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It was to a Church sorely tempted and tried, and weakened by the working of a spirit of disunion, that the Apostle Paul wrote two Epistles of faithful and loving rebuke and exhortation, concluding with these words of encouragement: "Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect (*καταρτίξασθε*), be of good comfort, be of one mind (*τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε*), live in peace (*εἰρηνεύετε*), and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. xiii. 11).

N. DIMOCK.



#### ART. V.—"THE INTEGRITY OF SCRIPTURE."<sup>1</sup>

THE history of the world is the judgment of the world. The history of opinion is the judgment of opinion. "Securus judicat orbis terrarum." This is the truth that underlies a maxim which neither leads to the conviction of the infallibility of world-judgment nor yet to Rome. How often have we been told in the course of the present Old Testament controversy that it touched nothing, altered nothing, which a Christian holds, or ought to hold, dearer than his life? We can preach the Old Testament so much better. We breathe so much more freely in an atmosphere of pure truth. There is an old-fashioned ring about the assurance. It takes us back some years. "Strauss," we were told, "admitted the statements of the Gospel to be true; he only denied that they were historically true"—a distinction, of course, only of importance to the incompetent, the uncritical, the uncultured. Let us continue the quotation. "Strange as it may seem, it did not occur to Strauss that by such a theory he put himself beyond the pale of the Church. It did not occur to him that by the profession of such views he was called upon in honour to resign his office as a Christian minister. On the contrary, he endeavours to reduce to a minimum the difference between the historical believer and the mythical believer. His reasoning amounts to this: An evangelical preacher selects, perhaps, for the subject of his discourse the narrative of Christ walking on the sea. He begins by a reference to the outward circumstances of the case, and by a description of the scene, and an enumeration of the external incidents. Yet upon these, even the evangelical preacher does not long linger. He speedily passes on to derive suggestions from the outward picture, to spiritualize the narrative into practical lessons for every day, to

<sup>1</sup> "The Integrity of Scripture: Plain Reasons for Rejecting the Critical Hypothesis," by the Rev. John Smith, D.D., Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh. Hodder and Stoughton; 1902.

show that there is always an Infinite presence even amidst the sea of human trouble, and how, by surrendering our souls to that presence, there is always heard the still small voice, ‘Peace, be still.’ The mythical preacher proclaims the same Gospel, with this one difference, that what the evangelical minister calls practical lessons derived from the subject, the mythical preacher calls the subject itself. To him the spiritual influences of the passage are the primary truths. These truths are not derived from the history, it is the history that is derived from them; the outward incident is only a poetical representation of Eternal truth. And so the mythical preacher passes over the historical reference, on which his evangelical brother dwells so lightly, and, without adverting at all to the outward circumstances of his text, he proceeds at once to unfold its spiritual import.”<sup>1</sup>

But the clear understanding foresaw the issue. The spiritual must have its basis in outward fact to be strong enough to resist the hard facts of life. Without this basis in fact, it vanishes without power and without comfort. The mythical theory was scientifically false. It handled cruelly the highest instinct of humanity, which is a thirst for the living God, which no revived and revised Gnosticism can satisfy. It was the broad road that led to intellectual destruction. And the clear understanding of Strauss was forced along this road. Hear the lucid words of his later pronouncement: “Things had not as yet come to such a pass, but it needed no extraordinary acumen to foresee that they soon would do so, when one gifted, perhaps, with but too much acumen, when Schleiermacher propounded his system of ‘theology.’ He resigned himself from the first to the possible necessity of yielding the point of the genuineness of the greater part of the Biblical writings, after having of his own accord surrendered that of the traditional conception of Jewish history, as well as that of primitive Christianity. For him, no less than for the Rationalists, the historical and dogmatic value of the Biblical account of creation, and the fall of man was null, and like them also, *only with rather better taste,*<sup>2</sup> he knew how, on purely rational grounds, to explain the miracles recorded in the Gospels, not excluding the cardinal one of the resurrection of Christ. Neither did he retain the original sense of the Christian dogmas, the difference consisting only in the greater ingenuity, but sometimes also the more artificial character, of his interpretations. Of one article of belief only did he keep firm hold, and that certainly the central dogma of

<sup>1</sup> “Aids to the Study of German Theology,” 1874, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> The italics are our own.

