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God Hath Spoken

A Testimony to the Full Inspiration
of the Bible.

BY

H. D. BROWN

(LONDON).

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Old Testament Declaration.

THE MIGHTY

GOD

EVEN THE LORD

HATH SPOKEN

AND CALLED THE EARTH FROM THE RISING OF THE
SUN UNTO THE GOING DOWN THEREOF.

—PSALM l. 1.

New Testament Declaration.

GOD

WHO AT SUNDRY TIMES AND IN DIVERS
MANNERS SPAKE IN TIMES PAST UNTO THE
FATHERS BY THE PROPHETS

HATH

IN THESE LAST DAYS

SPOKEN

UNTO US BY HIS SON.

—HEBREWS i. 1, 2.



God Hath Spoken.

“THE mighty God, the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.”—Psalm l. 1.

A Momentous Question.

Has God in very truth spoken to men? Has a voice come from the Infinite, the Eternal One? If He has spoken how can we hear His voice? how shall we know what He has said? We turn to the Bible, which claims to be the Word of God, and inquire if this is true, for if the claim can be substantiated there can be nothing of more vital importance to all mankind than to know, What saith the Lord?

A more momentous question therefore could not be asked than this, “Is the Bible a revelation from God?” No other book in all the world deals with such stupendous issues, no other gives such clear declarations concerning human destiny with its great correlative themes of sin, salvation, death and judgment. If the Bible be a mere human compilation, the thoughts of men, the “evolution of the religious idea,” as it is sometimes called, only human con-

ceptions of God and truth and righteousness and eternal decrees, then, indeed, we dwell in darkness and are in utter ignorance of the highest, the deepest, the most momentous things that can engage the mind and heart of man. If all our knowledge of God, of His relation to us and of our relation to Him be dependent upon the vagaries of the human mind, then we are truly like "children crying in the night," we can at best "stretch forth lame hands of faith, and grope" in the darkness; and are, every one of us, poor agnostics,—knowing nothing.

But if God has really spoken, if we have in very deed received a revelation from Heaven, if the Bible is in truth the Word of God, then the true light has come, and we can rejoice in the light and we need no more "stretch forth lame hands of faith, and grope" nor be as "children crying in the night," but we can come to the light and walk in the light, and know of a surety the truths which most deeply concern us.

What are these truths? They are those concerning God our Creator, Who and what He is, and what are His thoughts towards us; concerning ourselves, who and what we are, whence we came, and whither we are going, why we are shut out from communion with our Maker, and how we can enter into and enjoy that communion again. Every thinking man will acknowledge the overwhelming importance of these things, while even those whose minds are

chiefly occupied with what they shall eat and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, have times when the solemn realities of life and eternity call aloud for attention and will not be silenced. How great then the importance of our being able to know of a surety that the Bible is a message from God upon which we can rely as absolute truth !

Is it Reasonable to Believe that God hath Spoken ?

Unquestionably, it is most reasonable to believe that the Creator is both able and willing to communicate with the intelligent beings of His own creation ; for unless man has created himself (which is an impossibility), he must have been brought into existence by some One greater than himself, some One to Whom he owes his life and every power with which he is endowed, and everything which he possesses, to Whom, therefore, he is accountable and Who rules his destiny. But if this be so it is a necessity that he should be able to know the mind and will of that Supreme Being, and he can only do so by that Being communicating His mind and will to him. This Supreme Being is "the mighty God," the Creator, the Upholder and the Contrôller of all things.

True, this is not in accord with the widely accepted idea of the present day that man and all things are the product of the evolution of the ages.

I do not stay now to combat this fallacy, which I shall deal with later on, but I would merely point out that it is opposed to every law of nature, for it is a plain, incontrovertible truth that the Cause must always be greater than the Effect, for nothing can produce a thing greater than itself.

It is clear, therefore, that man and the whole universe have been brought into existence by One greater than all, by One Who must Himself be eternal, infinite, and almighty, by an intelligent Being Who has acted upon His own initiative according to the purpose of His own will. Is it conceivable that such a Being should either be unable or unwilling to communicate with the beings which He has brought into existence, and whom He has endowed with intelligence? Nay, it is only possible to conceive of such silence on the part of the Creator on the ground of some great crime committed by the creature. Such a crime has indeed been committed by man, yet it is not at all unreasonable to believe that nevertheless God hath spoken in His love and pity to the souls whom He hath made.

How shall we know if God hath spoken?

Whatever claims to be the Word of God must speak with divine authority and present divine credentials. The Bible is the only Book in all the world which presents reasonable claims to be the Word of God; all other so-called sacred writings

are only human philosophies at best, mingled with human absurdities, and those which make any claim to be a revelation from Heaven offer no credentials, and, whatever stray gleams of virtue they may possess, they are manifestly only human in their source. The Bible alone makes the stupendous claim of being the very Word of God, and this claim has been acknowledged during many centuries by many millions of people, including the greatest and wisest, the noblest and the most cultured of men and women. Surely, then, it is the greatest folly and a crime to ignore this claim; and it is the highest wisdom to inquire into it and, if it be substantiated, to listen reverently to what God hath spoken.

I propose to put before my readers only a few of the overwhelming proofs drawn from the Bible itself, that it can be none other than the Word of God. I shall not bring forward any proofs that require an intimate knowledge of history or archæology or science; first, because I want to give only such proofs as any man can without special education understand for himself; and second, because while archæology, science and history are deeply interesting when they throw side-lights upon Bible statements and help us to understand the Scriptures better, yet none of them can really either confirm or discredit the claims of the Bible to Divine inspiration. This may seem a bold statement, but a little consideration will show the truth of it. You can only test the accuracy of, say,

a footrule by placing alongside of it a standard measure : you might cut fifty wands out of a hedge and lay them alongside the footrule and argue from these that the rule was either too short or too long or quite correct, but anyone would at once see the folly of this ; yet it would not be more foolish than trying to prove either the accuracy or the inaccuracy of the Bible from ancient heathen chronicles or modern scientific theories until it has been proved that the ancient chronicles are themselves absolutely inerrant or that the scientific theories are incapable of change. How can science be a criterion of the errancy or inerrancy of the Bible when it does not even profess to have reached finality ?

What I propose to do therefore is to give a few of the incontrovertible proofs that can be brought forward from the Bible itself, that it can be none other than the Word of God, for if this can be established we may rest assured of its absolute infallibility whatever scientific theories or archæological discoveries may seem to say to the contrary.





The Question Answered.

The External Evidence.

To obtain an answer to the question let us first examine the external evidence connected with the Bible, and then we will examine the Bible itself and its internal evidence to the truthfulness of its claim. Let us endeavour to approach the subject with open minds, and I ask the reader to weigh carefully and judge candidly the following brief statement of the case.

A Marvellous Fact.

I begin with the marvellous fact of the very existence of such a Book, making such a claim which if not true must be a huge imposture and downright blasphemy : yet it has been received by millions of the human race as the Word of God, many of whom have even laid down their lives in attestation of their belief. It is a Book which is found in kings' palaces, in the mansions of the rich and the cottages of the poor, a Book which for nineteen centuries has held the most unique position in the whole world, a Book of which there are in the present time more than ten millions printed every year, and it is a Book which is

found carefully preserved in the most ancient manuscripts extant, manuscripts for which the Governments of the greatest and most enlightened European nations have paid great sums to possess them and place them in their national libraries and museums. Surely such a wonderful Book is not to be lightly esteemed, and when it claims to speak with Divine authority we are bound either to accept that claim and obey that authority, or at least to investigate its claim carefully and impartially and see whether it be truly the Word of God or falsely the word of man.

