

prophet of any great mark save Moses), "I, the Lord, do make myself known unto him *in a vision*, and do speak unto him *in a dream*. My servant Moses is *not so*, who is faithful in all my house. With *him* I speak mouth to mouth, even visibly, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord doth he behold." Faithful service in God's house, then, and fellowship of spirit and aim with Him, are far higher gifts than prophetic dreams and trances, ecstasies and visions; and these are open to us all: they are gifts which all who ask may have, which all who seek may find. For what is there, save our own unwillingness, to hinder any one of us from seeing and serving God in all we do? what is there, save our own worldliness and selfishness, to prevent any one of us from a constant and growing communion with Him, and an ever-augmenting knowledge of his will? For all lowly, but faithful and loving, souls there is immense comfort in St. Paul's words: "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, . . . but have not charity, I am nothing."

SAMUEL COX.

THE EXEGESIS OF THE SCHOOLMEN.

THEIR VAGUE VIEWS ON THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION.

If we were to fix on any one special characteristic which marks each separate epoch of exegesis in the age of the Schoolmen,¹ we might say that—

(i.) The first period, from Walafrid Strabo († 849) down to Abelard († 1079), is mainly marked by secondhandness and iteration.²

(ii.) The second period, from Abelard to Durandus of St.

¹ I will speak of the Mystics separately.

There were, of course, partial exceptions, such as Rupert of Deutz.

Pourçain († 1332), is vitiated by the intrusion of dialectic forms and methods.

(iii). The third period, from Durandus to Gabriel Biel († 1495) and the Reformation, illustrates the extremest degeneracy of Scholasticism in the universal prevalence of idle and useless speculations.

We have already seen the extent to which exegesis was paralysed, (1) by an extravagant prostration of mind before the authority of the "Fathers," and (2) by the surrender of all independent inquiry respecting fundamental beliefs. A third source of weakness—and this continues to this day to be a source of weakness in hundreds of commentaries—is the absence of any clear conception as to the nature and limits of Inspiration. To the scholastic exegetes, the definition of "Inspiration" was of less interest than to us because they only professed to believe what they were told. They held that "the Church"—by which they ultimately meant the Pope—was infallible; and with perfect unconsciousness they gyrated in a vicious circle of argument, now founding the authority of the Church on the infallible character of Scripture, and now resting the proof of the inspiration of Scripture on the infallible authority of the Church.¹

The word "Inspiration,"—by which we express the influences of the Spirit of God in illuminating the vision and dilating the powers of the mind of man—is indispensable to theology. But if men continue for centuries to comment on Scripture without any distinct conception of the sense in which they use the word, or the limits of that authority which the Scripture writers derive from their inspiration, room is at once made for the endless confusions which have been introduced into exegesis from the days of the Apostles.

¹ Any one who reads the arguments of Duns Scotus (*in IV. Sent. prol. Qu. II.*) in favour of Scriptural infallibility, will see how much they would need to be re-stated in modern days.

Is the word "Inspiration" to be used in a *mechanical* sense to imply verbal dictation? or *dynamically*, merely to express a superintending control? Is inspiration to be regarded as *antecedent, concomitant*, or only so far *consequent* as to imply a general sanction? Is it natural or supernatural? In other words, is it the expansion of an ordinary energy, or the superinduction of a transcendent force? Has it existed in other writers besides those of Scripture; and if so, does their inspiration differ from that of the Bible in kind or in degree? Is it continuous, or intermittent? If continuous, is it always equally supernatural, or does it admit of degrees and variations? if variable, by what criterion can we estimate its pulsations? if intermittent, does it ever wholly cease? Does it annihilate or does it intensify the individuality of the writer? Is it a miraculous impulse reducing its recipient into a passive instrument, or is it in whole books nothing more than "a grace of superintendency?"

