

## POSITIVE REASONS FOR BELIEVING THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

My Lecture tonight<sup>1</sup> is constructive. In it I aim at setting forth reasons of a purely positive nature for the belief that the Bible is the word of God.

The Bible, to us Protestants, is scarcely a word of doubtful denotation. We mean by it all the Books of the Old and of the New Testaments, exclusive of Apocryphal Books, whether Old or New. It is worth observing that the whole of Christendom accepts the New Testament Canon as denoting the same identical Books from Matthew to Revelation. I do not deny that it took some time for the whole of Christendom to come to a unanimous finding as to what were all the Books that went to form the New Testament Canon, albeit that for the major part of the New Testament there always was unanimity. But as the outcome of much thought and many investigations, all Christendom—Syriac, Coptic, Greek, Roman, Protestant—came in the end to mean by the term New Testament one and the same Books. That unanimity seems to me very impressive.

To the Old Testament the non-Protestant Churches add certain Books known as the Old Testament Apocrypha. I am inclined to think that this condition of things, in respect of the non-Protestant Churches, arose out of the fact that, within the period that the Scriptures of the Jews were being rendered out of Hebrew into the Greek of the Septuagint, certain Hebrew Books that were not regarded as canonical in Palestine were in Egypt rendered into Greek. These got bound up with the proper Greek Old Testament, and not these only but certain other Books of Jewish authorship that never were in Hebrew. These additions to the strict Hebrew Canon form the Old Testament Apocrypha. But the Jews, unto whom were committed the Old Testament Oracles of God, never recognised these Apocryphal Books as belonging to their Canon. We, Protestants, recognise as Old Testament Scripture the Books contained in the pure Jewish Canon and none other.

<sup>1</sup> Delivered on November 20th, 1930, as an Address under the auspices of the Newcastle and Gateshead Bible Witness League.

Of this Bible, then, we, with the Second Helvetic Confession say, not merely that it contains the word of God, but that it is the word of God.

To say that the Bible is the word of God is tantamount to saying that what the Bible says God says, that what the Bible teaches God teaches—although that statement has to be well sensed.

Now that is a great and high claim that we advance in respect of the Bible; a claim indeed that ought not to be put forward without solid reasons. What are those reasons? The remainder of this Lecture will be devoted to setting forth some of them.

### I.

#### THIS HAS BEEN THE COMMON FAITH OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN ALL AGES.

We might, for proof, ascend the stream of time beyond the days in which Our Lord lived on earth. We might for example note the character of the Psalmist's response to the Law—how he loved it, thought it sweeter than honey, more precious than the finest gold, purer than silver that has been purified seven times in earthen furnace. But we have not at our disposal the time for an investigation of that character; nor is it necessary. We know that our Lord Jesus had in His hands the Old Testament to all intents and purposes as we now have it. How did He regard those Scriptures? I answer, to begin with, in the words of E. Haupt, a German rationalist, who, in his volume entitled "Old Testament quotations on the Four Gospels," says: "We recognise first what no doubt scarcely requires proof, that Jesus treats the Old Testament in its entirety as the word of God. Down to the smallest letter and most casual word, it is to Him truth, and that, religious truth" (Warfield's Trans.).

That witness on the part of Haupt is corroborated by Westcott. But, on the reasonable supposition that, broadly speaking, the evangelists faithfully record the words of our Lord, we may see for ourselves that the Lord Jesus always held the Old Testament Scriptures as the word of God. Thus, glancing at the record of His life, we find that, early in His Ministry, He declared: "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all things be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 18). Later on in His ministry, He declared

that "the scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35). I know that it has been argued that in the New Testament the definite singular noun "the scripture" always means a particular passage of the Old Testament, and never the Old Testament as a whole. But that "the scripture" sometimes—I do not need to say always—means more than a particular verse or passage of the Old Testament is (among several places which might be cited, but to which I cannot now within the time more definitely refer) evident from Acts viii. 32: "Now the passage of 'the scripture' which he was reading was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter." Here it is quite obvious that *the "passage"* (although itself more extensive than a single verse), is only part of "*the scripture.*" That single verse, Acts viii. 32, is sufficient to prove that "the scripture" may mean the whole Old Testament. That, in John x. 35, "the scripture" means not the particular passage of Psalm lxxxii. 6, "I have said, Ye are gods," from which Jesus draws an inference, but the whole Old Testament is evident, because our Lord's argument is based on what has the essential form of a syllogism. The major premiss is: "The scripture cannot be broken." That is a universal affirmative. The minor premiss: "'I have said, Ye are gods,' is part of scripture," is a particular affirmative. The conclusion is inevitable, to wit: "The saying of Psalm lxxxii. 6, is indefectible." In other words, in John x. 35, Jesus by the term "the scripture" means the Old Testament as a unitary whole, and of that whole He says, that it cannot be broken, that it is infallible. Still later, in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 53-54), our Lord uttered these words: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures (i.e. the Old Testament) be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Thus, to our Lord it was conceivable that His body should be broken, but not that the Old Testament should fail.