Christianity—the doctrine regarding the person of Christ. In this instance, the well-meaning, didactic, and itinerant rabbi of the Rationalists was almost too insignificant—I might say too prosaic—for him. He believed himself able to prove that Christ had played a more important, a more exceptional part. But whence obtain these proofs, if, after all, so little reliance could be placed on the Gospels?"

And then comes the conclusion of all this in the clear, relentless understanding: "And now, methinks, we have reached the end. And the result? Our answer to the question, Are we still Christians? Shall I still give a distinct statement, and place the sum total of the foregoing in round numbers under the account? Most unnecessary, I should say; but I would not, on any consideration, appear to shirk even the most unpalatable word. My conviction, therefore, is, if we would not evade difficulties or put forced constructions upon them, if we would have our yea, yea, and our nay, nay—in short, if we would speak as honest, upright men—we must acknowledge we are no longer Christians."<sup>1</sup>

And these are his words upon his death-bed to his pious daughter: "What your father has done will live for ever, but his personality will for ever cease to be."<sup>2</sup>

This, then, is the end in a clear intellect of generations of sophistical ingenuity and one-sided elaboration. We are left once more "without God and without hope in the world." Only the darkness which closes in and can be felt is more cruel for the light shut out—Christ, our hope, expunged, eternal life gone.

We see from this instructive example the necessary path of the clear understanding, when we have paid, as, we have lately been told we must pay, the indemnity to a so-called science that, with the most praiseworthy diligence, saws away the branch on which it sits. Christianity has a body in fact, as well as a soul in spiritual reality. That this body is instinct and breathing with life (we are reminded by the powerful and useful book, which we are called upon to review), that this body is a living body is part of the true scientific proof of the reality of our religion. To say the soul will live after the body is dead is in this world to say nonsense. We Christians have a right, a historic, grave right, to say to those who play with a light heart with the instruments of a confessedly one-sided, biassed criticism, whither does all this tend?

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<sup>1</sup> "The Old Faith and the New: a Confession," by David Friedrich Strauss, 1874, pp. 47, 107.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Pierson's "Seed Thoughts," p. 109.

This question is no question of the academic reputation of scholars, be they great or be they small, our author again reminds us. Still less is it, we agree, in the least a matter for prosecutions or heated, narrow-minded partizanship. We have had too much of this, and suffer from its reactions. But it is an exceedingly grave issue that must be fought out. The whole Church, shaken and disturbed to its foundations, must judge. It is a question of the truth and certainty of the things wherein we have been instructed, wherein we instruct—for the parallel to which we have sought to call the attention of our readers does not stop where we left it. To use the words of Strauss just quoted: "A few years ago things had not as yet come to such a pass, but it needed no extraordinary acumen to foresee that they would soon do so." A few years ago we had no psalms of David in the Psalter; no intelligible influence of Moses on the law; the prophets without prophecy; Abraham and Moses receding into folk-lore; no fall, but an ascent of man; no work of God discernible to the clear understanding. But now, without a single protest from anyone, as leaders of the van of a victorious army, these intellectual stalwarts have advanced from the ruins of the Old Testament into the sanctuary of the New. We are told we have only a few sayings of our Lord in the Gospels to rest our hope upon, and why these? If it is a matter of mere critical acumen, and not historical fact, why these? Our Lord's priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek" is "mere temporary rhetoric." "We possess no Epistles of Paul; the writings which bear his name are pseudepigrapha." We find from the less responsible murmurs of the rising tide that the Incarnation is uncertain, the Virgin birth is untenable or not to be pressed, the descent of the Spirit never took place at Pentecost, the baptismal covenant is a later invention.<sup>1</sup> And all this and the like fatuous nonsense is pressed upon us with scarcely any protest from any man in the sacred names of science and of truth. By whom? By clergymen of the Church of England, by ministers of religion. And when the working clergyman finds the power of his message evacuated in the name of religion, and its presentation impossible—when he feels himself ready to cry with the poet, "Quo, quo, scelesti, ruitis?"—he is told by those who have accepted the principle, but do not quite like all the inferences, or who are sitting on the hedge, that there is no place in this matter for his illiberal ignorance. All he has to do is to pay the indemnity and to leave to the fine intelligence of experts his spiritual direction.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, the "Encyclopædia Biblica," and "Contentio Veritatis," *passim*.

