to an ethical and religious doctrine," and that "such a statement may fitly be subjected to all the tests of accurate history." No; consciousness on the part of the sacred writers, however earnestly or emphatically expressed, will never stay the course of modern biblical criticism. Nought will stay it when once inability to accept the supernatural has become a settled characteristic of the soul. If our investigations have helped to bring out more distinctly the close connexion that exists between this so-called Higher Criticism and difficulty as to acceptance of the supernatural, they will not have been made in vain.

2. A second result to which we seem led by the general course of our argument is this—that if we accept the Analytical view we must reconstruct our views and estimate of revealed doctrine, and, generally, of the inspiration of Holy Scripture. Let us illustrate this statement in reference to fundamental doctrine as revealed to us in the Old Testament.

Our current view of Old Testament revelation, it may be assumed, is substantially to this effect—that from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Malachi, a gradual disclosure is made to us of the nature of Almighty God, and of His dealings, through one favoured race, with the children of men. These dealings reflect from the very beginning redemptive love; and history and prophecy combine in bringing that redemptive love ever more and more clearly home to each succeeding generation. A promise and the evolution of a promise form to the general reader the spiritual substance of the Old Testament, and place all portions of the sacred volume before him in coherent unity. Redemption through Christ that is to come is the ultimate tenor of the revelation of the Old Testament.—Redemption? But from what? Let us suppose the answer to be, as it ought to be,—From sin, and from death, and from

spiritual hosts of boundless evil, "world-rulers,"³ as an apostle calls them, of this darkness in which we dwell. But whence is such an answer derived? What event is there in the past, or what series of events, that makes redemption the fundamental necessity to man that all revelation thus proclaims it to be? The answer, let us hope, will at once be given—The Fall. But is the Fall a fact? One thing is certainly a fact, that there is radical evil in man's nature; all experience proves the truth of the apostle's experience, that when he would do good, evil was present with him.⁴ But how is it so, and why is it so? Does the Fall, if it be a fact, explain this? Let us again hope that the answer will be—Yes, veraciously and persuasively.

From this sort of questioning addressed, as we have supposed, to the current believer, it becomes at last abundantly clear that on the view taken of the Scripture narrative of the Fall the gravest spiritual consequences will be found to depend. Now we are told, not merely by foreign writers, but by English Churchmen, that the narrative of this Fall and the other narratives prior to the call of Abraham are of the nature of myth—that is, "of a product of mental activity not yet distinguished into history and poetry and philosophy."⁵ But what exactly does this mean when we apply this statement to the Fall? Does it mean that the narrative in Genesis is a typical representation of what takes place in every individual soul,—just as it has been said that our Lord treated the Flood as typical,⁶—or does it mean, that though to some extent we may recognise symbolism in the narrative, "the passage," as Dorner rightly says, "has to do with the first human pair and their historical fall?"⁷ And if it has this latter meaning, why, in the case of an event on which all the redemptive history of mankind depends, has it not been said so with the utmost distinctness by those Churchmen who are commending to us the new criticism? The pronounced advocates of the Analytical view, at any rate, make *their* meaning quite plain. They dismiss the whole as fable, or as the Semitic mode of accounting for the existence of radical evil. The Fall becomes a figure of speech, and our whole view of revelation, as we have already said, must be reconstructed. Are we to stand ourselves

¹ Dr. Cheyne, in *Theological Review* for 1877, p. 215.

² Professor Ladd, in his large work, *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, vol. i. p. 729 (Edin. 1883).

³ Eph. vi. 12.

⁴ Rom. vii. 21.

⁵ *Lux Mundi* p. 356 (ed. 10).

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 359.

⁷ *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. iii. p. 13 (transl.), (Edin. 1882).

or let others stand upon the brink of an error so perilous as this, and not utter one word of salutary warning?

The result of our foregoing considerations would seem to be this—that the Analytical view of the Old Testament, if thoroughly accepted, must involve fresh views not only of history, but of vital and of fundamental doctrine, and that any attempt to utilise it for the sake of helping the distressed faith of a few may end, we had almost said must end, in endangering the faith, and, it may be, even the salvation of thousands. If there is any hesitation in accepting the reality of such a truth as the Fall, there never can be any heart-whole belief in the realities of the Redemption and the Atonement.

We have touched upon the perils which the advocacy of the modern criticism of the Old Testament may involve in regard of revealed doctrine; we may now notice the difficulties in which it places its exponents in regard of inspiration.

