

*THE OLD TESTAMENT AND OUR LORD'S  
AUTHORITY.*

THE controversies upon the age and authorship of some books of the Old Testament which now engage the Church are sufficiently momentous in themselves. But they assume a form unspeakably more important when they are regarded in the light of our Lord's authority. We find men of high repute accused of disloyalty to Him because they disbelieve the critical correctness of the current traditions of His time on these subjects, to which His words give expression. And those who stake His authority against the conclusions of modern criticism suffer the accusation, scarcely less awful, of dismissing to infidelity many in the present, and possibly multitudes in the future, who in their own desire and affection are His dutiful followers.

As is usual in such cases compromises are suggested. We are urged to accept the results of critical inquiry without considering the authority of our Saviour as involved in them. But even if we ourselves feel it possible to avoid connecting Him with such investigations, so many Christians among our best and ablest have declared themselves unable to do so, that it is plain the subject must be faced. In other quarters we are recommended to suspend our judgment, and remember that destructive criticism on the Old Testament has not yet proved its points. And this is doubtless true. Christians are not only at liberty to remember, but in duty bound to remember that other critical judgments advanced with equal confidence have before now been reversed. As to the Old Testament itself therefore, we are bound to wait for more light.

But it is a different matter to bid us wait one moment more than is necessary in determining what our Lord's responsibilities on the subject are. Nothing except the absence of materials for decision could excuse us in putting that point by. It is not fair to critics to bid them pursue their investigations under a suspicion of impiety, nor fair to the body of the faithful to bid them ascribe to their Master a provisional infallibility. More than all, it is not fair to Him to avoid the subject. The time for considering whether a friend is responsible for a proposition is the time when any person of credit seriously maintains that he is so. If we wait until the proposition is proved false, we shall cast inevitable doubt upon our *ex post facto* attempts to clear him of connexion with it. And many have felt this in the present question, and, refusing to postpone an inquiry which concerns their Lord, have considered His expressions regarding the Old Testament in their necessary relation to His nature and person, and have come to varying conclusions. We do not know whether any one has yet attempted to treat the same inquiry in connexion with a class of facts which come still better within our own sphere; namely, His work for man.

The saving work of Christ has been universally thought to consist, firstly, in what He has done for us; secondly, in the example He sets us. S. Peter sums up the Gospel when he says that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example.

It might seem that in this classification His teaching is omitted. Under which head shall we find room for that oral instruction which fills so large a part in our gospels, and makes so important an element of our Christianity, and in which are contained the allusions to the Old Testament which are now under review? They form part of His example, for they show us His mind and how to follow Him. They are the words which prove that "guile was not

found in His mouth." At the time when the apostolic epistles in which the doctrine of Christianity is drawn out were written, the biographies of Christ and the records of His utterances, which we now read in the gospels, were current, written or unwritten, throughout the Church, and made the staple of the instruction which, like Theophilus, every convert received. They formed the picture of the Saviour which was manifestly set forth as a pattern to the Church, and to which the writers of the other New Testament books so often refer when they bid Christians be followers of the Lord, or run with patience the race set before them, looking unto Jesus.

Teaching and example are united even in the work of inferior masters. A lecturer, even upon the most abstract sciences, is effective in proportion as he enables his hearers to feel how the thing he speaks of was done or learnt by him, how his mind grasps it, and wherein its interest for him lies. But when it is with moral or spiritual truth that our teacher concerns himself, the prime requisite is that he should put his mind on our level, and lift us up to his. Every true teacher must indeed be master of his subject, but not so master as to regard it merely from above. He must sympathise with the condition of his learners by a vivid remembrance of the time when he was a learner himself. Now above all teachers that ever taught, the Lord proclaims a perfect sympathy between Himself and His disciples. It is a community of mind, not merely in metaphor, but in reality. We hear of Christians having the mind of Christ, of Christ living in them, and many other expressions, which labour to convey the idea of a mental and spiritual union far beyond those which exist between the most beloved of other instructors and the pupils whom he guides. And in order to maintain the place of Christ as our teacher in that sense which peculiarly belongs to His saving work, we must be careful to assert,

not merely His mastery of what He teaches us, but also the resemblance which exists between His own ways of knowing and the knowledge He imparts to us. We had as well deny the correctness of His knowledge as deny that it is human. We must feel that He understands all He would have us know with that kind of understanding which issues from experience and implies sympathy.

