

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE VII.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

## I.

## A TRAVESTY UPON EXISTING DOMINANT METHODS EMPLOYED IN OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

UNDER the pseudonym of E. D. McRealsham, an ingenious writer, who is evidently thoroughly at home in all the facts and methods of biblical criticism, has published a pamphlet of one hundred pages purporting to show, by careful critical analysis, that the Epistle to the Romans was not written by Paul, but is a composite document containing clear traces of four distinct writers. We are the more inclined to give prominence to this *jeu d'esprit* because of the indications that are in it that the author is a well-known American biblical scholar of high attainments in Old Testament studies, as well as in various other lines of inquiry. So well sustained and apparently conclusive is the evidence, that, but for a postscript confessing the real character of the work, it would doubtless have passed as serious criticism, and have made many converts. It is well, therefore, that the author reveals his character, and emphasizes his belief in the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Romans. Otherwise his work would with reason have been classed with that of Steck and Völter, who have recently renewed the well-nigh forgotten attack of Bruno Bauer upon the genuineness of the Epistle. In these days of unbelief and agnosticism it is scarcely safe to attempt to caricature any of the extravagances of criticism, since many of the critics themselves have in their serious efforts attained the climax of absurdity.

In the present case the results of this analysis of an Epistle whose genuineness is supported by stronger and more abundant evidence than that of almost any other ancient document, are certainly most surprising, and show that the method of criticism so much relied upon by many Old Testament critics at the present time is utterly delusive in its results. Upon exhaustive analysis the author finds that there are four well-marked divisions of the book, which are marked by a combination both of doctrinal and linguistic characteristics, and which coincide with peculiar uses of the name of God and of Christ. Through certain well-defined sections, Christ is referred to as Jesus Christ; through certain others, as Christ Jesus; while through the remaining portion, God, instead of Christ, is represented as the supreme authority and author of salvation. These last portions, also, are distin-

guished by well-marked doctrinal peculiarities, in one of which Christianity is portrayed as an ethical institution in which salvation is by obedience to law, while, in the other, salvation is by faith, not in Jesus, but in God. These four divisions he symbolizes by the letters G<sup>1</sup>, G<sup>2</sup>, JC, and CJ.

After having dwelt at considerable length upon the doctrinal peculiarities characterizing these parts, the author devotes thirty pages to the coincident linguistic peculiarities, and the results are certainly astonishing. For example: he finds that, excepting a few of the most common words, such as *θεός*, the more frequent conjunctions and prepositions, the article, the numerals, the pronouns, and most proper names, there are in the Epistle 928 words.<sup>1</sup> "Of these there are 173 used only by G<sup>1</sup>, 171 by G<sup>2</sup>, 98 by JC, and 186 by CJ. The sum of these is 628, so that there remain only 300 that are used in common by two or more of the four. In particular the relation is best seen when put into a tabular form.

Used only by G <sup>1</sup> .....	173
“ “ “ G <sup>2</sup> .....	171
“ “ “ JC.....	98
“ “ “ CJ.....	186
“ “ “ G <sup>1</sup> and G <sup>2</sup> .....	25
“ “ “ G <sup>1</sup> and JC.....	13
“ “ “ G <sup>1</sup> and CJ.....	30
“ “ “ G <sup>2</sup> and JC.....	31
“ “ “ G <sup>2</sup> and CJ.....	40
“ “ “ JC and CJ.....	31
“ “ “ G <sup>1</sup> , G <sup>2</sup> , and JC.....	17
“ “ “ G <sup>1</sup> , G <sup>2</sup> , and CJ.....	28
“ “ “ G <sup>1</sup> , JC, and CJ.....	15
“ “ “ G <sup>2</sup> , JC, and CJ.....	30
“ by all four.....	40
Total.....	928

"From this table we gather that G<sup>1</sup> uses in all 341 words, G<sup>2</sup> 382, JC 275, and CJ 400. Consequently it follows that more than half of the words used by G<sup>1</sup> are used by him alone, viz., 50.73 per cent. The proportion in the case of G<sup>2</sup> is 44.76; of JC, 35.64; of CJ, 44.