The view of Inspiration that is now taken by all the more sober interpreters of Holy Scripture is substantially in accordance with what an apostle has said in reference to prophecy,—“Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.”¹ Another apostle, as we shall well remember, speaks of the inspiration breathed as it were into what was written—a fact as real as the inspiration of the writer, but not lending itself so easily to the elucidation of the essential idea to which modern theology is now more particularly addressing itself. Attention is now primarily directed to the operation of the blessed Spirit on him who either spoke or wrote under the holy influence, rather than to that which was spoken or written. Adopting this mode of regarding Inspiration, we may very readily accept the excellent definition of Inspiration given by a writer whose ability and learning I greatly respect, but from whose conclusions I am compelled, in many particulars, very widely to differ. Speaking of the prophets, psalmists, moralists, and historians of the Old Covenant, Mr. Gore most truly remarks that “their inspiration lies in this, that they were the subjects of a movement of the Holy Ghost so shaping, controlling, quickening their minds, thoughts, and aspirations, as to make them the instruments through which was imparted “the knowledge of God and of the spiritual life.”² With the tenor of this passage we may heartily agree, but when we begin to apply it to several

particular cases, the results at which we seem constrained to arrive are very different from those arrived at by the writer.

Let us take two or three cases which have been already touched upon in some of the foregoing articles. For example, the case of the Book of Deuteronomy, of the Books of Chronicles, and of the Book of the prophet Jonah. And here let us be careful not to impute to those with whom we are now arguing any of the estimates of these books that have been formed by the thorough-going advocates of the Analytical view. Let us take the view which English Churchmen have taken, and have considered to have been proved plainly and decisively by critical investigation. Let us assume that the Book of Deuteronomy is what is euphemistically called “dramatic”; or, in plainer words, that it was not written by Moses,—though it can be shown, at the very least, inferentially that it professes to have been written by him,—but that it owes its existence to the literary activity of an unknown writer who lived eight centuries after his death. Let us admit that it was the work of a pious Jew who felt that the times in which he lived seemed to call for some more vivid setting forth of the Mosaic law. Let us even suppose that he had something to work upon, some oral traditions, some fragmentary records of words believed to have been spoken by Moses, and that his simple aim was to republish the law in what he deemed would be its most attractive and effective form. Let us make all these assumptions,—assumptions which, it may be said, writers like Wellhausen would reject with a sneer, and writers of the school of Kuenen would briefly tear to pieces as baseless and uncritical,—let us, however, make them, and suppose them generally to commend themselves to a certain number of sober thinkers in our own Church; yet could the majority of us ourselves believe, or persuade others to believe, that a book written as we have supposed was, in any true sense of the word, an inspired book, or that the Spirit of truth had inspired the writer thus to impersonate the great lawgiver of the past. Every fresh proof from the contents of the book that it did inferentially claim to be written by Moses would make the case more hopeless. The dramatic republication that we are invited to believe in would be more clearly seen to be, after all, really pious fraud, and the position taken up by clear and reverent thinkers like the late lamented Dr. Liddon would be felt to

¹ 2 Pet. i. 22.

² *Lux Mundi*, p. 354 (ed. 10).

be more impregnable than ever, viz. "that unless there be such a thing as the inspiration of in-
veracity," we are shut up to the choice between acceptance of "the authority of some of our modern critics, and any belief whatever in the inspiration of the books which they handle after this fashion."

Very much the same language may be used with regard to the modern views of the Books of Chronicles. As we have seen in an earlier paper, we are to believe that they present to us a version of history that cannot be regarded as a true recital of events, but as a recital which had the *imprimatur* of the priestly schools. We have before us the narrative of the Books of Kings, and we can see for ourselves and mark the discrepancies and differences. We are not invited to think that the compiler of the Chronicles had before him a different series of documentary annals on which he relied more than on the narrative of the Books of Kings; we have proofs forced upon us that there was intentional modification. We are not, however, to regard this as conscious perversion, but as "unconscious idealising of history"¹ (whatever that may mean), and a reading back into the records of the past the usages and ceremonial of the present. Now taking thus, as we are studiously taking, the mildest and most apologetic view of results of the Analytical criticism of the Old Testament, we are still justified in asking whether reverent common sense will permit us to believe, if the literary procedure was what it is alleged to be, that we could rightly regard the result as a product of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. An inspiration of the Holy Ghost in writing the history of the past or the present we can understand; we can realise an inspiration by which the working out of the will of God may be foreseen in the future; we can believe in an inspiration of reminiscence, and an inspiration of selection, but an inspiration of the idealising of history, or, in simpler language, of repainting history, must be pronounced to be, in the case of the great majority of Christian minds, incredible and inconceivable.

