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the words could bear, carries with it the underlying implication of the unity of being. Combine the Lord's assertions of eternal pre-existence with His claims to equality with God, and the demonstration is complete, that He is no created being, but the only-begotten Son, very God of Very God.

J. P. SHERATON.

(To be continued.)

ART. IV.—HOW FAR IS MODERN CRITICISM CONSISTENT WITH THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE ?¹

THE subject I am invited to discuss is, How far modern criticism is consistent with the Inspiration of the Bible; and I shall endeavour to direct my observations strictly to that question. I shall not enter upon the vast question of the results, or alleged results, of that criticism, as it would lead us into far too wide a field for the present occasion. It is the more important, moreover, to keep strictly to this issue because it is greatly obscured in much of the current discussion on the subject. Take, for example, a book now widely read, Professor Adam Smith's recent volume, entitled "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament," to which it will be convenient frequently to refer in this paper, and you will find that the question of Inspiration is practically put out of sight, under the discussion of the very different question whether the Bible furnishes a record of God's revelation of Himself to the people of Israel. The question the Professor asks (p. 73) is, "What does criticism leave to us in the Old Testament; how much true history: and how much Divine revelation?" Roughly speaking, his answer is (p. 77) that "with the time of Samuel we at last enter real and indubitable history." Not that even after that date all the history is to be trusted. He says that the books of Samuel and Kings "are composed of narratives of very various worth. Some are plainly of an age long subsequent to the events they describe; there has been time for later conceptions to mingle with the facts on which they are based." But on the basis of the limited historical materials thus left to us he confidently maintains (p. 142) that "there are here the lines of an apologetic for a Divine revelation through early Israel, more sure and more clear than any which the traditional interpretation of the Old Testament ever attempted to

¹ A paper read before the Eastern Counties Clerical Conference at Ipswich on June 4, 1902.

lay down." "We cannot doubt," he says (p. 143), "that the history of early Israel, as critically interpreted, was an authentic and a unique stage in the process of revelation; that Israel were receiving, through their national God, real impressions of the character and mind of the Deity."

I confess I cannot understand his meaning when he says that the lines of argument on which he relies for this purpose are "more sure and clear" than the old ones, for he practically surrenders the facts on which the old interpretation relies. But it is, no doubt, a very simple and forcible argument to say, as he does in effect: Here you find in the prophets of the eighth century, such as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, profound apprehensions of the nature and the will of God; but there is nothing in the natural character of the people of Israel to account for such apprehensions; and, consequently, we may be sure that God had been revealing Himself to their ancestors (pp. 142-144). It would seem, indeed, that this is rather a roundabout method for showing that some facts or other occurred of a similar nature to those which are recorded in the Old Testament narratives, and particularly in the Mosaic books. It thus confirms the probability of those narratives; but it would seem far less sure and clear than the evidence afforded by those narratives and records themselves. What I am concerned to point out, however, is that, whether Professor Adam Smith's view on this point be true or not, it, to say the least, abandons as unimportant the inspiration of the books of the Old Testament. It is content, in his words, to take a mass of narratives "of very various worth," and to argue that, whatever their trustworthiness or untrustworthiness, it is evident that God was gradually making Himself known to the people of Israel. This is an important conclusion, and justifies Professor Smith in his statement, during the recent debate in the Assembly of the Free Church at Edinburgh, that he fully recognised in the Bible a Divine revelation to men. But it leaves the question of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books entirely on one side, and practically says that that inspiration is a matter of no consequence.

Now, this is a point of view in which it would seem impossible for Christians to acquiesce, and in which we may be quite sure that the stress of controversy, both within and without the Church, will never allow them to acquiesce. A belief in the special Inspiration of the books of the Bible is indissolubly bound up with the faith of the Church; and if it could be proved untenable, the authority of the Evangelical and Apostolic writers—I must add, of our Lord Himself—would be grievously shaken. It is, indeed, a doubtful point how far the authority of our Lord can be fairly appealed to in

support of the actual authorship of the books of the Old Testament; and it is improper to rest any case on His authority unless that authority is quite clear and unmistakable. But His authority is thus clear and unmistakable in respect, at all events, to the possession by the Sacred Books of the Old Testament of that kind of special Divine authority which is implied by the description of them as inspired. His appeal to them in such words as, "*The Scripture cannot be broken;*" the fact that, after His resurrection, in conversation with disciples, "*beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*"—this is quite sufficient to show that He accepted the Sacred Books of the Old Testament, as they existed in His day, as the authoritative record of a Divine revelation. The fact is admitted by Professor Adam Smith, who says (p. 11) that "the Bible of the Jews in our Lord's time was practically our Old Testament," and adds that "He fed His own soul with its contents, and in the great crises of His life sustained Himself upon it as upon the living and sovereign word of God." Let us pass to the Apostles; and let us again take Professor Adam Smith's statements respecting their view of the Old Testament. St. Paul, he points out (p. 15), affirms that it had been the glory of the Jews "to possess a definite and authoritative expression of God's will in the Scriptures." He quotes the text, "*Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;*" and he adds (p. 16): "These opinions of the abiding validity of the Old Testament were held by the Apostles along with a very strict belief in the inspiration of its text." Dr. Sanday, whose sympathies are to a great extent with the current criticism, admits, in his Bampton Lectures, that the view of Inspiration held by the Apostles appears to have been, in substance, the belief of the Christian Church until some fifty years ago.

