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# THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1922

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

**Cheltenham Findings.** WE owe our readers an apology for the late appearance of this issue of the CHURCHMAN, but we feel they will forgive us when they know that we kept it back a few days in order to get in as many as possible of the papers read at the Cheltenham Conference. The meeting of the Conference this year was of quite unusual interest and importance. The anxieties which are perplexing Evangelicals at the present time are of a very serious nature, and it was hoped that by a clear, quiet, dispassionate examination of some of the questions at issue, some solid contribution might be made by the Conference towards the solution of the problems and so help forward the cause of unity among ourselves. And so, after the opening address of the Chairman, which skilfully diagnosed the situation, papers were read on "Evangelicalism in the Modern World," "The Authority of the Bible," "The Interpretation of the Bible," "The Atonement" and "Evangelization." It was not to be supposed that individual readers or speakers would necessarily express the mind of the whole Conference, and some striking divergences were apparent, but when the Friday morning came and the Conference as a body had to decide upon the Findings, a wonderful degree of unanimity was felt and expressed. It was, however, distinctly agreed that the Findings are to be taken, as in previous years, as expressing the general sense of the Conference, and not as representing in detail the views of individual members. Bearing well in mind this important qualification, we invite the careful attention of readers to the Findings as finally passed by the Conference :—

"1. While modern thought tends to emphasize what is corporate rather than what is individual, and is reluctant to accept traditional

modes of expression, human nature remains unchanged. The necessity for a personal relationship with God and for the witness of individual saintliness persists. Man still needs the same Gospel, though the phraseology of its presentation must always be adapted to each successive age. Where the Gospel is proclaimed in the power of the Holy Ghost with conviction and a passion for souls, it proves His ever-present power to transform lives and bring men to God.

" 2. The Conference reaffirms its belief in Holy Scripture as the uniquely inspired record of God's revelation of Himself to man. This revelation has been progressively unfolded through patriarchs, priests, and prophets, and brought to its fullness in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and is the supreme authority for faith and conduct. As a revelation of the living God Holy Scripture is, and in all ages has proved to be, the bread of life to the soul of the believer, who through it is brought into living contact with his Lord and Saviour.

" 3. In the course of our discussion there has appeared a divergence of view on the interpretation of our Lord's references to Holy Scripture. Some of us hold that our Lord's utterances set the seal of His Divine authority upon the truth in detail of the books of the Old Testament ; others believe that through the necessity of His true humanity he expressed Himself to His contemporaries in the forms of thought and habitual language of the day. We gladly recognize that all alike affirm the essential Deity and true humanity of our Lord, and accept the authority of His teaching as the final revelation of God to man.

" 4. We affirm that the salvation of men from the guilt and power of sin is the essential purpose of the Gospel and rests solely upon God's gift of His Son, who took upon Himself our nature, was obedient unto death, and made upon the Cross one perfect and complete propitiation for the sin of the world. The Atonement, with its appeal to the heart and conscience of man, should occupy the forefront of all Evangelical teaching.

" 5. The Conference, while recognizing the widespread sense of corporate failure and sin, deeply laments the lack of a sense of individualism and of responsibility before God, which causes so much indifference to the truth of the Atonement. It, therefore, all the more urgently presses upon all Evangelical Churchmen the preaching of the Gospel with conviction, and with confidence in its undiminished power, and the employment of every opportunity for presenting its truth by personal dealing with individuals. In view of the unevangelized masses in our own country, in the great Dominions and amongst the heathen, the Christians in our churches should be constantly reminded of their obligation to take their share by word and example in proclaiming salvation through Christ.

" 6. The Conference rejoices in the manifestation of the Power of the Holy Spirit in Evangelistic movements throughout the country, and urges Evangelical Churchmen to co-operate in a campaign to lead their fellow-citizens to God."

**A Criticism and a Reply.** These Findings were made known through the Press and it was not long before they were subjected to criticism. They had been commented upon also in private, but the main complaint in public came from the Rev. F. Jansen, who challenged the use of the word "uniquely" in reference to the inspiration of Holy Scripture ; and the expression "true" Humanity used in reference to our Lord, and urged that the more usual word "perfect" should have been employed ; and he professed to diagnose the reason why the word "true" had been used. His surmise, however, was beside the mark, and Dr. Mullins, as Chairman of the Drafting Committee, explained the position in the following terms :—

1. The adjective "true" as applied to our Lord's humanity was certainly not selected in distinction to the word "perfect," but practically as equivalent to it. My impression is that every one present would have accepted unreservedly the definition of our Lord's personality contained in the Athanasian Creed : "Perfect God and perfect man."

2. The Holy Scriptures were said to be "uniquely" inspired in order to assert that their inspiration differs in character, and not merely in degree, from the holiest of utterances found elsewhere. It puts them in a category by themselves, as other suggested adverbs would not do.

Dr. Mullins also explained the meaning of clause three of the Findings, in regard to which some doubt has been felt and expressed :—

The third clause [of the Findings] was meant to imply our belief that there are amongst us devout and loyal men who refuse to impute to our Lord either ignorance or error, even though they do not admit that His references to passages of the Old Testament settle finally all such questions as their authorship and historicity. Such men believe that as a perfect man of His time, speaking to His contemporaries, he could do no other than speak in terms of their language and forms of thought. Whether we agree with such men or not, we must distinguish between them and the Modernists.

We give these explanations as they tend to remove any difficulty that may be felt regarding the doctrinal position of the Conference in its corporate capacity.

**The Cheltenham Papers.** It is not necessary to comment upon the papers read at the Conference. Seven of them are reproduced in our pages, and we ask for them the careful study of the reader. They represent contributions of the highest value to

the discussion of important questions, and our regret is that we have not been able to include the others. In regard to the Rev. G. E. Ford's thoughtful and suggestive paper on "The Atonement," we may say that we shall hope to insert at least the substance of it in a future issue: its great length will, we fear, preclude its appearance in full. But over and above the "papers" there were the carefully prepared addresses of "selected speakers" to which reference must be made. Thus on the subject of "Evangelicalism and the Modern Mind" nothing could have been finer than the addresses of Mr. Stephen Neill (Trinity College, Cambridge) and Canon Morrow:

Mr. Neill deeply moved the Conference by his frank description of the apathy that he finds among his contemporaries, which he attributed to reaction after the war. He is convinced that immediate personal experience of Christ as our Saviour through belief in the Atonement is the greatest need of the age. Modern preachers do not preach with conviction, and are disturbed by all kinds of ideas as to what criticism has discovered. Personal conversion is necessary if men are to preach conversion. Only men who have been redeemed by Christ and sanctified by His Spirit can manifest the sainthood that must be shown to a world in search of reality.

Canon Morrow said the modern man stood on the Everest of the world's knowledge and civilization and as such he was able to scrap out-of-date systems and traditions, but he was able to rescue from the past ideas and principles and positions. If Evangelicalism is to have any message for the present day it must (1) be capable of adaptation to new conditions, and (2) have the power to communicate vitality. But the presentation of the message will depend on the man himself. He will win the modern mind not by the force or extent of his rhetoric, but by his personal experience of Jesus Christ.

On the question of "The Bible" we regret that, whilst printing three of the papers, we have been unable to obtain a full report either of Professor Beresford Pite's contribution or the speeches of the Rev. T. W. Gilbert and the Rev. H. Montague Dale, but the all too brief summaries, appended, will be read with interest:

Professor Pite developed the idea that all Scripture must be interpreted in terms of Christ. The Old Testament is the microcosm of Hebrew genius, and the revelation of God in Christ lies hidden in it, whereas in the New it lies open. The Old Testament prepared the way of the Lord; the Lord came and interpreted its meaning, and the Apostles and New Testament writers looked at everything from His point of view. We can only understand Scripture aright if we grasp the fact that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The Rev. T. W. Gilbert, speaking on the authority of the Bible, said it was significant that the position with which we were faced to-day was parallel with that which faced the Reformers from three different quarters: (i) They were urged to follow the Inner Light and let Reason be their supreme authority; (ii) they were also urged to follow the teaching of the Church; (iii) they were urged to follow the literal teaching of the Bible regardless of Reason or the Church. But the Reformers put them all aside. They took what was true from each of the three points of view, and Articles VI and XXI were the result.

The Rev. H. M. Dale quoted Dean Inge's remark that Evangelical belief in verbal inspiration is the greatest obstacle to Evangelical progress. It is our duty to read the Bible with open minds and discover what it says of itself and what it really teaches. He has found the new knowledge of the Bible a great solvent of difficulties and the means of appreciation of the message of the writers. Revelation is progressive, and to-day we are learning more of God's ways, which lead us into a truer appreciation of His truth as revealed in Holy Scripture.

Although we hope to give a fuller account in a subsequent issue of the Rev. G. E. Ford's paper on "The Atonement," we must, in order to make the narrative complete, briefly indicate here the main point of his paper:

What [he asked] was the significance of Christ's death? His teaching on this point was seen in the Parable of the Good Shepherd, wherein He put the emphasis upon the fact that the laying-down of His life was not something forced upon Him from without, but that it was a purely voluntary act on His part. And with equal definiteness must they draw from His words the inference that His suffering and death were in no sense whatsoever a punishment inflicted upon Him by God the Father. His death was the cause of a fresh access of Divine love for the Sufferer: "*Therefore* doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life." On the positive side of Christ's teaching as to the significance of His death, Mr. Ford explained it as showing that it was the supreme manifestation of the holiness of God and the fullest manifestation of God's love for sinful men; and that it was calculated beyond everything else to arouse in all who would consider it a deep and salutary dread of sin and of its consequences, and make them feel their need of salvation.

Following Mr. Ford there were two Selected Speakers who, in spite of the restrictions of time, expressed themselves very happily, Mr. W. Guy Johnson emphasizing that it was the Atonement and not the doctrine of the Atonement which reconciled us to God; and the Rev. W. Dodgson Sykes showing that Calvary is not a school for theologians, but a refuge for sinners.

At the session which dealt with Evangelization, a pointed and practical paper written by Canon Lillingston, of Durham, was read, and this we hope to print in our next issue. The Bishop of Chelmsford followed with a characteristic address full of suggestion and power.

He urged that Evangelicals must concentrate upon the things that really mattered, just as Christ concentrated upon the accomplishment of the task for which He came into the world and for which He died. Were they as Evangelicals getting in more outsiders than other sections of Churchmen? He confessed he felt heart-broken when he thought of the position of the scattered sheep. Our Lord told of the ninety and nine in the fold, but the Good Shepherd did not stay with them; He went after the one that had strayed and was lost. To-day the position was reversed. There was one in the Church, and the parson remained with him, but what of the ninety and nine who were outside? Above all, let them concentrate upon the manhood of England. In the endeavour to win the men they must be prepared to give of their very best and not be content with the weak and ineffective preaching.

Then as to visiting. Before the clergy went out how much time did they spend in prayer? What did they go out to do? To save souls? That ought to be their aim in pastoral visitation. When clergy visited they should strive to leave behind them a spiritual impression. Another defect in their present methods was that they were not teaching their communicants to be soul-winners. He hoped that members of the Parochial Church Councils would give themselves to soul-winning. Evangelization, said the Bishop, must be the main subject of the ministry. When they were called up higher and saw their Lord face to face the question would not be how much money had they raised or how many churches had been built. No; all the Lord cared about was the men and women for whom He died.

Mr. A. G. Pite and Canon Cole followed as Selected Speakers. At the following session the Findings were discussed and settled.

But the Conference was not yet over. Cheltenham has always stood for unity, and it was felt to be most desirable that something should be done to allay the present unrest and to promote a greater unity among Evangelical Churchpeople. The matter was discussed at a private meeting and the next day, after the Findings had been agreed to, it was determined to issue an appeal to Evangelical Churchpeople in the following terms:

**The Cheltenham Appeal.**

“ The Seventh Cheltenham Conference ventures to address an appeal to all Evangelical Churchmen.

“ There has been borne in upon us the deep conviction that God is calling us to a united effort of Evangelization, that He has opened doors at home and abroad for the entrance of the eternal Gospel, and we humbly thank Him that by His Grace He has made us to know His saving truth. We frankly acknowledge that we are not in entire agreement upon several questions, and we see no way at present for a complete solution of our differences. We are humbled before God and distressed beyond measure to realize that the Evangelization of the world is being gravely retarded by our dissensions.

“ First of all, therefore, we appeal to all our Evangelical brethren to concentrate upon the one objective of preaching Christ Crucified to a lost world, to go forward with unanimity to do the work our Saviour has called us to perform.

“ And, secondly, we invite all Evangelicals to exercise towards one another every possible forbearance, charity and love, believing that thus alone we shall be led by the Holy Spirit into all truth, and, refraining from any hasty action, leave the questions at issue to be dealt with by the operation of the Spirit of God, Who will surely be our Guide in this hour.

“ So, forgetting all things but the one great object of preaching the Gospel to all men, we shall fulfil the prayer of our Blessed Lord ‘ that they may all be one.’ ”

The Appeal has been well received, and we believe that its influence will be of a growing character. It was borne in upon the Conference that something of the kind was needed and it may well be that once again Cheltenham has taken a step which will have the most beneficial effect upon the position of Evangelicals and indirectly upon the Church at large.

Cheltenham has made large demands upon our **Prayer Book Revision.** space, but there is one other important subject to which reference must be made—the proposals for Prayer Book Revision embodied in the Report of the Committee of the National Assembly. It is not certain that these proposals will come up for discussion and adoption at the next session, but the National Church League leaves nothing to chance, and it has accordingly issued to its members and friends an urgent call to take the matter into its consideration at once:

The matter [it says] derives additional urgency and importance from the fact that the Committee state: “ We do not claim finality for our work. Indeed, we have clearly indicated



that further revision not only may, but will be needed in future." (Page 6.)

It is, of course, obvious that the results of such future revision will depend on the treatment of this Report. In many cases the proposals have much to commend them, but there are others, such as the permission of Reservation and of the use of the Vestments, the inclusion of prayers for the Dead, and, it may be added, the attitude taken towards Holy Scripture, which imply a reversal of principles on which the Prayer Book was drawn up; and if they are allowed to pass unchallenged, it will be more difficult to resist other demands of a like nature at a later stage.

The Minority Report issued by Mr. Athelstan Riley, moreover, indicates that proposals were made which did not find favour with the Revision Committee, and the possibility of these and others finding advocates in the Assembly should not be overlooked. It must not be assumed that the points in the Report to which objection may be taken are the only ones to be guarded against.

There is, then, no time to be lost if the general body of Churchpeople are to become acquainted with the nature of the proposed changes so as to be able to make their opinions known before the stage of final approval is reached. We suggest, therefore, that you should bring the matter before a special meeting of your parochial Church Council *at the earliest possible date*, and that a general parochial meeting with a lecture or address on the subject be also arranged for. If Resolutions are passed at these meetings, copies should be sent to the Bishop of the Diocese and to the Representatives (clerical and lay) of the Diocese on the National Assembly. We should be glad if copies were also sent to the Secretary of the National Church League for collation and reference.

The League has issued a carefully-prepared summary of the principal changes, from which it is seen that the proposed revision is of a more moderate character than was at one time expected. "But" (it is pointed out) "there are several points to which serious objection must be taken, such as Reservation of the Sacrament, the use of the chasuble at Holy Communion, the removal of the rubric requiring at least a minimum number of communicants ;

Prayer for the Dead in public worship ; the Commemoration of All Souls, so closely associated with the doctrine of Purgatory ; and the general attitude which appears to be taken with regard to Holy Scripture. In many points of detail the wording requires amendment, but these do not stand on the same footing as the foregoing. The number of alternatives in Prayers, Psalms, Lessons, Forms of Service, etc., may give some ' elasticity,' but are likely to cause much confusion in the minds of an ordinary congregation." Copies of the Report of the Committee can be obtained (*1s. 2d.* post free) from the Church Book Room, 82 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

The Church Congress, Sheffield. It will consider "The Eternal Gospel."

The choice of this subject is due, we believe, to the criticisms which were passed upon last year's Congress, when economic, social and even sex questions received too much prominence. There is a general feeling, which found expression even in the secular press, that a Church Congress should concern itself mainly with spiritual matters. Among the numerous branches of the general subject which will be discussed, "The Gospel and Conversion" will, we hope, receive very clear and direct treatment. We associate ourselves with a recent comment on the Congress programme, which ran as follows : "No doubt many interesting things will be said on the meaning and psychology of conversion, but too much must not be conceded to exponents of psycho-analysis, and it is important to stress the fact that, after science has had its last word, it remains as a matter of simple experience that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit of God. It is to the ministry of conversion that the Church needs to pay good heed. Not always does it occupy the place it demands, yet the ministry which does not aim at the personal conversion of souls to God is impotent as a spiritual force." Other branches of the general subject are : "The Gospel in History," "The Natural and the Supernatural," "The Gospel and the Person of Our Lord," "The Gospel and the Bible," "The Gospel and the Creeds," and, finally, "The Coming of the Kingdom." The discussion of these important questions will be awaited with interest. Sheffield has set an example in choosing a spiritual subject for its Congress, and we hope it will be followed in future years.

The Near  
East.

Among the many comments on the crisis in the Near East the best we have seen comes from the Bishop of Truro. He does not join the critics, but he says quite plainly and effectively that world-peace can only be assured on two conditions: First, the men who make it must be men of good-will, men who recognize that God and His righteousness have a place both in individual lives and in the life of the world; and secondly, the methods by which they make it must be the methods of the Kingdom of God. But his main point is that of personal responsibility. Governments have failed, he says, because they have not had behind them the compelling influence of a public opinion based on the principles of the Kingdom of God. "We cannot lay the blame upon the shoulders of any Government, for it rests upon our own." If anyone thinks this lies in the realm of theory, he answers that it is the business of those who hold the Christian faith to show the world how it is to be put into practice. There are four things, quite simple and practical, which we must begin to do and go on doing until the Church has fulfilled its task of helping God to bring His Kingdom. These four things he thus expounds:

First, we must pray. There is much prayer in our modern Church, and we are learning to make it plainer and more definite, but there is not enough belief in the efficacy of prayer. May God give us the faith to believe that His Spirit moving in the world will and does bring answers to prayers.

Second, we must live. An individual Christian whose life contradicts his creed is adding to the world's chaos. An individual act of malice, of meanness, or of selfishness, adds fuel to the fire which bursts out at last in the flames of war. The Spirit of Christ in one individual is additional help to the peace of the world. . . .

Third, we must teach. I have put life before teaching, because if the life, corporate and individual, is wrong, the teaching will be unavailing. The teaching of the Church is given in two ways: we teach in the pulpit and with the pen, we teach also in our common conversation, how manifold it is, with individual men. There needs to loom larger in both the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Christ's Gospel is one Gospel, but we think of it both in terms of the Cross and in terms of the Kingdom. . . .

Last, we must use all our influence to further those movements, man-made, and therefore, perhaps, faulty, which make most for the ideal of the Kingdom.

These are wise counsels, and if the Bishop's words were acted upon we should soon see a different temper in the discussion of public affairs.

## HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF BELIEF IN THE VERBAL INSPIRATION OF SCRIP- TURE UP TO THE 18TH CENTURY.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP KNOX, D.D.