A Marvellous History.

I ask you now to consider the wonderful history of the Book, taking that only since it appeared in its present completed form. For many centuries the world has been doing its utmost to get rid of it, but has utterly failed ; kings, priests and people have united in trying to banish it from the earth, but without avail ; they have cursed it and burned it, they have cavilled at it and maligned it ; worse still, they have imprisoned and tortured and put to the most cruel deaths men, women and little children for the sole crime of loving it and avowing their belief in its blessed truths ; in their blind hatred of the Book and of the God Whom it reveals. But all to no purpose ; God has sent the Book into the world and it remains unto this day. He has planted it and no man can uproot it ; it is charged with the message of His wonderful love and His

glorious salvation ; and men may hate it and scorn it and reject it, but **He** has said "My Word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Is there another Book on all the earth that would have withstood this terrible opposition? Nay, not the works of the world's greatest thinkers would have stood it for a single decade, but in a few years of such persecution they would have passed into utter oblivion. What other book in the world is there for which men would willingly have suffered the loss of all things and counted their lives not dear unto them?

But the Bible has not only remained in the world, but it has prospered exceedingly, so that now it is spread over the greater part of the earth and is translated into more than three hundred languages. This, moreover, has not been done by the great men and rich men, or by powerful governments ; but chiefly by the poor and obscure ones, who were rich in faith and noble in purpose, of many of whom it may truly be said "this world was not worthy."

A Marvellous Power.

If the history of the Book in the world has been wonderful, its power over men is more wonderful still, Of all the multitudes who have loved the Bible and have believed its truths there are very few who have

not first had to be conquered by it: comparatively few have known and believed and loved the Scriptures from childhood: the natural heart has no desire for God or the things of God, and in all ages, it has only been through reading or hearing the truths of God's Word that men have "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, Who delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 10.) This is what we call "conversion" and is not a mere outward profession of Christianity when "religion walks in silver slippers," as Bunyan puts it, and there has been no sifting process of persecution to test its reality. Many of the bitterest enemies of the Bible have become its devoted friends, not a few who have sat down to examine it and prove its falsity have seen their error, believed its truth and become its firm adherents, many, after having persecuted those who believed in it, have themselves become believers and willingly laid down their lives in its cause.

Then witness its power as shown in the changed lives of the drunkard, the harlot, the thief, and of men and women previously sunk in the most debasing forms of vice and crime; witness its power over savages of the very lowest type, as for instance among the Terra del Fuegians and the cannibals of the New Hebrides, eighteen thousand of whom have been con-

verted to Christianity through its teachings within a single generation. Witness its wonderful power of sustaining heart and mind in the midst of the sorest trials and when face to face with death even in the most terrible form. While at the same time multitudes of the noblest, the purest, the most cultured of men and women have found inexpressible delight in perusing its pages and meditating upon its sublime truths.

Consider these things and say why it is that this ancient Book is able to do what no other book in all the world has done or can do, what is the secret of its mighty power? There is but one answer: there is a Power behind the Book manifesting Himself in the Book and through the Book, and that Power is God, the Author of the Book. If you believe not this, reader, try to account for it in some other way. You may be told that it is the "religious instinct in man" that accounts for it; but it is an undeniable fact that no "religion" in the world except the Christian religion has ever withstood the fire and the sword and still survived the flames of prolonged persecution. No, the Bible in its very existence, in its wonderful history and Divine power, stands absolutely alone in sublime isolation as manifestly the very Word of God.





The Question Answered.

The Internal Evidence.

WE now come to consider the internal evidence—that which can be drawn from the Book itself ; and our examination of this must necessarily be brief, but I trust it will be sufficient to prove incontestably the Divine authority of the Bible. Let us now consider

Its Unique Construction.

It is composed of no less than sixty-six books or writings, extending over a period of at least fourteen centuries. It has well been called “A Divine Library,” yet it is also emphatically **ONE BOOK**: its unity in diversity is marvellous ; it contains history, legislation, worship, poetry, prophecy and doctrine ; it is the work of many writers who lived at vastly different periods of the world’s history, yet all these many writings form one Book of which all the parts are wonderfully compacted together and wrought out in beautiful symmetry. Does not this clearly show that the whole Bible is the work of one Author, one great Master Mind Who gave to each writer his work, and planned, directed and guided the whole ?

Further, not one of the writers contradicts or corrects another, or alludes to previous writings, however ancient, as obsolete ideas, but rather quotes them as the one ground of their authoritative teaching. True there is progressive revelation, but it is as light which from the dawn of morning "shineth more and more unto the perfect day," the same light, but with ever-increasing radiance. This is entirely contrary to human ways, for in every other department of literature there is constant correction, contradiction, and suggested improvement, old ideas become obsolete and give place to the new.

Another striking fact in the construction of the Bible is that it is composed of two great sections, the Old Testament and the New. The Old Testament has always been most jealously guarded and conserved by the Jews, while they repudiate, despise and hate the New, so that there can be no thought of collusion between the writers; yet each of these two great sections is the counterpart and the complement of the other, without which neither is complete, but together they form one harmonious whole. To the Jews the Old Testament remains an enigma to this day; rejecting the New Testament they cannot find the key to their own Holy Writings.

Its Unique Character.

All the prophets and apostles speak and write with authority; there is no hesitation in delivering the

message, but a clear ringing "Thus saith the Lord," yet no one claims any authority for himself except as the messenger of God. Often the message is a terrible burden which they shrink from delivering; it brings them no honour from men, no peace but persecution, ignominy and even death, but they are sustained and impelled by an inward power; they cannot withhold the message; as Paul said, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel."

The Bible reveals truths so deep and high that the mightiest intellects on earth cannot comprehend them, yet the way of salvation is made so plain that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein," and the most ignorant and uneducated can drink as deeply of its spiritual joys as the most enlightened and cultured. Scholars and peasants, civilized and barbarians, when converted through its truths, have each and all found in it the fullest satisfaction for their souls' intensest desires.

What it Reveals.

This wonderful Book contains history the most ancient, poetry the most soul-entrancing, prophecy and its fulfilment most miraculous, and truth most glorious. Yet these are not the great features of the Book: its grand and distinctive mark is that it bears the distinct impress of God. In it we hear, as it were, two voices, as "deep calleth unto deep," and as we listen with reverent attitude we hear the voice of

God speaking to man, and the voice of man speaking to God. We have a double revelation, a revelation of the heart, the thoughts, the purposes of God, and we have a revelation—that is a divine revelation—of the heart, the thoughts and the yearnings of man.

The Revelation of God.