"We should naturally expect the number of different words used to correspond pretty nearly with the whole number of words used, including repetitions of the same word. But this is not the case. Thus, while there are only 73 verses in the sections assigned to G<sup>1</sup>, he uses 341 different words.<sup>2</sup> JC, on the other hand, who writes 85 verses, uses only 275 different words.

<sup>1</sup> It should be said that the argument is based upon the critical Greek text, which is closely represented to the English reader in the Revised Version.

<sup>2</sup> "It would be more exact to count the words (including repetitions) rather than the verses. But the proportion would not be materially different."

Stated proportionally, the relation is as follows:  $G^1$  uses (words 341, verses 73) 4.67 times more words than verses;  $G^2$  (382 : 131) 2.92 times more; JC (275 : 85) 3.24 times more; CJ (400 : 142) 2.82 times more. In every respect, therefore,  $G^1$  is the most unique of the four. He uses decidedly more words in proportion to the extent of his writings; he has a decidedly larger proportion of words used only by himself.  $G^2$  and CJ are in these respects nearly alike. JC exceeds these two in the proportion of words to verses, but is the least original of all in the relative proportion of words used by himself alone. Between  $G^1$  and  $G^2$ , who might have been expected to present a similarity in their vocabulary and style, there is a marked difference. Is it conceivable that one and the same writer in the first half of his work would use 4.67 times more words than verses, and in the second half only 2.92 times more?

"Let us compare  $G^1$  and JC as respects the words peculiar to each. In his 73 verses  $G^1$  uses 173 words which occur nowhere else in the Epistle, i. e., on the average 2.73 in every verse. JC, on the other hand, in his 85 verses uses only 98 words not found in the other parts; that is, on the average in every verse only 1.15!  $G^2$  and CJ on the contrary, although theologically very unlike, come much nearer together in their vocabulary and in the proportion of words to verses. But we leave it to the reader to carry out the comparisons for himself.

"It is instructive to compare this result with a similar analysis of Gen. i.-xii. 5 which has been made by Professor W. R. Harper.<sup>1</sup> He finds the whole number of different words to be 485, of which P uses 239, and J 367. Those used exclusively by P number 118, by J 246. Therefore there are 121 common to the two. Turning now to our Epistle and comparing  $G^1$  and  $G^2$ , we find that together they use 613 different words, but that only 110 are common to the two, that is, while .25 of the whole vocabulary of P and J is common to the two, only .18 of the whole vocabulary of  $G^1$  and  $G^2$  is common to the two.<sup>2</sup> So far as this indication goes, therefore, it speaks more decidedly for the non-identity of  $G^1$  and  $G^2$  than for that of P and J. If we compare the whole number of different words used by P and J with the number used by each exclusively, it appears that those which P alone uses are .24 of the whole, while those used by J alone are .51 of the whole. This is a striking disproportion, but it is almost equalled by that which is found between CJ and JC, who together use 559 words, of which .33 are used by CJ alone, but only .17 by JC alone.

"Let us now take JC and CJ. Together they use 559 different words. Common to the two only 116, that is .21, as against the .25 in the case of P and J.

"If we compare similarly  $G^2$  and CJ, we find that together they use 644

<sup>1</sup> In the *Hebraica*, October, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> For convenience of printing we have changed the common fractions to decimals.

different words. Of these 138 are common to the two, that is, .22 of the whole.

"Comparing G<sup>1</sup> and CJ, we find that together they use 628 words, of which 113 are common to the two, that is, only .18 of the whole.

"Comparing G<sup>1</sup> and JC, we find that together they use 531 words, of which 85 are common to the two, that is, .16 of the whole.

"Comparing G<sup>2</sup> and JC, we find them using 539 words in all, and of these 118 in common, that is, .22 of the whole.

