

Reviews.

The Authoritative Inspiration of Holy Scripture. By the Rev. C. H. WALLER, M.A., Principal of St. John's Hall, Highbury, etc. With an Introduction by the Lord Bishop of Liverpool. Blackie and Son. 1887.

THIS is an admirable book. It demands and repays careful and repeated perusal and consideration; not that it is heavy reading, for, on the contrary, every page is marked by a certain originality and point which carries the reader on; but it is a book full throughout of minute touches of remark and suggestion, and of traces of the writer's own thorough and precise study of the Divine Book, in a way which challenges the pauses and attention of the reader in an uncommon degree.

The powerful and characteristic *Introduction* extends over 46 pages. It forms in itself a discussion and defence of the authoritative inspiration of Scripture, highly popular, indeed, in form, but in texture a mass of solid facts in close connection. The Bishop's style, with its grand homeliness of phraseology and presentation, is the expression all the while of very large reading and close attention to the workings of contemporary speculation. A discussion by him on Scripture, such as the present, like many a good popular scientific lecture, is the happy effort of trained skill in making long-matured and verified thought the common property of average minds.

Mr. Waller's treatise is not precisely popular. It appeals directly and specially to readers who have been themselves exercised over the problem concerned, and who either are, or seriously purpose to be, genuine Biblical students in something of a scholar's sense of the word. Not that its only message is to them. Its pith and vigour, and the many points of contact it presents with the thoughts and experiences of common life, are fitted to make it an attractive book to minds which are not as yet seriously interested in its theme, and which have hitherto rested complacently in the mere conventionalities of belief, or the yet poorer conventionalities of doubt, regarding the nature of Scripture. But the book is essentially the book of a thinker and teacher, who takes for granted an attentive and already exercised reader.

It is something to watch the writer's own mental position and habit, as a not too common phenomenon of present-day religious thought and teaching. Mr. Waller would be shown by the present book, even were he not well known otherwise as a writer and as an active trainer of young minds, to be a student of strong intellectual independence, by no means over-disposed *jurare in verba magistri*, and with many mental sympathies more akin to the present than the past. And yet he is a believer in the ultimate and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, without *arrière pensée*, from the first verse of Genesis to the last of the Revelation. For him, as truly as for the Christian student of the fourth century, or of the seventeenth, the inscription at the head of every book and chapter is *Thy word is truth; The Scripture cannot be broken.* He vindicates (and we

heartily endorse every word of the vindication) the "received" translation of 2 Tim. iii. 16 ("All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"), and the verse so translated is precisely the creed about Scripture which he loves to recite. He exposes the flimsy inferences drawn from that complete misunderstanding of 2 Cor. iv. 6 which makes the "letter" to mean the words of Scripture and the "spirit" some indefinable result of its utterances as a whole, separable from their precise expression; and for him the *ipsissima verba* are divine. He entirely recognises, and discusses and illustrates in a highly suggestive way, the perfect reality, freedom, and naturalness of the human side of the work of the writers of Scripture; and yet (rare and delightful phenomenon at the present time!) this recognition is *not* used in order to support a running assumption that these writers are not to be thoroughly trusted, and that we are habitually to give the benefit of the doubt *against* them in favour of "modern science" and "modern criticism." For him the equal presence of the human and the divine in Scripture is not illustrated by the imperfect and coloured reproduction, by a tyro reporter, of a consummate utterance of truth, or by a modern sermon in which spiritual instruction, good on the whole, comes accompanied (and discredited) by notes of serious ignorance of astronomical or geological facts, *claimed by the preacher to be knowledge*. It is illustrated rather by the Human and the Divine, equally present and mysteriously harmonized, in the Incarnate Word. The divine of the Scripture is indeed divine; the human of the Scripture is indeed human, in that it is the entirely natural outcome of the processes of human thought and character; but it is none the less perfect, faultless, the precisely adjusted vehicle to the work and manifestation of the divine, or, as Mr. Waller boldly puts it, the Deity, in Scripture.

We dwell a little at length upon this characteristic and exceptional attitude of the writer's thought. It will be obvious that the book is at least, as things go at the present day, not conventional. There may have been a time when conventionality took exclusively the direction of a somewhat unthinking and active allegiance to the Scriptures. Certainly, within the world of scholarship (a world quite as liable as any other to the mischief of conventionalities and mere fashions of its own) it does not take that direction now. Many of us well remember, as Mr. Waller (p. 7) does, the earthquake shock of the days of the "Essays and Reviews," and of Bishop Colenso's successive volumes. *Nous avons changé tout cela*. Not very long ago, in a gathering of scholars not supposed to be sceptical about the Scriptures, a Doctor of Divinity read a paper to prove that the genealogies in Gen. vi. are varieties of the Solar Myth; a theory which at least leaves it doubtful whether "the blood of righteous Abel" will ever come up in any future judgment, and whether Enoch is in any intelligible sense a pattern of spiritual faith. And office-bearers of the Church can now, without any serious thought of being called upon to vacate their office, announce in effect that theology must begin again, *de novo*, with the attempt to account for the unity of nature, and that the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead very possibly came to be believed in the way suggested by Renan. The present drift and fashion of scholarly thought, of which such utterances are extreme but not wholly alien specimens, runs now in a direction which makes a book like this, being as

it is the work of a genuine and open-eyed scholar, a strikingly unconventional phenomenon.¹