Now, strange to say, essential as these questions seem to be, the Church has never laid down any definite answer concerning them. The Church of Rome refers to the "unanimous consent of the Fathers;" but, exegetically speaking, there is no such thing, and much that was authorized by a consent which most nearly approaches unanimity, is in point of fact, erroneous. The language of the Fathers, even when dogmatically consistent, diverges into constant expressions which nothing but a determined casuistry can reconcile with their dogmatic theory.¹ The same phenomenon is still all but universally observable. The Church of England, indeed, remains unhampered by any untenable and paralysing formulæ on this subject. She requires her ministers to believe nothing beyond the broad and indisputable truths that "Holy Scripture con-

¹ Even in the case of Jerome (*Proœm in Esaiam. Proœm in Jerem. In Gal. ii. 1, etc.*), and Augustine (*De Consens. Evang.*, ii. 5, etc.).

taineth all things necessary to salvation,"¹ and that the "Old Testament is not *contrary* to the New, for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ."² But though the Church of England has wisely abstained from assertions respecting Scripture which every earnest student cannot but see to be historically false and intolerably burdensome, there are still thousands of her ministers who profess to maintain such assertions in the narrowest, most superstitious, and most impossible sense, and to enforce them upon others with powerless anathemas. The ill-defined and traditional prevalence of the mechanical theory about "verbal dictation" is the fatal disease of all honest exegesis. It cleaves an absolute abyss between historic and systematic theology. What intelligence of faith, what clearness of vision, what freedom and manliness of religious opinion, can possibly be hoped for, when we put into the hands of millions of Christians of every tongue, all sorts of translations—and often very bad and imperfect translations—of a highly uncritical text of a group of books of very various qualities—and tell them that every sentence, word, and letter of those books are inspired?³ And how can we justify such a dogma while, nevertheless, we are unable to refer them to any hermeneutic theory or any authoritative commentary? I will not go so far as to say with Mr. Ruskin, that "it is a grave heresy (or wilful source of division) to call any book, or collection of books, the word of God;" but I will say that there is One, and One only—not a book, but a Divine Person—to whom can be given absolutely and without qualification that title of "the Word of God." To say that *all which Scripture contains* is, in any true or deep sense, the "word of God," is to murder the spirit of Scrip-

¹ Art. VI.

² Art. VII.

³ As in the *Formula Consens. Helveticæ*, "Tum quoad consonas, tum quoad vocalia—tum quoad res, tum quoad verba θεοπνευστάς."

ture under pretence of reverencing the letter. The misuse of Scripture, which has resulted from such fetish-worshipping confusion has been a pregnant source of curse and ruin to the world. We at any rate of the Church of England have no excuse for confusing inspiration with dictation and even with infallibility, for the word occurs several times in our Prayer Book, and in every instance is applied *not* to the extraordinary and miraculous, but to the ordinary and continual workings of the Holy Spirit of God;—the inspiration which cleanses the thoughts of the Christian's heart, the inspiration which enables us to think those things that be good, the inspiration which makes our works pleasant and acceptable to God.¹ And this is in accordance with the use of the word in all ages. It connotes Divine guidance, but no complete exemption from human limitations and from human infirmity. Philo certainly did not assert for himself any infallibility when he claims to be sometimes inspired (*θεοληπττεῖσθαι*);² nor Cyprian, when he says that he wrote "*Inspirante Deo*;" nor Milton, when he says:

"Inspire as Thou art wont
My prompted song, else mute."

Nor is there anything in Scripture itself to give a moment's countenance to the popular perversion of the word.³ Beza-leel was "inspired," but no one has ever pretended that he thereby became a superhuman artist. Samson and David were often moved and filled by the Spirit of God, yet this secured for them no permanent holiness or perfect wisdom. The Apostles were mitred at Pentecost with tongues of cloven flame, yet they themselves honestly record for us the facts which shew how little they were exempt from fallibility either in their words or in their deeds.

Yet there is scarcely one—if one—of the Schoolmen who

¹ See the first Collect of the Ante-Communion Service; the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter; the 13th Article; the Hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

² *De Cherub*. (Opp., i. 143).

³ Neither verb nor substantive occur except in Job. xxxii. 8. and 2 Tim. iii. 16.

had even the glimmering of a rule by which to discriminate between that which is partial and transitory in Scripture, and that which is universal and eternal. In them, as in almost all commentators, the incidental criticisms are often in flagrant contrast with the asserted dogmas.

