

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

THE BIBLE AS AUTHORITY AND INDEX.

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WE have seen in the previous discussions, that the development of the religious life is a process involving many and differing forces.<sup>1</sup> Some of these are of so simple a character that they can be traced readily, and do not for a moment perplex us either as to their own nature or the sources from which they are derived. Others, on the contrary, are more elusive. They do not reveal themselves easily or frequently. They change in their manifestations. They are, if not strictly supernatural, so much like supernatural forces as to demand a classification peculiarly their own.

Forces of this latter type have always abounded in the history of religion. They are the variants, amid the permanent elements of religion, which supply in each case a certain rationale which without them we should utterly lack. They are many, but feeling is one of them. We may say it is one of those which we have the least difficulty in catching and examining, though it may not be for long at a time. It has also appeared that these forces have an important part to play in the crystallization of religious thought into institutions, and afterward into literature descriptive of them. More than

<sup>1</sup> Bib. Sac., Vol. 1. pp. 52 *seq.*, 261 *seq.*

this, they have the power of reproduction and self-extension. They possess a kind of appeal to the ages. They are never without expositors. And these expositors are the prophets of their time.

But up to this point, religion, considered as the aggregate of the phenomena which express the human spirit in its upward struggles to higher life and growth, is purely personal and of a psychological nature. It hence demands at this stage a psychological treatment. But religion cannot long remain personal, and must of necessity, as soon as it seeks expression, become social. It must busy itself with the content which it secures from the immediate problems of society. And from this fact, the progress of religion may be said to be coeval with the progress of society. Its laws grow like social laws. They extend in application or they diminish in limits as the society under which they flourish admits of such extension or requires such repression. But it is this very fluctuation which marks the presence or the absence of the variable elements of the religious life which form the problem of investigation. Their exceptional character leads, in the earliest times, to the inference that they are supernatural interferences with the existing order. Their recurrences at stated intervals or under similar conditions may lead, in a scientific period, to their reduction to the sphere of law. But the essential fact is their existence and their undoubted sway in the religious life.

When the processes thus described have passed through centuries, they are recognized in the record of the world's experiences as history. The simple statements of the visual manifestations constitute the annals of time. These annals interpreted make history. Searched for the underlying personal and social forces, history becomes philosophy. The unexplained residuum of the philosophy of history is revelation. What the nature of revelation thus acquired is, is a question which will be examined later; but the important

fact to be noted here is that revelation comes through the ordinary channels of personal and social development. It is neither unlike history in the media of its expression nor divorced from it in the body of the literature of human religious effort.

When, therefore, we use the term "supernatural revelation," it is far from accurate to think at once of interference with the established order of human development. What is commonly called a miracle need not thus be thought of, unless the mind cannot grasp the fluid character of the powers which go to make up the universe as well in its physical as in its intellectual aspects. Interferences strictly so-called would in the modern conception of thought be highly unnatural. Yet what is very much like interference takes place constantly in the arrests of development, in the physical battles of growth, and the triumph, at least for the uses of the present generation, of the unfit. All this, however, merely indicates the material for another law, which, when the data have sufficiently accumulated, will be announced and verified.

Now the revelation which is thus left as the unexplained residuum of the philosophy of history, is so interlinked with the explained portions, that without the former the latter would be inexplicable. For example, the destruction of the Confederacy would be unintelligible unless we knew the facts concerning the fall of Richmond. *Why* Richmond fell, or *why* the forces operating in the Confederacy produced such a result at last, are other questions; but the essential thing is that Richmond fell. Its fall had ulterior causes, no doubt. These form a separate problem by themselves. But they were at work during and before the Civil War. Indeed the Civil War itself loses its rationale, without the long history which precedes it. Now it is simply impossible to separate the fall of Richmond from the influences which made and finally destroyed the Southern Confederacy. But the process by which this is proved, is a very different one from that which proves

that the Confederacy fell because Richmond was taken. It is just as real and true. It has as certain a claim to rational assent. It produces a logical conviction equally as strong. But the arguments which prove it are of the character which at every step can be denied as stoutly as they can be affirmed. No one can deny that Richmond fell. No one can deny that that fall ended the existence of the Confederate States of America. Anyone *can* deny that the institution of slavery ultimately destroyed those States. Anyone *can* deny that the prevailing social conditions of the South before the war ultimately destroyed them. But can anyone deny the valid character of those conditions as historical forces, or their real influence upon the Southern States? Now precisely this difference prevails in the logical estimate of simple facts, and the forces behind the facts. These forces are actual and intelligible. They are unquestionable. But they are elusive when we attempt to pin them down to a certain fact or result.