The leading and characteristic thesis of the work is conveyed in its full title, "The Authoritative Inspiration of Holy Scripture, as distinct from the Inspiration of its Human Authors." Mr. Waller is far from denying personal inspiration to the holy writers, of course. But he rightly points out that inspiration, as a personal quality or condition of man, is extremely difficult, or rather impossible, to analyse and define, and to argue from; and that most certainly, whatever it was, it did not exclude in the subject of it the possibility of personal mistake and moral failure in the experience of life. It did not prevent passion in Moses, vice in David, impatience in Jeremiah, weakness of principle and action in St. Peter. And Mr. Waller contends, and with the amplest proof for his contention, that the view of Scripture endorsed by our Lord, is that the Book, not the writers, is the proper subject of uniform and unvarying *authoritative inspiration*; that it, unlike them, is to be regarded as, so to speak, always and characteristically authoritative. It is not merely in some great moments, or for some great purposes, lifted, as it were (like a prophet), above itself. It is always itself; and that self is always the authoritative report, a report in words which are always human in one respect, always divine in another and in the most important, of facts and of truths which God purposes to be authoritative for man.

One of the weightiest parts of the whole work is that in which the testimony of our Lord to this view is collected and discussed. Those who have read the late Lord Hatherley's invaluable "Continuity of Scripture," will have been prepared for much that Mr. Waller says on this point; but Mr. Waller dwells with very special precision and suggestiveness upon it. To our mind it has long been absolutely certain, as a fact of history, that our blessed Lord, alike before and after resurrection, saw divine *authority* in the *ipsissima verba* of the ancient Scriptures; that He "believed things because they were so written in the Bible;" and those who hold that "Christ alone is infallible" must, if they mean out and out what they say, at least extend the ascription of infallibility to what was infallible for HIM. Mr. Waller draws special attention to the fact that our Lord very seldom dwells upon the *personal authorship* of a Scripture, as if it got weight because specially Moses, e.g., or Isaiah, had written it. They wrote it; but its immediate claim to attention and submission is that *it is somehow written* in that unique and mysterious Book.

The relation of the Church to the Canon is a subject which of course comes up, and it is handled in a way full of good sense and attention to facts. In brief, Mr. Waller discusses the historical relation of the Jewish Church to the Jewish Canon (going to Deut. xvii. for his *locus classicus*), and finds the most reasonable and natural of analogies in the relations of the Christian Church and Canon. In neither case can the Church *make* Scripture, nor even by its mere "consciousness" *select* Scripture. It registers and preserves Scripture, which in itself must be produced by prophetic persons, or under their attestations, and delivered by them as Scripture; as was the case, e.g., with "all" St. Paul's Epistles in the view

¹ A strange example of "free-handling" of revelation came accidentally to our notice a few days ago, in a very unexpected quarter. At a meeting of the National Scottish Bible Society, in an able and carefully reported address by a Doctor of Divinity, occurred these words, "That divine image in which man was made, and by whose fracture the male and female elements had been parted asunder, had its fragments re-united in the life of One Who comprehended within Himself the masculine and feminine soul"! This may be Plato, it most certainly is not Moses.

of St. Peter. Such deliverances it is the business of the Church to receive, to register, to attest.

We are tempted to write on, and to deal with the manifold details of this remarkable book at much greater length. But it will be better if this brief notice calls the attention of readers to the real study of the book itself. We would only catalogue, in closing, some of its specially suggestive points. Let the reader then remark the excellent and far-reaching illustrations of the way in which Scripture gets its authority, by the way in which an Act of Parliament becomes law (p. 59); the distinction drawn between inaccuracy and faultless ignorance (p. 72); suggestions on the removal of "difficulties" by a closer study of Hebrew numeration (p. 80); the refutation of the suggestion of our Lord's fallibility in His estimate of Scripture (p. 117); remarks on the phrase *γραφή* (p. 130); on the Lord's corrections, in His sermon, of what "ye have heard said" (p. 133); on the conditions under which the human author was all the while the implement of an "external authorship" (p. 198); a valuable passage on limitations and cautions (p. 209), and on variations in the report of one event (p. 214); the statement, and proof, that "verbal inspiration does not require a verbal report" (p. 218); and the catena of our Lord's testimony to the Old Testament in the Appendix. Meanwhile the whole volume is full of incidental hints and examples how to study Scripture.