It is scarcely necessary to pursue the subject in reference to the Books of Jonah and of Daniel. Of both we have spoken elsewhere. The former we have seen to be regarded even by English Churchmen as a fiction,² and the other we know to be regarded by modern criticism as a history of

events contemporaneous with the writer of them, disguised in the garb of prophecy. But without pressing these expressions of more advanced opinion, we will simply take the more diluted description of these books as "dramatic compositions worked up on a basis of history,"³ and content ourselves with asking how it is possible to maintain that if they have this dramatic character it will be no hindrance "to their being inspired,"⁴ or rather to their being accounted to be so. If the word "inspired" means that the Holy Ghost inspired the two writers in the dramatic operations attributed to them, then we may at least say that the assertion that the Spirit of truth, who leads us into all truth,⁵ was concerned in the working up on a basis of history of these dramatic compositions, must be regarded simply as a statement which, it may be added, it will be found very difficult to sustain.

This tendency to go considerable lengths with the Analytical criticism of the writings of the Old Testament, and then in the sequel to turn round and say that they are inspired, is now becoming very common. Each critic is making his own diagnosis, and settling for himself when inspiration is to be attributed to a writing of the Old Testament, however much that writing may have suffered at his hands. A recent writer on the criticism of Holy Scripture makes this perfectly plain. Speaking, we may presume, for himself and the advocates of what he terms "Higher Criticism," he says that "we determine the inspiration of the book from its internal character and the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking in it to the believer."⁶ In a word, the settlement of the vital question is to be purely subjective. The testimony of the Church, the canonicity of the Book, the judgment of Catholic writers, all become as nothing. The judgment of the individual, on the presupposition that he is qualified to form it, is to settle the question, however doubtful it may be, whether the blessed Spirit may have vouchsafed to speak to him hereon or no. Nothing really is more melancholy in this whole controversy on the authority of Holy Scripture than the reckless manner in which the judgment of that which is declared by an apostle to be "the pillar and

³ *Lux Mundi*, p. 355 (ed. 10).

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 355.

⁵ John xvi. 13.

⁶ Dr. Briggs in the *American Review* for July 1891, as cited in the *Religious Review of Reviews* for August, p. 163.

¹ *Lux Mundi*, p. 354 (ed. 10).

² Dr. Cheyne in *Theological Review* for 1877, p. 214.

ground of the truth,"¹ is set aside by Christian teachers when endeavouring to find some basis for belief in God's holy Word. This is the very last result that those English Churchmen who have supported the Analytical view of the Old Testament would wish to see arrived at. When one of them says that "it is becoming more and more difficult to believe in the Bible without believing in the Church,"² we may readily perceive that no sympathy is felt with modern individualism, and yet nothing has more helped to call out that individualism than the very criticism of the Old Testament which has been precipitately advocated.

3. We have pointed out two of the leading results at which we seem to have arrived ; but one other, and that of far, far more importance than either of those already mentioned,—important as they most certainly are,—yet remains to be mentioned. And it is this,—that the judgment of our Lord and Master, so far as we have been able to derive it from His use of the Old Testament, His references to it, and the declarations He has made in regard of it, is sufficiently clear to justify us in making the following assertion,—that our Lord's view of the Old Testament is not only consonant with the Traditional view, but may even be regarded as supporting and confirming it ; and that in no particular,—or, to use the most guarded language,—in no particular of any real importance, has it appeared to favour the Analytical view. This result, thus expressed, we do not think would be seriously contested by those who are opposed to us. The judgment at which we have arrived in some of the many passages we have examined,—though we have done our very best to maintain a strict exegetical impartiality,—may be called into question as influenced by presuppositions, or may be attenuated when subjected to closer examination ; still, we sincerely believe that what may be called the net result will not be found to be substantially different from that we have defined it to be.

Assuming, then, that it is so, we find ourselves confronted with the serious question—How are we, as English Churchmen, to order ourselves in the present controversy ? Some of the answers to this vital question we have already incidentally dealt with in foregoing articles, but two answers there are which must now be more particularly considered.

