

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION

by Robert Bryant

Bryant's theological study of the doctrines of biblical inspiration and divine revelation, examining how God has communicated His truth through the Scriptures and what it means for the Bible to be the inspired Word of God.

85 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 01 - Part 1 - Preliminary Discussions
2. 01.01 - Importance of the Subject Discussed
3. 01.02 - The Old Testament Canon
4. 01.03 - The New Testament Canon
5. 01.04 - The Higher Criticism
6. 01.05 - The Bible as Literature
7. 01.06 - Divine and Human Factors in Scripture
8. 01.07 - Errors of Scripture
9. 01.08 - Rise and History of the Mechanical Theory of Inspiration
10. 02 - Part 2 - Inspiration
11. 02.01 - Inspiration and Revelation Distinguished
12. 02.02 - Inspiration of the Agents
13. 02.03 - The Holy Spirit the Agent of Inspiration
14. 02.04 - Prophets as Inspired Agents
15. 02.05 - Prophetic Names and Titles
16. 02.06 - False Prophets
17. 02.07 - The How of the Prophets Inspiration
18. 02.08 - Results of the Prophets Inspiration
19. 02.09 - The Prophet as Writer
20. 02.10 - The Apostles as Inspired Agents
21. 02.11 - The Holy Spirit the Inspiring Agent
22. 02.12 - The Apostles as Writers
23. 02.13 - Limitations of Inspiration
24. 03 - Part 3 - The Scriptures as Inspired Writings
25. 03.01 - Inspiration of the Writings Based on Inspiration of the Writers
26. 03.02 - The Pentateuch Inspired
27. 03.03 - Inspiration of Composite Scriptures
28. 03.04 - Inspiration Attested by the Unity, Harmony, and Purity of Scripture
29. 03.05 - Inspiration Claimed by the Scriptures
30. 03.06 - The Testimony of the Lord Jesus to the Inspiration of the Old Testament
31. 03.07 - Christ Jesus and Modern Criticism
32. 03.08 - The Witness of the Apostles to the Inspiration of the Old Testament
33. 03.09 - The Double Sense of the Old Testament Scriptures
34. 03.10 - The Inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures
35. 03.11 - The Apostolic Witness to the Inspiration of the New Testament Writings
36. 03.12 - Ancient Views of Inspiration
37. 03.13 - Modern Theories of Inspiration
38. 04 - Part 4 - Revelation
39. 04.01 - Revelation and Modern Theology

40. 04.02 - Revelation: Its Meaning and Purpose
41. 04.03 - God as Revealer and the Revealed
42. 04.04 - Revelation a Possibility and Reality
43. 04.05 - Revelation Written
44. 04.06 - Revelation and its Record
45. 04.07 - Revelation Independent of the Record
46. 04.08 - Revelation and its Method
47. 04.09 - Revelation, Historical and Progressive
48. 04.10 - Revelation and Israel's Early History
49. 04.11 - Revelation and Ethnic Religions
50. 04.12 - Pfeleiderer's View Criticised
51. 04.13 - Revelation and Mosaism
52. 04.14 - The Leading - Truths of Mosaism
53. 04.15 - Revelation Under the Judges and Former Prophets
54. 04.16 - Revelation and the Latter Prophets
55. 04.17 - The Moral Character of God Seen in His Covenant Relation to Israel
56. 04.18 - Revelation and the Hagiographa
57. 04.19 - Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Job, and Psalms
58. 04.20 - Historical Revelation in the New Testament
59. 04.21 - Revelation: Christ and the Gospels
60. 04.22 - The Facts and Truths of the Gospel Evidenced in the Teachings and Writin...
61. 04.23 - Christ Jesus the Completion of Revelation
62. 05 - Part 5 - Revelation and Its Evidences
63. 05.01 - Miracles
64. 05.01.01 - Miracles and the Manner of Divine Action
65. 05.01.02 - Miracles, Probable and Necessary
66. 05.01.03 - Revelation and Miracle Historical Aspects
67. 05.01.04 - Miracle and Religious Element
68. 05.01.05 - Miracle, Evidential
69. 05.02 - Prophecy an Evidence of Divine Revelation
70. 05.02.01 - Prophecy as Miracle
71. 05.02.02 - Prophecy Considered as Evidence
72. 05.02.03 - Prophecy and the Supernatural
73. 05.02.04 - Prediction and Criticism
74. 05.02.05 - Prediction and Fulfilment
75. 05.02.06 - Prediction and Double-Meaning
76. 05.03 - Evidences Manifold Notably the Moral
77. 05.03.01 - The Witness of the Moral Character of Christ
78. 05.03.02 - The Divine Care and Preservation of the Scriptures
79. 05.03.03 - Their Moral Power and Influence
80. 05.03.04 - The Ideal of Christian Ethics
81. 05.03.05 - Christian Morality is Scientific and Beneficial

- 82.** 05.03.06 - The Divine Authority of Scripture
- 83.** 05.03.07 - The Scriptures a Living and Abiding Word
- 84.** 05.03.08 - Christ and the Scriptures One Witness
- 85.** 05.03.09 - Concluding Observations

01 - Part 1 - Preliminary Discussions

PART I PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS (1) Importance of the Subject discussed (2) The Old Testament Canon (3) The New Testament Canon (4) The Higher Criticism (5) The Bible as Literature (6) Divine and Human Factors in Scripture (7) Errors of Scripture (8) Rise and History of the Mechanical Theory of Inspiration

01.01 - Importance of the Subject Discussed

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION PART I PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS (1) Importance of the Subject Discussed THAT the subject of Inspiration and Revelation should be the suggested topic for this lecture, at this time, is what might be expected considering the relation of this question to modern Biblical criticism.

Something like a revolution in Biblical criticism and theology has taken place during the last quarter of a century, and the question of Inspiration and Revelation has been largely affected by it. Moreover, the advances and discoveries of recent years in science, archaeology, literary criticism, and the determination of the texts of the sacred Scriptures have had their bearing on these doctrines.

It seems desirable that a lecture of this kind should discuss this question, lying as it does at the basis of all theology and religion. It is important, also, because Revelation, which concerns the supernatural communication of truth to men respecting God, man, redemption, salvation, etc, is concerned in a great degree with historical theology and ethics as also with doctrinal and dogmatic beliefs. The consideration of this question is also desirable because some condensed and careful presentation of the present position of this subject, viewed from the standpoint of modern Biblical criticism, is a felt necessity. This is no slight task, in view of the conflicting theories of constructive and destructive schools of criticism. To hold the scales even and care fully weigh the elements of truth in the conceptions of both require not only a clear judgment and a well-balanced mind, but an adequate knowledge of the views of both sides, and the power to discern the truth and to estimate its bearings and value qualifications that come of careful training, special study, and familiar acquaintance with the subject. As this lecture is intended for popular use, we will avoid as far as possible all abstruse reasoning, all technical terms and expressions, all learned quotations, and seek to present the subject in as full, clear, and popular a manner as we may be able. Those who wish to pursue the study further will find easy of access all the helps necessary for the prosecution of the task. While we discuss certain of the views held and conclusions reached on this subject, we shall consider them in relation to the Canon of Scripture, the higher criticism, the alleged errors and discrepancies of Scripture, literary and moral questions, the claims of Old and New Testament writers, the evidential value of miracles and prophecy, and the moral influence of the Scriptures in the Church and the world. Our hope is that by this discussion we may help to reassure the doubting as to the reality of divine Inspiration and Revelation, and strengthen their faith and confidence in the Bible as the Word of God, and the authoritative rule of faith and practice.

01.02 - The Old Testament Canon

(2) The Old Testament Canon

Before we can speak of the inspiration of the Scriptures, or of the Scriptures as a revelation of God, we must know what Scriptures are intended. The expression “the Scriptures” implies some definite understanding as to the number and character of the writings included under that title. The Scriptures are divided into portions, known as the Old and New Testaments. These two are vitally related to each other, and together contain the record of divine revelation, and form one whole. The New is the outcome and fulfilment of the Old, and the Old is the historical and literary progenitor of the New; but they are not the work of the same human writers, nor are they written from the same standpoint; yet they are a unity, and form a harmony and an agreement in every sense unique, and unlike anything else in the realm of literature. The question of the formation of the Canon is a somewhat difficult and controversial one; the several books of Scripture not having been admitted en bloc and at one time, but at different times, and some of them only after much discussion. The formation of the Canon, like revelation itself, has been a matter of growth. The subject is, moreover, connected with many assumptions, speculations, legends, and stories of a marvellous character, many of which are found to be unhistorical and indefensible. Such are the legends associated with the names of Ezra, Nehemiah, Simon the Just, and the men of the great Synagogue; and the revelations and communications said to have been made to them respecting the editing and compiling of the Old Testament Canon.

Many of these stories and assumptions are declared untrustworthy “mere egotistical myths.”¹ The only historical warrant we have for supposing that Ezra, Nehemiah, and the men of the Synagogue completed the formation of the Hebrew Canon is that they took an active part in collecting and codifying portions of the sacred writings, and that this period (B 100:400) was a time of much labour and activity in this respect. But assuredly the Canon of the Old Testament Scriptures was not completed at that time. Ryle says: “The Synod of Jamnia, A.D. 90, was the official occasion on which the limits of the Hebrew Canon were finally determined by Jewish authorities. We may, therefore, fix the year A.D. 100 as representing, as nearly as possible, the time of the Jewish official conclusion of the formation of the Old Testament Canon” (P- 172).

¹ Kyle's “Canon of the Old Testament”: Excursus u A. The process of the formation was gradual, as also the order of the acceptance and canonisation of the several books, which accord with the threefold division of its contents “the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” “The Law” answering roughly to our Pentateuch, including the book of Deuteronomy is ascribed to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, 444 b.c.; the canon of the prophets, including “the Former and the Latter Prophets,” having been completed about a century later some time in the third century P..C.; the third division, known as “the Hagiographa” or “the Psalms,” was the longest in dispute; but all the books of the Old Testament were accepted in the century B.C, although the Canon was not finally and officially settled until after the discussions in the council of Jamnia, A.D. 90.

It is asked concerning the Hebrew Canon why there should be so many books and no more? Why certain books should have been accepted and others rejected, having regard to their nature, character, and value? What has been the Jewish and Christian estimate of the canonical books? and what was the meaning and idea of canonicity? What were the guiding principles and rules that led to the choice of the particular books inserted? That the selection was determined upon some decisive principle is evident, though what that principle was is matter of keen dispute. It has been affirmed that it was the number of books to be included. The Jews had peculiar notions respecting numbers, and it is said that the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet determined the number of the books in the Hebrew Canon; that the number, twenty-two uniting Ruth with Judges, and Lamentations with Jeremiah was a ruling number in Jewish cosmological speculations, and so determined the number to be twenty-two. If we reckon the number of books to be twenty-four, that number accords with the letters in the Greek alphabet, with the number of elders mentioned in the Apocalypse, and the number of watchers in the temple. But there is, and can be, no reason why the number of books in the Canon should be the same as the number of letters in the alphabet of the languages in which the books were written; nor can we see any necessary connection between numbers and language, or between the form and character of Revelation and creation to determine the number of books in the Canon of Scripture by Jewish cosmological numbers.

Moreover, to settle this question by numbers, without regard to the character of the writings admitted or excluded, is not only unworthy of the character and purpose of sacred Scripture, but is inconsistent with facts both as to the discussions on the disputed books and the number of books admitted. The discussions respecting the inclusion and exclusion of certain writings did not turn on the number but the character of the books to be admitted, while the number of books admitted into the Alexandrian Canon was different from that of the Palestinian. Nor was the determining principle that of the language in which the books were written, nor is antiquity of the writings themselves. All the sacred books written in the Hebrew language are not included, while some older than those which are included have been rejected. The "Former Prophets" make mention of certain books or writings, and quote from them, and these are not included. Nor was the selection determined solely on the ground of authorship, because we have only selections from the writings of some authors, while some books are mere compilations; others of unknown or doubtful authorship are admitted, while those by men of high repute are excluded. Nor is it on the ground of the utility and ethical teaching of the writings themselves, since some highly ethical and instructive writings publicly read in the religious assemblies for instruction and edification are excluded, while others not more instructive and edifying have been admitted. The guiding rule and determining principle must have been something other and higher than these, and something applicable alike to the books accepted and rejected, and that principle must have been the divine character of the writings, the reputation they gained, and the way they commended themselves to the judgments and faith of men, and to the consciousness of the Jewish Church and nation. The theopneustic character of the several writings admitted is seen in that they all breathe the same spirit, give a similar reflection of the theocracy and of the divine character, exhibit the same gracious purposes of divine revelation, and describe the same national life and purpose, and the same distinctive features of Israel's history and religion. So, though the several portions of Hebrew Scriptures may differ in the degree of their inspiration, and those the longest in dispute and the last to be admitted may exhibit the least degree of inspiration, yet they exhibit a harmony and unity that accord with their divine inspiration.

Concerning “ the Law and the Prophets, 5 which constitute much the larger and more important portions of the Hebrew Scripture, there has been little or no dispute. Their divine authority has been generally admitted; they have supplied a name and become the standard for the whole of the Old Testament writings, and have always been regarded by the Jews as most sacred and inspired. The Scriptures contained in the Hebrew Canon were those known and used by our Lord and His Apostles, and which Scriptures were publicly read and expounded in the synagogue service of their day. It was “ this law and the prophets “ to the reading of which Paul and his company listened on the Sabbath day in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, and which, at the request of the ruler, Paul expounded and applied to the ministry and teaching of John and Jesus Christ and His Apostles. It was concerning these same Hebrew writings Paul said “they were given by inspiration of God,” and were able to make men “ wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,” and of which the Lord Jesus Himself said: “ Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me”.

01.03 - The New Testament Canon

(3) New Testament Canon

Bishop Westcott, speaking of the esteem in which the Old Testament Scriptures were held in the days of our Lord and His Apostles, and the formation of the New Testament Canon, says that the latter "was a moral miracle of overwhelming dignity." Yet it does seem to us that the recognition given to the Old Testament Scriptures, the importance ascribed to them, and the close relation in which they stood to Christ and Christianity, constituted the very ground for the formation of the New Testament Canon, while those ancient writings formed a nucleus around which to gather other writings of a similar character and tendency. The Old Testament Canon accordingly supplied the stamp and pattern for the New. But neither Jesus Christ nor His Apostles seem to have formed any deliberate purpose or set intention to create a body of New Testament writings. The Lord Jesus Himself wrote nothing, while the Evangelists and Apostles were primarily preachers of the gospel, and gave themselves chiefly to the oral proclamation of the great facts and truths of the gospel, and never committed any gospel or epistle to writing until the truths of the same had assumed a fixed form, and were publicly taught and known. The formation of the New Testament Canon was gradual and not a sudden creation, a growth and not a work. Harnack has spoken of it as being the creation of the Christian Churches of Asia Minor and Rome, about the middle of the second century, for the purpose of checking the inroads of Gnosticism and Montanism. This could not be, since the greater portion of the New Testament was written before the close of the first century, and the whole of it before the time referred to; and the writings of the New Testament were called into existence gradually and for the purpose of meeting existing religious and spiritual needs. So long as the Apostles and their helpers were able to gather their adherents in Christian assemblies and minister to them, and so long as they had the weekly or daily reading and exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures, they felt no special need for written gospels and epistles. But when adherents increased and assemblies multiplied, and heresies and false teachings crept in among them unawares, and the oral preaching of the gospel and the public reading of the Old Testament Scriptures failed to meet the needs of the assemblies, the custom of providing written records of the facts and lessons of Christ's life and teaching, and of sending written gospels and epistles to be read in the assemblies along with the law and the prophets, became general. The preparation and circulation of these apostolic writings led to the writing of apocryphal gospels and epistles by unauthorised writers, whence arose the necessity for collecting and authorising a Canon of New Testament Scriptures.

This, however, was a work of time. The process was gradual, being after the fashion of the formation of the Old Testament Canon, and according to the method by which literature generally was accepted and authorised. Professor Sanday says, "The process was similar to that by which opinion has ripened on many another subject before and since. There entered into it a number of varied elements, reasonings partly conscious and partly unconscious, authority, usage, the sense of affinity to things spiritual, and of harmony between spiritual things already realised and appropriated, and others lying beyond, where the realisation and appropriation were still to come."

1 Among the guiding, determining principles in the selection of the books of the New Testament Canon was "Apostolicity." It was to be expected that churches founded on the teachings of Christ and His Apostles would have special regard for writings of apostolic origin and sanction, and which specially interpreted their mind and teachings. Apostolic authorship was not the sole criterion, because writings are included in the Canon the apostolic authorship of which is matter of dispute. And while some writings, which are the work of companions and fellowhelpers of the Apostles, have been admitted, other writings by fellow-helpers like the Epistles of Clement and Barnabas have been rejected. "Apostolicity" meant not merely apostolic authorship and sanction, but the further test of apostolic doctrine and teaching. The writings were judged by their contents, and were required to be according to the analogy of the faith," or were already accepted and used by the Churches. The standard of the faith was that fixed by oral tradition and apostolic preaching, which, says Dr. Sanday, "worked in two directions. On the one hand it excluded any Scripture which did not satisfy it in regard to doctrine; and on the other hand it excluded, or had a tendency to exclude, any writing which clashed with those already received in matters of history" (p. 55). In addition to apostolicity, to reception and use by the Church, conformity to standard doctrine and recognised history, there was the further test of divine inspiration, assured by the invested authority of Christ Himself on the one hand, and by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit on the other. As we shall have to speak both of the inspiration of the writers and of the writings hereafter, we will not dwell on this here and now. Suffice it to say, it is only as apostolic authority became inspired authority that it became the test of canonicity. Apostolic and Church fathers, apologists, heretics and historians, from the time of the Apostles on to the settlement of the Canon in the fourth century, accepted, used and quoted the books of the New Testament Canon as inspired Scriptures. When we consider the way in which the gospels and epistles originated, how they were written, addressed and sent by particular messengers to distant churches or to particular persons in those churches; when we consider, further, the circumstances under which they were received and used, as contemporary with the oral teaching of the Apostles, and supplementary thereto; when we have regard also to the fragile character of the material on which they were written, to the fact that only one single copy was made, and consider the disturbed times that existed, the imperfect organisations of the churches, and the careless conduct of individuals, and that some of the epistles were circular epistles and had to be sent from church to church, and that this went on for some two hundred years or more; it is scarcely less than a miracle that these writings should have been preserved, and have gained the currency and authority they did, until the time arrived for their complete collection and canonisation. So that though we may not claim divine inspiration and miraculous interposition in collecting and forming the New Testament Canon, yet it must be confessed that a special Providence and oversight has been with them, which has secured their preservation and acceptance into the Canon. Westcott says, "The usage which fixed the Canon is only another name for the divine instinct, a providential inspiration, a function of the Christian body. That history teaches by the plainest examples that no one portion of the Bible could be set aside without great and permanent injury to the Church which refused a portion of the apostolic heritage" 1 Professor Given, Hoffman, and others, have contended that the agency of the Holy Spirit was as much needed in the selection of the books as in their composition, and operated in the formation of the Canon as much as in the writing of the books only differently. Much as we may sympathise with the sentiment, we cannot accept it, in the face of the discussions of Councils for the acceptance

and rejection of particular books. The rather do we say with Professor Stewart, “that if inspiration cannot be claimed for the process of canonicity, canonicity cannot fix the bounds of inspiration.” Hence writings may have found their way into the Canon of Scripture of the inspiration of which men are in doubt, and some writings not less 1 “ New Testament Canon.” inspired than some that have been admitted have been rejected. This, however, does not affect the completeness of Scripture as a rule of faith and practice; for great as the loss would be in certain particulars, yet the exclusion of all disputed books would not exclude one essential truth or doctrine of Scripture, nor would the admission of others, once included but now rejected, add one essential doctrine to the Christian faith.

01.04 - The Higher Criticism

(4) Higher Criticism

What of the results of the higher criticism? Do these affect the inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures, and the integrity of the Canon of Scripture? We think whatever may be the conclusions ultimately reached respecting the particular dates, composition, and authorship of the several books of Scripture, these conclusions will not alter the above statements as to the sacred books and their being received as authoritative and divine by the Jewish and Christian Churches, and the completion of the Canon of Scripture at the dates named. As to what may be the effect of the higher criticism on the minds of persons respecting the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures that is a more difficult problem, and one not so easy to determine. The critics themselves assure us that their criticisms have regard to the human authorship and not to the divine origin of the Scriptures, that their investigations are literary and historical rather than religious and spiritual, and do not directly concern the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. "The divine inspiration of the Scriptures," it is said, "is consistent with a critical view of their structure and growth," and that "there is nothing in these conclusions to shake even the outermost fringe of the hem of our religious faith." These statements form pleasant reading, but they are not quite so easy to accept.

There are, however, critics and critics in the higher as well as in the lower schools of criticism; there is, moreover, a criticism that is legitimate and one that is illegitimate; a criticism that is in sympathy with the supernatural and one that is opposed to it; a criticism that is considerate and believing, and one that is hostile and unbelieving. There is a kind of criticism that betrays a manifest unwillingness to face facts which are opposed to the issues it seeks, which facts are persistently ignored. There are critics who start with a foregone conclusion, and whose hypotheses are formed with a view to the conclusions desired. The higher critics are by no means the only sinners in this illicit process. Such criticism needs criticising whenever practised, and its hollowness and falsity exposing.

Legitimate criticism which means honest examination, the judging and testing of the Scriptures according to honest and righteous principles is both desirable and necessary. Such criticism must be constructive as well as destructive, positive as well as negative. It is not the province of criticism merely to find fault, to detect mistakes, and controvert received opinions and established beliefs. It must inquire into the origin, reasonableness, and significance of the truths held, and bring to view other truths and meanings not previously suspected or recognised. It must accept facts and examine them, and weigh and determine the nature of the evidences. That kind of criticism which comes of prejudice and bias, which aims at presenting the Scriptures to the popular mind as unhistorical and untrustworthy, as full of idealised history, mistakes, anachronisms, self-contradictions, fables, pious frauds, legendary folk-lore, and ingenious poetic imaginations, etc, with a view to discredit the sacred Scriptures, is to be deplored. It is unworthy of the Scriptures as a recognised revelation from God; it is not sober, just, or adequate criticism, and can only tend

to weaken and destroy the people's confidence in the Bible as the Word of God, and the rule of faith and practice. To say that this is the character of the Higher Criticism as a whole would be unjust and inconsistent with the known character and work of many of the critics. Some of these we know to be men of proved scholarship, of sober judgment and trained skill in criticism; men who consider well their positions, who do not speak at random, nor without understanding well what they teach. We know them as firm believers in the great verities of Christianity, men of high moral and Christian character, devout and spiritually minded, men who shrink from disturbing the minds and unsettling the faith of devout believers in God and Christianity; and it is manifestly unjust and iniquitous to brand them as "unbelievers" and "apostates from the faith." As critics they must inquire into the authorship, date, character and form of the books of Scripture; they must ascertain whether the narratives are historical and trustworthy; they must also distinguish and judge between the several writings and give an opinion as to their meaning and intention. But we are not required to accept all their conclusions as indisputable and infallible. The critics themselves are not agreed on all these points, nor do they regard their conclusions as final, or as all equally verifiable; rather do they regard them as tentative present-day opinions based upon data to hand and as the result of wide research and candid examination. But these conclusions are by no means universally or generally accepted. The principles and methods of criticism adopted are not always accepted, nor do the conclusions always follow of necessity upon them.

We must pause and think before we accept all the conclusions now put forth by advanced critics of the naturalistic school. Patient waiting, and prayerful, deliberate consideration of the issues involved are necessary at this juncture. Critics are busy criticising the critics, and already conclusions formerly held by them have been abandoned. Time and patient investigation will tend to separate the false from the true, and to leave us in possession of the things of the kingdom which "cannot be shaken."

Young people are apt to be carried away with what is novel and revolutionary, and they need to remember a thing is not true because it is new, any more than it is false and worn-out because it is old. Nor must they judge because present-day criticisms are destructive of certain cherished beliefs, that these beliefs are thereby proved unworthy of credence, and must be abandoned as indefensible and useless; nor should they speak of their fathers who stand fast by those truths as mere "ignorant defenders of a narrow and outworn creed."

While we counsel caution, patient waiting, and devout consideration of issues, this must not be mistaken for indifference, hostility, and indiscriminate denunciation. It becomes us duly to appreciate the services rendered by the higher criticism to the cause of Biblical study; to the knowledge and better appreciation of the Old Testament Scriptures; to the better acquaintance with Semitic literature and religion; a more just and adequate view of the progressive character of divine revelation and of the historic perspective of the Scriptures generally. It also becomes us to maintain an attitude of readiness to welcome, with all its just consequences, whatever is clearly and conclusively proved to be true, even though we may have to modify our views on some points and abandon them on others.

We may accept the historical and progressive character of divine revelation, and study the Old Testament Scriptures in the light of the natural development of Israel's history and religion. That however, does not mean that we must entirely reverse the recognised order and arrangement of

the Old Testament Scriptures, and place the Prophets before the Law, and so make prophetism to be the precedent instead of the consequent of Mosaism. We hold such a reversal to be contradictory of the express teachings of Scripture; to be opposed to the temporary, incomplete, and typical character of the Mosaic economy as interpreted by the New Testament writers; to be opposed also to the theory of development which is at the basis of modern criticism, since it deprives prophetism of the preparatory stages essential to its existence, and instead of it being regarded as the growth and development of the revelation of God in the history and religion of Israel, it is made to come forth in the eighth century P>.c. a fully developed system at the first, to teach a highly developed doctrine of ethical theism. By this reversal the law of development is ignored, the Scriptures are travestied, the Jewish people maligned, a developed prophetism instituted without the necessary antecedents for its inauguration, and the teachings of Christ and His Apostles thereby controverted. A theory so inconsistent with facts cannot be accepted only on the strongest evidence and after the most careful examination by believing critics.

We may admit, further, that some of the books of Scripture are a compilation, that some others, hitherto regarded as a unit}-, arc the work of two or more authors; that the whole may have been edited and re-edited at different times by different hands, ere it attained its present form. But we are not to conclude, therefore, that the text of Scripture had been so corrupted, annotated, and interpolated, as to be utterly unreliable, or that what is presented to the eye in the Polychrome Bible is indisputable and infallible truth. The higher critics have displayed a wonderful ingenuity in detecting difference of style, structure, and method; in discovering layers of narrative and poetry in the documents; and in tracing interpolations and editorial emendations, until the Bible is made to appear in all the colours of the "rainbow," or a marvellous piece of literary patch-work. In our judgment such microscopic dissection of the Scriptures is not deserving of the name of " scientific criticism," nor can it help to a proper understanding of the purpose and teaching of the authors. It does not do the writers or their writings justice; it does not give a connected, adequate, and comprehensive view of the method and teaching of the writer, nor does it help us in forming a just and worthy conception of the truth of Scripture, or of its character as a trust worthy record.

It may be fully admitted that legitimate and established principles of criticism accepted and acted upon by critics of all schools and of all forms of literature must be regarded as applicable to the sacred Scriptures considered as literature; and when these principles are legitimately applied we must have regard to the conclusions to which they lead. Should those conclusions traverse certain traditional theories and dogmas, or some current interpretations of Scripture, such theories and interpretations must be reconsidered in the light of these conclusions, and if proved untenable must be abandoned for some better theory or some truer interpretation. At the same time regard must be had to the unique character of the Bible as literature, to the elemental and typical character of the Old Testament teaching, to the progressive character and gracious purposes of divine revelation, and the spiritual meaning and significance of many of its laws, rites, and institutions, to be unfolded and realised from time to time as successive generations are able to receive them.

It must also be remembered that facts and theories, truth and the interpretations of truth, Scripture and dogma are not necessarily the same: the one is of human, and the other of divine origin, and the former may change and pass away, but the other endureth and abideth for ever.

It is further admitted that the authorship of a book is not vital to its acceptance as a divinely inspired and authoritative record. The contents and teachings of Scripture are the main thing. These are the same, and will remain so, whoever may have written it, whether the author be known or unknown, and whether it be the work of one individual or more. But it does not follow that the question of authorship is of little or no importance, and that it matters not who wrote it, if only we are assured that its contents and teachings are true. When a writing is known to be the work of an inspired Prophet and Apostle, its teaching and authority are the more readily and fully accepted; while, on the other hand, should it be proved that the fourth gospel is not the work of the Apostle John, its teaching would assume a different aspect to many, even though its teachings and doctrines are authorised by other New Testament Scriptures, and confirmed by the Christian consciousness. The question of authorship does affect the views of men as to the authority of Scripture. So with the doctrine of inspiration. It may be that the conclusions of the higher criticism are opposed to the mechanical and verbal theory of inspiration. This particular theory may be surrendered for another and more tenable view, and the character of Scripture as a divine revelation be unaffected by the change.

01.05 - The Bible as Literature

(5) The Bible as Literature Closely connected with the Higher Criticism is the present-day treatment of the Bible as literature. The Bible is not a book, but a library of sixty-six books, written by forty or more authors, who wrote at different times and places, and under very different conditions. The Old Testament is called Hebrew literature, or the national literature of the Jewish people. It is not meant that it comprises the whole of their literature, but that it is national in the sense that it reflects their national life, history and religion, and follows a given course of development. The primal strata of all national literature, we are told, are traditional and legendary; the earliest forms are poetical and narrative, in which imagination and creative art blend with traditions and facts semihistorical. With the development of family and national life and history are associated moral and social relations, institutions, and usages the historical.

Then follows upon this the highest form of literature, called the ethical and didactic. The Bible, in so far as it is a national literature, is said to follow this order of development. The earliest records are poetical and traditional but set in a framework of fact and history; then we have the historical and prophetic, and lastly the didactic and philosophical writings. In accepting this rough characterisation of the Old Testament Scriptures as national literature, we claim to interpret these terms and expressions. If we admit the primal strata to be traditional and legendary, we do not mean that those early records in the book of Genesis have no foundation in fact; but that they are the product of fact and reflection.

Tradition is not history proper, but it has its roots in actual fact; it is sacred when it concerns such sacred subjects as Creation, Temptation and the Fall; and it has a character and value peculiarly its own. Those early Hebrew traditions, forming the primal strata of Hebrew literature, must be regarded as having their source in a direct revelation from God to the first man; their character and teachings concerning God, His relation to the world and man, being greatly superior to that of any other nation or people. Again, when it is said the early narratives are poetical rather than historical, we are not to conclude that they are fictitious and untrue. Poetry is not truth in the same sense as history and philosophy.

Poetry is the work of imagination and creation; a form of literature in which imagination and emotion help description; it idealises the fact, it puts the fact into epic stories, lyrical and dramatic presentations. So that if the early narratives of Hebrew literature are poetical they have their facts; the facts are set in a framework of history; the epic incidents are actual, only presented in poetic form. But some critics tell us that Hebrew literature is in most respects unlike any other national literature.

They question whether, strictly speaking, there is either epic, drama, or philosophy, in the Scriptures; while no other national literature has anything approaching Hebrew prophecy. No other literature has so many peoples, languages, and voices contributing to its wisdom; none supplies so many points of view and of insight into men and things, presents its message in so many ways and forms, nor supplies just such unity with diversity as the Scriptures do. So that while the

Scriptures are a national literature, and take on certain literary forms and characteristics, they are unique, and cannot be treated in precisely the same way as any other literature. When we are asked to “treat the Bible as any other book,” it must be understood to mean any other book of its kind. The late Professor Rooke, regarded this limitation as most important; because all books are not of the same kind, are not of equal value, and are not treated by us in just the same way. Students of all subjects have their authorities whom they accept, quote, and trust, and they treat them with the confidence and respect they deserve. When we inquire respecting the Bible into what class of literature we shall place it, and what sort of book we shall compare with it, we find that, regarded as literature, as a book of religion and morality, as a directory of life and conduct, as an authority in matters of faith and practice, it stands alone. There is none other that can be compared with it. If the popular demand to “treat the Bible as we would treat any other book,” means that we must adopt a similar course in tracing its teaching and discovering its meaning as we would adopt in studying any other subject; and that we accord to it, in respect of its teaching, the same respect, deference, and authority, we pay to any other acknowledged standard better informed than we are; so be it. But if the cry means that we should regard the Bible as literature, look upon it as the work of fallible erring men, and as characterised by the same mistakes and errors, the same crimes and horrors, as any other literature, and as of no higher authority and deserving of no greater confidence than any other sacred literature then we hold that this is to prejudge its claims as the inspired record of divine revelation: that is, not to accept and judge it as we would any other acknowledged authority, for what it is, and what it claims to be. But there is another feature in the modern study of the Bible as literature which may serve as a check to the Higher Criticism in the disintegration of Scripture by historical and literary analysis. The tendency of the Higher Criticism is to get behind the Scripture for the purpose of ascertaining what it is, and how it came to have its present place and form.