He evidently thought about the Old Testament after He rose from the dead as He had done in all the time of His public ministry, because otherwise He would not have upbraided the two disciples with whom He forgathered on the way to Emmaus as He did when He addressed them in the words: "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke xxiv. 25). Haupt's inference from the data with which the Four Gospels supply us is found to be unquestionably

correct. Now the unmistakableness of the regard in which our Lord held the Old Testament has been the sheet anchor that has kept the great body of evangelical Christians from drifting away from a valuable truth, at a time when the storm of destructive criticism has blowed fierce and long.

It will, nevertheless, be worth while to glance at what the New Testament writers, disciples of Jesus, thought of the Old Testament. And here again I adopt the method of letting the finding of the general run of Biblical scholars in a matter of this kind find expression at the hand of a learned rationalist, in this instance, Dr. Toy of Chicago, a Unitarian whom no one will suppose to be biased in our favour. In his work, "Quotations in the New Testament," he writes: "We know from the general tone of the New Testament that it regards the Old Testament as the revealed and inspired word of God." The correctness of that witness we can verify for ourselves. Matthew, in pure narrative, himself regards the conception and Virgin Birth of our Lord; His flight into Egypt; His coming into Nazareth where He was brought up; His conducting a great and memorable ministry in Galilee; His devotion to the alleviation of pain; His adoption of a method of teaching by parables; His being forsaken of His very Apostles, in the hour of His greatest trial; as all having taken place in order that the Old Testament Scriptures should be fulfilled. Mark and Luke have fewer appeals of that nature than has Matthew. John, perhaps, equals Matthew in this regard. All three are at one with Matthew in finding in cardinal events in the life of our Lord the fulfilment of eternal purposes of God of which intimations had been given in Old Testament Scripture.

Paul, too, might be quoted at length so as to establish the correctness of Otto Pfeiderer's summing up in the present reference: "Paul assumed," says Pfeiderer, "the irrefragable authority of the letter of the Old Testament as the immediately revealed word of God" (*Paulinism* i. 88).<sup>1</sup> I quote 2 Tim. iii. 16, not because I think Pfeiderer's interpretation of Paul's attitude towards the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures is open to challenge, but in order again to call attention to the meaning of "Theopneustos." "All Scripture is theopneustos," that is, "God-breathed," or "given-by-inspiration-of-God." It is, of course, in order to speak of the Biblical writers as "inspired."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Warfield's *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*.

But it would be scarcely congruous to speak of the writers as "God-breathed" or as "given-by-inspiration-of-God." Paul therefore speaks here not directly of personal inspiration, but of graphical inspiration. He has the whole Old Testament in its several parts before his mind, and of the sum total he says that it is given-by-inspiration-of-God.

The fundamental fault of the late Dr. Orr's "Inspiration and Revelation," in my judgment a disappointing book—is that he overlooks the real significance of Theopneustos, and seems to refuse to take it as a passive, and so refuses to make Inspiration anything but personal, refuses to make it graphical as Paul does. I say that with reluctance of Dr. Orr, for, along several lines, he rendered in his time no little service to the truth of the Gospel. But that Theopneustos means "God-breathed" Warfield showed beyond reasonable cavil in an article that appears in Vol. I of his collected works, under the title—"God-inspired Scripture." Dr. Moffatt has acknowledged it, and Mr. E. K. Simpson, a first-rate Greek scholar, has confirmed the truth of Warfield's contention in a paper over his name which appears in Vol. II, Number 4, of *The Evangelical Quarterly*.

