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

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THE TRADITIONAL AND ANALYTICAL VIEWS.

I. The rectified traditional view may be conveniently expressed under the following formulated statements. We have full reason for believing—1. That the Book of Genesis was *compiled* by Moses,—in its earlier chapters from primeval documents which may have been brought by Abraham from Chaldæa, and in its later chapters (except parts of xxxvi.) from family records of a distinctly contemporaneous origin, which we may reasonably believe to have been preserved in the families of the successive patriarchs as the archives of their race. That these should have been accessible to the divinely-appointed leader of the race, himself a man of known learning,—that he should have arranged them and illustrated them by contemporary notes, is a supposition so reasonable, that, though no more than a supposition, it may be accepted at least as more plausible than any other which has yet been advanced. 2. That, of the four remaining Books of the Pentateuch, the first, the Book of Exodus, as the autobiographical character of large portions of it seems clearly to indicate, was *written* by Moses, or, at least, under his immediate direction and authority. That the Book of Leviticus, as containing the statutes and ordinances for the most part expressly stated to have been revealed to Moses, must, if not actually written by him, have been compiled by authorised scribes under his immediate supervision. That the Book of Numbers, as containing more mixed material, may be considered to have been compiled—in part from the legislative revelation made directly to Moses, in part from contemporary records made by Moses, in obedience to God's command, in part from documentary annals including references to books that may have been compiled during the lengthened abode in the wilderness,—but all, as the tenor of the whole book, and its concluding verse seem distinctly to imply, under the authority and general oversight of Moses. . . . Finally, that the Book of Deuteronomy, containing as it does, not without notes of time and place, the addresses of the closing days of the inspired legislator (which we may regard as having been specially recorded and preserved by official writers), assumed its present form, as one passage seems in some degree to suggest, under the hand of Joshua. 3. That the Book of Joshua, which is rightly considered by all recent critics as standing in close connexion with the Pentateuch, was similarly compiled by some contemporary writer or writers under the direction of Joshua—in part, as the narrative seems to imply, from communications personally made by Joshua, and, in part, from documents and records made at the time by official writers and recorders, of whose existence and employment, even in those early days, we find traces in the Pentateuch. 4. That the Book of Judges is a compilation, not improbably made by the prophet Samuel, from contemporary records, family memorials, and other existing materials, commencing with events recorded in Joshua, and extending, though not in perfect chronological order, over a period of about 400 years. 5. That the Books of Samuel and of Kings are compilations, consisting in part of the compositions of contemporary prophets, beginning with Samuel and with Nathan and Gad, and in part of selected materials from official records, sacred and secular, put together, and perhaps added to, by seers and prophetical writers, of whom Jeremiah was the last, and, as he well may have been, one of the principal contributors. 6. That the Books of Chronicles were a compilation, possibly, nay, even probably, by Ezra, made largely from the Books of Kings, or from the documents on which these books were based, but with abundant references and allusions to nearly all the earlier historical books, including the Pentateuch. 7. That the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were written by the writers whose names they bear, and contain, in part, extracts from official documents and from contemporary records, and, in part, narratives of personal history. 8. That the prophetical writings are written by those whose names are, in every case, specified in their writings, and that they contain, in

some instances, portions of contemporary history, but that the main element of their writings is distinctly predictive, and has reference to events that belong to what was future and posterior to the time when they were mentioned by the writer. 9. Lastly, that the historical books, as we now have them, bear plain and unmistakable marks of the work having passed through the hands, not only of the early compiler or compilers, but of later editors and revisers,—numerous notes, archæological and explanatory, some obviously of an early, and some of a late date, being found in nearly all the books, but particularly the more ancient. Such would appear to be a fair and correct statement of what we have agreed to term the Traditional view of the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament, modified as it now is, and, in some particulars, rectified, by modern research.

II. We now turn to the opposing theory to which we have agreed to give the colourless epithet of "Analytical," as claiming to be founded on a searching criticism of the historical books of the Old Testament, and especially of what is now called the Hexateuch (the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua)—these early books involving the widest alleged divergences from the formulated statements which have been set forth in the foregoing paragraphs. This Analytical view we will first place before the reader in the form now generally adopted by the most acute foreign critics of the Old Testament: we will then pass onward to notice the extent to which they have been accepted by recent writers of our own country and Church. The results that have been thus accepted will unhappily be found to be considerable; but the tone in which they are set forth is widely different from that adopted by the majority of the foreign critics, and is marked by a temperate and reverential spirit which, at any rate, shows some recognition of the momentous issues that are involved, and the influence they must exercise on the faith of the general reader of the Old Testament.