St. Gregory the Great, in those *Magna Moralia* on the Book of Job which furnished the Middle Ages with the materials for innumerable sermons, says that the inquiry as to the author of the book is quite superfluous (*valde supervacue quaeritur*) because the author is the Holy Spirit who *dictated* it,¹ and that therefore to ask the author's name is as ridiculous as to enquire with what pen some great writer copied out his work.² We ask with amazement whether St. Gregory supposed that the Holy Ghost *dictated* the cruel sophisms, the malignant "orthodoxies," the uncharitable innuendoes of those three friends, whose utterances occupy so large a part of the book, and which God Himself so unexceptionally condemned? Bonaventura, in his vague declamatory way says, that all Scripture was "written by the Triune God." Does not such an assertion flatly contradict what Scripture itself again and again implies and teaches? Are there not multitudes of passages in the Old Testament which we could not, without an irreverence almost amounting to blasphemy, say were "*written by the Triune God?*"

Starting then with the undefined and loose if not positively irreverent assertion, that the "*auctor primarius*" of all Scripture is God, and that the sacred writers were only "*a pen of the Trinity*," much of what the Schoolmen say on the subject of Inspiration can only be regarded as so much vague and vaporous declamation, which has no value for the purposes of thoughtful or scientific theology.

Here for instance is a passage of John of Salisbury.¹ He speaks of "the books of the Divine page, of which *the*

¹ "Ipse igitur hæc scripsit qui scribenda dictavit."

² "Quid aliud agimus nisi legentes literas de calamo percentamur?"

very points of the letters are full of Divine mysteries," and which are written "by the finger of the Holy Spirit." Akhiva and other Rabbis had said the same sort of thing centuries before, and the Kabbalists had carried out the dogma into a whole system of egregious folly and delusion. Some theologians repeat the same thing now. But to what can such dogmas lead except to that letter-worship which our Lord swept utterly aside? He taught us, as the Apostles do, that certain rules and ordinances belong only to times of ignorance, and can only be regarded as concessions to weakness; while at the same time He leads us to the very heart of those authoritative and spiritual principles which supersede and transcend the dead letter.

Here again is a passage of St. Bonaventura, at the beginning of his *Breviloquium*. "The height of Scripture," he says, "is unattainable, because of its inviolable authority; its plenitude inexhaustible, because of its inscrutable profundity; its certitude infallible, because of its irrefutable method; its healthfulness priceless, because of its inestimable fruit; its beauty incontaminable, because of its impermixtible purity, *etc., etc.*, in order that to the secular sciences, which inflate the heart and darken the intellect, there may be no opportunity of glorying against Holy Scripture. . . . It is the river which flowed forth from the place of pleasure to water the Paradise both of the faithful mind and of the militant Church, which is thence divided into four heads, namely of histories, of anagogies, of allegories, of tropologies. The river of histories withdraws the mind from earthly histories; the rivers of anagogies refresh it in things celestial, *etc., etc.*" Now perhaps something of this kind might be permissible in homiletics, if a preacher wished to impress upon his audience that in the highest teachings of Holy Scripture, and in the totality of its revelations, they might find peace and salvation. But for

¹ *Polycraticus*, viii, 12.

any purpose of real knowledge, for any solution of obvious difficulties, what are such passages but mere specimens of epideictic oratory—mere sound and fury signifying nothing? The homilist is often the antithesis of the exegete. His method is a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*.¹ He is a sort of privileged misinterpreter who does and may thrust into his exposition an endless variety of commonplaces. Oftentimes these “improvements” of the text have no relation whatever to the original meaning of the writer, whose words the homilist is using in fragments to construct out of them a mosaic of his own. For instance St. Bonaventura proceeds to tell us that the Old Testament precedes the New because *that which is carnal* comes before that which is spiritual.² Is there then in the *carnal*, to the same extent as in the *spiritual*, all the *incontaminabilis pulcritudo*, all the *impermixtibilis puritas*, about which he has been pouring forth such sesquipedalian eulogy? In another place he tells us that the brief difference between the Old and New Testament is that between fear and love. But if “perfect love casteth out fear,” how are we helped in the slightest degree towards the solution of a problem of such consummate importance as the degree of reverence with which we are to regard the Old Testament?

Similarly Hugo of St. Caro tells us that in every book of Scripture there is *plena et perfecta veritas*. Is there, we ask, “full and perfect truth” in the Books of Canticles and Esther, which do not once mention the name of God? in the Epistle of St. James, which scarcely ever alludes to many of the most essential Christian doctrines? in the Book of Leviticus, which contains so many of what St. Paul calls “weak and beggarly elements?” in the Law generally, which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews characterizes as *not* full but fragmentary, and *not* perfect but

¹ See Merx, *Eine Rede vom Auslegen*.