It may be said that all that has so far been argued bears on the Old Testament only. But what, it may be asked, can we, on these lines, affirm of the New Testament? I answer:

(a) Our Lord Himself promised that He would so grant the Holy Spirit unto those men whom He was to use as instruments in establishing His cause and kingdom in the world as that they should be led into the whole truth, and the Apostle Paul, for one, acknowledges that he was the recipient of the Holy Spirit in this very sense so that the choice of his very words was made under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit—"wedding spiritual thoughts to spiritual words," for so we should render *πνευματικῶς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες* in I Cor. ii. 13.

(b) All the New Testament writers speak to us with a sense of finality. They never make a hesitating statement. They narrate, they issue orders, as men conscious, even when they do not, in so many words say so, that the authority of the Spirit of God lies behind all their affirmations. Paul, in fact, in giving orders to the Corinthian Church as to how public worship should be conducted, closes on this authoritative note, "If any man think himself to be spiritual let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you is the commandment of the Lord"

(1 Cor. xiv. 37). We can scarcely draw back from the conclusion : According to Paul, what Paul commanded to the Churches the Lord Jesus commanded to the Churches.

(c) Paul quotes Luke as Scripture in 1 Tim. v. 18. "For," says he, "the scripture saith, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*"—words which you will find written in Deut. xxv. 4. Then, Paul, in the next breath, goes on to say, "*The labourer is worthy of his reward,*" evidently quoting this also as Scripture. This latter passage you will find in Luke x. 7 and no other where ; and it too is Scripture, to Paul. We may well believe that "Luke" was written at that date. Thus, as soon as written, "Luke" was regarded by Paul as inspired-of-God.

(d) Peter, in 2 Peter iii. 16, thinks of Paul's Epistles as a collection of Epistles, and classes them with the Old Testament Scriptures.

We thus see that although the testimony of the New Testament to the Divine Authorship of the New Testament itself is not so ample as its testimony to the Divine authorship of the Old Testament nevertheless that testimony is weighty. I would offer two other remarks in that connection :

(1) Speaking *a priori*, one would say that, if when God spake unto the fathers in the prophets the record of that revelation had the Holy Spirit of God as its primary author, surely when God hath spoken unto us in His Son, the record of that more glorious revelation will have the Holy Spirit of God as its primary author.

(2) It seems to me that it is self-evident that what on *a priori* view we would have expected, has actually taken place. The New Testament is its own witness to its heavenly origin.

I have spoken at some length of the testimony of the New Testament to the Divine authorship of Old Testament Scriptures and more briefly of the testimony of the New Testament to itself in the same high sense. I now pass on to refer to the testimony borne by the Spirit-taught Church of God to the Inspiration of the Scriptures, subsequently to the days of the Apostles. For, although as Reformed thinkers we regard the Bible as the source of all our doctrines, nevertheless if we find that the Fathers of the Church, and particularly the men that came immediately after the Apostles, held substantially our view of the primary authorship of Scripture that discovery strengthens

us in the conviction that our Exegesis of the Scriptures could not have been materially wrong. Particularly interesting, I say, is it to note how the sub-Apostolic Fathers refer to the writings of the New Testament. It is impossible to give, to within a very few years, the date of the Epistle of Barnabas, but it is certain that Barnabas himself—not the companion of Paul—might, for age, have seen most of the Apostles. How, then, will he refer to a New Testament passage, if he has occasion to introduce any such? We have the answer in his Epistle iv. 17: “When ye see that after so many signs and wonders wrought in Israel, even then they were abandoned, let us give heed lest haply we be found, as the scripture saith: ‘Many called but few chosen.’” That passage—“Many called but few chosen”—is found in the Gospel according to Matthew, and nowhere else in the Bible, but Barnabas styles it Scripture, as one of us would do. It is evident that to Barnabas Matthew, like the Old Testament, was just Scripture, or the written word of God. In the same way Clement of Rome, *c.* 96 A.D., says that Paul wrote to the Corinthians by Inspiration. He knows that he himself does not so write. Polycarp, who saw and knew the Apostle John, speaks of men who deny the Resurrection and the Judgment as perverting the Oracles of the Lord. Now Oracles must be understood in the sense of Divinely communicated utterances. In the case before us, Polycarp must refer to the New Testament, here, I should say, the Gospels. The Gospels are to Polycarp Divinely communicated utterances. Similarly, Papias the contemporary of Polycarp, wrote five books entitled “Interpretations of the Oracles of the Lord.” Only fragments of this interesting work have survived, but the common judgment of scholars is that Papias wrote to elucidate our Gospels, and, in that sure case, the fact of the title of Papias’s work being what it is speaks volumes.