It is quite true that man has by nature a “religious instinct”; he is formed for worship; God has formed man for Himself, and his only true attitude is that of worshipping, adoring, and communing with his Creator. This is the great characteristic that makes him to differ from every other creature on the face of the earth. This “religious instinct” marred, perverted and misdirected by sin, has led him through all time in his ignorance of the true God to create gods of his own imagination and bow down and worship them. Now in all the history of the human race no people under the sun has ever conceived of a God such as is revealed to us in the Bible; all such gods, even in the palmiest days of such nations as ancient Greece and Rome, when men of the highest intellectual culture lived, were only human monsters, and their mythology consisted only of stories of intensified human passion, lust, and revenge. And why? Simply because the human heart can conceive of nothing greater than itself, and even to-day, apart from the teaching of the Bible, the greatest human intellects are in utter ignorance of God.

'The God revealed to us in the Bible then is infinitely above every human idea. His character, therefore, is no human conception, but a revelation from Himself.

Let us take three great attributes. First, **His absolute holiness**. Now, not only is the natural mind incapable of understanding holiness, but the natural heart hates it with the utmost intensity. That "the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," is a truth of universal application. Ah ! this is why men hate the Bible ; its history they may be interested in, its poetry they may admire, its ethics they may approve of, but its holiness they hate, and the holiness of God whose eyes are "as a flame of fire" searching the inmost thoughts of their hearts, Whose anger burns against sin, not only against the grosser forms of sin, but against all sin, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," Who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity," is to the natural heart an object of terror and hatred.

How then could this revelation come from man? How could it be "the evolution of his religious conceptions" when it is utterly opposed to his every thought? Is it not clear that it must be a revelation from God?

Now let us take **the righteousness of God**. If man by nature hates holiness, he also dreads

righteousness. True he retains some crude idea of justice, of the punishment of the evildoer, but it is little more than the instinct of revenge, and he thinks of the punishment to be meted out to others, not himself ; but the truth of perfect righteousness whereby he and all his actions, all his words and all his thoughts and motives will be tried and dealt with in unswerving justice is too dreadful for an accusing conscience, and he will rather fly for refuge into atheism so that he may hide the thought from him.

But if the heart of man hates the holiness of God and dreads His righteousness, still more has it proved itself utterly incapable of conceiving of the **love of God**. No "religion" in all the world except that which is taken from the Bible has ever presented God as a God of love, still less has the heart of man ever conceived of infinite love in perfect harmony with and, indeed, inseparable from absolute holiness and unswerving righteousness. But oh ! what a character does the Bible reveal to us of God Who, without abating one jot of His hatred to sin, yet loves the sinner with an infinite compassion, and Who, of His own free sovereign grace, has devised a plan and carried it out whereby the sinner may be saved from his sin, justified in His sight and made a partaker of the Divine nature and "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

And besides the revelation of God we have also

The Revelation of Man.

Man has ever been an enigma to himself, whence he came, what he is, and whither he is going ; the past, the present and the future of his being have always been to him impenetrable mysteries which no man either in ancient or modern times has been able to solve. The latest "scientific" theory—that of evolution—shows that he is still groping in the dark as regards his origin, while the janglings of philosophers show how vain are their attempts to understand what he is, so great and yet so small, so noble and yet so vile ; and as for the future, peer into it as he may, he cannot penetrate the thick dark veil that hides it from his view.

The Bible alone solves the mystery, and every true ray of light that has fallen upon it has come direct from the Holy Scriptures. They tell us whence man came, that he came from the hand of his Creator, created in the image of God ; they tell us how he fell and lost that image and became what he is, and they tell how that image can be restored, and whither he is going, either to eternal blessedness in the presence of God or to everlasting woe if he continue in rebellion against his Maker, a rebellion infinitely more guilty, now that the true light has come, on the part of those who reject the salvation purchased by the blood of His own beloved Son.

The Bible is a master-key which unlocks every recess of his innermost being ; not a thought, not an

imaginâtion, not a desire nor passion, not a grief nor a yearning of his heart but finds its reflex there. The Bible holds a mirror before his face and shows him what he is, deformed and defiled with sin. For this reason also he hates it, because he does not like to see himself as he really is ; he likes to imagine himself fair and good with traits of high nobility which only need cultivating, and he plumes himself much upon what he dreams the human race will be in the far future when it has reached its goal !

This is but another proof that the Bible could not have come from man.

Reconciliation between God and Man.

The deepest problem of human life is the great question which is most strongly rooted in the human consciousness, "How shall man be just with God?" This cry of the soul is universal, in all ages of the world's history, among all nations and peoples ; the burden has an intolerable weight, with every thought of death and the hereafter ; among the heathen it has been the cause of their terror of an unknown god whom they have sought to propitiate with horrible sacrifices even of their own children, "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

In later times men have tried hard to crush the gnawing fear with unbelief, but no one has ever succeeded in answering the question asked in Holy

Writ three thousand years ago, "How then can man be justified with God?"

The Bible alone has solved the great problem ; it acknowledges the whole world to be "guilty before God," but it has shown us how a holy and righteous God can "be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," "having made peace by the blood of His cross."

Oh, reader, if you have not already settled this question with God, I would earnestly plead with you to do so now before it be too late. Listen to the message from God's own Word that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

But again I ask, is it conceivable that such a marvellous revelation could possibly have come from man ? Does it not bear upon it the indelible impress of the mind of God ?





Christ the Great Theme.

THE Bible embraces many subjects of vital importance ; it ranges through heaven and earth and hell ; it reaches heights and depths beyond the power of the greatest human intellect to understand ; but it has one grand central Theme which unites them all and brings them all into one harmonious whole. That Theme is the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ ; He is the Sum and Substance, the Centre and Circumference, the Heart, the Life, the Glory of the Holy Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. “ To Him give all the prophets witness.” He is foreshadowed in every type, every song glorifies Him, every doctrine rests upon Him as the one Foundation, every line of history bears directly or indirectly upon Him, and every genealogy derives its sole importance from its relation to His earthly lineage.

If it were possible to take Christ out of the Bible nothing would be left—at least, nothing intelligible ; nothing would remain but dead leaves without life or power, and with very little human interest. But with Christ as its all and in all, the whole Book is lighted up and pulsates with life and power, and is filled with

glory. Throughout the Old Testament the two great thoughts are, a coming King and a coming Sacrifice. That King and that Sacrifice are revealed to us in the New, recording the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then declaring the blessed results which flow from these, and prophesying the coming again in great power and glory of the Son of God from Heaven.

A Stupendous Task.

What a stupendous task, therefore, was before the men who sat down to write the story of the earthly life and death of such an One ! They had to portray the life not only of a perfect Man, but of One Who is God as well as Man, perfect in His divinity and perfect in His humanity ; moreover, of One Who should fulfil all prophecy that was written concerning Him, every requirement of the law, both moral and ritual ; every promise of the Messiah, every God-given hope and expectation.

It was, indeed, a superhuman task, yet how have they succeeded ? Let history bear witness. For nineteen centuries this wonderful story has been before a hostile world, with the challenge which Christ Himself gave to His enemies, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin ?" and no one has been able to find a single flaw. Many have tried, but all in vain, and though some have tried to cast mud and asperse

the character of Christ, it has only recoiled upon themselves.