**H**UMAN utterances are called "inspired," when the mind of the speaker, writer or artist is recognized to be in closer contact with the Divine Mind than is at all common among men. The self-expression of the inspired, whatever form it takes, is seen to be more than self-expression. The God "in Whom we live, and move, and have our being," is finding expression in and through the human self. We are not concerned to-day with the whole of this wide field of inspiration, nor with the counterfeits of it, but with that particular group of writings known as Holy Scripture. Our concern is with the Jewish and Christian views of inspiration of Holy Scripture.

We may set aside at once the opinions of those who attribute to Holy Scripture no more than a high degree of literary inspiration, for that is recognized by all. The real problems of Scriptural inspiration begin when the question of its authority is raised. Is the authority of Scripture solitary and supreme, or are other authorities concurrent with it? or again, is its supremacy universal and unquestionable as to all matters contained in it, or does it apply only to certain spheres, and if so, to what spheres, of human thought and conduct? It is true that this is not the shape in which the question of inspiration is usually presented. Speculations have commonly taken the form of questions as to the degree of the control exercised by the Divine Spirit over the writers of Scripture. But that is a question about which we have no information, a question of fact, where the facts are unknowable. Such speculations have always had an end in view—the establishing, or the weakening, of an authority that has been claimed. If there is a God, His authority must be supreme. His word must be final. But has He spoken? To whom has He spoken? In what sense is the Scripture His Word? These questions will not be argued in this paper, but a summary will be attempted of the history of

<sup>1</sup> A Paper read at a meeting of Clergy of the Diocese of Rochester.

the answers that have been given in the course of the ages through which the problem has been presented to the Jewish and Christian Churches. We must, however, conclude with the end of the 17th century.

We begin with the last century B.C., by which time the Old Testament Canon was fully formed. The voice of prophecy had long been silent, except for the Messianic hope, the current of which continued to run in strong and increasing volume. But this hope was a purely national hope, its literature a national concern. So far as the outer world was concerned, Judaism stood committed to a sacred book, containing the books which we call canonical in Palestine; with the addition of the Apocrypha in Alexandria. Although all the canonical books were sacred ("defile the hands"), the Pentateuch or Torah outweighed all the rest in authority. Not only public worship rested upon it, but the whole constitution of government, the whole regulation of civil and social order, and the whole conduct and regulation of private life. "He who asserts that the Torah is not from heaven, has no part in the future world." "He who says that Moses wrote even one verse of his own knowledge, is a denier and despiser of the word of God." Even the last eight verses of Deuteronomy recording the death of Moses were said to have been revealed to him by God: it was all dictated to him: nay, it was handed to Moses by God, the only question being whether it was handed to him whole, or in separate volumes. (Schürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*. Div. II, Vol. I, p. 307.) It was not only read in the Synagogue, but taught in the schools, in the elementary schools in the country as well as in the higher schools. "The Jewish child," says Josephus, "is instructed in the law from his swaddling clothes." (Schürer II, II, p. 48.) The work of the scribes was *by interpretation* to apply the precepts of the law to the details of daily life, and *by illustration* to awaken interest and kindle devotion. But this veneration for the law, great as it was, did not hinder Josephus from correcting the history, or Philo from allegorizing the narratives, of the Old Testament. Nor did it, as our Lord points out, prevent the scribes from explaining away its obligations, or adding to its burthens. In so doing the Jews found nothing inconsistent with their veneration for the Divine authority of Scripture. At a time when MSS. still varied, and the Septuagint, in spite of its divergences from the

Hebrew text, claimed to be an inspired translation, there was not room for the extreme theory of verbal inspiration, maintained in later ages—a point which is often overlooked by those who seem to claim our Lord's sanction for a doctrine which had not yet obtained currency.<sup>1</sup> The authority of Scripture was unquestioned, and its Divine origin : but these were no obstacle to the production of legendary matter, nor to the alteration of details to harmonize with more modern, or with Hellenic, sentiment. There was a consciousness that the Old Testament needed fuller interpretation, and it was actually asserted among the Jews that the whole meaning of Scripture would not be reached till the Messiah came, a prediction which was amply verified by fact.

In the course of little more than a century, that is, between A.D. 33 and A.D. 150, are comprised events of the first importance in the history of the Scriptures. The world-detested Jewish nation seems to be stamped out. Their holy books had called them God's chosen people, had established the throne of Jehovah on Mount Zion. They had covenanted an everlasting priesthood for the seed of Aaron, and an everlasting dominion for the seed of David. The iron heel of Rome had crushed all these prophecies into the dust, and had carried the sacred furniture of the Temple in triumphal procession through the city of Rome. Was it possible for any Scriptures to survive such absolute falsification of all the hopes to which they had given birth? Yet in that same period had arisen a new interpretation of the Old Testament, by which it gained a fresh and unprecedented authority, and there had been added to the Old another volume, destined to achieve even greater miracles than the first, not superseding it but vitalizing it with a power hitherto unknown. A transforming hand had been at work, by which the Old Testament, so long the sacred book of an exclusive race, had become a revelation of the purposes of God towards the whole world. We are too familiar with the result to be able adequately to recognize its extraordinary significance. Yet is it conceivable that any such revivifying interpretation could be given to the Vedas or to the Quran? Think of the Jewish reverence for the Scriptures ; think of the Temple in all its glory : think of the

<sup>1</sup> The fabled verbal inspiration of the LXX, if accepted, disposed at once of the verbal inspiration of our present Hebrew text, from which it varies considerably.

pride, the bitterness, the fanaticism, the erudition of the representatives of Judaism—and then think of the words, “Search the Scriptures, . . . for these are they which bear witness of ME.”

In the “*Testimonia adversus Judæos*,” collected by Dr. Rendel Harris and Mr. Vacher Burch, we have, I doubt not, as they claim, the remains of a book older than any book of the New Testament, a book containing what we may call the Emmaus teachings of our Blessed Lord. His Personality gave a new meaning to the Old Testament, and invested it with a new authority. But soon, very soon, questions were rife. Who was this Jesus? What did He really teach? What was the secret of His power? The claim of the Gnostics to some inner hidden revelation forced the Church to collect the writings of eyewitnesses and Apostles, and so to bring the authentic tradition of Him into closest relation with the prophetic word concerning Him. The two standing side by side secured the monotheism of the Church without impairing her faith in the Word made flesh. That the oracles concerning the Lord (*λόγια κυριακά*) did not form part of this collection is perhaps due to their fragmentary character as a collection of texts, and to their serving as an elementary book of instruction, not at all unlike the hundred texts of the Irish Church Missions. But though the book, as a book, is lost, the texts are to be found here and there in every book of the New Testament, as well as in Justin Martyr, who tells us most impressively how much he owed to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Those who speak, and rightly speak, of our Lord's authentication of the Old Testament should never forget that He authenticated it as a revelation of the Will of the Father concerning Himself and concerning the world: that He converted it from a record of the glories of Israel into a revelation of the mystery that a new way was open for the Gentile into the Holy of Holies, that a New Covenant, sealed in His own Blood, had superseded the Old. Where so much was transformed, is it right to insist that Jesus Christ did indeed set His seal on the record of the ages of the antediluvian fathers, on the precise measurements of the Ark, on the census of the Israelites in the wilderness, or on many other details which cannot, except by the most fanciful exegesis, be pressed into the great and eternal purposes of God. That our Lord accepted the Old Testa-

ment as Jews accepted it may reasonably be maintained, but the evidence that He used Divine Omniscience to vouch for each separate statement in it, is not in fact forthcoming. The boldness and independence of our Lord's attitude towards the Old Testament should make us careful in the use which we make of His certification of it. His reverence for the Divine Word is unquestionable, but it was reverence compatible with very free treatment of its accepted interpretation. On the other hand, nothing is more clear than that the Old Testament had for Him the authority of a Divine communication, that He so studied it for personal devotion as well as for the discovery of the Father's will concerning Himself, that He substantiated from it whatever claim He made for Himself, and passed it on to His disciples with the impress of a final and indisputable authority. So He made good His word that He came not to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil. The modern view that the Old Testament is the record of a progressive revelation does not seem adequately to express our Lord's reverence for Scripture, and His personal submission to its claims. A record gratifies curiosity, explains the course of events, but it does not speak with the voice of the living God. I wish to emphasize this point. To say more would be outside the limits of this paper.

But it would be a mistake to imagine that our Lord's treatment of the Old Testament cleared up all difficulties that surrounded the use of it. Its devotional value was indeed beyond question. As Harnack says (*History of Dogma*, translated by N. Buchanan, IV, 177): "There were in the Old Testament books, above all in the Prophets and Psalms, a great number of sayings—confessions of trust in God, of humility and holy courage, testimonies of a world-overcoming faith, and words of comfort, love and communion which were too exalted for any cavilling, and intelligible to every spiritually awakened mind. Out of this treasure which was handed down to the Greeks and Romans, the Church edified herself, and, in the perception of its riches, was largely rooted in the conviction that the holy book must in every line contain the highest truth." But this conviction opened the way for assaults from many quarters. On one side, the Jew pressed the exclusive right to Divine favour which the Old Testament gave to him. On another, the heathen (notably Celsus and after him Porphyry) developed merci-



less criticism of the history and morality of the Old Testament. On a third, the Ebionite and Gnostic denounced it as the production of some inferior God, or even as a forgery of the Evil One. To meet these objections the Church fell back on the use of a spiritual or allegorical interpretation, herein following the lead of Philo and of the scribes.

The temptations to expand the use of this method were considerable. Not altogether without reason, the Church believed that it found sanction in the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles. It was to be traced in the Testimonia, in St. Paul's teaching as to the true Israel, in the Epistle to the Hebrews where the Mosaic ordinances were represented as shadows of better things to come. But Allegorism was as dangerous as it was useful. What it explained, it could also be used to explain away. Therefore the Church had to lay claim to possessing the sound use of Allegorism, and further to claim, in opposition to the Gnostic tradition, that it had inherited this use from Christ and His Apostles. If there had been one self-consistent tradition within the Church, the claim would have been easy to sustain. But it was not so. In the hands of some the tradition became a means of fostering mechanical systems and hierarchical tendencies. The whole sacrificial law was by these regarded as the charter of the hierarchy. The sound tradition was that which came through Bishops who could prove that they had received it ultimately from Bishops, who had received it from the Apostles. The Alexandrine Fathers, on the other hand, looked to Teachers rather than Bishops as transmitters of the true tradition and, bringing Greek philosophy to bear on the Old Testament, held the far-reaching principle that "nothing was to be believed which is unworthy of God." They hesitated not to set aside the Old Testament where it conflicted, as they thought, with Science, or to explain it away by allegory.

In any history of belief in the Inspiration of Scripture the name of Origen must have special prominence. His labours to obtain a true text—even the text of the New Testament was already grievously corrupt—his honesty in exposition, and especially his anxiety to reach the literal sense of Scripture, as a guide to its spiritual and moral meaning: his clear recognition of the fact that Scripture contains physical and moral impossibilities: his recognition and confession of inconsistencies in the New Testament as

well as in the Old, all mark him as one of the greatest, perhaps, having regard to his age, the greatest of the exponents of Scripture. He maintained that the authority of Scripture as the Word of God depends upon its truth. For truth is, as Dr. Hort says, what we *must* believe, not what we choose to believe. Truth compels obedience, falsehood and error do not. His way of escape from the difficulties of Scripture is described by Dr. Bigg (*The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 138) as follows: "These passages, he admitted, in their literal sense are not true. Why then, urged the adversary, are they found in what you Christians call the Word of God? To this he replied that, though in one sense they are not true, they are in another the highest, the only valuable, truth. They are permitted for an object. These impossibilities, trivialities, ineptitudes are wires stretched across our path by the Holy Spirit to warn us that we are not in the right way. We must not leap over them; we must go beneath, piercing down to the smooth, broad road of spiritual intelligence. They are the rough outer husk, which repels the ignorant and unfit reader, but stimulates the true child of God to increased exertion. The letter is the external garb, often sordid and torn, but the King's daughter is all glorious within. It is as if the sunlight streamed in through the crannies of a ruinous wall; the wall is ruinous in order that the sunlight may stream in." The man who thus thought of Holy Scripture was no dilettante speculator, guessing at that which he had taken no pains to understand. His monumental work the Hexapla reproduced in parallel columns the Hebrew text and the five versions. It consisted of fifty great rolls of parchment, and perished, to our infinite loss, at the hands of the Arabs when they destroyed the library of Cæsarea.

The method by which Origen tried to base the authority of Scripture on its perfect truthfulness was no doubt open to some objections. But at least the attempt pointed in the right direction. The course of Church history was gravely deflected by the persecutions of the latter half of the third century. Origen himself perished in the persecution of Decius, A.D. 254. Those persecutions inevitably raised the question of the validity of baptism by renegades, and consequently of the bounds and limits of the true Church, outside which there was no salvation. The Papacy was not yet in a position of such recognized authority as to decide the question, and

left it undecided in spite of its overwhelming practical importance. So this question and others of no less importance were argued from Scripture. But what was the Scripture? What books were canonical? Of conflicting readings in the acknowledged books, which was the true reading? Above all, what was the real authority of the LXX? Was it more truly inspired than the Hebrew, because our Lord and His Apostles quoted it? Or did they only quote it when it agreed with the Hebrew, and where the two differed, give preference to the Hebrew?

It was in reply to such questions as these that Jerome produced his Latin Bible, the Vulgate, which, according to Milman, exercised a greater influence on Latin Christianity than the Papacy itself. Believing, as he did, that the very order of the words in the original had a sacred significance, believing also that the admission of even a trifling false statement into Scripture would destroy the whole of its authority, purging himself of his Ciceronian Latin, for which he had seen himself in a dream excluded from heaven, he not only studied Hebrew, but settled in Palestine and travelled in the East, that his mind might be soaked, as it were, in Oriental atmosphere, and so produced his translation of the Old and New Testaments, in face of much opposition, of accusations that he was corrupting the Scriptures, and undermining the faith of the Church. Then, as now, the book of Jonah was a storm centre, but for a different reason. An African Bishop, who read Jerome's (*hedera*) "ivy" instead of the old *cucurbita* or "gourd," found himself deserted by his congregation. Such was the faith of the laity in the verbal inspiration of translations. Augustine himself was uneasy at Jerome's handling of the LXX.

Augustine's acceptance of Jerome's work secured its ultimate triumph over all other Latin versions, though many centuries passed before the Vulgate was recognized by the Church to the complete exclusion of all other translations. But Augustine did far more than that. In a world, of which the old civilization was threatened with extinction, a world overshadowed by clouds of barbaric and heathen invasion, so that the future of the Church itself was all uncertain, and that Church so distracted with heresies that the faithful appeared to be but a small remnant of humanity, Augustine was called upon to establish the justice of a God who brought multitudes into the world, only to perish everlastingly. Augustine

rested his defence on the Fall of Man, as recorded in the first chapters of Genesis. Thus the Mosaic cosmogony became the very groundwork of the faith of the Church, so essential to justification of the Divine righteousness that the Reformers, who went back upon many doctrines of the Church, could not go back upon this. Primitive science became part and parcel of Christian faith, and the doctrine of verbal inspiration, not a new doctrine indeed, but hitherto often questioned, became the accepted teaching of the Church concerning Scripture. It is not necessary here to repeat the well-known extravagant statements of Augustine. It is enough to say that for their teaching of Scriptural infallibility the Reformers were always able to find support in the teaching of Augustine.

It is true that on this, as on so many other points, Augustine was inconsistent. He even went so far as to say that the study of Scripture is the path towards love, and that he who possesses love no longer needs Scripture. In another place he writes: "It is a very shameful and dangerous thing, and one to be carefully avoided, that an unbeliever should hear a Christian talking nonsense about the earth, the air, the motions, and magnitudes and distances of the stars; the courses of seasons, the nature of minerals, on the pretended authority of Scripture. For if his hearer has a real knowledge of these things grounded on observation and reasonings, he cannot refrain from laughing at the abysmal ignorance of the Christian." Such statements availed little as against the use which he made of the early chapters of Genesis, and as against his letter to Jerome: "I most firmly believe that no writer of the Canonical Scriptures committed any error in what he wrote. And if anything in them seems to offend against the truth, I take it to be nothing but a fault in the MSS., or on the part of the translater, or a misunderstanding of my own."

The sublime ambition of the mediæval Church to be the Kingdom of God upon earth, not merely in theory but in realized fact, involved the necessity of a revelation sufficiently extensive to cover all the ground which such a claim involved. The direction of all knowledge, the regulation of all conduct in private and in public life, the supremacy over all authority, civil as well as religious, were burthens boldly undertaken because behind them all stood the Divine revelation, the infallible guide for every emergency, if

only it were rightly understood and rightly interpreted, that is, according to the traditions of the Church. Revelation and reason were no longer in conflict, for it became the office of reason simply to work upon the material which revelation supplied, and to pass on its findings for the acceptance of faith. Faith became acceptance of the intellectual statements so passed on. Many of the old difficulties about Scripture were difficulties no longer. Why should its miracles be questioned, when miracles were of everyday occurrence? Why should the barbarities of Israel offend races slowly emerging out of barbarism? The superstitions and religious rites of the invading hordes were rechristened, their gods became saints, their festivals saints' days, and their holy places consecrated ground. For the ordinary layman Scripture became an unknown book. He could not read it, and fragments only out of it were read to him, and those not always in such a way as to edify. In the lofty conceptions of the Church the layman had no part save that of submission to teaching which he could not question without suspicion of heresy.

Two great movements external to the Church contributed during the Middle Ages to stereotype its belief in the infallibility of Scripture. These were the appearance of the Quran, which claimed to be a heaven-sent document complete from the hand of God, and admitting therefore no possibility of error. The other was the labour of the Massorettes who reduced all preceding Hebrew MSS. of the Old Testament practically to one, so guarded by rules of punctuation and transliteration as to obviate all possibility of MSS. variations. The Church was thus confronted with two rival revelations, each claiming infallibility. She could scarcely do less than put her own Bible on the same plane, and claim for it an equal degree of reverence.

Yet even in the Middle Ages the use which the Church made of Scripture did not pass without question. Mysticism had not died with Origen. With Plotinus and the Neoplatonists it took a new lease of life outside the Church, and often in violent antagonism to it. But through Augustine it flowed again in Christian channels and inspired the famous work attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. The mystics found in Scripture a meaning deeper than the letter. Their position cannot be more easily explained than in the words of Dean Inge, who writes of Dionysius (as we must call him): "The soul is bipartite. The higher portion sees the Divine

image directly, the lower by means of symbols. The latter are not to be despised, for they are true impressions of the Divine character, 'and necessary steps which enable us to mount to the one undivided truth by analogy. This is the way in which we should use the Scriptures. They have a symbolic truth and beauty, which is intelligible only to those who can free themselves from the puerile myths (τολμῶσα θεοπλασία and παιδαγωγῆς φαντασία) of the Old Testament (the language is startling in a saint of the Church) in which they are sometimes embedded.' In virtue of this claim to penetrate to the inner meaning of Scripture, the long line of mystics sat loosely to the facts. They did not so much deny them as regard them, even the great events in the life of Christ, as manifestations of a universal law, enacted not in this world of shadows but in the eternal counsels of the Most High. He who believes in the universal truths need not trouble himself about their particular manifestations in time" (Inge on *Mysticism*, p. 89).