Literary criticism proposes to take the Scripture as it is, to examine its literary character, form, and structure, to ascertain what it really is as literature. A foremost leader in this “Literary Study of the Bible,” is Professor R. G. Moulton, of the University of Chicago. In the preface to his work, he says, “Historic analysis, investigating dates, sometimes finds itself obliged to discriminate between different parts of the same literary composition, and to assign to them different periods; having accomplished this upon sound evidence, it then often proceeds, no longer upon evidence, but by tacit assumption, by unconscious insinuations rather than by distinct statements, to treat the earlier parts of such a composition as genuine or original, while the portions of later date are made interpolations, or accretions in fact, are alluded to as something * illegitimate.” This he describes further on, as “un-scientific; it is the intrusion of the modern conception of a fixed book and an individual author into a totally different age.” Instead of regarding different styles and forms of composition as the work of different authors and of different dates, literary criticism would treat them as genuine portions of the same writing, differing only in literary form and structure. So in regard to the division of chapters, paragraphs, and verses of Scripture: “Historic analysis busies itself almost exclusively with the subject matter of the composition to the neglect of the literary form. A powerful search-light is thrown upon minute historical allusions, while the broad indications of literary unity are passed by.” A change of speaker, or of literary tone and expression, is often taken as evidence of a new composition, the work of another hand and of another date, until there “yawns a whole century” between the verses of a single chapter, whereas what really “yawns” is a difference of literary style and expression. This difference of view as to literary form and structure

considered in the light of the authorship and unity of the several books of Scripture we regard as important, and destined to exert a modifying influence on the conclusions and methods of the Higher Criticism in this particular. While the latter seeks for unity of style and structure and expression as evidence of the unity of authorship, the other seeks for unity of idea, thought, and purpose, with diversity of style, structure, and expression. The one takes verses and clauses and judges them separately, the other takes the writing as it is and judges it as a whole. By this method literary criticism claims to find the higher and truer unity of the Scripture, which may be simple unity) the unity of idea; or the unit} of transition in which one idea passes into another; or the unity of contrast and antithesis when a poem or discourse begins with one topic and ends with an entirely different one; or, the unity of aggregation in which particular sayings or compositions of the same kind are gathered together and united in a whole; or, the unit} of external circumstance which is to be found in the occasion and use of the Psalm or discourse rather than in the composition. 1 As to what will be the ultimate issue of the “ Literary Study of the Bible “ in this particular we affect not to say, but we think we can see in it a helpful corrective to the disintegration of Scripture by the process of historical and literary analysis.

01.06 - Divine and Human Factors in Scripture

(6) Divine and Human factors in Scripture From what has been said it will be seen that we recognise the presence of divine and human factors in the Scriptures. To acknowledge their existence, and correctly to determine their relation, would be to solve the problem of inspiration. The phenomena of the Scriptures imply the recognition of both factors as fundamental. Hitherto the practice has been largely to recognise but one factor to the exclusion of the other, whereas both are essential to Divine revelation and its record, and must act conjointly in the production of the Scriptures. In the past the 1 Moulton's "Literary Study of the Bible," pp. 90-103. tendency has been to emphasise the divine factor, and rightly so, seeing that factor was primal and essential to the acceptance of Scripture as a Divine revelation, and as being distinctively and emphatically "the Word of God." But as Prof. Sanday, in his "Bampton Lectures," indicates, the time has come when this "traditional conception shall give place to one more strictly accurate and scientific." When from regarding the Bible as "the Word of God,"

"one word," we shall recognise that the Bible contains a "number of words of God with the attributes proper to them." "This aggregation of words and the one word," says Sanday, "is not quite the same thing, because in the interstices between the words there was a considerable human element binding them together." 1 In emphasising this one word and the divine attributes proper to it, "the human element was apt to be, and was, lost sight of." To attempt a discrimination of the divine and human features in the Scriptures in the earliest ages of the Church, and to have emphasised them as now, would have endangered the recognition of the Scriptures as "the Word of God," would have weakened their divine authority, and lessened that "respect and reverence for those great truths and great commands which were really Divine Words." If the authority of the Bible had been broken down on so cardinal a point as that of "the Word of God," it would soon have broken down altogether. We see, then, a Divine Providence working in historical criticism, by which one age is fitted and prepared to discover and accept what another age could not hear. Of this truth the

1 P. 424 present-day declaration of the divine and human factors in the Scriptures is a striking illustration. It may be that the discovery and declaration, like most fresh discoveries and new truths, has been unduly magnified, and in some quarters the human element has been enlarged and exalted until the divine has appeared at vanishing point. Criticism, however, is regaining its equilibrium, and we are approaching a proper recognition of both factors and their adjustment in revelation and its record.

Two analogies are used by way of setting forth this relation; and though they explain nothing they help to illustrate the problem: (1) The union of matter and mind in the constitution and action of man; (2) The union of the two natures divine and human in the Person of Christ. In the former matter and mind, with their distinctive phenomena, are co-existent, united, and operative in the human personality; without them man would not be man, and. their union and co-operation are essential to the conduct of human life and action. The analogy of the two natures in the Person of

Christ the Incarnate Word also illustrates the mystery of the written word. The written word the outward human symbol answers to the “ Word made flesh “ in the Divine Incarnation. Jesus Christ being divine and human; perfect God and perfect Man; the Son of God and the Son of Man; born of woman, yet “the effulgence of the Father’s glory, and the impress of His substance.” So the Scriptures are said to be divine and human, “ the Word of God “ in human form, containing the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge set forth in human speech and language. And just as mind and body make one man, and the divine and human in Christ constitute one person, and are inseparable in person and action, and blend and cooperate in all their movements, so with the Scriptures the divine and human are blended so as to make a unity, a divine harmony, one complete whole. The presence of the one factor does not displace or destroy the other; both factors are present, and both are active, and both retain the attributes and functions proper to them. This is what is meant by the expression “the blending of the human and the divine,” the action of the Spirit of God and of the mind of man, and of the letter and spirit, the form and truth, in the Scriptures.

Because of this union and blending of the two factors in the production of the Scriptures, and the harmony and unity that characterise the Scriptures as a whole, they have been styled after the manner of the Person of Christ “the divine-human.” Dr. Pope speaks of them as “ a divine-human collection.” And while in respect of divine revelation in the truth and its expression, and in respect of the divine activity in inspiration it may be difficult to say where the divine ends and the human begins, yet the attributes and features proper to both are in many respects broadly marked.

There are divine commands, divine encouragements, rewards, and promises; divine warnings and threatenings; divine instructions and foretellings; divine powers and influences clearly manifest. We have equally manifest the unfolding of the gracious purposes of God in redemption; the revelation of the divine name and character; the divine testimony against sin, and the proclamation of divine peace, pardon, and purity; there is the enlightening, renewing, regenerating power, the power of God that dwells in them, and works with them. But there is also manifest the human element, which declares the divine revelation is human in form, and intended for human eye and heart and understanding. There is the record of human experience?, the stamp of the mind, life, and culture of the individual author; while the writings are marked by the defects, mistakes, discrepancies, and errors that belong to all human workmanship, and in form, structure, and composition follow the order of human writings generally. And because the Old Testament Scriptures record the revelation of God as reflected in the life, history, and experience of the Jewish people, we have reflected the evils, follies, and sins, together with all the manifold imperfections, which characterised that nation and people. Not only so, but the writings reflect the conceptions scientific, historical, and chronological peculiar to the age and nationality of the writers. Prof. Rogers says: “Every species of error that could flow from inadvertence or negligence of transcribers, from ignorance or presumption in editors, from lapse of memory or illusion of eyesight, and which so largely deform profane literature substitution of one letter or one word for another, slight omissions, lacuna, mistakes in numbers, names, and so on may be equally expected here.” 1 1 “Superhuman Origin of the Bible,” p. 414.

01.07 - Errors of Scripture

(7) Errors of Scripture This brings us to remark upon that somewhat difficult and vexed question the “ infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture.” In the discussion of this question both in this country and America it is asserted “ that the Scriptures are perfectly infallible in every part, both in thought and expression “: that the spirit of truth so “ presided over the writers in their writing as to secure an errorless record of the matters they had to communicate.” Dr. A. A. Hodge, of America, says: “ The divine influence exercised upon the writers secured the perfect infallibility of the Scriptures in every part as a record of faith and doctrine, both in thought and verbal expression “ , that “ their natural faculties were so directed in the choice of subject and expression that the writings produced by them were infallible and divinely authoritative.” Again: “ A proved error in Scripture not only disproves our doctrine, but the claims of Scripture, and its inspiration in making these claims.”
1 The above view is declared to be the only adequate and proper view of the Scriptures that they are perfect, “errorless and infallible” that “they say all they ought to say and only what they ought to say.” Further, that this is the true, proper, and Scriptural idea of inspiration that divine inspiration secures “ perfect infallibility,” an “errorless record”;

1 See “Inspiration and Inerrancy,” pp. 9-12. Also, “Presbyterian Review “; the Drs. Briggs, Evans, and Smith Controversy: also, the discussion in the British Weekly, September, 1893. and any proved error in Scripture is sufficient to destroy its authority as “ the Word of God “ and the rule of faith and conduct. Notwithstanding these strong assertions it is boldly maintained by the opponents of this school that the Scriptures, so far from being infallible, and inErrant, everywhere “ bear the marks of human imperfection, and contain discrepancies, variations, and mistakes in matters of detail.” That while no error of a serious kind enters into the revelation of the character of God, or the gracious purposes of redemption and salvation, or of an> moral and spiritual truth, yet in details of narrative, of science, chronology, and history, there are mistakes of the kind that may be found in most, or all, human writings. The following are adduced as instances: the numbers given in 2 Samuel 24:9, and 1 Chronicles 21:5; Acts 7:1-60, and Genesis 23:1-20, Genesis 33:1-20, etc. There are discrepancies in the double narratives, and the genealogical tables given in both Testaments; also in the gospel nar ratives of the sayings and works of the Lord Jesus.

Prof. Gardiner, reviewing these, says: u It is undeniable that the Scriptures, as we have them, do contain certain errors.” The qualifying clause “as we have them,” if intended to mean that “ the original autograph copies,” as some have said, “ if found, would be free from errors and mistakes “ does not count for much: because, in the first place, we have no such copies, and are not very likely to have; and, in the second place, the vast number of MSS. and Versions we have contain errors of the kind similar to those found in our own Version. Nor is it clear that the Scriptures claim for themselves infallibility and inerrancy in all particulars; nor that God, in giving us the written revelation of His will, designed to guard author, translator, and printer, against all possible errors and mistakes; nor is it according to the method of God in natural providence and history, to deal with us on the ground of infallibility and absolute certainty and perfection of detail, but rather on the

basis of adequacy, sufficiency, and clearness of meaning and purpose. In all His ways and works God deals with men as rational and responsible beings; beings capable of judging and knowing, understanding and doing. So, instead of giving us fixed, mechanical rules, requiring undeviating exactness, or asking of us rigid conformity to a fixed order, and acting with absolute sameness and infallibility in every detail, God has placed us under general laws, a divine order characterised by that moral flexibility essential to freedom of action and responsibility of conduct. So in the written revelation God has given us an adequate, and trustworthy revelation of His will, a sufficient rule of faith and conduct, a sure guide to truth and salvation, which, if any man follow, " he shall not walk in darkness "and uncertainty, " but shall have the light of life." But while we admit the Scriptures are not infallible and inerrant in every detail, and that, as a revelation of God's will, a guide of life, and a rule of faith, they are sufficient and authoritative and more sure and authoritative than are the text-books men accept and follow on most other subjects: yet in respect of the so-called " mistakes and errors of Scripture " we do not regard them as being of that magnitude and importance rationalistic critics declare them to be. In many cases they are not so much errors of fact and truth as differences of expression and language; they are not perversions of truth with intent to deceive, but adaptations and accommodations to times and circumstances, views and conceptions, the conditions and needs of men. Hence in respect of science, the names of authors of books and writings, etc, the terms and names used are popular, not strictly scientific and literally accurate yet not misleading but are in accordance with the ideas, and conceptions of their time, and such as the people would be able to understand. In respect of the quotations from the Old Testament given in the New, it must be remembered these are not all taken from the Hebrew Scriptures, but some are from the Septuagint, and in other cases are given from memory. As such these quotations may be supposed to differ in expression and phraseology from the Hebrew record, and yet be true to fact and the spiritual meaning of revelation. Those instances of grave difference in ethics and moral teaching between the Old and New Testaments belong to different stages of ethical development and the progress of divine revelation; and in some instances we are expressly told that things were allowed out of divine condescension and regard to human conditions, infirmities, and defects, and were not according to the requirements of the mind and will of God, as evidenced by the higher revelations and purer morality and righteousness current as exhibited in the completed revelation of Christ and His Apostles. Even the varying accounts in the Gospels of the teaching and works of Jesus Christ are not so much contradictions or mistakes on the part of the writers as they are amplifications and modifications in detail, to suit time and circumstance. Each narrative is strictly true in fact and reality, while in one instance a deeper spiritual significance of idea and purpose is named by one Evangelist that another takes no note of. Variations and differences there are, but not " errors and mistakes " in the sense which we ordinarily attach to those terms. The use made of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the way in which they are quoted in the New, is sufficient to show that the writers did not regard and use them from the standpoint of verbal accuracy; that they were concerned more with the spirit and meaning of Scripture than with the word and letter; that they had regard more to the truth and substance of the teaching than to the form of expression; that the reality, authority, and value of Scripture lies not in its verbal infallibility and literal inspiration, but in its spiritual meaning, character, and teaching as a Divine Revelation.

01.08 - Rise and History of the Mechanical Theory of Inspiration

(8) Rise and History of the Mechanical Theory of Inspiration The verbal and mechanical theory of inspiration, generally called “ the traditional theory,” would seem to find its roots in the Jewish conception of their Scriptures, as being “the very Word of God,” and given them by divine revelation and inspiration.

They accordingly set great store by them. They treasured, and used them as history-book, law-book, and religious text-book; as hymn and prayer-book of the Jewish Church, and so guarded them as most sacred and holy. The men who wrote them were men of God, who wrote and spoke in His name and by His authority, having been commissioned by Him to declare His will to the children of men. This view dominated the Jewish mind from the time of the Captivity to the coming of Jesus Christ, and led them to guard every word and letter of Scripture as most sacred, to count and number the very words of Scripture, and to copy them with the utmost care, regarding every letter and word as in truth “ the Word of God.”

Jewish Rabbis and writers cherished the same idea, and ever spoke of their Scriptures as “sacred and holy”; they called them the “Scriptures of God,” the “Oracles of God,” and the “ Word of God “; while the “ Law “ was so sacred, it must not be touched by unclean hands nor given to the Gentiles except in the briefest and most summary manner. The Rabbis associated most remarkable stories with knowing and keeping the Law, invested it with the most marvellous meanings and significations, and laid down rules for its interpretation on Kabbalistic principles. The Lord Jesus sought to free them from this slavish regard to the letter of their Scriptures, and to lead them to the fuller recognition of their spiritual significance and teaching. He taught men that the Law itself was only a stage in the revelation of God and the development of Israel, that it was temporary and passing away, a “ shadow of good things to come,” and that they must advance from the temporal to the spiritual, from law to grace and truth, from “ the letter which killeth to the spirit which giveth life.” Christ treated those Scriptures reverently but freely, regarded them authoritatively but spiritually, and made them the starting-point for those higher and fuller revelations He came to impart. He had respect to those Scriptures as “being witnesses of Him,” while He ever unfolded their higher and spiritual meaning. After Christ’s death and resurrection the Apostles went everywhere preaching the facts of the Gospel, rather than expounding the “ Law and the Prophets.” They recognised the divine authority and spiritual significance of these Scriptures as also the authority and teaching of Christ, but they framed no theory of inspiration. When the Gospels and Epistles came into vogue, and were recognised and read in the churches along with the “ Law and the Prophets,” their inspiration and divine authority were thereby attested: but they reached no definite theory of inspiration.

Christian literature increased and multiplied. Many venerable writings were possessed and treasured by the Churches, and read for purposes of instruction and edification, and in process of time the Canon of the New Testament acquired equal recognition with the Old, and together the two Testaments were regarded as the Sacred Writings. Apostolic and Church Fathers, historians,

and apologists used and quoted them as “the Word of God.” They acknowledged in them the presence of divine and human elements, but made no attempt to separate and define those elements, nor to explain the relations between them.

During the Middle Ages there came into vogue a Mysticism and Illuminism, and a Church tradition and authority which somewhat conflicted with each other, which struggle issued in the recognition of the Scriptures as supreme.

It was reserved for the Reformation period which sought to correct the abuses, superstitions, and slavery of Intellectualism on the one hand, and the tradition and authority of the Church and Pope on the other, to emphasise the pre-eminence of the Scriptures as supreme, and to guarantee individual liberty, spiritual freedom, and divine authority in matters of faith and religion. But the Scriptures did not bind men as did Church dogmas, confessions, and creeds. Their aim was to make men free by instructing them in the knowledge of the truth, to liberate them from a lordly authority by enlightening the mind and making them “wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ,” and by securing to them the liberty of the sons of God. But in freeing men from the dominion of a boasted Intellectualism and the tradition of an infallible Church authority, the Scriptures themselves became authoritative in all that pertained to doctrine and conduct, and were declared to be “the very Word of God,” divinely revealed and inspired verbatim et literatim, and of infallible authority in all that concerned faith and practice. By this means it was hoped to escape all difficulties and objections, and to secure an infallible and authoritative standard for truth and life which all would accept. But the very thing that was supposed would silence all objections raised anew the whole question with greater intensity. The traditional theory was keenly disputed and strongly opposed, with the result that an earnest attempt was made to frame a more rational theory of inspiration, and one that should do equal justice to the divine and human factors in the Scriptures. A more careful discrimination was made between revelation and inspiration, as also between revelation and Scripture; while the relation of divine revelation to human thought and language, and of divine inspiration to human freedom and intellectual activity became the subject of discussion. Hitherto the contending parties have regarded the question too exclusively from their own standpoint without due consideration of the opposite view. A better understanding between disputants is gaining ground, with the result that we are approaching a more intelligent, adequate, and permanent view of the subject.

02 - Part 2 - Inspiration

PART II INSPIRATION (1) Inspiration and Revelation distinguished (2) Inspiration of the Agents (3) The Holy Spirit the Agent of Inspiration (4) Prophets as Inspired Agents (5) Prophetic Names and Titles (6) False Prophets (7) The How of the Prophets Inspiration (8) Results of the Prophets Inspiration (9) The Prophet as Writer (10) The Apostles as Inspired Agents (11) The Holy Spirit the Inspiring Agent (12) The Apostles as Writers - (13) Limitations of Inspiration

02.01 - Inspiration and Revelation Distinguished

PART II (1) Inspiration and Revelation Distinguished

BOTH Inspiration and Revelation have regard to the divine action in communicating to man a knowledge of God and of the way and plan of salvation, and of declaring that knowledge to the race. Both terms are applied to Scripture as the record of the divine will and purpose for man; but as divine acts they are distinct from Scripture, and could have taken place without being recorded at all. Indeed, much that God has revealed of Himself, of His ways and works, never has been written; while some things recorded in the Scriptures are not by the revelation of God.

So, though these divine acts are concerned with the Scriptures as the record of God's will and purpose to men, yet, as divine acts, they are distinct from Scripture, and prior to it, and in the order of thought distinct from each other.

They differ in nature and object. Revelation is a divine act of self-manifestation, or a divine communication of truth to man. Inspiration concerns the reception, apprehension, and declaration of that truth to others. The one is objective in its operation, the other subjective. Chalmers spoke of them respectively as the "influx and the efflux," or, the "ingress and the egress of truth." The one denotes how divine truth was communicated to the mind of man by God, the other the way in which the mind of man cognized that truth and declared it to others, either by speech or writing, or both. Revelation is the informing of the mind by the knowledge of God and of His truth. Inspiration is the actuating and energising of the human agent by the Holy Spirit in imparting that knowledge to others. Dr. Pope not only regards them as distinct in nature and purpose, but also as distinct in their source. In his "Compendium of Christian Theology" he speaks of "the Son in the unity of the Father and the Spirit as Revealer; and of the Spirit in the unity of the Father and the Son as the Inspirer." The Son is the living Eternal Word, in whom the external idea of all truth existed before it was made known; while the Holy Spirit signified the meaning of the truth to the minds of the sacred writers, who "spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." Revelation is identified with God as Lord and Son, inspiration with God the Holy Spirit. This distinction is, however, by no means universal in the Scriptures. Paul speaks of God the Father as revealing things unto him, as also the Son and the Holy Spirit. While revelation and inspiration, as divine acts, are distinct in themselves and separate in their source and purpose, in the order of thought these are united in the individual and the result. God communicates His will to Prophet or Apostle, who at the same time are inspired to utter or write it. Scripture is therefore the product of both revelation and inspiration.

There has been a tendency to regard inspiration and revelation as synonymous and interchangeable terms when speaking of the Scriptures: a practice which has led to much loose thinking and speaking on this subject. The Conference, in fixing the subject of this lecture, would seem to have regarded the terms as distinct, and requiring separate treatment. We have, therefore, to distinguish between the two as between objective and subjective; as between the truth and the agents who spoke and wrote the truth; as between the subject-matter communicated

to the mind of the agent, and the agent's conscious recognition and declaration of that truth to others. And though in the discussion of this subject we may not be able sharply to maintain this distinction when we speak of the " inspiration of the Scriptures " and no great violence will be done either to revelation or inspiration by regarding the Scriptures as both revealed and inspired yet the distinction is important, and will help to discriminate between the divine and human factors in Scripture, as also between revelation and its record.

02.02 - Inspiration of the Agents

(2) Inspiration of the Agents

Because inspiration primarily concerns the human agent, we shall treat first of the inspiration of the man and then of his work, or first of the writers and then of the writings. Inspiration denotes that action or influence of the spirit of God on the mind and heart of the human agent by means of which he is fitted and prepared to receive and declare the truth which God communicates to him, or to perform a certain work for the accomplishment of which God intends to use him.

Because the receiving, knowing, and declaring the word and will of God are spiritual, the preparation of the agent is also spiritual, and must be the work of the Spirit of God. Paul, speaking of this spiritual preparation and its necessity, says, "The natural (or unspiritual) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned (or judged)." "We received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Margin, R.V, "Interpreting spiritual things with spiritual men." (1 Corinthians 2:12-14) In these words the Apostle distinguishes between the things known, the knowing mind, and the process by which they are known. The things known are "the deep things," the "hidden things," the "things of the Spirit of God"; the knowing mind is the mind of man "enlightened and renewed by the Spirit of God"; the way of knowing is through the revealing, searching, and teaching Spirit; the result is that "we know the things freely given us by God."

Peter says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:20-21). We are here assured that prophecy is not of man's own origination, it is not a matter of individual, subjective interpretation; but a something borne in upon the mind of man by the action of the Holy Spirit. The prophet does not utter his prophecy because he wishes to utter it, or because he has made up a message and wills to proclaim it; but because he is moved or carried along by the Holy Spirit, and is therefore constrained to speak. He speaks not of himself only, or from himself, but from God; and so he often utters a message the full import and meaning of which he does not understand, he being borne along by the movement of the Holy Ghost, as a ship is carried along by a strong wind "being moved by the Holy Ghost."

02.03 - The Holy Spirit the Agent of Inspiration

(3) The Holy Spirit the Agent of Inspiration

Inspiration is the specific work of the Spirit of God. Various gifts, operations, and powers are ascribed to the Spirit of God in the Old and New Testaments, but inspiration is His special and distinctive domain. Sometimes in the Old Testament the " Spirit " or the " Spirit of God " stands for God Himself; at other times the term denotes a power or influence, like " wind " or " breath " going out from God, and by which " things were created," " nature was renewed," the " heavens were furnished," and all " the host of them by the breath of His mouth." The " Spirit of Man," and the " understanding " that is in him, are by the " breath " the " inspiration of the Almighty." The Holy Spirit's action is upon as well as in man. It is both transcendent and immanent. The transcendence and freedom of the action of the Spirit of God are indicated, as also the immanence, which indicates the fixity and inner law of the divine movement. Both truths are important: under the one aspect the Spirit of God is spoken of as coming and departing from man, as given to him and with drawn from him, denoting the freedom of the Spirit's action. By the other term we have represented the constancy and immutability of the law of the divine action in the universe, whereby we may come to realise how that it is the Spirit " who worketh all in all." The Spirit of God in the Old Testament is associated with man in all that pertains to life and business physical and intellectual, spiritual and official. The same Spirit that gave to man life and being, gave to him understanding and knowledge in all things; while He conferred exceptional powers on particular persons for special purposes. He gave His word to Abraham and to Moses and they be came His prophets: God gave His Spirit to Joseph, which made him " wise and discreet "; while Bezaleel was " filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom, under standing and knowledge, and all manner of cunning workmanship," for the furnishing of the tabernacle. As a Spirit of might and strength, of wisdom and courage, of heroism and valour, He dwelt with the Elders under Moses, and with the Judges in Israel; while upon Eldad and Medad, upon Samuel also, Saul and David, rested the Spirit of God, and they did prophesy. There are instances in which the Spirit of God imparted to men in Old Testament times special gifts for special purposes; but these gifts and purposes were on the line of natural endowment, and of national life and calling. The higher and more spiritual endowments and activities of the Holy Spirit are connected with prophecy. These are witnessed in the acts and teachings of that succession of wonderful men, raised up, commissioned, and endowed by the Spirit of God to the work of ruling, guiding, admonishing, and instructing the people of Israel. They were known as the * Prophets of Israel," as " men of God," who spake from God, being moved by the Spirit of God. The wisdom, power, and authority with which they counselled, admonished, taught, and instructed king and ruler, prince and people, were by the Spirit of God that was in them. " The hand of the Lord was upon them," " the word of the Lord spake unto them; "they possessed the Spirit of God, or were possessed by the Spirit, and their prophecy was the work of the Spirit that was in them.

It is in the New Testament, in the Person and ministry of Jesus Christ, to whom the Spirit was given in His measureless fulness, in the ministry of the Baptist the greatest of the prophets and in

the promise of the Father to the Apostles, that the personality, work, and gifts of the Holy Spirit are most fully manifested. The same Spirit which rested on Jesus at His baptism, which is the Spirit of prophecy, is the special promise of Christ to His Apostles. He was to be to them “mouth and wisdom,” the “Spirit of truth,” the Spirit who “should speak in and through them”; who should be to them Advocate, Teacher, and Helper; who would “guide them into all truth, and shew them things to come.” This same Spirit is given to the Church as the Spirit of grace and truth, of holiness and power, the Agent and source of all help and inspiration, imparting to believers divers gifts and powers “knowledge, faith, healings, workings of miracles, prophecy, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues,” “dividing to each one severally even as He will” (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The activity of the Holy Spirit in and with the Prophets and Apostles as agents of inspiration was special and not general, extraordinary and not ordinary, official and miraculous, and not moral and religious and this differentiated it from that in ordinary believers. The purpose for which divine inspiration was given was special and extra ordinary, and so the endowment was extraordinary and miraculous. The calling and mission of Prophet and Apostle in the work of revelation and redemption were special, and so a special and miraculous endowment was given them for their work and calling, nothing less would be adequate to the exigencies of the case. Mere rational, moral, and religious enlightenment, the gracious illumination and operation of the Spirit vouchsafed to ordinary believers for the purpose of religious knowledge and experience, would not be sufficient for the purposes of the revelation of redemption and salvation of the race; nor would they explain the supernatural and miraculous gifts and powers possessed by Prophets and Apostles. The theory of “illumination” and religious “genius” which identifies the theopneustic gift of the sacred writers with the enlightenment and gracious operations of the Spirit in believers generally, neither meets the necessities of the case, the claims and assurances of the sacred writers, nor the principles of Scripture exegesis. It may be the same Divine and gracious Spirit who worketh all in ail, but the gifts, powers, and operations of that Spirit in kind and degree are not the same in all cases. Men may speak of the knowledge, power, and gifts for service imparted to them by the Spirit as inspiration; and inspiration it is but not the same inspiration that came to “holy men of old, who spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost,” and which prepared them for the higher task of revealing to us the divine purposes of grace and redemption.

Moreover, to identify the ordinary and extra ordinary, the general and special operations of the Holy Spirit, and to speak of them as the same, is not only to ignore the miraculous gifts and powers, the freedom and sovereignty of the Divine Spirit in His operations; but it also confounds things that differ, and misinterprets the purposes and work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and in the economy of revelation and redemption. The personality and agency of the Holy Spirit does not necessitate us to believe that His gifts, powers, and operations are in all respects the same, and more than diversity of gifts, powers, and operations necessitate the belief that they are the work of a diversity or multiplicity of Spirits. Not only so, but it is this identification of all the powers and operations of the Spirit in all persons and cases that is at the core of that theory of subjective inspiration, or the theory of the “inspiration of genius,” so prevalent among modern thinkers, and which is so subversive of the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. The theory varies somewhat in its presentation, but in all cases it identifies divine inspiration with mental and spiritual enlightenment, and denies to the sacred writers any specific supernatural aid in the production of their writings, beyond what was realised by scientists, philosophers, poets, and reformers in their productions.

02.04 - Prophets as Inspired Agents

(4) Prophets as Inspired Agents

While the Holy Spirit is the agent, men ordinary men are the organs of divine inspiration. They were men of their own age, nation, and people; but called and chosen of God for a special purpose, and fitted and prepared by Him for that purpose. Hence they were called “messengers of the Eternal/ They were not men of any special class, tribe, or family; nor were they chosen because of any social, educational, or intellectual fitness they might possess; nor because of any special art, power or peculiarity that was theirs. They were intelligent, honest, keen-witted, pure-minded men: men capable of coming into contact with God, of receiving His message, knowing His mind and will, and declaring it to their fellowmen; but they were ordinary men.

Primarily the Prophet was a proclaimer of truth, of righteousness, and justice; the Greek name *prophe tes* meaning one who “speaks for another/ rather than one who speaks to or in the presence of another. The prophet was a “forthteller,” rather than a “foreteller “one who proclaims or pours forth the message of the Lord which he has received, rather than one “who predicts” something to come. The “message of the Eternal “ he received and proclaimed might be one of counsel or instruction, of admonition or warning: but he delivered it as from God, and from God to men. Whether the message had a personal, national, or universal bearing; whether it was of social, political, moral, or religious significance; whether it concerned divine and spiritual truths that related to the prophet’s own age, and people, or foretold future events of God’s providence and kingdom; whether that message was communicated to him by God with or without any known media, or whether it was knowledge acquired in some other way, that message was equally prophecy a prophetic word, a divine message for the people. The Hebrew prophet was before and above ever) other thing the “messenger of the Eternal,” the mouthpiece or spokesman of God to the people. So though prediction is an element of Scripture prophecy, yet it is not by any means its main element: the Prophet’s message was for the most part a present message for the people than the prediction of some future event.

Foresight was part of God’s inspiration to the prophet, but insight into the divine plan and purpose was no less so. Professor Sanday says: “Prophetic inspiration is the type of all inspiration, and is the one mode in which the most distinctive features of Biblical inspiration can be most clearly recognised.” In the days of Samuel the prophets formed a kind of religious order; there was a school, guild, or corporate body, called the “Sons of the Prophets “ men who formed a brotherhood and dwelt together near by the ancient sanctuaries, and rendered special services to Church and kingdom; but as the messenger, or spokesman of God, the Prophet belonged to the earliest times. Abraham is called a prophet because, as the friend of God, God spoke to him, declared to him His will, and gave him visions and revelations of things to come. Enoch, the tenth from Adam, is called “a preacher of righteousness “; while Moses was a prophet of the highest order, and the type and earnest of the true succession of Prophets who from time to time God would raise up and send in His name, for God spoke to him face to face, and he was the mouth of

God to men. In Samuel and the prophetic guild we have the first stages in the development of Prophetism, as also some of its most distinguishing features. Men who hitherto had been called “seers” were now called prophets, and assumed the duties of priest and states man as well as religious teacher. Samuel, as Prophet, was not only the mouthpiece and messenger of God to men, but he is spoken of as a discerner of spirits and a discoverer of secrets, and as such was sought unto and consulted by the men of his time. He was a man of God, but also a man of prayer, and made intercession for the people. He was, moreover, a religious reformer, and restored the worship of Jehovah at Shiloh and Ramah, rebuilt the deserted and forsaken altars, offered sacrifices, and performed other priestly rites and functions. Samuel was the type of a true Prophet of the Lord, and he acted in the capacity of prophet and priest, judge and states man.