"We have thus gone through the possible permutations, and find that in the comparison of any two of these parts of the Epistle to the Romans with one another, the number of words common to the two is never more than .22 of the whole, and in one case is only .16 of the whole, the average being .19 as over against the .25 in the corresponding comparison of P and J in Gen. i.-xii. 5. Every one must see the significance of this result. If the linguistic phenomena brought out by Professor Harper indicate difference of authorship in Gen. i.-xii. 5, *a fortiori* does the result of our analysis indicate the fourfold authorship of the Epistle to the Romans."<sup>1</sup>

The author then goes into detail, and brings out a great many very curious results. For example: in the different conceptions of righteousness and justification which appear in JC and CJ, "both of them use the term *δικαιοσύνη*, but not in the same sense. In every instance in which JC uses it (i. 17; iii. 21, 22, 25, 26; v. 17, 21; x. 3-6, 10) with reference to the peculiar state or privilege of the Christian, it is used in a forensic sense; it is God's justifying righteousness, an imputed righteousness, not a moral state of uprightness. CJ, on the contrary, in every instance uses the word to denote the moral or religious state of the Christian. He uses it at vi. 13, 16, 18, 19, 20; viii. 10; xiv. 17. No one looking at these passages by themselves, and without reference to JC's use of *δικαιοσύνη*, would ever think of assigning to the word here any other than the simple ethical sense. And even those who regard the Epistle as a unit have for the most part recognized this difference of sense.

<sup>1</sup>"Our omission of the pronouns and the more common conjunctions and prepositions must be quite balanced by the prefixes, suffixes, and inseparable prepositions and conjunctions of the Hebrew, which of course cannot have been counted in Professor Harper's enumeration. Should all these words be added to our list, it would be increased by about 64, of which 41 are used by all in common. But here, too, striking phenomena appear. E. g., *πρός* occurs nowhere in G<sup>1</sup>, once in G<sup>2</sup>, but 7 times in JC and 10 times in CJ. *ὅς* is used by CJ 17 times, by G<sup>2</sup> 13 times, but by JC only 4 times, and by G<sup>1</sup> only once. *ὄντω* occurs 17 times in G<sup>1</sup> and nowhere else. *ἄπό* occurs in CJ 15, in G<sup>1</sup> and JC each 4, in G<sup>2</sup> only 2 times. *ἔγω* in G<sup>2</sup> 10, in CJ 4, in JC 2 times, in G<sup>1</sup> not at all. *ἐί* in G<sup>2</sup> 22, CJ 20, in G<sup>1</sup> and J each 4 times. *ἴνα* in CJ 14, G<sup>2</sup> 12, JC 4 times, in G<sup>1</sup> not at all. *μέτ᾽* in CJ 4 times, JC twice, G<sup>1</sup> once, G<sup>2</sup> not at all. *μή* interrogative in G<sup>2</sup> 6 times, JC once, in G<sup>1</sup> and CJ not at all. *σύν* 4 times in CJ, nowhere else. *τίς* in G<sup>2</sup> 24, CJ 14, JC 4 times, in G<sup>1</sup> not at all. *ἕτερον* in JC 10, CJ 8 times, G<sup>2</sup> once, G<sup>1</sup> not at all."

In reference to only one of these passages (vi. 16), does Meyer, for example, undertake to interpret the word as denoting justification; and in this case he makes it refer not to the present state, but to the final judgment. Such phrases as "the righteousness of God," "gift of righteousness," "righteousness which is of faith," are entirely wanting in CJ.

"The same difference appears in the use of the verb *δικαίω*, and the nouns *δικαίωμα* and *δικαιοσύνη*. The verb is used twice by JC (v. 1, 9) and both times expressly with reference to justification through faith in Christ's atonement. It is used four times by CJ (vi. 7; viii. 30 *bis*, 33), but in none of these instances is there any such express connection indicated. No doubt the verb in all these cases may have a forensic sense; but in none of them is the notion connected with the atonement of Christ. *δικαιοσύνη* occurs only in JC (iv. 25; v. 18), and in both cases is used with express reference to justification through Christ's redeeming work. *δικαίωμα* is used by both, but in an entirely different sense. JC (v. 16, 18) means by it a judicial sentence, or justifying act; CJ means by it simply an ordinance (viii. 4).