A much humbler but not less important class of believers was unconsciously feeling its way towards discovery of the main error that underlay Scholasticism. That error was the belief that knowledge is man's great end in life. It was taken over from Aristotle, whose God spends eternity in self-contemplation. But these, the Waldenses, the poor men of Lyons, and a long line of pre-Reformation heretics or reformers, call them which you will, believed that the great end of life was to be Christ-like, to do good, to manifest love, to walk humbly with God. They desired to possess and to read the Scriptures for this end. They had no interest in the building up of philosophies, but in the reorganization of society on Christian lines. They did not question the Scriptures. They had no desire to do so. But the use which they wished to make of them, while it emphasized the literal in preference to the allegorical or analogical meaning, pointed to a possible reevaluation of the different parts of Scripture.

The time for such revelation, however, was not yet come. It must first be proved that the unlearned layman would not receive more harm than good from reading the Scriptures in his own tongue. Translations of the gospels or other books might be made for the devout nobility or gentry, to be read under the guidance of spiritual advisers, or for convents. For them the interpretation built up in long ages by the learned could accompany the reading.

But what could the plain burgess or peasant know of the fourfold meaning of each sacred passage, even of each sacred word? Wyclif met these arguments by bold assertions that "the whole of Scripture is of equal authority in respect of each several part. That is plain, since the whole of Scripture is the one and only word of God, and our authors are but scribes or heralds of God, to write down the law which He dictates to them, and in comparison of Him can only be called authors by a loose use of the term." He opposes Scripture with its clear and pure unworldly utterances to the polluted worldly traditions of men. "If Scripture," he says, "asserts anything, then it is true." So he gave the impetus to translation and circulation of Scripture in England on a scale quite unknown in any part of the Continent, and prepared the way for the spiritual, as opposed to the political, elements in the English Reformation.

There are two distinct stages in the Reformation, each having its own bearing on the question of Scriptural Inspiration. The first is the attempt to escape from the spiritual bondage in which souls were held by the disciplinary system and institutions of the mediæval Church. Sacraments designed for spiritual help and guidance had become lifeless ordinances, dogmas intended to unify human knowledge, and correlate it with Divine revelation, had become fetters to all advance of thought, the Scriptures overlaid with traditions had almost ceased to be a word of God to the human soul. In this stage the attitude of the Reformers to Scripture was free from entanglements of verbal inspiration. "To the Reformers," says Lindsay in his *History of the Reformation*, "the Scriptures were a personal rather than a dogmatic revelation. They record the experience of a fellowship with God enjoyed by His saints in past ages, which may still be shared by the faithful. In Bible history as the Reformers conceived it, we hear two voices, the voice of God speaking love to man, and the voice of the renewed man answering in faith to God. The Protestants did not mean by infallibility (i.e. of Scripture) what the Romanists meant. The Romanists, as much as the Protestants, based their whole system on Scripture. But the Romanists found that the Protestants had a conception of the unity of Scripture which upset their interpretation. The Romanists had therefore to create an artificial unity by means of the doctrine of the Church, so as to use the Bible as

a 'storehouse of divinely communicated knowledge, of doctrinal truths and rules for moral conduct,' and nothing more. The Protestants found in it a new home for a new life, not merely knowledge about God, but communion with Him. The mediæval student, by Origen's fourfold method had practically destroyed the value of the Bible, from which he could draw any meanings that he pleased. But, on the other hand, faith being assent to doctrinal positions, he was really tied up to meanings imposed by the Church. Infallibility guaranteed correcting of propositions stating relations between God and man, with the result that the use of the Bible as a means of communication between God and the plain believer was destroyed. With the Protestants saving faith was not assent to propositions, but trust in the promise of God, and this trust could be drawn from, and strengthened by, ordinary reading of the Bible, even though parts seemed to be useless or unintelligible. For them it was God speaking to man, therefore they hastened to translate it."

Two short extracts may serve as illustrations of these generalizations. The first is from Luther's *Table Talk*. "Melanchthon, discoursing with Luther touching the prophets, who continually boast thus: 'Thus saith the Lord,' asked whether God in person spoke with them or no. Luther replied, 'They were very holy spiritual people, who seriously contemplated upon holy and divine things: therefore God spake with them in their consciences, which the prophets held as sure and certain revelations.'" A little reflection will show the far-reaching import of this answer.

The other extract is from Calvin's Catechism:—

*Catechist:*

How can we reach so great a benefit? (i.e. the knowledge of God).

*Child:*

For this end He left us His holy Word. For it is a spiritual instruction, like to a door, whereby we enter into His heavenly kingdom.

*Catechist:*

Where are we to search for this word?

*Child:*

In the holy Scriptures, in which it is contained.

Here we have the highly important statement, that the word



of God is contained in the Scripture, and must be sought for in the Scripture. It does not lie on the surface. In short, at the outset, "the Reformers," as Sabatier says, "were conscience free on the question of inspiration."

How then did the second stage in their attitude to it come about? For there is no doubt that they did come to use the Scripture as a storehouse of doctrinal revelations, and consequently to insist on literal verbal inspiration.

The change was due partly to political exigency, and partly to controversial entanglements.

1. *Political exigency.* The Reformation involved a break-up of the political system of Europe. This system had been built up on the intimate alliance of the Papacy with the Holy Roman Empire, and the dependence of the Empire, and of all political authority in the West upon the Papacy. The new States had to justify their existence, and to justify it—not on the will of man—the social contract was yet to be invented—but on the will of God. The new rulers had to pose as defenders of the true faith. Confessions of faith had to be framed on Scripture, and for this purpose the letter of Scripture had to be pressed, and pressed very often, for purposes for which it was not intended. The old controversy between predestination and free will, which raged fiercely at the break-up of the old Roman Empire, revived once more, and added sharpness to the definitions of faith. Political and religious issues became strangely confused.

2. *Controversial entanglement.* At this stage the great Jesuit protagonist Bellarmin stepped into the fray with his book *De controversiis*, and exposed, as unsparingly as man could, the difficulty of interpreting Scripture, the strange and uncertain conclusions to which it led, and set forth the necessity of using the traditions of the Church, if the true meaning of Scripture was to be reached. In England it fell to Dr. Whittaker, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, to answer Bellarmin. In his work on *Disputations on Scripture*, Dr. Whittaker goes through Bellarmin's arguments *seriatim*. We need not follow him. It is enough to note that he adopts the most extreme of the sayings of Augustine and finds fault with Erasmus for suggesting that St. Matthew may have substituted in the 27th chapter the name of Jeremiah for that of Zechariah. "We must not be so easy or indulgent," he says,

“ as to concede that a lapse could be incident to the sacred writers. They wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, as Peter tells us : and all Scripture is inspired of God, as Paul expressly writes. Whereas, therefore, no one may say that any infirmity could befall the Holy Spirit, it follows that the sacred writers could not be deceived nor err in any respect. Here, then, it becomes us to be so scrupulous as not to allow that any slip can be found in Scripture.” Whittaker says in another place : “ God inspired the prophets with what they said, and made use of their mouths, tongues, and hands : the Scripture is therefore immediately the voice of God.” He is obliged to admit that it is only the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit that can convince us solidly of the authority of Scripture, and gets out of the Jesuits’ objection : How is it that you Lutherans and Calvinists are not agreed among yourselves as to what is the Scripture, whether or not it includes the Apocrypha ? by saying, “ We all of us have the Holy Spirit, but not all of us the same measure of the Spirit.”

The political and doctrinal aspects of the Reformation are very far from exhausting the whole significance of the movement. The Reformation cannot be understood apart from the literary Renaissance, of which it might be called one aspect. The revived knowledge of Greek, the cry “ Ad fontes,” the critical spirit which necessarily grew out of appeal to the original text, the art of printing which set the student free from the domination of monastic cloisters, the translation of the Bible, the formation of English as a language in which learning could express itself, the discovery of the new world, the overthrow of the Ptolemaic astronomy, the splendid conceptions of Giordano Bruno, the revolutionizing discoveries of Galileo, what might be called the discovery of the power of reason when used as an instrument for observing Nature, these are but some out of the many forces set loose in the sixteenth and first part of the seventeenth centuries, and, so set loose, that the mind of man seemed to be passing out of the confines of a narrow inland sea into the uncharted waters of an illimitable ocean. Such a vast change as this could not fail to challenge the unquestioned authority of Scripture. The ancient chart that had sufficed for man’s need, as he crept round the shores of the Mediterranean, could it in truth pilot him over the new world, or answer all the problems which the new world raised ?

It was surely fortunate for the Church of England that it was not officially committed either to any doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, or to any sharply defined view as to Predestination. For sharply defined views on Predestination cannot well be separated from extreme theories of Biblical inspiration. It was also well for our Church that, while renouncing Roman supremacy, it did not officially rest the English political system on a Scriptural basis. Calvin had indeed built up a scholastic system more true to Scripture than the Papal: a system to which the religious life and political freedom of England are deeply indebted, but scholasticism could not contain in its old wineskins the new life which was fermenting in the world.

Richard Hooker, the protagonist of the Church of England in her struggle with Puritanism, found himself in this position. Jewel, whom Hooker styles "the worthiest divine that Christendom hath bred for the space of some hundreds of years," had argued against the Jesuit Harding "the sufficiency of Scripture for establishment of all doctrine without the traditions of men." On this position the Puritan Cartwright fastened eagerly. You say that "Scripture is sufficient: if so, that which is not in Scripture is forbidden." So Jewel himself had argued: "The bread which our Lord gave unto His disciples, saying unto them, 'Take and eat,' He deferred not, nor commanded to be reserved unto the next day. If this negative argument holds good in respect of Reservation of the Sacrament, if that which our Lord has not commanded is forbidden, how can you defend a multitude of ceremonies in your Prayer Book, which have not the authority of Scripture?" Pressed by this argument, Hooker found himself obliged to consider the whole question of the relation of Scripture to Reason. In answer to Cartwright's plea, "Wisdom doth teach every good way," he says: "Yes—every good way, but not by one way of teaching. Whatsoever men on earth or angels in heaven do know, it is as a drop out of that unemptiable fountain. . . . Some things she openeth by the sacred books of Scripture: some things by the glorious works of Nature: with some things she inspireth them from above with spiritual influence: in some things she leadeth and traineth them only by worldly experience and practice." Hooker contends, in fact, that the sufficiency for Scripture for all things necessary to salvation does not exclude the use of reason. While he admits

that the authority of Scripture outweighs all other authority, even that of our senses, he is careful to add "that it is not to be required, nor can be exacted at our hands, that we should yield unto anything other assent than such as doth answer the evidence which is to be had of that we assent unto. For which cause, even in matters divine, concerning some things we may lawfully doubt and suspend our judgment," giving as instances the fall both of men and angels, and the virginity of the Mother of our Lord *after*, though not before His birth, and concluding, "finally in all things our consciences are best resolved, and in a most agreeable sort unto God and Nature settled, when they are so far persuaded as those grounds of persuasion which are to be had will bear." Hooker gives a most solemn warning against attributing to Scripture more than it can have, and warns us that the incredibility (so raised) will cause even those things which indeed Scripture hath to be less reverently esteemed. . . .

In the history of belief in the Inspiration of the Bible two great names may be selected as influencing thought for many subsequent generations. Those names are Pascal and Spinoza. They were practically contemporaries. Pascal lived from 1623 to 1662, and Spinoza from 1632 to 1677. Both lived under the shadow of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, that devastating conflict fought in the name of religion. Though outside the region of it, and not concerned in it, they could not either of them be unconscious of the spirit of the words "Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum." Both reacted against the prevalent mechanical theory of the universe, but in different ways. Into this region we must not follow them. But both were serious in their efforts to establish faith on philosophic grounds. Pascal having joined the recluses of Port Royal, and having fought against the Jesuits in defence of the Augustinian theory of grace, was preparing an apology for the Christian religion when death overtook him. Fragments of that apology are preserved in his *Pensées*. The foundation of his system is the inadequacy of man to satisfy the highest powers of which he is conscious, apart from God. The things of God which are above reason are preserved to us in Scripture. As creation became more remote, God provided an historian, and charged a whole people with care of the book, in order that it might be the most authentic history in the world. "Shem, who had seen Adam, saw at least

Abraham, who saw Jacob, who saw Moses." Thus the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis is proved. Pascal goes on to lay down a series of suggestions, which for centuries formed the basis of Christian apologetics. He was not unconscious of the inconsistencies of the Old Testament, but he solved them by insisting that all of them can be harmonized in Jesus Christ, Who is therefore the true author. It would be a grave injustice to Pascal to suppose that this demonstrative, scholastic theology was to him the heart and core of true religion. "Holy Scripture," he says, "is not a science of the mind but of the heart. It is intelligible only to those whose heart is right. The veil which is over the Scripture for the Jews is over it for the Christians also. Love is not only the end of Holy Scripture: it is the door to it also." He shares the ambiguity of the position of St. Augustine, sometimes exalting the letter at the expense of the spirit: at others the spirit at the expense of the letter.

Pascal's contemporary, Spinoza, sought to counteract the mechanical view of the universe by insisting on the Divine Immanence. To him God was *Natura Naturans*, not, however, a God Who wills, or loves, save that He loves Himself with an intellectual love, which is the unity of finite minds. Our finite thoughts together form the infinite self-loving intellect of God. But Spinoza was not content with these lofty abstractions. He wished to preserve religion for the masses, who could obey, though they could not acquire a virtuous disposition by reason. For them he uses language far away from his philosophy. He was equally anxious to make his philosophers religious. For their benefit he tried to restate the religion of the time in philosophic language. Scripture, he says, cannot teach nonsense. If the Bible disagrees with science, we must have misinterpreted the Bible, or we must find out what the Bible really is. He boldly attacks the questions of miracle and prophecy, the dates and authorship of various books of the Bible. In his language concerning our Lord, he anticipates the findings of the Conference of Modernists at Cambridge. "God can communicate immediately with man: still, a man who can by pure intuition comprehend ideas neither contained in, nor deducible from, the foundations of our natural knowledge must possess a mind far superior to those of his fellow-men, nor do I believe that any have been so endowed save Christ . . . it may be said that the wisdom

of God took upon itself human nature, and that He is the way of salvation." In yet another passage again we seem to hear the Modernist speaking: "I admit that the Evangelists took the resurrection of Christ literally, but they might well be in error without prejudice to Christian doctrine. Paul, to whom also Christ appeared later, asserts that he knows Christ not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

The very real personal virtues of Spinoza and his extraordinary intellectual power failed to make any mark on the religious conservatives of his generation. On the contrary popular theology hardened, and became more and more committed to verbal inspiration, which Buxtorf, at about this date, would have extended even to the vowel points of the Hebrew text. It would not be true to say that the critical attitude towards inspiration passed wholly into the hands of rationalists. For instance, Richard Baxter asserts that not all parts of Scripture were equally divine, since all had not an equal bearing on religion. He held also that it was impossible to demonstrate the divine origin of words and phrases. Similarly Philip Doddridge distinguished between two kinds of inspiration in Scripture, one an immediate work of God, increasing the powers of writers, preserving them from error, and leading them into the truth: the other an inspiration that governed and uplifted their minds, without the same safeguard against error. Still further, the Society of Friends by the stress which they laid on the personal influence of the Holy Spirit were led to give a secondary place to Scripture. They insisted that it was not the Word of God, and nowhere called itself the Word of God. George Fox says quite distinctly: "Though I read the Scriptures, that spake of Christ and of God, yet I knew Him not, but by Revelation, as He who hath the key did open, and as the Father of Life drew me to His Son by His Spirit." With the Friends must be classed the mystics. The comparative silence of William Law concerning Scripture is very remarkable. Even in advising young clergy how to prepare themselves for preaching, while he mentions good books, he does not explicitly mention Scripture. "The book of all books," he says, "is your own heart."

We must also add that while the official doctrine of the Church of Rome in the Council of Trent maintained that "all the books of the Old and New Testament, since God is the author of both,

and the traditions, are to be received as though verbally dictated by Christ and the Holy Spirit," this dogma did not prevent the Jesuits and especially Bellarmin from maintaining that inspiration did not extend to matters that were trifling and well known. Bellarmin would have shielded Galileo if he could. As it was, it fell to his lot to convey to him the censure of the Church. Richard Simon, an opponent of Pascal, is called by Sabatier the father of Higher Criticism. He repudiated altogether literal and verbal inspiration. This attitude of the Jesuits no doubt helped to stiffen the resistance of English Churchmen to more liberal views of Scriptural inspiration. Chillingworth goes great lengths in his *The Bible the Religion of Protestants*, and Waterland is not afraid to stake the truths of the whole of the Old and New Testaments on the Story of the Fall of Man in Genesis.

Here time compels me to draw this outline to a premature conclusion. But enough has been said to show that within the Church itself there have been serious differences of opinion as to the true limits of the authority of Scripture. That which God has said must be true. But what has He said? Through whom has He spoken? How far has He permitted human mentality to colour His words, or used human material to convey spiritual truth? If this outline serves to show that answers to such questions as these cannot be given offhand it will have served its purpose. The Bible has outlived centuries of criticism and will outlive all time, because of the Divine voice that reaches man through it. That voice must not be confused with the instruments employed to convey it, in which some notes may be antiquated, some harsh, some even discordant. But the child of God will not fail to recognize his Father's voice therein, hearing it there, as he hears it in no other book, a voice at once of authority and of love.



## CHELTENHAM CONFERENCE PAPERS.

## THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

BY THE REV. CANON H. A. WILSON, M.A., Rector of Cheltenham.

I HAVE the very great honour and pleasure of welcoming you, my brethren, to our Seventh Cheltenham Conference. A considerable proportion of our members consists of those who have been with us on several occasions before, if not at every one of our Conferences.

Those members will be fully acquainted with our methods and ideals, but for the sake of those who have come for the first time, I think it necessary to enlarge upon these points to some extent.

Our object and hope for this Conference is to make it to some extent and increasingly an organ of expression for the general body of Evangelicals in the Church. There are larger gatherings than ours, more impressive in numbers. But these larger gatherings are not vocal in the sense that we seek to be. A supreme need for us to-day is to provide Evangelical Churchmen with an organ through which they can express definite opinions upon current Church questions. The voice crying in the wilderness is unheard in a world of much talk. We seek to unite our voices in such unanimity that we may be heard above the tumult.

It has been a bold experiment, which has received criticism not only from those who are not of our way of thinking. But I think it cannot be disputed that we have won a hearing in many quarters. We have been distinguished for boldness of utterance and courage of conviction, and the attention we have received proves the acknowledgment and the respect always accorded to sincerity of conviction.

Two conditions have always to be observed in attempting to arrive at genuine decisions upon great questions. The body that speaks must be a representative body, and it must be afforded sufficient time to weigh and discuss the subjects under consideration.

We claim only to represent the rank and file of Evangelical and moderate opinion in the Church. Our invitations are issued broadcast. In this way we have secured not a chosen group who will dance to a selected measure, but typical representatives of Evangelical thought from most parts of England.

To give this body ample opportunity for discussion the number must be limited. The force of circumstances partly secures this. The time, the place, the period occupied all combine to reduce numbers. And we are generally left with about fourscore men who are prepared to apply themselves to the task of beating out definite conclusions, and to do this we offer full opportunity for discussion and self-expression to everyone.



I need hardly remind you of the peculiarly grave conditions under which we meet to-day. Never have Evangelical Churchmen had such a wonderful opportunity for influencing the Church and the nation as to-day. We believe that the Gospel committed to us is the one solvent for all the world's troubles and distress ; we believe that the call to Evangelize has come very definitely from God ; we believe that the prestige of the Evangelical School in the Church never stood so high. And yet in this day of tremendous opportunity and desperate need we are found divided.