In these four Gospels we have the portraiture of an absolutely perfect faultless Man, of One Who was over and over again declared to be so, and Who Himself claimed to be the Son of God, equal with the Father ; and in that portraiture we have set before us a life of such surpassing loveliness, so full of divine majesty, so pure and holy, so righteous yet so full of grace and truth, that many of the greatest intellects, even among those who are not His disciples, have acknowledged its marvellous beauty, and have revered Christ at least as the very highest ideal of men ; while vast multitudes, in every quarter of the globe, have acknowledged Him as Lord and Saviour, and have seen in Him the brightness of the glory of God and the express Image of His Person.

Who were the Writers?

Now, who were the men who wrote this wondrous story ? A tax-gatherer, a fisherman, a country doctor, and a young man of unknown occupation. Will any sane man believe that these men “ created ” the life of the Lord Jesus Christ ? There have been those, and there still are some who tell us, that with a modicum of fact the story was woven out of the fervid imagination of His disciples. Could human credulity go farther ? They might, with far greater

reason, ask us to believe that the pyramids of Egypt had been built by babes, or that a masterpiece of Raphael or Michael Angelo was the work of an imbecile ! They cannot deny the great historical fact of the life of Jesus Christ, but in their hostility to His Person as the Son of God they assert that what to them seem the more miraculous features were accretions added by the historians. The utter irrationality and emptiness of such a thought is only too manifest, for the great miracle of miracles lies in the **character** and **teaching** of Christ. To us it is not His miracles that attest His divinity, but His manifest divinity which attests the truth of His miracles. It is because "Never man spake like this Man," as even His enemies testified, that our reason is convinced and our faith assured that the Lord Jesus Christ is none other than the Son of God.

Only He Who was in the bosom of the Father could declare the Father unto us ; only He Who in the beginning was with God could make known to us His eternal counsels ; only He Who was Himself "the Word of God" and the "Wisdom of God" could reveal God unto us as He did, and if Christ revealed these things to us, it was a light thing for Him also to do those wonderful miracles, which to the men then living who saw them, attested that He "came from God"—as Nicodemus testified, "No man can do these miracles which Thou doest except God be with him."

It is perfectly clear, then, that the writers had before them the actual Life and Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; but it is quite as clear that no man could have written the Story by his own unaided powers. They could only have written it by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, for only He could give a perfect record of that perfect Life.

The Testimony of the Son of God.

Here, then, we have undoubtedly a divine record of a divine life, the life of the Son of God, Who claimed, and proved His claim, to be equal with God, Whose knowledge, therefore, was infinite, and Whose authority is undeniable. What is His testimony to the Scriptures? Does He leave us in any doubt that they are in very truth the Word of God? Nay, verily, He stretches one arm as it were over the whole of the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament, and puts upon them the seal of His divine authority—an authority which no man dare question. On them He founds His own claim to be the Messiah; by them He confutes all His adversaries, and to Him they are ever an end of all controversy. Then He stretches the other arm over the New Testament, divinely authorising and commissioning His disciples, and promising that the Spirit of Truth would lead them into all truth, and teach them things concerning Himself which at that time they were not able to receive.

Moreover, He, the Incarnate Word, and the Scriptures, the written Word, are so inseparably interjoined that no man can put them asunder: without Christ it is impossible to understand the Bible, and without the Bible it is impossible to know Christ. It is all very well to say as some do, that they prefer a living Christ to a dead book, when all they know, or ever can know of Christ, they learn from that Book; nor does the Holy Spirit ever teach men a single truth concerning Christ which He has not already recorded in that Book. Let anyone go to heathen lands and try to teach men about Christ without the Book, and see how he will succeed!

Our faith in the Bible, then, as the Word of God from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation, rests not on human testimony, nor on human reason, but on the infinite knowledge, the infallible wisdom and indisputable authority of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. Nay, more—we have in His declarations the authority of the Triune God, for though it is true that our Lord “emptied Himself” when He “was made in the likeness of men,” yet He was still God as well as Man. Moreover, He was filled with the Spirit, while again and again He declared that the words He spoke were not His own words, but the words which His Father had given him to speak (cf. John xii. 49), so that in every word He spoke we have the authority of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I trust, therefore, that it is now abundantly clear to my reader that this wonderful Book which we call the Bible is undeniably what it claims to be—the inspired Word of God, incontestably proved to be so both by the external and internal evidence, and above all by the testimony of Christ Himself. I shall now proceed to inquire into the character of this Divine Inspiration.





Inspiration.

What is Inspiration?

INBREATHING something which comes from without, not from within. Inspiration by the Holy Ghost, therefore, is totally different from human genius. Genius is a quality of the human mind and comes from within a man ; inspiration comes direct from God, and is wholly independent of the quality of the human mind. The Holy Spirit could equally use and inspire a trained intellect like that of Saul of Tarsus and a wholly uncultured one like that of Amos, the herdman of Tekoa. It is of great importance to remember this because the two things are often confounded, and the genius of poets and thinkers often regarded as being the same as inspiration ; but this is only confusing men's thoughts with God's thoughts, whereas God has said : " My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways." Men's thoughts may sometimes be to some extent in the same line as God's thoughts, but those are only scintillations from the light originally given to man at his creation, and are wholly different from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit which carries with it divine authority.

For a right understanding of the inspiration of the Bible we must note that it consists of three things :

An Inspired Record of events which have taken place ;

A Divine Revelation of truths which man could not discover for himself ; and

A Divine Seal upon truths common to man.

First. An Inspired Record.

That is, its history was divinely inspired ; though that does not necessarily mean that the facts were miraculously communicated to the writers. Concerning some parts this was doubtless the case, as, for instance, in the account of the creation, but in later history it is clearly stated that the record was compiled from material already existing ; even then, however, to insure absolute accuracy, the writers had to be miraculously guided in selecting and recording what the Holy Spirit chose for His purpose, and the fact that there were prepared materials already to hand does not in the least militate against the divine inspiration.

Second. Divine Revelation.

This has already been fully dealt with in a previous chapter ; it includes the revelation of the thoughts, the plans and purposes of God, and also of the thoughts of man's heart which are known to God alone, as He says in Jer. xvii. 9, 10 : "The heart who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins thereof."

Third. Divine Seal.

It is often said that many of the truths of the Bible, even those spoken by our Lord Himself, are to be found also in heathen philosophies ; and it is argued from this by some that these truths were taken from heathen sources, and by others that the heathen philosophers were inspired by the Holy Spirit in the same way as the writers of the Bible. Neither of these is correct, however, but God having in His wisdom chosen men to be His instruments, there are naturally many thoughts and expressions common to men, which the Holy Spirit has used, having sifted these, purified them, and stamped them with His divine authority. "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." (Ps. xii. 6.)

Theories of Inspiration.

Men have wrought out many theories concerning the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures in their vain attempt to explain what is a divine mystery. Dean Farrar has summed these up and divided them into five heads. It may be instructive to state these, quoting his own words.

The first he calls "The organic, mechanical or dictation theory," and says : "According to this theory the Bible is in every text absolutely supernatural, transcendently divine."

The second he calls "The dynamic or power

theory," which he thus defines: "The truths are inspired by the Holy Spirit, the words and phrases are the result of the writers' own individuality."

Third. "The theory of illumination," which is that "the Bible is divinely inspired, but in different degrees"; there is, according to this theory "the grace of superintendence, of elevation, of direction, of suggestion."