"In short, the general conception concerning the initiation of the Christian life is markedly different in the two writers. According to JC it is introduced by faith in Christ on man's part (i. 17; iii. 22, 25, 26; v. 1, 2) and by an act of gracious acquittal on God's part (iii. 21, 24, 26; v. 9, 16, 17, 18, 21). According to CJ, however, the Christian life is begun by dying to sin, by being identified with Christ in his death to sin (vi. 2-11; vii. 6; viii. 2), and entering upon a spiritual life in Christ (vi. 11, 16; viii. 9-11, 14-17). It is a striking fact that, while JC speaks of faith (*πίστις*) in this specific sense of justifying faith in Christ's atonement no less than ten times (i. 17 *tris*; iii. 22, 25; v. 1, 2; x. 6, 8, 17), and of believing (*πιστεύω*) no less than eight times (i. 16; iii. 22; x. 4, 9-11, 14 *bis*) in the same sense, CJ *nowhere* in the dogmatic part of his work uses *πίστις*, and when he does use it, in the hortatory part (xii. 3, 6; xiv. 1, 23 *bis*), in every case denotes by it merely the general religious attitude of the Christian. This is equally true of his use of *πιστεύω* (vi. 8, xiv. 2), which, as he employs it, has no reference whatever to faith in Christ's atonement.

"Now if anything is cardinal in the so-called Pauline doctrines, it is the conceptions of faith and justification. Yet with reference to these conceptions we discover a marked and unmistakable distinction between JC and CJ. Their phraseology is largely different; and where it is identical the meaning is different."

But space fails us to dwell upon the numerous ingenious theories, such as are frequent in many recent works upon Old Testament criticism, to escape a difficulty by supposing an interpolation or a corruption of the text. The historical argument is also dealt with in the same thorough manner, and every conceivable objection is considered and parried after the manner of the followers of Kuenen and Wellhausen, and the author closes with the just remark, that "by the exercise of sufficient ingenuity equally plausible efforts might unquestionably be made with many other ancient and even modern

works about whose genuineness there is not the slightest doubt in any well-balanced mind."

And it must be confessed that, on comparing the linguistic argument for the composite nature of Romans with that given by Delitzsch in the fourth edition of his Commentary on the Prophecy of Isaiah for the composite character of that book, Mr. McRealsham has presented the stronger case. If Delitzsch is surprised at the strength of his argument against the unity of Isaiah, much more reason is there for surprise on the part of the author of this brochure.

Says Delitzsch: "In carefully weighing the material collected in these lists one is surprised at the number of phenomena telling against the unity of authorship. It is strange that the combination of divine names, 'Lord, Jehovah of hosts' (i. 24; iii. 1; x. 16, 33; xix. 4), meets us nowhere in the Deutero-Isaianic parts, and the description of God's judicial power by 'his hand stretched out' (v. 25; ix. 12, 17, 21; x. 4; xiv. 26 f.; xxxi. 3) only in xxxiii. 11; but it is still more strange that the Isaianic leading thought of a remnant surviving the period of judgment is nowhere put in this form in chaps. xl.-lxvi., and that in chaps. xl.-lxvi. the idolatry of the heathen and of Israel is constantly opposed without the idols being once called *elilim*, as in ii. 8, 18, 20; x. 10 f.; xix. 1, 3; xxxi. 7. And it is a heavy weight in the scale, that in xlii. 6; xlix. 8; liv. 10; lv. 3; lix. 21; lxi. 8 'covenant' is a religious conception belonging to revelation, whereas in the first part it occurs only in a political sense (xxviii. 15, 18; xxxiii. 8), and that 'all flesh' (xl. 5 f.; xlix. 26; lxvi. 16, 23, 24) is quite foreign to the first part. The fact is hard to reconcile with the identity of the author, that God's designation of himself: I am he, I am Jehovah and no other, I am First and I Last, running through chaps. xl.-lxvi., is without parallel in the first part; that such attributive designations of God as Maker of heaven and earth, Former of Israel, etc., are wanting in the first part; and that *bara*, which occurs in the first part only once (iv. 5), in the second part is a governing word about God, the world's author. Driver pertinently remarks, that the first Isaiah celebrates the majesty of Jehovah and the second Isaiah his infinity; and it is quite correct to say that the idea of the "Servant of Jehovah" does not stand to the Messiah-figures of the first Isaiah in the relation of continuous development, but is a departure from the previous line of teaching and the striking out of a new path."