This account of the book is brief and fragmentary. There are a very few details where we do not wholly go with the writer; but they are so merely details that we will not dwell upon them, with one exception. On p. 11, note, Mr. Waller gives his reasons for holding fast to the statement that Scripture not merely contains, but is, God's Word. In that statement we agree entirely and cordially with him. But surely its best vindication is his whole argument, and not the collocation (*l. c.*) of 2 Tim. iii. 16 and iv. 2; in which latter verse it is scarcely certain that *ὁ λόγος* bears a definite reference to the *γραφή* just before.

AN EXAMINER.

The Official Year Book of the Church of England. 1887. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

It is only of late years that the ordinary layman of the Church of England has begun to realize the greatness of his Church, or even to think much about it at all. Especially is this true of the Evangelical layman. If he were Evangelical merely in a party sense, his enthusiasm was easily evoked by the word "Protestant;" but the sound of the word "Church" made him feel uneasy, and he would suspect any speaker using it much as of Romeward proclivities. If he was Evangelical in the true sense, a godly and praying man, he dreaded—and rightly dreaded—anything that seemed to put the Church in the place of Christ; and he shrank from calling himself a Churchman, for fear he might by so doing disparage the higher name of Christian. Thousands of excellent Church Sunday-school teachers looked askance at the Church Catechism; and we remember a good lady, a Churchwoman all her life, hearing Hugh Stowell preach a stirring sermon for what was then called the Prayer Book and Homily Society, expressing her astonishment that so staunch an Evangelical should speak so enthusiastically of the Church of England. That there is a great change in this respect among Evangelical people we can all see. Does that change imply Romeward proclivities, or putting the Church in the place of Christ? Assuredly not. It is a result of two causes: first, the enormously increased power of the Church of England as a spiritual agency; secondly, the assaults upon her from without. Men and women engaged in practical evangelistic work, or who, if not engaged in it, like to hear of it and to help it, see that the Church is in the forefront in all

that is being done to save souls. Men and women who love the Word of God have seen the Church alone stand firm in defence of the Bible in the school. And the Disestablishment agitation of two years ago, whatever else it effected or failed to effect, certainly did this—it bound Churchmen together as they have never been bound together before. So that an Evangelical man feels that he can still put Christ and the Gospel first ; still sympathize with all who do the same, though they be not Churchmen ; still work with others, if they will work with him, and yet be proud of the ancient historical Church, Catholic, Reformed, Protestant, National, to which he is now not ashamed to belong.

At this juncture comes the "Official Year Book of the Church of England" with its truly marvellous revelations of the actual work of the Church. It has been from the first a wonderful production ; and this, the fifth (we think) annual volume, is the most wonderful of all. The Honorary Editor, the Rev. F. Burnside, has done extraordinary service to the Church by his labours in compiling it. Anyone gifted with persistent industry could now carry it on ; but the original planning of the work, the mapping out of its various sections, the initiation of the machinery for collecting such a mass of varied information, must have involved immense trouble, and the result is a monument of organizing and editorial skill. This language may seem extravagant, but it will not be thought so by anyone who will really examine these seven hundred pages.

It would require many pages of this magazine to give any fair idea of the contents of the "Year Book." Chap. I. treats of the Training of the Clergy, and gives full information about Theological Colleges, etc. Chap. II., which occupies 160 pages, describes Home Mission Work in fifteen sections, such as Church Building and Extension, Parochial Work and Missions (with illustrations from actual parishes), Lay Help, Christian Evidence, Reformatory Work, Temperance, Deaconesses, etc., etc., with full lists and notices of the various institutions. Chap. III. is on Education, National Schools, Sunday Schools, etc., In Chap. IV. eighty pages are given to Foreign Missions, the work of all the Church Societies being detailed, and a most interesting series of reports given from no less than sixty Colonial and Missionary Bishops. Chap. V. is on the Episcopate, and a sketch of the history of the Colonial Episcopate is of special interest in this year of its centenary. Chap. VI. describes Choral and Bell-Ringing Associations. Chap. VII. gives particulars of the Convocations, the House of Laymen, the Diocesan Conferences, the Central Council and the Church Congress ; with a (not complete) notice of the various Evangelical, Clerical, and Lay Unions. Chap. VIII. provides statements regarding the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, and the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. Chap. IX. deals with Clergy Pensions, Endowments, and Charities ; Chap. X. with the Welfare of Young Men ; Chap. XI. with Church Defence. Chap. XII. gives a chronology of Church events ; and Chap. XIII. a list of Church books published. Then follow sixty pages of statistical tables of all sorts, lists of officials of the Dioceses, Universities, Societies, etc., and miscellaneous matter.

Heartly thanks are due to the S.P.C.K. for its unstinted liberality in bringing out such a volume at a price within the reach of all ; and we hope ere long to find the "Official Year Book" of the Church of England upon nearly as many tables as Bradshaw and Whitaker's Almanack.

E. S.