This illustration may fairly be taken as representative of the authority of revelation. It is so interlinked with the facts and accidents of history that a separation is practically impossible. To cast out revelation as untrustworthy would be to render the remainder equally untrustworthy. Revelation is an integral part of history. When history becomes untrustworthy, so likewise does revelation. But, *vice versa*, when revelation is discredited, so also is history. By the side now of the former example take one from the New Testament. The conversion of Paul the apostle, from the standpoint from which we now view it, was a unique fact. Apart from his own explanation of that phenomenon, we have the historical Paul. His ministry, his teaching, his life and character, are history, apart from all considerations of religion or otherwise. Paul *was* the creator of modern Christianity. Paul *did* make his journeys throughout the Roman Empire, with certain well-defined results. What becomes of the explanation which Paul gives of the motives which produced that life and its

activity? It is precisely in the category of the explanation that slavery caused the downfall of the Confederacy. It is similarly open to argument. It can be denied. That is to say, Paul can be charged with delusion, or lunacy, or any other malady. But his explanation remains logically upon exactly the same basis as the assertion that slavery caused the destruction of the Confederacy. If we seek proof for the latter, it is of a like nature with that by which Paul's assertions are proved. *But a difference between them remains in one particular. One is revelation, the other is history. They rest, however, upon the same grounds. They have the same authority. The conclusion is clear. The Authority of History is the foundation of the Authority of Revelation.*

The inquiry will now at once be raised, if we mean to imply that revelation is merely a form of history. And the answer to this question must be an affirmative one. Only this qualification must be made, that it is history of that large and unverifiable character which places it within, and yet beyond, the ordinary historical canons of investigation. There is no desire here to relieve revelation for an instant from any test which is applied to ordinary history. But, as we have seen, there are influences in the world which must be classified as historical which, nevertheless, are so removed from the mere uses of factual narratives that they stand by themselves. It is among these in their historical character that we place those influences which from their exceptional nature we denominate revelation. But by such a classification they lose none of the trustworthiness or authoritative force which belongs to simple chronological records. Indeed, it is upon their alliance with, and by their consonance to, verifiable history that they derive an exceptional authority, as we shall see later. As part of the common record, however, they are exactly like, and exactly as authoritative as, ordinary verifiable history.

## WHAT IS AN HISTORICAL AUTHORITY?

Perhaps, before we raise this inquiry, it may be well to ask, What is authority itself? And the answer is not an easy one to give. The revolt against the Bible as authority seems to be based upon a notion that authority is in some sense destructive of free inquiry or of natural development. It is supposed to impose upon critical investigation a sort of restraint which says, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." Indeed on this very point Mr. Huxley has expressly said: "I had set out on the journey with no other purpose than that of exploring a certain province of natural knowledge; I strayed no hair's breadth from the course which it was my right and duty to pursue; and yet I found that whatever route I took, before long I came to a tall formidable looking fence. Confident as I might be of the existence of an ancient and indefeasible right of way, before me stood the thorny barrier with the comminatory notice board 'No thoroughfare. By order. Moses.'"<sup>1</sup>

What this shows is, that, at the point where Mr. Huxley saw the board fence and the forbidding sign, there really stood a false idea in his own mind concerning the nature of history, and a more false one concerning the structure of the literature in question. It indicated furthermore that he had not the requisite knowledge to discriminate as to what was actually before him, for later he came to the conclusion that "Moses is not responsible for nine-tenths of the Pentateuch; certainly not for the legends which have been made the bugbears of science. In fact the fence turned out to be a mere heap of dry sticks and brushwood, and one might walk through it with impunity, which I did."<sup>2</sup> The conclusion clarified the situation at once, because it was based upon true knowledge. There was no less authority in the Pentateuch after that discovery, however, than before. Not one jot or tittle of the Pentateuch had disappeared. It appeared in different rela-

<sup>1</sup> Collected Essays, Vol. v. p. vii.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.

tions, which were the right relations. Instead of reading the margin of his Bible, Mr. Huxley now read the text. And the board fence was found to be a creation of his own imagination, not an actual hindrance to inquiry.

And yet it remains true that there is such a thing as authority in history and literature. And while it does not announce the closing of the path of knowledge in a given direction absolutely, it does often close it all but absolutely. That is to say, for the purposes of scientific inquiry it is regarded as final. An historical inquiry may be said to be finally established when reasonable affinity with correlative facts and forces has been established. How far the term "reasonable" is applied to the question must, like all other things, be determined by the consensus of judgment by competent observers. This will not secure infallibility, let it be remembered, but it will secure finality in the sense of practically closing the case. To be sure, such finality has all the force of infallibility, using that term in a literary sense. Such an inquiry becomes by its finality an authority. And such an historical authority acquires with each succeeding century that its decision remains unquestioned a greater force, and creates a greater presumption as to its substantial correctness. It is in this way that the body of so-called common law has become established. It is in this way that literatures secure their place in the abiding records of human experience. And the influence of such an authority is immeasurably increased, when it is discovered that an analysis made centuries ago is found to tally accurately with similar conditions when these occur to-day. The presumption then is, if possible, more final than before. For added to exactness of correlation, demonstrated experience has, so to speak, signed and sealed the judgment of the past.