Indeed, the elaborate articles of Rev. Mr. Cobb<sup>1</sup> upon the linguistic peculiarities of the different portions of Isaiah when compared both with each other and with the literature of other periods of Jewish literature, prove as conclusively as anything can be proved outside of mathematics, that whatever arguments there are which can be adduced against the unity of the book are to be sought in some other quarter. In other words, the discussion of the unity of Isaiah is not one in which expert Hebrew scholars have any special advantage. Isaiah may be a composite book, but the evidence of it does not

<sup>1</sup> Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. xxxviii. pp. 230-253, 658-664.

appear in its linguistic characteristics, except upon the adoption of the principles of proof that are demonstrated to be false by McRealsham's *reductio ad absurdum* in the case of Romans. And the same is true, also, as the author himself shows, in the case of the efforts to establish the composite character of the Pentateuch by a similar analysis and classification of its contents. We earnestly advise all who are in danger of falling into the toils of the mistaken methods of so many Old Testament critics, to peruse this *jeu d'esprit* of McRealsham, and before surrendering themselves to their confident assumptions make a preliminary effort to expose his fallacies and answer his subtle arguments.

G. F. W.

## II.

## THE CREDIBILITY OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IT is a serious logical error to attempt at the present time to prove or disprove any of the subordinate miracles of the Bible apart from the general evidences supporting the system to which they belong. This is as true of the miracles of the New Testament as of the Old. To those who have lived since the beginning of our era, and have been called upon to decide concerning the claims of the Bible, the first and the most important question has ever been, What think ye of Christ? This question has been forced upon them, first of all, by their contact with those who believe in Christ and have experienced the blessedness of his promises. In answering this question, the vast majority of candid minds have been led to confess that Christ was at least a supernatural being, and that a notable miracle was wrought in his resurrection from the dead, and exaltation to heaven.

Thus, at the very outset of our inquiries concerning the Christian system, we are forced either to believe in a miraculous dispensation or to stand aloof altogether from participation in the work of the church. It is appropriate, therefore, that we should find a superabundant amount of evidence going to establish this central miracle of the system. And this we do find. The resurrection of Christ and the events immediately leading up to it are recorded with great minuteness in all four of the Gospels, and are the basis of most of the exhortations and reasoning of the Epistles. No man therefore can cross the threshold of the church and enter the company of believers without confessing at least as much as the centurion did who beheld the Saviour's dying agonies, "Surely, this is the Son of God."

Without proper appreciation of the evidential value of this fact, there can be no just estimate of the weight of testimony supporting the various other historical facts connected with the system of which Christ is the central figure. It must be admitted also that the human mind is too limited in its vision to determine by itself what should have been the appropriate antecedents and accompaniments of the career which closed on Calvary. The



principal province, therefore, of historical criticism, is to determine from ordinary evidence what those antecedents and accompaniments actually were. This limitation to our critical capacity also operates to guard us against rejecting as trivial or irrelevant many things which may seem so, but which are supported by a fair amount of direct historical evidence.

One of the most noticeable things to the student of Christian evidences is the congruity of the culminating facts of the Christian system with all their antecedents and accompaniments as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. There is a unity pervading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation which cannot be ignored. If there are miracles introduced into the history at various stages, they are clearly proportionate to the ends to be attained; that is, upon a just comprehension of all the accompanying circumstances, they conform to the law of parsimony so constantly used in scientific reasoning. The system is not so overloaded with miracles as to be fantastic, but everything is subordinated to the grand culmination at the close of Christ's earthly career. If there are a few miracles,—like the floating of the axe, or the experiences of Jonah, or the destruction of the swine at Gadara,—that seem fantastic, it can be said of them, in the first place, that they are the exceptions, and not the rule; and, in the second place, that we are debarred from arbitrarily rejecting them by our ignorance of the accompanying history, and by our inability fully to estimate their importance in making the truth attractive to multitudes who could not otherwise have been properly impressed. It is the province of the Bible not only to contain the truth, so that all by diligent search can find it, but to enforce its central facts, so as to compel even the inattentive and the unwilling to give it due consideration. The Bible is not a bare revelation of truth, but a book of facts clothed in every kind of rhetorical form and set forth with infinite variety of representation.