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

² *Lux Mundi*, p. 338 (ed. 10).

(a) The one is that we must believe that our Lord so used human nature and its limitations of knowledge, so restrained "the beams of Deity" (this expression is Hooker's),³ as to observe the limits of the historical knowledge of His age. This statement, which we have collected with anxious care from the words of the writer to whom we have had frequently to refer, and after those words had received a very necessary revision,⁴ may now be regarded as the most restrained form of answer which has been put forward by the English advocates of the Analytical view of the Old Testament. At first, to the great disquietude of all parties in the Church, and to the grievous injury of the faith of many of the "babes in Christ,"⁵ answers were made by English Churchmen patently asserting or admitting fallibility in Christ ; and though most of these answers have been either explained away or retracted, yet it is to be feared that some of them are still permitted to remain, in spite of widely-circulated remonstrances. These answers, however, and the answers given by foreign advocates of the Analytical view, we will leave unnoticed, and simply confine ourselves to a brief consideration of the answer in the form in which we have specified it above. Can we, as loyal Churchmen, accept it ? The answer, if we admit the validity of the arguments in Article IV., can only be that the doctrines of the sinlessness of Christ, and still more the doctrine of the union of the Two Natures, unitedly forbid the acceptance of words which imply limitation in respect of historical knowledge. We firmly hold with Hooker that the union of natures adds perfection to the weaker nature,⁶ and that the soul of Christ was endowed with universal, though not with infinite knowledge peculiar to Deity itself ;⁷ and we are solemnly persuaded that the assumption that the Lord willed not to know, in His perfect and illuminated human nature, the things concerning the Holy Scriptures, about which mortal man claims to have knowledge now, is inadmissible, and at variance with catholic teaching.

³ *Lux Mundi*, p. 360. Hooker, however, it may be observed, speaks (with greater precision) of the beams of Deity "in operation" either restraining or enlarging "themselves" (*Eccl. Polity*, v. 54. 6).

⁴ Up to the fourth edition the words were different, and were very properly altered ; see Preface to ed. 10, p. xxxiii, and Preface to ed. 5.

⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 1.

⁶ *Eccl. Polity*, v. 54. 4.

⁷ *Ibid.* v. 54. 7.

The erroneous conception that seems to give rise to all such assumptions is this—that if the Lord in His human nature had this wide-reaching knowledge, that nature would cease to be true human nature, whereas, as it has been well argued, an eye that cannot discern, say the satellites of Saturn, does not cease to be a true human eye when it sees them by means of its conjunction with a telescope.¹ We are compelled, then, to set aside this form of answer to the general question now before us as to the attitude which, as Churchmen, we must assume in the present controversy. We cannot get behind what has distinctly appeared to be the teaching of Christ in reference to the Old Testament, by assuming that He spoke simply on the basis of the highest knowledge of His own times, and that his nescience does not bar our acceptance of the results of modern criticism in the somewhat modified form in which they are now commended to us.

(b) The other form of answer to the question that is before us may now in conclusion receive our careful attention. If we cannot consider ourselves free to accept, we will not say the Analytical view in the form in which foreign criticism presents it,—this being utterly incompatible with the tenor of our Lord's teaching,—but the Analytical view as pressed upon us by English Churchmen, are we to declare that the question is foreclosed, and that the authority of the Lord binds us to repudiate all critical inquiry whatsoever into the composition of the books of the Old Testament? This surely would be a hard saying on the other side, and hurtful to that reverential study of the Holy Scriptures, that searching of them, that reading, marking, and learning which prepares the way for the fuller understanding and inward digesting of the blessed Book of Life. There is a teaching now about us and around us as to that book which it is not either reasonable or wise simply to denounce. There is much in that teaching that bears, as we have seen in these articles, the sinister mark of disavowal of the supernatural; much that is repulsive, much that may even involve peril to the faith. But there is also in it much that promotes and stimulates that close study of the Scriptures which can never be without ultimate profit to him who conscientiously undertakes it. Happy, however, are they who are drawn to God's holy Word by higher influences, and are taught by

¹ See *Literary Churchman* for Aug. 21, 1891, p. 331.

the teaching of the Spirit. Happy, indeed, are they who, from the fulness of a heart-whole belief, can receive the written word, without a thought rippling the still waters of the soul as to the circumstances under which it holds its place in the Book of Life, or as to the hand that traced it on the roll of prophecy, or on the records of God's revelation of Himself to mankind. Blessed and happy are such, and woe to those who heedlessly or needlessly cause disquiet to these gentle spirits, whether by giving a half-approving currency to criticisms of God's holy Word, which weaken the trust in its plenary authority, or by concessions which (as we have seen) bring in their train modifications of vital and fundamental doctrine.