I desire to speak with the profoundest respect for the opinions of men from whom I differ, but I feel every one of us must feel sadness unutterable at this tragic event. Our whole programme is taken up with these questions, and I am sure it must be the earnest prayer of us all that this Conference may help in no small measure to lead to a healing of this grave wound. But if this is to result, there must be frank, courageous, sympathetic, and charitable discussion of the questions at issue between us.

The title of the first subject for consideration suggests concisely the whole problem—Evangelicalism in the modern world. It reminds us that the present environment of Evangelicalism is somewhat different from what it was in the past. I think we should probably all agree that this is so. There are constant elements, such as human needs and human hopes, and there are elements which have become modified. The human organism with all its hopes, fears, needs, is unchanged, but its world is a very different place. I will not turn aside to note these differences. This will probably be done by one of the most distinguished of our speakers, the Bishop of Bradford. I think at present I may take all this for granted.

Has Evangelicalism the power to live in this world? That is, the supreme question which runs through the whole of our Conference Life has been defined as the capacity of an organism to adapt itself to its environment. An oak tree cannot grow in the tropics, neither can the orange tree bear fruit in northern climes.

Is Evangelicalism an exotic in the modern world? The question cannot be answered by stout protests, but only by honest inquiry, and we must begin by discovering what Evangelicalism essentially is.

I have felt myself increasingly during the past ten or fifteen years that our supreme need is the discovery of our fundamental principles. The simple way to do this is to go back to the past—say the sixteenth or eighteenth centuries—discover what were the great principles of Evangelicals then and impose them on Evangelicals to-day. But the simple way of doing things is nearly always the wrong way, and this short way is on reflection seen to be scientifically unsound and in practice hopelessly confusing. We should have to take into account Wickliffe, the "Evangelical doctor," the reformed Churches of the Continent, the Puritans in our own land, the Evangelicals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the Evangelical Free Churches of to-day. We should find ourselves then faced by contradictions which were irreconcilable and burdened

by views of God and man impossible to accept. There is another method, much more difficult to employ, but one which gives us a value for  $x$ . This is to study patiently and carefully all those varying expressions of Evangelicalism and to seek for the spirit which is common to them all.

Despite the danger I am in of anticipating what some will have to say, I venture to try to define this common spirit which I believe to be the permanent element in Evangelicalism. It may be summed up in one word—Redemption.

The supreme purpose of the Incarnation was to redeem man, to save him from sin and from self. This was achieved by the Life and Death of our Lord, who on His Cross made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. By an act of faith the individual soul is opened to the inflow of Divine Grace, which cleanses from sin and reconciles to God. This Grace of God is free and unfettered ; the soul needs no mediation from priest or Church for a contact with God, which is direct and immediate. It is God's Will to save all, but His beneficence is limited by human will. " If any man will he shall know." Evangelicalism proclaims its belief in the constant recurrence of a moral miracle, that any man, however steeped in sin and vice, by a willing act of faith in God can be lifted into a new relationship with God, be conscious of a new power, and give evidence of a new life.

The authority for this belief was found in Holy Scripture, which was ratified in the experience of the believer.

This, I believe, is the heart and core of Evangelicalism. It gathered around it, as has already been noted, in each age certain other views, but these were often only the ephemeral clothing of an eternal truth. The Evangelicals of the sixteenth century never hesitated to discard much that Wickliffe taught, apart from the fact that they differed also among themselves, and the eighteenth-century Evangelicals jettisoned many things which were regarded as vital in the sixteenth century. It is only, therefore, what we should expect that many modern Evangelicals should decline to take on board some of the heavy cargo which their fathers in the eighteenth century deemed necessary. Evangelicalism has always been a bigger thing than the Evangelicals. No generation has been able either to declare it completely or to escape the danger of alloying it with secondary and ephemeral matters. And more than once in history Evangelicals have made the fatal blunder of quarrelling over the secondary matters, with the result that their witness and influence have been fatally impaired.

Is the same tragic mistake to be made now ? Let it be plainly said that absolutely the only thing which can possibly justify a breach among us is the conviction that the subject of dispute is an absolutely vital matter affecting Divine Truth. I cannot but feel that if this were borne in upon us all, and if we could all grasp what are the permanent elements in the Evangelicals' vision of truth, a breach would no longer be possible.

It is a perfectly certain fact that we are not all going to hold

precisely the same views upon inspiration or details of ritual ; it is, I am confident, an equally certain fact that we do all hold the same views on the great question of Redemption. I believe on this point there would be no appreciable difference or variation in the advice given to a sin-stricken soul by every Evangelical clergyman in the land. When we have this great, sacred and precious thing in common, is it not enough to provide a rallying-ground for us all ?

The Evangelicals have been called by God to preach the Evangel—the Evangel stands above and apart from all these other and, perhaps, important matters of inquiry. But I cannot think we are true to our mission if we allow these other things so to occupy our attention that we lose our perspective, and, as a result, fall to blows amongst ourselves. St. Paul could say : “ Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel.” Would that all we Evangelicals could penitently say, “ Christ has sent us not to dispute on secondary doctrines, but to preach the Gospel at home and abroad, in sincerity, in passionate love for Him and the souls in our flocks, and with a full trust in the sincerity of our brethren.”

May God grant us deliverance from this grave peril which threatens us in this day of splendid opportunity ! But deliverance will not come unless we are determined to do our part—*i.e.*, to seek peace and ensue it.

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## EVANGELICALISM IN THE MODERN WORLD.

BY THE BISHOP OF BRADFORD.

**WE** ARE living in a new world : and it is not easy to realize it. We forget that in five years we have seen changes greater than those which normally mark the passing of a generation or even of a century. There is a real alteration, and not simply a modification, in the problems and conditions of our individual and social life. Science has made great leaps of advance in mechanics, physics, medicine and biology. The world had been shrinking before the War through the development of quick transport, telegraphy and telephony—but the War itself produced an extraordinary race contact, through the medley of the world's fighting men gathered in many fields of battle. Europeans, Americans, Asiatics, Africans, and dwellers in distant islands, have fought and fraternized, racial and religious barriers have been partly overcome, and at the same time the international outlook has not hindered the growth of nationalism. Rather has the instinct of peoples to assert their own self-consciousness, and the determination of nations, small or great, to work out their own destiny, been quickened. The political and industrial situation to-day had no real parallel before the War. “ Neither the French Revolution nor the Industrial Revolution can give us guidance as to the causes of our present discontents or the remedies likely to prove effectual. Then the struggle was for

freedom and a chance to live. Now it revolves about the use of that measure of freedom which has been won, the kind of life which is to be the goal of both the individual and society. Before the war, in practically all lands alike, certain forms of political and industrial organization were widely accepted, and the question at issue was that of their relationship. Now a growing body of people claims that these organizations must be scrapped, and we need light on the vital question of the types of organization by which they should be replaced." (Yeaxlee in *An Educated Nation*.) There is a world-wide poverty upon us, producing a new situation in the economic life of the world. Political and social combinations and cleavages which used to mark our national life have given place to completely different ones—even into our Universities the returned soldiers have carried a wave of radicalism (not purely or even mainly political) and among their tutors are to be found many who are far more concerned with the education and emancipation of the masses than with the polishing of culture for the few.

To all this add the prevalent moral laxity; the craving for pleasure and excitement; an almost feverish restlessness which shows itself in impatience with organized Christianity, and an indifference to the claims of God for worship and the keeping of His Day of Rest; a "revolt against authority, of tradition, of wealth, of dogma, and of arms, rather than of truth, goodness, and beauty"; and yet, withal, a craving for communion with the unseen which finds an outlet in Spiritualism, and a hunger for God which is shown, e.g., in the fact that religion is probably the most generally discussed subject amongst the young men in our Universities to-day—and we have a situation which seems to be without parallel in the history of the world.

But if it be unique in its composite difficulty, it is also unique in its wonderful opportunity for us who believe with Dr. Chalmers that "the great peculiarities of Christianity are the one solid hope of the individual man, and of the social and political life of the world."

A Leader writer in *The Times* said recently: "Christianity not only claims to be the highest and purest of all religions: it presents itself as absolute and final"; and he then proceeded to call upon the Church for "a more adequate insistence on the special character and mission of the Christian Faith."

How, then, can Evangelicalism meet this challenge? "The problem of making Christianity fit in with modern world conditions reduces the question to fundamentals." Evangelicals believe that the greatest contribution they are set to make is just this—that disregarding as secondary many things on which other Christians lay supreme emphasis, they do insist on the *special* character and mission of the Christian Faith. They are concerned with fundamentals, and will not be drawn aside to magnify non-essentials into necessities for salvation. And those fundamentals are in reality extraordinarily few. Dr. Bigg, surveying the growth of the Church in the Roman Empire, has said that the distinguishing

characteristic of its success was its witness to the power of the Cross. "The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, dear to the heart of Broad Churchmen, was not in itself peculiar to Christianity, however great soever may have been the enrichment which the idea received within the Church. The conception of Incarnation treasured by Catholics, was in some form or another not unfamiliar to the Pagan world. Neither of these doctrines would, of itself, have captured Europe. It was the Cross that appealed to the hearts and consciences of men. *In hoc signo vinces.*" It is the cruciality of the cross, to borrow a phrase from Dr. Forsyth, upon which Paul and Luther and Wesley laid the emphasis of their teaching. "God reveals Himself in redeeming. The acceptance of grace is the condition of the attainment of truth." The Evangelical cannot think of the Incarnation apart from the Atonement. "Christmas is not a gospel apart from Good Friday and Easter, and the Cross is a more perfect symbol of the Incarnation than the Madonna and Child." "It would, perhaps, be unjust to say that modern theologians of the Incarnation treat the Redeeming work of Christ as though it were a *παράγωγον*—but it would seem to be true that they substitute "the Word became flesh" for "God so loved the world" as the governing idea of Apostolic Christianity which thus becomes a metaphysic rather than a message." But Evangelicals insist that Christianity can only retain its identity if it continues to be the Evangel: if it retains unimpaired what gave power to the preaching of St. Paul, success to the theology of Athanasius, and life to the reforming zeal of a Luther or a Wesley. No separation is possible between Christ and His Cross. The preaching of Christ is the Word of the Cross. However manifold the apostolic faith may be, it is all comprised within the limits of Christ crucified. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the apprehension of Truth and the attainment of holiness, are comprehended within, not realized side by side with, the good news of the free favour of God whereby He reconciles us to Himself in the redeeming personality of His Son. "It is quite possible to construct a system, and that with the aid of the N.T., developed out of the Divine Humanity of Our Lord, which recognizes the Church as His Body, which justifies the Sacraments as extensions of the Incarnation, and which unifies all things in heaven and earth in the Incarnate Word as its central principle and yet leave out what is distinctively Christian." The true *differentia* of the Gospel is the Message of Redemption, freedom by the blood of the Cross. "The Person and Work of Christ stand not for an evolution, an almost necessary evolution, of the Divine nature in its relations with mankind, but for a voluntary and gracious undertaking on the part of the kindness and love of God for men. Its primary interest is not philosophical, but personal and religious. If the Word became flesh, it was in taking upon Him to *deliver man* that He abhorred not the Virgin's womb. If the sacrifice for sin involved the assumption of a representative humanity, it was the personal will to *condemn sin and pardon the sinner*, to justify the

ungodly in an act that did not compromise the eternal justice, which moved the Father thus to set forth Jesus as a propitiation. If the Catholic Society was the mystery hidden from the foundation of the world, but revealed in Christ, it was the fact not of its universality, but of its *establishment through the blood of the Cross* that made the Church, as distinct from any other community, the Body of Christ. Is not the pith and marrow of apostolic Christianity contained in such a passage as 2 Corinthians, v. 19? "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses"? We get out of touch with the Gospel if we fail to recognize that the ministry which has been committed to us, is a ministry of reconciliation." (Canon Simpson in *The Religion of the Atonement*.)

I have quoted at length from Canon Simpson, because he has put into words far better than I can hope to do what I believe to be the "special character and mission of the Christian Faith," as understood by Evangelicals. I believe that it was the preaching of Christ crucified, as the only message adequate to set free the souls of men to run the way of God's commandments, that made St. Paul, the first great Evangelical, the successful missionary that he was, and that brought to a world sunk in vice and despair, a liberating power and hope which was new life from the dead. It was the rediscovery of this same great Evangel that set free the minds and hearts of men stifled and almost crushed by the dead hand of Rome, through the preaching of Martin Luther. It was once more, in the days of the great Evangelical revival, this central truth that kindled the hearts and inspired the utterances of Wesley and Whitfield and their friends, and changed the face of England, bringing countless souls out of darkness into light, stirring Wilberforce and Clarkson to the work of slave emancipation, Howard to the cleansing of the prisons, and Hannah More to the uplift of the degraded country-people of the West: that brought Christians to see that Christ's redemptive work was for all the world, and inspired them to start the great missionary societies which have moved the heathen world to-day towards the God of Love. And what Evangelicalism has done in the past, we believe it can and will do again.

"Although the industrial problem is economic, it is not primarily economic. It is primarily psychological, a problem of human conduct and behaviour." (Mactavish, Secretary of Workers' Educational Association.) "The problems facing us to-day in a new world are problems of personality far more than of circumstance." (Yeaxlee in *An Educated Nation*.)

Evangelicalism aims at conversion through the Message of the Cross. It deals with personalities, human conduct and behaviour. "It was not only Evangelicals, but Evangelicalism" (writes Dr. Overton) "that abolished the slave trade": the doctrines these men held compelled them to do the work.

"A socialist, of whatever school, may feel himself diametrically opposed in nearly everything to the individualist. It would appear

that between them there is a great gulf fixed, and that they must find themselves perpetually kept apart in ideals and aims and methods. Yet the synthesis of individualism and socialism is the setting of the *complete man* amidst the ideal society." (Yeaxlee.) The modern world, like the ancient and mediæval world, is moved by strong personalities. All the greatest movements in history have been the outcome of deep convictions in the hearts of individuals. Evangelicalism has produced the strong personalities, the "complete men," who in other ages have solved the problems of their day, who have proved that Christ and "the great peculiarities of Christianity" are indeed the power not merely to lift individuals on to a higher plane of life and service, but to sweeten and uplift the life of the community. The conditions of the modern world to-day may be unique, but if Evangelicals will unitedly preach the old Gospel of Redemption through the Crucified Saviour, and emphasize afresh His power as the Living and Indwelling Lord, men and women will respond again, as they have done in the past, to His call, and will go forth in His strength to win fresh victories under new conditions. For whatever may have changed, the human heart remains the same. And it is that primarily with which Evangelicalism has to deal.

In one of his Outspoken Essays, the Dean of St. Paul's says that "Christianity as a dogmatic and ecclesiastical system is unintelligible without a very considerable knowledge of the conditions under which it took shape. As our staple education becomes more modern and less literary, the custodians of organized religion will find their difficulties increasing." If that be true, then Evangelicalism will have its supreme chance: for it presents not Christianity as a system so much as Christ as Universal Saviour: it lays stress not on the authority of the Church, however venerable, but on the personal authority of the historical Jesus, crucified, risen and working to-day through His Spirit: it comes not primarily with a teaching, but with a message of glad news and freedom, authenticated by the experience of the messenger, and backed by the credentials of the written Word of God.

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BY THE REV. CANON H. FOSTER PEGG.

**B**ETWEEN the first word of my subject, "Evangelicalism" and the last phrase, "The Modern World," there is a vast difference of appeal; to many the former is uninteresting, almost unmeaning, but to nearly all the latter is both interesting and arresting. Merely to mention to the man of affairs the words "the Modern World" is to excite interest and to bring an anxious expression upon the countenance; and the same effect is also produced upon the keen Churchman, a man interested in religious matters. To both of these types of men "the modern world" is an enigma, an amazement, and a fear. They have both gazed

abroad upon the world at large, and Europe in particular, and their eyes, like the dove liberated from the ark, can find no spot to rest upon with satisfaction and delight. 'Tis but a dreary scene of confusion, tumult, instability and unrest. It is the same in what we must describe, for clearness sake, the Religious World; there, too, we discover unrest, instability, uncertainty.

The Great War is immediately responsible for this state of affairs, but it is to be borne in mind that the Great War but accelerated and manifested the tendencies which had been silently working in the nations, and were only visible to the observant few. Now the Great War has not only broken up the deeps of national life, but has also opened the windows of Heaven by sharply revealing to us a hitherto unrecognized, or if recognized a disregarded, fact, the insecure basis upon which modern civilization rests. The Great War has demolished many dream idols. We do not now make wooden or stone images to bow down before, but we manufacture dream idols composed of various ideas or theories, which we hold strongly. I mean such as the widespread belief that commerce would introduce the reign of universal peace and prosperity, and link the nations in the bonds of brotherhood; or (the dream) that education would banish all the evils of life and turn this world into a second Eden; or that political freedom and the vote would introduce the Millennium. These and many such theories have been violently shattered by that Titanic struggle, and we have been compelled to see that human nature is *still human nature*, with a strong tinge of the brute remaining that has not yet been cast out. The lesson we need to learn is, that man needs something more than external reforms to lift him to true manhood. Man needs help, and that help we believe can only come from *without*, from God, through Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit working upon man from *within*. Our Evangelical Faith rests upon the solid facts—of man's *nature*, sinful; man's *need*, grace; man's *hope*, Divine assistance. The Cross, with all its depth of meaning, *needed* by all—*open* to all—*sufficient* for all.

We cannot wonder that to-day, considering the outlook of things in general and of the state of religion in particular, that there should be a great deal of pessimism abroad. Men are earnestly asking: What is the end of it all to be? Is modern civilization played out? Has religion failed? Now the cure, I venture to think, for this state of depression, is a strong dose of History. It is so natural to imagine that no one's trials are really so hard to bear as our own, and it is a temptation to think that there never was such a crisis as that of the present. Now let us take the dose I have ventured to prescribe, by looking back upon the eighteenth century, and as far as the religious aspect is considered, and it is with that I am especially concerned in this paper, there is a striking resemblance.

I quote the description of the state of men's minds with regard to religion to-day, given by Bishop Gore in the opening chapter of his *Belief in God*, "The Breakdown of Tradition": "The



world in which we live to-day can only be described as chaotic in matters of religious belief. . . . But wherever men and women are to be found who care about religion and feel its value, and who at the same time feel bound, as they say, 'to think for themselves,' there we are apt to discover the prevailing note—not the only note, but the prevailing note—to be that of uncertainty and even bewilderment, coupled very often with a feeling of resentment against the Church, or against organized religion on account of what is called its 'failure.' " "Chaotic"—"Uncertainty"—"Bewilderment"—"Resentment." Certainly a dark, but by no means an overdrawn—I would rather say an underdrawn—picture of to-day, for it omits the prevalent and widespread spirit of indifference or carelessness to organized religion in any form. Now let me give you a description of the eighteenth century, drawn by the master hand of Bishop Butler. "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all persons of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world" (*Advertisement to the Analogy*). Let me quote another description later on in that century by the famous lawyer, Sir William Blackstone, who said that he had gone from church to church in London, and that "It would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius or of Mohammed or of Christ." I give you a third description of those times from an historian: "Never had religion seemed at a lower ebb. The progress of free inquiry, the aversion from theological strife which had been left by the Civil War, the new intellectual and material channels opened to human energy, had produced a general indifference to the great questions of religious speculation which occupied an earlier age. The Church, predominant as its influence seemed at the close of the Revolution, had sunk into political insignificance. . . ." The decay of the great dissenting bodies went hand in hand with that of the Church, and during the early part of the century the Nonconformists declined in numbers as in energy. But it would be rash to conclude from this outer ecclesiastical paralysis that the religious sentiment was dead in the people at large. There was, no doubt, a revolt against religion and against Churches in both the extremes of English society. In the higher circles "every one laughs," said Montesquieu on his visit to England, "if one talks of religion." "Of the prominent statesmen of the time the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives."