In considering the direct evidence supporting the mass of the miracles recorded in the four Gospels, the student is at once struck in most cases with its meagreness as compared with that supporting the more central fact of the resurrection. The former often consists merely of the single statement of the anonymous writer of a Gospel. How, then, is it that we rely with such confidence upon the testimony of a single witness to events of such a nature that similar reports at the present time could not obtain general credence though a committee of scientific experts should sign an affidavit that they had witnessed them? The evident answer is that these isolated reports in the Gospel histories receive confirmation from the general evidence supporting the system to whose history they belong. They cannot be proved to be incongruous elements in the history. In the main they are manifestly in strict accord with the other acts attributed to Christ during his earthly ministry, and they are free from those fantastic elements elsewhere so universally connected with reported miraculous facts. If Christ is indeed the Son of God, and has come into the world to accomplish the great purposes that throughout the New Testament are attributed to his mission, the

miracles in the New Testament are not surprising because of their abundance, but because of the moderateness of their number. So patent is this fact, that no candid student can help seeing that the writers of the Gospel histories were under that kind of restraint which surrounds an honest man when attempting to tell "the whole truth and nothing but the truth." So evident is this that no amount of reasoning upon *a priori* considerations can materially diminish our confidence in the mass of the miracles connected with Christ's ministry, so long as we believe in his resurrection and in its purported significance with reference to the salvation of the world. These minor miracles accord with the whole circumstances of the case. He whose repugnance to the miraculous has been so far overcome that he can believe in the reality of Christ's resurrection will not find it difficult to believe in the whole cluster of miracles connected both with Christ's own ministry and with that of his chosen apostles and of their associates.

The Old Testament stands in a similar relation to this central work of Christ. Its history was regarded by Christ and his apostles as preparatory to that of the New Testament. The New Testament does not stand by itself, nor is it suspended from the heavens in mid-air. It rests upon the broad foundation of the patriarchal promises, of the Mosaic institutions, of the prophetic instructions, and of the providential history recorded in the Old Testament. Independently of the light thrown back upon it from the New Testament, the miraculous history of the Old would be difficult of belief. But to him who has accepted Christ as he is revealed in the New Testament, there is no more reason for rejecting the miracles of the Old Testament than there is for discrediting the mass of supernatural facts connected with Christ's ministry. We are not compelled to establish the truth of each specific miraculous account by itself, but the unity of the revelation and the congruity of the whole system are such that the burden of proof is thrown upon him who would discard any Old Testament miracle.

The foregoing principles do not by any means close the door against critical investigations; but they should restrain inquirers from reckless treatment of the Old Testament documents. The presumptions they involve have in themselves strong evidential force. The Old Testament history cannot be treated in entire independence of the New, or of what is said about it in the New. The Old Testament is the paved way leading to the temple of the new Jerusalem. A due sense of our limited capacity for criticising the ways of God, will lead us to be cautious about discarding those preparatory stages of revelation which have been so fully endorsed by the writers of the New Testament.

Many seem in undue haste to strengthen their defences of the Christian system by voluntarily surrendering all the outposts, and shutting themselves up in the citadel. From an apologetic as well as from a military point of view, this would seem to be a confession of weakness and a precursor of disaster. If miracles are altogether out of harmony with the preliminary stages of the Christian system, it will be difficult to look upon them as credible at the con-

summation of that system. The difficulty with an army which has retreated to the garrison is that it has so limited the area from which to draw subsistence that it is now in imminent danger of starvation. So will it be with the Christian church when it abandons the broad fields of historical facts which constitute the earlier stages of revelation, and endeavors to support itself upon a bare faith in the realities of the spiritual world unsustained by the history of miraculous intervention. Old Testament history is certainly an important support to Christianity but only by virtue of its supposed truth and reality. In view of the relation of its history to the New Testament, nothing is gained, and much is lost, even from an apologetic point of view, by surrendering our faith in any clear and well-attested miraculous account in the Old Testament. If one is to derive spiritual comfort from believing in the miracle of Christ's resurrection, of what advantage is it to cultivate incredulity respecting those miracles that prepared the way for the introduction and reception of Christianity?