We are glad that there are some, at least, like Dr. Smith, of Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, who have the courage not to think so. This matter touches to the quick national life, the faithfulness and existence of the Church, the work of missions. It is no plaything for experts to build their reputation upon. Is this the time, we ask, as we look round upon the flock, and the lambs of the flock, and their hard, inevitable struggle—is this the time for those in high places, without protest, to weaken the power of religious convictions, to strike at the Divinity of the Commandments, to obscure the very person of Christ? If this is the truth, let it slay us. Let truth and reason prevail; let the Church and Christianity perish—perish with lamentation, but still perish. If we are without chart and compass still, adrift from all ancient moorings, cut away from the Catholic faith and the martyr's power, we say with our author and at once, if the truth compel it, let it be so. We will face the truth like men. But it is too late, with the fatal history of opinion before us, to say that we can still derive excellent sermons from the Old Testament, though it be only an unhistorical graft upon a natural development, and that the criticism at present accepted by many touches nothing, alters nothing, only improves. The clear understanding will never accept this proposition.

It is the great merit of Dr. Smith's work that he reasserts forcefully that the feeling of Divinity, which the Old Testament inspires and always has inspired, reinstates its historical worth. As Dr. Smith says so well, we do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. A Jahveh who at one time stood level with Chemosh, and was transmuted by the prophets, and later by the priests, into the God of heaven and earth, and clothed with a garment of fiction and a garniture of legend, is not, and cannot be, the Jahveh whose name rings true from the first page of the Old Testament to the last. There can be no natural development where there is a natural impossibility. The seed is of the same nature as the product. From gross, corrupt, superstitious idolatry no true Divinity ever can, nor ever did, proceed. History is the evidence. If all nations, as we are told, were advancing from the germ of foul and evil superstition to the fruit and bloom of the knowledge of God, why is it that nations better equipped with culture than little Israel never achieved it and never came near it? Why should a mission be imposed upon the Church? That God spake in many parts and many manners to the Fathers by the prophets, of whom Moses was one and Abraham another, and that the history of men and of thought moved on through a noble progression of increasing revelation to the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is as intelligible as it is

credible and interesting; but that the Creator slipped into the theology of Israel in the midst of fiction and legend, we don't well know how or when, is a criticism which we should contend is demonstrably untrue to the body of Hebrew history and literature, but which gives no rational account at all of the soul and spirit that palpably inspires its lowest levels.

We are told in a passage which Dr. Smith quotes from a critic of note that "For over a century, every relevant science, every temper of faith, and, one might add, almost every school of philosophy, have shot across this narrow field their opposing light, under which there has been an expenditure of labour and ingenuity greater than has been devoted to any other literature of the ancient world, or to any other period in the history of religion."<sup>1</sup> We answer, if this statement is intended to convey that all this labour is concentrated in one only direction, it is plainly misleading. Much of the labour has set on a steady foundation facts which are directly counter to the prevailing hypothesis. It is only those, who occupy a height of intelligence which is superior to recognising any labour which in the least contradicts or modifies the views they favour, who would affect to deny this. Much, again, of this labour has greatly cleared our understanding of the sacred record, and will remain useful to all time. But the labour directed to establish the hypothesis that pure, everlasting religion was grafted by a fiction upon a merely natural development has been exceedingly small, if any at all. Our author has well spent more labour on this than they all. This, which is the central point of the whole matter, is taken, as a rule, for granted at the outset without argument, or established by a sneer. Besides, labour is no criterion of truth.<sup>2</sup> The traditions of the Elders, which culminated in the Mishna, were built up by the stupendous labour of generations. The edifice of the scholastic philosophy, which stood in the way of true science for generations, was abundantly laborious, and was fortified by general consent. It were no reason that what has taken thousands of generations to build up into the fear and love of God could be pulled down in an hour by an epigram.