Now I venture to think that the most pessimistic and depressed will not dispute that though to-day things are dark and gloomy, they are neither so black nor so distressing as they appeared to be in that century. We do well to remember that even then the

“religious sentiment was not dead in men”; that in spite of such a state of things, “England as a whole remained at heart religious.” Religion was not dead then, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, and in my judgment it is equally true that it is not to-day. Therein lies our hope. I have not done with the eighteenth century yet. To meet that dark and serious crisis and to deal with such a state of affairs, Bishop Butler was moved to write his famous *Analogy*; later on Paley wrote his brilliant book on Natural Theology, basing his argument on the Fixity of Species. We are indebted to Bishop Gore in his *Belief in God* for pointing out that this idea was the prevalent scientific conception. He says: “But as a matter of fact the idea appears first, not in Christian Fathers or Schoolmen, but as a scientific conclusion of the seventeenth century. A conclusion drawn especially from the limits within which interbreeding is possible” (Gore, *Belief in God*, p. 6).

It was this scientific doctrine which Paley made such brilliant use of. Not for a single moment would I in any way detract from the importance and necessity of such work. It was necessary then, and it is necessary to-day. I would encourage scholarship, wide reading, research and patient thought in all directions. No school of thought can survive without scholars, and the greater and more numerous the scholars, the wider the influence. Neither we Evangelicals nor any other school of thought can flourish upon ignorance, faulty scholarship, or scanty reading. My advice to all is *read—read—read—mark*, learn and inwardly digest all knowledge, biblical, scientific, historical, social and economic, that from your treasures of knowledge you may, as occasion serves, bring forth things new and old for the advancement of the Master’s cause and the salvation of mankind.

But there was also a movement of another character advancing along other lines—a movement associated with the names of John Wesley and Whitfield. These and men like-minded faced the crisis by preaching the Gospel, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, and through Him alone. Their method was to preach the Gospel at all times and in all places, and the result—ah, what a result! Listen to an historian’s testimony: “A result which changed the whole temper of English society” (Green, *A Short History of the English People*, p. 718). “The Church was restored to life and activity.” “Religion carried to the hearts of the poor a fresh spirit of moral zeal, while it purified our literature and our manners.” “A new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave trade, and gave the first impulse to secular education.” “In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm which, rigid and pedantic as it often seemed, was still healthy in its social tone, and whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had disgraced the upper classes, and the foulness which had infested literature ever since the Restoration.” “But the noblest result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the

social degradation of the profligate and the poor" (*ibid.*, p. 721).

We are faced with difficulties and perplexities, we are confronted with darkness, indifference and levity, but not greater nor more threatening than those which confronted Wesley and Whitfield. They won through, not by dissembling, not by trimming; they triumphed by boldly bearing aloft the full banner of Calvary, the whole virtue of the Cross for the ills of man and society in that dark period. I know that some will say that the present circumstances are different, and the old appeal is not fitted to meet the modern need. I grant that the old way of presenting the appeal may not be so fitting for modern times, but the appeal itself, and not its method of presentation, is fitting, and there is still no other. The Gospel, I believe, was so ordained by its very nature to be a perpetual answer to the fundamental needs of man. Man's fundamental needs do not change, but abide the same; sin, love, suffering, loss, hope, sorrow, despair are, and always will, remain the same, and it is to these fundamental needs of the soul that the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ appeal and satisfy.

We need the adaptation of the old truths to modern needs, and this may mean a changed presentation, but not a different Gospel. I am not advocating the adoption of the same modes of thought which were so fresh and powerful with the Reformers, or the schemes so ably propounded by the dogmatists of the seventeenth century, or the exact expressions of the eighteenth. But underlying all these there was a positive strain, which made them forceful and impelling. Nothing is more characteristic of the modern mind than its passion for reality. Dr. Forsyth says, in *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, p. 269: "Nothing is more characteristic of the modern mind than its passion for reality. What the modern world seems to crave is reality. It is blindly groping for reality; it is intensely practical. It seeks for actions, for results. All things are brought to the test of reality, and the positive is the appeal which touches it." We may learn useful lessons from careful observers outside the domain of the Church; I mean from such ardent souls as Thomas Carlyle (*Past and Present*, p. 208). His remarks about the speaking man haunt one's mind, "That a man stand there and speak of spiritual things to men. It is beautiful—even in its great obscurity and decadence it is among the beautifullest, most touching objects one sees on earth. This Speaking Man has indeed in these times, wandered terribly away from the point; has, alas, as it were, totally lost sight of the point: yet, at bottom, whom have we to compare with him? . . . A man even professing, and never so languidly making still some endeavour, to save the souls of men. . . . I wish he could find the point again, this Speaking One; and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy; for there is need of him yet!" It is our wisdom and vindication to proclaim to the world the full-voiced Gospel of Jesus Christ. To-day we need to proclaim the Gospel of Love. The heart and core of Calvary is love. Love almost too wonderful for speech. We have nothing to fear from modern science or from modern scholarship.

We need not fear the most searching test of either, so long as we speak that which we do know, and testify that which we have seen." I like Carlyle's dictum, "On Heroes," p. 161: "Belief I define to be a healthy act of a man's mind. It is a mysterious indescribable process, that of getting to believe;—indescribable as all vital acts are. We have our mind given us, not that it may cavil and argue, but that it may see into something, give us clear belief and understanding about something, whereon we are then to proceed to act." "A man lives by believing something; not by debating and arguing about many things."

Evangelicalism is to-day subject to the lure of Modernism on one side and of Sacerdotalism on the other, both very real dangers. In the last issue of the *Church Times* (September 1) we are told in an article on "Schools of Thought": "To-day Evangelicals, as a school of positive belief and devotional ardour, have more or less dropped out of the running, or become absorbed in Liberalism." Perhaps the wish is father to the thought, but there must be some grounds for such an assertion. Both of these tend to interpose a wedge between the soul and God, the one of the Priest and the Church, the other of the Law and Order. Personally, I see no fear from any discoveries of science, save only from false inferences. I stand by Coleridge's statement: "In no case can true reason and a right faith oppose each other." To me the Gospel of Jesus, Evangelically interpreted, is one of the most wonderful exhibitions of scientific revelation, using the word in its highest sense, ever revealed or that could ever be revealed. I am not prepared by the specious pleadings of Modernism to accept the naturalistic interpretation of Nature, for the simple reason that it creates more difficulties than it removes, nor do I feel drawn to the haven of rest promised by Sacerdotalism. There is a peril that I do fear, and that is the danger of division in our ranks. United we stand, divided we fall. A house divided against itself is nigh collapse. Let us seek for inclusion, not for exclusion. Let us earnestly seek for the points of agreement, and we shall discover that those on which we agree are more in number and of infinitely more importance than those upon which we unhappily differ. If we look to the rock from which we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which we were digged, we shall find that our Evangelical forerunners were men of *vision* and men of the broadest *sympathy*. Their vision swept the whole world, their sympathy touched the whole of life. Their sympathy and vision led them to found the great societies, and their sympathy to rescue and help the poor and downtrodden. The gospel they proclaimed was as wide as the world. It was good news, liberation, freedom from all that was wrong and oppressive. They did not select certain spheres, social, economic, or philanthropic, but the Gospel they believed in compelled them to enclose all within its compass. The whole world and the whole of life was their sphere. With such vision, with such largeness of soul, with such breadth of sympathy we may confidently, in the strength of God, confront and save the modern world.

I close my paper with the stirring words of Dr. Frank Hugh Foster in his admirable *History of New England Theology*: "The questions of the present hour are more fundamental than those with which New England theology or its immediate successors have had to concern themselves. A ringing call is sounding through the air to face the true issue—the reality of God's supernatural interference in the history of man versus the reign of unmodified law (or ideas and processes). The question is not whether the old evangelical scheme needs some adjustments to adapt it to our present knowledge, but whether its most fundamental conception, the very idea of the Gospel, is true. Before this all the half-way compromises of the present day must be given up. Men must take sides. They must be for the Gospel or against it."

One word more, I began with an appeal to History and I will end with another: Look back across the intervening centuries since Christ came; note the crises, mark the difficulties, consider the oppositions; and yet, in spite of all, He triumphed, and His cause progressed. To-day the fairest flowers of modern civilization spring from the root of His cross. All that is sweet and true and of good report we owe to Him. We believe that we hold God's truth, that God is working in us and for us; therefore we need fear no foe, blanch before no difficulty, falter before no opposition. "He that is with us is greater than all that is against us." It is ours to guard the sacred deposit of truth revealed to us. It is ours to hand it on unimpaired and undiminished. May I be pardoned for altering slightly some well-known words—

Naught shall make us rue  
If only we to Christ Himself do rest but true.

It is my belief that Evangelicalism may calmly, confidently and boldly face the modern world with all its problems—in Christ—with Christ—for Christ.

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## THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

BY THE REV. A. W. GREENUP, D.D., Principal of St. John's Hall,  
Highbury.

THE authority of Scripture is not undermined by the higher critics, but rather by those who believe that higher criticism has undermined its authority. To start on the assumption that criticism undermines Biblical authority is weakening the cause of religion. Matters of opinion are not matters of faith; and a sharp dividing line should be drawn between them. Argument must be met by argument, criticism by criticism. The criticism of the Bible has never been so trenchant as it is to-day; yet the authority of the Bible has never been more fully established amongst scholars in face of it and by the aid of it. "A Christian who knows that God

*does* speak to the soul through the Scriptures," says an Evangelical theologian, "ought not to speak of criticism as an alien or hostile power with which he may be compelled, against his will, to go so far, but which he must ever regard with suspicion." Our difficulties lie in the crude misrepresentations from the pulpit and the platform of those who, through lack of training and knowledge, consider all criticism as destructive, and in their fulminations against it do much harm to the cause of truth, and put into the hands of secularists and unbelievers a weapon which is used for their own castigation. Insistence on the destructiveness of higher criticism has led the man in the street, and many out of it, to ignore the fact that higher criticism means merely a criticism which is different in kind from lower or textual criticism, and that therefore every intelligent student must of necessity be a higher critic. It is due to sane criticism that the Bible is more vividly apprehended on its historical side, that the messages of the prophets become more real to us, that the figure of Jesus Christ shines forth more conspicuously, and that we apprehend the meaning of the inspired utterance that "in many parts and in many manners God having spoken of old time to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days spake to us in his Son." The wise preacher *uses* all these things in enforcing the claims of the Gospel message; though, if he be wise, he *says* but little of criticism owing to the common misinterpretation of the phrase "higher criticism" as destructive criticism. "Since 1889 (the appearance of *Lux Mundi*)," says the author of that delightful book, *John Allen and His Friends*, "the clergy have preached too often on higher criticism; and whilst most of their intelligent congregations are too ignorant of the Scriptures to know or care how many Isaiahs there are likely to have been, the youths and maidens among them leave their Sunday morning orisons, complacently assured that you need not believe what is in the Bible." Believe me, it is better for preachers to preach the great certainties of the Gospel than the great uncertainties of much current criticism. Not that I would deprecate criticism in the least—for the more criticized the firmer the Bible stands through its own inherent truth—but I think its intrusion into the pulpit a mistake, and am glad to say so in a gathering like this. The pulpit should be the platform of the herald, not the chair of the critic.

The authority of the Scriptures rests on that which destructive criticism cannot touch, and on what constructive criticism has greatly aided and enforced: it rests on the fact that they testify of Christ, the ultimate authority in religion and morals, the citadel of our faith. This states in a sentence the ground on which we accept them as authoritative; and a thesis on the authority of the Bible would be merely to amplify this sentence, bringing in sundry subordinate proofs and noticing the difficulties which occur in defending such a view.

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Our Church lays stress in its Articles, Homilies, and Ordination Services on the authority of the Scriptures. In the Articles refer-

ences to their sufficiency for salvation, their warranty of the Creeds, their limitation of Church authority, make clear the nature of their authority. It is not insignificant that the Book of Homilies should *open* with a discourse on Holy Scripture, and with these words: "Unto a Christian man there can be nothing either more necessary or profitable than the Knowledge of Holy Scripture; forasmuch as in it is contained God's true word, setting forth His glory, and also man's duty: and there is no truth nor doctrine necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation, but that is or may be drawn out of that fountain and well of truth." In the Ordinal the characteristic symbol is the delivery of the Bible, showing the fundamental contrast between this service and the Roman use. But although authority for the Church of England resides, as these references abundantly show, in the Scriptures, yet that authority is rested on canonicity—"in the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority there was never any doubt in the Church"—a somewhat curious statement in view of many of the Reformed Confessions and the well-known opinions of the Continental Reformers; and a somewhat difficult passage to interpret, for if we took the words literally we should have to omit from the lists given two or three Old Testament books, and five or six of the New Testament, about whose authority there were doubts in the Church. But it may be that, in view of what is said in the Homilies, the compilers of the Articles did not mean to assert authority solely on the question of canonicity—at least I hope not, for I think it the least satisfactory of the considerations which support the authority of Scripture. Yet it is a support; for the Providence which has watched over the preservation and the selection of the books was something far greater than the work of Councils, which only ratified the judgment of the common Christian body. In the formation of the Canon we read the action of the Holy Spirit in selecting for His Church books containing the authoritative messages of God. But this line of argument I do not propose to pursue, both on account of lack of time and also because of its complexity. Moreover, I believe that, owing to the greater attention paid now to the religious content of the Bible and its purpose rather than to the history of its transmission, we can arrive on other grounds at a more satisfactory argument for its authority. My thesis is this:

1. The New Testament is authoritative from its containing a consistent scheme of doctrine, and from its documents being primitive documents or derived from primitive sources.

2. The Old Testament is authoritative owing to its acceptance as such by our Lord and the writers of the New Testament.

3. The whole Bible is authoritative by reason of the work it has accomplished and still accomplishes.

## I

The authority of the New Testament cannot be separated from a careful study of its contents and an effort to reach and grasp the

great truths therein recorded, and this is true of Holy Scripture generally. The authority of the New Testament rests on the spiritual emphasis of its doctrinal contents and their harmonious relationship to each other. Moreover, if we can prove that the documents of the New Testament are authentic documents written close to the events they commemorate, we have additional witness to their authority. The science of systematic theology enforces the one, literary or higher criticism the other.

The best method is to start from the Pauline Epistles—especially with that to the Romans, which gives us an exposition of the Gospel, and which is in Tyndale's words "the light and way unto the whole Scripture"—then to work back to the Gospels.

Notwithstanding the various types of doctrinal teaching, Pauline, Petrine, Johannine, and so on, there is a unity in diversity, and this is shown in the fundamental basis, the doctrine of redemption, that God forgives the sins of penitent and believing men because Christ died for them. This is elaborated by St. Paul in the great passage in the third chapter of Romans: "Now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested . . . a righteousness of faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe . . . being justified freely by his grace through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus . . . that God himself might be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." Any attempt to describe this doctrine as merely Paulinism fails. It is prominent in St. John, in St. Peter, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as a study of the marginal references will show, and there is no need for me to elaborate it. And so, too, with the other great doctrines developed by St. Paul which relate to the new life in Christ.

Whence, but from heaven, could men, unskill'd in arts,  
 In several ages born, in several parts,  
 Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why  
 Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?  
 Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,  
 Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.

The mystery of the Cross satisfies them all; and as an interpretation of the person and work of their Master their witness carries with it the authority of the Gospel narratives, the pivot of which is, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost, . . . not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

"If the content of Scripture be truly expounded," says Prof. Patterson, "it will continue as before to take captive the mind and hearts of men; and when this occurs there never fails the reproduction of its due reverence for the Bible as the book which enshrines and transmits the gracious and life-giving message, and it continues to be fitly described, in contrast to all other books, as the Word of God." The sufficiency of the New Testament in setting forth the doctrines of redemption implies its authority. An examination of the contents of the apostolic writings shows that they are faithful to the lines laid down by their Master, and interpret truly His Person



and His Work. It is the soteriological content of the New Testament which is the peculiar Word of God there, and which abides independent of all literary and historical criticism, which has to do only with the human side of the Scriptures. "The central point of all our interpretation," said a Lambeth Conference, "must be our Lord Jesus Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, the healer of our sinfulness, the source of all our spiritual life, and the revelation to our consciences of the law and motive of all moral virtue. To Him and to His work all the teachings of the Old Testament converge, and from Him all the teachings of the New Testament flow in spirit, in force, and in form." If this be true, and it is, then the New Testament is authoritative, for there can be no proof of its authority independent of its contents.

Dr. Ladd, in his monumental work on the Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, divides the content of the N.T. into (1) the obviously indispensable—the fundamental element of the Christian faith; (2) the apparently unimportant—what has no manifest bearing on that element; and (3) the important, but not obviously indispensable—the relation of which to the principles of faith is debatable. I observe the same tendency in recent works on the authority of Scripture—a tendency which evacuates much of the authority of Scripture as a whole, giving authority only to those truths which may be summed up in the expression "the Gospel"; and in opposition to it I should like to make the following observations: Each part of Holy Scripture has its peculiar work to do; and it is not for us to define its work, but to leave it to Him Who inspired the whole. The genealogies in the Gospels would certainly come under Dr. Ladd's "apparently unimportant," but they led Rabinowicz, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to come out of Judaism into Christianity; and many a minister could tell of the "apparently unimportant" contents of Scripture which have proved the stepping-stone to a knowledge of the Gospel. Again, even should Dr. Ladd's second and third classes be not the result of revelation or inspiration, yet authority should be ascribed to them *because they occur in the documents*. We have to deal with two questions—the authority of the writings themselves, and the authority of the doctrines they teach. It is not merely a question of the relative authority of the various parts of Scripture—a different question altogether to the one I am dealing with, and which would require special treatment. The tendency of the day is to emphasize that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, rather than that it is the Word of God, and Dr. Ladd would emphasize the Bible within the Bible as the only obviously indispensable. But I believe my old teacher Robertson Smith is right when he says: "This is not the doctrine of our Churches, which hold that the substance of *all* Scripture is God's Word."

Literary criticism has greatly enforced the authority of the New Testament. Time fails to point this out in any fullness; for the Pauline epistles reference need only be made to the works of Knowling, Beet, and more recent commentators. St. Paul's conversion

occurred within three or four years of our Lord's death, and there is probability that he had seen and heard Him, and as the rationalist Keim says, "His knowledge did not consist in a blind traffic in unexamined Christian tradition, but was obtained by a clear, keen, searching and questioning consideration, collection and collation of such materials as were accessible to him."