The question now arises, What do we mean by exact correlation in history? It must at once become obvious that we cannot mean by exactness in history what we mean by exact-

ness in chemistry, for example. Here we have the elements at our command and can combine them as we will. But history is not produced by any power that can be swayed by the human will. Every act of the will helps to make history, but its way and influence is utterly beyond its own control, in the universal result; so that a reasonable affinity with correlated facts cannot mean mathematical accuracy. If it did, there never would have been any philological investigations, since these, for the most part, rest for a long period upon pure conjecture. And how important, and how accurate too, such conjecture may be, is seen in the remarkable story of the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia. For the most part, reasonable affinity is satisfied by the term natural development. But natural development is not sufficient; for that term itself is limited to what we already know about the laws and methods of growth, variation, and reproduction. But historical science has proved, again and again, that natural development is insufficient as an explanation for all the historical results with which we are acquainted; unless indeed all development is styled natural development, and then the expression ceases to have any descriptive value.

As an instance, therefore, of what we mean, take for example such a case as the following: In the book of Amos we find that prophet vigorously denouncing the luxury of the court of the northern confederacy, and giving expression to most threatening prophecies of the destruction of Samaria and the general ruin of the kingdom. Now it is not necessary that a verification of every particular utterance of the prophet should be found, to assure us of his accuracy and the integrity of the contents of his book. When, from the various sources at hand, we gather, that the court *was* licentious and corrupt, that the poor *were* oppressed and robbed for the luxurious living of the nobility at the capital; when we know that an Assyrian army *was* advancing, and Samaria *was* destroyed,



and the threatened prophecies were more than fulfilled,—these are sufficient to give a credibility to those parts of the book upon which we have no such direct light, which differ only in the very slightest degree from the rest, if they ought to differ at all. It is of course possible that interpolations may have crept into the text; or the prophet may have been mistaken with reference to particular points; but, for historical purposes, it is scientifically accurate, to say that this book is trustworthy and thoroughly credible. It fits into its period. It is in reasonable affinity to the correlated facts and contemporary records. Substantial accord is sufficient. Mathematical accuracy is not needed. You have an historical authority. It is all but final. Exception to it throws the burden of proof upon the objector. It is as final an authority as a piece of literary work can be, and be of its character. Slight and unimportant contradictions no more invalidate its authority as history than the newspaper exaggerations of election majorities invalidate the fact that an election has been held. It is a general and reasonable accuracy that is needed and desired. This is usually all that can be secured in literature that is not simply annalistic. And chronological tables do not make literature, and are not subjects of literary criticisms. They are simply right or simply wrong.

Thus it becomes evident what an historical authority is. We see ourselves requiring, indeed, that we shall not be deceived; but we do not find ourselves with multiplication table and two-foot rule in hand. If the subject-matter can be treated in chronological tables, then we have these for reference easily accessible, but we do not call that studying history. For history we demand a philosophy or rationale by which we shall see beyond and under the operations of the parties to the events, to the motives which governed them and the ends which they sought to establish. And if, in the endeavor thus to portray the spiritual and intellectual influences at work, we have in the matters of mere detail a reason-

able and not positively untrue or misleading picture, we are ready to accept its accuracy and accord it the authority of history. If the source be an original one, so much the more. If only secondary, the ground is still firm and for scientific purposes sufficient. Literature and the literary sciences have none of the technical subterfuges of the criminal courts. Reasonable accuracy stands, in the absence of the charge of actual falsehood, in the place of truth. Historical authorities in their very nature are subject to the laws of literary structure and form. They are victims to the assumptions on the part of their authors of a given amount of knowledge on the part of their public. Posterity may never know what those assumptions were. It may never be able to solve some of the mysteries of the author's omission or allusion. But it cannot impugn his accuracy without assailing his moral purpose first, and thus creating a presumption of deliberate fraud. But literary fraud is one of the hardest of all accusations to prove, except in cases of direct and bodily plagiarism. The importance of this distinction, when we examine the Bible according to the method proposed, is very great. It removes the responsibility of the biblical revelation from the nature and fate of mere documents, and by freeing the documents it increases by so much the difficulty of assailing their essential facts. Whatever of weight it takes from the mere books of the Bible, it adds to the burden of proof of him who would undertake to divest them of what they still possess.

#### THE BIBLE AN HISTORICAL AUTHORITY.

As literature, the Bible is the combined aggregate of survivals of an immense amount of literary material of various kinds produced under varying conditions, from the crudest to the most highly organized. In this survival are the remains, not only of original works by the authors themselves, but numerous fragments by unknown authors, and these again brought together by a series of editings, the precise number,

or the extent of which, we cannot at this distance positively determine. We shall in all probability never know how many hands have been responsible for the canon of Scripture as we have it to-day. Of this there is not the slightest doubt or reason for doubt. Moreover this literary composite now called by us the Bible, has within its limits all kinds of literary style and material. Composed it obviously was under conditions widely differing, and often strikingly contrasting, and even contradictory. The literary problem of classification and analysis is thereby one of vast comprehensiveness and almost interminable length. The literature of biblical criticism amply proves this.

But after we have admitted the composite character of the Bible, and the singular character of the documents contained within it, and the numerous editings and redactions before the present canon was formed, we ask, whether the Bible as we examine it presents on the whole an appearance of heterogeneity which would naturally be expected in a collection of books brought together under such circumstances. And on this point there is but one reply possible, namely, that, no matter what the circumstances under which the fragments and books of the Bible were brought together, there is throughout a singular unity and homogeneous character, which is probably the most extraordinary literary fact known. The very compositeness has added to its unity by the astounding correlation of the most dissimilar parts. The cosmogony in Genesis, for example, and the development of the creation history, is in our judgment one of the most remarkable pieces of literary work ever accomplished. Either of the original narratives alone would be tame by the side of it. As it is, the complementary force of the two narratives woven together makes what will in all probability through all time be the final epitome of the divine creative activity at the beginning of things.