To me it is most interesting to discover that the stream of acclamation of the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, as the word of God, was never interrupted. The sub-Apostolic Fathers left few writings, and, naturally, the elements therein that bear upon this particular constitute but a small stream. But it is most significant, and, for apologetical purposes, constitutes all that was wanted to make this stream an unbroken one. As we come down the course of time the literature is increasing, and with it the volume of testimonies to the Divine authorship of the Scriptures increases rapidly. Having in view the exigencies of the space at

my disposal, I content myself with the conclusion arrived at in the present connection by an eminent English scholar, the thoroughness of whose investigation is everywhere recognised: Jeremy Taylor after he had in this interest visited the writings of the Fathers, concludes: "The sum is this: . . . The Scriptures are a perfect rule; for that the Scriptures are the word of God, and contain in them all the word of God (in which we are concerned) is delivered by a full consent of all the Fathers, and no one Father denies it."

Athanasius writes a letter (367 A.D.) bearing on the Canon. After giving the books contained in the Old and New Testament Canons, exactly as Protestants have always reckoned them, he says: "These are the fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrines of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let any take ought from them." I need scarcely take up time in showing that the Reformed Confessions are in harmony with Athanasius.

We are warranted now in saying that if we have erred in asserting that the Bible is the word of God we have erred in the best of all companies. At the same time it has to be acknowledged that this is the judgment of faith. That in the nature of the case is what it was bound to be. I have so far dealt with Inspiration as a doctrine—and all doctrines are of faith. But I now pass on to set forth in brief form evidence that goes to show the reasonableness of this our faith.

## II

### ARGUMENT FROM EXPERIENCE

We hear a good deal nowadays about experience, with the aim of leading us to build our Theology not on an infallible Bible but on experience. I wish one heard more about experience, in the good old Puritan sense—I refer to the experience of conversion—for I am bound to say that I reckon that that experience of the converting grace of God which has the word of God as an element entering into it, and indeed as the great means of our emancipation, supplies us with the normal form of conversion. I illustrate from two or three notable instances in the history of the Christian Church.



Who has not heard of the conversion of Augustine, of which I am now, for illustrative purposes, making use? He had left, he tells us in his Confessions, his friend Alypius (afterwards Bishop of Thagaste), under the shadow of a fig tree. Then, while at no great distance from his friend, he flung himself down upon the ground, when he poured out those sorrowful cries, How long? how long? Why not now? Then he seemed to hear the voice as of a boy or girl—"take up and read; take up and read." He was then led to return to his friend Alypius, near whom there lay on the ground what he calls the volume of the Apostles. On taking up the volume his eyes fell on the words: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." "Instantly," he goes on to say, "as the sentence ended—by a light as it were of security infused into my heart—all the gloom of doubt vanished away." It was for Augustine a vision of God. He, in principle, in a moment overcame his delight in what he calls trifles, and, in their stead, there did enter into his experience "God Himself—sweeter than all pleasure, brighter than all light, more exalted than all honour."

The account that Master Thomas Bilney, martyr, gives of his own conversion, and of consequent regard for the testimony of Scripture, has for a long time appeared to me as understandable an account of a soul's conversion to God as any written within the range of Protestant literature. Writing at the time of his imprisonment to his bishop, after speaking of his coming to realise that he himself was a sinner in the sight of God, and how little help the parish priests, whom he often and for long resorted to, brought him, he goes on to say: "But at last I heard speak of Jesus, even then when the Greek New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus, and I bought it, and, upon the first reading, I chanced upon this sentence, 'It is a true saying, and worthy of all to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief and principal.' This one sentence, through God's instruction and inward working, did so exhilarate my heart, being before wounded with the guilt of my sins, that even immediately I seemed to myself inwardly to feel a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leaped for joy. *After this the Scripture began to be more pleasant unto me than the honey, or the honeycomb.*"