Fourth. "The theory of essentials," which "confines the inspiration to matters of doctrine, of morality, and faith."

Fifth. "Ordinary inspiration," which is "not generically distinct from the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts and intellects of all Christian men." According to this, "Each book and passage of Scripture must be tested by its inherent consistency with that which we learn of God's will from His revelation of Himself, above all in the life of Christ."

Now it will be seen that the last four of these definitions, though differing in some respects from each other, have all one feature in common—namely, that they all assume the admixture of human error with divine truth only in greater or less degrees. Let us very briefly examine them, beginning with

No. 2. If the Holy Spirit revealed the truths, how could He do so except through the medium of language? for a man cannot think except in words; and if the writers were left to express the thoughts of

God in words of their own choosing, how could we know that they expressed these thoughts correctly or adequately? There are many passages of Scripture an inexact rendering of which might imperil our eternal salvation, while throughout the whole Bible, our comfort, our joy, our peace can only be assured through our knowledge that God Himself is speaking.

No. 3. If the Bible be inspired in different degrees how shall we determine what degree of inspiration and therefore what degree of authority to attach to any part of it? Supporters of this theory are wont to compare passages such as Isaiah liii., or the Gospels, with chapters of genealogy in the Old Testament, and ask if we can believe that they were all inspired alike. Undoubtedly they were, for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost was as much needed for selecting and recording the details of sacred history which was to set forth the earthly lineage and glory of Christ as for the prophecies concerning Him or for the revelation of divine truth.

No. 4. This theory is equivalent to saying that historical accuracy is not "essential," and that the Holy Spirit overlooked all mistakes, or even false statements in the records, so long as the writers were correct in their "doctrine, morality and faith," a theory which has only to be stated to show its absurdity.

No. 5. This theory reduces the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to the level of mere human thought, and

confounds a man's own thoughts concerning the teaching of Scripture with the authoritative voice of the Spirit.

All these theories, and every other which denies the Verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, claim for man the position of judge, and instead of him submitting himself to the authority of the Word of God, the Word is made to submit Itself to him ; and while these theorists deny the infallibility of the Book, they practically claim infallibility for men.





Verbal Inspiration.

WE now come to examine the first of the theories in the foregoing list, which Dean Farrar (who, however, does not accept it) rightly says makes "the Bible in every text absolutely supernatural, transcendently divine." A better description of it could not be given, but I wholly dissent from his definition of it as being in the least degree an "organic, mechanical or dictation theory." Inspiration as to words is no more "mechanical" than inspiration as to thoughts, and "dictation" is altogether distinct from inspiration. The latter is to us an incomprehensible influence of the Holy Spirit upon a man, exerted we know not how, but in such a way as to blend mysteriously together the absolute control of the Holy Ghost with the perfect freedom of the human mind. To call this "dictation" is a perversion of language, but it is invariably used by those who deny verbal inspiration.

My contention is that in the original writings there was absolutely no error possible, for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost extended to every word written, and I shall endeavour to show that this is the **only form of inspiration** of the Bible in which we can reasonably believe,

Here, however, it may be objected that as we have not now the original writings to examine, it is not possible to test their inerrancy. This I readily admit, and it is, therefore, necessary to fall back upon what is called the *à priori* argument, and consider what is most reasonable to believe under the circumstances. It must be borne in mind that the question at issue is clear and well defined—namely, this : Are we to believe that God gave a **perfect** or an **imperfect** revelation?—because every other theory than that of verbal inspiration is a plea for a revelation more or less imperfect, having some admixture of human error with divine truth.

First let me clear the ground by explaining as clearly as I can what is meant by verbal inspiration.

Verbal inspiration means such divine guidance in the use of words as secured absolute inerrancy in writing down what God revealed or what He desired to record ; but it does not mean that everything everybody said or did as recorded in the Bible was of God. This is a common mistake ; the RECORD was inspired, but many of the acts and words even of Godly men were far from being according to the mind of God.

Verbal inspiration does not exclude the human element, for while the whole Bible is divine in its source it is human in its form ; it was written for man, and God in His wisdom used human minds and human forms of speech as the vehicles for com-

municating His revelation to man. But the Holy Spirit selected His own instruments, and to these He gave "diversities of gifts," and these gifts He used by His Divine power according to His Divine wisdom and His sovereign will. In what way the Holy Spirit operated upon the minds of His chosen instruments no man can understand or explain, but in the written Word we see a reflection of that mysterious and incomprehensible union of God with man that we see also in the Lord Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word.

Again, it must be borne in mind that while it is of the original writings that we speak (for no one claims that either copyists or translators were inspired and, therefore, inerrant), yet it is clearly manifest that God has wonderfully watched over the transmission of the inspired Writings so that we still have a Book which, after all the labours of a multitude of learned men in comparing all the ancient copies extant, is a marvellously close reproduction of **the very words of God Himself.**

Let us now consider some of the reasons for holding that verbal inspiration, or the giving of a **perfect** revelation unalloyed with any human error, is the **only** form of inspiration in which we can reasonably believe.

First. Because God is absolutely perfect in Himself, in ALL His ways, and in ALL His works. Is it possible, then, to believe that in one of His most

important works, the revelation of His mind and will to His creatures, He would do it imperfectly?

Second. As the purpose of God in giving man this revelation was for man's highest good, and as it is undeniable that it is for man's highest good that such a revelation should be perfect, is it conceivable that a God of wisdom and truth would permit His revelation to be 'marred with error and falsehood?

Third. If we think it possible that God could have given us an imperfect revelation through the fallibility or ignorance of His instruments, how could we know what was divine truth and what was human error? This is a question of tremendous importance, for the supposition completely destroys the authority and even the usefulness of the Bible as a revelation from God. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself for the battle?" Some say we "must trust to the reason that God has given us," but they forget that reason which was originally given perfect to man is now marred by sin so that it is wholly unreliable. Others say we must accept that which appeals to our "inner consciousness." But if my "inner consciousness" knows by nature what is and what is not the mind of God, what need had I of a revelation at all? Every theory except that of absolute inerrancy, which could only be obtained by verbal inspiration, logically claims infallibility for man, and is a plea, as already said, for man sitting in judgment upon the Word of God instead of submitting himself to its

authority, and it is an insult to the Most High God to suppose that He would allow man to occupy such a position.

The Testimony of the Holy Ghost to Verbal Inspiration.

But the most serious arraignment of those who deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible is, that they ignore the repeated declarations of the Holy Spirit on this very subject. It is true that there is not on every page a declaration that God is the Author, but this is not needed. If you receive a letter from a friend, you believe that it is **all his, every word of it**, although he makes no special declaration that it is so; or if a book is published in any man's name, it is accepted as **all his, every word of it**; and if anyone declares that it is not, the onus of proof lies upon him. So also with the Bible; it comes to us in the name of God, and we are bound to accept it as **all His, every word of it**; and if anyone declare to the contrary, he is bound to prove his case.