But this same quality of unity and homogeneity is visible

throughout, and never for a single instant obscure even to the unpractised eye. Occasions there certainly are where the welding process is evident and some unintelligible combinations appear. But these are exceedingly rare and of almost no significance at all in the general structure of the whole. We speak now of the mere literary unity. It is without doubt absolutely without a parallel in literature. In order to get the full force of this fact, one needs only to examine a work of the most modern times, constructed with all the wealth of scientific arrangement and documentary authority and collation, to see how extraordinary the literary unity of the Old Testament is. Such a work is the "Narrative and Critical History of America." Edited by a scholar of unusual historical insight, the helplessness of even the most expert mind, with a host of authors of marked individuality and widely divergent views to deal with, becomes at once evident. The unity of this work (magnificently conceived as it is) is positive chaos compared with the continuous thread in the Old Testament. To be sure, the latter is very much smaller in bulk. But that very fact would tend to make the difficulty greater. Eight large volumes offer an area sufficiently large to obliterate the blemishes and to present a finished and well-rounded narrative. But to compress into one volume, and that numerously subdivided and endlessly edited, the bulk of material and the innumerable details and side-lights which are found in the Old Testament, is, humanly speaking, a most miraculous undertaking. And yet our Old Testament presents a finished unity like one of those exquisite mosaics of the East, so elegantly wrought that only a magnifying glass can reveal the parts. The Old Testament is for all practical purposes a literary unit.

The case is stronger still when we take one step further and examine its motivation. In every instance, whether we take the books which show least traces of editing, or those which reveal the most, the animating purpose in production

is the same. Centuries apart as some of the documents are in time, they are one in the impulse which directs their composition and preservation. It is the unity of motive which suggests the quality which we know as inspiration. And this inspiration, being of the nature that it is, lays the foundation for the reverence which culminates in divine authority. But the only fact to which we call attention now is, that there is no discordant note throughout to mar the effect of the sustained and ever developing motive which led to the composition of the Old Testament books.

But now we come to the question of debate. Is the Bible an historical authority? Its literary unity and its singleness of motive are of no value here, except as they give us an insight into the nature of the book which we are to test. And we are led by the use of such resources as we can bring to bear to conclude that the Bible is an historical authority. The argument here takes a somewhat different turn, but it moves in essentially the same lines as before. Some parts of the Bible are confessedly annalistic. Of these we expect certain things. Let us leave them for a moment and turn to the rest. The largest part of the Bible, the Old Testament being now in view, is not concerned with chronology at all. It takes for the most part no cognizance whatever of existing conditions, except as these affect the underlying motive of writers and editors. Now let us ask the question, Is the material of the Old Testament in reasonable accord with the related facts and contemporaneous records? No man possessed of the ordinary faculties of discernment would venture to deny that, whatever forces or machinations may have brought it about, the writings of the Old Testament are in substantial historical accord with the times which they purport to represent and in which they allege to have come forward. If at this point the Pentateuch be cited as an illustration contrary to this rule, the reply is at once at hand, that, when the Pentateuch is analyzed, and the component parts are placed in their proper classification, and

the sources traced to their beginnings, and the history of their development followed out, it will be found that the very Pentateuch itself is the strongest witness to the truth of our proposition in the whole Old Testament. Its alleged literary ascription to Moses of course is cast off. Historical succession and growth take the place of pious hopes and conjecture. But when all this has been done, the Pentateuch itself becomes the guarantee for the historical accuracy of the book. To be sure, if a chronological arrangement were attempted, the beginning of the Old Testament might stand very near the end. But, in its place, it would be accurate, and for all purposes of science sound as history. It would not, as we have shown, partake of the exactness of the mathematical sciences. But it would be as scientifically accurate as literary work of its kind and compass can be. It would stand the keenest scrutiny as such. Indeed it already has. And the effect of all this is to place the whole structure of the Bible upon an historical basis with all the rights and all the credibility that belongs to historical authorities of a literary character. The documentary analyses have brought this into clearer relief than anything else could have done. The Bible is true history. It is for literary purposes accurate history. If it is not true history or accurate history within the limits which we have described, the allegation must be, not against its structure or the vicissitudes of pious customs of false ascription, but to moral obliquity in the direction of deliberate fraud. Return now for a moment to the annals of the Old Testament, consisting of lists, genealogies, and the like. When these are accurate, so far as accuracy can be proven, there is nothing further to be said. If, however, they are found false, it is at once apparent that the main argument has not been touched at all. Lists are special in their character. Genealogies are more or less determined by local motives. They may be wrong, but their inaccuracy cannot be more than scribal. They hardly admit of a moral character, since

they appeal directly to the reader's consciousness of their verity. They in no wise affect the historical accuracy for scientific purposes of the Old Testament as a whole.