But though differing apparently in our understanding of the facts of this century of labour, we should like to cite the remarks of Dr. Smith which follow this quotation, with cordial agreement as to their spirit. "We do not wonder," proceeds Dr. Smith, "that there should be

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<sup>1</sup> "The Integrity of Scripture," p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> A philological aptitude and an eminent capacity for cataloguing facts and opinions are no guarantee for a large-hearted lucidity of thinking.

a jealousy of the results of such enormous labour. And we hope that we shall never be left to ourselves to speak or write with any other feeling than that of respect for high character, extensive erudition, patient research, and an honest pursuit of truth, whatever our opinion of the results may be. On the other hand, the critics must not for a moment suppose that we are to accept blindly what they give. There is a tone manifest in their reference to the common Christian judgment which, in the interests of truth, not to speak of good feeling, cannot be too strongly reprobated. What the Christian people shall say, what the Christian people shall judge, is discounted for them beforehand by those whose work has to be pronounced upon, with a scarcely veiled contempt. In a sentence of his recent volume which is most likely to live, Professor G. Adam Smith allows the Church of Christ, with whom abides His Spirit, no liberty of judgment, but only the forced payment of the critically fixed indemnity. Again, when he has eliminated from the history of the patriarchs everything beyond the smallest 'substratum of actual personal history,' he flouts the conscience of myriads of believing men, to whom such statements raise many difficult questions not easy of solution, with light queries like these: 'But who wants to be sure of more? Who needs to be sure of more?' Canon Cheyne, too, is prone to lecture us on 'what Conservatives want, or ought to want.' In all this there is a misunderstanding of their position. The critics are the plaintiffs, not the judges, and they must learn to respect the bar at which they plead. Now that their case is drawn up and stated, there is legitimate and large room for practical consideration, not merely of their theory and its self-consistency, but of how it stands related to ordinary probability, the laws of evidence, and the character of the religion whose origins they would explain."

The volume before us has done this task well with regard to the whole field of that theoretical and biased criticism, which at present it is sought increasingly to impose on us as victorious all along the line. The issue is shown to be grave; the historical view of the Old Testament held heretofore to be great, worthy, and steadfast; the critical explanation to be unnatural and impossible. "Could a revelation," it is asked, "which has searched generations of men with the fire of God, and has exposed, and still exposes, every form of unrighteousness, be itself a sham, pervaded by a self-witness which is a lie, built of legend, fancy, tradition, by art and man's device?"<sup>1</sup> We are persuaded that no Christian man of clear under-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Integrity of Scripture," p. 144.

standing will in the end tolerate that the truth by which he lives is the unnatural and hybrid development which some criticism has presented.

We thank the author for the courage which prompted him to write this book; we hope that his example will stir up an increase of courage in others before it is too late. The victorious prevalence of these opinions means the sterility of the Church. The majority of men will not accept the imperious claims of a religion resting on such a basis. We greatly appreciate the large-minded tone and temper of this book; and we devoutly hope that in these troubled times many who have read one side, impressed by the glamour of a fascinating but pernicious theory, will in fairness read the other; and that those Christian men who have set themselves to be protagonists of the critical position may be induced to give a kinder and more serious consideration to so powerful a protest, lest at any time they should be found to have destroyed the work of God, and even the weak brother perish for whom Christ died. It was not a triumph when the world woke up to find itself Arian.

F. ERNEST SPENCER.



ART. VI.—TIGLATHPILESER, KING OF BABYLON—  
THE KEY TO ISAIAH XIII. 1 TO XIV. 27.—I.

OF the different oracles concerning heathen nations, which form the third part of the Book of Isaiah, the Burden of Babylon is of especial interest, not only on account of the striking sublimity of the *māshāl* or “parable” contained in it, but also because of the problem which it presents as to authorship and the circumstances under which it was written; for if this “burden” can be proved to be from the pen of Isaiah, then something is done to substantiate the unity of authorship of the entire book, seeing that Isa. xiv. 1, 2 contains, as Delitzsch observes, chaps. xli. to lxvi. *in nuce*. I shall endeavour to show that the solution of this problem can now be obtained from the testimony of undoubted historical facts. All, indeed, is not clear nor can it be, so long as our knowledge of Babylonian history remains in its present fragmentary condition; but enough evidence has come to hand to enable us to credit the prophet Isaiah with a prophecy strikingly Isaianic in the terms employed,<sup>1</sup> enough to explain the main outlines of that prophecy, its fulfilment, and even the date of its composition.

<sup>1</sup> See additional note 1 at the close of this article.