I venture to add a third illustrative case of conversion. I refer to Dr. John Duncan, sometimes quoted as "Rabbi" Duncan. Readers of Dr. David Brown's Life of the late John Duncan, LL.D., know how Cæsar Malan was the greatly honoured instrument in John Duncan's conversion. Speaking, in advanced life, to Mr. Taylor Innes, a distinguished Edinburgh lawyer, Dr. Duncan went on to say: "Well, next day (i.e. after experiencing the great change) as I sat down to study, and took up my pen in my hand, I became suddenly the passive recipient of all the truth which I had heard and been taught in my childhood. I sat there unmoving for hours and they came and preached themselves to me." Now my point is this: Millions of men who could not give classic utterance to their experience of conversion like Augustine, or Bilney, or Duncan, have had an experience not essentially different from theirs. It is in an experience of that kind that one understands what the testimony of the Spirit to the Divine Authorship of Scripture means. But it has been from among men of a profound experience of salvation that the Church has, speaking broadly, had the most unflinching witnesses to the inspiration of the Scripture. And men of an experience that changed for the better the whole course of their lives have the right to appeal to such an experience as justifying them so far in choosing their *principium theologiæ*.

### III

#### WITNESS OF ARCHÆOLOGY

I refer next in order to the witness to the historicity of the Scriptures rendered by Archæology and other allied sciences. The conviction grows with myself that either the writers of the Scriptures wrote only what they were eye-witnesses of, or, failing that, that they relied for their information only on the testimony of such as were eye-witnesses. But it is not necessary to go all that length in order to establish the historicity of the Bible, and, of course, I am not forgetting that there are certain statements of fact, as about the Creation, that could have reached primitive man, or for that matter any man, only by way of revelation from God.

(a) I refer to the New Testament. Some ninety years ago F. C. Baur, followed by a number of like-minded German

scholars, who became known to the world as the Tübingen School, in the interests of the Hegelian Philosophy, gave his construction of the history of New Testament literature under the assumption that there was intense antagonism between the Apostles Paul and Peter. With this touchstone (certainly I should say, fallible) in hand, he concluded that only Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Revelation, were genuine among the New Testament writings. The remainder of the New Testament belonged to about the middle of the second century—they were what were called tendency writings, pious frauds meant to make the church think that there never was an essential difference between Peter's and Paul's viewpoints. He was able, such was his ingenuity, to support what at bottom was a philosophical prepossession with arguments so subtle and so plausible that he swept an incredibly large number of scholars off their feet, and made many more feel uncomfortable.

But a tide in an opposite direction soon set in. The genuineness of the New Testament as a whole is today received with more intelligence than was the case before Baur's assault came forth.

The first section of the New Testament to be, so to say, rehabilitated was Luke and Acts, both as written by the companion of Paul—Luke, the Physician. The four names that are chiefly associated in our minds with this work of turning back an assault that would have robbed us of Luke and Acts, as Divinely authoritative writings, are, Sir J. Smith of Jordanhill, Dr. Hobart of Dublin, Sir W. M. Ramsay, and (strange to say), von Harnack of Berlin. Of course, it is impossible to explain here and now how these severally contributed their quota to the debate. But there it is. It is now, beyond reasonable doubt, established that, Luke, Paul's companion, his beloved physician, one of the greatest historians of any age, wrote our third Gospel, and also the Acts of the Apostles.

This primal victory gave men courage to stand by the belief of the ages in respect of the remainder of the New Testament, when there was no clear evidence to the contrary.

The history of the movement that makes the Johannine Writings, if not all by the Apostle John, at least all first century documents, is full of interest and instruction. First of all, in regard to the Gospel, which the Tübingen School would date later than 150 A.D., there turned up a long-lost translation of

Tatian's *Diatessaron*, in which the opening section was found to be the *Prologue* to John's Gospel. Now the *Diatessaron* was written just about the time that Baur gave as the date of the writing of John's Gospel. Yet in the *Diatessaron* the Fourth Gospel is treated as a long-established authoritative volume. The Tübingen School now felt disposed to date John's Gospel about 130 A.D. Then there turned up the long lost Apocryphal *Gospel of Peter*. It was discovered that this New Testament Apocryphal Book could scarcely be later than 130 A.D., and yet it presupposed John's Gospel. There was nothing for it but to allow that, at least in some form, the Fourth Gospel belonged to the first century. I am credibly informed that at this moment the occupant of F. C. Baur's Chair in Tübingen actually maintains the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

The story of the rehabilitation of the traditional dates of the New Testament against the dates suggested by the Tübingen School could not possibly be told in a few sentences. But the rehabilitation is practically complete. Is it not a striking thing that what is probably the ablest vindication of the genuineness of 2 Peter ever written in the English language (the one book that has been more than others spoken against) should appear over the name of the learned Dr. Bigg, in the International Critical Commentary Series, a series where, if anywhere, criticism is supposed to be abreast of the times?