#### HISTORICAL AUTHORITY AND RELIGION.

We have now seen that the Bible is not only an authority, but an authority linked with history and of established literary accuracy. The next stage of the inquiry is, What has this to do with religion as a practical matter anyway? What does religion have to do with history and historical authority? One answer, and one not infrequently made, is that religion has nothing at all to do with history. The religious life, not being governed from the past, but from the present experiences and influences, has no concern about what happened in other times or answered for others' needs. Religion and history have no interdependent relations whatever.

Now if religion is merely limited to that which exercises control over the ethical life, and the ethical life as expressed in conduct be substantially the entire content of religion, the reply is a correct one. Ethical relations are independent of historical association or dependence. It makes little difference what others thought about a given procedure, so far as our duty in that same matter is concerned. Duty is always in the present tense. It does not concern itself with the evolution of the idea or its previous form and requirement. It lives for to-day, and to-day alone. But religion is more than ethics. Conduct may indeed, as Matthew Arnold alleges, be three-fourths of life and perhaps of religion; but, if it is, it may be also said that the largest part of the human body is made up of trunk, legs, and arms. But that fact does not alter the fact that the important thing about a man is his head. Ethics may furnish the body of religion, but its head is vastly more important than conduct. This being the case, we cannot say so readily that it makes no difference what the past has wrought, or what the past has thought, in matters of re-

ligion. In fact, what we are thinking is a survival or an evolution of the past, and to understand it we need to know what that past has been, and how far it has survived and remained a force in our own life and development.

This is the reason why it is true, and justly true, that the religion of many people is traditional. The Illuminati who scoff at traditional religion, simply show by that fact their profound ignorance of how human life is carried on, and how the permanent from the thought of one generation is carried over and applied to that of another. Traditional religion has been perhaps the greatest conserving force in civilization. At all events, if the multitude had not received their religion traditionally they would have been without any. Observe here that this is not saying that the personal experience which makes for vital religious living is absent in traditional religion, but that it comes in connection with it. The simple truth, whether we like it or not, is that all religion is now traditional religion. The reason for this is that religion now comes to the vast majority of mankind, and certainly to all Christendom, freighted with the vast wealth of centuries of experience and experiment. These traditions that come in connection with the experiences and labors under which they were formed are, so to speak, the raw material of the intellectual structure of the religious life of to-day. It is the message of the past. It is the setting in which the jewel of personal piety and devotion is to be placed. It gives historical continuity to the past, and brings a pledge for orderly succession toward the future. Nothing has so sound a basis or is worthy of more respect than the much abused "traditional religion."

Now the medium through which tradition comes, is history. And, as we have seen, we soon develop from the mass of traditions those to which we accord certain distinctions, and these become for us historical authorities. The Bible is such an authority. Now religion by its very nature calls for just such authorities as the necessary substructure upon which



its rational growth may be based. That is to say, for its intellectual unity religion makes certain assumptions. If the evidences at hand are of a kind to accord with the intellectual demand, they are appropriated and the process is at once begun. If they must be searched for, the field where the search is made is the field of history. The thought of man may be compared to a series of interlinked circles, of which one-half of each is always covering another half of that which preceded it. The religious life moves forward in just this same way. If the connection is easily established and readily apparent, then the onward process is also easy and readily entered upon. But what this shows is that religion almost from its beginning is linked with history, and, being thus connected, soon demands historical authority. If the authority sought for be of the proper character, it will soon be found; but if the exaggerated kind of historical evidence which we have described be demanded, why of course it will never be discovered, and the religious life will be the usual set of contradictions and perplexities which we find a religion begun *de novo* to be.

But what then? Do the religious experience and the faith which inspires it rest upon these authorities as their base? By no means. When once the individual experience has been recognized as connected with the current of human experiences, the demand for authority gives way to another and very different demand. This is not for rational foundation, but for spiritual guidance. The first requirement was for a sure alliance with the historical order. The second has no more discussion about the historical succession, but asks for guidance and direction. As the Bible was found in the first instance to be a trustworthy historical source, so now it is examined with a view to making it a spiritual guide. In fact this is exactly the process which takes place from generation to generation. The evidences are examined. The main line of argument remains the same. Subordinate lines are changed and the literary examinations are made, but the

main line of Christian evidences stands substantially undisturbed, though it is added to, and new arguments are made from new facts. But this once done, and it is rapidly done (so rapidly in fact that often we are not aware of the process), then the Bible becomes the spiritual guide and index of rational religious living. It is one of the most interesting of processes to observe how soon the transition from authority of the Bible to the spiritual guidance of the Bible takes place. And this is precisely what ought to take place. The perpetual search after mere authority or the verification of mere facts is almost fatal to a sustained Christian experience. No generation was ever intended to examine independently for itself *all* the evidences. It is concerned with those which correspond most to its temper and mental tone. It does not meddle with others. Having settled the points which interest it most, and these are usually few, it goes on to the practical thing, which is the maintenance of the spiritual life. For this it desires not an authority, but an index; not a force which shall dominate the intelligence, but one which shall answer the moods of the spirit. And so historical authority, however important at the beginning, gradually fades away as an element of first importance, and in its place comes a spiritual guide, to which the spirit yields for leadership and direction in spiritual growth and development.