This apologetic position permits, and indeed provides for, due consideration of the documentary and literary evidence upon which dependence must be had for determining what is really described in the Old Testament as miraculous. For example: it leaves one open to question just what phenomenon is referred to in the sun's standing still while Joshua completed the destruction of his enemies. It permits of the distinction between *mediate* and *immediate* miracles which has so long been in vogue. It allows us to challenge the correctness of the text in the story of the descent of the angel to trouble the water in the Pool of Siloam. But in considering the evidence, the natural presumption against the occurrence of miracles is so far removed by their connection with the Christian system that there is no necessity for extraordinary proof. There is no occasion to make any higher demand for evidence to support the testimony than that which is involved in the somewhat indefinite but valuable legal caution to consider if the point is proved "beyond a reasonable doubt." The view one entertains concerning the greatness of the central miracle of Christianity and the closeness of the connection between the Old Testament and the New will largely determine when a reported fact either in the Old Testament or in the preliminary stages of the New is regarded as proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Among the miraculous elements of the Old Testament are to be classed certain phases of the prophetic function. It is difficult, for example, to read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, with its marvellous forecast of the Saviour's character, work, and suffering, without feeling that there is here prediction entirely surpassing the capabilities of the human author, however much he may emphasize the interpretative character of the prophetic office. It is not possible to exclude in all cases such a distinct foretelling of events as constitutes a true miracle. We may therefore well distrust the conclusions of any biblical critic who approaches the Old Testament with a manifest disinclination to be satisfied with ordinary evidence in support of its miraculous facts. Hence, when we find a critic laying it down as a principle that "a prophet's

prescience *must* be limited to deductions from patent facts taken in connection with real or supposed truth," we may rightly conclude that he is not in a proper frame of mind to weigh the evidence concerning the authorship of the latter part of Isaiah. In approaching the study of Old Testament history, the first duty of us all, and of biblical critics in particular, is to free the mind from *unreasonable* prejudice against the miraculous character of its history.

G. F. W.

### III.

#### ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.

MODERN science may be said to begin with the discovery that the earth is round and revolves about the sun. The shock which these discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo gave to the religious world was more serious than any which has been given by any subsequent scientific discoveries. The fact that Christianity has not only survived this rude shock, but has flourished more abundantly than ever since then, should serve to dissipate the fears and strengthen the confidence of any who are alarmed at the present aspect of affairs. If we remember that an oak tree has withstood the onset of a tornado we shall be less concerned about it when we see its branches swaying in a storm of moderate violence. It is well, however, to bear in mind that the opposition of the ecclesiastical authorities to Galileo in his time was based both upon the supposed teachings of Scripture and upon ideas of the constitution of the universe inveterately associated with the apparent movements of the heavenly bodies, and that in both cases the interpreters were mistaken. The sun does indeed seem to move around the earth every year, and the whole heavens seem to do so every day. But the appearance is deceptive. Yet nature is not untrue, for it is not essential that she should cheaply surrender her secrets to the superficial observer, when closer inspection and more careful comparison of facts will reveal the simpler truths of modern astronomy.

In this case nature has not necessarily deceived us, but men had deceived themselves by forming a conclusion before the facts were all in, and before they had given the proper amount of attention to the collection and comparison of the facts. It was just so in the interpretation of the astronomical references in the Bible. The Bible does indeed speak of the "four corners of the earth," and of its "immovability," and of the "windows of heaven," and of the "rising and setting" of the sun, and of the sun, going forth, rejoicing as "a strong man to run a race," and of the sun and moon and stars as having been appointed for marking the seasons of the day, the month, and the year. But, before the days of Galileo, the interpreters of the Bible had misunderstood this language just as they had misinterpreted the corresponding facts of nature. The language expresses the apparent truth of the phenomena, and is the same language used to express those very thoughts

at the present day. We still speak of the four quarters of the globe, of the immovability of the earth, and of the rising and setting of the sun. The language of the Bible is the language of everyday life, and not the technical language of science. In this case there has been progress in interpreting the Bible, just as there has been in interpreting the apparent movements of the heavenly bodies.

The second great shock which the Christian public received from the hands of science had its origin in a similar misconception of the language of Scripture, the fault being not in the Bible, but in the interpreters. The language of the Bible with reference to the creation was adapted to the state of knowledge in the world at any particular time; in this respect being exactly like the astronomical language already alluded to. 'The word "day," used in describing the progress of creation, has so wide a range of signification, that all interpreters should have been on their guard against limiting it to a period of twenty-four hours; as some of the earliest, like Augustine, were. Furthermore, the statement concerning the original creation is in the most general terms possible. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." In this language there is no warrant for placing this beginning immediately before the creation of man, whose chronology is professedly short. In those words, "in the beginning," an indefinite vista is opened up to our vision, and the geologist is permitted to look backward through the corridors of geologic time without any uncomfortable restraint from theological critics.