But even in this matter the Holy Ghost has been careful to make it abundantly clear that He has directed the words, as well as given the thoughts. For instance, how often do we read, "Thus saith the Lord"? In Exodus iii. 12, God said to Moses, "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." Does that look as if Moses were left to

himself to write the words? Again in 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, David says, "The Spirit of the Lord **spake** by me, and **His word was in my tongue.**" In confirmation of this, we read in Acts i. 16, "The Holy Ghost **spake** by the mouth of David." Again, in Heb. i. 3, we read: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners **spake** in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days **spoken** unto 'us by His Son," showing plainly that the words of Christ Himself and the words of the prophets were equally the words of God; and throughout the whole chapter a number of passages of Old Testament Scripture are quoted, and referred direct to God as the Speaker without so much as naming the human instruments who wrote His words. Paul claims the same divine **verbal** inspiration for himself and for the other writers of the New Testament, as, for instance, where he says in 1 Cor. ii. 13, "Which things we speak, not **in words** which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." In 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, the same Apostle, **writing of the Hebrew canon of "The Holy Scriptures,"** says, "All Scripture (**writing**) given by inspiration of God," or as in the R. V. "Every Scripture (**writing**) inspired of God," or still more emphatically in the marginal reading, "Every Scripture is inspired of God."

Declarations, such as these, abound throughout the Bible, all affirming this great truth, and I ask if

any claim could be stronger to any reasonable and unprejudiced mind, that the very words of Scripture were inspired by God Himself? To say that the Holy Spirit in revealing the mind of God to man allowed the revelation to be conveyed in a mass of legend, myth and fable ; or to say that the men who wrote in His Name were permitted to mis-state history, to mingle their own thoughts with the thoughts of God, or were left to express as best they could with their own imperfect understandings the eternal truths He taught them, is so utterly unreasonable, that we may well be amazed that it could be believed by men who profess to believe in a God of wisdom and truth.

Blessed be His Name, we are not left to such poor comfort, to grope in semi-darkness, to unravel such an entanglement of truth and error ; but, however difficult some parts of Holy Writ may be to our poor understandings, our faith can rest secure upon "the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture," and we can have all the comfort, all the joy, all the blessed assurance that comes from knowing of a surety that every word of God is eternal as Himself. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away," saith the Lord.

How does this Affect an Imperfect Translation ?

But it may here be asked, What is the advantage to us of verbal inspiration if the Bible as we now

possess it be not perfect? And does not this imperfectness impair its value and invalidate its authority? To this we answer Yes and No. Yes, because to whatever extent our translation is imperfect, to that extent its value is diminished; and herein lies the great value of the labours of those scholars who by the critical examination of ancient copies have endeavoured to give us as nearly as possible an exact reproduction of the original writings.

. But we also answer Practically No, because of the Divine care which has manifestly been exercised in handing down to us “the wonderful words of life,” so that notwithstanding the tremendous difficulties attending the transmission (of some parts for thousands of years) and translation, yet the truth of God has been preserved to us pure and uncorrupted to the present day. It is nothing short of a miracle that the light from Heaven is all unbroken through the multitude of copies and translations into different languages, while the different readings and renderings which have arisen from the efforts of scholars to get back to the Divine original only affect the details of diction, and indeed serve to bring out the “lights and perfections” of the Word of God.

Moreover, the much talked of discrepancies really amount to nothing; many of them on closer examination can be explained, others evidently await our fuller knowledge of the mind of the Spirit to see the full beauty of His design, while others are manifestly

the small errors of copyists and translators. Indeed, this is but another proof of the *necessity* for verbal inspiration, for if it has been found impossible for uninspired men even to copy correctly God's handiwork, though taking the greatest care, how great would have been the confusion had God left His amanuenses to their own feeble human powers to attempt to write His Divine thoughts in their own words !

The necessity for our having a Divinely given infallible standard of truth is also shown by the multitude of errors, heresies, Judaic observances, and Pagan philosophies which filled the Church and rent it asunder almost immediately after the closing of the Canon of Holy Scripture, and which began to show themselves even while the Apostles were still living.

If it be asked Why did not God take the same care to preserve the later copies and translations from imperfection as He took to preserve the original writings, we can only answer that it has pleased Him in the plenitude of His wisdom, and in harmony with all His ways to commit His oracles to the keeping of men ; and we ask, who can fathom "the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God . . . for who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ?" It is ours to accept facts, not to question the wisdom or the ways of God.





Opposition of Science.

[F the reader is convinced from the evidence which the Scriptures themselves present, from the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the express declarations of the Holy Spirit, that the Bible from beginning to end is indeed the Word of God, then no difficulties whatever need arise. However much it may be above our comprehension, nay, however much it may seem to be antagonistic to our understanding, it need not disturb our faith. It is enough, **God hath spoken**; it is ours to hear with reverence what the Lord hath said. This is no blind unreasoning credulity, no superstitious clinging to “traditional beliefs.” It is enlightened REASON and FAITH **resting** upon the Word of God.

But it may be well to consider some of the difficulties which do arise even to devout minds and endeavour to remove them.

First we may take the difficulties which science seems to present to an unquestioning belief in the Bible. Now it is perfectly true that the supposed discoveries of science and the declarations of Scripture very often do not harmonise and sometimes are in direct opposition to each other. What then? are

the conjectures of fallible men to be pitted against the Word of the living God? For it must be borne in mind that a very great deal of what is called science nowadays is not science at all ; science means knowledge, whereas a vast amount of the so-called science of the present day is not knowledge at all, but merely conjecture. A certain modicum of fact is discovered and the rest is all theory, in reality a string of conjectures which may be right or wrong, but it is not knowledge. By many, scientific theories are supposed to be the teachings of Nature and therefore incontrovertible, but Nature or God's handiwork is one thing, men's theories about it quite another. Lest I be thought to be harsh in my judgment, take the testimony of Mr. T. A. Edison, himself a scientist of no mean attainment. He says in "Suggestive Therapeutics," "*There are more frauds in modern science than anywhere else . . . take a whole pile of them that I can name, and you will find uncertainty, if not imposition, in half of what they state as scientific truth. They have time and, again set down experiments as done by them, curious, out-of-the-way experiments that they never did, and upon which they have founded so-called scientific truths. I have been thrown off my track often by them, and for months at a time.*"

This is a scathing indictment, all the more that it is not from the religious, but from the scientific standpoint, and it comes from one who is in the inner circle of practical science. Science has' undoubtedly

done great things for human knowledge, for human civilization, and for the mitigation of human suffering ; and to the noble toilers in those labyrinthine paths we owe an immense debt of gratitude ; but scientists themselves never claim finality or infallibility for science—except, of course, when they are trying to prove that the Bible is wrong !

The great overmastering theory which goes by the name of science in the present day is Evolution, which is an elaborate attempt to account for the universe without God. There are many who accept evolution as a theory and who still believe in God, but the origin of the theory, the genius of it, the foundation thought upon which the whole superstructure is built, is that matter was uncreated and has by a power within itself transformed itself in the course of long ages and by imperceptible changes into all the marvellous variety and wondrous beauty which we now see in nature.

I shall now endeavour to show, although I can only do so very briefly owing to want of space, that this theory of evolution is

Against the laws of Science, Against the laws of Nature, and Against the teaching of Scripture.