02.05 - Prophetic Names and Titles

(5) Prophetic Names and Titles

Much discussion has arisen respecting the terms descriptive of the prophet and his work. From 1 Samuel 9:9, we learn the prophet was formerly called “seer”; whence it has been concluded that “seer” is an archaic name, and not only archaic, but the late Dr. Payne Smith called it “archaic, also colloquial, and popular”; and that it had little or nothing to do with “the prophetic office, or with prophecy as an inspired utterance.” “Seers,” he says, “were men of acute understanding, and of better education than the common people”; they solved questions and problems beyond the comprehension of ordinary men, but were not divinely inspired. Hence they were found in connection with heathen sanctuaries and royal households; while others acted as wizards, necromancers, and diviners; men “who taught for hire and divined for money,” who practised for a livelihood. Persons in need of counsel and advice approached them with gifts and presents of divers kinds, and sought their counsel and assistance; and not unfrequently the spake to the people after the desire of their hearts. Now while the “Former Prophets” were sought unto for assistance and advice in business life and matters of daily and private interest, yet we do not think the Hebrew “seers” were simply men possessed of natural acumen and mere magical powers. They were different from “wizards and necromancers,” and are distinguished from them; they also received great honours, and were esteemed for their high spiritual character; while there is a close connection between their intuitive knowledge or insight and their relations to the Eternal. They were not, however, “messengers of the Eternal,” as were the latter and the greater prophets. “Chozeh,” a name closely allied with that of “seer,” yet distinguished from it as indicating deeper and truer insight into truth beheld God as in a vision, gazed upon Him, and received His message, and declared the things he heard and saw. Dr. Lee says: “The name describes one who possessed the prophetic gift but not the prophetic office. Whether this distinction can be maintained or not, Chozeh or gazer indicates a man who sees visions, a visionseer and divine mystic one who spoke for God by or from visions.”

“Nabi,” the Hebrew name for prophet, is a word the origin and meaning of which is somewhat difficult to determine. Kuenen endeavours to trace it to a Canaanite origin, and thinks it may have been adopted at a time of religious revival, when the excitement resembled the ecstasy of the heathens. If it should be proved that the word was borrowed by the Hebrews from the Canaanites who dwelt in the land, the insinuation that the prophets were “hysterical enthusiasts,” or the followers of an “unwholesome revivalism,” is unworthy of the character of the Hebrew prophets. They were not self-deluded enthusiasts, or men of the mantle type, or after the stamp of the fanatics of Eastern countries and ancient times, but sincere, honest, sober men; and many of them were among the most godly, intelligent, and cultured men of their times. And because of some instance of extravagant excitement on the part of a single individual, under peculiarly exciting circumstances, to brand the whole class of prophets as “raving fanatics,” or “madmen,” is absurd in the extreme. If the etymology of the word nabi signifies to “bubble up,” or “bubble forth,” under some exciting condition or circumstance, as when the Psalmist says, “My heart is bubbling up of a

good matter,” yet this view does not accord with the usage of the word. The word is best interpreted after the Greek prophetes or spokesman, and to denote one who speaks for God and from God. Ewald calls him “a loud, clear speaker,” speaking as a God-inspired prophet only can speak.

Other terms and expressions are used indicative of the prophet's relation to God and his special work.

He is called a “man of God,” a “servant” and “messenger of God,” a “shepherd” and “watchman” in Israel. The prophet had to stand upon his watchtower, to act as sentinel, to look out and warn of danger and threatening destruction; while at all times he was God's servant, messenger, and spokesman to the people. The prophet spoke in the name of God, and with the assurance that he declared the mind and will of God; that the thing he declared he had received by revelation from God. There was an evident note of truthfulness in his utterances that attested his sincerity and authority, and gave him courage and boldness in proclaiming his message, even when that message declared the most unfamiliar and unwelcome truths. Not unfrequently the prophet had to teach most unpopular doctrines, but he did so with a fear less and unhesitating directness, whether the people would hear, or whether they would forbear, because it was the “Word of the Lord,” the “Message of the Eternal,” that came to him. He spoke because he must: he could not get from it. If he thought not to speak it, “then there is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain” (Jeremiah 20:9).

Amos says, “The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:8).

02.06 - False Prophets

(6) False Prophets

There were false prophets mere imitators and simulators: men who made a false profession of being prophets, who assumed the prophet's role, wore the prophet's garb, used the prophet's watchwords, pretended to speak in the name of God, and by the inspiration of the spirit of God, but who prophesied out of their own hearts, uttered their own thoughts, or prophesied in the name of false gods, and as moved by evil spirits. These were diviners and necromancers; men who "taught for hire and divined for money." Kuenen and Hitzig have insinuated that the prophets generally were of this class, and, as a whole, were morally bad. This cannot be. The very fact that the two classes are mentioned and contrasted, and that certain criteria were recognised by which to judge and distinguish them, and by which to determine the truth or falsity of their predictions, imply that both classes existed, and that there were both true and false prophets. The recognition of this fact is essential to an adequate understanding of Hebrew prophetism, It is also essential to distinguish between false prophets who were mere diviners and deceivers, and prophets who "spoke falsely," for there were in this sense false prophets, or prophets who taught and predicted falsely, who were not mere heathen diviners, nor morally bad; but who by mistaken utterances and false predictions led the people astray, made them to err, and led them to trust in "vain confidences." As Montefiore, in his "Ilibbct Lecture," has pointed out, "There were wide gradations of character among them, from the hypocritical charlatan, to the honest if deluded enthusiast." Some prophecies were "relatively false," they were true in idea and purpose, but wrongly interpreted and applied. The interpretation and application were literal and mechanical, made without discernment, understanding, or consideration of their meaning, relation, and condition. The doctrine of the "inviolability of Zion," the security of the Holy City and Temple as the dwelling-place of Jehovah, was true both to tradition and fact; but literally and mechanically applied, and used without regard to intention and relation by prophet, priest, and people, proved a delusion and vain confidence. The people trusted to the security of their city and temple, and supposed God would defend these against all attacks of the invading armies, and they would be perfectly secure against the foe, whatever their manner of life and character, and so assured themselves of peace and security. Trusting to the prophet's teaching of the "inviolability of Zion," they said, "Peace, peace, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these "; words which, however true in themselves, were under these circumstances "lying words," "vain confidences."

Sometimes the prophet's utterances were merely sceptical of Israel's traditions and cherished beliefs in the righteousness and justice of God, rather than opposed to these truths, or teaching falsely in respect of them. It was so with regard to the problem of suffering in Israel. It was according to prophetic teaching and the cherished belief of Israel that righteousness and prosperity, sin and adversity went together, or were related to each other as cause and effect. When upon Josiah's reformation the nation became more religious in practice and righteous in conduct, it was expected, according to this doctrine, it would enjoy peace and prosperity. Instead of this, righteous Judah suffers invasion, affliction, and loss; while Chaldea, cruel, haughty, and

merciless, goes on from victory to victory, enjoying great triumph and success. This gave rise to the scepticism of Habakkuk and other of the Old Testament prophets, who questioned Israel's cherished belief as to the righteous character of God, and the power of His goodness and truth; and they declared that "righteous judgment had failed," and justice had become "maimed and helpless." This scepticism was again the result of a too literal and mechanical application of the prophetic doctrine of the divine righteousness and its rewards, not discerning the relation of sin and suffering, or failing to understand how love and goodness have their chastisements, and that suffering may be vicarious as well as punitive. But while there were prophets who spoke falsely because of ignorance or doubt, there were "false prophets" who were wicked and lying; who made themselves vile, and spoke presumptuously, and prophesied falsely. They inquired of strange gods, asked counsel of wood and stone, practised magical incantations and lying deceptions, and spoke rebellion and defection, and led the people astray. Sometimes a lying spirit was in the mouth of the prophet for the purpose of judgment and destruction. The prophet spoke words of flattery and deception, according to the wish and desire of those who sought unto him, and the people were placed under a delusion to believe a lie that their iniquity and idolatry might be punished. At other times the false prophet spoke falsely and in direct opposition to the teaching of the true prophet, as in the case of Hananiah against Jeremiah. But the words of Hananiah were lying words, and he fell the victim of his own vanity and falsity. The true prophet was God's spokesman. He declared to the people the Word of the Lord, he proclaimed the message of God the truth which God had put into his heart and mouth to utter; but the false prophet spoke out of the vanity of his own mind and from the deceit of his own heart. The utterance of the one was God-breathed and God-inspired; the utterance of the other was the reflection of his own mind, or the suggestion of an evil and lying spirit.

02.07 - The How of the Prophets Inspiration

(7) The How of the Prophet's Inspiration The fact of the prophet's inspiration is one thing, but the how, the manner and results of that inspiration, is another. The mistake too often made is in mixing up the fact of inspiration with all sorts of queries respecting the method its forms, limitations, and varying degrees. That the Hebrew prophets were God-inspired men, men fitted and prepared by the agency of the Holy Spirit to receive, apprehend, and know the message of God, and to declare it to others, is indisputable. Of this the prophets were assured, and concerning it they were not and could not be deceived; while the character of the message is such as to attest its divine origin. But while the fact of inspiration is apparent, and the results of it are clearly manifest, the how of the Spirit's activity on the prophet's mind the *modus operandi* is not quite so clear or easy to understand. From what has been said it will be understood that inspiration is not the same as genius; it is not something native to the mind, which is cultured, developed, and educated but something imparted; some power of insight and foresight which is the gift of the Holy Spirit; some vision or faculty divine, enabling the mind of man to see and know and express what without that power and gift would be to the person impossible. As an intellectual phenomenon this is not a priori impossible. Westcott says, "To enlarge or inform any faculty is only a secondary operation of the same Power by whom the faculty was first originated or quickened into being. It is not more remarkable that man's spirit should be brought into direct communication with the Spirit of God and actuated by it, than that one human spirit should be able to exercise a sympathetic influence upon another." But if, as we have previously indicated, inspiration is not of the same measure and kind in all cases, and the Holy Spirit is the sole agent of inspiration, then the Spirit's action in kind and extent is not always the same. The quickening, actuating energy of the Spirit in enabling us to realise the presence of God, or in recognising and performing duties we owe to God and His Church, may be of a character different in kind and measure, if not in method, from that which fits the prophet for discerning, appropriating, and proclaiming a divine message as His spokesman. We think some aspects of the method of divine operation are clear: (<-?) the action of the Spirit of God is not a dead mechanical action, but vital and organic. The power of the Spirit on the mind of the agent is not a dead power but a living force, which falls "naturally into its place in the development of the purpose of the Living God." (/;) Because the action is vital and organic, intelligent and living, it could not render the agent unconscious; but would tend to quicken and invigorate consciousness to its highest degree, making mind and heart, thought and judgment, determination and will, more susceptible, vigorous, and powerful with it, than they would be without it. (Y) The prophet being called "A man of the Spirit of God," we may conclude the Spirit of God was in him as a source of enlightenment, of knowledge, of judgment and of power; and that the prophet being in the Spirit entered into the will, mind, and purpose of God through the Spirit, so that he was God-inspired, moved by the Holy Spirit to speak and act by a divine intelligent force difficult to withstand.

02.08 - Results of the Prophets Inspiration

(8) Results of the Prophet's Inspiration The action of the Spirit being enlightening, vital, and spiritual, must result in spiritual insight and foresight; or in deeper, larger views of moral and spiritual truth. Hence one result is the fuller knowledge and experience of "ethico-religious truths." The truth made known, the nature of the message received from God, the purposes contemplated and the ends furthered, are ethical and religious. This ethico-religious insight, as the outcome of divine inspiration, was not the mere quickening of the moral and religious consciousness of the prophet into activity, but there was the apprehension, the appropriating and communicating of moral and religious truth before unknown, and which, apart from this inspiration could not have been known. The prophet not only received and apprehended the truth, but had an insight into its meaning and bearing upon the nation, the kingdom and purpose of God in the world, that enabled him to declare it as the mind and purpose of God for the race.

Another result was the stirring of the emotions and feelings of the prophet, which resulted in considerable mental agitation and emotional excitement.

It was to be expected that as the mental and spiritual nature of the prophet was stirred and actuated by the Spirit of God, and new and enlarged views of truth possessed his mind, and he saw into their present and future bearings, there would be great emotional excitement. The prophet must have entered into a sympathetic relation with the truth as it concerned God and man, and as being the message of the Eternal to the people, so when he uttered threatenings of divine wrath and judgment upon their idolatries and sins, or pronounced the divine favour and promise of reward upon their repentance and obedience, or shared in the gracious purposes of divine revelation and redemption, he could but have his emotions greatly stirred. The feelings of awe, reverence, and godly fear, that came of contact with God; the burden of the message of the Eternal that was heavy upon him; the shrinking of the soul from the awful presence of the divine holiness, and the profound sympathy and affection the prophet felt for his own nation and people under chastisement; the joy with which he would deliver the promise of reward and the assurance of victory over their enemies, and the sorrow and dread with which he would declare the judgments of God upon their idolatries and sins, would necessarily fill his mind and soul with strangest excitement.

There was not only mental and emotional excitement, but at times the strongest physical agitation was associated with divine inspiration. Whether this excitement was largely a reflection of the heathen mantic, of the times in which the prophet lived or not, it was a marked feature in the earlier stages of prophecy, and with the lower orders of prophets. Hence the conduct of Saul and of his servants at Naioth, when the Spirit came upon them and they prophesied "they stripped themselves naked and fell prostrate to the ground." Balaam in his vision of the Lord "fell down before Him having his eyes open." Other of the prophets when they saw the Lord and heard His voice "fell upon their faces," while at other times great physical excitement and agitation possessed them, until their "bones shook," and "rotteness entered their bones," "trembling took

hold upon them," "the hair of their flesh stood up," they "reeled and staggered like drunken men," were affrighted, frenzied, and fainted. From these expressions it will be seen how strong was the physical agitation that came upon the prophets, how overpowering and arbitrary was the impulse that seized them, and how real was the involuntary action associated with divine inspiration. How much of it is attributable to the age, to habit, character, and temperament, we affect not to say; but we must not conclude that Hebrew prophecy was nothing better than heathen mantic, or was little else than a state of frenzy and madness. The differences between heathen mantic and Hebrew prophecy were great, while the resemblances were only slight. The condition and action of the Hebrew prophet were involuntary, those of the heathen prophet were voluntary and simulated. The latter used external means for the purpose of producing the excitement, and so worked himself into a state of frenzy, in which condition he claimed to receive special revelations, after the fashion of the Hebrew prophets when borne along by the Holy Ghost. The physical excitement of the heathen prophet was not only self-produced, but it was marked by the wildest extravagance and frantic asseveration and shouting, that it had the appearance of mere raving; but not so with the Hebrew prophet.

There was a divine manifestation, an objective presence, a spiritual force that possessed him, while a voice spake to him and a message was given him which he was constrained to declare. The heathen prophet was not only frenzied and lost self-control, but he attained to no prophetic truth, and received no revelation which he could communicate; while the prophet of the Lord retained his senses and received communications of truth which he understood and declared to the people. With the heathen prophet mantic and ecstasy were essential conditions of prophecy, but not so with the Hebrew prophet. It was no essential condition of divine inspiration and revelation, but merely incidental and occasional; and, in the case of the latter and greater prophets, was exceedingly rare. To them God spake face to face; the word of the Lord was heard by them and openly and consciously received. Sometimes the message came while praying and waiting upon God, and was revealed to the inner consciousness and thought of the prophet.

02.09 - The Prophet as Writer

(9) The Prophet as Writer The Hebrew prophet was not only a speaker and announcer, but also a writer of prophecy. Speaking, however, and not writing was his primal work; hence many of the Hebrew prophets wrote nothing, but fulfilled their ministry by means of the living voice, and all that we have of their prophetic utterances are mere notes or memoranda made by historians or annalists of the time. Written prophecy was undertaken by commandment of Jehovah, or by the express suggestion of the Spirit Who gave the message, and sometimes it was written without being spoken. The writing sometimes followed immediately upon the oral delivery; other instances at considerable intervals from it. Sometimes the prophet wrote what he uttered, at other times it was the work of a scribe or amanuensis written at dictation.

Sometimes the writing was from memory with the aid of notes or memoranda; at other times it was the elaboration of notes and memoranda previously taken. On some occasions we have a full report of the prophet's discourse, in other cases we have only a condensed and incomplete statement. In some instances the writing is the record of a particular utterance spoken at one time, in others it is a combination of several discourses covering a period of months or years fused into one. In all cases the writing is owing either to the necessity of the case, the nature of the message, or the exigencies of the times; or it is executed by Divine command or by the suggestion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit moving the prophet to write.

Writing Divine messages and revelations, however, did not originate with the latter and literary prophets, as may be seen from the Decalogue, as also from the directions given to Moses and Joshua to write in a book certain transactions and instructions to Israel, to say nothing of the forms of torah and law books that existed, and were added to from the earliest times of Israel's history. While the primary ground for writing prophecy may be in the Divine command to write, there were certain secondary reasons that rendered it necessary. The disturbed state of the times and country, constant wars and intrigues of kings and nations, the dangers arising from the presence of foreign soldiery and domestic spies, rendered it unwise and difficult for the prophets to publicly utter their counsels and denunciations, and so they wrote them. Writing was also necessary that a record might be kept for a witness to the people for ever, while it was the chief means of judging of the truth and falsity of a prediction. Notunfrequently the prophet's utterance had a wider significance and reference than belonged to the immediate present, and stood related to the broader purpose and revelation of God; and this required to be recorded that it might be preserved, known, and believed by the people, and was written for that purpose. Writing and elaborating in extenso prophetic utterances was also necessary to the formation of a sacred literature. Hence the impassioned discourses of prophets, spoken under the afflatus of divine inspiration, were composed into writings of symmetrical prose, and took the form of literature, as in the case of Jeremiah's roll and its re-writing by Baruch the Scribe. 1 A consideration of the fate that attended the reading of Jeremiah's roll before the king illustrates not only the dangers pertaining to public prophetic utterances, but also the risk to which a prophetic writing was exposed of being destroyed, and how a Divine Providence wrought for its preservation. We may

learn further how that the prophets in the reproduction of their prophetic utterances did not think it necessary simply to repeat themselves, or to preserve the exact words and expressions: they pruned or expanded their discourses, annotated and amplified 1 Jeremiah 36:1-32. them with additions from their own utterances, or with quotations from other prophets, as necessity might arise or occasion might require. A still further fact is made apparent from the reading of Jeremiah's roll by Baruch and Jehudi, and the way it was received by king, priests, and people, viz. that a prophetic utterance was regarded as much the word of the Lord, and as of equal authority when read by another as when spoken by the prophet himself implying that inspiration was not altogether with the speaker or writer, but in some way it passed over to the utterance and writing itself.

02.10 - The Apostles as Inspired Agents

(10) The Apostles as Inspired Agents The Apostles, like the Prophets before them, were ordinary men, called from the ordinary avocations of life, commissioned and qualified by the Holy Spirit and the teachings of Jesus Christ to be His representatives in the world and messengers of His gospel to others. The very nature of the commission accords with the usage and meaning of the term "Apostle" as found in the New Testament, the Septuagint, and Hellenistic Greek, and is legitimately applied to the Twelve whom the Lord Jesus called, instructed, and commissioned to carry on His mission in the world after His departure. As a further equipment for this work Christ promised and imparted to them the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who should take of the things of Christ and show them unto them; Who should bring all things to their remembrance, declare to them things to come, and endue them with power and might from on high as His witnesses. The term "Apostle" is sometimes applied to ordinary evangelists and messengers in the New Testament, as also in the Didactic and early Christian literature; there were also "false apostles" "deceitful workers fashioning themselves into Apostles of Christ, and calling themselves apostles and were not." (2 Corinthians 11:13; Revelation 2:2, etc.). "False apostles" were not false in name and title; it was not that they had no right or claim to be called Apostles because the name is not restricted either in the New Testament or Greek literature to the Twelve; but they were false in character and purpose. They were legalists, Judaizing teachers, and by bearing the name and title of "apostles" would the more effectually impose on the unwary, and succeed the better in their proselytising schemes.

When, then, we speak of "Apostles as inspired agents," we must be understood as meaning the "Twelve" whom the Lord Jesus called, instructed, and commissioned, and who had companied with Him, and Paul, who, though not one of the Twelve, claimed to have seen Christ, to have been called, qualified, and commissioned by Him, and to have exhibited "the powers and signs," and to have done the work of an Apostle. The Apostles were not ordinary office-bearers in the Church, nor were they presidents, overseers, and governors in the early Church: they were preeminently witnesses of Jesus Christ, preachers of the gospel, and founders of Christian Churches. The relation in which they stood to the Lord Jesus and His Church, the revelations made to them, and the special commission given them, and the Divine inspiration imparted to them, imply that they were special messengers of Jesus Christ and of His gospel, and had special visions and revelations from the Lord Jesus, and were endued with gifts and powers and miraculous might as witnesses, teachers, and writers of the gospel and religion of Jesus Christ. As such they were distinct from all other messengers, missionaries, or apostles of the early Church; the inspiration and revelations that came to them were different from that of other persons bearing the name and title of "apostle": their authority and mission were unique, and they could have no successors.

02.11 - The Holy Spirit the Inspiring Agent

(11) The Holy Spirit the Inspiring Agent The Holy Spirit, the special promise of the Father, was the source and spirit of inspiration to the Apostles. The inspiration, secured to them by the abiding presence and gracious activity of the Spirit, imparted to them a quickening, invigorating power of understanding, knowing, and proclaiming the truth, exercising the judgment, discernment, and insight into divine things, which enabled them to be true, faithful, and efficient witnesses of Christ, of the facts of His death and resurrection, and of the truths founded upon them. While the Holy Spirit was the promise of Christ to His Church and people as a whole, He was the special promise and gift of the Father to the Apostles, for the special work for which they were commissioned. So that while a dispensation of the Spirit was given to every man to profit withal a dispensation or gift suited to the various duties and purposes belonging to each officer and member of the Church to the Apostles, whose work was the most significant and important, was given a dispensation proportionate to their calling and needs. "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed" (Mark xvi. 20). u Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness " (Acts 28:31). The Apostles were specially and supernaturally prepared by the Holy Spirit to know and teach and record those facts and truths which concern the Gospel and Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Their inspiration was the work of the same Holy Spirit that was given to the Church generally, and Who was the source of light and life to all them that believe: yet in nature and purpose it differed from that, and had specific reference to the revelations and visions of God which came to them as the Apostles of Jesus Christ, and to those spiritual gifts and powers which belonged to them as witnesses of Christ and of His resurrection from the dead. As compared with the inspiration of the Prophets it was less outward, less emotional and physical; it was not so sudden and occasional as that which came to them, but was more ethical, religious, and spiritual, was more gradual and continuous, and was in accord with the higher truth they had to receive and teach, and the deeper spiritual life and work they had to fulfil. It was therefore larger and fuller in its measure and scope, in its spiritual judgment and insight, in the uncovering and disclosing of divine purpose and meaning, just as Christianity, as a system, was superior to Prophetism and Judaism. That endowment to the full the Apostles claimed to have received. Paul says: " We received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth. " 1

02.12 - The Apostles as Writers

(12) The Apostles as Writers The work of the Apostles was primarily that of witnesses and preachers of the Gospel: as such their inspiration may be supposed to have been that of speakers rather than writers. It was, however, as Apostles as men chosen and commissioned for the office and work of the Apostolate that they were inspired, and therefore fitted and prepared for whatever was included in that office and work. The promises of Christ, moreover, had regard to their work as a whole, and from the commencement to the close of the Apostleship “always even unto the end,” and pertain both to the matter and the manner of the teaching, and must, therefore, concern writing as well as preaching. Indeed, some theologians argue that a higher inspiration was needed and guaranteed to the Apostles as writers than as speakers: this, however, cannot be inferred from the statements of the Apostles themselves. The Corinthians said, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account,” meaning that the epistles he sent them were more powerful and effective when read and considered by 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 than his speech and words were when he was with them and addressed them. But this criticism Paul controverts, and affirms that what he is “by letter when absent, that he will be by word and deed when present with them.” To the Thessalonians he states that his discourses and epistles are of the same authority and importance, while he requires the same obedience to what is communicated, “whether by word or epistle.” If the written truth were more authoritative and Divine than the spoken utterance, it would be required of us to distinguish between the two, and between what was spoken and communicated by companions or fellow-workers, and what was subscribed by the Apostle’s own hand, and that apart from the nature and contents of the truth itself.

John the Baptist, the greatest of prophets, and the Lord Jesus, the greatest of teachers, wrote nothing at all, and the Accord we have of their teachings and discourses is the report or testimony of eye- and earwitnesses; but no one would dispute the authority of the teachings of the Lord Jesus on that account. The Apostles wrote as they preached, and claimed the same inspiration for their written as for their spoken communications; no more and no less. The inspiration and revelation given them by the Spirit of truth had respect to the truth in its totality, and therefore relates to the contents of the truth, to the method of receiving, apprehending, and developing it; and so must concern both preaching and writing as means for preserving, developing and propagating the truth. The historical and theological development of the truth of revelation is no argument against the inspiration of the Apostles, since the promises of Christ to them recognised the progressive character of Divine revelation and the fuller developments of truth according to the necessities of the times in which they wrote and spoke. No gift bestowed by the Lord Jesus on His Apostles at the time He sent them forth, and no endowment received at Pentecost, can be said to have exhausted the promises of Christ and the fulness of the Spirit’s might and truth; and so the promises hold good under all developments, and secure to them Divine inspiration and guidance as they passed from stage to stage in the progressive apprehension and communication of the truth. On the other hand, we are not warranted to conclude from this that the latest writings of the

New Testament are the most inspired and authoritative, and the most deserving of confidence and respect: developments are not necessarily new revelations: the truth is present in germ in the earliest revelations, to be more fully developed in course of time. Moreover, the authority of Divine truth is not in the largeness of the view we have of it, nor in the fulness of detail, nor in the intensity and force with which the truth is realised, but in the truth itself, in its being the truth of God, and given to us by revelation from God. The New Testament writings are diverse in character, method, and form of treatment. We have the testimony of witnesses to facts of various kinds, statements of what they saw and heard, of transactions and events in which they took part. We have independent and concurrent witnesses and testimonies, which, differing in detail, agree in fact and substance as to the truth and event itself. We have, moreover, theological and argumentative treatises, with formal and logical arrangements of truth and doctrine. In some instances we see the writer struggling with the truths and thoughts that possessed him thoughts that seem too Divine for human speech and utterance, too big and vast to be grasped and shaped; yet he struggles to give them birth and form, and to know and declare the “love that passeth knowledge,” and to make known the “hidden wisdom,” and the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,” not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” The New Testament writers do not say much of their own inspiration or the inspiration of each other, but what they do say is assuring. The Apostle Paul makes the greatest claim for himself. This is owing partly to the fact that he was not one of the Twelve chosen and instructed by the Lord Jesus, and accompanied with Him as the other Apostles did; and partly in vindication of his own apostleship and inspiration, which was challenged from time to time. The place and influence the Apostle acquired in the ranks of the Apostles and among the Churches, the number, character and doctrinal significance of the Apostle’s writings and teachings are such as to have won for him the acknowledged position as “the real author of Christianity.” Baur and the Tübingen School of Criticism declared Paul to be “the chief exponent of evangelicalism and universalism; and that but for him Christianity must have failed of its purpose.” This theory fails to recognise the importance of the teaching of Jesus Christ and of the Eleven; it fails to appreciate the importance of the preaching of Peter and John, and the testimony and labours of Stephen, Barnabas, Timothy, and other of the Evangelists and helpers in the early Church.

Peter was leader and chief spokesman for the Apostles on all important occasions; he also testified of his inspiration and that of his fellow Apostles; while above all other New Testament writers he spoke most positively of the “theopneustic” character of the Scriptures, and classed the writings of the Apostles with those of the holy prophets. In his Second Epistle, Peter designates Paul’s Epistles as sacred Scriptures, and testifies to their supreme authority and importance. John says the least about his inspiration of any of the great Apostles, but he uses the words “ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things”; while in the Apocalypse he speaks of being “in the Spirit,” of “sayings faithful and true,” and of the authority and completeness of the Word of God. The two historical Evangelists, the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, James and Jude, cannot claim apostolic inspiration and authority. They were, however, companions of the Apostles; they shared in the inspiration that belonged to the entire community of believers, while Mark and Luke are said to have written their Gospels under the superintendence of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Few writings bear more clearly and fully the marks of Apostolicity than do the Synoptic Gospels, while that of Luke’s witnesses above all others to the universal character of Christ’s teaching. The “Acts of the Apostles,” by the same author, bears the stamp of

genuineness, of historicity and trustworthiness, and of being divinely inspired.

Dr. Pope says: “ The New Testament writers form a body of men united in the unfolding of Christian doctrine, and who always deliver their message as from God their Saviour, by His Holy Spirit. If they do not always assert their inspiration, it is everywhere implied by themselves, and supposed to be understood by their hearers and readers. In this they occupy precisely the same position as the Old Testament writers. Like them, they stand before the people of God with infallible teaching, from which there is no appeal; like them, they occasionally declare themselves when their authority is resisted to be the organs of the Spirit. In a word, they take the place in the New Testament of the prophets in the Old, continuing their office and ministrations by a divine commission, the credentials of which are known and read of all men.”

02.13 - Limitations of Inspiration

(13) Limitations of Inspiration

Though Prophets and Apostles were inspired of God, their inspiration had its limitations. Inspiration did in no wise affect the free personality or hinder the self-conscious activity of the individual. The inspired agent retained the free use of his mental and physical powers, and used his ordinary intelligence.

He was an active and not a passive agent: a living, conscious, free agent, and not an unconscious instrument. He was a “labourer together” and an underworker with God: not the pen, but the penman of the Spirit. All the individual peculiarities and distinctive characteristics of the writers their excellences and their defects, their individuality of thought and style, of culture and training, of life-character and occupation are manifest in their discourses and writings. They wrote and “spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” but wrote and spoke in their own language as “the Spirit gave them utterance.” When the prophet was seized, moved, and borne along by the Spirit to utter an unwelcome message, and to perform an unpleasant task, he was made to yield to the constraining force within, to conform to the mind of the Spirit, so that he became a conscious, willing agent in discharging his task. The Prophet’s inspiration on these occasions was indisputable.

Inspiration did not render the agent infallible.

Sometimes the sacred writers are spoken of as in fallible and inerrant, as possessed of a truth and knowledge little less than Divine; so that they were more than mere human beings, that they were the very mouth of God, the Spirit of God speaking not in but through them. The sacred writers were themselves, and retained the full conscious possession of all their powers and faculties, so that they could say: “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” x John speaks of “that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled concerning the word of life.” 2 Paul says: “We know in part and we prophesy in part.” 3 These statements imply that they were conscious, but limited in their knowledge; that they were them

1 John 3:2

2 1 John 1:1.

3 1 Corinthians 13:9. selves, and possessed and exercised all their powers and faculties.

Inerrancy in every statement, and infallibility in every particular are not essential to the Scriptures as an authoritative rule of faith and practice. It is sometimes said, “if the Scriptures are not infallible in every particular we can have no confidence that they are infallible in any”; and if “mistaken and errant in matters unimportant, then they may be mistaken and errant in matters of greatest importance.” Patterson Smyth says in reply to this, “This is not how we reason in respect of any other book, or any other authority. We do not say that an error in numbers, dates, or names

in a book of history would discredit its claim to be regarded as history, nor should we on that account declare it to be unreliable and untrustworthy." Mistakes of this kind are found in some of the greatest authorities, when found, we correct the mistake and still continue to use our authority. We do not say because a man is not infallible in every utterance, or inerrant in every statement, that he is unreliable and untrustworthy in all matters whatsoever. What politician, scientist, philosopher, historian, professionalist, or preacher, would claim to be so tested? A teacher or preacher must not necessarily be infallible and inerrant in every statement and in every detail of that statement, to be regarded as an efficient and trust worthy teacher and preacher. Slips of memory, of tongue, and of pen may occur; and there may be unimportant errors of various kinds found in a preacher's sermon, and yet it may be an adequate and trustworthy declaration of truth and doctrine, and worthy of acceptance and confidence. And the Bible, as our authoritative record of the revealed will of God, and as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, is not invalidated because scientific, chronological, and historical errors are to be found in it. Despite these errors, the record is still true "That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." And these "things are written that ye may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name.", Because Revelation is historical and progressive, and because the Scripture records cover a period of hundreds of years, it is to be expected that statements of fact and truth made at one time will receive fuller elucidation and enlargement at another time, and by means of development assume a difference of form and expression at these different periods; yet the facts and truths are substantially the same.