Even, however, with such gentle spirits in the foreground of our thoughts, we cannot advocate the attempt to silence this new teaching by the voice of authority, mighty and momentous as we have seen that authority to be. It is wise and it is seasonable, for the sake of those who, with the best intentions, may plainly have been going too fast and too far, to reason gently with them, and to show them what must be the ultimate issue of this plausible and seductive analysis. Arguments from consequences, as Dr. Liddon has impressively pointed out, cannot be set aside with impunity. "If it be obvious," as he says, "that certain theories about the Old Testament must ultimately conflict with our Lord's unerring authority, a Christian will pause before he commits himself to these theories." The appeal to Christ may be fruitless to those who have deliberately crossed a Rubicon; but in the case of the great majority, the appeal, if wisely and persuasively made, will rarely fail to suggest some hesitation, some reconsideration of theories which are traversed by the teaching of Christ, or by the inferences which immediately flow from it.

The greatest use, however, of the appeal to Christ will probably be discernible in the case of two of those classes which now especially are looking earnestly to us, God's ministers and the stewards of His mysteries, for help and for sympathising guidance. To the young, in whose hearts the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is still the ruling influence of the spiritual life, the appeal to Him, in reference to the books that spake of Him, will always minister light and reassurance. Nor will it be less helpful to that large class of sober-minded but imperfectly instructed believers, who

are now, as it were, standing at gaze, startled and shaken in faith by finding the Traditional view of the Old Testament,—for which we have seen in these articles the arguments really remain as valid as ever,—either gently set aside, or obscured by statements which honoured names commend to them as vouched for by investigations as precise and as trustworthy as those of science itself. To this class the appeal comes with a force and a steady power which no other argument for the authority of the Old Testament supplies to us in any comparable degree. The assured fact that the Hebrew Bible, as we have it now, is identical, save perhaps in some few subordinate details of text, with the Bible as it was in the days of our Lord, and the further fact that strong and clear proofs can be drawn from the recorded words of our Lord, that, in what we have described as the Traditional view of the Old Testament, we are now regarding the sacred volume substantially as He regarded it, are indisputably facts on which every disquieted spirit may rest with the fullest confidence,—anchors on which it may securely ride out the gales of passing controversies.

The appeal to Christ, then, is not made with any design of attempting to silence all criticism, or to set aside all thorough-going investigation. We have made the appeal chiefly to reassure and to forewarn, and to direct. We have made it to reassure those who may have been led to doubt in the truth of the Traditional view. We have made it to forewarn those who may have been attracted by the results of modern biblical criticism that some of these results will be found plainly to be in conflict with the authority of Christ. But, in doing this, we have not failed to direct the attention of earnest students of the Old Testament to many details of biblical criticism which the very appeal to Christ proves to be not only open to us for discussion, but as earnestly needing it at our hands. We have admitted that the Traditional view has been rectified in some particulars, such as the composition of the Book of Genesis, and we by no means refuse to admit that careful research may prove that further rectification may be needed in other particulars. This we are prepared to admit ; but it is one thing to rectify a view in particulars on which it is plain that our Lord has not, directly or indirectly, expressed any kind of judgment ; and another thing to advocate a view that is incompatible with it.

The particulars, which need further investigation, are many, and have a bearing upon many important and interesting questions. We may name the subject of the language in which the different books of the Old Testament are written—a subject on which we have not touched, for the simple reason that on some of the most important questions connected with it the judgment of experts has been greatly divided. If, for example, it be correct, as recently maintained by the Laudian Professor of Arabic in Oxford,¹ that there was a well-developed New Hebrew as early as 200 B.C., widely different from the Middle Hebrew of Nehemiah, and still more widely different from the Old Hebrew of the earlier books, many of the hypotheses of the Analytical view will have to be completely reconstructed ; but this cannot as yet be said to be substantiated. If, on the other hand, as is maintained by Hebrew scholars of high reputation, the early editors of the Masoretic text are to a great extent responsible for the similarity of language that certainly seems to pervade the Hebrew Books of the Old Testament, then arguments from language become utterly precarious. But this hypothesis is as far from being generally accepted as the former one. To attempt, then, in such a state of things to argue from language is absolutely futile and inadmissible. There is thus in this department of criticism a wide field for research and investigation.