First. It is **against the laws of science** because the proud boast of science has always been that it will accept nothing without proof, and it has always demanded demonstration. Now for Evolution

not one solitary proof has ever been forthcoming ; it is nothing but hypothesis or conjecture from beginning to end. Evolutionists see in nature an infinite variety of species, with almost infinitesimal variations, and instead of ascribing these to the wisdom and creative power of God, they have formed an hypothesis that all these must have in the course of ages merged one into the other by an innate, intelligent upward straining towards perfection. For this, as I have said, not one solitary proof can be given, nor is demonstration possible because these assumed changes are supposed to have taken millions of years. What they offer as proof is simply the fact that different animals have slightly different organs, and that some animals are by nature adapted to their changing environment—these, by the way, are all amongst the least intelligent of animals—but in all the domain of true science where would such things be accepted as proof?

It is strange that any sober-minded men should be found to listen with gravity to the fantastic, ludicrous ideas which evolutionists propound as the methods whereby all things have been evolved from the original protoplasm.

Second. It is **against the laws of nature** because one great invariable law of nature is that the Cause must always be greater than the Effect ; no lesser can evolve a greater out of itself by its own power. Strangely enough this is the very thing that is proved by some at least of the illustrations given by

Mr. Darwin in support of his theory, as for instance the illustration of the varieties of pigeons and of roses, if left to themselves, or to nature, reverting to what he calls their original type, in his view a lower type than that to which they had attained under development by man. But according to evolution the effect is always greater, better, higher than the cause ; a complete contradiction to the universal law.

Third. It is **against the teaching of Scripture.** I refer to this chiefly because there are not a few who say that they believe the Bible and they also believe in Evolution, thinking that evolution is the plan whereby God brought all things into existence, though He was originally the Creator of matter and the great Agent Who directed the process of evolution. They try to make the Bible agree with this theory, and where they cannot, they attribute it to the errors of the inspired penmen, thinking it the height of folly to suppose that men of science could possibly be wrong !

Now it cannot be too emphatically stated that Evolution is in direct opposition to the Bible and the Bible in direct opposition to the theory of Evolution. No one can read either the first chapter of Genesis or any of the references throughout the Bible with a mind unwarped by scientific theories and not see that the true and natural meaning of the language is that everything God created He created in its perfection, that it came into being immediately at the fiat of

the Almighty and not through any long, slow intermediary process. "He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." The fishes were created fishes, the fowls were created fowls, the fruit trees "bearing fruit," and man was created man, not a monkey, nor a tadpole, nor the slow product of evolution from protoplasm.

Evolution presents to us our "original type" as a "bestial savage." The Bible presents him as a perfect man capable of holding communion with his Creator. The two are directly opposed. You can believe one or the other, but you cannot believe both—I for one believe the Bible.

For a fuller treatment of this subject I would refer the reader to my pamphlet on "Creation,"* as I have not space to enter into it here, but what I want to emphasize is this: that if the Bible be the Word of God—as I have sought to show that it is—then our only watchword must be "no surrender," "no compromise," and if "science, falsely so-called," is not in agreement with it, then it is the science, the thoughts of fallible men that need mending—not the Bible.

With what magnificent scorn do these words with which "the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind" answer those in the present day who put their

* "Creation, according to Science and according to Revelation." Holness. 2d.

theories about creation against the testimony of the Creator Himself:—

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, if thou hast understanding. . . .
Who laid the corner stone thereof;
When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy? . . .
Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?
Or hast thou walked in search of the depth?
Knowest thou because thou wast then born?
Or because the number of thy years is great?”

Ah ! reader, the only *true* science, the only real knowledge of the works of God, is to be found in the Word of God, and although the Bible speaks of natural phenomena *as they appear*—as for instance of the sun rising and setting—this is just what every sensible man does even in the present day, for the Bible was written for all time, and not only for the present. And as for the “miracles” recorded, every one of them is possible, and possible *only* through the omnipotence of God the Creator and Upholder of all things, and it is not the slightest strain upon faith to accept the record of them upon His authority.





The Higher Criticism.

UNTIL comparatively recent times the critical examination of the Bible has been confined to what is called "textual criticism," that is an endeavour to clear our present "authorised version" of ambiguities and small errors of translation or of copyists during many centuries, and to the invaluable labours of these great scholars we are under a debt of gratitude for their researches in this department of learning. But within the last fifty years a new school of critics has arisen whose criticism is of a totally different character; they call it "the higher criticism," and while they make a great profession of searching after truth, their aim is to prove that the Bible is not what it has been believed by the whole Church of God during nineteen centuries to be, written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but that it is "the evolution of the religious idea in man," merely the growth of human conceptions of God and divine truth.

As evolution is an attempt to account for the existence of the universe without God, so this "higher criticism" is an attempt to account for the existence of the Bible without God. This "higher criticism" was first started by learned sceptics, and

for a time was confined to the ranks of the enemy, but for a long time now it has been eagerly accepted and diligently taught by a large number of Professors in our Christian colleges and taken up by a multitude of ministers, especially by the younger men who have been thoroughly indoctrinated in it during their college curriculum, so that now it is considered by many to be an evidence of higher intelligence and "scholarly attainment" to be even a kind of camp follower of the "higher critics."

These critics profess to have discovered that many of the books of the Bible were not written by those to whom they have always been attributed, for instance, that "the Law," or the five books of Moses, were not written by Moses, nor for hundreds of years after he died, and then were written, or rather compiled from pre-existing documents, chiefly for purposes of fraud or human ambition. This, notwithstanding the many declarations in Scripture and the testimony of our Lord Himself, thus either intentionally or unintentionally charging God with connivance at a stupendous fraud.

They declare the Bible history to be a mixture of facts with legends, myths and traditions, and they describe the prophets at best as shrewd, intelligent, patriotic statesmen, who foresaw the calamities coming upon their country and in their fervour mistakenly imagined themselves to be inspired by the Spirit of God !

Of course there are various degrees of this criticism, and all do not go to the same extreme as others, but all are, so to say, "in the same boat," and it is perhaps very difficult for any one of them to define his particular position. There are even many Godly men who talk of "reverent criticism" and tell us we ought to thank God for it. But they forget that "reverent criticism" is an impossibility, it is a contradiction in terms ; a "critic" necessarily assumes a position superior to his subject, and therefore cannot criticise it *reverently*. Above all things it is impossible to criticise **the Bible** reverently, for either a man believes the Bible to be the Word of God, and if so he dare not criticise it, or he does not believe it to be the Word of God, and in that case he cannot reverence it. But this phrase has done more harm, perhaps, than anything else, for it has misled a multitude of good Christian people, causing them to believe that the "higher criticism" must be true, or at least have a good deal of truth in it, or it would not be adhered to by such "devout critics" !

The statements of these critics are very specious, and therefore all the more dangerous, for while there is much admiration professed for the Scriptures as literary productions, the idea is at the same time insidiously conveyed that they are only human thoughts, the result of human genius, writings which we may admire but have a perfect right to accept or reject, to believe or disbelieve, and to test by our own

notions—or rather by the critics' notions—the truth of those inspired writings.