The results of the Analytical theory, as arrived at by the most acute foreign critics, may be thus briefly summarised:—1. That the Old Testament did not assume its present form till a somewhat late date in the period of the Exile. 2. That the later historical books, and especially the Books of Chronicles, disclose methods of constructing history which justify the limited estimate that has been formed of the trustworthiness of the earlier books, and prepare us for the inferences that have been drawn from a critical investigation of them. 3. That this critical investigation, in the case of the Pentateuch, and the Book of Joshua (now usually called the Hexateuch), discloses at least three strata of narrative and legislative details, of different dates and distinctive peculiarities, which, after having been revised and re-edited, possibly several times, have at last been not unskilfully combined in the form in which they have now come down to us. 4. That the three strata more particularly to be recognised are—(*a*) a History Book,—itself composite, as both names of Almighty God (Jehovah and Elohim) are to be found in it,—dating from the period of the early kings and prophets; (*b*) the Book of Deuteronomy, compiled in the days of Manasseh or Josiah by some unknown writer, and having some slight affinity with the above-mentioned history book; (*c*) a document, in its earliest state of perhaps the same date as (*a*), historical only in form, using throughout the name Elohim,—sometimes called the *Grundschrift* or Fundamental Document, sometimes the Book of the Four Covenants, sometimes, though misleadingly, the earlier Elohist,—which, after having been carefully revised, became expanded in the time of the Exile into what is called the Priestly Code, its basis being Leviticus and allied portions of Exodus and Numbers. 5. That the three codes of Law found in the Pentateuch conform to and corroborate this analysis. 6. That in the present Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings we have remodelled history, and a repainting of the original picture on a generally uniform principle, and with some reference to Deuteronomy, — the accretions and corruptions in the Books of Samuel being numerous, and especially when the prophet stands in connection with the history of David; and the revision of the Books of Kings being also very unrestricted, though closer to the facts than in Judges or Samuel. 7. That the prophets used history as a vehicle for their own ideas; and that their so-called predictions are only fallible anticipations of the manner in which, according to their conceptions, the Deity would, consistently with the character they ascribed to Him, deal with the subjects of His government; and this, notwithstanding it is admitted that all the writers of the New Testament, and our blessed Lord Himself,

ascribe divine foreknowledge to the Israelitish prophets. 8. That thus—to sum up a few leading results to which we are led by the foregoing statements—we are to regard the Book of Deuteronomy as a fiction, founded it may be on traditions, and of no earlier date probably than the eighteenth year of Josiah; that the Tabernacle of Witness, or, as it is now commonly called, the Tent of Meeting, and everything connected with it, had never any existence except in the fabricated history composed in the days of the Exile, and that far from the Tabernacle being the prototype of the Temple, it was the Temple that suggested the deliberate and elaborate fiction of the Tabernacle; and, further, that the older books were remodelled according to the Mosaic form, and that Chronicles, especially, was falsified by Priests and Levites to sustain the belief that the tribe of Levi had been set apart from the days of Moses, and that the priesthood dated from that time,—such a belief being, it is alleged, utterly inconsistent with the truth.

Such, in brief outline, is the analytical view of the Old Testament—a view which, I regret to say, has very many supporters, and in Germany is fast becoming the accepted account of the origin and formation of the earlier portion of the Book of Life. That such a view should meet with acceptance in any Christian country is sad enough, and startling enough, but that it should meet with acceptance to a considerable extent at the hands of members of our own Church is full of very sad augury for the future. But it is so. In a carefully written article by one of our university professors, and in a portion of a recent and well-known collection of theological treatises, the substance of much that has been just specified has been adopted and set forth as a view of the Old Testament that may be consistently maintained by an English Churchman.