² Bonavent., *Proem. in Breviloquium*.

inefficacious? According to the decree of the Council of Trent, the Church "receives and venerates with *equal* pious affection the Books of the Old and New Testament." With *equal* affection? Is the type [then as valuable as the antitype? the shadow as the substance? the evanescent as the eternal? the partial as the complete? Is not this as absurd as to say with the Talmudists that every sentence of the Pentateuch is equally valuable, from "*Timnath was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son,*" to "*the Lord our God is one Lord*"; and that from "*In the beginning,*" down to "*in the sight of all Israel,*" the Law was written by Moses from the lips of Jehovah? What can we say of this but that it is what St. Gregory of Nyssa called mere *Ἰουδαϊκὴ φλυαρία καὶ ματαιότης*.¹ To attach an equal degree of "inspiration" to the list of the Dukes of Edom and to the last discourses in the Gospel of St. John,—to accept "with *equal* pious affection" David's imprecations against his enemies, and St. Paul's description of charity,—to value the Books of Chronicles as highly as the Epistles to the Romans or the Gospel of St. Luke,—to reverence with equal devotion the list of clean and unclean animals and the first Epistle of St. Peter,—is to treat the Holy Scriptures in a spirit of plus-quam-Judaic superstition, and to claim for all their parts an equal authority such as they never remotely claim for themselves. Yet in spite of a few theoretic disclaimers and actual inconsistencies, this is the spirit which animates every one of the Schoolmen in their voluminous commentaries on almost every part of Holy Writ.

"But we are," says Bonaventura, "to understand everything of Christ." There is a certain sense, capable of careful definition, in which this vague phrase may be accepted. But to say nothing of the fact that such a rule may be abused into the crudest casuistry which utterly distorts and depraves the true historic sense of Scripture, and turns it

¹ Greg. Nyss. Orat. xii., cont. *Eunomium*.

into a fantastic enigma, Bonaventura gives us no shadow of a rule by which we may be safer in applying all the Old Testament to Christ than in applying it (as he himself does) to the Virgin Mary. The Psalter, for instance, of the Seraphic Doctor becomes a series of hymns to the Virgin. Thus in Psalm i. we read, "Happy is the man who loves thy name, Mary Virgin;" in Psalm ii., "Why have our enemies raged? Let thy right hand defend us, mother of God," etc. Are such methods in any way worthy of the name of exegesis? Does not the use of Scripture on such a system become necessarily artificial and misleading? Can the Bible be rightly understood so long as it is used as a book of propositions all on the same level, "each absolute in itself, and warranting whatever inferences can be logically deduced from the phraseology?" Can we wonder that "the piety of the Schoolmen became a superstition, transubstantiating the word of God into the verbal elements by which it was signified?"¹ If there be in Scripture a human element as well as a Divine; if each writer be as St. Augustine said, "*inspiratus a Deo sed tamen homo*";² if, as the same saint says, each Evangelist wrote "*ut quisque meminerat et ut cuique cordi erat*";³ if Inspiration differs in illuminating degrees; if it be supernatural only in matters undiscoverable by reason yet essential to faith; nothing can be clearer than that there is something utterly superstitious in the adoring literalism which refuses to judge of Scripture by the teachings of Christ, of Experience, of History, of Criticism, of the Moral Sense. "God," says Luther, "does not speak grammatical vocables, but true essential things." "As incredible praises given unto men," says Hooker, "do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation, so we must likewise take great heed lest, in attributing to Scripture more than it can have,

¹ Bishop Hampden.

² Aug., *De Consens Evang.*, ii. 28.

³ *Id. ib.*, ii. 5.

the incredibility of that do cause even those things which it hath most abundantly to be less reverently esteemed.”¹

The evils which rose from this reiterated assertion of the supernatural, sacramental, and infallible character of *every* word of Scripture—which meant to the Schoolmen *every word* of very imperfect translations of a by no means perfect text—were manifold. This *πρωτων ψευδος* tended to vitiate their whole system of interpretation.

1. One of these evils was the universal prevalence of modes of exposition which, as we shall see in a later paper, were in their very nature unsound; and the consequent acceptance of conclusions which, by universal admission, are absolutely without basis.