There were differences of view as to the time of Christ's second coming among the Apostles, and the same Apostles had different conceptions of the "Parousia" at the beginning and the end of their Apostleship; but this difference of view, as to the nearness of that event, does not destroy confidence in the Apostles as inspired agents, nor yet in the reality of the fact of Christ's second coming for judgment as a revealed truth. The fact was revealed to the Apostles, but the time was not made known; and because the fact was certain to the Apostles mind it was declared as "at hand," that it would be immediate, in their day, whereas the "day" was the "day of the Lord," which is "as a thousand

1 John 20:31, years." Variations in expression and differences of statement in parallel histories and narratives, whether in the Old or the New Testament, must not be considered as mistakes and errors in the sense of being false, contradictory, and untrustworthy. The differences and divergencies are similar to those found in parallel accounts of any important event made by different narrators, reporters, or historians at the present day, who give an independent and unbiassed account of the fact, but written at a different time and viewed from a different standpoint. So with those parallel accounts in Kings and Chronicles and the Gospels, different and divergent as they are, are to be regarded as the testimony of other witnesses to the reality of the facts and truths recorded, and as confirmatory of their reality and historicity; and because they differ in some particulars we may be assured the writers were not mere copyists, but had recourse to various sources, or viewed it from different standpoints, and are independent witnesses, and were not guilty of collusion. But the so-called errors and discrepancies in the Bible may be the result of copying, translating, or printing, and so belong to the transmission rather than the origination of the Scriptures; are secondary and not primal, the work of scribes, translators, and printers, and not the work of inspired writers. As inspiration did not secure the sacred writers

against literary mistakes, nor render them infallible and inerrant in matters of knowledge and statement, neither did it secure them against moral mistakes, nor render them immaculate in life, or holy and spiritual in heart and conduct. Speaking generally, inspiration was alone the experience of “ holy men “, spiritual holiness was the basis of its operation. It was men called and spiritually fitted to receive divine revelations and visions to whom the vision came; while it was only the spiritually-minded who could compare and judge and discern spiritual truths; yet inspiration and holiness are not correlative and consequential terms, nor is inspiration a guarantee of spiritual holiness or a pledge of moral character.

Hence Balaam and Saul, among the Old Testament prophets, and Caiaphas and Judas, among the New Testament ones, were not holy men; nor were Moses and David, Peter and Paul, perfect and unblamable in life and character. Indeed, inspiration itself was not always the constant experience of Prophets and Apostles. It was occasional rather than continuous, and for special ends and purposes rather than for ordinary and religious ends: and so the Holy Spirit, as the agent of Divine inspiration, was not always with the Prophets and Apostles, nor always operative in their minds, thoughts, deeds, and utterances. The Prophets speak of the Spirit coming to them, seizing and moving them specially and suddenly, of His departing from them and coming again after a lapse of days, weeks, and months; while the Apostles tell us how they speak and act of themselves and not of the Spirit; while at other times they were constrained and moved by the Spirit, so to speak and act. Again, Paul tells us how at times he spoke “ foolishly,” and after “ the manner of men,” while in his defence before Ananias, he “ spoke against God’s high-priest “ and the “ law of Moses “ unwittingly, or unknowingly. At other times we hear of “ contentions,” slips of memory, errors of judgment, cherished purposes, and expectations not realised. Peter, moreover, was not perfect, unblamable, and without defect, as may be seen in his denial of his Lord and Saviour, in his conduct at Antioch, when Paul “ withstood him because he was to be blamed,” and the difference that arose between him and other of the Apostles on various matters.

While Inspiration was not the constant possession nor the ceaseless experience of the sacred writers, neither was it the same in kind and decree in all of them, nor did it place all on the same level as to knowledge and understanding of the truth, nor did it impart to their utterances and writings a uniform significance and authority. Inspiration was imparted to holy men of old according to their needs and requirements, and with a view to the work they had to do. The Prophets as announcers of God’s will and purpose, as statesmen, social reformers, preachers of righteousness, counsellors of kings and people, and foretellers of coming events, and as writers of history and prophecy, had an inspiration imparted to them sufficient for the task assigned them. So with the Apostles there was a diversity of gift imparted to them suited to the diverse and varied tasks they had to perform. It is this fact that led apologists and theologians to speak of “ degrees of inspiration “ the “ inspiration of incitement,” “ enlightenment,” “ invigoration,” and “ elevation “; the inspiration of “ superintendence “ and “ guidance,” of “ direction and assistance,” of “ suggestion and communication,” as suited to the needs of the agents and the character of their writings. The inspiration was, therefore, adequate but not uniform: it was not the same in kind and degree in all and through all, but it answered the end for which it was given, and served the purpose for which it was needed.

Inspiration did not raise all agents to the same platform of knowledge and the realisation of divine truth, neither did it secure to them a full, perfect, and immediate knowledge of the meaning and

significance of the truth and vision they received. The prophets, we are told, “searched diligently” to understand the salvation made known to them “ searching what time or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” 1 Jeremiah and Ezekiel were perplexed respecting the revelations they received, and the meaning of the symbolic acts they were commanded to perform. The Angel Gabriel was sent to instruct Daniel concerning the vision he saw; while an angel unfolded to Peter the meaning of the vision he saw in a trance at Joppa. The seer at Patmos understood not the visions and revelations of the Spirit; while Paul speaks of having “heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for a man to utter.” From this we gather that revelation and inspiration had to do with the truth imparted, and not with the form, manner, and method of its reception and expression, 2 Peter 1:11.

03 - Part 3 - The Scriptures as Inspired Writings

PART III THE SCRIPTURES AS INSPIRED WRITINGS (1) Inspiration of the Writings based on Inspiration of the Writers - (2) The Pentateuch Inspired (3) Inspiration of Composite Scriptures (4) Inspiration attested by the Unity, Harmony, and Purity of Scripture (5) Inspiration claimed by the Scriptures - (6) The Testimony of the Lord Jesus to the Inspiration of the Old Testament (7) Christ Jesus and Modern Criticism (8) The Witness of the Apostles to the Inspiration of the Old Testament (9) The Double Sense of the Old Testament Scriptures (10) The Inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures (11) The Apostolic Witness to the Inspiration of the New Testament Writings (12) Ancient Views of Inspiration - (13) Modern Theories of Inspiration

03.01 - Inspiration of the Writings Based on Inspiration of the Writers

THE SCRIPTURES AS INSPIRED WRITINGS

PART III (I) Inspiration of the Writings based on Inspiration of the Writers

HAVING spoken of the inspiration of the agents, we now speak of the inspiration of their work; and from the inspiration of the speakers we pass to the inspiration of their utterances; and from the inspiration of the writers to that of their writings. As already indicated, inspiration primarily belongs to the agents, to the speakers and writers, and only secondarily to their utterances and writings. It is more intelligible and more correct to speak of the inspiration of men than of books; because inspiration denotes the action or influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men preparing and assisting them in the work of speaking and writing. Because Prophets and Apostles were specially chosen to be the spokesmen of God to the people, and to receive communications or revelations of God's mind and will, and to make them known, and were specially inspired for this, those communications, whether given orally or by writing, may be said to be inspired because they "wrote and spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." The sacred Scriptures are inspired because they contain the declared mind of the Spirit, are the organ of His abiding and living influence, and are a means of inspiring men to noble deeds and holy purposes.

Hence the Scriptures are called "theopneustic" "God-breathed or God-inspired. This applies to all the inspired utterances and writings of Prophets and Apostles, whatever the literary form and character of the writing may be whether law, prophecy, psalm, history, Gospel, Epistle, or what. It is an inspired production because it is the outcome of Divine inspiration. This is the primal ground or basis of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, that they are the writings of inspired men: men chosen and inspired for the work of declaring the Divine mind and will, and to whom a communication or revelation of the Divine will has been made. This gives rise to a question of some importance.

If those Scriptures alone are to be regarded as inspired which were written by inspired men, what of those Scriptures which are admitted to be compilations, which contain laws, oracles, visions, derived from unknown or doubtful sources; or are the work of unknown authors, or of men of whose inspiration we have no certain knowledge? There are Scriptures which are largely or wholly anonymous or pseudonymous; and others which have been written under the superintendence of inspired Prophets and Apostles, and by men who were their scribes and companions.

These writings are not the immediate work of Prophets and Apostles, but of their companions, and hence we cannot rest the inspiration of the Scriptures wholly and alone on the known and proved inspiration of the writers without throwing a large portion of the sacred Scriptures open to doubt as to their inspiration.

Moreover, to make the known and proved inspiration of the writer to be the sole basis of the inspiration of the Scriptures would necessitate us to prove the authorship of the books, and to establish their authenticity and genuineness before we could accept their teachings as inspired

and authoritative: a task which is admitted to be a difficult, if not an impossible one.

Regard must not only be had to the known inspiration of the writer, but also to the contents and teachings of the writing, to the nature, unity, and harmony of the contents of the Scriptures; that they claim to speak to us in the name of God and to make known His will; that they have been received from the first until now as the Word of God; that they accord with the analogy of the faith; that Apostles, apostolic Fathers, Apologists, and early Christian writers have quoted and used them as inspired Scriptures; that the Church has authorised their use because they believed them to be inspired, and because they breathe the Spirit of God, and are profit able for teaching, correction, and instruction in righteousness and holiness." Tried by this standard those Scriptures, said to be composite in character and the work of unknown authors, are found to be inspired, they contain highly moral and religious teachings, and are the product of the spirit of truth. The authors, though unknown, and outside the list of writing Prophets and inspired Apostles, were, nevertheless, inspired men; men belonging to an inspired community, and were the producers and conservers of revealed truth. The point of supreme importance in this view of inspiration is that we are required to concentrate attention on the character of the truth itself, on the subject-matter of the teaching, without attempting to settle the vexed question of the date and authorship of the books of Scripture. It may be that the difficulties pertaining to the nature and character of the teaching, the contents of the truth, and the standard of morality found therein, may not be fewer, nor less important than those that concern the question of elate and authorship. No, but we take the Scriptures as they are, and the contents as we find them; and though the history is not according to strict historical methods, and the science of Scripture not according to modern scientific teachings, and the morals and ethics not those of our own age and time, we may judge them according to what they are. And it is well to remember that the sacred writers wrote and spoke to their contemporaries, to the men of their own age and country, in their own language and the language the people could understand, using terms and expressions to which they were accustomed, and which conveyed to them just the truth they wished them to understand and know. And such an idea and purpose cannot be said to be contrary to the idea of Divine inspiration, and that they taught what was not strictly and scientifically correct. The message was primarily for the people of their own age and country. The recognised standard of knowledge, science, and morals was that of their own age and time; and the purpose of revelation was not perfection of knowledge in history, science, and morality; but to reveal God, to make known the purpose and method of His working in history and humanity: and anything that will make this purpose clear will help us the better to understand the character and design of the Scriptures as inspired writings.

03.02 - The Pentateuch Inspired

(2) The Pentateuch Inspired The Old Testament is the authoritative record of God's special discipline and training of Israel as a people to whom was revealed the knowledge of Him self and of His gracious purpose for the race. This fact will remain, whatever Criticism may determine as to the date and authorship of the books of the Old Testament. Whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch as we now have it or not, it must be admitted that the writings contain a nucleus of Mosaic legislation and teaching, which, as Israel's prophet, leader, and lawgiver, he gave them. Moses is the recognised author of the national status and religious institutions of Israel; he provided that people not only with the nucleus of a system of civil ordinances, but of ceremonial and religious observances, befitting the ethical and religious relations in which they stood to Jehovah as their God and Saviour. Moses also instituted some form of priesthood, which priesthood was instructed in matters pertaining to the ceremonial and religious observances of the worship of Jehovah as the God of Israel. Those instructions may have been only in outline or germ, to be filled in, and developed, as the people multiplied and family and national life took on new aspects, assumed new conditions, and required new laws and regulations.

These additions and developments made by inspired authority according to the necessities of the law, were Mosaic in spirit and character, and when given in the name and with the authority of Moses they were so given in the belief that they were according to the legislation and teaching of Moses, and were just what Moses would have sanctioned had he been with them as prophet and lawgiver at that time.

Because they were developments of the Mosaic legislation, because they were given as divine revelations and instructions to Israel to guide them onward to the coming of that Holy and Just One, "the prophet like unto Moses" whom God promised to raise up and send, they are inspired, whether the actual work of Moses, or only according to the Mosaic pattern. "There was in this," says Dr. Driver, "no interested or dishonest motive on the part of post-Mosaic authors; this being so, its moral and spiritual greatness remain unimpaired, and its inspired authority in no respect less than that of any other portion of the Old Testament Scriptures which happen to be a compilation and anonymous." *

03.03 - Inspiration of Composite Scriptures

(3) Inspiration of Composite Scriptures So with the prophecies of Isaiah and Zechariah, if these were not written by the men whose names they bear, yet, doubtless, they are divinely inspired.

1 Pent. Introduction, p. Ixii.

If the second Isaiah was not the same as the first, yet, judged by the contents of the writing, the last sixteen chapters of that prophecy are not less inspired than the first forty chapters; nor was the writer less spiritually-minded or less inspired of God; and if we are still to speak of him as the “unknown,” he is indeed “the great unknown.” So with the Psalter, if unknown authors wrote many of its hymns and songs of praise, its psalms of penitence, confession, and adoration, yet were they inspired, and not less inspired for their work than was David. So with the book of Proverbs, if we admit the book to be a collection of proverbs by many authors, the “words of wise men,” and not exclusively the proverbs of Solomon, their authors were not less inspired than was Solomon; while not unlikely some of the sages were prophets in Israel, and their “words” are words of wisdom, and given for the purpose that “men might know wisdom and discipline, and might receive instruction or training in sound sense, in righteousness, judgments and rectitudes.” So with New Testament Scripture; the Synoptic Gospels may be of a composite character and derived from unknown sources and traditions, and some of the names of their authors cannot claim apostolic authority, yet are they apostolic in their contents and teachings; and are historical and trustworthy records of the things they narrate and bear the stamp of Divine inspiration. So with other of the New Testament writings the authorship of which is disputed or unknown; for if they be not the work of inspired Apostles yet are they the work of inspired men; and the truths and teachings they set forth are in fullest accord with the spirit and teachings of the New Testament generally. Especially is this the case with the “Fourth Gospel” and the “Epistle to the Hebrews.”

These Scriptures not only show signs of a unity of authorship and marks of the highest qualities of mind and heart; but the sublime conception of God, of holiness, righteousness and truth which they contain, the unique and lofty portraiture of the Person and work of Christ, of atonement, redemption, and salvation they present, and the deep spiritual influence their teachings exert on the minds and hearts of their readers, attest their Divine character and origin, and stamp them as emphatically God inspired writings.

03.04 - Inspiration Attested by the Unity, Harmony, and Purity of Scripture

(4) Inspiration Attested by the Unity ^ Harmony, and Purity of Scripture In speaking of the contents of the Scriptures as evidence of their Inspiration, we ask you to look at the unity and harmony which characterise their teachings. The unity of Scripture is not in identity of statement, style, language and form of expression; for in these particulars there is the greatest possible diversity, every writer being true to himself; but in the unity of truth, doctrine, and purpose which imply the guiding presence and action of the same Spirit of truth in all and with all. There is a unity of theme and subject and a combined harmony of treatment, which, considering the diversity of writers and their distinctive literary characteristics, is remarkable, and peculiar to the Scriptures. We must also remember that the writers lived apart from each other, wrote at times and in places separated from each other by considerable distances, and so could not have written in concert or with knowledge of each other's writings, yet they not only write upon the same themes and in much the same way, but they agree as to the reality, necessity, purpose, and results of their doctrines and teachings. Professor Kstes, of Hamilton Theological Seminary, speaking of the unity and authority of Scripture, says: " It is as if one drew water out of a deep well with vessels of different metals, one of brass, another of tin, a third of earth, the water may seem at first to be of a different colour owing to the reflection of the vessel; but when the vessels are brought near to the eye, this diversity of colour vanisheth and the waters are found to be of the same colour and relish. So in the Scriptures we have the different styles of the historian, the poet, the philosopher, the prophet, the evangelist and the apostle, which difference to some at first sight may appear to make the truth of Scripture seem to be of different complexions, but when we look narrowly into them and take them advisedly then will the identity both of colour and relish manifest itself." 1 The unifying factor is the revealing, inspiring Spirit of God who breathes in all, and moves and energises all with the same truth and purpose. The Scriptures are not a mere collection of writings by different authors on a given theme, nor a heterogeneous mass of literature, but an organised whole, making one complete developing organism of the Kingdom of "Bibliotheca Sacra," Oct, 1898.

God, the work of the Holy Spirit as the source of divine inspiration and revelation. One theme and purpose dominate the whole, binding them together into an inseparable unity. The Old Testament is ever looking forward to the New, the New is ever looking back to the Old, citing and fulfilling its prophecies, quoting and interpreting its doctrines and truths, interweaving its teachings and promises with the great facts and truths of the Gospel, so that Christ becomes the end of the law for righteousness, the completion and perfection of Judaism, the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. This is peculiar to the Bible.

Though the unity is in the truth and its interpretation, the doctrine and its meaning, the teaching and its purpose, yet the unifying principle is not historical, literary, and intellectual, but moral and spiritual.

There is a purity, righteousness, and holiness characteristic of the Scriptures that is noteworthy in this connection. For Israel was prone to idolatry and sin as other people; but despite their idolatries and moral defection in life and practice, there originated and developed with them the revelation of holy law, of divine righteousness, holiness, and truth; of religious devotion and spiritual worship that attained completeness and perfection in Christ Jesus and the Christian religion. These three unity, harmony, and purity of doctrine, precept, and purpose give to the writings of the Old and New Testaments a character, significance, and permanency, which are the reflection of the Divine mind, the work of the Spirit of God, who worketh all in all.

03.05 - Inspiration Claimed by the Scriptures

(5) Inspiration claimed by the Scriptures To argue the Inspiration of the Scriptures from the testimony and claims of the Scriptures themselves has the appearance of arguing in a circle. \Ye do not, however, start with an a priori assertion that the Scriptures are inspired, and thence seek to establish the fact of their inspiration. What we assume is that the Scriptures are reliable and trustworthy, that the sacred writers knew better than anyone else of the fact of their inspiration and the purposes for which they were inspired. And if we may accept the sacred writers as honest and trustworthy men, and their writings as reliable and trustworthy records, then may we accept the testimony they give of their inspiration as trustworthy.

Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and the Prophets tell us of the revelations that came to them, and of the directions given them to write the same in a roll or book, which they did; and because they have recorded this and narrated it with a simplicity, clearness, and fulness that carries with it the assurance of reality and conviction, we accept the writers testimony as to the revelations made and the directions given them to record the same. \Ye may be required to limit this statement to the particular message and communication with which the command is immediately connected. So that if Moses was commanded to write the words of the “ Decalogue,” of the “book of the Covenant,” of the “memorial of the destruction of Amalek,” and to make a record of the journey of the Israelites to the Promised Land, etc. then it is to those events the direction applies, and to those only, and affords no certain evidence that Moses wrote the whole of the Pentateuch. So with every other direction to write songs, laws, prophecies, narratives, records, etc, given to Joshua, Samuel, David, and the Prophets; the command can only apply to the song, the law, the memorial, the prophecy mentioned, and cannot be affirmed of the whole of the writings which pass under their names. It may be admitted that this is what the particular directions to write mean; yet there is the fact that we have other of their writings, and, as already shown, the teachings and contents of these writings are of the nature of divine revelations, bear the stamp of divine inspiration, and must have been written by men inspired of God, and are no less the revelation of God than those which they were expressly commanded to record.

Moreover, prophets and chroniclers speak of the “book of the Law,” of the commandments, statutes, and judgments written in the “ book of the Law,” or “ the law of Moses,” which comprise writings other than those with which the direction to write is concerned. The same holds good of other writings in the Old and New Testaments. There are, moreover, those prefatory forms of expression used by the sacred writers in making the record, that “the Word of the Lord came unto them,” or “the burden,” “the vision,”

“the oracle” of the Lord by them, implying God had given them that word, had communicated to them His will, that they were the bearers of His message, and wrote and spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost. Further, it was they, and they alone, who received, declared, and recorded these messages, and no other such record of the Divine will as the Scriptures contain is known to us, and with the writings in our hands we can but receive the testimony of these men,

and accept “ the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms,” as being the revealed Word of God, and as given by inspiration from God.

03.06 - The Testimony of the Lord Jesus to the Inspiration of the Old Testament

(6) The Testimony of the Lord Jesus to the Inspiration of the Old Testament The claim made by the Old Testament writers for the inspiration and authority of their writings is confirmed by the testimony of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus quoted and referred to these writings under the title of "Scripture," the "Word of God," the " Law of God," the " Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms "; expressions which show the writings thus quoted and referred to were the Hebrew Scriptures, which then existed as rolls or books. The knowledge the Lord Jesus had of these writings was perfect and complete; it was more if not other than ordinary, it was spiritual and Divine; He said, " these are they which bear witness of Me." The perfect knowledge of the Lord Jesus is evidenced by the extensive use He made of them, and the remarkable applications and explanations He gave of them. He used them on all important occasions in conflict with the devil, in opening His synagogue ministry, in justification of His conduct towards publicans and sinners, in rebuking Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees, in condemning evils of various kinds He quoted the Scriptures, the authority of which His hearers generally acknowledged. In quoting them the Lord Jesus quotes them by the names of their reputed authors Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Daniel, Jonah, etc. He adopted the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures as known in His day, and placed His seal of approval on their inspired teaching and authority.

While He censures and rebukes the teachings of Pharisees and the traditions of men, He never depreciates, censures, or condemns the Scriptures, but fulfils and perfects their hidden meanings, their deep, spiritual significance and far-reaching applications. By this means He attests their divine inspiration, while He reveals Himself as Lord of the Scriptures as well as of the Sabbath and of the Temple. The Lord Jesus judged the Scriptures spiritually. He accepted and interpreted them according to their spiritual meaning and signification. He was not the slave of literalism, but quoted and interpreted them in a liberal manner, not always according to the letter but after the spirit. He saw in their teachings truths and doctrines which were exhibited in His own life and teaching, of which God was the Author and Revealer, and of which He was the highest and fullest embodiment. To Him the Personal and the written word were alike the Word of God. To Him the Old Testament Scriptures were not the isolated writings and mere literary compositions they are to modern Critics, nor did He concern Himself with questions of human authorship. He was concerned with their religious contents, their spiritual teachings, their relations to Himself and His mission, their bearing on the revelation of God and the redemption of the race. The Lord Jesus either had a more perfect theory of inspiration, or a more perfect knowledge of God and of His gracious purposes in revelation and redemption than we have; and thus He was able to take the Scriptures and use them as they were, and to find in them " the Word of God, the Scripture which cannot be broken."

03.07 - Christ Jesus and Modern Criticism

(7) Christ Jesus and Modern Criticism As the Lord Jesus used and quoted the Scriptures for religious and spiritual ends, and not for literary and critical purposes, it is reasonable to suppose that He quoted them under the names by which they were familiarly known, or by the name inscribed upon the roll and associated with it by tradition; and that for the purpose of knowing and identifying the quotation, and authorising the particular application of the Scripture used, and not for the purpose of determining the question of authorship. If modern Criticism shall demonstrate that certain Scriptures were not actually written by the persons whose names they bear, and that when the Lord Jesus quoted them as the saying of Moses, David, Daniel, or Jonah, He was quoting them under a pseudonymous name, that would neither discredit the knowledge of the Lord Jesus nor the truth and authority of the Scriptures quoted; but would simply show that the Lord Jesus accepted, used, and quoted them as they were used and known by His hearers, without staying to correct the name of the author, while the Scripture none the less taught the lesson, and served the purpose for which He quoted it The authority of the law of Moses and of the books of the Pentateuch does not depend on the tradition that Moses wrote them, but on the fact that they were given by God, and were written by the inspiration of God. The application and appropriateness of a particular Psalm to Jesus Christ does not lie in the truthfulness of the tradition that David wrote that Psalm, but in the fact that it was spoken of Him and applies to Him in a special and pre-eminent manner. The question of date and authorship is a modern literary question, and is subjudice, and not one that engaged the mind and thought of Jesus Christ at the time He quoted and used the Scriptures, nor is it one that vitally concerns the Divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, nor will it materially affect the character, purpose, and ends of Divine revelation; since these will be much the same whenever and by whomsoever the Scriptures may have been written.

If this be so, then we need not be over-anxious to find in the utterances of the Lord Jesus support for or against critical views and opinions as to the question of human authorship, seeing the Lord Jesus cannot be said to have intentionally and authoritatively spoken on that particular question; and to do so is, in our judgment, to use the sayings and utterances of the Lord Jesus for a purpose and end to which they were not intentionally spoken. When the Lord Jesus quotes a Scripture for some religious and spiritual purpose, that is the real purpose and meaning of the quotation made by the Lord Jesus, and for that purpose must be regarded as infallibly correct; but when we use it for a mere literary purpose and to establish a position other than the primary purpose for which it was used we cannot be so sure, and remembering the vicissitudes through which the Scriptures as literature have passed, to force the sayings of the Lord Jesus into the service of mere literary and historical criticism is unwise. We can but deplore that men should accuse the Lord Jesus of ignorance, error, and mistake in His knowledge and use of the Scriptures of truth, and should say that His knowledge of the Scriptures was that of fallible man, and not that of the divine Son of God; or that His knowledge was merely human and according to the views of the men of His own age and time and country, and not that of One to whom was given the spirit of knowledge and wisdom

with out measure. On the other hand, we think for men to contend that when Jesus Christ used the name of Moses in quoting from Deuteronomy, or of David when quoting the 100th Psalm, or of one of the Prophets in connection with a particular prophecy, He unquestionably meant and taught that Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy, that David wrote the 110th Psalm, and that the Prophet wrote the particular prophecy associated with his name; and that to say the contrary is disloyalty to Christ, is to convict Him of falsity or dishonesty, and must discredit both the character of Christ and the revealed will of God. This is a perversion or mere wresting of the Scriptures from their true purpose and end.

Whatever our views as to the Kenosis and knowledge of Jesus Christ, to do Him justice those views must accord with His marvellous and unique personality as God-man. We must not speak of him in terms which would seem to divest Him of that uniqueness and fulness of knowledge which belonged to Him as the Divine Son of God, and which filled Rabbis and contemporaries with wonder and amazement. On the other hand, we must not so speak of Him as to exclude those limitations and developments in wisdom and knowledge which belonged to Him as the Son of Man. Whatever our explanation of the marvellous phenomena of the Person of Christ, the facts of that unique Personality must be guarded, in Whom dwelt the fulness of wisdom and knowledge, as also that sinlessness and truthfulness which no Prophet, Apostle, or teacher ever possessed; while as man He grew in stature and in knowledge, confessed ignorance on one or more points, and used the means of ordinary men to gain information on some others, and lived and spoke as man with men in the ordinary affairs of daily life. As man He was subject to those limitations inseparable from the purposes of the Incarnation, while as the Son of God and the revelation of God, as He Who was "the Way, the Truth, the Life," He was infallible and authoritative. This is not the same as saying that Christ was ignorant, that He had no knowledge beyond that of His own countrymen, or that He was false to truth, accommodated Himself to the views and prejudices of men, and argued ad hominem, and so misled His hearers as to the dates and authorship of the books of the Old Testament. What we mean to say, and what we think we are justified in saying is, that on these questions of modern Criticism the Lord Jesus gave no distinct authoritative utterance. And while we do not discuss the Kenotic questions, or the relation of omniscience to Christ's Incarnation, we do say that fallibility is excluded by virtue of Christ's Divinity, that error was an impossible to Christ as sinning, and deceiving a blaspheming. But it is not necessarily follow that all scientific, historical, and critical knowledge was present to the human mind of Christ, or lay bare and open before Him whenever He stood up to speak, or that every detailed event and incident of history was thought when He expounded and the Psalms in all things concerning Himself."

03.08 - The Witness of the Apostles to the Inspiration of the Old Testament

(8) The Witness of the Apostles to the Inspiration of the Old Testament. In numerous ways and forms New Testament writers refer to and quote the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God. The Evangelists in their genealogical tables, in describing the time, place and circumstances of Christ's birth, the flight into Egypt, the residence in Nazareth, the purification in the Temple, the baptism, the Galilean and Judean ministry, the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ, speak of these as being a "fulfilment of that which was written and spoken by the Prophets/ or foreshadowed in the Law and the Psalms. The allusions to and quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures in the Acts and the Epistles are many and various, while they are of such a character and are applied in such a way as to show the writers regarded those Scriptures as of Divine authority, as being the Word of God. The testimony of the Apostles is the testimony not only of believing Jews, trained in the knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures and the Jewish religion, but of instructed and inspired Apostles, men who had shared the personal instruction of the Lord Jesus, and received the baptism and gift of the Holy Ghost.

They spake of them as "holy writings," the "Scriptures," the "commandments," and the "oracles" of God. Paul speaking of them says, "All Scripture" "Every Scripture is given by inspiration of God"; while Peter says, "No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation," implying the Divine inspiration of those writings. In making their quotations, the Apostles use such expressions as the following, "It is written," "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," "in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled which saith," or, "the Scriptures saith," "the Lord saith," "He saith," "He spake," expressions used by most of the writers and used of the Old Testament as a whole, as well as of particular portions. They also refer in a marked manner to Old Testament characters, institutions and ordinances, testifying and interpreting the significance of priesthood and sacrifice, of institution and ordinance, of the relation of the law to Christ, and of the teachings of the prophets to the doctrines of righteousness, holiness, and grace. The New Testament writers testify of the Divine prescience, the prophetic insight and foresight manifest in the Old Testament Scriptures. This is seen in the fulfilment of prophetic utterances as witnessed in the ministry of the Baptist and of the Lord Jesus; in Jesus Christ "taking upon Him our sicknesses, healing our diseases, and bearing our sorrows and sins"; in the birth, teaching, suffering, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God in power and glory; in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, and the wonderful results that followed upon the ministry of Paul and Peter among the Jews and Gentiles, all of which had been foreseen and emphasised, and which should come to pass in the latter days. There are also the facts and truths exhibited in the disobedience, rebellion, and falling away of the Jews and the gathering in of the Gentiles, in the persecution and dispersion of the believers and the diffusion of the gospel; in the placing of both Jews and Greeks under sin and the bringing in of a universal redemption and an everlasting righteousness; the justification of the ungodly by faith, the revelation of the righteousness and holiness of God, and the election of grace; all of which are among the things witnessed to by the

law and the prophets. “ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have faith.” *

03.09 - The Double Sense of the Old Testament Scriptures

(9) The Double Sense of the Old Testament Scriptures

What is meant by the double sense, or double meaning of prophecy, is a meaning and application above and beyond that recognised by the Prophets in their day; a meaning deeper, larger, more spiritual, which was unfolded by the Spirit of truth to teachers in subsequent ages. Hence the new

1 Romans 15:4.

Divine and spiritual meaning ascribed to the Old Testament Scripture types, shadows, and ordinances by Christ and His Apostles; the spiritual significance, the hidden meaning and far-reaching application of that truth as brought to light by the Spirit in the gospel, all of which attest the divine inspiration of those Scriptures. For if this deep, spiritual truth and significance be an integral portion of the truth itself, not a mere adaptation of truth, nor an additional revelation to the mind of the New Testament writer, but a bringing out of the truth under the guiding, interpreting power of the Spirit of truth; then is it a witness to its Divine origin and character as the revealed truth of God, while it becomes the earnest and pledge of still fuller light and truth which may yet break forth from the Divine Word upon the minds of men in the days to come.

03.10 - The Inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures

(10) The Inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures The New Testament writers claim for themselves and for their writings a similar authority and inspiration to that claimed for the Old Testament Scriptures.

This, as Prof. Sanday has shown, is the highest possible witness to their inspiration, that they were received and accepted as of the same Divine authority and inspiration as the Old Testament Scriptures.

They were declared to be inspired and authoritative standards of faith and practice when they came to be placed by the Christian Church on the same footing with the Law and the Prophets. It was not that some new attributes or authority were ascribed to them, or that some new conception of inspiration had to be formed: what was needed was that the New Testament Scriptures should conform to the same standard of authority and inspiration, and should rank side by side with the Old Testament Scriptures. And so the inspiration of the Old Testament is presumptive evidence in favour of the inspiration of the New: the second is the complement of the first. They are held to have emanated from the same Source, to embody similar truths and teachings, to contemplate the same gracious ends, and together constitute one organic whole.

There will be no question by Christian believers of the authoritative character of the utterances of Jesus Christ; and if the Gospels be inspired and trust worthy records of those sayings and teachings, there will be no questioning of the Divine inspiration of the teachings of the Gospels. The opponents and enemies of the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh declared Him to "be true," and to "teach the way of God in truth"; while Jewish rulers and Rabbis said of Him, " We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God."

Speaking of Himself Christ declares, " He was sent of God, and speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John iii. 34). Again: "My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me " (John 7:16). The Spirit given to Christ in His measureless fulness was the same Spirit that spake by the Prophets, even the " Spirit of Christ which was in them, and testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow them " (1 Peter 1:10-11. The Holy Spirit the Spirit of Christ when speaking of the teachings of Christ, speaketh of Himself, and we know that His witness is true. The same witness Christ claims for Himself He also claims for His Apostles. The Lord Jesus makes no difference between Himself and His Apostles in the matter of authority and inspiration, saying, " He that heareth you heareth Me: and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me: and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me." 1 This right and power the Apostles claimed, saying " He that rejecteth, rejecteth not man but God, who giveth His Holy Spirit unto you." 2 The inspiration and authority Christ promised and fulfilled to His Apostles, they claim was verified in their writings and the truths they taught, which " was not the word of men, but, in truth, the word of God." 3 Paul, speaking of the gospel he preached and taught, says " It is not after men: for neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." 4 When the Apostles speak of the promises of inspiration given them,

and the revelations and visions that came to them, the claim is not made in any arrogant or ostentatious manner, nor used for aggrandisement and display, but is spoken of in such a way and manner as to assure us of its genuineness and reality. When their Lord and Master was removed from them, and they were commissioned to be His representatives and ambassadors, they stood in His room and stead, spake in His name, declared His will, commanded and rebuked with His authority, and ruled and governed the Church in His name, and 1 Luke 10:16; Matthew 10:40.