We are told, for example—(1) That the earlier narratives before the call of Abraham are of the nature of myth, — myth being defined to be the product of mental activity not yet distinguished into history and poetry and philosophy. (2) That the Hexateuch owes its existence to three principal sources, viz. those already specified,—the composite History Book, sometimes called the prophetical narrative, Deuteronomy, and the Priests' Code: the first-mentioned being the oldest; the second belonging to the reign either of Manasseh or Josiah; and the third to the period of the Exile, when the laws, gradually developed out of an earlier and simpler system, were finally formulated in a complete and definite Code. (3) That the Book of Deuteronomy is a republication of the Law in the spirit and power of Moses put dramatically into his mouth. (4) That the later historical books are of a composite structure, and present to us the phenomena of older narratives fitted into a compiler's framework; and, generally, that there is a considerable idealising element in the Old Testament history. (5) That in the Books of Chronicles we must admit unconscious idealising of history, and a reading back into past records of a ritual development which is really later. (6) That the predictive knowledge of the prophets is general, and of the issue to which things tend; sometimes, but not usually, a knowledge of times and of seasons, prophetic inspiration being consistent with erroneous anticipations as to the circumstances and the opportunities of God's self-revelation.

Such are the conclusions with regard to Old Testament criticism which English Churchmen are advising us to accept. Such the sort of compromise, if compromise it can justly be called, which those who stand in the old paths, and substantially hold the traditional view, are now invited to make with those who maintain in its completeness the analytical view, as it has been set forth in this address.

Now, in the first place, let any fair-minded reader simply set side by side the six statements just made with the eight statements of the analytical view made a little earlier, and then form his opinion of the relation of the two. And will it not be this?—that the difference in tenor between the two groups of statements is slight, and that it is impossible to regard the statements of the English writers as otherwise than expressive of a general acceptance of the analytical view; modified, it will be observed, in certain details, and minimised, to some extent, in phraseology, but in no degree approximating to the rectified traditional view, or to be regarded as a mediating statement between the two theories. We have really only two views to place in contrast, but, in doing so, it will be only right and equitable to recognise that we are not justified in imputing to the English advocates of the analytical view the extreme opinions which the foreign advocates can

be shown either by direct statement or by necessary inference, indisputably to hold. This, however, may always be said—that the tendency of unbalanced minds, if they accept any modified view, to pass onward into the unmodified, is very patent. The real harm then that has been done by recent English writers lies in the plain fact that they have, though with the very best intentions, actually prepared the way for shaken and unstable minds to arrive at results which will at last be found to involve inability to accept the supernatural, and so, a complete shipwreck of the faith.

These things are sad and serious, and do justify us in inviting these well-intentioned writers to reconsider their whole position, and to ask themselves whether they may not more profitably devote their efforts to a guarded rectification, where it may be needed, of the traditional view, and whether these over-hasty excursions into the analytical are not full of peril, not only to simple and trustful souls, but even to those in whose interest these adventurous excursions have been made.

But we must now proceed onward with our general argument. We have set forth, we trust fairly and correctly, the two opposing views—the rectified traditional and the analytical, and also the few real modifications that have been suggested in the latter. We must now put these views to the test, and give full and fair consideration to the two leading arguments which must influence us in our choice between the old and the new learning,—between tradition and critical hypothesis,—between historical supernaturalism and ultimately natural development,—between alleged facts and alleged myths,—between the leading features of the belief of the Jewish and of the Christian Church, and the investigations, confessedly acute and elaborate, of a few distinguished scholars and critics of this last half of the nineteenth century. These two leading arguments we will endeavour to develop in the next address, and in those which will follow it. We will first make our appeal to the reasonable and the probable: we will then make that appeal which, if rightly made, must bring to a close all controversy—the appeal to Him to whom the Old Testament bears witness, and whom the New Testament reveals—to Him in whom dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the Light of the world as well as the Saviour of the world—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Buhl's Canon and Text.

Canon and Text of the Old Testament. By Dr. Frants Buhl, Ordinary Professor of Theology at Leipzig. Translated by Rev. John Macpherson, M.A., Findhorn. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street. 1892. 7s. 6d.

Dr. F. Buhl occupies, as is well known, the chair formerly held at Leipzig by the late venerable Dr. Franz Delitzsch. He was, as is generally understood, designated by that scholar as his successor. Dr. F. Buhl is a Dane, and has been for several years Professor in the University of Copenhagen; and while in that post published, in Danish, the major portion of the work now before us, which he afterwards enlarged and published in German. He studied under Delitzsch at Leipzig, and it speaks volumes for the liberality of the German authorities that a Dane should be called to occupy a chair of theology in the renowned Saxon University. The work is exceedingly well and carefully done, and it fully deserves being issued in an English dress. The translator has done his work, on the whole, carefully, and has added among the literature references to the most important contributions of British scholars. There is no short summary of the history of the Old Testament Canon in English so satisfactory as that which is contained in this volume. The work will form a most useful addition to every clergyman's library, and even specialists will find in it much that will repay their perusal. We heartily recommend the work, and hope it may pass through many editions. Its publication is a sign of the increased interest now felt in Old Testament studies in this country. We trust it will be found soon in the hands of all our theological students, as it will show them how wide the field of research is, and how much remains yet to be done.