Other subjects, such as the whole question of the text,—the notes in the earlier books and the historical books,—the marks of compilation in the Pentateuch and in later books,—the probability of additions being made from time to time to the ceremonial law,—the quotations and references in the historical books, and the consequent relations of the books to each other,—the genealogies, early and late, and the principles on which they appear to be constructed,—the legitimacy of the inferences that have been drawn from the names of Almighty God,—a clear statement of the alleged anachronisms and contradictions ;—all these, and others that might be added to the list, are now seriously demanding a far more thorough and systematic investigation than they have yet received at our hands. To such subjects all the best efforts of modern criticism may be safely and helpfully directed. It is on these details that a far fuller

¹ See Margoliouth, *Essay on the Place of Ecclesiasticus in Semitic Literature*, p. 21 (Oxford, 1890).

knowledge is required before we can hope either to place the principles and conclusions of what we have termed the Traditional view on a secure basis of tested facts, or to maintain a strong position against the increasingly aggressive efforts of the modern destructive criticism.

This destructive criticism, however, need not give us any great anxiety. The real enemies and ultimate levellers of this so-called Higher Criticism are they of its own household. For a time there is a kind of union in destructive effort among the adherents of this school of thought; but when any attempt is made to formulate anything of a constructive nature, the union becomes speedily dissolved. Expert is ranged against expert; theory is displaced by theory; hypothesis by hypothesis; until at length the whole movement, that once seemed so threatening, silently comes to rest, and finds its *nirvana* among the dull records of bygone controversies. It has been so with the Higher Criticism of the New Testament; it has been so, to some extent, with the attempts to teach and preach a gospel of evolution, and so most assuredly will it be with the destructive criticism of the Old Testament, which is now causing so much anxiety, and has been helped by so many lamentable concessions.

Our efforts to set these things in their true light, and fairly to examine what we have termed the Analytical view, and the concessions that Churchmen have ill-advisedly made to it, are now brought to their conclusion. Much more might be said. But we trust enough has been said to reassure those who may have been disquieted, not simply by the attacks on the credibility of the Old Testament, and the disbelief in the supernatural, from which they spring,—for this has been always so,—but by the recent admissions which, confessedly from a good motive, have been made by Churchmen of known learning and piety in reference to the Old Testament.

To reassure has been my principal motive in preparing the foregoing articles. But not the only motive. I have sought also to warn. I have felt, and most deeply felt, the dangers, especially

to the young, of accepting theories, ingenious, and even fascinating as they may appear to be, of the origin and composition of the Old Testament, which careful investigation may show to be irreconcilable with the teaching of Christ. In the case of all such theories, and indeed of the Analytical view generally, it has been my care to point out whence they originate, and what they ultimately involve. They originate, as we have seen, in most cases from a readiness, if not to deny, yet assuredly to minimise, the supernatural; and by the inevitable drift of consequences they commonly end in some form of spiritual paralysis, some enduring inability to lay hold of the life eternal. This downward drift and ultimate issue may easily be traced out. If the theory is irreconcilable with the teaching of Christ, and is fairly felt to be so, then the temptation to believe in a possible ignorance on the part of our Lord, becomes in many minds irresistible, and the way is paved for a belief in the possibility, not only of His ignorance, but even of His fallibility,—and so, by dreadful inference, in the possibility of our hope in Him, here and hereafter, being found to be vain and illusory. . . . Most truly has it been said by Dr. Liddon that there is one question compared with which all these questions as to the Old Testament fade into utter insignificance, and yet it is a question up to which, under the influence of this Analytical criticism, they will constantly be found to lead. That question, to summarise the words of the great preacher, is this, and nothing less than this—With whom have we to do, here and hereafter, a fallible, or the infallible Christ?

When such a question as this is found ultimately to be raised by the novel criticism that is now being applied to the Old Testament, surely it must be well for all those who may feel attracted by it to pause, seriously to pause, and to take to heart these words of Almighty God, as He thus spake by the mouth of the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."¹

¹ Jer. vi. 16.