2 1 Thessalonians 4:8 3 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

4 Galatians 1:1-24. according to His mind and spirit; and their teachings and decisions were accepted as authoritative and final; evidences of their divine inspiration and authority.

03.11 - The Apostolic Witness to the Inspiration of the New Testament Writings

(11) The Apostolic Witness to the Inspiration of the New Testament Writings. The New Testament writers make no claim to any specific instruction or command to write their Gospels and Epistles, or inspiration for the purpose of writing apart from what was given them for the work of teaching and governing the Church. Nor does it appear that the writers had formed an}- preconceived purpose or definite idea of creating a new order of Scriptures, either to supplant or to supplement the sacred Scriptures then in use, or that should be added to them, and be received as of equal authority with them, and to be publicly read in the churches for doctrinal teaching and religious instruction and edification. The inspiration imparted for the work of teaching and preaching the gospel availed for all the work of the apostleship, and especially for the work of making known the truths committed to them, both orally and by writing. Those truths which are of the essence of the gospel are the truths which the Apostles affirm they had received by "revelation of Jesus Christ," or by "revelation from heaven." They, moreover, speak of those truths as "the gospel," "the gospel of Jesus Christ"; truths they "were persuaded of," and assured of "according to the mind of Christ Jesus," and of "the Spirit of God." These truths they moreover describe as "Scripture," which, though the word simply means a "writing," yet it is used of no writings but those contained in the Old and New Testaments. By calling these writings "Scriptures" they distinguished them from all other writings as being the writing given by inspiration of God. When, then, Peter calls Paul's epistles "Scripture," he places them on a level with the Law and the Prophets, with the writings the Lord Jesus received and quoted as "the Word of God," and which were generally received and acknowledged to be holy and inspired writings.

Whoever studies the New Testament Scriptures must feel that he is dealing with supernatural truths, truths that breathe the breath that comes of inspiration from God. You read the Epistles of Paul and he gives you the idea of being possessed, penetrated, and permeated with the supernatural.

He breathes the breath of Divine inspiration. He may not talk much about it, or about the Divine inspiration of his writings; a few casual references and incidental allusions are all you have, except when he is vindicating his claim and title to be called an Apostle in the presence of gainsayers. But the fact is there, it is everywhere implied, and is present both to his own and the consciousness of his readers. He speaks, but his "word is not in word only but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," and in "much assurance."

1 When he teaches, it is not in "the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the spirit teacheth."

2 "If I preach the gospel I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me."

3 Hebrews 1:1-14; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 9:16. writes to the Church at Corinth "His letters, they say, are weighty and strong." The Apostle always

and everywhere gives evidence of Divine inspiration; while he always assures his hearers and readers that his message is not one of his own invention, but that in truth it was “ the Word of God.”

It is no objection to the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures that they consist largely of “ Epistles “ writings of an incidental and occasional character, having their origin in certain exigencies and circumstances, the impress of which is found upon the style of the writing and the character of the teaching set forth. Because of this the teaching and doctrine, while unsystematic and incomplete in form and treatment, are real and practical, warm and vital, and glow with an inspiration that comes from the heart of the writer and goes direct to the heart of the reader. The teaching and doctrine of the New Testament were not “ elaborated in the study”, but struck out in the “storm and stress of actual life.” The practice of letter-writing did not originate with the Apostles, but it was a form of literary composition that lent itself most admirably to their purposes of warning, admonishing, instructing, reproving, and teaching in all wisdom and doctrine.

“When the Apostle Paul began to write,” says Dr. Sanday, “ probably neither he himself nor his readers attached so much importance to his letters as they came to do.” It would seem that some of his early letters were lost, there being allusions in his Epistles to previous letters having been written, while subsequent Epistles witness to the importance and authority his letters acquired, and the way they were treasured and read in the Churches. In the occasion and preservation of these Epistles we see an overruling Providence co-operating with the Apostles and the Church, almost unconsciously, to fulfil the Divine purposes of Revelation. And while the inspiration of those letters is not put prominently forward as the reason of their preservation and use, yet no one can read the Epistles without feeling that the authors were conscious of their Divine inspiration; and the Churches to whom the epistles were addressed, and by whom they were treasured and read, were equally conscious of their inspiration. In the Churches to which these Epistles were sent were men of all nationalities, of learning, philosophy, and authority, and the fact that they received these writings as inspired and authoritative is an important witness to their Divine inspiration.

Then when you have the witness of the early Christian Church and of Church leaders, Apostolic Fathers, and Christian Apologists of the first three centuries, who had excellent opportunities of ascertaining the facts, and who give unqualified support to the Divine inspiration of those writings, the testimony is practically unanimous. It is positively avowed in their writings and everywhere assumed in their controversial, didactic, and devotional discourses. They recognised a clear distinction between these and all other sacred writings. And while acknowledging that a measure of inspiration was realised by the Apostolic Fathers and companions of the Apostles, like Barnabas and Clement, they draw a clear distinction between writings Divine and human. They held without question the Divine inspiration of the Apostles and the inspiration and authority of their writings. The “Epistles of Clement and Barnabas,” the “ Shepherd of Hermas,” the “ Didache” the “ Diatessaron,” and other early writings, name most of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament by the names and titles as we have them, and unitedly testify to their prevalence and power, and the regularity with which they were read in the public assemblies, and the reverence shown them as inspired and authoritative Scriptures. But while New Testament writers, Apostolic and Church Fathers, Christian Apologists of all degrees of authority witness to the prevalence and Divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, they do not define inspiration, or say in what it consists, and what it implies. The fact is admitted, but the nature, the extent and limitations are not full)

defined. The prophets who “testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow,” the men who expounded and interpreted the gracious revelations and purposes of God to their fellows, “ wrote and spoke by inspiration from God, and were recognised channels of Divine and infallible truth. But it is not contended that they always spoke and wrote by revelation from God, or were always inspired by the spirit of God to write and speak, and that all the writings of the Old and New Testament are equally inspired, and teach precisely the same infallible truth. And if we would come to any definite theory of Inspiration, and some affirm that we should, the theory must be built on judgment and inference, on the teachings and character of the writings themselves, and not on any recorded testimony either of Prophets, the Lord Jesus, Apostles, or Church Fathers.

03.12 - Ancient Views of Inspiration

(12) Ancient Views of Inspiration

Jewish Rabbis and writers, Apostolic and Church Fathers, Councils, creeds, and confessions, give us views of Scripture which reflect the thoughts and teachings of men respecting the sacredness, perfection, and value of the Scriptures; their importance, inspiration, and authority as the rule of faith and practice: but we do not find in them any definite and satisfactory view of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures as a whole. And while no presentation of their views and teachings would put an end to all controversy on the question, it is nevertheless important and necessary to know what their views and teachings are. ¹ A careful examination of these will reveal the fact that they recognised the presence of Divine and human elements in the Scriptures, and the most conflicting statements are made respecting them, which makes it most difficult, if not impossible, to harmonise their views and statements respecting the Divine infallibility and perfection of Scripture and the human fallibility and errancy of the writers. It must be remembered, however, that the general drift of a writer's views and opinions are not necessarily identical with particular expressions and isolated passages found in their writings. Nor must it be supposed that all ancient writers and

¹ These may be found in a convenient form in the writings of Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott, and the Hampton Lecture of Prof. Sanday.

Fathers of the Church are of equal importance and authority. And while many statements imply that Verbal Inspiration was the view held by some of them, the high views held as to the importance and unsurpassed moral excellency of the Scriptures are not identical with that particular theory.

These ancient writers held firmly by the Divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. This is evidenced by the names and titles used of the Scriptures and by which they are differentiated from all other writings. They spoke of them as "inspired," "holy," and "divine," they styled them "Holy Scriptures," "memoirs of Christ and of the Apostles," "divine oracles," "oracles of the Lord," etc. epithets and titles intended to express belief in their inspiration and authority. Irenaeus speaks of the sacred writers as "fully assured about all things and possessed of perfect knowledge," while their writings are "perfect, because given by God and the Spirit of God." Tertullian speaks of "the minds of the sacred writers being flooded by the Holy Ghost," and that they "delivered that, and that only, which they received from Christ Himself." Irenaeus speaks of "the completeness of the Scriptures," of "the records of faith as the source whence all arguments in defence of the Christian faith are derived." The Gospels are spoken of "as authentic accounts of Jesus Christ and of the doctrines He commissioned His servants to teach." Athanasius speaks of the Scriptures as "above all Synods, Councils, and creeds in matters of faith," and as "sufficient of themselves for all purposes of faith and salvation." Origen and Justin designate the Scriptures "theopneustos" and the "source of all religious truth," but "they have a body and a spirit," and "the letter is subservient to the Spirit." Jerome speaks of the Scriptures as "suggested by the Holy Spirit," and he calls them

“theodidactoi” Augustine contended for the literal accuracy of every word of Scripture, and that “the Apostles did not and could not err, nor make mistakes, nor set down anything falsely.”

We have here every diversity of expression respecting the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, they are “inspired,” “divine,” “infallible,” “perfect,” and “holy”; they are spoken of as “the Word of God and of His Spirit”; as being “dictated” and “suggested” by the Spirit; the inspiration of the Prophets was “occasional,” that of the Apostles “continuous,” and of the Lord Jesus “unceasing.” Jerome says, “The weakness of human nature could not endure the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit, nor could the ordinary function of the body be always discharged under the presence of the Lord.”

03.13 - Modern Theories of Inspiration

(13) Modern Theories of Inspiration

These may be roughly classed under two heads Plenary and Partial. The latter of these is not of much practical moment, and need not detain us for discussion, since no theory which leaves it open to the human mind to determine for itself what Scripture is inspired and to what extent, is of no practical importance and utility. Under this head may be placed all merely natural and literary theories, theories opposed to all supernatural and extraordinary gifts and powers, theories which limit inspiration to natural genius and intelligence, to mere rational illumination, and which accept as divine and true what "finds me" rather than what commands me. According to this theory the Scriptures are placed on the same level as any other book, and are treated as mere human productions. The sacred writers are regarded as honest and trustworthy witnesses, faithful teachers of what they knew and had acquired in the ordinary way of knowledge, and nothing more. This theory runs counter to the whole trend of this lecture, to all the claims and evidences of Inspiration which the Scriptures make for themselves, and which has been accorded to them by the Church from the beginning. The plenary view is the one accepted by Christian teachers generally, while they differ largely as to what it means and what it includes. The term plenary denotes what is full, adequate, or sufficient to account for the phenomena of the Scriptures, and to meet the needs of men. The term is objected to by some because it is associated with the mechanical or dictation theory, which theory regards the sacred writers as mere machines moved by the Holy Ghost, or unconscious and irresponsible instruments used by the Spirit as he willeth. This theory Dean Farrar describes as "an untrue and unscriptural hypothesis," signally "dishonouring to the majesty and holiness of God, and tending to materialism and idolatry." This theory is erroneously said to be "the view of orthodox evangelical churches." It may be the view of a few extreme individuals in those churches, but certainly is not the view of the Evangelical Free Churches of this country as set forth in their creeds and confessions, their catechisms and recognised doctrinal standards. The term plenary is objected to by others because it is identified with Verbal Inspiration: as held by us, it must be distinguished from it.

Verbal inspiration denotes that action of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the sacred writers, which not only secured infallibility in all particulars, but secured the form and expression as well as the subject-matter of the truth; the words as also the contents and thoughts of Scripture, the language as well as the truths of Scripture. It declares the words of Scripture to be the words of God and not of men. There is a certain reason and ground in Scripture for this view within proper limitations. It is reasonable to suppose if God gave man a revelation of His will, He would secure its faithful and accurate communication by guarding the language in which it is expressed.

Moreover, the close connection which exists between thought and language, ideas and words, truths and symbols, has led some to conclude that we can only think in words, and receive ideas and truths in some form of language or thought-symbols. It is also reasonable to conclude that if Scripture be a revelation of the mind and will of God to man, and is to be accepted as authoritative,

it must be infallibly true.

There is not only a ground, in reason, for some form of verbal inspiration, but also in the Scriptures themselves. They speak of the truth being preached and taught “not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth,” implying that the truths of Divine revelation were not in ideas, thoughts, and voiceless visions only, but were clothed in some form of words, or suggested to the minds of the writers in certain forms of thought-symbols.

Bishop Westcott says: “The slightest consideration will show that words are as essential to intellectual processes as they are to mutual intercourse. For man the purely spiritual absolute is an imagination or a dream; thoughts are wedded to words as necessarily as soul to body.”¹ When Prophets foretold things of which they had no personal knowledge or adequate conception; when Apostles spoke with tongues and in languages they had never learned; when Evangelists gave “the words” of the Lord Jesus; when Moses recorded the words of the Decalogue as given him on the Mount, and when the sacred writers use arguments and make statements of fact and doctrine, the import and value of which turn upon words, tenses, and parts of speech, there must be in some sense verbal inspiration. It must be to these cases, and to those in which the sacred writers claim to speak; the words God had put into their mouths,” verbal inspiration should apply. To ascribe all the words of Scripture to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would be to make the Holy Spirit responsible for all the errors, defects, discrepancies and imperfections in the expressions, language, and narratives of Scripture, a position which involves serious issues.

Under Plenary Inspiration we include degrees of inspiration.” This theory is of Jewish origin. It obtained with the Rabbis, who held to a triple inspiration, agreeing with the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa with a descending grade of inspiration. Professor¹ “Study of the Gospels/ Introduction, p. 14.

Cave, in his “Inspiration of the Old Testament,” holds by a threefold inspiration; the Hagiographic inspiration which resulted in the assimilation of revelation, the Prophetic, resulting in the apprehension and communication of revelation, and the Transcriptional, prompting to the act of writing and assisting in accomplishing it. This theory of degrees was urged mainly in opposition to the mechanical and verbal theories, and obtained favour and currency under the threefold conception of “superintendence, elevation, and suggestion.” “Superintendence” was ascribed to the historical and narrative writings, “elevation” to the poetical and ethical Scriptures, and “suggestion” to the doctrinal and prophetic. The main idea of the theory is, that assistance was given by the Holy Spirit to the several writers for the purpose (a) prompting to write; (b) imparting to them a knowledge of tilings they did not otherwise know; (c) superintending and securing them against radical error; (d) suggesting and guiding them into the truths of doctrine and “race. This theory has certain support in the Scriptures.

All the sacred writings are not equal in importance and authority, do not claim the same significance, nor rank the same in doctrinal teaching and value, nor exert the same moral, spiritual, and beneficial influence on the minds and hearts of men. They are not equally inspired, nor do they equally inspire the reader. Moses was a much greater prophet, holds a much higher place, and enjoys a higher distinction and inspiration as a pattern-prophet than Nathan, Samuel, or any of the Minor Prophets. What Moses and Isaiah were among the Old Testament writers, Paul and John were among the New Testament writers. If we would examine and make a comparison of the

moral and doctrinal teaching of the several books of Scripture, we shall find that Numbers and Judges will not compare with the Psalms and the book of Job; or Ezra and Nehemiah with the writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah; or Esther and Chronicles with Deuteronomy and the Minor Prophets; nor the Old Testament Scriptures with the New; and this difference is largely attributable to a difference of inspiration. Dr. Sanday, in his Bampton Lectures, holds “ that prophetic inspiration was typical of all inspiration “; he also says, “it is not safe to transfer what is said of this to all other kinds of inspiration whatsoever. The Psalmists and wise men had an inspiration of their own, which may be in part prophetic but is not entirely so. It would be less safe to ascribe prophetic inspiration to the writing historian, “ because prophetic inspiration is most remote from the writing of history.” The two may be connected so far, “ That the knowledge of the ways of God acquired in inspired moments, might when applied without the afflatus give an insight into the meaning of history greater than would be possessed without it. But there is no evidence that such inspiration would in any way supersede the ordinary use of historical materials, or interfere with the use of that material in such a way as to prevent possibilities of error.”¹ The theory of degrees of inspiration applied to the Old Testament is applied in a similar way to the New. The chief place is given to the Gospels of 1 Bamp. Lee, p. 268.

Jesus Christ as the source of the facts and the fount of the doctrinal truths of the New Testament, and among the Gospels supremacy in doctrinal truths and teaching is accorded to the fourth Gospel. Next to the Gospels are the Epistles, and among the Epistles those of Paul and John rank before those of Peter and James, and these again before Jude and the Apocalypse. In this gradation of inspiration in the New Testament the ruling principle would seem to be the Christological one. Supremacy is given to the work and teaching of Christ, to the doctrines of redemption and salvation, those Scriptures which are Christocentric being regarded as of the highest inspiration.

While much may be said in favour of the theory of degrees of inspiration, and it may best explain certain differences in teaching, and accord with the Divine contents of the Scriptures, it is not without its difficulties and drawbacks. It tends to sectionalise and split up the Scriptures into divers parts and portions, and gives rise to a teaching inconsistent with the unity of Scripture as an organised whole.

It fails to give an adequate and satisfactory view of the historical and ethical Scriptures, and to account for the superiority of Scripture history to any other; nor does it sufficiently explain the gradual unfolding of the Kingdom of God and the development of the Divine purpose according to selection, and so to answer the purposes and ends of Divine Revelation. It does not clearly discriminate between Inspiration and Revelation; it is somewhat arbitrary and artificial in its distinctions and degrees, and affords no more satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of Scripture than is supplied by the dynamical view of inspiration. The defect of most theories is their a priori character and assumptions. Instead of being drawn from the facts and phenomena of Scripture they are largely brought to them. The only way of arriving at a true theory of Inspiration is to make a complete induction of the phenomena to be accounted for, to inquire into their origin and cause, and find their solution. This has been the main purpose of this discussion in the distinctions made between the historical character of Scripture and the development of the doctrines, morals, and truths of revelation. In giving our adherence to the doctrine of Plenary Inspiration we do so believing that theory best meets all difficulties, accounts for all phenomena, and, legitimately

interpreted, will be found sufficient and complete for all ends and purposes. It recognises Divine and human factors; emphasises the spiritual in contradiction to the rational consciousness; it respects the gracious ends and purposes of Revelation and its historical aspects; it secures the character and authority of the Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice; while it has the advantage of holding with the past, of being in accord with the creeds and confessions of Christendom, and upholds the trust worthy character of the Scriptures as a record of God's revealed mind and will to man. It is also dynamical in the sense of admitting a *dunamis* or supernatural power moving the minds of the sacred writers and carrying them along in the execution of their work, as also a Divine and supernatural power working with the Scriptures themselves. It duly recognises the unity and diversity of the Scriptures, and secures to each its proper place and value in the redemptive purposes of God.

"It does not," says Professor Rooke, " regard every part of Scripture as a perfect infallible revelation, even though it does accept every part as part of God's infallible and perfect record." Every Scripture reveals some aspect of God's gracious purpose as the work of Divine inspiration and revelation to the mind of the writer. While it holds all parts are not equally inspired, it recognises that measure of inspiration which renders each Scripture a reliable and trustworthy writing. Though it does not support the dogma of mechanical dictation, and leaves room for the free play of the writers personality, it at the same time finds room for those revelations of God which communicate unknown truths to the mind, with an impulse to write and speak and a sufficient guarantee of correct expression. As a theory it respects the Divine activity and human freedom, whereby God is free to declare His mind and will to the writer in His own way, and the writer is able to receive and express the same with fulness and accuracy. It may not as a theory solve every difficulty nor secure the full adhesion and confidence of all thinkers, yet to us it is an adequate working theory, and we are able to receive what God has been pleased to inspire the writers to communicate, we have " the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels," but we accept the vessels as of God's own choosing, for God was pleased to " choose the foolish, the weak, and the base things of the world, to confound and bring to nought the wise, the strong, and the things that be, that no flesh should glory before God." " The weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Corinthians 1:25-30.)

04 - Part 4 - Revelation

PART IV REVELATION (1) Revelation and Modern Theology (2) Revelation: its Meaning and Purpose (3) God as Revealer and the Revealed (4) Revelation a Possibility and Reality (5) Revelation Written (6) Revelation and its Record (7) Revelation Independent of the Record (8) Revelation and its Method (9) Revelation, Historical and Progressive (10) Revelation and Israel s Early History (11) Revelation and Ethnic Religions (12) Pfliderer s View Criticised (13) Revelation and Mosaism (14) The Leading- Truths of Mosaism (15) Revelation under the Judges and Former Prophets (16) Revelation and the Latter Prophets (17) The Moral Character of God seen in His Covenant Relation to Israel (18) Revelation and the Hagiographa (19) Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Job, and Psalms (20) Historical Revelation in the New Testament (21) Revelation: Christ and the Gospels

(22) The Facts and Truths of the Gospel evidenced in the Teachings and Writings of the Apostles
(23) Christ Jesus the Completion of Revelation

04.01 - Revelation and Modern Theology

REVELATION

PART IV (1) Revelation and Modern Theology

ONE important change in Modern Theology in respect of the doctrine of Scripture is a reversal of the order and relative importance of Inspiration and Revelation. The old order was to use the term inspiration to include revelation; inspiration was the orthodox term for guaranteeing the divine reality of the words of Scripture as being in truth the words given by God. Modern theology is careful to distinguish between inspiration and revelation, as also between revelation and Scripture. This change is perhaps rightly traced to the teachings of Schleiermacher, to the distinction he was wont to make between the objective and the subjective in religion, between Christ and Christianity, between consciousness and the truth revealed in consciousness, between objective truth and its subjective correlative faith. Revelation was the essential in respect of objective truth, and inspiration was of subordinate importance. The present day tendency is to adjust the relative importance of these two factors, and to secure to each its proper recognition, which I presume was the design of the Conference in the choice of the terms of this treatise.

Revelation is not only distinct in fact and thought from Inspiration, but it is primal, determinative, and regulative, if not inclusive. Revelation is primal, and with it Scripture and truth begin. Revelation must take place before it can be recognised or truth can be received; truth must be declared ere it can be known, and truth must be recognised and known ere it can be preached or recorded. Revelation presupposes inspiration: it is connected with it and conditioned by it. Because revelation is primal and determinative it would have been more logical to have considered it before Inspiration, if only Conference had so ordered. As both terms are connected with the doctrine of Scripture considered as the revelation of God's will to man, the order of discussion is unimportant if only we carefully discriminate between the meaning and relation of the things themselves.

04.02 - Revelation: Its Meaning and Purpose

(2) Revelation its Meaning and Purpose The word Revelation means an unveiling, an uncovering; it is to make bare or naked, like the removing of the locks from the ear in the whispering of a secret. This uncovering may be effected either by the person receiving the secret or by another on his behalf. Another idea implied by Revelation is the making-known the declaring or testifying as when God is said to reveal or make known Himself, to declare His mind or will, to testify His truth, grace, and love to man. A still further concept is the Revelation 12:1-17 manifestation of what is hidden, unfolding what is concealed, disclosing what is mysterious as when truth hidden, concealed, and before unknown is made manifest to the minds of men which, in the doctrine of Scripture, is Revelation proper. There are mysteries in nature, providence, history, and science, the disclosure of which is not so much revelation as discovery. Revelation strictly belongs to religious and spiritual truths relating to the person and character of God and the mode of the Divine existence in the Godhead; the relation of the Persons in the Godhead to each other, to the universe and men; to the Divine purpose and work in creation, providence, redemption, and the economy of grace. This is the "mystery," Paul says, "which by revelation was made known to him, and which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy Apostle and Prophets in the Spirit.":

Revelation is the act of Divine self-manifestation in a supernatural way for gracious ends and spiritual purposes. This revelation is called in Scripture "the mystery of redemption," to distinguish it from the revelation of God in creation; it is further called "the mystery of Christ," or "the mystery of God in Christ" "the mystery which from the beginning hath been hid in God, but is now revealed unto us," to distinguish it from the revelation of God in Nature and in Providence. This revelation takes place in history, which again distinguishes it from the intuitional, or what is revealed in the moral consciousness. This revelation is special rather than general, spiritual rather than material and human, enshrined in the purposes of divine selection, and appointment of men to the prophetic and apostolic office, by whom God made known His will to the race; while the highest and fullest revelation of His purpose and love was in the appearing of Jesus Christ, who came to "show us the Father," and to accomplish the purposes of Divine redemption and reconciliation for the world,

04.03 - God as Revealer and the Revealed

(3) God as Revealer and the Revealed

God as Agent and Object, as Spirit and Word, as the Eternal Reason and Spirit of truth is the Source and Substance of Revelation: the Revelation is from God and of God, and is most aptly phrased as “ the Self-revelation of God to man.” It is God Himself who is revealed, and not some particular truth about God. God is not revealed as a mere postulate whether of faith or reason. The God of revelation is not a practical idea realised in moral consciousness; still less is He an idea which the individual or the race has reached as a product of thought. The rather has God revealed Himself as the personal, living God governing all things, who sustains a personal relation to the children of men, is deeply concerned for their welfare, who comes near to them in making Himself known, to the intent they may know, love, serve Him, and do His will.

Professor Sanday speaks of God “ the living God, as a postulate that lies at the back of all belief in inspiration and revelation.” It is more than that, it is the essential fact of revelation” itself. The revelation is God manifesting Himself, a revelation of the personality of God as Creator, Sovereign, and Father; of the official relation of God to the race as Redeemer, Saviour, and Judge; of the nature of God as Spirit the Spirit of holiness and truth; of the character of God as righteous and true, gracious and merciful, Who by His Incarnation and self-sacrifice has given Himself for men that He might redeem and save them. This is the revelation of God as love self sacrificing, self-communicating love whereby “He loved us and gave Himself for us.” God would not be revealed as love, if we had nothing but the mere statement, however authoritative, that “ God is love.”

Hence revelation is not a truth about God, not a doctrine of God, however sublime and true; God comes to us, not as doctrine and truth but as a Person, as a concrete, spiritual presence, what the Ritschlians call a “spiritual magnitude,” which authenticates itself as Divine. Hence the highest and fullest revelation of God is in Jesus Christ. In Christ we meet with God, or rather God meets us, to lay His hand upon us, and lift us into a life of fellowship with Himself. It is through the revelation God has given us by His Son, that we come to the knowledge of God Himself. That we might “know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”¹ This is the specific purpose of all divine revelation to man in the written word, the moral consciousness and the personal, living Christ, “ that we might know God,” know Him in His spiritual and saving relations to men, in His gracious purposes for the race, and all those great spiritual realities revealed in Jesus Christ

¹ John 17:3. and the religion of Christ, and which man as a religious and spiritual being most needed to know.

These truths relate not only to God’s nature, character, government, and truth, but to those truths which concern the moral and spiritual condition of man as a sinner before God, and to His gracious purposes of redemption by Christ Jesus. This is that knowledge of “ the true God and

eternal life “which the Scriptures specially teach: Christ says, “ Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me.”: Paul also says, “ which Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2 The special purpose of every inspired Scripture is to make known the salvation that is of God through Jesus Christ. Speaking of Himself Christ says “ I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” 3 “For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” 4 The Gospel Christ preached, the Kingdom of Heaven He proclaimed, the miracles He wrought, the cures He effected, revealed Him as the Saviour and Healer of men. The preaching and writings of the Apostles were given to the proclamation of the same Gospel of redemption and salvation.

1 John 5:39 2 2 Timothy 3:15

3 Luke 5:32.

4 Mark 10:45.

04.04 - Revelation a Possibility and Reality

(4) Revelation a Possibility and Reality The possibility and reality of a Revelation from God to man is grounded in the character of God and the needs of men, and the relation existing between them, of which revelation is the necessary corollary.

It is reasonable to suppose that in the event of a revelation being made, it would be such as would best reveal the Person and mind of God, and most effectually meet the needs of men. To say that such a revelation is impossible, that God cannot communicate with men by way of speaking to them and declaring His will is, says Professor Fairbairn, "the negation of God Himself. The God who could not speak would not be rational; the God who would not speak would not be moral; and so if God be a person intelligent and moral, there must be some such form of revelation." 1 The revelation must be made to men and be known by them; it must enter their minds and consciences, either by a direct and immediate revelation from God, or be mediated through the experiences and history of the race, and realised in the development of their moral and spiritual nature. This distinction between immediate and mediate revelation had its origin with the theory of mechanical inspiration, and by some has been abandoned with it. The sacred writers are the active agents in receiving and declaring divine revelation, the Scriptures which record that revelation are the media by which the revelation is made known to us. The revelation is mediate because it comes to us through the minds and writings of inspired men, who make known to us what was divinely made to them. The revelation was given by God to the sacred writer in some extraordinary way, while the writer was left to his own mental apprehension and spiritual activity aided by the Holy Spirit to receive and make it known to others. The revelation to the writer was direct, immediate, and divine: to him it was an idea, a thought, concept, or light shining in his mind; it lacked order and expression, it only became "a sure word of prophecy" when it took form and shape in thought and language. "It is this mediate revelation," says Ewald, "which alone deserves the name of revelation, and which in the fullest sense is the revelation of the Scriptures." 1

04.05 - Revelation Written

(5) Revelation Written

Professor Fairbairn argues that because Revelation came to the minds of men, took form and shape in human language, and was declared by them in Prophetic and Apostolic utterances, it was sure to be recorded: "because a spoken it was sure to become a written word, and to believe in a written revelation is as rational as to believe in a spoken revelation." 2 On the contrary, Dr. Martineau argues "that divine revelation is and must be immediate and intuitional, and cannot, from the very nature of the thing, be formulated in words, secured by inspiration and attested by miracles." If it were so communicated and authenticated "it would by these means avail itself of physical material and so become a natural and not a supernatural revelation." The voice of God to man "must be the voice of conscience, its light and know- 1 "Revelation; its Nature and Record," p. 6.

2 <: Christ in Modern Theology," p. 494. Revelation 13:1-18 ledge, God's revealing and appealing look; it is in the conscience of man alone that the voice of God becomes imperative and authoritative." The one condition of revelation is that it must be immediate, living God with living man; spirit present with spirit; knowing Him, indeed, but rather being known of Him. The whole road of human ascent must be cut away. Where the Agent is Divine and the recipient human, there can be nothing for the mind to do but to let the light flow in, and by the lustre of its presence turn each common thought to sanctity."

"Revelation is immediate divine knowledge, strictly personal and individual, and must be born anew in every mind." T

There is no objection to speak of revelation as "immediate and divine," as the "voice of God in conscience," or the work of the "living God in the soul of man," provided it is not intended to restrict it to that particular method, and to exclude all historical media whatsoever, and so limit divine revelation to the immediate action of God on the human mind, to the intuitional consciousness "born anew in ever individual soul." The enlightened conscience may correctly judge of what is true and false, right and just in respect of faith and practice, and when it echoes the voice of God and accords with the mind and spirit of God be authoritative; but that does not warrant the conclusion that conscience is the only medium of revelation, and the intuitive knowledge of God the only supernatural revelation possible; or that revelation coming in any other way and through any other media is no revelation at all.

1 "Seat of Authority in Religion," pp. 302-7. Nor do we see how the formulating of a revelation in words, embodying it in speech and confirming it by signs and powers, destroys its supernatural character, seeing words are the symbols of thoughts and truths to men; and the fullest revelation of God is in the living Eternal Word made flesh. This intuitional theory seems to confound the fact and truth of revelation with the method of its reception, and to identify the subject-matter of revelation with the How of its manifestation and cognition.

Even if we admit that all divine revelation comes to the Prophet and Apostle by intuition and conscience, it would still require the external medium of language for its expression and communication. Because the revelation of God is universal, and not alone for the sake of the individual to whom it is given, but belongs to the world of men, the world must hear it, and hear the voice of God by and through the speech of man. If revelation be the voice of God in conscience, what more likely than that voice should speak, and that the communication should be in the thought and language the man can understand and know? Speech is the property of spirit, and as such possible to God, and because speech is the way by which thought is communicated by man to his fellows, it is reasonable to suppose that God would speak to man, and speak by and through him to the race, so that the truth should be not in the words of man, but in the word of God.

Dr. Fairbairn asks: "And may not the word which God has spoken to another become a word which God speaks directly to me, yet which I never should have heard but for the older man of finer ear and clearer soul?" If, as Dr. Martineau holds, "mind can resolve cosmical phenomena into the speech of the causal mind, why may not conscience find men in history who embody the eternal will? Are there not persons who have acted, and still act, like a personalised conscience for the most cultivated peoples? And is not this one of the clear functions discharged by Jesus Christ? And if it is, what is He but an authority in religion? And if He is, are not also the men who have been most conscious of God and His law? But if He and they are authorities, must not the record of their consciousness have some value, even of an authoritative kind, for the consciences of less inspired men?" It is on these grounds we claim authority for a written revelation of God to the race.