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The Epistles to the Thessalonians.

The Epistles to the Thessalonians. With Introduction, Notes, and Map. By the Rev. George G. Findlay, B.A., Professor of Biblical Languages in the Wesleyan College, Headingley. Cambridge: At the University Press. 1891.

We learn from a prefatory note to this little volume that the work of editing the Epistles to the Thessa-

lonians for the *Cambridge Bible* was originally intrusted to Dr. Moulton, the well-known headmaster of the Leys School. Owing to the pressure of other duties, however, Dr. Moulton found himself unable to proceed with the undertaking, and Professor Findlay was asked to take his place. Perhaps no higher praise could be bestowed upon the Commentary, as we now have it, than to say that it possesses just those characteristics of excellence which we would have expected in any text-book from Dr. Moulton's pen,—the same accurate scholarship, the same well-balanced judgment, the same spiritual insight into the apostle's meaning, the same devoutness of tone. Mr. Findlay's book is, of course, framed on the lines with which previous volumes in the same series have made us so familiar. It consists of an Introduction, a series of Notes on the text itself, an Appendix, and an Index—the last sufficiently full to render it really serviceable. Those who have made much use of the author's Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, published a few years ago as one of the volumes in the *Expositor's Bible*, will expect and be prepared to find Mr. Findlay's treatment of Thessalonians at once careful, fresh, and suggestive. Nor will they be disappointed. Whether dealing with the historical details of Paul's connection with Macedonia, or discussing the genuineness of the two epistles, or annotating the text itself, Mr. Findlay is always concise, always perfectly clear, and always succeeds in leaving the impression that he thoroughly knows the ground over which he leads us. Only of one topic could we have wished a fuller and more explicit treatment, viz. the place which these epistles hold in Paul's own theological development. That they must be assigned the first place in any chronological arrangement of the Pauline letters; that they "afford the best example left to us of St. Paul's *earliest* instructions to Gentile converts"; that they are "neither passionate nor argumentative, but practical, consolatory, prompted by affection, by memory, and hope"; that they "represent, as has been aptly said, 'St. Paul's normal style,' the way in which he would commonly write and talk to his friends,"—all this is clearly stated in the Introduction. Mr. Findlay also calls attention to the fact that very little is said in the two letters on the subject of the Atonement and Salvation by faith. He explains this on the ground that "on these fundamental doctrines there was evidently no dispute at Thessalonica. They were so fully accepted and understood in that Church that it was unnecessary to dilate upon them; and the apostle had other matters to deal with." The comparatively small space occupied by the subject of Christian Morals is also referred to; Mr. Findlay remarking that though "the new duties and affections belonging to the new life of believers in Christ are touched upon at many different points," yet "they are not developed with the fulness and systematic method of subsequent epistles." We are reminded on another page that the doctrine of the *Parousia*, so prominent in these letters, "afterwards retreats into the shade in the apostle's writings"; and for this two reasons are suggested,—Paul's quickened anticipation of the nearness of his own death, and his discovery of the disturbing and morbid effect of the doctrine itself among the Thessalonians. This is admirable so far as it goes. But we wish that Professor Findlay could have found room for at least one paragraph from the point of view adopted, for example, by Dr. Matheson in his recent and singularly fresh volume on the *Spiritual Development of St. Paul*,—one paragraph bringing out more clearly that the chronological order of the Pauline Epistles marks a mental order too. Much of the value and merit of Sabatier's well-known book, to the just published English translation of which Mr. Findlay has contributed a very thoughtful essay, lies in the careful attempt that it makes to trace the different stages in the apostle's mental and spiritual career; and by one so familiar with Sabatier's argument, we might have expected that greater prominence would be assigned to this particular topic. It is, however, almost invidious to find fault where so much is good. The Notes are crisp and never scrappy, no mere verbal discussions, but instinct with life and spirit. Nothing conld be better, for example, than the brief and well-condensed paragraphs on Election (pp. 51, 52), the Kingdom of God (p. 71); the Day of the Lord (pp. 108, 109); or than the discussion in the Appendix on 2 Thess. ii. 1–12 (the "Man of Sin" section). This addition to the *Cambridge Bible* bears on every page of it the evidence of long and sympathetic study of Pauline theology.

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