It is just here that the great confusion among critics about the Bible is most manifest. When the vast mass of Christians insist upon the divine authority of the Bible and its infallible character, they mean, for the most part, its spiritual sufficiency and its infallible response to the soul seeking for spiritual enlightenment. Even the most fierce of the destructive critics cannot gainsay this. To be sure it will be, it must be, that from so sturdy a security, which the spiritual guidance of the Bible produces, a more or less similar feeling and confidence will attach to the mere details of history. It could not well be otherwise. But the fact is, there is every pre-

sumption for such confidence. In the sphere of spiritual guidance and direction, the Bible is final, supreme, and infallible. There is no room here for even the slightest doubt. The combined experience of the church throughout its history makes doubt on this point simply childish. It is but a step from spiritual guidance to historical credibility, and the step is readily taken by all who have been under the direction of the Scriptures. Whether rightly taken or not, the process is very easily discovered. The presumptions are certainly in favor of the step. Not to take it would seem like questioning one's own self. But here we have the picture and the process of the way in which the authority of the Bible grows and is sustained. It is idle to expect that that authority will ever be undermined. It is absurd to imagine that criticism will ever change the love and regard of people for their infallible spiritual guide.

#### THE BIBLE AS SPIRITUAL INDEX.

What we have been saying up to this point has had to do chiefly with the intellectual assent which is required to give the Bible a leading place in the mental furnishings of men. It must not be supposed, however, that the authority of the Bible is held in doubt until this intellectual assent is established. Far from it. The fact is, that another process has been going on, parallel to the one already described, which has even a greater force in the determination of the religious life and conviction than that of intellectual belief and authority. This is the development of the spiritual necessities and the process of building up a spiritual index through the means of satisfying them. To this we now turn our thought.

The human feelings of fear, hope, joy, depression, and the like, do not wait upon any intellectual process in their production. To be sure, they require certain concomitant mental conceptions; but the emotions themselves are not the direct product of these conceptions, but rather a kind of appli-

cation of them to the problems of selfhood and self-expression. Now each one of these seeks naturally a means of expression as soon as experienced. If the sensation or spiritual emotion be that of fear, it almost simultaneously evokes a desire for defence from the impending evil, or a placating of the offended power whose wrath is dreaded. Likewise, hope is not held as a vague, indefinite feeling, but is almost at once accompanied by an expression of confidence in the subject-matter of the feeling. So is it with joy; so is it with grief and depression. All are at once directly allied with an effort at the corresponding secondary stage through which we recognize the emotion as existing. Thus joy is almost always allied to some expression of the voice, melodiously or otherwise, but still the use of the voice in a way which all but infallibly indicates the ruling mood. This is why prayer and praise are so closely bound together.

But observe that when these emotions are at work, and in force so to speak, they do not wait upon some authority by which they shall express themselves. What they require is not an authority, but a medium of expression. And in seeking for this medium, by which they shall not only identify themselves but provoke and secure fellowship, they may be said to be infallible. They *are* infallible. Men in deep contrition do not take kindly to exuberant expressions about the joys of the righteous. Men in deep anxiety are not prone to find relief in expressions of abounding fulness and abundance. All human experience shows that the allied moods seek each other. So they go to any source whatever; and if they once find their proper need supplied, to that source they will go again. When this process has been carried on for a certain period, longer or shorter as the case may be, these sources of rest and recuperation for the spiritual moods become a kind of index for the moods themselves, and lead to their identification more quickly, and their satisfaction more

readily, than before, and from this fact the source or sources become final and authoritative in the spiritual life.

Now this is exactly what has happened with the Bible. While the intellectual questions of date and authorship and a great variety of critical problems have remained, and must remain, unsolved to the end, the work of spiritual guidance is going on just the same, and will go on. What effect this finally comes to have on the mental attitudes concerning the problems of the Bible, we shall see later; but the important fact is, that this process goes on without the slightest interruption. Spiritual needs are constantly recurring, and their satisfaction cannot be made to wait upon a question of date. For this reason the spiritual-minded man does not care as a matter of his spiritual life, whether the psalms he reads are exilic, post-exilic, or Maccabean. The essential thing to him is not the date, but the result to his own spirit. The same thing may be said about the Gospels or the Epistles, or in fact about any Scripture, for it still remains that all Scripture inspired of God is useful for the given purpose for which it was intended.

Of all, therefore, of the world's responses to the spiritual desires of enlightened mankind, the Bible is the most complete, the most sure, and the most accurate. The very gradualness with which we see the moral sense developing in the Old Testament renders this more true than it otherwise would or could be. For these various stages of the moral sense are here to-day. They require the same process of unfolding and education that we see indicated in the Old Testament. It is still necessary to master the decalogue before there can be a just appreciation of the gospel. Sinai still precedes Calvary, spiritually as well as historically. This is why the equal authority and the equal use of both Testaments will never be essentially disturbed. With the spread of the knowledge of the Scriptures the appeal to the spiritual guidance of the Bible becomes more and more universal. What a trifling matter

then the mere questions of letter, when the weighty matter of the spirit is settled! And so reason the world and the church. There is no room for arguments here. Each man's experience is his own. If he has once successfully appealed to the Bible as an index to his own spiritual state and aspiration, nothing ever can or will invalidate the response thus obtained. The court which renders that decision is beyond human appeal or reversal.