04.06 - Revelation and its Record

(6) Revelation and its Record

While the Scriptures record and preserve the revelation of God's will for the race, they are not the revelation itself, only in a secondary manner; and while to us the Scriptures are the Divinely appointed means for making known the revelation of the Divine will and are indispensable to that end, yet, the revelation and the record are not the same, and must be carefully distinguished. The revelation existed before the record, and is independent of it; it was in the mind and consciousness of Prophet and Apostle as the received truth and living word of God ere they committed it to writing. And though God has 1 "Christ in Modern Theology," p. 495. caused it to be recorded for our instruction and as a means of its preservation and propagation, and this way may be said to be the best, yet God might have left it to the spiritual results in the minds and lives of men, or to oral tradition, or have embodied it in symbols, institutions, laws, and usages without committing it to writing at all. Indeed revelation considered as history, as denoting the manifestation and activity of God in the universe, and enshrined in acts and manifestations, is independent of the record, although by means of the record we are made acquainted with it. The revelation did not originate with the record, nor does the record make the history and the facts, all of which existed anterior to the record.

04.07 - Revelation Independent of the Record

(7) Revelation Independent of the Record The Divine purpose in the call of Abraham and the choice and history of Israel, the dealings of God with that people, and the laws, ordinances, and communications given them, were not only prior to the record, but their meaning, intent, and action were also independent of it. The Divine purpose and activity in Israel were what they were and in every respect what they would have been, whether they were understood and recorded or not. The record of the Divine commandments, covenants, and movements was made and published that they might be known, obeyed, and fulfilled, but the record was apart and subsequent to the events themselves. It is so with the great facts of the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. These facts have their place and significance in the work and mission of Christ, and in the revelation of the Divine purposes of grace and redemption for the race, but the facts were accomplished long before the New Testament Scriptures were written, and were what they are from the time of their occurrence, and in the Divine intention and purpose would have been what they are, had the Gospels of Jesus Christ never been written. This is what is mainly intended by the statement that the facts of revelation and the record are not the same, that the revelation is distinct from the record, and in considering the doctrine of Scripture it is important to make clear this distinction. The distinction is important and helpful because it enables us to consider the nature, subject-matter, and method of revelation apart from the question of date, authorship, and order of the books of the Canon of Scripture. The order of Divine revelation is not necessarily according to the arrangements of the books in our English Bible. The order and process of historical development and of Divine revelation is not necessarily that of " Law, Psalms, and Prophets:" the reverse may have been the true order, and the Prophets before the Law and the Psalms. So with the books of the New Testament; for whilst the facts of the Gospels are the primal facts of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, and the source and fount of New Testament teaching, they are not the earliest of New Testament writings, but were written subsequent to the earliest of Paul's Epistles. Hence the order and process of revelation is not that of the Book. This distinction is further important, because it enables us to consider the facts and truths of revelation, and the historical development exhibited in Divine actions as well as in truths and teachings. The Divine revelation is closely related with the Divine movements in history: the historical is an essential element in the progress of Divine revelation, while the events of history are among the essential parts and purposes of divine revelation. By these is made known the activity of God in the history of Israel, and what His gracious purposes concerning the human race are.

God identified Himself with Israel, took an active interest in their history and progress, because by them He sought to accomplish His gracious purposes of redemption and salvation for the race. The calling and separating of Abraham and his seed as a people for Himself, the wonderful interpositions and miraculous deliverances wrought out for them, the revelation of His will made to them, the laws, ordinances, and institutions given them from time to time, the accomplishment of His purposes concerning them and the part they were called to play in furthering the purposes of God in the world, are all parts of God's revelation for the race. " Put the Scriptures," says Professor

A. B. Bruce, “ foremost in your ideas of revelation and you almost inevitably think of revelation as knowledge, as consisting in truth and doctrines, in words and speech. Put the record in the background, forget for the moment that there is a Bible, and you make room in your thoughts for the idea that revelation may proceed by deeds and acts as well as words, and even more characteristically by the former than by the latter.” 1 1 “ The Chief End of Revelation,” p. 96,

04.08 - Revelation and its Method

(8) Revelation and its Method

God spoke to the Hebrews by the Prophets, and by divers portions, and in divers manners, regarding His purposes toward the race. He made Himself known by his personal activity among them, and after the analogy of the human factors in their history. He dwelt and moved among them as their God and Saviour; came into close contact with them that they might see His works and acts on their behalf, and know His relations to them. He was known to them by a distinctive name; He spoke and declared to them His mind and will, and dealt with them as He did with no other people, because they were to Him a chosen people chosen for a special purpose, and He loved them and was gracious to them. In these particulars God dealt with them in ways analogous with the human factors in their history, save always with that difference which distinguishes the Divine from the human. But just as man reveals himself, his will, purpose, and relation to his fellows, by his speech, actions, and conduct towards them, so God revealed Himself to Israel. But though the method was analogous it was not identical. The infinite God has ways and means of making Himself known, and declaring His will finite which man has not. He has freer and fuller access to the minds and consciences of men than man has, and in marvellous ways can reveal Himself to them and in them.

Hence the reality of the revelation of God to men is not less but greater than is the human: not feebler but fuller, and carries with it greater conviction and assurance than the human does. We need not dwell on the outward historical and wonderful dealings of God with Israel, and on their behalf. How He over ruled and controlled the forces of nature, and made them to work for their good; how by His direct intervention He wrought changes, achieved results, and accomplished His purposes towards them. We are concerned with the moral, religious and spiritual revelations of God, which, coming to them, enlightened their minds, heightened and quickened their mental energy and moral activity, stirred their dormant and latent faculties, and gave them a knowledge of the divine plans and purposes which others did not know. God not only gave them these revelations of Himself and of His purposes, but He gave them eyes to see, and minds to understand and interpret them for the instruction and edification of others. God appeared to men in visions and in dreams, and in a waking state, when there were presented to them visions of God and of His purpose and will. God is sometimes represented as speaking audibly from heaven to men as to Jacob at Bethel, to Israel at Sinai, to Moses on the Mount, to Samuel in the Temple at Shiloh, to Balaam at Peor, to Jesus at His baptism and transfiguration, to Paul on his way to Damascus, and afterwards when he heard unspeakable words. At other times messages were mediated by means of angelophanies, theophanies, and divers manifestations. At other times it would seem the revelation was realised inwardly within the human soul and conscience as in the burdens, visions, and revelations of Prophets and Apostles when they were said to have "seen the Word of the Lord," and the Lord revealed His secret to them, and they heard the still small voice, and suggestions and revelations came to the mind. It was thus God made himself known, and revealed His will to Israel in ways which accord with the distinctive and peculiar relation in which

He stood to them, and by which lie became a cofactor in their history.

04.09 - Revelation, Historical and Progressive

(9) Revelation Historical and Progressive

Revelation and progress have sometimes been described as contradictor}-; revelation being regarded as definite and complete, and progress as indicating a process of development and of gradual unfolding.

Because of this the expression “ progress in the know ledge of God “ has been substituted for “ Progressive Revelation.” We hold by the latter expression, using it to embrace the two ideas of a progressive know ledge of God Himself, and of His gracious purposes of redemption for the race. “ Revelation,” says Professor A. B. Bruce, u took the form of an historical movement, subject to the ordinary laws of historic development, and exhibiting the usual characteristics of movements subject to those laws. The redemptive purpose of God evolved itself by a regular process of growth, and the progress was marked by three salient features: slow movement, partial action, and advance to the perfect from the more or less imperfect, both in knowledge and morality.” 1 This slow and gradual progress of revelation and redemption harmonised with the revelation of God in Nature, Creation, and Providence, 1 “The Chief End of Revelation,” p. 105. and is in general accord with the divine action in history. To have ushered the divine plan of redemption into the world suddenly and full-grown, and by one great act, “ would,” says Professor Bruce, <(not only have been contrary to the known ways of God, but have carried the appearance of a thaumaturgical performance, and have given rise to a feeling of doubt and misgiving and resistance to it.” Moreover, the race would not have been prepared to understand and receive it. The race required to be trained and educated to understand and accept it. Israel was placed, like a child, under “tutors and governors,” was put to school with the “ Law and the Prophets;” that as a people they might understand the purpose of God, might know His will, even the “ hidden things of God,” and be prepared to work out His gracious designs for the race.

04.10 - Revelation and Israel's Early History

(10) Revelation and Israel's Early History The progress was not only slow and gradual, but in some respects narrow, partial, and exclusive; and even, in certain aspects, apparently contradictory of the plan and purpose of a universal redemption. The selection of one individual, of one family and nation, to be the recipients of the divine favour and promises to the exclusion of all others would, at first sight, seem to be opposed to the divine purpose of grace and redemption for the world. But this was to teach the great truth that selection was a purpose of grace, a principle of divine operation, part of the method of redemption, and, therefore, necessary to be understood and appreciated. God made choice of one to be the recipient and custodian of His promise and gift because one could be the easier and better trained, disciplined, and fitted for His purpose, and the more effectively to understand and make known that purpose to the race than the many could; and so through the one the blessing should come to the many. God chose Abraham that in "him and his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed" "bless them selves. Of Abraham's many descendants Jacob was chosen that Israel might "make known His name unto the Gentiles, and declare His salvation unto the ends of the earth." Israel was not chosen because, as a people, they were larger, wiser, holier and worthier than any other, but because God loved them, and because some selection was a necessity. This does not mean the abandonment of the rest, or their exclusion from all participation in Divine revelation and the purposes of grace and redemption. In Creation, Providence, conscience, and reason, God revealed Himself to all men from the beginning.

Some tell us that while God selected Israel to be His chosen vessels, the heavenly treasure was by no means confined to them. Because redemption was for all nations and peoples, there entered into all God's providential dealings with men revelations of His purpose which we find reflected in the religions of all nations and peoples, while all peoples are possessed of a religious nature capable of receiving the revelation of God whenever it is declared unto them. This view is implied in what is called "the theodicy of the world," or, "the revelation of God in history," or, "the religious education of the race" which theories regard ethnic religions and teachings as parts of God's training and preparation of the race for the realisation of His purposes of redemption and salvation. It is further maintained that ethnic religions contain truths and teachings akin to those of the Hebrew Scriptures, that they are parts of God's revelation to be perfected in the fulness of time, and are so many scattered rays of that one "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

04.11 - Revelation and Ethnic Religions

(11) Revelation and Ethnic Religions

Into a formal discussion of this question we do not now enter; we have not space or time for the discussion, nor for the consideration of the theory of the evolution of all religions from a common stock.

Suffice it to say that no view we may hold of these speculative questions can affect the uniqueness of Israel's position and religion, or the supremacy of the revelation recorded in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. We must remember that the Old Testament Scriptures which contain the record of the revelation of God's gracious purposes towards Israel and the race, also tell of the part played by Egyptians, Canaanites, Assyrians, and Chaldeans in the discipline and instruction of Israel, while the Prophets recognised the hand of God working with the nations and peoples of the earth. Paul also says that " God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said: For we are His offspring." ¹ If the revelation of God to the Hebrew Prophets did not teach new truths, truths other than those given to other nations and peoples, it did teach the truths generally known with greater emphasis and positiveness, placed them in clearer light, and invested them with greater spiritual significance and importance. Not only so, but the sacred writers in the Old and New Testaments had a stronger conviction, a fuller knowledge, and a more certain hold of the "truth as in Jesus," and dealt with that truth in its bearings on righteousness and holiness in a way other systems of religion do not; which things give to those writings a pre-eminence over all others.

04.12 - Pfleiderer's View Criticised

(12) Pfleiderer's View Criticised

Modern criticism wishes to know whether we are quite sure that these recorded experiences were the actual experiences of Israel, and not the glosses of some prophetic or priestly editor of a later age, who, in working over the patriarchal narratives, wrought in the ideas and truths of his own times? Professor Pfleiderer thinks this was so; he says: "From the hands of prophetic revisers How those traits in the history of the origin of Israel, which throw back into the earliest foretime the Messianic hopes, and the thought of a universal purpose of grace, which were but in reality and mental achievements of the later 1 Acts 15:1. Acts 15:25-28. centuries. We include under these particulars the treatment of the patriarchal age, and, above all, the life of Abraham. On the territory of dawning prehistory the prophetic narrator has operated with greatest freedom." 1 We must remember this is the utterance of one who has made no attempt to conceal his hostility to the supernatural element in religion, and who aims at excluding all traces of supernaturalism from religious history, that it may the better accord with the principle of a natural evolution. If we accept the supernatural as an element of Divine revelation, and admit that God did make known His will and gracious purpose to Abraham, then is it not reasonable to suppose that revelation did anticipate distant stages in the accomplishment of the Divine purposes to be unfolded in the course of fulfilment? To say these truths belong to a later time, and could not have been known to Abraham, is to ignore that they are a revelation from God, and declared the mind and purpose of Him who knew the end from the beginning, and gave to His servants fore gleams of that which should be here after. Christ said to the Jews in His day: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad." 2 1 "Die Religion," vol. ii, pp. 337, 338:

2 John 1:8.

04.13 - Revelation and Mosaism

(13) Revelation and Mosaism

Whatever views we may hold as to the date and authorship of the books of the Pentateuch, we are assured there is in them a large Mosaic element, and that the facts and truths of Divine revelation found therein will remain virtually unchanged by the ultimate conclusions reached on these points. Modern critics say: "That the actual body of permanent revelation given in the Torah remains entire, unchanged by the different views entertained as to the historical character, origin, and composition of the Pentateuch."

Critics of a more conservative type refuse, however, to accept this assurance. They hold that the Pentateuch, if not written by Moses, was a forgery; and if so, it is discredited as a record of Divine revelation.

Whether it be finally concluded that the record was made by Moses or by another in his name at a much later date, the main facts of Israel's history and the revelation embodied therein will be verified, and will remain as the basis of those greater and future revelations of God to Israel in later times. Whoever wrote the narrative, the facts of the history, the miracles, and revelations recorded are historical and true, and are recognised as such throughout the Scriptures. If we admit that editorial touches of a religious character appear in the Pentateuch, which are the reflections of the prophetic or post-exilic period, those touches were introduced to make more clear and vivid the religious teaching and meaning of the documents themselves; and did not then introduce a revelation and a religious element which previously had no existence. The repeated references made in the Scriptures to Israel's sojourn "in Egypt, and to their deliverance" there from by a mighty hand and stretched out arm, are explicable only on the ground of historical reality. Moreover, the whole of Egyptology testifies to the presence and influence of Moses and Israel in Egypt, and supplies corroborative evidence of the truth of the Scripture narrative respecting the sufferings, plagues, and wonderful acts of God connected with Israel's sojourn in the land and at the Red Sea. Not only so, but the incidents of the Egyptian bondage and the sojourn in the Wilderness were part of the divine discipline and training of Israel for their future mission, and enter into all their songs, ordinances, institutions, and subsequent revelations, and so witness to the historical veracity and divine inspiration of the Pentateuch.

04.14 - The Leading - Truths of Mosaism

(14) The Leading Truths of Mosaism

Among the leading ideas of Divine revelation as made known to Moses, are the following: The recognition of Jehovah as Supreme God ruling in Egypt and governing Nature: "Pie is the faithful covenant keeping God who made His choice of the Hebrew race and will not draw back; He is the God of grace who lives to give guidance, counsel, help, food, drink, and every needed supply; He is the Holy One and requires obedience to His will, and Who takes the necessary steps to make it known; He is a jealous God and demands that clue worship shall be paid to Him, and to none else; He is the Covenant God and the two sides of the Covenant are: Jehovah Israel's God, Israel Jehovah's people." There is, moreover, in Israel's bondage in Egypt and deliverance there from to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear " a revelation of the great outgoing of the great family of man from the bondage of superstition, ignorance, and sin.;) The events are not merely typical of spiritual truths and realities, but the fact that they are and are so recorded, shows the faith of the men in the divine revelation.

04.15 - Revelation Under the Judges and Former Prophets

(15) Revelation under the Judges and Former Prophets In tracing the progress of revelation during this period it will not be necessary to determine the origin, authorship, and dates of the books of Judges, Samuel, and the Kings; nor to attempt the difficult and impossible task of determining what in them is history and what tradition; or to harmonize conflicting accounts, and arrange events and incidents in chronological order. The great thing that confronts us at this stage, and which in the opinion of some is vital to the question of Divine revelation is: The morality of the age as seen in the destruction of the innocent with the guilty, and in the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanites, the Amalekites, the priests and prophets of Baal by Divine commandment. To examine the case of the Canaanites will help us to understand what is essential and primal in all these instances. The question is not as to whether the slaughter of the Canaanites was as sudden and complete as some have affirmed, or whether it was more partial and gradual, and extended over a much longer period than is generally supposed, however important, humanely and morally considered, this may be. The great question is: Whether God actually commanded the extermination of the Canaanites, whether He used the Israelites as His instruments or agents in accomplishing their destruction, and whether such conduct can be reconciled or harmonised with the revealed character of God as just and righteous, gracious and merciful, according to the revelation given to Moses and the leaders of Israel? That God required the extermination of the Canaanites by the hand of Israel is expressly stated by Moses and the leaders of Israel, and they are directed “to destroy them utterly.”¹ This command Joshua tells us was fully and literally executed.² It would also seem that in this work of extermination the Israelites acted under Divine direction, executing Divine punishments on an idolatrous and sinful people, because of their idolatries and sins; and that they acted with the fullest assurance they were Divinely commissioned to this work of destruction, and that to show favour and tolerance to spare them would be to transgress the Divine commandment. Impossible as such conduct would be to men of to-day, to the men of that age and country when and where the individuality of the man and the idea of ethical justice were imperfectly realised it was possible so to act, especially so, when they were fulfilling a Divine threatening and purpose under Divine leadership. When we come to inquire into the grounds of this action, the Why of this commandment, and the righteousness and justice of such conduct, we enter on debatable ground. Was the divine command to exterminate the Canaanites and dispossess them of their land merely an act of favour to Israel, to ensure the undisturbed possession of this land and that they might dwell therein securely and peaceably? Not exactly so: to drive out the Canaanites, and to give Israel possession of the land was part of the Divine purpose and promise, but not the most important part. It was an act of punishment indicted upon the Canaanites for their idolatries and sins; and was intended to exterminate the evil by exterminating the race; and thus secure Israel against the idolatries and evils that afflicted the land in which they should dwell. In this we have a revelation of God as both just and gracious, righteous and merciful; a God of severity and goodness, of vengeance and mercy; a “Power not ourselves making for righteousness,” as against idolatry and sin; and by His strange work of judgment against the workers of iniquity working out His gracious

purposes for the race. We by no means think this view will commend itself to all minds and carry the judgments of all men, seeing it involves a conduct inconsistent with modern conceptions of justice and righteousness. We must remember, however, that to ascertain the facts of the Divine action and commandment is one thing, but to understand and fathom the reasons which underlie them, and the motives which prompt them, is another. Nor must we lose sight of “ the ruling ideas “ of that age and country in respect of individual rights, ethical justice, and moral action, so different from those of our age and land; while the means, opportunities, and agencies for dealing with idolatry and sin, for securing the conversion of sinners from the error of their ways, for teaching and instructing the ignorant and erring in the ways of righteousness and truth, were not the same as now. Moreover, the laws of the Old Covenant in respect of these evils were severe and inexorable, and knew nothing of mercy and forgiveness, while the God of justice and mercy was the unfailing Avenger of evil, the Punisher of transgression and sin, the Saviour and Judge of men. This was that fuller revelation of the Divine character now made to men, revealing God as the Just and Righteous One, who executeth judgment and faileth not to visit for iniquity and sin, Who is also gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth, and will not fail to forgive the penitent, to help the helpless, and to reward the righteous.

While this may be said to mark a distinct stage in the revelation of the divine character, God’s relation, government, and dealings with men, and one which needed to be pressed home in the most convincing manner upon the minds and hearts of Israel at the very beginning of their national history, the principle is one which existed from the beginning, and found striking illustration in God’s dealings with the first human pair in the garden of Eden, with the antediluvians at the Flood, and the dwellers in the Cities of the Plain. But it now laid the foundation for the future revelation of the Divine character, purpose, and dealing with men in the subsequent ages, and which gathered emphasis and force from the teachings of the Former and Latter Prophets, and of Christ and His Apostles. The conduct and teaching of Elijah and Elisha as the greatest among the Former Prophets grandly illustrate this great truth. When Israel under royal influence had been won over to Baal worship, and Elijah obtained the victory for Jehovah against Baal in the contest on Carmel, and the hearts of the people were turned towards the Lord, Elijah followed up this victory with the slaughter of the prophets of Baal 400 men who had deceived the nation and caused the people to sin. By this means vengeance was executed upon the idolatrous prophets, the progress of Baal worship effectually checked, while Israel was prevented from being again enslaved by that form of idolatry.

It was with Elijah a ruling principle that Jehovah can brook no rival in His kingdom. He therefore avows his zeal and devotion for the Lord of Hosts by calling Israel back to her allegiance to Jehovah, and by destroying the prophets of Baal. His method, however, was largely one of violence and force.

These were his chief weapons, and he never supposed he could conquer by means of any other. When these failed in their purpose, broken in spirit, he desired to be relieved of his fruitless task and die.

Now it is that he was taught by the remarkable phenomena at Horeb, when “ the wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rock,” and “after the wind an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire,” but the Lord was not in them; and after these, “a still, small voice,” which “voice”

revealed the gentleness, mercy, and grace of God that God was not a mere God of justice and vengeance, nor was His cause to be served and furthered by violence and brute force, but by the voice of righteousness, faithfulness, and truth. From that time another spirit possessed him. He no longer attempted to suppress idolatry and evil by means of force, but trusted to the word of truth and righteousness. It was this “voice” speaking in the Prophet, and “ the Schools of the Prophets,” and the hearts of the faithful, that prepared Israel to be the Lord’s faithful people. Speaking of the result of Elijah’s mission, Kuenen says: “ The consequences of this conflict were most important. From this period onward the belief in Jehovah, the God of Israel, is assailed no longer. The Prophets of the eighth century are able to start from it as a universal conviction. For this foundation for their preaching they must thank Elijah and his^ school.” 1

04.16 - Revelation and the Latter Prophets

(16) Revelation and the Latter Prophets The Latter Prophets had a deeper insight into the spirituality of God, especially His righteousness and holiness, as also into the inner meaning and spirituality of Divine truth, and the deep religious and spiritual character of their mission. Full of zeal for the glory of God and the cause of righteousness, they not only waged war against all forms of idolatry, evil, and sin, but against all hypocrisy, all heartless and meaningless forms of worship, all trust in outward observances, rites, and ceremonies, which priests and people were wont to substitute for the practice of righteousness and truth. They called upon people to “cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow/ 2 So Micah: “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to 1 “Religion of Israel,” vol. i, p. 360:2 Isaiah 1:17. love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? “!

God was not only a God of righteousness. He was also a God of compassion and love, of mercy and forgiveness, to Whom men might look with confidence, and Whose mercy and love they might rely upon for forgiveness and salvation. He was a “just God and a Saviour,” “that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage; he retaineth not His anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.” 2 Jehovah was to His people Redeemer, Sovereign, and Father, their Protector and Husband, Who is faithful, devoted, loving, and true, Who pleaded with His faithless and backsliding people as would a devoted husband with an unfaithful and offending wife. 3

04.17 - The Moral Character of God Seen in His Covenant Relation to Israel

(17) The Moral Character of God seen in His Covenant Relation to Israel

While the Latter Prophets gave prominence to the moral and ethical character of God, we are not entitled to conclude that the date of this conception of Jehovah is thereby assigned to this period. The covenant which God made with Abraham, which secured to his heir and seed the possession of Canaan, was a promise, and was confirmed in a remarkable manner, and partook of the nature of an oath. 4 So the covenant with David constituting his seed the perpetual rulers of the Kingdom of God is spoken of as "ordered in all

1 Micah 6:8

2 Micah 7:18 3 Hosea 2:16-23.

4 Genesis 22:17, Genesis 26:3, Genesis 15:7-18.

Things, "sure," even "the sure mercies of David, and was constituted with due and solemn rites. This covenant is spoken of as "eternal," and is made by Isaiah the foundation of Messianic prophecy. 1 So with the covenant which secures the perpetual priest hood in the family of Levi. Into all these covenants together with the promises, institutions, and facts connected with them there enter certain moral elements, duties, and obligations which imply Jehovah was a moral and righteous Being Who entered into moral relations with His chosen people, which has for its basis the principle of righteousness. This covenant relation of Jehovah and Israel is recognised as already existing by the Latter Prophets.

Jehovah is the God of Israel, Israel is His people, this relation they trace to the time of Israel's deliverance from Egypt; that was the day of Israel's birth, the time when Jehovah knew her. 2 This relation, how ever, does not imply immunity from chastisement and suffering, nor is it to be regarded as indissoluble.

Jehovah assures this people by His servant Hosea that because of Israel's idolatry, unfaithfulness, and profligacy, Jehovah shall say of her, u She is not My people, neither am I hers. 3 But upon her return to obedience, fidelity, righteousness, and goodness, Jehovah promises to renew His relationship with her, saying: "I will say unto them which were not my people, Thou art My people; and they shall say Thou art my God." 4 This is the teaching of all the Latter Prophets, and while the Exile may be the rupture of the Old 1Isaiah 8:11-14, Isaiah 9:10; Isaiah 7:11.

2 Amos 3:2; Hosea 2:3, Hosea 11:1; Hosea 12:9.

3 Hosea 1:9, Hosea 2:2 4 Hosea 1:10, Hosea 2:23. covenant, the Restoration marks the establishment of the New. But into and around this new covenant, or the renewal of the covenant relation of Jehovah with Israel, there gather all the ideals and aspirations of the teaching Prophets, viz, the forgiveness of sins, the assurance of righteousness and peace, the possession of

everlasting joy and blessedness, and all that pertain to the Messianic expectation and hope. The covenant also takes on certain new aspects, which are not only new but better, because connected with the richer and fuller revelations of Jehovah's name and character, especially of His righteousness, grace, and truth; that "Jehovah remembers His covenant and His grace to do it for His name's sake," that He may "show His faithfulness and perform His truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which He had sworn unto their fathers from the days of old." 1 It is new and better because of its intense subjective reality and the realisation of its deeper and more spiritual significance of forgiving and renewing grace and truth. "I will write it on their hearts." "A new heart also will I give, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" 2 In this "new and better covenant," with its subjective reality, its deeper spiritual significance, we have a higher and fuller revelation of God of His immutable and unchanging character, of His abiding

1 Micah 7:20.

2 Ezekiel 36:25-28. mercy and grace, and the universality of His dominion and rule, as set forth by Deutero-Isaiah, and more fully by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. With this higher conception of the moral character of God, the spiritual nature of His reign, and the growth of Divine holiness, we have a truer view of the moral character of sin and the necessity for some Divine and efficient method of forgiveness and salvation. The moral and polluting effect of evil and sin comes out in the conversion and call of Isaiah "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips." 1 We have here both the sense of personal sin, and of the relation of evil to the race, as also of its moral defilement and pollution. The general teaching of the Old Testament respecting sin is that of defilement, according to the teaching of the second commandment. It was a defilement that reached to others besides the actual sinner; the sins of the fathers reaching unto the children; of the head of the family, the tribe, and the nation reaching to all that belonged to them, or were associated with them: by this the sense of moral guilt was lessened, and personal responsibility, as also of individual and personal forgiveness and salvation. But in the teachings of the Latter Prophets notably those of Ezekiel we have a deepening sense of personal guilt and personal responsibility. 2 "The soul that sinneth, it shall die, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

1 Isaiah 6:5 2 Ezekiel 18:20. This is also true of righteousness as of evil: "The righteous man shall deliver only his own soul by his righteousness; for though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall deliver but their own souls by their righteousness." Nor shall righteousness at one time prevent judgment if a soul relapse into wickedness; nor shall his former wickedness be reckoned against him on his turning to righteousness. 2 Responsibility belongs to individual souls for actual things done and for nothing else. In the last eight chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy we have a picture of the Kingdom of God in its final and perfect state. The ruling conception is that of Jehovah dwelling in visible glory in His sanctuary in the midst of His people, and a corresponding holiness as the condition on Israel's part which such a relation involves. The institutions and symbolism are priestly both because Ezekiel himself was a priest and deeply imbued with the traditions of his

office, and because of the priestly influence of the age as exhibited by the “ Priestly Code “ and the “ Law of holiness “ which criticism has assigned to that period. According to the Deuteronomist Jehovah was the Holy One, and He chose Israel that they might be to Him “an holy people.” The spirit of holiness to Jehovah was ethically exhibited by love to God and love to man, as the spring of all human action. Being holy to Jehovah they must love, serve, and worship Him only, and that at the one place He has chosen, and not go after other gods. On its manward side this holiness 1 Ezekiel 14:12-20 2 Ezekiel 33:10-30. is exhibited by love towards their neighbours, by kindness and charity towards the poor, the widow, the orphan, the Levite, and the stranger; and by all works of righteousness and goodness. In this revelation of the moral and righteous character of God, and of the holiness and glory of His Name, and the new and spiritual relation He sustains to Israel and to all nations and people; in the revelation of the value of the individual soul, of the evil of sin and of the need and efficacy of repentance, and the creation of a new heart and of a right spirit within, in order to fulfil the law of God, we have some of the brightest gems of spiritual truth to be found in the records of divine revelation, and a decided forward movement in the development of revelation.

04.18 - Revelation and the Hagiographa

(18) Revelation and the Hagiographa The Hagiographa comprise a variety of writings dealing with a variety of problems; problems affecting faith and doubt, life and destiny, the mystery of affliction and suffering, and of its probationary and vicarious value; problems relating to wisdom, goodness, devotion, and heart-loyalty; problems of joy, praise, and gratitude; of soul- rapture, soul-yearning, and communion with God, and that in times of loss, chastisement, and suffering, and these set forth in sapiential utterances, aphorisms, songs, and psalms, the noblest and grandest in the realm of literature. The wise sayings, the sagacious utterances, the ethical philosophy, the high toned piety and devotion, the perfect trust and confidence in God under the most distressing conditions exhibited in these writings, indicate a faith, an integrity, devotion, righteousness, and godliness, which imply a knowledge of God, of His character and relation to the children of men, of faith, love, and confidence of the most exalted character.

04.19 - Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Job, and Psalms

(19) Ecclesiastes Proverbs, Job, and Psalms The author of Ecclesiastes may be said to take a somewhat gloomy and pessimistic view of things.

God is recognised as the Governor and Ruler of the world; nevertheless, much happens by chance and not by law and order. He is an austere Being Whose throne is on high, and He has but little regard for the things that are done on the earth. Though the tone of the book is sceptical and pessimistic, it cannot be said to teach scepticism or to encourage pessimism. Life may be largely made up of “dreams and vanities,” but to “fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man.” It proclaims a deep sense of dissatisfaction with the world, and its insufficiency to meet the needs of humanity, but it supplies the starting-point of a true quest when it declares “God has placed eternity in the heart of man,” that he may move upwards towards God, heaven, and life eternal. For the full realisation of this we must turn elsewhere, even to Christ and His Gospel, by whom “life and immortality have been brought to light.” So the book of Proverbs may be earthly in its tone, utilitarian in principle, and sordid in some of its maxims; nevertheless, its prudential and ethical teachings are connected with the “fear of the Lord,” and with the highest and truest “wisdom.” Its social, civil, and business teachings are of a high religious character, its counsels of virtue, purity, fidelity, and honesty accord with the requirements of the Law and the Prophets, for kings to commit wickedness is an abomination, while “righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” * The ode on the virtuous woman with which the book closes is incomparable in literature and national ethics. On questions of religion and morality, of faith and goodness, of the knowledge and fear of God, of uprightness and true manliness, we have an echo of the truths enforced by the Prophets and exhibited in the teachings of our Lord and His Apostles. The highest, sublimest, and most spiritual teaching of the book is in its description and presentation of “wisdom,” and its identification with the thought, word, and mind of God in Creation, Providence, and Redemption, which reads like a prophetic forecast of the Divine Logos, the Eternal Word, the First-born of all Creation, by Whom God made the world and all things therein. Whether the wise men who wrote the Proverbs were prophets or not, we recognise a fundamental unity in the teaching which accords with the highest revelation of God to man. For Jesus is not only the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of God in a mystery, perfect, possible, and available for all but He is made unto them that believe “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” and “giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.”