Now, it cannot but be a matter of the utmost gravity if a belief of this kind, held by the founders of the Christian Church, recognised and asserted by the Apostles in their Epistles, is undermined; and any writer who puts forward new views on the subject is bound to reckon with it. Dr. Driver has attempted to do so in the Preface to his "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," and in a very strange way. He says (p. xiii.) that "Criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament; it *presupposes* it. It seeks only to determine the conditions under which it operates, and the literary forms through which it manifests itself." This seems

as much as to say that Inspiration is a mere word, by which we have agreed beforehand to describe any phenomena whatever which we may think we have discovered in the Old Testament. It implies that the word "Inspiration" has no settled meaning; that it is a sort of blank cheque, which the Christian Church allows the critics to fill up as they please. But this is a mode of begging the question which seems entirely inadmissible. Certainly, there is great difficulty in actually defining the term "Inspiration," and in determining the exact limits of the truth which it expresses. But that is the case with many, if not most, of the words we use to express great realities. It is difficult to define the word "Spirit" or the word "Person." But we have none the less a general idea what the words mean, and in each case there are certain phenomena which are incompatible with that meaning. It seems, in short, almost absurd to say beforehand, as Dr. Driver practically does, that there are no results of criticism which would be incompatible with our applying the term *inspired* to the Old Testament. The Church has had the idea from the first. The Apostles had the idea; they speak of Scripture *given by Inspiration of God*. There must be a great reality behind the term—a reality of which Christian men have a broad and general conception; and the question I am asked to discuss, whether certain results of criticism are compatible with it, must be a real and vital question.

But, of course, in order to answer it we must be prepared with some statement of that general meaning of the term *Inspiration* which has been in the mind of the Christian Church; and I would suggest that there is one principle respecting it which is impregnable, because it rests on a clear statement of our Lord as to what Inspiration would mean in the case of His Apostles. In His last discourse to them before His Passion, He said that "when the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself, but what things soever He shall hear, those shall He speak, and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." Those words seem to describe sufficiently for our purpose what was to be the essence of the work of the Spirit upon the minds of the Apostles. It was to lead them into all the truth; and accordingly we believe that the effect of the gift of the Holy Spirit was, in the words of our Whit-Sunday Collect, to "give them a right judgment in all things," to enable them to apprehend, as they had never before done, the meaning of our Lord's teaching, to understand the ancient Scriptures and their references to Him, to penetrate into the meaning of the Law and the Prophets, and to grasp the truths which our Lord had

revealed to themselves. We believe that the writers of the Gospels had the aid of that Spirit to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them, and to enable them to produce those records of His words and deeds which have been the life of the Church ever since. We may surely conclude, therefore, that one unmistakable and indispensable mark of an inspired book is that it is specially guarded against error, that its writer is assisted to record what is true, and to guide its readers into an apprehension of truth. It is to be observed, indeed, that this guardianship does not seem to take account of small and unimportant details. It is a fact, which no one can dispute, that God has not deemed it necessary to protect the books which His Spirit had inspired against errors in transmission. There are doubtful points in the text of the New Testament, and still greater uncertainties in respect to the text of the Old. It would seem analogous to this fact that there are some uncertainties, and perhaps some inaccuracies, in the sacred narratives, in addition to those which arise from errors in the text. It may seem specially intended to be a lesson to us on this point, that we cannot be quite sure what was the exact form of some of the most important words spoken by our Lord. Although we are quite sure, for instance, of the substance of His words in instituting the Holy Communion, there is some variation in the exact expressions reported to us. All this seems a clear indication that the truth we are to look for in inspired books is substantial truth—that sort of substantial truth which is independent of minute details, and which is sometimes, in the evidence of witnesses, deemed to be even corroborated by variation in such details. But in the sense of truth of this kind, it would seem to be the clearest and most important of all the marks and effects of Inspiration that an inspired writer is guided to see the truth, and to utter it in words of truth.