(b) I pass on to the Old Testament. I can select only a few of the instances in which Archæology has to an amazing extent confirmed the historical trustworthiness of the Old Testament :

(1) I begin with the proper name Belshazzar, with which the book of Daniel had kept Bible readers acquainted during all the intervening centuries. But beyond the Bible, and possibly books it influenced, the name was not known. Unbelieving critics gave the mention of Belshazzar as one reason why they could not accept the book of Daniel as giving true history. They were at a loss what to make of Belshazzar. Ewald, one of the most distinguished of the destructive critics, thought it was a mistake for Nabonidus—the last king of Babylon. But it was known that Nabonidus had submitted to the Persians in Borsippa, not in Babylon. Here surely was a Biblical blunder. But after some years a Babylonian cuneiform turned up, which made mention

of Belshazzar as Nabonidus's eldest son. We have since then learned that when Nabonidus fled to Borsippa, Babylon was, as Daniel says, left in charge of Belshazzar. It is almost certain that this situation explains the nature of the promise to Daniel that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom, for Belshazzar was himself second to Nabonidus (Dan. v. 29).

(2) Sargon. Isaiah xx. 1 makes mention of Sargon, king of Assyria. But outside the Bible no one had for many hundreds of years heard of such a king. Some Germans said that this was an instance of the prophet's imagination at play. The very first fruits of excavations in Babylon was a revelation of this Sargon as one of Assyria's greatest kings. At Khorsabad he left in writing the annals of a most illustrious reign. Then, in a generation or two, he is for two thousand years totally eclipsed; but the Bible never ceased to certify his at-one-time reign.

(3) Samaria. I refer to Samaria not because, so far as I know, any scholar in recent times actually questioned its having been founded by Omri, as the Bible says. But excavations at Samaria illustrate in a striking manner how careful the Biblical writers were in their statement of facts even when these might seem to have little connection with the plan of salvation. The University of Harvard sent an expedition there in 1908, and in 1924 they published an adequate account of their discoveries. Dr. Geo Nagel, an eminent Swiss archæologist, reviewed the volume in the beginning of this year in the *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* (Lausanne). All these archæologists are simply amazed at the correspondence that exists between their findings and what was read all those years in the historical books of the Old Testament. They feel themselves compelled in turn, in going on to new conclusions, to make the Old Testament an instrument of discovery. It shows that the Spirit of God took care of the truth of the Bible, not only in the great matters of the Church's salvation, but in apparently such unimportant matters as the houses of ivory, and the temple, which the kings of Israel built upon that interesting mound of theirs.

If any one wishes to be quite sure that there was no palace on the Hill of Samaria until, as the Bible reader would naturally expect, Omri built it, here he will find the scientific proof laid to his hand. If anyone wonders whether the prophets of Israel were justified in their castigation of Samaria for its

drunkenness and luxury, here too, strangely enough, the condemnatory evidence is forthcoming.

(4) Sons of Anak. M. Sethe, the distinguished German archæologist, has with others been recently making discoveries in Hebron. One of the most interesting facts Sethe has brought out is the historical correctness of what the Book of Joshua says of the Anakim, and the three Sons of Anak. René Dussaud, the French archæologist, writing in review of Sethe's work at Hebron in the French Archæological Review—*Syria*—in the Spring of 1927, said: "The Anaquim of the Old Testament are among the most interesting things which M. Sethe has established. He enables us to replace in their proper place a people whose name the Biblical Critics generally fail to name. Thus Lucien Gauthier, because the Anaquim are in one place referred to as giants, would relegate the Biblical narrative about this people to the domain of fable. Our new texts oblige us to rectify that opinion, and to restore the Anaquim to their rightful place in history, for out of it they were arbitrarily excluded. The historical value of Joshua xv. 13 is, in a singular degree, brought home to us by these new documents."