A word as to the Gospels. Recent research into their origin has strengthened considerably their authority. Early dates of the New Testament writings are authoritative witnesses to the teachings of Christ and to the historical facts of His life; and in the case of the Gospels the investigation of their sources puts their authority objectively on indisputable ground. That these are documentary may be taken for granted, for the theory of an oral origin does not satisfy the facts; and the sources of course carry us farther back in date than the Gospels themselves. Mark's Gospel—not our canonical Mark, but a proto- or deutero-Mark—is the foundation of Matthew and Luke; and this fact alone is evidence of the high authority accorded to it in the first century. Matthew and Luke appear to have drawn upon collections of sayings of our Lord; and the statement of Papias, the use elsewhere in the New Testament of the Lord's sayings not in our Gospels, the discovery of logia at Oxyrhynchus, show that such collections were much in use in the early Church. The exact limits of the contents of the hypothetical document known as "Q" are still matter for investigation; but whatever the ultimate conclusions of scholars the results will not affect my argument. Luke tells us that he was in a position to verify his documentary sources through eye-witnesses of the events; and recent criticism points to one of his special sources as the work of Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, bound by ties of special gratitude towards her Lord and who ministered to Him of her substance. "Analysis of the sources," says a worker in the field, "so far from weakening the authority of the Gospel, has rather increased it, by enabling us to see the circumstances in which each component part came into being, and thus to account for differences in the record. Out of all these many and varied fragments there comes into view the single and commanding Personality of the Son of Man."

Recent criticism has shown that the Fourth Gospel, whether its authorship be assigned to the Apostle or to one of his disciples, is an historical document of first importance, giving us an authoritative first-century impression of the Person of our Lord, and is no Alexandrine production of the second century.

So much for my first argument from the harmonious doctrinal content of the New Testament and its high historical authority as a primitive document. To pass on to my second argument.

## II

To Christ and the New Testament writers the Old Testament was authoritative and true; and it was the Old Testament as we

now have it, for although certain books were disputed until the time of the Council of Jamnia, yet that Council in fixing the limits of the Canon returned to the Canon of Judas Maccabæus. It is true that there are no references in the New Testament to Obadiah and Nahum, Ezra and Nehemiah, Esther, Canticles and Ecclesiastes—but there are satisfactory explanations for this. The Minor Prophets were reckoned as one canonical book; Ezra and Nehemiah are connected with Chronicles; and the peculiar character of the remaining books accounts for their not being referred to. The important points to notice are that the *groups* to which these books belong are recognized, thus presupposing the completed Canon; and that the Apocryphal books are not treated as being Holy Scripture, though familiar to the writers as contained in the Greek Bible, a fact which makes us doubt whether we can in any strict sense of the word speak of a Canon in connection with the Alexandrine Version.

The authority of our Lord may be appealed to to cover that of the Old Testament. The titles He applies to it imply that its books are sacred Scriptures and therefore authoritative. In the crises of His life we find Him using these Scriptures in such a way as to show us that that life was rooted in and ruled by Scripture. He uses the words of the Old Testament quite confidently as illustrating and explaining His own experiences. He uses the Old Testament for the development and enrichment of His own spiritual life. His parables and sayings are full of Old Testament reminiscences. Of its law and prophecy He is the fulfiller. He came not to abrogate the Law but to fulfil it. "He rendered perfect the doctrines handed down in Mosaic law, supplying to their precepts, accommodated as they were to the nature of a ruder age, that meaning which is required by the idea of true virtue, and which is especially adapted to a more perfect order of affairs." His interpretations of these Scriptures show that He distinguished what is absolute from what is relative; and although His opponents disputed His interpretations they never disputed the authority of that on which those interpretations were based. He did not impart an authority to the Scriptures, but recognized it as already existing. His saying, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished," asserts the permanent value of the Old Testament.

The attitude of the Apostolic and other New Testament writers towards the Old Testament is substantially that of our Lord. The Old Testament scriptures are called "holy writings," "sacred letters," expressions which prove indubitably their authoritative value; their narratives are without any doubt referred to as historical facts; their words are looked upon as the voice of God to man, and as separated from all other literature; the permanent value of their great spiritual truths is taught; their witness to Christ is ever insisted upon, and the Christian hope in Christ is established by them. The general attitude is expressed in the words, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,

that through steadfastness and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope," and "Every scripture is inspired of God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for discipline, which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

If the New Testament be acknowledged as authoritative it carries with it the authority of the Old Testament. Their interdependence is such that one cannot be understood without the other—a New Testament could not have been written if an Old Testament did not exist. The Old Testament is incomplete, and needs something to supplement it. Christ is not read into it, but out of it; and by an inductive process, through an examination of the New Testament, we arrive at its divine authority. It was authoritative for the men to whom it was delivered, and was acknowledged as such; it is authoritative for us on such principles of interpretation as can be gathered from the teaching of Christ and of the New Testament writers, whose authority is guaranteed by the promise of their Master.

"No one but Christ Himself," says Ewald, "is the unity whose light shines back from the New Testament upon all the earlier books, and penetrates every part of these with His radiance. That which casts light upon all parts and yet enables us to see at the same time the gradations of this light in the separate parts, appears to us resplendent with double radiance and preciousness." The truths which constitute one organic body of revealed truth sanctify the vessel that contains them.

### III

The argument for the authority of the Bible based on its work in the past and the work it still does I need not labour. The book when judged by its fitness to do its work shows itself to be authoritative. Its main purpose is to lead man into the presence of God, and this it does and always has done. A book which through extended periods of time has proved itself to be the means of the revelation of God to man is a book of peculiar value and authority. Dr. Moulton, in his Fernley Lecture, after describing the alarm felt amongst many Bible lovers at the onward march of criticism, says that in answer to their fears "God has provided His own answer, and as we might expect, it is an infinitely better one than we could devise. It is—the British and Foreign Bible Society! Through a century criticism has been proving the Bible truly human, written by human hands in human language, and liable in unessentials to human error. Through a century the Bible Society has been proving it divine . . . and wherever it has spoken signs and wonders have endorsed its message. The wilderness has blossomed as the rose, the madman sits clothed and in his right mind at the feet of a Saviour present still. While miracles like these continue to attest the uniqueness of our Book, we have small reason to be angry or

afraid, whatever science may determine concerning the human features of a message thus manifestly from God."

#### IV

The *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* was looked upon by the Reformers, in their revolt against ecclesiastical claims, as the crowning proof of the authority of Holy Scripture; and this is reflected in Coleridge's well known dictum, "In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever thus finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."

The proof is one which from its very nature can only appeal to Christian people. "They know," it has been said, "with all the immediateness and certainty which can belong to any form of experience that their faith grounds itself upon this Word, and that their inner life corresponds to and confirms the facts and truths and promises of this Word. The authority of this Word, therefore, becomes to them an authority confirmed within their experience, in a perfectly invincible way." True! but what is the nature of such an authority? It can cover only matters in the ethico-religious sphere; and herein lies a weakness of the proof. It does not cover of necessity the whole Bible. To me, quite apart from any inner experience, the *whole* Bible is authoritative, not merely "a final authority of *faith* and *conduct*." It is for me authoritative not merely as containing the only true doctrine of redemption, the only guide to true faith and conduct, but also as containing the history of a race which was God's organ of revelation. Martineau's words are worth quoting: "In history the divine element lies hid; it is missed at the time even by those who are its vehicle. It comes forth at the end of the ages in the retrospect."

You cannot judge all the parts of Scripture by this argument of experience; it meets only certain distinctive teachings of Holy Writ; it fosters subjectivity unduly; and if pressed to its logical conclusion appears to me to evacuate, as dubiously authoritative, large portions of God's word written. "No religious experience can go to the length of enabling a man to recognize the divine inspiration and authority of every part of the Biblical books"; and, if this be so, the proof from the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* can be but a subsidiary one. When I am told that "the element of truth at the heart of this appeal is the fact that the general experience comes in to confirm the individual faith, to correct its errors, enlarge its narrowness, and broaden its catholicity," I ask: Does the history of the Church confirm this statement? I think not. Parts of the Bible *may* be less authoritative than others subjectively—though who can say which?—but the *whole* Bible is authoritative, since every part of it contributes to the great scheme of redemption. From Genesis to St. John it contains an evangelical message.

## THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

BY THE REV. G. T. MANLEY, M.A., Secretary of the C.M.S.

IT is generally agreed amongst Evangelical Churchmen that their attitude towards the Bible is distinct from that which characterizes the Modernist school of thought; and that the distinction may fairly be expressed by saying that Evangelicals accept the teaching of the Thirty-Nine Articles heartily and without reservation, giving them broadly that same Evangelical interpretation which was originally intended.

It is the object of this paper briefly to inquire into the nature of the Authority of the Bible as declared in the Church of England formularies, and then to apply it to certain present and practical considerations.

I. (a) At the outset it is of importance to observe that whatever meaning be given to such phrases as "God's Word written," or "Holy Writ," the qualities implied in them are predicated of the Bible as a whole, and not to any part or portion of its content.

There is a phrase in current use that the Bible *is* not the Word of God, but *contains* the Word of God. Such a distinction is entirely contrary to the teaching of the Church of England formularies. There is not the slightest hint in them of a division of the Bible into two parts, one of which may be regarded as gems of revealed truth, and the other as a casket in which they are contained. It is invariably treated as *the Word of God*, and not as a record of certain words of God. There is nowhere any suggestion that even the words of Christ are to be regarded as a superior standard by which the truth or value of the remainder is to be judged. On the contrary, the final authority of Holy Scripture over the counsels of men, even over General Councils of the Church, is clearly regarded as inherent in the Scripture as a whole; and lest any should contend upon the basis of one portion of Scripture alone, the internal harmony and consistency of the various parts of Holy Scripture is the subject of special and explicit declarations.

What Bishop Pearson wrote about belief in the Creed well expresses the attitude of the Church of England to the Scriptures in which the truths of the Creed are revealed: "To believe therefore as the word stands in front of the Creed, and not only so, but is diffused through every article and proposition of it, is to assent to the whole and every part of it, as to a certain and infallible truth revealed by God (who by reason of His infinite knowledge cannot be deceived, and by reason of His transcendent holiness cannot deceive), and delivered to us in the writings of the blessed apostles and prophets, immediately inspired, moved and acted by God" (*Pearson on the Creed*, p. 16).

This treatment of Scripture as a whole is based upon the teaching of the Fathers, and upon the attitude of our Lord and His Apostles to the Old Testament. In 2 Timothy iii. 15, however that verse be

best translated into English, St. Paul attributes the predicate *θεοπνευστος* to every Scripture, and by common consent he had the Old Testament in mind in so doing. Moreover, to quote the words of Professor Swete :—

“ Though it is only in 2 Timothy that inspiration is directly ascribed to the Old Testament Scriptures, there can be no doubt that belief in this inspiration was shared by all the leaders of the Apostolic Church, who quote the Old Testament as a final authority or as the Word of God. The same attitude seems to be attributed to our Lord in more than one of His arguments with the Jews, and in the direct teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. . . . *It is written* is His final justification of courses of action, the ground on which He bases principles.”

With regard to the New Testament, Professor Swete says :—

“ The traditional belief in the inspiration of the New Testament finds its justification in the promises of Divine assistance made by our Lord to the Apostles and their company, and the special gifts of the Spirit possessed by the Apostolic Age. If the first age was specially guided by the Spirit into a knowledge of essential truth, its writings have rightly been gathered by the Church into a sacred canon ” (*The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, pp. 330, 389).

Those who decline to apply the title the Word of God to the whole Bible do so for theoretical rather than for practical purposes. They would be the last to admit that special Divine authority attached to all those parts of the Old Testament introduced by such expressions as, “ Thus saith the Lord,” or to offer any practical division of the Bible into its authoritative and unauthoritative portions. It is unnecessary to labour the point further, for it is really unquestionable that when in the Church of England formularies the Bible is spoken of as the Word of God, that expression is attributed to it as a whole.

(b) The nature of the authority attributed to the Bible in the Articles is undoubtedly Divine. They place it above human traditions which have no force of obligation unless they can be proved by Holy Writ ; it is placed above the authority of General Councils, since they are not all, though they should be, governed by the Spirit and Word of God ; it is superior to the Church itself, which may not decree anything contrary to it nor enforce anything essential apart from its authority.

In the days of the Reformation it was asked, and the same question is being asked by Modernists to-day : How can Divine authority reside in a book ? Is not every book by its nature finite in its contents, bound up with the thought expression of its own age, and altogether a dead and not a living thing ?

To which the answer given is that contained in the Creed and in the Scriptures themselves, that the Holy Spirit is, in the last analysis, the author of Holy Scripture, and also its Interpreter. To quote Bishop Pearson again, the law given to Moses was “ not a mortal word to die with him, but living oracles to be in force

when he was dead, and oblige the people to a belief, when his rod had ceased to broach the rocks and divide the seas" (*op. cit.*, pp. 14, 15).

When Stephen spoke of the "living oracles," he was using an expression not applicable to secular history; and according to the teaching of the Church of England the living and timeless nature of Scripture is due to its authorship by the Holy Spirit, Who is not a dead but a living Person, and is the Interpreter of His own book to every individual and every age of the Church. In the Homily on Holy Scripture it is taught that it is plentifully sufficient "for all ages and for all degrees and sorts of men"; and that for its understanding, as Chrysostom said, human and worldly wisdom and science are not required, "but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, Who inspireth the true meaning unto them that with humility and diligence do search therefore."

Just as the doctrine of the Atonement is at once rendered inconsistent and nugatory if the Divinity of Christ be left out of count, so it is essential to the Protestant view of Scripture to bear in mind the work of the Divine Spirit.

His office, as Pearson points out, is first general and external by the deliverance of the revelation in the inspired Scriptures, and then individual and internal by moving the heart to assent to that which is propounded in the Word of God.

From this follows the Prayer Book doctrine that neither can Holy Scripture contradict itself, nor can it be contradicted by any man or body of men who speak under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

II. (a) Such being the teaching of the Church of England, how can it be applied to the problems raised by modern criticism, and to the practical end of promoting belief in Christ and holiness of life? For it should never be forgotten that God gave the Bible not to be the possession of scholars, but to be the lamp of life to common men; not to be a storehouse of arguments, but to be a rule of faith and conduct.

It has ever been the glory of Evangelicals to urge men to put their trust for salvation not in themselves, nor in their human teachers, but in the plain promises and statements of the Word of God.

And it is worth noting that its practical authority over the minds of men is directly proportionate to the confidence which they place in its precepts. Those who speak depreciatingly of the Old Testament should reflect that where confidence is shaken, authority is diminished, and the souls of men are injured.

There is not anything in the Church's doctrine of the supremacy of Scripture to hinder a reasonable and reverent historical criticism; but on the contrary, modern criticism stands in urgent need of the Evangelical faith in the Bible as the Word of God to make it not only more reverent but more reasonable.

The real difficulty does not turn upon questions of literal or symbolical interpretation, nor is it necessarily bound up with the



absolute accuracy of every genealogy or group of numbers to be found in the Bible. Such difficulties have been discussed since the earliest ages of the Church, and they have presented no obstacle to faith in the Bible as God's written Word, which Hooker describes as "with absolute perfection framed" and as possessing "no defect."

But the real issue is raised by that view of the Old Testament which was propounded by the rationalists De Wette and Wellhausen, and adopted by a majority of modern theological professors, which turns the history of Israel upside down. The article upon Israel in Hastings' one-volume *Bible Dictionary* gives a moderate exposition of this theory. After dividing the sources of Old Testament history into the three groups of narratives—(1) embodying tribal traditions; (2) reflecting the traditions of certain local shrines, and (3) a miscellany of legendary and mythical survivals, it proceeds to give an account of the history of Israel from which all miracle and Divine intervention is eliminated, its occurrence being attributed to primitive ignorance, and to give a description of the origin and early development of Israel which differs *toto cælo* from that given in the Pentateuch.

There is a twofold difficulty in reconciling such a view of the Old Testament with faith in it as the Word of God. In the first place it does violence to Pearson's statement that God is too wise to be deceived and too good to deceive us. The historical books unquestionably represent as real occurrences the plagues of Egypt, the institution of the Passover, and the giving of the Law from Sinai, and the plain man cannot easily bring himself to believe that God is the author of a book which, according to such criticism, not only misrepresents His actions, but even distorts His character.

The second difficulty consists in the fact that our Lord and His Apostles by common consent accepted these narratives as substantially true. It is hard to deny that Christ believed in a Jehovah who judged Sodom and Gomorrah for their sin by a physical visitation, and in one who saved believing Israelites when they lifted up their eyes to the brazen serpent.

Therefore, when we are asked with moral indignation whether we can believe that the Law of Moses proceeded from the inspiration of God, or whether He sanctioned the slaughter of the Amalekites, we are confronted by the fact that our Master believed in this Jehovah and taught His disciples to believe in Him, and we are loath to set up our standard of moral judgment as superior to His.

If the Graf-Wellhausen documentary theory and the closely connected non-miraculous character of Old Testament history rested upon the solid ground of external archæological evidence, we should be compelled to revise our view of the Old Testament as the Word of God, and our official position in the Church, but fortunately the exact contrary is the case, many eminent archæologists being strongly opposed to the critical theories.

But upon whichever side the truth may lie, the width of the

gulf that separates the two sides cannot be denied. Those who accept the narratives of the Old Testament as substantially true, and as truly representing the actions and character of God, stand in this matter where our Lord and His Apostles stood, and where the Church of England by her formularies stands, and unhesitatingly affirm the Old Testament, its partial and dispensational character notwithstanding, to be the Word of God. But it is not surprising that those who regard its narratives as historically impossible, and its picture of Jehovah as cruel and immoral, should be unready to give it this title, and should seek some relief from the acceptance of articles of religion with which they cannot reconcile their critical views.

(b) The question of the relation between the authority of the Bible and the Divinity of our Lord is crucial. It is not a question, as so often stated, of the limitations of our Lord's humanity. The question is of His truthfulness. Just as in the sphere of conduct we hold Him to be free from sin, whether or not He was liable to sin; so here the question is not whether or not He was liable to error, but whether in His recorded teaching He fell into error.

There are those who claim that they regard Him as absolutely infallible as a moral and spiritual leader, but that He did not possess more scientific knowledge than the people of His day. But the question of His knowledge of science is entirely beside the point, for He seldom even remotely referred to any scientific question, and it is easily shown that He never made a scientific mistake. The real question is, whether or not He was mistaken in His views and teaching regarding the Old Testament, and the God of the Old Testament.

The New Testament gives a clear picture of the thought and teaching both of our Lord and His Apostles with regard to the Old Testament. Broadly speaking, He accepted its narratives as historical, He believed in the Jehovah whose very deeds and words it described, He regarded as binding the moral commandments of the Law, and He saw around Him the fulfilment of predictions in which He recognized the sure prescience of God.

According to the dominant school of criticism He was in all these matters misled by the current notions of His own time.

Canon Liddon held that one proved error in any matter would be fatal to our Lord's authority; what then remains of His authority if on none of these points His teaching can be trusted? It requires more than ordinary mental agility to say that such vital matters as the character of God and the validity of the Messianic predictions lie outside the moral and spiritual sphere. But, even if the difficulties just mentioned could be avoided, such a distinction between moral and intellectual spheres is psychologically unsound, and can only end in the abandonment of all reliance upon His authority in all matters that concern the human intellect. And, let it be repeated, authority rests upon confidence, which is its correlative term. If we accept the authority of Christ we must be prepared to accept as true all that He can be fairly

shown to have taught and believed concerning Holy Scripture and its contents.

(c) The principle of authority must not be used unreasonably to bind our consciences with that ceremonial law which was fulfilled and done away with in Christ, nor to wrest or misapply apostolic injunctions of a confessedly temporary character, nor to build a weighty doctrine upon the doubtful interpretation of a single text. Nor does the attachment of the highest authority to the Bible as the Word of God place any bar in the way of the reverent study of textual or historical criticism, but rather supplies it with added stimulus.