Can it be doubted that this is the effect of Inspiration which has been chiefly prized by Christians in their Sacred Books? They have believed that, because those books are inspired, they are to be implicitly trusted; they have prized them as containing a solid foundation of truth on which they could securely build their beliefs respecting God's dealings with men in the past and His purposes for them in the future. The common phrase that a thing is "true as Gospel" embodies this cardinal meaning. If it can be shown that the statements in a book are not true, from that moment it must cease to be regarded as inspired.

Now let us look at the conclusions of modern criticism under the light of this consideration. It may be observed, in the first place, that unless a definite claim to authorship be

made in a book, explicitly or implicitly, the mere question of authorship may be discussed without affecting the question of Inspiration. As the late Archbishop of Canterbury observed, the question of the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews has always been as doubtful in the Church as it is at the present day, but the Inspiration of the Epistle is none the less generally acknowledged. There are cases, indeed, where the authorship is implied, though not explicitly stated, such as that of the Gospel of St. John, and in such cases Authorship and Inspiration become inseparable. But the question of the Inspiration of the books of Samuel and Kings does not depend at all on what may be definitely known of their authorship, provided we have sufficient reason to believe that their writers were under Divine guidance. Jews and Christians have always believed that their writers, whoever they were, were led by the Spirit of God to select such facts as are of vital consequence for the purpose of Divine revelation, and to record them truly. Apply this consideration to the authorship of the Pentateuch. It is now alleged that it is a composite work, not written throughout by Moses, but compiled from at least four documents of varying ages. Now, I do not here discuss whether this theory is true. Though the majority of Hebrew scholars accept it, there are also distinguished scholars who still doubt it—at least, in the definite shape now generally current. There are many who admit the claim put forward by some parts of it to have been actually written by Moses at God's command; and if it be allowed that he wrote, or may have written, some parts of the book, it is difficult to see why he may not have written more. But however this may be, what I am now concerned to point out is that the mere fact of the composite character of these books would be no presumption whatever against their Inspiration. The person who compiled them, whoever he was, may as well have been under Inspiration in his work as the persons who originally wrote the documents or records of which they are composed. One man may have been inspired to write the first chapter of Genesis, and another person, in subsequent times, to combine it with other inspired documents. As the late Dr. Liddon happily expressed it, there may well be such a thing as the "Inspiration of Selection." So long, therefore, as the question is merely one of the composite character of some of the Sacred Books, the reality of their Inspiration is not necessarily touched, and the discussion of such questions seems quite consistent with an acknowledgment of their Inspiration. Here, again, questions may arise similar to what was mentioned just now with respect to St. John's Gospel. Renan once said that either the author of that Gospel is St. John

himself or he is a forger. That seems to me to be substantially the case with respect to the Book of Deuteronomy. Either that book proceeded in substance from Moses, or it is inconsistent with that truth which is the first note of inspiration. But apart from such a case as this, very various opinions may be held as to the authorship of the Pentateuch without compromising its Inspiration.

But the case is entirely altered when we proceed to other contentions of criticism—those, namely, which involve the conclusion that the truth of the narratives in the Sacred Books is not to be relied upon. This is the plain and unquestionable effect of a great deal of the criticism which is now current. Wellhausen, as is well known, makes no scruple of stating this plainly, and his more reverent followers in this country may disguise it, but cannot escape it. Professor Adam Smith, for instance, says (p. 130) that “to whatever heights the religion of Israel afterwards rose, it remained before the age of the great prophets not only similar to, but in all respects above mentioned identical with, the general Semitic religion; which was not a monotheism, but a polytheism, with an opportunity for monotheism at the heart of it.” But this can only be regarded as a direct denial of the truth of the representation of the religion of Israel which is given in the narratives of Genesis, of Exodus, of Numbers, of Deuteronomy, and of the books of Samuel, in which the patriarchal leaders of the people, at all events, are clearly represented as having revealed to them the great principles of the religion which was afterwards enforced in a special manner by the Prophets.

It is important to observe, moreover, that this contradiction applies to the writers of the New Testament as much as to those of the Old. St. Paul's whole position is based on the assertion that the essential principle of Faith in God was established by God's revelation to Abraham. So, again, the current theory that the Law was subsequent to the Prophets involves a direct contradiction of the historical truth of such narratives as that of the construction of the Tabernacle; and the description in the Pentateuch of the action of Moses must certainly, on this supposition, fall generally under that euphemistic designation of “unhistorical” which critics of this school prefer when they mean to say that a thing is not true. When the utmost that an earnest writer like Professor Adam Smith can say in support of the truth of the history of Abraham is (p. 107) that “with critics there has been a distinct reaction of late in favour of admitting the personal reality of Abraham,” it is evident that the effect of the criticism he represents is that the narratives of the patriarchs