(5) Gerar. Splendid work has recently been done in and about Gerar. Destructive critics have been wont to relegate what Genesis tells us of Abraham's and Isaac's intromissions with Abimelech to the unhistorical, largely because (1) the Bible narrative regards that king and his people as Philistines. It was too early for the Philistines to be there. (2) A certain Phicol is found both in the Abraham and in the Isaac incidents. That shows that the one story is told with variations twice over. What is archæology's answer? (1) The Philistines were in force at Gerar in Abraham's time. (2) As for Phicol, that is the name of the office, not of the man. If the corresponding officer of state were present at a conceivable interview between the king of Gerar and Jacob, he would still be styled Phicol.

Thus wherever archæology comes to the bed-rock of fact, if the discovery bears on a Biblical incident, there we find the Bible confirmed. As Dr. M. G. Kyle puts it in the fourth number of Vol. II of *The Evangelical Quarterly*, so is it: "These are but a few examples of the historical parallels being furnished by the work of the archæologists. Every new one that appears certifies some event of Bible narrative as a real event. But I am sometimes asked, 'Are there not sometimes Biblical narratives discredited

by parallel history dug up in the land ? ' We are seeking to get the facts, whatever they may be ; thus far all parallels attest the Biblical narratives."

The fact is that the most distinguished archæologists are nowadays finding it most useful and most necessary to take the Biblical data as the very instruments of their discoveries in other fields. One of the best illustrations of that fact is seen in Sir W. M. Ramsay's "Asiatic Influences in Greek Civilisation." What do we find him do ? He simply takes what Genesis x. 2-5 says of the Sons of Japheth—particularly Gomer and Javan—as his guiding light and with it comes to highly interesting conclusions respecting the oldest inhabitants of Asia Minor. Conclusions these which light reached through studies in other fields corroborate.

Is not that a marvellous book that, tested over a period of four thousand years of comparative darkness all over the earth, is found at the salient points to stand the trial ? Nay, rather, it has itself become a touchstone for other apparent data to be tested by ! Surely an event like that demands an adequate cause ! Is not the simplest, the likeliest cause, the one that is suggested by the title of this lecture, that the Bible is the word of God ?

Let me here add that the new mathematics is at the moment giving strong help in pushing our lines back far beyond four thousand years ago. I do not suppose that there is a more distinguished astronomer, or a greater expert in pure mathematics, in England today than Sir James Jeans. The conclusion to which he has come, and which he has announced in his latest publication, "The Mysterious Universe" reads thus : "The whole story of the creation of the universe can be told with perfect accuracy in the six words : 'God said, Let there be light.'" That brings us very near the beginning of our book, and, from the point of view of the new mathematics, is a tribute paid to our book.

Sir James Jeans in two volumes issued little more than a year ago already announced in the name of the most advanced astronomers, that there must have been an actual creation by God in what Astronomy would speak of as a past, not awfully remote. Sir Ambrose Fleming, another great scientist, and great Christian too, in a review of these two volumes in this *Quarterly*, remarked that that means that Evolution fails just there, and if it fails on a vital point, fails it not everywhere ?

## IV

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ABOUNDING VITALITY OF THE  
SCRIPTURES

The Apostle Paul in Col. i. 6 speaks of the true Gospel as possessed of a native dynamic of growth and expansion. This touchstone of heavenly truth may be applied to the Bible as a whole. It is certainly a volume that is fitted to benefit every one that allows himself to come under its influence. To speak more particularly: Could an individual choose a better guide in life than the First Epistle of John, or a church a higher standard than Ephesians, or a nation a more likely means of its own stabilisation than Romans? Yet the Bible has always been the object of hatred and of the fiercest forms of attack. Both in Old and New Testament times the power of kingdoms, and empires, have been requisitioned in order to make an utter end of it. Adverse critics in all ages have poured scorn on its truthfulness. But with what results? It is a torch, "the more 'tis shook it shines." Today we are told that, in whole or in part, it is found in some 888 languages. There is nothing to compare with that record in the whole history of literature. And it brings healing wherever it goes!

I have thus shown that our doctrine of Scripture has been the common doctrine of the Church of God. Under the captions, Experience, Archæological Discoveries, the Innate Biblical Dynamic, I have submitted proofs in the sense that the Church doctrine of the Divine Authorship of Holy Scripture is not unreasonable.

I hope at some future date to rebut objections that have been made to this our Doctrine.

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