2. Again, the false view of Inspiration served to obliterate the one conception which is the best key to the difficulties of Scripture—the conception of *a growth and progress in Revelation*; the recognition that God revealed Himself fragmentarily and multifariously; that there were times of ignorance “at which God winked,” that there were certain things which God allowed only because of the hardness of men’s hearts; that even moral truths were but slowly apprehended; and that God spake “to them of old times” in a different way from that in which He spoke in his Son. He who has not grasped the fact of this continuity and relativity of Scripture—the truth that Scripture is not to be handled as though it were one contemporaneous revelation, and that each part of Scripture must be judged with reference to the age in which it was written, and even to the degree of development in the mind of the writer—is wholly unprepared even to begin the work of an Expositor.

3. The same vagueness of theory led commentators to overlook and practically to ignore the difference produced by the intense individuality of the sacred writers, and by

¹ Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, II. viii. 7.

the very tone in which they write according to the varying moods of their special temperament. The style of the greatest of them rises and falls as the gusts of emotion sweep across their spirits, even as the melodies of a wind-harp rise or fall with the breeze. To treat every utterance of a David, an Isaiah, a St. Paul, as if they were to be accepted with equal literalness, and with no reference to the feelings which called them forth, is to treat the Bible as if it were the Koran, and to rob it of that human element which awakens our tenderest sympathies. It is the natural and human element of Scripture which takes the deepest hold of our hearts, because it shews us that the writers were men of like passions with ourselves, though we are receiving through their honoured instrumentality the revelation which they received from God.

4. The same erroneous point of view prevented the due and necessary appreciation of what may be called the rhetorical element of Scripture—the fact, that is, that its utterances are, in every book, and in every particular, regulated by the normal rules of human expression. The Jews had an eminently wise proverb, which might indeed stand as the initial rule of all sound interpretation, and which far transcends their ordinary practice—that “*the Law speaks in the tongue of the sons of men.*” The neglect of this rule by the Schoolmen—their manner of handling every word of Scripture in the interests of a hard and lifeless traditionalism—reduced all Scripture to the riddle of a sphinx. Each verse presented an enigma to which all sorts of differing answers might be invented, and of these answers many were mutually exclusive, and the majority were valueless and arbitrary. It is the habit of the Schoolmen—it continues to be the habit of some modern commentaries—to crowd into every text as many conceivable meanings as can be extorted out of the words. The practice seems to assume the impossible notion, that the author

meant himself to be understood by his original readers in half a dozen different ways. This unsatisfactory method of dealing with sentences which were written to be understood each in its own proper sense continues, by direct affiliation, from the "*potest etiam intelligi*," or the constantly recurring "*aliter*," with which the scholastic commentators heap upon us a multitude of diverse interpretations one after another. Unless the language of Scripture be treated by the grammatical and rhetorical rules of the languages in which its books are written, our comments upon it will inevitably be marked by confusion and error.

5. In this paper I will note but one more evil which sprang from the vague and exaggerated notion held by the Schoolmen, of the *equal supernaturalness* of all parts of Scripture. It is the grave abuse of parallel passages which still continues to be a scandal in modern exegesis. The practice of wisely illustrating one part of Scripture by another is indeed capable of the most fruitful application, and has been at all times practised. The scholastic abuse of it arose in part from their mistake as to what St. Paul meant by "the proportion of faith." They strangely interpreted this to mean "*Cum veritas unius Scripturae ostenditur veritati alterius non repugnare.*"¹ When St. Paul says, "whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith," he clearly means that we are only to teach and preach according to the measure of faith which we have received, less or more. This is sufficiently shewn by the context, which tells us "that our gifts differ according to the grace that is given to us." The Schoolmen, however, used the phrase to mean that we must make all the different books and utterances of Scripture agree together; a task which was for them the more impossible because there was scarcely one of them who knew the original languages in which Scripture was written, and

¹ Thos. Aquin., *Summ. Theol.*, *Ima. Qu.* 1, *Art.* 10.

therefore scarcely one of them who could in any given instance of difficulty be sure what the first meaning of the writer had been. St. Bonaventura both lays down the rule, and gives us a specimen of its application. "Scripture" he says,¹ "has a special mode of procedure, and so must be understood and explained in its own special way. Since under its letter lies a manifold sense, the expositor must draw this into the light by another Scripture of clearer meaning. Thus if I were expounding 'Take arms and shield and arise to help me,' and wished to explain what were the arms of God, I could say that they were his *truth* and *good will*, as is proved by an open passage of Scripture. For it is written elsewhere, 'With the shield of thy goodwill Thou hast crowned us,' and again, 'His truth shall surround thee.'" The reader must judge for himself as to the value of thus handling the most ordinary metaphors which in point of fact need no explanation whatever. We shall see hereafter that the exegesis of St. Thomas Aquinas depends to a very large extent on this method, applied with great ingenuity and great knowledge of the Vulgate, but often to extremely little purpose. It led to the use of "texts" as though they were so many cards in a pack, which might each be applied separately without any reference to their surroundings, and without a suspicion that the same word may be used not only by different writers, but even by the same writer in different passages, with very different shades of meaning.