2 In Job we have a genuine outcome of the religious life, knowledge, and experience of that people, and of that people in the later stages of its history. The doctrine of God is that of a righteous and moral Governor of the world, just and true in all His ways and dealings with the children of men; and this righteousness and justice must manifest itself in the face of all difficulties and objections. The problem of the book is the suffering and affliction of the righteous. Job as a righteous man was called upon to endure trial, chastisement, and severe discipline; to submit calmly, patiently, and without complaining to losses, calamities, and sufferings of various kinds,

and amid the reproaches of friend and foe to maintain His faith and confidence in the justice, righteousness, and goodness of God. This he did, saying, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." 1 " Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah." 2 Nature, philosophy, and science have in their turn supplied some contribution towards the better understanding and solution of this problem; but the problem is a moral and religious one, and is related to the fact of sin and the character of God as Saviour and Judge of men.

Man is a moral being, is the subject of a moral government, placed under moral law, the violation of which has entailed suffering and death which have come upon all men in that all are part of the same race and all have sinned. Hence suffering and death are not only personal but racial, not only punitive but vicarious, and belong not only to the present but the future. And while the righteous may suffer here, 1 Job 13:15; Job 21:21. and suffer not only on account of their own sins, but the sins of others, Job was also assured that there would be an ultimate and future vindication. This assurance he has expressed in one of the grandest and sublimest passages in the realm of literature, and yet one very difficult to interpret: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand up at last on the earth; and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another, though my veins be consumed within me." 1

It is in the Psalms, however, that theological, religious, ethical, and eschatological questions find their fullest expression in Old Testament revelation.

Modern Criticism regards the Psalms as the background of individual and national history, reflecting in their contents incidents in the lives of their authors, and the varying fortunes of Israel as a nation. There is that; but this personal and national element by no means exhausts their religious meaning and teaching. The personal element is soon lost in the impersonal, the national in the universal, the Jewish in the Christian. " Universality and timelessness " are distinguishing characteristics of the Psalms and a witness to their divine inspiration.

They view Israel's history in the light of high, moral, and eternal principles, which are for all time and for all men. The most particular and immediate incidents reach forth into the most universal and permanent issues. The " I " and the " we " Psalms often express more fully the personified genius and experiences of Israel and of the Church-nation than those 1 Chap. 19:25-27. of the individual author. We have, therefore, in the Psalms indications of the national and Church consciousness Godward, as well as the utterances of individual experiences of king, Psalmist, or one of the Prophets, who may have been the author and immediate subject of the Psalm. Hence the difficulty in fixing the date, occasion, and primary significance of the Psalms from their contents, and the necessity for a broad and liberal view in determining their origin and place in the progress of Divine revelation.

Without attempting to discuss the date, origin, and authorship of the Psalms we content ourselves by saying that we regard them as a growth, and covering a period of many centuries from the time of David to that of the Maccabees, and while the present arrangement is post-Exilian, and formed the hymn-book of the second temple, the religious teaching of the Psalter exhibits the religious development of Israel: and the spirit of psalmody is the spirit of prophecy. And so we have Jehovistic and Elohistc Psalms, God transcendent and immanent in nature and religion, God in providence and grace, God as King, Redeemer, and Judge of the world. The attributes of God are

of the most exalted character, and in His moral character is the Holy One, the ideal after which men are called to take pattern. He hateth sin and delighteth in goodness, He abhorreth iniquity and findeth pleasure in righteousness, He is "nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." 1 Sin is the abominable thing which God hates, and when the Psalmist realises its malignity and evil he abhors himself in dust and ashes, ps. 34:18, and with true penitence and contrition turns to God and seeks forgiveness. The Psalmist also speaks of "sacrifice and offering," of "redemption and salvation," of "pardon, forgiveness, and justification": and though these terms may not have the same doctrinal significance and fulness of meaning they have in the New Testament Scriptures, they yet reveal a knowledge of the redemption and salvation God accomplished for the race. If they do not exhibit the genuine current coin of Christian revelation and experience they are the molten metal out of which genuine coin is made and stamped.

We may not be justified in saying with Bishops Wordsworth, Alexander, and others, that the Psalms contain the same principle of atonement and salvation, the same doctrine of sin, repentance, and forgiveness; the same "sweet interworking of the grace of God and the will of man," and that they are no less full of Christ and redemption than are the writings of John and Paul; nor do we say they reveal the religion of Israel in its divinest form, its highest spirituality, and most abiding manifestations. It may be equally true that the ii, xxii, xlv, lxxii, ex, and other Psalms which seem most clearly to refer to the Person, mission, death, resurrection, kingdom, and reign of Christ were not so understood and intended by their authors.

Nevertheless, the Spirit of God that was in them and guided them in their utterances, and thus moved them to speak and write, was by them intentionally furthering the purpose of divine revelation and redemption for the race. And we know how our Lord and His Apostles in their day quoted the Psalms as testifying of the mission, kingdom, and reign of Christ. And this truth is not weakened by the statement that the Psalms are not so much the revelation of God and of His relation to the Church and the world, as they are the pious thoughts, reflections, and meditations of men on God and religious truth.

They are both. And it is through men, through their conceptions, experiences, and knowledge, the revelation of God in the Scriptures has been given us. And so the utterances of the Psalms are echoes of God's law in the hearts and through the lives and experiences of men who strive to be faithful to it, and on that account are not less the revelation of God through them to us to whom those experiences have been made known. What reached them in this way may also find us, and through the use of the Psalms as prayers, hymns, and songs of praise we may come to know God as much so as by Torah and prophecy.

04.20 - Historical Revelation in the New Testament

(20) Historical Revelation in the New Testament The historical element, which forms so prominent and essential a part of revelation in the Old Testament is equally apparent in the New. The New Testament is the record of those facts, transactions, and events by which God has revealed Himself and His gracious will and purpose to man, and in which man's nature and destiny are historically concerned. These are not only the basis of the revelation of God to men, but they constitute the revelation, or set forth the relation between God and man which is the essence of revelation. The historical element which exhibits the teachings and works of Jesus Christ, the dealings of God with men that form the substance of the revelation of the New Testament as recorded by Evangelists and Apostles. The purpose of the record is to make us acquainted with the facts, events, and transactions by which the revelation was made: that knowing the facts we might come to understand the revelation. But the essential elements in the revelation are the historical the persons, facts, events and movements recorded in the Gospels and Epistles.

04.21 - Revelation: Christ and the Gospels

(21) Revelation: Christ and the Gospels The Gospels are historical: they are accounts of Christ's life, works, words and self-manifestation, by means of which we come to know Him and the Father whom He came to reveal. They record how Christ was announced, became incarnate, manifested His glory, was rejected, crucified, rose again, ascended on high, and sent forth the Holy Spirit and created the Christian Church, etc. It is these facts and events that constitute historical revealing and make known the revelation of God to men; and these existed apart from the record and were all accomplished before the Gospels were written. But the Gospels make us acquainted with these facts and events, help us to know them and to find in them the revelation of God: they assure us of their reality and importance, explain their import, and inculcate their lessons. So that both the facts and the record under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth help us to the knowledge and experience of the divine revelation. But the revelation is in the Person, life, work, and mission of Christ, and not in the writing. Like the Prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ was a preacher and teacher of men; a "teacher sent from God," and sent to declare Him unto men. As such His life and teaching were always true to God, and to the purpose and will of God to men; but in His individual utterances He had regard to the actual position in which He and His hearers were placed. Accordingly Christ's utterances must be read in connection with their historical settings, and interpreted in the light of His moral environment, and the special circumstances and relations of His hearers. But in respect of the character and righteousness of God, the gracious and redeeming purposes of the Father, 1 1 is love, sympathy, and compassion for the erring sinful children of men, and His purpose to seek and to save the lost, Christ's work and teaching were full and complete. His discourses concerning the kingdom are set forth in parabolic imagery, thereby making manifest the historical clement in His revelation of God and of His gracious purposes. He embodied these in actual or illustrative historical conditions, and He did this not merely that His teachings might be remembered, or that they might have an additional charm and freshness, but that they might have an historical setting, and be brought into close relation with the events and incidents of everyday practical life.

Christ not only revealed Himself and His Father by His words and teachings, but also by His works; both by His ordinary works as also by His extraordinary works His miracles. These not only exhibited His supreme power and wisdom, and attested His claims to be heard as the "Sent of God"; but they revealed the love and sympathy of God with the needy, the destitute, and the suffering. They were a revelation of the Fatherly compassion of God towards the afflicted and suffering, and declared the divine purpose to deliver from suffering those who appealed to Him. These works were a more powerful revelation of divine pity and compassion than could have been exhibited in words. And just as the death of Christ "bearing the sins of men in His own body on the tree," giving "His life a ransom for many," exhibited the gracious love and purpose of God to redeem men, so the miracles of Christ set forth more fully than words could have done His purpose to save man as a sufferer. Compassion is here revealed as a thing of life and power, as an active beneficent movement of God towards suffering humanity. Christ here discloses to us the

very heart of God the Father for it is "He that doeth the works." The most outstanding facts in the self manifestation of Christ are His death and resurrection. There is in them, as facts in the history of redemption, a light and power, a significance and purpose that declare the redemption of the race to be an accomplished fact. This was the redemption for which the race long waited and so long desired; and the death of Christ as an atonement for sin is at once the accomplishment of the purposes of God, and the fulfilment of the prophetic types and sacrifices of the Old Testament. Herein are revealed the wisdom and power, the justice and holiness, the righteousness and the love of God. These facts and events of the Revelation 17:1-18 New Testament, while they have an historical relation, as had the facts and transactions of the Old, have this difference, that, while the Old Testament events pointed forwards to this divine manifestation, the New Testament facts attest its fulfilment and accomplishment. In the Old these things were matter of expectation, here they are matter of realisation; there they were the subject of promise things that were to come but now the facts are part of the world's history and of human experience. Then each successive stage brought men nearer the time of accomplishment, now the facts are the revelation of its completion. Then was exhibited a purpose, a gracious intention and design, now is declared the fact and its lessons, the event and its significance, the deed and its advantages and blessings.

04.22 - The Facts and Truths of the Gospel Evidenced in the Teachings and Writings of the Apostles

(22) The Facts and Truths of the Gospel evidenced in the Teachings and Writings of the Apostles

Hence the death and resurrection of Christ are not mere dry facts of history, but are invested with great practical, doctrinal, and saving importance, which things were in them, or connected with them from the first. The great truths, doctrines, and benefits of atonement and salvation by faith that is in Christ Jesus are not of apostolic creation, or some new revelation of truth direct from heaven to the Apostles, but are the legitimate outcome of the facts and truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, inseparable from the facts of the Incarnation, teaching, ministry, mission, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, things which make up the sum and substance of the Gospel. These facts are pregnant with truth and blessing for the race, luminous with the purpose and knowledge of God, alive with the doctrine and benefits coming to light through the knowledge and truth that are in them, and to be realised through faith. The authors of the Gospels, the Evangelists, Apostles, and first witnesses of Jesus Christ, speaking, witnessing, and writing under the teaching of Jesus Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had a consciousness of the meaning and blessing connected with these facts and transactions, and were able to make them known to their hearers and readers. They give us to see they had a consciousness of the wisdom, power, and grace of God then in movement for the world's salvation, and hastening on to its fulfilment, and that the kingdom of God with all its blessings was at hand. At the same time they give us to see how fresh light was constantly breaking forth from these facts, how their meaning and purpose were being unfolded, and larger and fuller measures of truth came to them as they were prepared to receive them. The progressive unfolding of the truth and meaning and advantages latent in the facts are most apparent, while the minds of men were gradually prepared to lay hold of them and to be possessed and moulded by them as they revealed themselves from time to time.

Hence the facts of the Gospel of Christ, their meaning and significance, form the sum and substance of Apostolic teaching. What the Apostles preach and declare is what they received, how "that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification." The Old Testament revelation of the unity and holiness of God, the mission of Israel, the authority of the moral law, the teaching of the Prophets and the Psalms, the inspiration of these writings, are taken for granted. They formed the foundation for these new facts, events, and their teachings to which they looked forward, and which were to form the distinctive message of the New Testament Scriptures, "Proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ," "the Son of God," "saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." * The reality, the historicity, the validity, and credibility of the facts of the Gospels are attested by the Apostolic preaching and writings. Jesus Christ was the Son of God, of divine origin and essence, and yet very man, born of woman, and of the seed of David according to the flesh. His death on the Cross was no mere martyrdom, glorious with the barren majesty of unequalled fortitude, but an event necessary for

our salvation. His resurrection was no fair dream of ardent friendship, unable to reconcile itself to the extinction of the hopes which had grown around His person, but a fact able to bear the weight of Christian faith and hope. The New Testament Scriptures, as also the whole fabric of Christianity, stand or fall with the facts of Christ's history. The reality, the uniqueness, the historicity of Christ's personality are among the indubitable facts of the New Testament writings; these constitute their abiding charm and worth, the secret of their 1 Acts 4:2; Acts 5:42; Acts 26:22-23. power, the foundation and bulwark of the Christian religion: and they are true. Their reality is attested by the Gospel records, by the Apostolic preaching, by the existence and universality of the Christian Church, by the ever-present grace and power of God in Christ Jesus to save all them that believe.

Criticism has directed its force against the historicity and credibility of the Gospel narratives, made much of the discrepancies between the Synoptic Gospels and the fourth gospel; and between these and the teachings and writings of the Apostles, they have made much of what they considered to be the original Jesus, His birth, ministry, and death, and the subsequent development and doctrinal teaching associated with His Name. But when Criticism has done its best or its worst, the facts of that wonderful Personality remain substantially the same as the Scriptures record, and the Church has received and taught. We are also assured that the Christ of the Gospels is the original and the true one; while the accounts of His Person, life, teaching, death, and resurrection, as made known to Paul, the converted Pharisee, and set forth by him in his Epistles to the Corinthians, is the same as that given in the Gospels, and is substantially true. The facts are certified, so far as they can be, by independent authority; and the war of the Critics over, we, at the close of the nineteenth century, find ourselves in substantial agreement with the first. The one changeless element running through the intervening centuries, and which has recently reappeared in clearer light and beauty, is "the Historic Christ." From Him all grace and blessing come; to Him all problems are brought for solution. This Christ Revelation 17:1-18 reconciles the contradiction of experience, and creates unity of faith out of the chaos of opinions. The Person of Jesus, with its divine and human elements, its indissoluble oneness, meets the perfect nature of God and of man; and amid all the shifting sands of speculation we have here solid Rock. This Rock is the immovable basis of divine revelation "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses." 1 This is not only the basis of revelation, but its summit and its crown, because in Him, by Him, and through Him we have redemption.

1 2 Corinthians 5:19.

04.23 - Christ Jesus the Completion of Revelation

(23) Christ Jesus the Completion of Revelation

Christ is the consummation of revelation; in Him revelation is final and complete: not final to historical and scientific progress, but to faith and hope and salvation; not final to apprehension, but to faith and experience. It is a redemptive and religious finality final for all that concerns the Divine will, purpose, and action for the world's salvation: final in kind not in degree, in fact and not in measure, in purpose and not in compass. All is revealed, but not everything implied in the "All is realised; the whole counsel of God is declared, but not everything pertaining to the "whole counsel" is experienced. Many things are yet to be made known, but everything necessary to salvation has been revealed all that faith needs, but not all that knowledge craves. The revelation is also final, because it brings us into loving, trustful union with the true God and eternal life, that we may be one with Him, as He is one with the Father. Here, then, is finality in respect of Christ's person and redeeming work, and whatever comes to us now must come to us through Him, and come by way of appropriation and not by revelation. Hence Christ becomes to us the free, final, and effective revelation of God for the purpose of the world's redemption.

05 - Part 5 - Revelation and Its Evidences

PART V REVELATION AND ITS EVIDENCES

I. Miracles (1) Miracles and the Manner of Divine Action (2) Miracles, Probable and Necessary (3) Revelation and Miracle Historical Aspects (4) Miracle and the Religious Element (5) Miracle, Evidential II. Prophecy an Evidence of Divine Revelation (1) Prophecy as Miracle (2) Prophecy Considered as Evidence (3) Prophecy and the Supernatural (4) Prediction and Criticism (5) Prediction and Fulfilment (6) Prediction and Double-Meaning III. Evidences Manifold Notably the Moral (1.) The Witness of the Moral Character of Christ (2.) The Divine Care and Preservation of the Scriptures (3) Their Moral Power and Influence (4) The Ideal of Christian Ethics (5) Christian Morality is Scientific and Beneficial (6) The Divine Authority of Scripture (7) The Scriptures a Living and Abiding Word (8) Christ and the Scriptures One Witness (9) Concluding Observations

05.01 - Miracles

REVELATION AND ITS EVIDENCES

PART V

I. MIRACLES

ONE of the most striking facts in the history of Apologetics is that what is used as an argument for the Christian faith at one time, is at another time placed in the list of things to be defended. This is the case with miracles and prophecy. Once regarded as among the strongest proofs and defences of Christian faith and Divine revelation, they require now to be defended. Miracles are said to be impossible or unverifiable, and as such incredible. This is attributable to several causes: (i) A mistaken conception of revelation regarded as a body of truth or system of doctrine Divinely communicated, which truths and doctrines being undiscoverable by human reason, required to be authenticated by supernatural powers, and signs. This, as we have shown, is not the burden and design of Divine revelation, which is not so much to make known truths and doctrines impossible to reason and inconceivable by the human mind, as to make conceivable possibilities of historical and indubitable facts, to make clear to thought God's gracious purposes for the race, and show that purpose and thought as consistent with the character of God as Father and Redeemer, and carried to completion in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Revelation is concerned with the facts of history rather than with the truths and doctrines connected with them and suggested by them. (2) An other cause is the erroneous conception of the true nature and function of miracles, and the ambiguous terms used in describing them. Miracles have been defined as "suspensions" or "violations of the order and laws of nature," by the immediate intervention of God, for the purpose of accrediting some agent or teacher so as to certify his action and authenticate his teaching. It was this conception of miracles Hume controverted in his famous argument from experience.

Against the possibility of miracles as a violation of the laws and order of nature grounded on human testimony, Hume argued Experience proves the laws and order of nature to be inviolable, while human testimony has often been proved false, and that human testimony was more likely to be false than that miracles ever occurred, and so miracles were declared impossible and incredible. Reject Hume's premises, and you will necessarily reject his conclusion. This is what modern Apologetics does. Apologetics not only rejects the conclusion as illogical experience being used in a double sense but it also rejects the definition of miracle as a "suspension or violation of the order and laws of nature," and holds with modern scientists that the order and laws of nature are fixed and inviolable, and that miracle takes place apart from the fixed order of nature and contrary to that order; it being the action of a superior power or first cause which operates to produce a certain effect. Miracle is the direct action of a super natural power to produce a particular effect which the order of nature by itself would not accomplish. We do not say that God "suspends" or "abrogates" natural law or order, but He uses it sometimes to work His own will and purpose. What is thus superior to the order of nature is as Augustine has pointed out "What God

by direct intervention effect-, and which nature working in its ordinary way would not accomplish.” Divine and intelligent Power uses nature for working out his own purposes much the same as human power and intelligence use it for the accomplishment of ends and purposes which nature, left to itself, would not effect. God does not necessarily work apart from nature and secondary causes, since He may use these to accomplish His specific purpose; but His action is not less real and immediate when He works by the use of secondary causes than when He operates without them.

God immanent in nature is not less Divine than God transcendent; and both are possible.

05.01.01 - Miracles and the Manner of Divine Action

(1) Miracles and the Manner of Divine Action

Sometimes, with a view to avoid the objection of an effect being produced without an adequate cause, miracle is spoken of as the action of a higher law on a lower.” The objection to such a definition is that it restricts miracle to the order and forces of nature, to the exclusion of the intervention of an intelligent personal God, with Whom it attempts to dispense. Accept a personal God, and you have an adequate Cause, and miracle at once becomes a possibility. The main defect in the treatment of miracles is the attempt to explain the *modus operandi*, or the method of the Divine action in miracles. It is of this method we are largely ignorant, and from any thing we know God can work with or without intermediate agencies. He can use natural laws and forces to work His pleasure, or He can bring into action unknown laws and forces, or make an unknown use of a known law; or directly and immediately of His own will and power effect His own purpose. All that miracle requites is that it is the work of God, the result of a Divine activity, and is wrought for a worthy purpose. The How of the accomplishment is of small importance, but the fact is all important.

05.01.02 - Miracles, Probable and Necessary

(2) Miracles Probable and Necessary The question to-day is not so much the possibility or impossibility of miracle as its probability or improbability. The fact of the Divine existence carries the idea of the possibility of miracle, and Theists and even Agnostics, like Huxley, will admit the possibility, but think it highly improbable, and Unitarians like Martineau, will admit that within the spiritual sphere such as conversion and inspiration the miraculous is allowable, but within the physical it is most improbable. But once establish the possibility and even the necessity of miracle within the higher sphere, and it is no longer impossible or improbable in the lower. It is that admission of the reality of miracle within the moral and spiritual sphere that we regard as most important to our purpose, and which, in our judgment, the necessities of the case require. The moral and spiritual miracle justifies the reversal of natural law as exhibited in human experience, The presence of sin in the world, the moral disorder following upon it, is such that disorder can only be rectified and moral order restored by the intervention of a supreme moral Cause. Grant this and miracle follows of necessity. There must be the breaking in upon the moral disorder, and its working the intervention of a supreme Power that shall arrest its operation, check the progress of moral evil, and bring the sinful race back to its primal and proper allegiance to God, and its rightful relation of obedience to moral law and order. It is here that miracle finds its rightful place and proper function in the revelation of God and of His gracious purposes for the race. The end and aim of Divine revelation we have declared to be the manifestation and accomplishment of God's gracious purposes in the redemption and salvation of the world by Jesus Christ.

While in nature God works in the ordinary way and by ordinary means and agencies, in the work of revelation and the redemption of the world from sin, God intervenes by special means and agencies, as manifested in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the divinely appointed Redeemer and Saviour of the world. Miracle is therefore of the nature and essence of Divine revelation, and indispensable to the redemption and salvation of the world from sin, and so an integral part of the plan for the restoration of the moral order of the world and of the race to God.

05.01.03 - Revelation and Miracle Historical Aspects

(3) Revelation and Miracle Historical Aspects

Miracle enters more or less into all the successive stages of revelation, and especially of the revelation of the Divine purposes of redemption for the human race. Miracle enters into the act of Creation, the call of Abraham, the birth of Isaac and the preservation of his seed, the call, appointment, and commission of Moses as the deliverer, leader, and law-giver of Israel, in bringing them out of Egypt and giving them possession of the Promised Land. In the plagues of Egypt, the deliverance at the Red Sea, and the miracles of the Wilderness, we see God as the Avenger of sin, the Deliverer of the helpless, the Defender and Supporter of the needy and the destitute, exhibiting His character and making manifest His purposes of redemption and salvation. With the establishment of Israel in Canaan, and the founding of the monarchy and the establishment of the Schools of the Prophets, and the institution of prophecy, miracles have their place, purpose, and function. But neither in Egypt, at Horeb, in the Wilderness, nor in the days of the Judges, the Kings, and the Former Prophets, are miracles wrought for personal glorification or national aggrandisement, or for investing the worker with a halo of glory and honour; but are wrought for the purposes of encouraging and stimulating people, leader, and prophet to duty and fidelity amid jealousy and discouragement, and to supply the needs of people and leader, judge and prophet, and to help forward the gracious purposes of redemption for the world. So again in the times of the Latter Prophets, in the preservation of the remnant, in the Exile and the deliverance of Judah from Captivity, both to Daniel and his compeers, to the Persian conqueror and his emissaries, God works by special intervention, by miraculous power and energy, to accomplish His purposes for Israel, and the redemption and salvation of the world.

Thus it is that miracles in Old Testament times stand associated with those great events in Israel's history and progress which make for the revelation of the gracious purposes of God in the redemption of the world, and group themselves around those stages of divine revelation which most clearly reveal the character of God as Redeemer, Teacher, Deliverer and Saviour of men. And if these miraculous manifestations characterise the preparatory stages, it was to be expected that when the fulness of time was come, and Christ Jesus the Redeemer and Fulfiller came to complete and accomplish the Divine purpose, miracles would again break forth in all their resplendent power and glory.

Hence the Incarnation, the mysterious Personality, the Divine manifestation witnessed in the life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, which were of a marvellous and miraculous character, and which were manifested for the purpose of redeeming the race from sin, and restoring the world to God, holiness, and truth.

Miracles are therefore an essential and integral part of God's revelation to man, and of the economy of grace and salvation, and are inseparable from it. The miracles in themselves had a revealing and teaching function, as also a redeeming, saving, and healing character.

05.01.04 - Miracle and Religious Element

(4) Miracle and the Religious Element

It is this moral, religious and spiritual purpose of miracle that is a main ground of defence and of justification of miracle as an intervention in the uniformity of the order of nature, and which becomes an important evidence of the Divine origin and character and mission of the Christian religion. It is not only the action of a Divine Workman completing His work but it is also the intervention of that Worker to recover His work from the invasion and havoc of the Destroyer, and to restore the work of His hands to its original and perfect state.

“ Where God had planned normal development, growing freedom and life,” says Godet, “ man, by sin, brought in disease, slavery and death.” When, then, God intervenes with miracle, He does so not as a human workman who corrects himself, and who improves upon his imperfect action, but rather as One who restores His work which another has spoiled for Him. The purpose of God is to redeem mankind from sin, and this purpose sufficiently vindicates the Divine intervention by historic miracle to accomplish His purpose.

05.01.05 - Miracle, Evidential

(5) Miracle Evidential

Miracle had also a teaching and evidential purpose, and belonged largely to the initial and progressive stages of revelation, and was intended to authenticate the worker and his work, as also to encourage and nerve Prophet and Apostle in the belief and discharge of their mission, and to strengthen the belief of others both in the agent and his action, the messenger and his message. They are, therefore, closely connected with the occasion of their occurrence, and with the ignorance and needs of men, and so have an historic and evidential value. They are not only "mighty works and wonders; not only "mighty works, indicating their efficiency and super natural power; but they are "signs, marking the purpose, object, and end of their operation, and connecting them with the revelation and purpose of God. As signs they pointed from the outward act to the inward and spiritual signification, from the visible fact to the invisible truth, and the material action to the divine and spiritual purpose. They accordingly answered a real Divine and spiritual purpose, served an important and real end: they answered a revealing purpose, and possessed an evidential value, being connected with some important event, fact, action, or teaching "God working with them signs following." Thus Moses, by divers miracles, substantiated his commission, authority, and Divine appointment before Pharaoh, as the deliverer of Israel from Egyptian bondage; while, by certain plagues inflicted on the land and the people, he chastened the determined will of Pharaoh into submission to let Israel go, and won from the magicians the confession that it "was the finger of God." So the signs given to Gideon as he entered upon his task; of delivering Israel, and the three signs given by Samuel to Saul on his being selected and anointed king over Israel gave the assurance that God had chosen and appointed them to their work and office.

Elijah, by the marvels of Carmel, wrought conviction in Israel that Jehovah was God; while the woman whose dead son he raised to life testified concerning him "By this I know thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth/ 1 So in the case of the Apostles "power over devils,"

"gifts of healing," working of miracles," "the gift of prophecy," and "speaking with tongues," were the credentials and signs of apostolic authority: and these things, following upon their mission and teaching, were the distinguishing marks that God was with them, and had sent them and commissioned them to speak and teach in His name. Indeed, the very call, commission, and endowment of the Apostles for their work were spiritual and Divine; and as such they believed themselves, and were believed in by others, to be supernaturally endowed for their work. Their gifts came from God, and were bestowed for the sake of the work and the kingdom of God. The Apostles may not have often appealed to outward signs, and did not often work miracles in proof of their authority and commission; but their call and commission was of God, and, in the case of Paul, was the outcome of a direct revelation from God; while his message was also given him by revelation, and signs and miracles were wrought by him in the midst of the people, by which he

proved himself not inferior to “the chiefest of the Apostles.” The Lord Jesus also wrought miracles to attest His mission, and appealed to them 1 Kings 18:24. in proof that He came from God, and spake in the name of God, and wrought the works of God; that it was God the Father who spake in Him and by Him, and who did the works. “He was approved unto God by powers, wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of the people.” Christ appealed both to His words and His works, to His teachings and His miracles, and claimed to be believed on account of both, because by these He was “declared to be the Son of God with power.” Men who listened to His teachings declared “His word was with power,” that He “spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Others beholding His works said “We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him.”- Because Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God, to have come forth from God, He both spake the words of God and did the works of God, “healing the sick of the palsy,” and making him whole, and declaring his “sins to be forgiven him.” When the disciples of the Baptist, hearing of His works, went to Him with the question “Art Thou the Coming One?” the Messiah, the Christ He pointed to His miracles as evidence of His Messiahship. And it is worthy of note that the Jews regarded miracles as evidence of Messiahship, and said “ We know when He who is called Christ is come He will teach us all things,” 3 and “When He is come will He do more signs than those which this man hath done?” 4 Jesus said “I that speak unto thee am He.” It was by His works, His miracles, “ He manifested His glory,” and many believed on Him. Thus

1 Acts 2:22

2 John 1:3

3 John 1:4-25

4 John 7:31. it is the miracles of Christ are held to be an evidence of Messiahship, and a proof that He was the Saviour, the Son of God. They were a ground of belief and confidence to men, a demonstration of His divinity as a Teacher, and of the authority and divinity of His religion; while He is “declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead.” His character, mission, and teaching, His religion, kingdom, and Church, are in strictest accord with this confession and claim. There is no incongruity or discord between them: the witnesses agree, and the truth is thereby attested and confirmed. So that, while miracles are not to-day in the system of Apologetics what they once were as proofs and evidences of divine revelation, they are “aids to faith; to faith in the message of the Old Testament Scriptures as a revelation of the gracious purposes of God; faith in the Person, teaching, and work of Christ as the fulfilment of God’s gracious purpose of redemption; and faith in the mission and teaching of the Apostles as the heralds of salvation to men, and the proclaimers of that Gospel “which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

“ Miracles “ have been spoken of “ as the swaddling clothes of Christianity,” and belonging to the introduction and establishment of the Christian religion, and were used by the inspired authors of the New Testament as auxiliaries to the preaching of the truth, and subordinate to the enduring virtues of the Christian character. As “ signs “ and “ aids to faith “they were merciful indications of a superhuman power mercifully offered to help men to believe the truth spoken and the message proclaimed, by calling attention to it and emphasising its supreme importance. And while miracles with prophecy may still be regarded as the direct and fundamental proofs of revealed religion

because whoever could and did work miracles in proof that God had sent him and was working with him, the miracles being the sign thereof, because wrought by the power of God and the wisdom of God yet too much stress must not be placed upon this witness, and too much importance must not be attached to these at the present day.

They can only be evidences of the wisdom and power, of the presence and authority of God when the mission and truth are in accord with the divine will and purpose. It is the moral truth, the spiritual purpose, the divine results, that are the all-important factors. We must not forget that the working of miracles has been associated with falsehood, imposture, and deception.

Paul speaks of “ deceivers,” “ false prophets,” who shall show signs and work miracles, and lead astray the very elect; while the “ lawless one,” “ whose coming is according to the working of Satan, shall be with power and signs and lying wonders.” ¹ Hence the one important, the abiding miracle, is the moral miracle, the miracle of conversion, of a holy life, of the divine and spiritual effects of the Gospel, which distinguish the New Testament and the Christian religion from all other writings and all other religions.

05.02 - Prophecy an Evidence of Divine Revelation

II. PROPHECY AN EVIDENCE OF DIVINE REVELATION

05.02.01 - Prophecy as Miracle

(1) Prophecy as Miracle

Prophecy is a species of miracle because it belongs to the supernatural, and like miracle is bound up with revelation and forms an essential part of it.

Generally it is that form of teaching in the Old Testament which grows and expands with divine revelation and attains perfection and completeness in Jesus Christ and the New Testament. It has two main factors (i) a teaching and instructing element, declaring and interpreting the mind and will of God to men; (2) the prediction of future events and their fulfilment. It is this latter element to foreknow and foretell future events, events unseen and in calculable to the minds of men, and which as much transcends the ordinary means of knowledge, and implies the intervention of the all-seeing and all knowing God, as does the act of healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead by a word that is debated. To predict a future event long enough before it comes to pass is regarded as evidence of superhuman knowledge, and so a proof of divine revelation or of supernatural communication. And because in Old Testament prophecy the super natural element is concerned with divine and spiritual truths, and the gracious purposes of God in redemption, the knowledge is a communication from God and an integral portion of divine revelation. It is the predictive element which has fallen into disrepute, and which to-day is largely rejected, and by some placed on a level with heathen divination, and which it is said tends to rob prophecy of all historical and ethical importance, and to curse it with barrenness.