In one great department of the Lord's teaching these principles are everywhere recognised as essential. In all which concerns the great moral conflict of man with evil, it is quite plain that Christ teaches us as one who has Himself learnt. We must misread the whole gospel history, as well as the inspired comment of the epistles upon it, if we fail to see how real was His strife with evil from the cradle to the cross. He helps us, not merely as a deliverer on whose work we may securely rest, nor as an instructor supremely skilled in the knowledge of sin and virtue, but as one who is partaker of our experience, and feels with us by reason of community in nature and in life. We read the record of this in the gospels, and the Epistle to the Hebrews draws the inference, "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." These words do not merely state a doctrine. They appeal to the remembrance of the human history of the Lord, which lived in the Church by the tradition on which her own life was founded, and of which many who had seen it actually existed to bear witness. And to introduce into our exposition of these words anything which deducts from their simple truth and reality—any doctrinal consideration which casts doubt upon the genuine truth of His sympathy with us, or rests it upon any other basis than that of His human experience—is to separate ourselves completely from the Christianity of the primitive Church.

We must not think of His Divine nature as in any way

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hindering the complete human reality of His conflict with sin, but, on the contrary, as assuring us of it. The works of God are perfect, and when we are told that He emptied Himself of His glory, and took on Him the likeness of man, we must beware of failing to acknowledge the truth of the Divine act. Reverence to God is shown, not by refusing to believe the literal meaning of the words, but by accepting it. Christ could not have been so truly the Son of man had He not been the Son of God. And when we see Him contending with evil in all its forms according to the sad and common lot of man, our whole faith in His Deity ought to go in the direction of making us believe that the conflict was as real as it seemed to be. Whenever saints and holy men say strong things about their fight with sin, there are always some of their admirers who think to pay them a compliment by refusing to credit all their testimony about themselves. But the saints care little for such flattery, and prefer that kind of admiration which believes that they knew themselves, for good and evil, better than strangers can do. It is to be feared that some believers in the King of saints Himself make the mistake of not quite taking Him at His word in respect of the deadly reality of His fight with evil. An error indeed: the fight was the truer and more human the more truly He was God.

We must take notice that the conflict with evil in the Lord's life and death is represented to us as a process having its gradual and increasing effects; upon Himself in growing strength as well as upon the malignant powers with which He contends, in their deepening darkness. This is the condition of the human conflict. Man as he proceeds in it becomes more confident in the Divine strength, and more submissive to the decree which imposes the trial upon him, as the best and kindest ordinance for him after all. We might perhaps have doubted, if we had been left to argue from the doctrine of the Lord's nature,

whether any of this internal progress could present itself in Him. While we should have known, of course, that it was only gradually that evil and the spirit of evil could yield to Him, we might have thought that the principle of good which secured the victory to Him would have been exactly the same in amount and power at the first as at the last. How, we might have said, could it be otherwise on the supposition of a *communicatio idiomatum*, a sharing, in the constitution of His Person, of the powers of His Deity with His humanity? Nevertheless we should have been wrong. The living picture of struggle, trouble, and conquest which the gospel history unfolds is expounded in Hebrews v. 8, 9 to mean that, though He were a Son, yet learnt He obedience by the things which He suffered, and having been made perfect, became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation. So that the effect which the union with Deity had on His humanity was not to abolish or in any way to change the relations to evil which are inherent in the conditions of man's estate, but to make Him a perfect model of the behaviour proper to man, when the very utmost of suffering and temptation which those relations to evil can produce are exhausted against him.

It is manifest that this view of the moral history of the Lord may be set in a perplexing light. If He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, must not the earlier stages of the process be stages of imperfect obedience? It is true that what He learned was not the principle of obedience, which in Him was perfect from the first, but the habit of obedience—the application of the principle to the circumstances of life. Yet even on this understanding it does not seem possible to deny that something was learnt by Him which was wanting at the first. As the application of a mathematical axiom to practical uses is a process which involves as much advance, and is as charac-

teristic of human progress from imperfection towards perfection in knowledge, as the first acquisition of the axiom itself, so the necessity under which we live in our moral progress of learning how to apply our moral principles and use our moral capacities is as characteristic of our limitation as is the deficiency of our principles themselves. If we were to apply to the moral life of our Lord the conception that His humanity partakes the perfection of His Deity, we should expect that perfect practical morality and the habit of virtue in all its applications to life would be possessed by Him by nature, not only in germ, but in development. Yet the verse in Hebrews ascribes His possession of it, not to His nature alone, but also to the things which He suffered.

This then is the conception of the Lord's moral life which is forced on us in the desire to realize and use His saving work. He is our priest, our sacrifice, and our example; and the very idea of sacrifice, priesthood, and example requires a union between Him and those for whom He offers and for whom He suffers. Forasmuch as they are partakers of flesh and blood, He also took part in the same; since no example can be effective which is set by those whose nature and circumstances separate them from those who are called to follow.