are not true accounts of actual facts. Now, this is a sort of criticism which, I submit, is absolutely incompatible with admitting the Inspiration of the books in question. On this supposition, those books have the effect—they have had the effect for at least 2,500 years—of representing as true that which is not true, of representing that certain actual lives were lived, that certain events occurred, and that certain Divine communications were made, when those lives were not lived, those events did not occur, those communications were not made. If that is compatible with Inspiration, the word is destitute of meaning. It ceases, at least, to have any practical value for us; and the books to which it has hitherto been applied have no higher claim to belief than those legends of other nations to which, by such critics, they are freely compared. Professor Adam Smith, after reducing the history of the patriarchs to this *caput mortuum*—after saying that, “on the present evidence, it is impossible to be sure of more than that they contain a substratum of actual personal history”—asks (p. 107): “But who wants to be sure of more? Who needs to be sure of more?” Who? Why, every Christian man, every Christian theologian, who has hitherto believed, under the teaching of St. Paul, that the call of Abraham laid the foundation of the Divine order for the redemption of the world, that he was the Father of the faithful, and that it is a cardinal point in the Divine will that in his seed should all nations be blessed. By such criticism the teaching of St. Paul, the history of the Bible, is robbed, not of an ornament, but of a fundamental truth; and it is incompatible with the Inspiration alike of the books which record those events, and of the teaching of the Prophets and Apostles which rests upon them.

The result, therefore, of these observations is to point to the importance of carefully observing a clear distinction in respect to modern criticism. No one can properly object to the application of criticism to the Bible, for it is merely the application of reason; and any results really established by reason must be accepted, whatever the consequences. But, on the other hand, it may afford reassurance in many quarters to recognise that results of criticism which do not affect the substantial truth of the Scriptures are not inconsistent with Inspiration, even if they overthrow received opinions respecting authorship, and even date. On the other hand, we should be warned that critical results which do affect that substantial truth are inconsistent with Inspiration. If such results must be accepted, then the Inspiration of the books affected by them must be given up. But those who are deeply convinced by the witness of the Spirit, the witness of

the Church, the failure of previous attacks, that the ancient belief respecting the Inspiration of the Scriptures is true, will justly view with the utmost suspicion critical results of the distinctive character in question. They will feel sure that there is some subtle error in a criticism which leads men—however good and able they may be—to such conclusions; they will be content to rely on the plain, broad testimony of Evangelists and Apostles, and of an inspired teacher like St. Stephen, and will patiently wait until, as on former occasions, criticism has corrected itself by better criticism.

HENRY WACE.

ART. V.—"OUR UNHAPPY DIVISIONS"—V.

(continued).

IN the time of the Reformation there were many who inclined to the conjecture that, "after the Apostles were deceased, churches did agree among themselves, for preservation of peace and order, to make one presbyter in each city chief over the rest."¹ And of this account of the origin of

¹ Few, I think, will be found to maintain that any form of Church organization is as distinctly prescribed to the followers of Christ as the emphatic command to evangelize the world; and if we grieve to see, on one side, a sad, though not unnatural, prejudice against Episcopacy, obscuring the view of the evidence in its favour, we may do well, perhaps, to inquire whether, on the other side, there may not have been manifested sometimes a prejudice against those who failed to see clearly Scriptural proof of its Divine appointment, and this in connection with a tendency to give it exaggerated importance, and unduly to exalt its monarchical dignity.

It cannot be denied that those whose prejudices led them to question the Scriptural evidence for the Order of Episcopacy might claim apparent support even from the Master of the Sentences. After speaking of the minor Orders, he says: "Excellenter tamen canones duos tantum sacros ordines appellari censent. Diaconatus scilicet et presbyteratus: quia hos solos primitiva ecclesia legitur habuisse, et de his solis præceptum Apostoli habemus" (Lombard, "Sent.," lib. iv., dist. xxiv., fol. 348b; Paris, 1558). Somewhat later he adds: "Sunt et alia quædam non ordinum, sed dignitatum vel officiorum nomina. Dignitatis simul et officii nomen est Episcopus" (*ibid.*, fol. 349a).

Archbishop Leighton, speaking of the esteem due to those concerned with "the holy functions of God's house," takes account of the straining of "this consideration too high, to the favouring and founding of a monarchical prelacy in the Christian world" ("On 1 Pet. ii. 9," vol. i., p. 283; S.P.C.K.); and he deprecates the seeking "those dignities that suit not with this charge, which is not *dominatum*, but *ministerium*" (*ibid.*, ch. v., vers. 2-4; vol. ii., p. 442). He appears to be alluding to the saying of "that holy man Bernard" (see p. 436): "Blanditur cathedra? Specula est. Inde denique superintendis, sonans tibi Episcopi nomine non domi-