The Bible may now fairly be called the World's Index of the Spiritual Life. If civilization has anything to teach, it teaches that. If the structure of the Christian family means anything to the modern life, it teaches that. If the splendid development and culture of the intellectual faculties of mankind under the nurture of Christian education teaches anything, it teaches that. If the science of comparative religion, with its unearthing and comparing of the religious classics of all ages and peoples, has any light at all, it teaches that. No one in his senses would seek to question the fact that practically civilization, as we understand that term, rests upon the Bible as the spiritual index of human life. But this fact, like all other facts, cannot be separated from a vast mass of other facts. Indeed this fact is of so great magnitude that it provokes a question whether this, so satisfactory spiritual index, does not thereby create certain intellectual presumptions concerning itself.

And so it does. And the presumptions which it creates are somewhat as follows. The moods of men's lives are the products of real living and real suffering. They are not produced by fairy tales and sun myths. They easily discriminate between the fanciful and actual. Sin and sorrow are not dreams. Goodness is not a natural state of moral creatures, so far as we are acquainted with them. It is not probable that falsehood can express with minute fidelity the human passions and their manifold train of consequences. The Bible does express them. That it does this rests upon what to

each individual is indubitable evidence. It is not a subject of argument. It is still possible to allege delusion, but the person who thus alleges is simply an incompetent witness. The Bible expresses the spiritual life. Falsehood cannot do that. Only a real experience, analogous and of similar import, could leave such an index of itself. The index is true. It has been true before. It will be true again. It must be a record of truth.

It would be utterly vain to reason that this argument has a fallacy in it. It has, but the fallacy in the expressed argument is more than made up in the revealed experience. It simply bridges the chasm between the rational power strictly and the revelation which attests divine authority. And sooner or later the index becomes an authority, and an authority of the first order too. And we can say too that the process by which this has come about is a perfectly legitimate one. It has a scientific quality without being in an absolute sense a scientific process. But it carries with it the conviction that the soul at rest is a soul allied to the Bible. If ever afterward the form of the truth changes, and it seems reasonable that it must change, there is, notwithstanding, the same stern conviction and same unbending, uncompromising fidelity to the Word which, whatever its origin, was a Word from God.

#### THE ANALOGY OF INDEX AND AUTHORITY.

The key to the analogy which we are now seeking to establish is found in Lessing's famous expression, that revelation is the mother, reason is the daughter, and that education is the form of progress for both. We have shown that there are two forms of evidence by which individual men become convinced of the power and moral worth of the Scriptures. We have seen, on the one side, how this evidence becomes, by a developing process, historical and authoritative. We have seen, on the other hand, that along with, and in strict conformity with, this process there is another which, wholly

independent of authoritative direction, builds up for itself a manual of spiritual decisions which afterward become an infallible index to those experiences, and all others like them. How, is now the question, are these related, and what is the effect of their union upon the view of the Bible as a record of events and a final authority?

It is easily seen that we have followed merely the line of inductive reasoning, tracing the steps as they have indicated themselves, making note, step by step, as to what the meaning of each stage on the way might be. We must hold that there is still no rational theory of the world which is not dualistic; that is, God is in the world, but God is not the world. There is a human and there is a divine element in life. If there is a point of union anywhere, that point of union must be the desirable end of human endeavor, and there will be found light to guide and wisdom to direct. In our search for the human element under such a plan as this, we have been led to the Bible because of the historical and philosophic interest which attaches to it as a human production of extraordinary worth and power. On the spiritual side we have been attracted to it by the excellence of its spiritual advice, and the accuracy with which it has responded to our spiritual aspirations. What is there still to be desired? A union which shall show both these processes to be differing sides of the same thing; which shall show our spiritual processes rational, and our rational processes spiritual. It is here that we shall see the Bible in its most excellent aspect.

It is one of the fundamental precepts of the New Testament that redemption is a process of individual effort and personal experience. It is not a question of mediators. Confession and forgiveness is a matter of the soul and God, without human intervention or human aid. This being so, we inquire, What, in the light of it, is the essential difference between the process first described, which resulted in our acceptance of the Bible as an historical authority, and the one last



described, by which we accepted the Bible as a spiritual index? That there are differences, we do not doubt; but what essential difference? A moment's reflection will show that of *essential* differences there are none whatever. In each case we started out with what was a personal question to be solved, for a personal end and the securing of a personal aim. How true this is, may be seen in the enormous differences between the estimates which men make of the same evidences. What is weak to one man is strong to another. The personal equation is the most important factor to be considered. Information for a rational consideration, just like help for a spiritual need, is a matter of personal judgment and individual decision.