But, rightly used to determine doctrine, the authority of the Bible is the very *raison d'être* of the Evangelical school of thought, which arose and gained its name from its habit of deriving all Christian doctrine from the written revelation of God, and not from Church tradition nor from unaided human reason. And here it was the true successor of the Reformation, not only in its principle of the divine authority and sufficiency of Scripture, but also in the doctrines which it derived therefrom.

Whence come such characteristically evangelical doctrines as the fallen condition of man, the depravity of the human will, and justification by faith alone through the propitiation set forth in Christ Jesus? Whence do we learn that these doctrines never will be popular to the natural man, but can only be accepted by the operation of the Spirit upon the heart?

We believe these things because we accept the Gospel message, and the Bible as God's written Word. When we see the vicarious nature of the Atonement written broadly over the pages of the New Testament, and proclaimed and predicted and illustrated by an enormous wealth of Old Testament teaching in covenant and type and prophecy, then the Evangelical is bound to accept it because of the authority inherent in the written Word. He cannot and dare not write it down as Judaism or Paulinism, nor need he wait to know what the modern world thinks about it.

It is true that such a doctrine makes a wonderful appeal to reason, when that reason is illuminated and humbled and guided by the Holy Spirit; but the highest reason consists in the acceptance of God's truth, as the most sensible scholar accepts his teacher's judgment rather than his own.

More particularly in the doctrine of future things, whether in this world or the next, we hold and must hold, that the Bible, as the Word of God, alone can give us sure and certain knowledge. The Evangelical views of the second coming of Christ, of future judgment, and of Heaven and Hell, the preaching of which are so greatly needed in this generation, rest upon the Bible as their only and sufficient authority.

Since, therefore, Evangelical doctrine is simply Bible doctrine, since we differ crucially from the Modernist in believing that the views of God and the world taught there are not the outworn intellectual garments of a bygone age, but are the revelation of God to

His Church for all time, until the return of Christ shall usher in a new age. Evangelicalism stands or falls with the authority of that Bible upon which its creed is based and from which its spirit is derived.

In conduct as well as in faith this is true. The Bible is our missionary handbook and our code of philanthropy. If the Bible loses its authority the warnings of God lose their terrors and the promises of God lose their comfort. If the Bible loses its authority, assurance of salvation will have to be placed in human works or human feelings. Without the Bible as the authoritative Word of God to this age, as to every age, it would be impossible to build up that saintliness of life and that practical holiness for which such gatherings as the Keswick Convention stand, and which is a true mark of Evangelicalism.

Finally, the authority of the Bible, being derived from the Divine Spirit of God, Who speaks in all its pages, let us in all consideration of its authority, as well as in its daily study, seek His illumination that we may see it as He made it, and use it as He intended.

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## THE EVANGELICAL MESSAGE: THE BIBLE— ITS INTERPRETATION.

BY THE REV. J. W. HUNKIN, M.A., M.C., Dean and Tutor  
Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

FROM what has been already said this morning it is clear that, as we attempt to interpret and to understand the unique library of which the Bible consists, we must use every effort to make our study worthy of its object. This means that our work must be begun, continued and ended in sincere devotion to Truth, and under the direction and ruling of the Spirit of God. We shall consciously depend upon the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Not that this is necessary only in the study of Holy Scripture. It is indispensable in all study. Every educational establishment should begin the day's work with prayer, as every human being should, whatever his day's work may be. We shall also constantly endeavour to preserve a single eye for Truth. It has been said<sup>1</sup> that the Roman Church manifests every Christian grace with the single exception of veracity. There are many, especially in the Universities, who are to-day watching the Anglican Communion not without anxiety with regard to the same virtue. We must be entirely loyal to the truth as we see it. Not that we shall see it all. We shall not be able to explain everything in the Bible. But it is not open to us to acquiesce in explanations which appear to us to be unreasonable.

<sup>1</sup> As Mr. A. E. J. Rawlinson has recently reminded us, *Studies in Historical Christianity*, p. 100.

Let us ask first of all, what it is that our fathers have told us with regard to the interpretation of Holy Scripture?

It seems to me that two distinct strands can be distinguished in the tradition of Biblical interpretation which we have received; and each of these strands can be traced backwards to the very earliest times.

The first may perhaps be called the interpretation of personal application. Men and women who are thoroughly familiar with the Bible find as a matter of fact that its language frequently comes to their lips in the various situations of life. Again and again in their experience inspiration and guidance are conveyed to their minds by the very words and sentences of Holy Scripture, sometimes with little or no reference to their context. Let me give a rather extreme example of what I mean. It is the interpretation given by an old monk to John Cassian of the last verse of Psalm cxxxvii. "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Ps. cxxxvii. 9). "Happy is he," said the old monk, "who takes his evil habits while they are yet little and dashes them against the stones." It would be hard to find a better application of this particular text of Scripture. In cases like this the words of Holy Scripture are a vehicle for a personal message, a message which strikes deep into the heart of the individual who receives it. Such a message, if we may change the metaphor, is *food* for the soul. And we should all be agreed that it is our privilege both personally to use such food, and to encourage our congregations to do the same. We should frequently impress upon them the importance of expecting, both when they come to church and in their private devotions at home, messages conveyed to them through psalm or lesson or prayer or sermon in this kind of way. That expectation should sustain them through the more arid portions of their religious exercises.

In this interpretation of Holy Scripture, the interpretation of personal application, it is clear that the utmost freedom is allowable. The English Bible, to say the least, stands at the highest point of our literature; and it would be strange indeed if the Holy Spirit of God did not speak to us through its beautiful and familiar words. We can accept no theory of inspiration which would deny some measure of it to our own translators. In some cases they have undoubtedly improved upon the Hebrew text. To quote a single example: in Psalm xxix. 2, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" is even better than "Worship the Lord in holy array," i.e. arrayed in holy ornaments, which is the more correct rendering of the Hebrew text. And there are many passages which have given rise to noble and inspiring ideas which are not, as a matter of fact, suggested by their original writers. Haggai ii. 7 is a familiar instance: "The desire of all nations shall come," has furnished a text for many a stirring sermon upon the Messiah; whereas the original should be translated, "The desirable things of all nations [i.e. their treasures] shall come." Still more familiar is the magnificent passage from the book of Job in our own Service for the Burial of the Dead: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall

stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another " (Job xix. 25-27). We do well to repeat these splendid words over our dead, even if it cannot be assumed that this rendering of the original really represents the belief of the author of the book of Job.

The interpretation of personal application, however, has its obvious limitations, especially when one individual tries to pass on his own private interpretation to others. About 1605 when all the Colleges at Cambridge except Emmanuel and Sidney had finally adopted the use of the surplice in chapel, a certain Fellow of Christ's, William Ames by name, still refused to wear one. The Master tried hard to persuade him. "The surplice," he said, "is that very armour of light which the Apostle enjoins us to put on." But although the Master saw the force of the argument, William Ames failed to see it, and we can hardly blame him. The author of *The Divine Armory of Holy Scripture* quotes as authority for "the noble lineage, immaculate conception and virginity of the Virgin Mary," "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee" (Canticles iv. 7). By applications of this kind we are forced sooner or later to two important questions with regard to any given passage of Holy Scripture : What did the writer of it himself mean, and how do his words apply in other circumstances, above all, in our own ? The consideration of the latter question I must be content to omit to-day. The former brings us at once to the other strand of the tradition we have received, and it is plain that it is the primary and the other the secondary.

For the other use of Holy Scripture rests upon the assumption that the sacredness of the Bible is already recognized. That sacredness, if we are to avoid arguing in a circle, rests on something else, namely, upon the actual meaning of, at any rate, some parts of it. That this meaning, the meaning of the writers themselves, must be discovered by sound scholarship and careful study is the other thread of the tradition we have received.

It must be confessed that there have been times when the thread has worn very thin. Especially was this the case in the Middle Ages. The Council of Trent summed up the principles of mediæval exegesis in four propositions. Any interpretation of a passage in Holy Scripture must conform to the rule of faith, the mind of the Church, the consent of the Fathers, the decisions of the Councils. It was a new and surprising thing at Oxford when at the beginning of the Michaelmas term in 1496, John Colet, with no degree in Divinity, and not yet in deacon's orders, announced a course of lectures on St. Paul's Epistles. He began with the Epistle to the Romans and went through it to the end treating it as a whole and not as an armoury of detached texts. His lectures contained hardly any quotations from the fathers or from the schoolmen, and he closed them with a few words to the effect that he had tried to the best of his power, with the aid of Divine grace, to bring out St. Paul's true

meaning. "Whether indeed I have done this," he added, "I hardly can tell, but the greatest desire to do so I have had."<sup>1</sup>

As a Reformed Church we are committed to the exegesis of Holy Scripture by means of careful study and sound scholarship. This of course exposes us to the danger of unsound scholarship; but ignorance is no match even for unsound scholarship. Only sound learning can drive out unsound. The work of the Christian student is thus summed up by Bishop Westcott<sup>2</sup>: he "examines the history of the Scriptures with the frankest study of all available evidence, external and internal; he determines their interpretation with a watchful regard to the circumstances under which they were composed; he sees in them, in a word, a true monument of human experience through which the Spirit of God spoke and speaks to men." What drove the revolutionary conclusions of scholars like Baur from the field was the superior scholarship of men like Bishop Lightfoot. And it is a reassuring indication of the increasing soundness of Biblical scholarship in general that new theories like those propounded in Bousset's *Kyrios Christos* and Norden's *Agnostos Theos* have been met with adequate criticism at an early stage and have by no means been allowed to sweep the field.

Sound study is impossible without accuracy. It is impossible also without the belief that all Truth is one. It is very easy to fall into inaccuracy in the simple quoting of Scripture. Lyman Abbott, in his book on *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*, tells the story of a Judge of the Supreme Court of New York who declared in a legal decision, "We have the highest possible authority for saying, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.'" The next morning the *New York Herald* commented on his opinion substantially as follows: "We find that it was the devil who said, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life': now we know who it is that our Supreme Court Judges regard as the highest possible authority." Even the Westminster Confession of Faith enforces the doctrine that the hopes of the unregenerate are illusory and vain by the argument of Bildad that Job must have been a great sinner or his prosperity would not have come to naught (Job viii. 13, 14).

If we are to avoid such mistakes in the future we must be accurate in our study of Holy Scripture. And that is perhaps the chief reason why there should be examinations in Scripture knowledge as in other subjects in our schools. Examination is a great incentive to accuracy. On the other hand the student of Holy Scripture must beware of the fictitious value which minute accuracy, depending upon microscopic points of learning, possesses for the academic mind: he must have a wide outlook; he must believe that all Truth is one. God is one; and the God of the Bible cannot contradict the God of History and the God of Nature. Happily in this respect we are in a better position than past generations. The study of Nature and of History is now well established on scientific

<sup>1</sup> See Seebohm's *Oxford Reformers*, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Lessons from Work*, p. 177.

lines. For the one we go to the laboratories ; for the other to the monuments and to original documents. If, for instance, we want to know about the prehistoric state of the earth we make a systematic study of geology and astronomy. If we want to obtain an account of the early history of the nearer East we take a book like Hogarth's *Ancient History* as our starting point and pass down the centuries keeping in touch with archæological remains all the way. No one will now think of questioning the validity of the scientific method in the realms of Nature and of History. And when, after having had—under the influence, as we believe, of the Spirit of God—exercise in these realms of thought, we come to the Bible and read it carefully we soon see that the Bible is neither a text-book of Science, nor, though it contains historical material, a text-book of History. It is only if we read carelessly that we escape from the fact that the Bible assumes that the earth is flat and that it, and not the sun, is the centre of the solar system. Some of the language of theology, resting as it does upon the language of Scripture, is built upon this assumption. Copernicus undermined the whole conception and as the Dean of St. Paul's has recently put it,<sup>1</sup> has left in our theology, "a still unhealed wound." And if the Bible is not a text-book of Science neither is it a text-book of History. No text-book of history could say so little about the great founder of a dynasty like Omri ; no text-book of history could leave unreconciled two such different accounts of the end of Jehoiakim as we find in 2 Kings xxiv. 6 and 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 6. We cannot assume that as writers of history the writers of Holy Scripture were miraculously preserved from error. Obvious slips are left staring us in the face, in Mark ii. 26 for example, as if to insist that the writers, honest bona fide historians as they are, make no claim to infallibility. Discussions as to the accuracy of St. Luke with regard to the impostor Theudas, or as to the numbers recorded in the book of Chronicles are interesting, but not important. St. Luke was a careful and well-informed, but not an infallible, historian. The exaggeration of numbers in the book of Chronicles is no more significant than the similar exaggeration in Josephus or in the journals of John Wesley.

But time does not allow of further illustration of such details. I think, if I may be allowed to do so, I had better try to sum up simply and frankly what I believe to be the result of the devoted labour which has been expended upon the study of Holy Scripture during the past two generations.

It seems to me that the contents of the Bible flow as it were from two great watersheds.

The first was reached under the Providence of God when Israel emerged out of childhood into the period of adolescence. After a long and chequered history, at last, at last, Israel knew that there was one God alone and that the Lord its God was holy and righteous and merciful. From that point Israel looked back and wrote its history in poetry and in prose. The first chapters of Genesis are an ancient

<sup>1</sup> "Teaching by Parable," *Modern Churchman*, March, 1922, p. 656.



*Paradise Lost*; the historical books of the Old Testament embody ancient material and use it as a good Protestant like one of ourselves might use the original documents of the Middle Ages in writing a history of the English Church; the Psalms are the "hymns ancient and modern" of the Second Temple; of the prophets I shall try to say a word in a moment. From all these documents we can, partially at least, reconstruct the course of history. We can go back to a time, for instance, when pious Israelites kept their teraphim or household gods and went to the nearest high place to worship the deity who gave the increase to their crops. The reconstruction needs care and is by no means complete at present. It is full of the deepest interest for it gives us a history of religion, and of our own religion. For our own religion goes back not to Thor and Odin, but to the religion of Israel. But the development we trace is no uniform development. High water mark is reached here soon and there late; surprisingly soon sometimes, and especially in the prophets: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah vi. 8). Here we have one of the permanent high water marks of religion. Or again and again in the Psalms the poet rises above the hill of Zion to the very heights of God. It is unnecessary for me to give examples. The Psalms appointed for the twenty-seventh day of the month (for instance) are full of them. We must remember, moreover, that the historical books of the Old Testament were written under prophetic influence, and many a peak stands out among them. It was especially through history and not especially through nature that the prophets had come to a knowledge of the character of God. And when they look forward into the future it is upon this knowledge that they take their stand. Their forecasts are intuitions, involving not a detailed foreknowledge of the future but an insight into the Divine mind.<sup>1</sup> But all this cannot be allowed to disguise the fact that the general level of religious thought in the Old Testament is lower than the Christian level. I have heard of cases in which professedly Christian men have seriously defended low levels of sexual morality by referring to the practice of concubinage by the patriarchs. Not long ago I was reading Professor Sir George Adam Smith's great book on *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, and on page 28 I came across a statement which I thought would be a good starting-point for a sermon. "To the prophets," says the Professor, "Phœnicia and her influence are a great and a sacred thing. Isaiah and Ezekiel bewail the destruction of Tyre and her navies as desecration. Isaiah cannot believe it to be final. He sees Phœnicia rising purified by her captivity to be the carrier of true religion to the ends of the earth."

I turned up the passage in Isaiah, and chose a text, Isaiah xxiii. 18: "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord." And then I looked into the passage more closely, and with the assistance of the commentaries of Dr. Skinner and Dr. Gray, found

See Rawlinson, *op. cit.* p. 168.

that there is in the context no suggestion of the purification of Tyre. After her captivity Tyre is to ply her trade exactly as before and the only difference appears to be that now the profits of Tyre's trading are to be paid into the Temple at Jerusalem. I was somewhat taken back at the lowness of the prophet's prospect, although I found it possible by a slight modification still to preach the sermon.

The whole watershed of the Old Testament is a lower one than the second watershed to which I have referred, the watershed of the New Testament. This is indeed the highest watershed the world has known, the heights of which, like those of Mt. Everest, have never yet been trodden by foot of man. It consists of nothing less than that life which was the light of men. All the books of the New Testament have their origin in the disciples' experience of that life and of its meaning in their own lives unto the second, and perhaps unto the third, generation. It is not merely St. John who looks back upon the events of the life of our Lord remembering all the time that He was no other than the Word made flesh: it is not merely in the fourth gospel that when Jesus speaks it is the voice of the Risen Christ that we hear. The same is true, to some extent at least, of the Synoptists. Even in a simple tale like that of Martha and Mary it is no mere rabbi, it is the Divine Lord Who uses words that fit that part only, and in a lower character would be out of place. Here again in the New Testament the heights are not all upon one level. We are told that John Colet<sup>1</sup> was wont to declare "that when he turned from the Apostles to the wonderful majesty of Christ, their writings, much as he loved them, seemed to him to become poor as it were in comparison." And it is impossible not to be struck by the differences in level among the utterances of St. Paul. On the one hand we have the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which even so unsparing a critic as Samuel Butler ranks among the three or four finest achievements of human art. On the other hand we also find in St. Paul prejudices not altogether defensible about women, unguarded language about the irresponsibility of spiritual people, and so on. We may follow up this last case a little further. In 1 Corinthians ii. 15 the Apostle writes "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." But as the Apostle grew in grace his sense of humour evidently grew also, and in his later epistles he does not take his readers so seriously. There must have been a twinkle in his eye as he wrote to the Philip-pians, his dear friends, whose capacity for forgetting he knew well: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to repeat once more and for the last time what I have said to you, to me indeed is not grievous—no, I don't mind doing it at all—but for you it is *safe*."

The conclusion to the whole matter in a word is surely this: God is the Living God. His Spirit is still guiding men. If He is not guiding them now then He never has been guiding them. But we believe that He still speaks to them and leads their hearts and minds

<sup>1</sup> Seebohm, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

into the way of Truth. They are fallible: there are no infallibilities. But inspiration is a reality, a reality in the present as well as in the past: "The Holy Spirit," says Wiclif, "teaches us the sense of Scripture as Christ opened the Scriptures to His disciples." It is true that we are not in a position to define it either then or now: and it will be well for us if we do not make the attempt. It is scarcely too much to say that the fundamental error in all the "heresies," as we called them, is over-eagerness to define, over-confidence in definitions. As Bishop Westcott puts it in the book I have already quoted,<sup>1</sup> "We have no right to approach Scripture with any *a priori* theory of inspiration but rather by a careful and inductive study of the books themselves we must be led to see in what their inspiration really consists." In that careful and inductive study, proceeding reverently and depending upon the comfort of the Holy Ghost, we shall go forward with confidence.

By Thine unerring Spirit led  
We shall not in the desert stray:  
We shall not full direction need  
Nor miss our providential way.  
As far from danger as from fear  
While love, Almighty love, is near.

The special subject of this paper has led me to refer at such length to various problems of Biblical interpretation that I am afraid I may have left an exaggerated impression of the difficulty of understanding the meaning of the Scriptures. I would if possible correct that impression in a closing word.