Prophecy, we are told, is moral and ethical, rather than doctrinal and spiritual, and was a moral present-day message to the people whom the Prophets addressed, rather than a divine revelation concerning things to come, or things concerning Christ and salvation, or His Church and Kingdom in the world. Prophecy, as already indicated, had a declaratory, national, and moral purpose, a message for the people of that time, but not for that time only; but in its ethical and moral teaching had regard to principles of good and evil, truth and falsehood, God and His enemies, that belong to the whole of time. " Prophecy," says Dr. Arnold, " is God's voice speaking to us respecting the issue, in all time, of that great struggle which is the real interest of human life, the struggle between good and evil." 1 Because it concerns "truth and falsehood," "good and evil, " God and His enemies," as such it must concern all time, because the facts and principles arc for the whole of time. Thus it is Paul tells us we are " built on the foundation of the prophets," "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone" Prophecy thus appeals to all peoples and to all time, and so in the opinion of some is even a more important witness to the truth of Divine revelation than miracles as such.

05.02.02 - Prophecy Considered as Evidence

(2) Prophecy Considered as Evidence Modern Criticism has not only disputed the place assigned to prediction in the evidences of Divine I Sermons on Prophecy. revelation, but questions whether there is, or can be, any such thing as prediction of future events at all, and whether it has any evidential value worthy of notice. What is called prediction is said to be mere conjecture, or a happy guess, or at best an intellectual forecast, an estimation of probabilities, or the calculations of likelihood, that may happen within a given period of time. Like miracle, prediction is pronounced impossible and incredible. But as in the case of miracle, so it is with prophecy; its possibility is admissible, and can only be impossible on the ground that a personal, infinite, all-wise God is impossible.

Admit the existence of God, and that He has access to the minds of men, and the communication of such truths as imply superhuman foresight and knowledge is not only possible but highly probable. The Prophets were not mere politicians, or shrewd observers of men and things, men with sagacious minds, who, while speaking of current events, perceived their probable distant issues and forecasted their probable results. They were “ seers,” “ men of God,” who spake from God and for God, who were given to see things, or had things revealed to them, hidden from ordinary men, and which facts and truths they were commissioned to declare in the name of God. Hence their statements were not mere imaginary, conjectural, or inferential utterances of their own imagining or forecasting, but things disclosed or revealed to them, and which they had to declare in God’s name. As already stated, they are not to be classed with heathen forthtellers, diviners, sooth sayers, and prognosticates, albeit their messages to the people contained elements of warning and threatening, promise and reward, of forecast and prediction, relating to the near and distant future. They dealt with a people whose existence, mission, and religion concerned not only their own age but the ages to come, not only their own immediate relations, but the divine purposes of redemption and salvation for the race, and as such had a necessary relation to the future, and contained within itself an element of prediction and foreshadowing of things to come, inseparable from all God’s dealings with them.

05.02.03 - Prophecy and the Supernatural

(3) Prophecy and the Supernatural.

It is necessary to emphasise this fact which under lies all our views and statements respecting prophecy, because much of the objection to prediction as an element of prophecy is based on antecedent presumption against anything supernatural being admitted when dealing with historical and literary subjects. Not a few of modern Critics take it as a fixed principle that in historical discussions the supernatural is to be excluded. When dealing with the sacred Scriptures which not only imply the supernatural, but have it for the cause and ground of their existence its denial must, of necessity, prejudice the investigation and vitiate the conclusions. On the other hand we who approach the Scriptures with a conviction of the truth and advantage of belief in a supernatural revelation may be disposed to over-estimate events, coincidences, etc, as proofs of prediction and fulfilment or what seem to be such and to underestimate difficulties and objections. We are inclined to think that in some instances this has been so; and what, in some cases, Apologists have been disposed to regard as predictions and fulfilments have not been so at all. Nevertheless, the fact remains that prophecy rests upon the supernatural and implies a Divine action and revelation in dealing with man, which is inconsistent with the modern theory of natural evolution, unless Bible prophecy has been written after the event, which, as regards the Old and New Testaments, is demonstrably impossible.

We must, therefore, consider the supernatural as an essential part of prophecy, and involving a forecast impossible to the mind of the Prophet, and a foreknowledge which must be the work of Divine suggestion or communication. The very calling, and commission of the Prophet as the messenger of God, declares his relation to the supernatural; while the teachings, writings, and revelations of the Old Testament Prophets as an intimation of things that should come to pass, imply prediction and fulfilment. The Prophets, moreover, claimed to possess supernatural knowledge, and to speak as the spokesmen of God.

They not only made such claims for themselves, but they were credited by the public generally with possessing such knowledge, and were resorted to and consulted by king and subject on all kinds of questions affecting the State, war and peace, sickness and recovery, dearth and famine; while such things as threatened doom to individuals, families, tribes, and peoples, because of idolatry, sin, and wrong-doing; the recovery of lost cities and forfeited territory, and the Captivity and Return, are events chronicled in Scripture history as having been foretold and fulfilled. The predictive element is native to Old Testament prophecy; it enters into the very life, experiences, conflicts, and hopes of the people; but it is by no means merely personal, tribal, and national; nor is it restricted to Israel's personal and national history.

It is the Divine, the religious and spiritual element, the relation of the Old Covenant to the New, of Judaism to Christianity, and of the national to the spiritual Israel, that reveals the predictive element and its fulfilment most clearly and fully. The predictive element is here in largest type, in fullest measure, and most definite form. Christ Jesus in the same broad and inclusive manner

claimed that the Old Testament “ bore witness of Him,” that the Law and the Prophets testified concerning Him. Christ appealed to those Scriptures as showing that He was from God, while the Apostles also appeal to them in proof that Christ must needs have come, and that this Jesus was the very Christ. The primitive Christian Church laid stress upon the evidence of Old Testament prediction as manifestly being fulfilled in the supernatural revelation that came through Christ and His Apostles. This prediction and fulfilment as set forth in Old and New Testament are the seal of God upon the reality of the Christian religion. When we speak of prediction as connected with the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole, we do so because the Lord Jesus so spake of it, and used as synonymous and interchangeable terms, “the Scriptures,” “Law,” “Moses and the Prophets,” “Law, Prophets, and Psalms,” as if they had the same meaning for Him, and as witnessing of Him. He thereby found revelation in the Law and the Prophets, and He found prediction in both; and of both he is the “ Fulfiller,” and Perfecter. To the New Testament writers Israel, her religion and her Scriptures are regarded as a unity, and are spoken of as a whole, especially so in respect of the revelation of God in redemption and salvation. This idea is involved in the conception which treats of the Old Testament Scriptures and religion as the “ Covenant,” the “Old Covenant.” The Covenant of God with the people of that time is manifested in the Law, the Prophets, and their teaching. The Old Covenant had in it an element of redemption, but it was a national redemption from foreign bondage, servitude, and oppression; it had the further element of divine grace and gifts of grace, but these gifts were in the form of legal privileges, held on legal tenure; it had also elements of righteousness, and to its provisions both contracting parties were bound by moral self determination. There was nothing of unfaithfulness, or caprice, or change, or conventionalism in it, but everything that denotes fidelity, constancy, and certainty. And so Christ, speaking of the Old Covenant or of the Law and the Prophets says, “ He came not to destroy but to fulfil “ them. This indicates that, in some particulars, in its inner side, as the revelation of righteousness, the Covenant was incomplete and inadequate, and required supplementing, fulfilling, spiritualising, and completing not abrogating or abolishing, but re-emphasising and republishing with the new privileges, blessings, and conditions that constitute the “New Covenant” of Christian redemption and the economy of grace. The Old Covenant failed to secure the righteousness it was designed to promote, and to produce the ideal righteous nation Israel was meant to be. So with the spiritual redemption and salvation, in respect of forgiveness of sins and divine renewal and restoration, by the establishment of the “New Covenant in His blood for the remission of sins,” Christ came and completed it. Both the ideal excellence and the actual failure of the Old Covenant were recognised by Moses and the Prophets. If there had been no ideal righteousness in Israel’s religion, prophetic teaching would have been without point or purpose.

What God had done and given to Israel was the earnest of His greater purpose or design concerning them; what God had already bestowed gave them the right to believe His promises would be fulfilled. On the other hand had there been no actual failure in Israel’s religious history, there would have been no place for the outlook for a better future. Progress would have been arrested, for “ if the first covenant had been faultless, no place would have been sought for the second.” Moses and the Prophets, who saw the righteous ideal and the happy future through the present, sought to maintain the people’s faith in the God of Israel by a present righteousness, while they pointed forward to some better thing God had prepared for them. Prophecy was not free from the conditions of the present, but viewed the future in the present, and looked onward from the standpoint of the time that then was; and so described the future in terms of the present, the

ideal through the actual and the real, and the unknown in the terms of the known. The message took the form of a promise of all that was best, holiest, most peaceful and glad in the nation's experience, only better, holier, more peaceful, joyous and prosperous than they in the present possessed. And so the golden age of prophecy became the key to the golden age of Messianic hopes and expectation as fulfilled in Jesus Christ and His Kingdom among men in much fuller and richer measure.

05.02.04 - Prediction and Criticism

(4) Prediction and Criticism

It may be granted to modern Criticism that too much has been made of particular types, symbols, and prophecies of Old Testament Scriptures, but without endorsing the sweeping statement “that Apologists cannot lay their finger on a single Old Testament prediction clearly referring to Jesus Christ, prefiguring His character and career, and manifestly fulfilled in His mission on earth, which prediction was so intentionally predicted and intended of Him”: we admit that types, figures, and utterances have been applied to Christ which cannot be said to have been so intended by their authors. It may be admitted, further, that the “seed of the woman,” of “Isaac,” the “coming of Shiloh,” the “prophet like unto Moses,” and the “high-priest like unto Aaron,” the “king of David’s line,” the child “Immanuel” set for a sign, and the “suffering-servant” of Isaiah, may have a meaning and application other than “Messianic” in Israel’s history; and yet, in their ultimate significance and meaning, only find fulfilment in the Person, work, and passion of Christ. It may be further conceded to Criticism that even the instances recorded by the Evangelists respecting the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem,” the “flight into Egypt,” the “slaughter of the innocents,” the settling at Nazareth,” the “healing of our sicknesses,” the “triumphal entry into Jerusalem,” the “betrayal,” “the thirty pieces of silver,” the “arrest,” the “flight of the disciples,” the “parting of the garments,” etc, said to be fulfilments of that “spoken by the Prophets,” are only the pious reflections and applications of the authors who, acting under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, were led to make this application of them as being in harmony with the teaching of the Prophets, the Law, and the Psalms. When the assaults of Criticism are over, the place of the Old Testament Scriptures in the history of redemption and of Divine revelation, as a preparation for the coming of the Holy One of Israel and the mission He came to accomplish, and as a witness for God and religion in the world, will continue in the future as in the past. Men will still continue to regard the Old Testament as a forerunner of the New, and the Jewish religion as preparatory to the Christian, and both as the result of a divine ordering, and the fulfilment of a Divinely-determined purpose. If so, then we need not attempt to indicate the prediction and fulfilment of particular incidents and events; while we find in the general forecast of a coming redemption, of a spiritual and universal religion, as set forth in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New, an argument for prophecy sufficient to place it among the indubitable evidences of Divine revelation.

05.02.05 - Prediction and Fulfilment

(5) Prediction and Fulfilment

Prophecy is not the writing of history before the event, in which the incident still to happen must be described with exactitude. The criteria by which to judge of prediction and fulfilment are not the minutiae of incident in agreement, or the accuracy of historical detail, but rather (a) that the prophet claims to speak in the name of God; (b) that the message is in character and essence according to the mind of God; (c) that it conforms in method and outline to the prophetic ideal; (d) that it comes to pass according to the plan and purpose of God. The conception that "prediction is the history of events before they come to pass," has not only led men to look for fulfilment in the minutest detail, but likewise to reject the idea of prediction and fulfilment on the ground of the non-literal fulfilment, and to question all cases of alleged prediction and fulfilment.

"Prophecy, regarded as prediction," says Professor H. Rogers, "on this ground, can always be questioned, since it may be alleged to be either too plain or too obscure; if too plain it was written after the event, and is history and not prophecy; if obscure, then its reference is uncertain, and we cannot be sure that it is prophecy": 1 a solvent well-calculated to discharge all colour from prediction whenever men choose to apply it. The prophets did not write to satisfy a morbid curiosity as to the future, nor to exhibit their fulness of knowledge and the Divine prescience of detail, neither did they parade their 1 "Superhuman Origin of the Bible," p. 436, wisdom and knowledge of things and claim confidence and trust on these grounds. They knew their business too well for that, and were too well assured of the reality and importance of their message and mission to care for detail; hence in some instances the details are not given, while principles and facts, rewards and judgments, are faithfully declared.

Moreover, the type and setting of the prediction are not always of importance, nor even of the essence and nature of the prediction, and can have no place in the fulfilment, while the thing typified and symbolised, the inner sense and meaning, is the all in all. So with prophetic periods of time numbers of days, weeks, and years mentioned. Time limits are not necessarily of primal importance in the prophecy, but the event, the fact itself, the prophetic "day" is an indefinite period seeing "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." So when events are spoken of as "at hand," or as "afar off," they do not always refer to time, but to certainty: the thing that is sure and certain is "near," "at hand," because it is as clear and real to the mind of the writer as if already accomplished. Predictions are sometimes conditional, and their fulfilment, postponement, or nonexecution, is determined by the repentance or the impenitence of a nation or individual; by the perverseness and ingratitude, or by the humiliation and submission of a people; or the opportunities, privileges, and circumstances pertaining to time, occasion, and threatening. It is not that God is fickle, changeable, or "slack as some men count slackness"; it is not either that God has forgotten or failed, or that the prophet was mistaken, or spoke without knowledge, nor yet that prophecy is unutterable fate, but rather that God acts reasonably, considerately, and morally with men, has regard to circumstances and conditions, is forbearing

and merciful, and does not act arbitrarily and unjustly. “ He remembers us in our low estate, for His mercy endureth forever.”

God reserves to Himself freedom of action, has regard to the facts, purposes, and ends of prediction, rather than to details, and this while it baffles human invention and imposition in bringing together prediction and event to make a fulfilment emphasises the moral and religious element as the important factor in all prediction.

05.02.06 - Prediction and Double-Meaning

(6) Prediction and Double-meaning

It is also necessary to note what is called the “double sense” of prophecy; that while prophecy had a local and historical significance, it had also a religious and universal meaning; that while it had a temporal and rational import, it had also a spiritual and world-wide application: it swelled out into strains of still grander and future relation, and throbbed with meaning and promise that reached forward unto the fulness of time. Hence the local, national, and particular application of a prophetic utterance does not mean its exhaustion or the completion of its meaning, or its only possible or legitimate application, inasmuch as it belongs to other times, incidents, and events yet to come, in which its fulfilment shall be more fully realised. It is, more over, a principle in the interpretation of prediction, that it can only be regarded as fulfilled when the whole body of truth in its fullest complement has attained living realisation. The question is not, therefore, whether any prediction had a local and national meaning and fulfilment, but whether it had not a further and deeper meaning and application; not merely whether the Prophet so intended by its utterance, but whether the Spirit that was in him testified beforehand of this larger and fuller meaning which it included. It is in this larger, far-reaching foresight that the real element of supernatural knowledge and divine revelation consists, and which the fulfilled event alone makes clear and plain. To deny all secondary meaning and application to prediction and to restrict it to its local and temporary meaning would not only rob it of much of its wealth of meaning, but it would be to deprive it of its place and purpose in the revelation of God, and in some instances render it absurd and extravagant. Moreover, from the close relation in which Israel stood to God and His divine purposes for the world of men, and the part which the nation played in the development of the plan of redemption and salvation, and the historic character of Divine revelation, it cannot but be that much that belonged to Israel was ideally religious and spiritual, and much that pertained to their national life and kingdom belonged no less to the kingdom and dominion that was spiritual and universal, and must of necessity have its fullest realisation in the reign and kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is in Him, His reign and kingdom, His Person, work, and mission, all the lines of prophecy meet, and find their legitimate interpretation. And if these be of the very essence and core of the prediction, and that in them the prediction has attained living realisation, it is idle to speak of them as “accidental,” “secondary,” and “accommodating”: they are of the essence of the prediction. The Lord Jesus recognised this double meaning of prophecy, and how the local, national, and temporary led on to the religious, the spiritual, the Divine. He spoke of Himself as “the Christ,” and of the dignity that belonged to Him as “the true Anointed of the Lord,” raising Him far above David and Solomon.

He applied to Himself the twofold meaning of humiliation and exaltation, suffering and triumph, and showed how the two images of the glorious Son of God and the Suffering Servant found their fulfilment in Him. “The two lines of prophecy,” says Orelli, “one of which speaks of the coming of Yahveh, the other of a future ruler from David’s house, blend in Him. Here type reaches its adequate completion, just as prophecy its full realisation.”

“ Even if David, or any other man of God, in the Passion-psalms spake primarily of his own experiences and feelings, the idea of the suffering King and Servant of God is fully realised in Christ. Take the following example: Ye all shall be offended in Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered. ¹ Even if the oracle of Zechariah, whence the citation was taken by the Saviour, applied originally to a pious shepherd of the prophet’s days, to himself, or a king of His days, it was verified in an incomparably higher degree in Christ. He is the Good Shepherd, who, with full

¹ Matthew 26:31 right and consciousness, claims for Himself every thing of this idea found in the Old Testament. And as He can call Himself the fellow of God with in comparably more reason than all other shepherds, so also what is said of the violent end of the best Shepherd, causing such bitter awe to the poor flock, will have its most terrible fulfilment in Him and His disciples.” ¹

05.03 - Evidences Manifold Notably the Moral

III. EVIDENCES MANIFOLD, NOTABLY THE MORAL The divine origin of revelation and the supreme authority of the Scriptures are proved not by one argument but by many, not by one kind of evidence but by all combined. Hence any attempt to destroy one form of argument, or to discredit one kind of evidence, however successful, cannot be said to destroy or to discredit Divine revelation itself. This is important to remember when dealing with destructive Criticism. We must not hastily conclude that because some particular theory of miracles, or argument from prophecy, or view of inspiration and revelation is proved untenable, that therefore the Divine origin of revelation and the authority of Scripture must be abandoned. Not so: the argument is broader and firmer than that. These are but buttresses that have been demolished, the foundation standeth sure when even the buttresses are destroyed.

Evidences are not proofs, but aids to truth, helps to faith, great moral supports. These things do not compel faith but win it; they do not force conviction but produce it; the evidences adduced are not demonstrative, but they create an atmosphere of probability, and give a ground for credence that becomes assuring in its likelihood and stability, and persuasive in its reasonableness and moral certainty. These things combined with the nature of the truths taught, the exalted character of the teaching, the sublime views put forth on such subjects as God and Christ and the Holy Spirit; of man, sin, and redemption; of righteousness, holiness, and happiness; of life, immortality, and eternal judgment are such as no uninspired mind ever has, or ever could have, conceived.

05.03.01 - The Witness of the Moral Character of Christ

(1) The Witness of the Moral Character of Christ

Look for one moment at the character of Jesus Christ, into which enters so much of the miraculous and the Divine, and the place it holds in the moral evidences of Christianity. That character is altogether unique, unlike any other among the sons of men, while its spiritual supremacy is attested on all hands, and witnessed to by the most hostile Critics of supernatural revelation. To quote the recorded testimonies concerning Him from that of Pilate, who declared, " I find no fault in this man," down to that of Carlyle, who called Jesus of Nazareth " our divinest symbol," would be to write many pages.

These quotations would attest in innumerable ways that Christ was the divinest Being that ever appeared on earth sinless and perfect, wise and holy, blame less and harmless, the Teacher sent from God, the Author and Perfecter of Faith, the perfect Man, the true Son of God. No human mind could have conceived such a character, no imagination could have invented it, no amount of advocacy could have given it currency apart from reality. This conception of uniqueness, of superiority, of moral grandeur, of Divinity, has been the belief and teaching of men in all ages from the beginning of the Christian Era until now; and this unanimity of conviction and belief is explicable only by the truth of it, which has spread so widely and perpetuated itself so firmly in literature and religion, and helped to mould and fashion the lives of the noblest sons of men. In this unique character and its influence among men, we have a witness to the reality of Divine revelation, and to the Divine authority of those Scriptures which bear witness of Him, and which proclaim them to be a standard of faith and morality for the world.

05.03.02 - The Divine Care and Preservation of the Scriptures

(2) The Divine Care and Preservation of the Scriptures

Something needs to be said respecting the risks and hazards associated with the Scriptures as the record of God's revelation to man, and the means by which they were to become acquainted with it, and the way God has cared for and preserved the Scriptures to the Church and the world. While many forms of belief, articles of faith, forms of worship, and even religious sects and parties, professedly based upon the Scriptures, or derived theirfrom, " have had their day and ceased to be, the Scriptures themselves hold on their way, and survive all the shocks of hostile criticism, and attempts made to corrupt and destroy them; and to-day they are "the power of God" for the purpose of the enlightenment and salvation of men. The Scriptures, as concerned with the revelation of God's gracious purposes for the race, are the object of Divine testimony and care, and as such commend themselves to men for acceptance and obedience. Moreover, the religious and the spiritual element shines forth upon the minds and hearts of men from out of that which is historical in a manner that is unique and challenges attention, and verifies their claims upon the faith and acceptance of men. We have here a witness to their Divine origin, and a presumptive evidence in favour of their Divine authority.

05.03.03 - Their Moral Power and Influence

(3) Their Moral Power and Influence. The revelation of God as recorded in the Scriptures is highly moral in its teaching and influence, and its morality is based on religious faith, and has for its purpose the formation of Christian character. The influence of the Scriptures tends in the direction of doctrine and life, of faith and morality, and the two are inseparably connected. Doctrine and ethics, religion and morality, as associated with the Scriptures and Christianity, are Christ-like and Divine. The Scriptures thus become the rule and standard of doctrine and morality, of faith and life. In this respect the ethics of the Scriptures are unlike most other ethical systems which are mainly humanistic or naturalistic. They are attempts at regulating life and conduct on principles and teachings purely hedonistic and altruistic, and without regard to the word of God and the character and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Christian ethics are evangelical and saving, and become an important factor in the regeneration and elevation of society. They are not mere rules and principles, maxims and precepts, but truths and principles charged with a moral, spiritual, and vitalising force, because associated with the Spirit of life and holiness working in them. They not only tell men what to avoid but help them to avoid it, not only teach men what to be and do, but enable them so to be and so to live.

05.03.04 - The Ideal of Christian Ethics

(4) The Ideal of Christian Ethics

Christian ethics do not aim at the regeneration, the elevation and regulation of society by State laws and enactments, or the legal enforcement of socialistic and ideal measures, but by Divine and spiritual influences, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, making men new creatures in Christ Jesus, by begetting within them a divine and spiritual life. The aim and ideal is unlike that of all other systems, and superior to them. It is not the high-minded man of Aristotle, nor the virtuous man of Plato, nor the wise man of Socrates, nor the self-regarding prudence of Epicureanism, nor the insensibility, indifference, and fatalism of the earlier and later Stoicism, nor the great and kingly man of Carlyism, nor the refined and cultured man of modern Idealism that is the pattern and example; but the Man, the perfect Man Christ Jesus, Who was “ holy, harmless, undefiled,” in “Whose mouth was no guile,” “Who went about doing good.”

05.03.05 - Christian Morality is Scientific and Beneficial

(5) Christian Morality is Scientific and Beneficial

It is scientific because based on recognised principles and regulated by law, the law of righteousness and holiness, governed by love to God and man, and obedience to the word and will of Jesus Christ. Its standard is the sacred Scriptures, especially the " Sermon on the Mount," and the recorded teaching and example of Jesus Christ. It is the declared word and will of God which instructs and commands belief, " commending itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." In the agreement of the truth with the enlightened mind and conscience of man of the law and standard with the nature and needs of man of the adaptation of the truth to his requirements, and the authority with which it appeals to him and commands him we have a witness to the truth and Divinity of the Scriptures, and their Divine authority as the rule of life and conduct. The beneficial influence of the Scriptures, and of the religion based upon them, reaches to all civil, political, and social life, to Government laws and society, to literature and art, and has made itself felt in all countries, and among all nations and peoples, in all forms of industry and commerce, on all the beliefs, creeds, and confessions of men, where recognised and cherished. When we consider the nature and extent of this influence, the multitudes brought under its sway, and the effects following upon its acceptance, the only explanation of the marvel is its divine character and power, that the Scriptures are in truth the Word of God and the power of God.

05.03.06 - The Divine Authority of Scripture

(6) The Divine Authority of Scripture This authority is that of truth, and the power of truth is that it is a message from God, the Word of Him Who is Truth, and which commands by virtue of its divinity, and wins acceptance by its reality and worth.

If the thoughts and actions of men, if their faith and conduct are properly and legitimately influenced and determined by mental and moral worth wherever found; and if the Scriptures be from God, the Fount of truth, the highest and noblest Source of mental and moral worth, and they declare to us His mind and will, then should they, and must they, control, wholly and absolutely, the faith and conduct of men, because their superiority and worth are incomparable and in disputable. Moreover, if it is always reasonable and right to defer to the opinions of those best qualified to judge in the matters concerned, then is it highly reasonable and just for man in his limitations humbly to bow to the revealed and declared will of the Supreme and Holy God, in all that concerns God and truth, faith and conduct, religion and life. Whenever and where ever we meet with the Divine, that must be to us absolutely authoritative because it is Divine, and therefore the highest authority known to us. When God speaks man must hearken, when God commands man must obey, when He leads man must follow on. It is this Divine element in the Scriptures which gives them weight, which makes them authoritative on all questions of faith and morals when they have definitely spoken, and their authority must be accepted as final. This conclusion respecting authority and finality in the Scriptures is only reached by the individual soul through the witness and demonstration of the Spirit by believing and trusting. It is not a matter of criticism, nor even of argument and reason, but of assurance through believing; nor is it altogether of study and inference though the Scriptures must be devoutly and intelligently studied but it is by the demonstration of the Spirit through the belief of the truth as in Jesus; it is not altogether a matter of intellectual apprehension and conviction but of Divine certainty, which says, "I know whom I have believed."

Dr Robertson Nicoll has told us that if we could only see the Invisible, the triumphant Church in Heaven, the Church of the First-born, " we should see much, And what should we see? That the living in Christ, that those who have heard in the written Word the true voice of God and obeyed it are that Church; and it is to them and them only that the conviction of the divine riches of the Word of God is assured."

05.03.07 - The Scriptures a Living and Abiding Word

(7) The Scriptures a Living and Abiding Word

It is in the permanency of the Scriptures, in the living and abiding Word that we have the witness to the truth and finality of the Scriptures. These Scriptures are circulated by the million year by year. No engrossment of the human mind in the secularities of life, in politic-, in scientific pursuits, in discover}, and inventions of even- kind; no change in methods of thought and criticism in science and literature, no progress or development or advancement in science and thought have put them out of court. Man}- books, writings, and systems have come into existence and passed away since the Scriptures began to be, but they hold on their way waxing stronger and stronger. We read many books, and some several times during the year with interest, but the Scriptures we read every night and morning with freshness and newness of meaning. This not only distinguishes them from all other writings and witnesses to their power and worth, but also testifies of their permanency and finality. The Scriptures contain all we know of God and religion, or ever shall know till the veil is rent. " No text, no revelation has been given in addition to that within the covers of the Bible." Men may say God has revealed Himself in nature, by His providence in history, that He has revealed Himself in the individual life and the religious consciousness of men, revealed Himself by His Spirit in His Church and her teaching and doctrine; that He has inspired books of devotion and hymns of praise which arc the treasures of the world; that week by week God speaks in and through the thoughts of men who under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit speak to their fellows of the deep things of God from the ten thousand pulpits of Christendom. Yes, it is so all true, perfectly true, in its way. But what has God said in nature, in providence, in history, in literature, in Christian experience, in devotion and the thoughts and hearts of men, that He has not first said in the Scriptures of Divine truth? " Take," says W. R. Nicoll, " the most beautiful thought ever uttered by any individual that has ever written or spoken on the subject of religion, and you may find it folded in some saying of the Lord Jesus, or some Apostolic Epistle, or in the utterance of some Prophet or Psalmist." This was the special argument of Professor Robertson Smith for the inspiration of the Scriptures. " We mean that they contain within themselves a perfect picture of God's gracious relations to man, and that we have no need to go outside the Scriptures to know anything of God and His saving will to man; that the whole growth of true religion up to its perfect fulness is set before us in the record of God's dealings with Israel, culminating in the manifestation of Jesus Christ."

History and experience have taught us nothing in the matter of true religion that is not found in the New Testament. We stand at the close of the nineteenth century where Christ stood at the first; or rather, Christ stands now in the midst of us and as much above us as He did in the midst and above the reach of His first disciples the perfect Master, the perfect Teacher, the perfect Revealer of God, the Supreme Head of the fellowship of all true faith and religion. Here then is room for growth and development in the knowledge of the Scriptures as the Word of God. Whatever the progress, whatever the development, the Scriptures and Christ are always above it the perfect standard is never reached, their meaning and worth are never exhausted.

05.03.08 - Christ and the Scriptures One Witness

(8) Christ and the Scriptures One Witness Nor arc the Scriptures and Christ to be separated from each other as the source or sources of the know ledge of truth and religion. Much less are they to be antagonised to each other, as is in some instances the case. Not a few are disposed to accept the historic Christ as the Supreme Authority for all matters pertaining to truth and religion, to declare Him the norm of theology, the Lord of conscience, the Light that lighteneth every man that cometh into truth, and who tell us we should accept the Person, the consciousness of Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Authority of faith and life, and not the Scriptures which merely witness of Him. But how arc we to know of the person and consciousness of Jesus Christ, of His light and truth and revelation, and how are we to come to Him and learn the way of access to Him, and know how to find Him apart from the Scriptures? While Jesus Christ declared Himself to be the revelation of God, the express character of the Father, He also ascribed supreme authority to the Scriptures, and required that men should search, believe and know them, “ because these are they that testify of Me,” and the “ testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” We are to know and believe “ the record which God hath given us of His Son.”

05.03.09 - Concluding Observations

(9) Concluding Observations

Consider, then, what is meant by the authority of the Scriptures as the rule of faith and conduct; consider what is meant by the supremacy of the Scriptures as being the record of Divine revelation and of the promise and scheme of human redemption; consider also what is meant by the Scriptures as the source of truth, the fount of knowledge, and the grounds on which they are claimed to be so. When ever you are asked to give a reason for these beliefs and to supply an answer as to why you accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and the rule of faith and life, say with Professor Robertson Smith: "I answer in the language of the Fathers of the Protestant Church because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God; because in the Bible alone I find God drawing near to man in Christ Jesus, and declaring to us in Him His will for our salvation; and this record I know to be true by the witness of the Spirit in my heart, whereby I am assured that none other than God Himself is able to speak such words unto my soul."

Consider further, I pray you, what is meant by accepting the Scriptures as the completed and final record of the Divine revelation to man, and as the true and authoritative record of the way and plan of salvation for the race. In an age when evolution, and development are sought and found in all God's ways and works: in an age when change seems to be written on all that is, when books of history, science, philosophy, theology, and religion, continue only for a few years, and are being constantly replaced by new text-books adapted to the requirements of increasing knowledge, discovery, and improved methods of interpretation and teaching: consider, I say again, what it means to have a completed, final, and adequate record of Divine revelation and redemption.

Think of what this means in the face of all the light and criticism and revelation that come streaming in upon the minds and thoughts and souls of men generation after generation. Think, I say, that after all this increase of knowledge, progress, and acquirement for centuries, no attempt has been made to give us a new Bible, another and improved revelation of God's will, and purpose, another way of salvation, another rule of faith and conduct, another guide-book from earth to heaven. Consider, I beg of you, what it means that the one we have is never challenged or disputed, never questioned or denied on its main issues and teachings, by all the acquired knowledge, the cumulative experiences, the developments, growths, and advancements made in Christian knowledge and holiness, in spiritual life, faith, and experience. No criticism, no philosophy, no discover), no religion, no Christian life or experience knows anything about God and Christianity, faith and religion, a future state and life eternal, but what is found in these Scriptures of truth. Think again of what this means to scholar and student, to commentator and interpreter, to preacher and teacher of Biblical truth. Think, I say, oh think what it means to Christian Church, and school and missions, to preacher, teacher, evangelist and missionary; to the aged saint who has accepted and trusted it so long, lived and walked by its teachings so far until he has come upon the shores of eternity, and is going down to his grave leaning upon it for support and comfort in the hour of death.

Think of what it means to the strong man in the bustle, conflict, and worry of life's business; think of what it means to the young child just learning his A B C to commence his search for truth, the truth able to make him wise unto salvation. Think, I say, what it all means that we have in this Bible, this book of God and Book of books, the perfected, completed final record of God's revelation to man, accredited and sealed by the " Verily, verily, I say unto you " the Amen and Amen of God and which is to be known, kept, and handed on to the end of time! In the light of such considerations as these, we may fittingly close this Lecture by adapting the solemn words of John the Divine: " I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Tree of Life, and out of the Holy City, which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Yea, I come quickly. Amen, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints.

Amen." * 1 Revelation 22:18-21.

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