The consensus of such judgments by a large number of persons becomes the argument from experience. And the argument from experience becomes with the lapse of time and increasing certitude the voucher for historical truthfulness. The analogy thus indicated is therefore quite clear. The spiritual purely and the rational purely are never so far apart as would seem to be the case, and they are perpetually exercising a reflex influence upon each other which must always be estimated, and upon the correct estimate of which rests the value of every historical judgment and every spiritual analysis. Both processes are allied in the relation of being forms of the same problem. Stated now in precise terms, this analogy may be traced in various ways.

1. History and spiritual experience are both a part of the record of the world's life. They are inseparable parts. The Bible is related to both. It is inseparable from both. As history, it has authority; as index, it offers direction. Both are the necessary conditions of spiritual existence. Just how much this is the case, and to what degree history and experience of spiritual things have at given points in the biblical narratives been combined, is the work of biblical criticism. If any elimination of history results, it simply means that at such a point there is the preponderance of the spiritual emo-

tions. And where we wander over the endless and often barren plains of simple and dry narrative, we have the dominance of the other element. But in either case we have the combination which solves the problem of personal redemption, which is the supreme aim of every revelation. Revelation as mere information is absurd. Revelation as a contribution to the æsthetic taste or the poetic fancy is equally absurd. There is no rationale which is sufficient for a revelation except redemption, in view of the great moral perplexity and the moral necessities of mankind. A record which would contain the most exact and precise statement of facts, and also the most correct and analytic exposition of the human emotions (as any modern psychology does give them), without the impulsive force that comes of the motive of personal redemption is simply an annalistic document without either the insight or the power of the inspired narrative. But when it becomes alive with the touch of the Spirit of God and calls out into being and action the hidden reserves of the human soul, then we call it revelation and look for the manifestation of divine power. Nor are we disappointed in our search. We find gradually that the sifting process separates the temporary and fleeting from the permanent and the eternally true. Both the inquiry for objective and subjective truth are constantly kept up, and in the clearing atmosphere of truth tried and experienced we come into the security of an intelligent and a spiritual faith. Such tests as these have made the Bible the rule and the authority for civilized mankind. Such tests will keep it intact in the ages to come. But the processes of the spirit and those of the rational faculties cannot be divided. They are one. If the index is true, the contents of the volume will be found as represented. When the volume has been searched through, or investigated even in parts only, the thesis is established and we know that we have a Word of God.

2. The analogy is further shown in the preservation of the parallel and relation of the rational and spiritual progress

of the religious life. When the religious life becomes a matter of signs and symbols which can be answered only by reference to the rational powers, then religion strictly has vanished. For the sense of dependence and the sense of mystery which are parts of the religious development are not present in the use of the rational faculties, nor can the ethical life be directed without reference to them. We can see the effect of this view of religion in the utter indifference to the influence of example on the part of the so-called rationalists in religion. The need of self-denial on account of the imperfect development or knowledge of others is never understood by mere rationalists in religion, for the simple reason that, when we consider the ethical act called self-denial, we cannot assign a rational justification for the act. It is simply impossible to justify self-denial or self-renunciation in the court of logic. When all nature calls for self-expression, and when all the forces at work in the world are of a character which educate, that is, draw out from man his resources, great and varied as they are, there can be no justification, by means of logic, of the self-repression which all the Christian world knows as self-denial. The life of Christ, and the life of every martyr in fact, has this same contradictory element in it. It is beyond rational understanding. But when added to the reason is the mystery and the wondrous insight of revelation, these things become not only intelligible, but sublime. Some sights are seen only from the mountain peaks! Of course the man in the valley can argue that they do not exist! He can urge that he has never seen them! He can claim that they are beyond the reach of his imagination, and so they are! He can even prove from his standpoint that they are impossible! And yet there they are to the man on the peak.

It is one of the striking facts about the spiritual influence of the Bible that while demanding in the highest degree the belief in the supernatural, without which by the way it would lose its intelligibility, it has always so preserved the relation

of the spiritual powers of man and the supernaturalism which it required as its necessary background, that it has not only not retarded the rational advance of mankind, but stimulated it in a measure that no other force in the world has done. On the contrary, where men have left the rational supernaturalism of the Bible, they have drifted into the wildest vagaries and the absurdest wanderings of spiritualism imaginable. The famous English deist who could not believe the miracles of the Bible, but could believe that the Lord thundered out of a clear sky his approval of a work against the Bible, is only a type of many such excesses.

The most marvellous of all the effects of the Bible in the direction shown, is just this stimulation of the intellectual life, so that the very inquiries which are most feared by many are the direct fruit of the desire for truth which the Bible inspires. Only, kept in the just relation, and within the parallelism in which the Bible keeps them, there will not only be no clash between the results of rational investigation and spiritual aspiration, but on the contrary the most perfect and enduring harmony.

It is through such a method as this that we find the divine authority of the Bible appearing in stronger terms than ever before. Not shut up to the barren terms of critical statement, but enriched likewise with the wealth and warmth of spiritual fruitfulness, the recasting of the faith and the search for a true underpinning to spiritual endeavor are carried on. It is authority, but it is the authority of a spiritual force, spiritually apprehended. It is an index, but an index understood by the partakers of the experiences which have been interpreted. But out of both it comes a Word of God.