For instance, the writer of the preface to The Temple Bible speaks of “the matchless spiritual lyrics of the Book of Psalms; those ‘classical expressions of a faith in the unseen which dominated the lives of the poets and only grew deeper as the shades of midnight fell’ (Cheyne).” By such expressions as these the ear of the reader is gained, the critic is regarded as a devout thinker, and the way is paved for the reception of his criticism with a mind already biassed towards it. This is, no doubt, one reason why we find so many of God’s own children honestly affected by the “higher criticism.” To support their statements the critics draw attention to a few quotations in the Bible from, for instance, “the book of Jasher,” “the book of Iddo the Seer,” “the book of Gad the Seer,” &c., and found upon these the inference that the whole Bible history was the work of some uninspired “compiler” or “editor” who wrote as a mere human historian drawing his materials from some now unknown pre-existing documents; and they make out the Bible history to be a jumble of truth and fiction, tradition, legend, myth, and fable. They seem to be quite unable to comprehend that the historians when they did quote from existing writings could be divinely guided in the selection, and that therefore all they wrote was a true and

divinely inspired history of the events which the Holy Spirit chose to record for the purpose of revealing the mind and purpose of God.

I trust I shall not be misunderstood ; I do not mean to say that there may not be among the "higher critics" some who are real Christians and who sincerely believe that they are serving the cause of truth ; and certainly there are many such amongst their adherents and admirers who have been carried away by the sophistry of their reasoning. But even true Christians may be misled and may mislead others ; having got on the wrong track, they may be serving Satan while they believe they are serving God, like Saul of Tarsus, who thought he did God service by persecuting His Church.

But whether sincere or not they are certainly blind and have more faith in their own "conjectures" than in the plain statements of the Word of God, for even according to their own admissions they can offer us nothing more than what they call "probability," although they build upon this flimsy foundation their boldest assertions. One of them, Professor Davidson, who is described by Professor Kirkpatrick as "an admirable and sober critic," writing of the higher criticism, admits that : "Its argumentation is of the kind called probable, and its conclusions attain to nothing more than a greater or less probability." Professor Cheyne, who asserts that the whole of the Psalms are post-exilic—that is, written

after the return of the Jews from Babylon—on the supposition that the Jews had not sufficiently advanced ideas before that, thus ignoring all thought of inspiration, says, as an apology for the absence of proof, that “the dark places of history must sometimes be illumined by the torch of conjecture.” Professor Kirkpatrick, who himself favours the higher criticism, says of this, “Thus the foundation and starting point of Professor Cheyne’s argument is a conjecture, or rather a series of conjectures” !

And yet Professor Kirkpatrick himself says, “It may indeed be asked whether the New Testament references do not at once decide many of these questions for the reverent believer . . . if the Pentateuch is referred to as the law of Moses, are we not bound to believe that it was written by Moses? If this position could be maintained, Christian criticism would be an anomaly and an impossibility. And there are some teachers who do not scruple to put before us the awful dilemma ‘you must choose between Christ and criticism.’ I call it an awful dilemma, because, as it seems to me, it may amount to telling the student of the Old Testament that he must be false to his Divine Master or false to the teaching of the reason which God has given him.”

The “awful dilemma” could not be more clearly put. And what are we asked to do in the face of it? I have already pointed out the sophistry of the phrase “the reason which God has given us,” for that reason

has been marred and misdirected by sin. But we are asked rather to believe in the guidance of our poor fallible reason, directed by the torchlight of the "conjectures" of these learned Professors who do not even agree amongst themselves; nay, rather to believe in the infallibility of their reason when our own leads us to an entirely opposite conclusion; rather, I say, are we asked to do this than to believe in the infallibility of the Son of God, the faithful and true Witness, the eternal Word, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

To get over the "awful dilemma" they "conjecture" what they term "the limitations of His human knowledge," and impiously assume the vast superiority of their vaunted "scientific methods of Biblical criticism" to the infinite wisdom and knowledge of the Most High. Where the "reverence" comes in I fail to see! Indeed, to my thinking, the assertions of some of the "higher critics," even of those who are professing Christians, come perilously near to the sin of "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost."

As one of the grounds for their assertions of the human origin of the Scriptures, they are wont, on the other hand, to appeal to the sayings of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament as being greatly in advance of, or rather in contrast to, the Old Testament. This arises from a very meagre understanding of the Scriptures and the presumption of judging everything by mere human standards. It is true that

we have in the Bible, as we have already said, a progressive revelation, and it must be so in the very nature of things. If God had given us His complete revelation in Genesis what need was there of any further writings? But the revelation of the character of God, and the truth of God, is the same all the way through. There is the same holiness, the same righteousness, the same grace from beginning to end ; the God of Genesis is the same as the God of Revelation. The God of Abraham is exactly the same in character as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is progressive development of God’s plan, fuller communication of His mind, but not a single contradiction or discrepancy ; on the contrary, as I have already pointed out, the writers of the New Testament found every declaration upon the Old.





Conclusion.

WHAT, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter ?

If “ God hath spoken,” surely it is our part to listen with reverence. If He has broken the infinite and eternal silence to communicate with His creatures, He will certainly expect His creatures to listen to His voice. “ Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for the Lord hath spoken.” To turn a deaf ear to a message from an earthly monarch would be to treat him with disdain and to incur his displeasure, but what must it be to refuse to listen to “ The Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords ! ” How much greater the folly and the crime when that Voice is the voice of Love ? It was in love that He deigned to speak to us at all : for we are a sinful and rebellious race, utterly “ unworthy of the least of all His mercies and His truth,” it was in yet greater love that He revealed to us His thoughts towards us—thoughts of peace and not of evil—still greater love it was that devised and carried out the wondrous plan for our redemption and restoration to communion and fellowship with Himself far beyond that which was lost in Eden ; how great then must be the sin of those who disdain to hear, and how just

the condemnation, "Behold ye despisers and wonder and perish."

Next it is our part to obey. "God hath commanded all men everywhere to repent," that we may be "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Such a gracious command it is most blessed to receive and obey, and, coming as it does from the God of Heaven and earth, it is an awful crime to refuse.

Again, it is ours to submit ourselves to His Word without questioning. Undoubtedly there are many things in the Bible which our finite minds cannot understand, and which may even seem contrary to our thoughts, for He Himself has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways"; but it is not ours to attempt to sit in judgment upon the thoughts or the ways of the Lord God Almighty. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

If we have believed and obeyed the Gospel, it is our blessed privilege and our solemn duty to "hold fast the form of sound words" which we have received, to read diligently, to study reverently, to meditate and feed upon the Word of God, and to let no man rob us of our inheritance in the "exceeding great and precious promises" through undermining our faith in "the oracles of God." It is also our duty and privilege to publish abroad the glorious Gospel of the

grace of God, not with bated breath or mental reservation as if we only preached the thoughts of men, or a strange mixture of divine truth and human error, but with unfaltering lips in clear ringing tones, with the certain knowledge that

“GOD HATH SPOKEN.”

“O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord.”

Appendix.

This little book has been written not for mere theological controversy, but with the earnest desire that it may prove helpful to many—young men especially—whose faith in the Bible as the Word of God is apt to be shaken by the bold, insidious, and specious attacks which are made upon it in the present day by many who call themselves Christians, and who occupy high places in the Christian Church. Also in the hope that it may be useful in awakening others who are indifferent to the claims of the Bible upon our attention, and the solemn responsibility that rests upon every man and woman to hearken to and consider the words of the Lord.

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