6. But in order not to prejudge the Schoolmen I will here let two of them, and those the greatest, speak for themselves.

"Questi che m'è a destra piu vicino
 Frate e maestro fummi : ed essi Alberto
 E di Colonia, ed io Tomas d' Aquino."²

i. Here then is the comment of Albertus Magnus on Joel i. 4: "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust

¹ *Proam. in Breviloquium.*

² Dante, *Paradiso*, x. 97.

eaten, and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm (Vulg. *rubigo*) eaten." Now on this passage an exegete might well tell us that the names of these insects literally mean "the gnawer," "the multitudinous," "the consumer"; he might enter into the question whether *different* insect-plagues are meant, or the locust *in different stages* of its existence; he would have made up his mind whether the prophecy of Joel is literal, or whether the locusts are an allegorical description of hostile forces. The comment of Albert merely refers us to Isa. xiv. 11: "The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee"; to Exod. x. 4: "To-morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast"; to Ps. cv. 35: "The locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number" (where the resemblance is far more in the Vulgate than in the Hebrew); to Ps. lxxviii. 46, and to James v. 2 (because in the Vulgate the word *aerugo* which is analogous to *rubigo* occurs there also!). His subsequent comment is a mere heaped up confusion of allegorical meanings by which the locusts are meant for Assyrians, Chaldeans, etc.; and moral meanings by which the locusts indicate lust, vainglory, etc. (Gregory); or sadness, joy, fear, hope (Jerome); or (Gregory again) the locust is *incipient passion*; the locust *instability*, because it flies; the palmerworm is "*habit*," because it settles; the cankerworm is "*despair*, because it consumes."

Thus the whole passage is a vague shifting between parallel passages which elucidate nothing, and secondhand opinions based on no intelligent principle, and floating in the air.

ii. Here again is the comment of St. Thomas Aquinas on Isa. xi. 1: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse." The Blessed Virgin, he says, is called "a rod:"

a. As *consoling* in tribulation—which he illustrates by the fact that Moses divided the Red Sea with his *rod*.

β. As *fructifying*—because Aaron's *rod* budded. Num. xvii. 8.

γ. As *satiating*—because the *rod* of Moses drew water from the rock. Num. xx. 11.

δ. As *scourging*—because a *rod* would smite the corners of Moab. Num. xxiv. 17.

ε. As *watching*—because in Jer. i. 11 we read: *Virgam vigilantem ego video* Vulg. “I see a rod watching” [lit., “a wakeful or early tree,” and in our A. V. “a rod of an almond tree,” LXX. βακτηρίαν καρυίνην].

Now in Isa. xi. 1 the word for “rod” is *chōter* (חֹטֶר). In Num. xvii. 8; xx. 11, the word is *matteh* (מַטֵּה) “staff.” In Jer. i. 11 it is *makkeel* (מַקְקֵל). The parallel passages are therefore no parallels at all, but purely misleading. And even if the Hebrew words used had been the same, what would be the intrinsic merit and value of this accidental concordance-like juxtaposition of passages in which the same word chanced to occur? The reference to the Virgin is arbitrary and baseless; the only light thrown on the passage is a false and fantastic light; the result of the exegesis is merely a play of ingenuity resting on no foundation and leading to no result.

But such a method might with great ease lead to results which were not only fantastic but heretical. Thus the word “*tabernacle*” in several passages of Scripture is used for our mortal body. In accordance with the methods of exegesis which they found used by all the highest authorities, the Manichees were therefore quite justified in explaining the verse, “*In sole posuit tabernaculum Suum*” (Ps. xix. 4) to mean that Christ had ascended *incorporeally* to the Father, leaving his *body* in the Sun! The heretical conclusion was rejected *because* it was heretical; but they might have pleaded from the analogy of numberless similar methods of interpretation that *the method* was orthodox; and that, if the method was justifiable, the inference was sound.