Upon two questions the Christian public is, at the present time, passing through serious trial in the adjustment of its interpretation of the Bible to the prevailing sentiment of the scientific world. The first of these relates to the doctrine of the origin of species and the mode of the creation of man. Without venturing a positive opinion as to the final word of science upon this intricate question, it is proper, in view of past experience, to call attention to the remarkable flexibility of the language of Scripture relating to these points, and to the ease with which modern doctrines of science may be adjusted to it. I am confident that in such an examination we shall find that same wise forecast, which I can attribute to nothing but divine inspiration itself, which has elsewhere prevented all possibility of collision with science, and has opened to religious scientific men as free a field for investigation as anybody can rightfully claim. The language of Genesis may properly be regarded as the language of theistic evolution. "God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, . . . and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass. . . . And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life. . . . Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, . . . and it was so." Here we should distinguish between creation and the processes of creation. When we teach our children that God made them, we indeed teach them the truth; but they will continue all their lives to learn concerning the processes through which God has brought them into being. So, also, when the Bible says that God made the cattle,

we are fully at liberty to inquire *how* he made them. Likewise, when it says that God made man out of the dust of the earth, we can easily see that it is no perversion of the language to refer it to dust that had already been incorporated into some lower form of organization. The essential thing in the creation of man is the inbreathing into him of the divine image. God is a spirit. The image of God in man is spiritual, not material.

The second disturbing question now in process of settlement between science and the Bible relates to the length of time during which man has been in the world. According to the ordinary interpretation of the Bible, that period is limited to about six thousand years. In the most of our Bibles B. C. 4004 stands at the head of the column in the first chapter of Genesis. But a variety of investigations seems to indicate that the origin of man must be placed considerably farther back than this. The monuments of Egypt contain inscriptions indicating a high civilization in the valley of the Nile at a period supposed by most authorities to be earlier than the date assigned in our Bibles to the creation of Adam, and by all to be earlier than the ordinary date assigned to the Flood. In the valley of the Euphrates the marks of civilization run back nearly as far. So high is this civilization, that in the natural course of things one or two thousand years must be allowed for its growth and development, while already, at the dawn of this civilization, the languages of these nations had become fixed, which is another process requiring, in the ordinary course of events, a considerable lapse of time. The geologist, also, brings forward supporting evidence of the existence of man at a much earlier period than that assigned to him by the ordinary interpretation of the Bible. But while these facts indicate an antiquity considerably greater than that generally assigned to the flood of Noah, or even to the creation of Adam, I believe they also show that the extreme antiquity claimed by some is far from being proved, and that the scientific evidence of man's antiquity indicates such limits to the chronology of the human race that it can be easily adjusted to a reasonable interpretation of the Bible itself.

In this whole investigation it is well to move slowly, and counsel together freely. This the *Bibliotheca Sacra* has done, on the biblical side, in the article prepared for its pages by Professor W. H. Green, and published in the number for April, 1890. In this it would seem that he had shown, to every thoughtful student who peruses it, that the genealogical tables of the Bible were not prepared for chronological purposes, and that little can properly be inferred from them concerning the antiquity of man. In a word, the conclusion of Professor Green is that, as, when in David's time Shebuel is said to be the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, we infer that the phrase "son of" is used in a loose sense, meaning merely descendant of, so, when in the fifth chapter of Genesis we meet the phrase "Seth lived one hundred and five years and begat Enos," we may understand it to mean simply that Enos was a descendant of Seth through the line which branched off at the 105th year of the patriarch's life. As we had to interpolate a number of generations between Shebuel and Gershom, so we may interpolate any number of

generations between Enos and Seth, and stretch out the chronology as far as history and the facts of science may make it necessary. Thus everywhere do we find that (as I believe by divine foresight) the Bible has been guarded against all conflict with science by what we may call the preparation of a double-track road, in which the Bible, laden with its rich stores of spiritual truth, is on one, and science, with its accumulating treasures of material truth, is on the other, and no collision is possible except in case some nervous man ventures, without orders, to meddle with the switches.

G. F. W.