In the providence of God the Bible as we have it contains large stores of religious food already prepared for the consumption of the wayfaring man. "I utterly oppose the opinion," Erasmus once said,<sup>2</sup> "of those who deny the common people the right to read the divine letters in the vernacular, as if Christ taught unintelligible mysteries which only a few theologians understand." Modern Psychology in treatises on the Psychology of Religion endeavours to present us with the results of its analysis of religious experience in a form that<sup>3</sup> arouses in us only a faint repulsion. It is as if a chemist should take us into his laboratory and invite us to partake of the elements of which our food is composed, nicely labelled in bottles. However hungry we were we could not eat. But here in the Bible the chemical process by which the elements become food convenient for us has been already performed under the good providence of God. The bread of life is placed upon the table. It is not a mixture of Carbon and Hydrogen and Oxygen: it is bread: all alike, young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned—for the Lord is the Maker of us all—may feed upon it by faith with thanksgiving.

<sup>1</sup> *Lessons from Work*, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by J. Moffat, *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> With notable exceptions like William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

## THE ATONEMENT.

BY THE REV. H. W. HINDE, M.A., Vicar of Islington.

IT is said that clear views of the Atonement are seldom set forth to-day, and that the reason is not that every one knows the Gospel, but that the preachers and teachers of it are themselves not sure of their ground. Whether this is an exaggeration or not is of no account; few will deny that there is not the same note of glorious certainty regarding the truth of the Gospel sounding forth from our Evangelical pulpits that once made us both a laughing-stock to, and the envy of, the world. It is also unquestionable that this lack of certainty about the Atonement synchronizes with an amazing indifference to the fact of sin. To the ordinary man sin is little if anything more than a myth, a relic of the teaching of less enlightened days, and the Christian pulpits and Church publications seem content it should be so. A lack of the sense of sin involves inevitably a lack of certainty concerning the truth of the Atonement. But the Atonement presupposes sin, and not only presupposes it, but looks upon it as something so terrible and damning that it required a Sacrifice of infinite worth for the reconciling of the world.

Let us then begin by recognizing a fundamental truth as regards our subject. It is impossible for us rightly to appreciate the Atonement or enter into the Mind of God concerning it until we feel the need of it. Indeed the Atonement is utterly meaningless unless there is the recognition of the awful fact of sin. No doctrine of the Atonement drawn from the Bible will commend itself to any soul which is not alive to the holiness of God and its own sinfulness. It is only when the conviction of sin has laid hold of a soul that the Cross of Christ becomes full of meaning, and the teaching of the Bible, still unreasonably true, becomes reasonable and soul-satisfying. Behind the glorious fact of the Atonement stands the awful fact of sin, and except in such a setting no true view of the Atonement can be obtained.

There is nothing more important for man than the knowledge of the Atonement, except it is the acceptance by faith of its benefits. Other subjects are vast and important, but none can be compared to this; other events have been far-reaching in their consequences, but never was any event so fraught with tremendous issues for life and death as was the Sacrifice of Calvary, for there was offered once for all the One Sacrifice which made atonement for the sins of the whole world. Books by the thousand have been written on the subject, and lost; sermons by the million have been preached, and forgotten; but the Fact of the Atonement remains the most amazing thing in the world's history, unparalleled, both in the greatness of its accomplishment, and the force of its appeal. Movements of thought about the Fact have swept through the Church again and again, theories have been set forth repeatedly, some have been forgotten, some have survived only for ridicule, some still

remain for consideration, for acceptance or rejection. But the Fact of Atonement remains unchallenged and unchallengeable, and the Fact is the all-important thing. Yet this does not mean that theories of the Fact are unimportant. Far from it, it is almost impossible to conceive the acceptance of the Fact without some theory in regard to it. Nevertheless, let us concern ourselves now more with the Fact than with the various theories that have been set forth, while it necessarily follows that in dealing with the Fact we must work along the lines of some theory. Let it be on the broad lines of a general substitutionary theory rather than those of a precise narrow dogmatic theology. The Writers of the New Testament took the same line and concerned themselves far more about the Fact (and were clearer about it) than about any theory regarding it. Each generation of believers since has sought to comprehend it more fully and to explain it more adequately, but the imperfect and sin-ruined intellect of man can never grasp it or set it forth in its completeness and complexity. We cannot do more than "know in part," but the time is coming when "that which is in part will be done away," and all our present perplexities and apparent difficulties will be dissolved in perfect knowledge.

Meanwhile, let us hold fast the Fact of the Atonement and, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, let us seek to enter more fully into the hidden truths, realizing the better how perfect is this Work of God and rejoicing the more in the peace which is ours through the Blood of the Cross.

It was, we have seen, in consequence of sin that Atonement was necessary. It was because of the immense evil of sin and its inherent effects that it was impossible for man to atone for it himself. Our iniquities separated between us and our God, and our sins hid His face from us. If the alienation is to be done away, if the estranged parties are to be reconciled and brought together again, man must be reinstated in a right relationship to God, and God must be reinstated in the heart and life of man. The Atonement set forth in Holy Scripture, the plan and performance of God, sets man right before God and is designed to draw man back to God. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," is first of all Atonement God-wards, "will draw all men unto Me," is Atonement man-wards.

Have we such an Atonement depicted for us in Scripture? The Cross of Calvary is the answer. It is "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." This is the Central Message of the Bible and is the very heart and life of the Evangelical Message. It is the central thought of both Old and New Testament, it is the key to both. The Old Testament looks forward to the coming of One to Whom all types, ceremonies and prophecies pointed, and to the consummation of an all-sufficient Atonement. The New Testament tells us of the Offering of the One Sacrifice "once for all" and looks forward to the effectual working of its power unto salvation in every one that believes.

We may not all perhaps be prepared to say with one of the Fathers of the Church that: "The Books of Moses are written with

the Blood of the Lamb." But we have ample justification for expecting to find in these Books and in the Old Testament generally some explanation of the Lord's Death. He Himself seemed almost surprised that the Emmaus Two had not already seen Him in the Scriptures: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And again a little later to the Disciples He said: "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name." Moreover, unless the Epistle to the Hebrews is a mighty deception or has been preserved under a marvellous misconception (with which the question of Pauline authorship has nothing to do) unless the Church has ever completely misunderstood its teaching and significance, it testifies that "the vast lines of the old Ritual and Priesthood all converged divinely upon the blessed Cross, *precisely* upon the Cross."

In the Old Testament the word Atonement is found nearly one hundred times, and usually in the phrase "to make atonement." Just as in the New Testament the words atonement, reconciliation, and the verb to reconcile, all stand for the same Greek compound in the original language, so there is always one single root in Hebrew behind the atonement of the Old Testament. Literally, it means to throw a covering over. In its emphatic form it means to apply that kind of covering which is necessary in order to the reconciliation of enemies, where there has been ground of offence. Dr. Waller put it thus: "The atonement of the Old Testament sets a shield, a cover, a barrier between the sinner and his offended God. The atonement of the New Testament takes the barrier away and unites them in the free intercourse and communion of peace." "The Old Testament states, fully and precisely, the absolute necessity of a 'cover' between God and sinners, if their meeting is to result in anything but the sinner's death."

But it is essential then for us to ask of what character was this "cover." It is obvious of course that there is no suggestion of attempting to hide anything from the all-seeing eye of the Deity with a view to deceiving Him and to make the sinner appear as otherwise than a sinner. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. The sin remained. But in virtue of those sacrifices because of what they represented, the sinner was so far reinstated that he might approach God. In effect they made atonement, though they were "but a shadow of good things to come." The Israelite might not understand the full significance of the rites and ceremonies, but nevertheless the whole system demonstrated the holiness and righteousness of God, the sinfulness of man, and the guilt

of sin, and above all, showed it was God's will that forgiveness should be secured, not on account of anything the sinner could do (either act of repentance or expiatory performance) but solely on account of the undeserved grace of God through the death of a victim guilty of no offence against the Divine Law, whose shed blood represented the substitution of an innocent for a guilty life.

Dr. Edersheim, in his book on *The Temple, its Ministry and Services*, says: "The fundamental idea of sacrifice in the Old Testament is that of substitution, which again seems to imply everything else—atonement and redemption, vicarious punishment and forgiveness. The firstfruits go for the whole products; the firstlings for the flock; the redemption-money for that which cannot be offered; and the life of the sacrifice, which is in its blood, for the life of the sacrificer. Hence also the strict prohibition to partake of blood. Even in the 'Korban' gift or freewill offering, it is still the gift for the giver. This idea of substitution, as introduced, adopted, and sanctioned by God Himself, is expressed by the sacrificial term rendered in our version 'atonement,' but which really means covering, the substitute in the acceptance of God taking the place of, and so covering, as it were, the person of the offerer. Hence the Scriptural experience: 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered . . . unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.'"

We are able to carry the matter further and to make it clearer when we turn to the occasion when the priests bore the sins of others. "The Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood" (Num. xviii. 1). Andrew Bonar in his commentary on Leviticus draws attention to the two passages in Leviticus in which occurs the expression "bearing sin" and says they tell us "(1) That the individual who bears the sin of others must himself be pure from these sins. This was signified by the priest's offering, a sin-offering by which all his own sins were borne away. (2) That this expression means more than enduring the effects of sin. For a personally guilty substitute might have done this. (3) That to 'bear sin' implies that the person is reckoned guilty of the sin. Hence when it is said that the priests bore the iniquity of the sanctuary the sense is, they were reckoned guilty, until they had put that guilt upon the sacrifice, and had seen that sacrifice burnt to ashes."

How very closely the guilt was associated with the offering is seen emphatically in the language used. For instance, in Leviticus vi. 26 and ix. 15, "He offered it for sin" might as fairly be translated—He sinned it or He made it sin. The sense of "offering for sin" is evidently taken from the fact that every such sacrifice had the sin laid on it. Hence perhaps the use of the expression in 2 Corinthians v. 21, "He made Him sin for us." It is not "made Him to be a sin-offering," but much more, the sin-offering itself was "made sin." The true idea appears in Genesis xxxi. 39, "I bare the loss of it," that is, I was made sin for it, the same word

being used. The idea seems to be "He put the sin of the people on the victim till it became one mass of sin." The priest's using it as the atonement for those who presented it, made the victim become, in a manner, the receiver of their sin and of the penalty it deserved. And so our Great Sin-offering, Jesus, when slain for us, was treated as if He were the reservoir of the sin and curse that flowed, in so many streams, over man. In this sense "the Father made him to be sin for us" (Bonar, *Levit.*, p. 182).

It is impossible to do more than cursorily glance at certain aspects brought out in Scripture, and a background knowledge must be assumed. But let us turn briefly to the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. Mr. David Baron in his recently published exposition of Isaiah liii (*The Servant of Jehovah*), says: "The heart and climax of the whole prophecy is to be found in the brief section which forms its inmost centre (chaps lii. 13 to liii. 12), which, instead of a prophecy uttered centuries in advance, reads like an historic summary of the Gospel narrative of the sufferings of the Christ and the glory that should follow. . . . The doctrine it enshrines, namely, substitution, is one of the leading truths unfolded in Old and New Testaments, and it forms the central thought in this great prophecy. It is, moreover, the essence of the message of comfort with which the prophet begins (xl. 1, 2) solving the problem as to how 'her iniquity is pardoned.'"

There are few of us probably who do not regard this great section, and in particular Chapter liii, as the very Holy of Holies of the Old Testament. Here perhaps more than in any other place we see ourselves and we behold and find our Saviour. Every sentence, every minutest detail, seems to declare loudly it testifies of Him. It is indeed, as Polycarp called it, "The golden Passional of the Old Testament." Many books have been written on it, various interpretations have been put forth, but somehow it seems to speak louder than any exposition and its direct appeal sinks deeper. Mr. J. K. Mozley well says in *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, published during the War, "The precise interpretation that we give to the Servant of Jahveh is not immediately important. Whether the Servant be Israel as a whole who suffers for the nations, or an ideal Israel, a faithful remnant who suffer for the redemption of the people, or the mysterious 'Great Personage' of Dr. Cheyne's *Mimes of Isaiah Re-explored*, the expiatory virtue of whose sufferings extended not to Israel alone . . . whatever, in short, be our conclusion as to the critical problems, historic and linguistic, involved, at least we are face to face with ideas of mediation, sacrifice, and expiation, which come with the greater and more significant force because of their totally unexpected appearance."

". . . What is done in Isaiah liii. is looked on as done between Jahveh and the Servant with the deliberate intention of an expiation for the sins of others. Whatever be the force of the substitutionary offering of the Servant, it is impossible to expel the idea of substitution from the passage."

Or again, he says: "We take the heart out of the words, and



deprive the Servant of His noblest glory, if we look on his work as only an object lesson, an incentive or even a piece of voluntary self-sacrifice: it is God who has brought him to stand where others should stand, to endure what others should endure; and he stands and endures because it is God's will for him, without complaint."

This, admittedly, takes us further than most modern authorities, but it accords more nearly with the general consensus of Christian thought throughout history from the time the Church began to think. It accords with history and the types as well as with other prophecies. It is pre-eminently along this line we see the Divine unity of Scripture, for when we turn to the New Testament we find fulfilled and again set forth the same great Truth, the same Mediation, the same Saviour, the same Atonement.

The Gospels have very little definite instruction on the subject of the Atonement, and yet we find the Lord teaching He came to give His life a ransom price for many (Matt. xx. 28), and He closes His Ministry with the institution of a Sacrament for the continual remembrance of His Death and of the benefits which we receive thereby. But if the Gospels have little direct teaching on the Atonement, the great prominence given by them in narrative to the Death of Christ shows how completely that Death filled their vision and how clearly they saw in it the fulfilment of prophecy and type, and the foundation of a new dispensation. As the late Bishop of Durham puts it, "The Incarnation . . . is presented to us historically in a few firm luminous lines. But when we come to the Sacrifice, when we approach and reach the Cross, with its other side in the Resurrection, it is as if no detail were too minute, no mass of darkness or of glory too large, in the Evangelical picture. There is no biography like that of the Lord Jesus, which carries us in three or four steps of incident over nearly thirty years of the brief life below, and spends upon the closing week, the closing day, and the immediate sequel of that day, nearly one quarter of the whole bulk of the story."

This prominence given to the Death of Christ is unique. It is unparalleled. It is without analogy, not only in Scripture but in history. Dr. Dale says: "The Evangelists found no precedent for this elaborate account of the Death of our Lord in the Old Testament. The death of Moses, of Aaron, of David, is told with a severe simplicity and brevity; the writers of the ancient Scriptures felt that it is to the life of prophets and saints—not to the circumstances of their death—that the enduring interest of their history belongs. St. Luke dismisses in one brief sentence the martyrdom of an Apostle—"And [Herod] killed James the brother of John with the sword." And if the martyrdom of Stephen is told at greater length it is plainly for the sake of what Stephen said, rather than for the sake of what he suffered. . . . In the importance which the Evangelists attach to the Death of our Lord, they are but following the line of His own thought. To Him, His Death—whatever may have been its significance—was distinctly present from the very commencement of His ministry, and He constantly spoke of it as necessary to the

accomplishment of His mission. . . . Why was it that the anticipation of His Death was associated with some of the greatest moments in His history? Why did He speak of it to Peter, when Peter confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God? Why did it occur to Him when the Greeks came to speak to Him at the Feast? Why did He institute a religious rite to commemorate it?

"When I try to discover the meaning of the sorrow of Christ on the Cross, I cannot escape the conclusion that He is somehow involved in this deep and dreadful darkness by the sins of the race whose nature He has assumed. If the dread with which He anticipated His Death, and if the Divine desertion which made His Death so awful, are to pass into Doctrine, I can conceive of no other form in which they can appear than that which they assume in the Apostolic Epistles—'He was delivered for our offences.' 'He died for our sins.' He 'suffered . . . the Just for the Unjust.' 'He was made a curse for us.'

"As I look, as I listen, I am driven to exclaim, 'Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' In no other way are His sufferings explicable. . . . Either the Death of Christ was the Atonement for human sin, or else it fills me with terror and despair."

"When we pass to the Book of the Acts we find everywhere in the words, and yet more in the spirit, of the Apostles that their profound, vital, presupposition is the Lord's Incarnation. But their articulate message is His Death, its awe, its shame, its glory, its results. As for the Epistles and the Revelation, where shall we stop when once we begin to trace the sacred line of atoning blood?" (Moule.)

The subject is inexhaustible. Time is exhausted. This paper must be closed. In conclusion let me say the great theme of both Old and New Testaments is a Sacrificial Death through which alone man can have access and peace. The emphasis of the Old Testament lies rather in the appeal to God, but even there is seen the appeal to man on the ground of redemption (e.g. Ex. xx. 2), and the emphasis of the New lies in the appeal to man based on the atonement made. The Death of Jesus Christ puts man in a new position before God, it reinstates him. The Death of Jesus Christ reveals to man such boundless love in God that it presents God to man in a new light. It reinstates Him. The Sacrifice of Calvary was the work of God and in it an atonement all sufficient was made. From the same Cross, through the Risen Lord and His Church, there comes to man the call: Be ye reconciled to God. The strength of the call is in the fact of our personal interest in the Death of the Incarnate Son of God, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." I may not understand "how" that death atones, nor "how" that life is a ransom "instead of" many and "on behalf of" all, nor "how" it was possible for the Sinless Lamb of God to assume the responsibilities of sinful men. I may not understand all about it, but I believe it. The world believes in

gravitation, in light, in electricity and in much else, not because they can be fully explained, but because the facts are demonstrable and the effects unquestionable. So, we believe that Christ died instead of the sinner, not because we know all the reasons which led God to appoint and to accept His Sacrifice, but because the fact has been demonstrated and the effects are felt and seen in our life. This is our great Evangelical message: "Jesus our Lord was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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### SHORT NOTICES.

**THE GOOD NEWS. WHAT IS IT?** By John Gordon Jameson, M.P., Advocate, Barrister-at-Law. Edinburgh: *Macniven & Wallace*. 2s. 6d. net.

It is not often that Members of Parliament pose as theologians, and judging by this book we think it is just as well, considering that the author rejects the Atonement, which he tells us was first elaborated by *St. Paul* in the Epistle to the Hebrews! So, in the face of scholarship, he has settled the vexed question as to the authorship of that letter, and he declares that the teaching is not that of Jesus. He seems to have forgotten that Christians regard the later books of the New Testament as inspired equally with the Gospel narratives. No, we cannot regard this worthy and well-meaning M.P. as a safe guide. It may be stupid of us, but we prefer the author of Hebrews!

**WHY DID CHRIST DIE? OR, THE GREATEST THEME IN THE WORLD.** By F. L. E. Marsh. London: *Marshall Brothers*. 5s. net.

In certain quarters the Atonement is out of fashion, indeed there are preachers who almost denounce it. But the author of this very valuable exposition regards it as one of the fundamentals. He has in his previous volumes shown himself to be an adept in the art of arranging Scriptural subjects in a helpful way, and he has prepared a very careful and complete survey of Bible teaching on this central theme, indeed it is dealt with from almost every possible point of view. Four errors in regard to the doctrine are effectively disposed of in the last chapter.

**THE BELIEVER'S FUTURE.** By the Rev. Ernest Baker of Johannesburg. London: *Seeley Service & Co.* 2s. 6d. net.

A series of eight short lectures or addresses on the subject of Immortality. In the first the author sets out the evidence for a future life and in the three following he gives us a well-arranged argument for the consciousness of the soul after death. He holds that "the saints do not now go to Hades." But if so, they must be in Heaven, a view not free from difficulty, but one that was held, if we mistake not, by the late Canon Garratt. On the whole, Mr. Baker has given us a useful contribution to the study of eschatology, even though we cannot accept all his conclusions.