Now when this is the case in respect of the moral life of the Lord, the question arises whether there is any similar relation between Him and ourselves in the intellectual life. His conquest of sin and His acquisition of obedience are just what ours ought to be, though, alas! too different from what they are. Is His conquest of error and His acquisition of truth of so wholly different a nature that, while in the moral life He is not ashamed to call us brethren, in the intellectual He is not our brother, but something infinitely above us? It is hard to maintain such a theory. In the first place, it makes a division in the constitution of the

Lord's humanity, so that part of it is less human than the rest. In the second place, the faculties thus differently dealt with are practically so united, that it is impossible to sever them except in abstract theory. An exercise of the intellect enters into every movement of the conscience. The condition of facts upon which conscience works is intellectually apprehended, and so are the positive ends which morality urges us to seek, and which conscience invests with a Divine sanction; while, on the other hand, there is no exercise of the intellect which is not subject to the sentence of conscience. We cannot therefore conceive of a progress in the moral part of the nature, accompanied by an intellectual condition which from the first is absolutely perfect. Accordingly we are told that the Lord increased in wisdom, and the verse in Hebrews uses a word which plainly implies that His intellect was engaged in His moral progress: He "learned" obedience.

And when we consider His work as a pattern for men, it seems impossible to suppose that His knowledge was so different from His goodness as to have in it no tinge of the difficulty and struggle which His moral life involved. For in man the strivings of the mind, its errors, victories, and disasters, form a large part of conscious life, and one in which help and sympathy are as urgently needed as in the sphere of morality. The search for truth, and the repugnance and misery under doubt are more characteristic of some ages of Christianity than of others. But they are always present, and in our own time they assume vast proportions. So that if we tried to regard our Saviour as merely a teacher of truth, whose own knowledge came to Him without struggle by the make of His nature, He would certainly be a very different, and a far less attractive Saviour to us than He was to those ages which knew little of doubt, but much of sin; for to them He was, not only the teacher of righteousness, but also the high priest that could be



touched with the feeling of their infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as they were. But here reverence for the Lord as a teacher of Divine truth comes in to check our ascription to Him of our intellectual conditions, and seems to forbid our imagining Him struggling with error in the same way in which the gospels so plainly show Him to us as struggling with temptation. Still the parallel seems plain, and the words of the New Testament clear. In whatever sense we think of the Lord as saving us from our sins, as one who Himself knows by experience what our contest is, in the same sense must we think of Him as helping our efforts after truth, as one who has Himself struggled for it, and knows both the blessing which difficulty brings to the truth-seeker, and the temptation it involves—knows where he should be left to himself, and where helped or corrected lest he be driven to despair or betrayed into self-confidence.

Thousands of parents, in those days of early mental training which of all the days of life are the most difficult and important in the acquisition of truth, have impressed upon their children the example of the Child Jesus, who increased in wisdom. Is this example real and genuine? Shall we think that, while He seemed to grow in wisdom, He was but gradually producing stores which were perfect from the first? Or shall we frame the still more incongruous theory, that His example of intellectual growth is but for childhood, and ceases to apply in the more awful and painful struggles of the mature man?

But then it may be said, that what in the intellectual sphere corresponds to sin in the moral is error. And as the Lord's moral life was confessedly perfect, so must His intellectual illumination be perfect also.

But what do we mean when we say that the Lord's moral life was perfect? Do we mean that He gives a perfect example of conduct in every situation in which a

human being can be placed? Not so. Such a thought may be natural, as we see from the attempts in the legends of pretended saviours of men to represent them as having gone through in their own persons the chief experiences of human life: as beggar and prince, husband and ascetic. But there is no such element in the gospel history. Its absence is no small proof of the reality and truth of its picture of Christ. The experiences of life which the Lord went through were of narrow limits, and multitudes of moral problems occur every day to His followers which never presented themselves to Him. S. Paul thinks it no harm to say that he fills up in his own person that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ; because, in point of volume and contents, the sufferings of Christ represent only a small part of those incident to man. But in point of quality His morality is supreme; and it is in that view that His sufferings afford a perfect and sufficient example to all men under all conditions.

By parity of reason, what we must ascribe to the Lord in the matters of intellect is, not a knowledge perfect in point of volume and contents, but a perfect intellectual attitude, according to the general conditions of humanity, towards His whole environment, spiritual and sensible. It is acknowledged in mental science that it does not belong to the human intellect in its ideal condition to create its own materials, but to use them in a perfect manner as they are brought in from its surroundings. Its perfect attitude is not merely consistent with the limitations in knowledge which the character of man's state involves, but actually requires them. For right behaviour in regard to what we do not yet know, and to what as men we cannot know, are as essential requirements of our intellectual condition as right use of the knowledge we have. It is in the former sphere that we specially need help, and that example is most useful to us. In science the inquirers who work in

advanced conditions of their respective subjects astonish us with the extent of their knowledge, and pour forth their discoveries in quick succession for the benefit of our lives ; but the men whom these scientific conquerors themselves regard as their best examples and the organizers of their victories are those who have laboured in elementary stages of science, and whose intellects have been exercised rather upon the immensity of the undiscovered than upon the limited area of the known. Much more, the intellectual High Priest of humanity must not be omniscient without labour and conquest.

The perfect intellectual attitude is a different thing from what we call talent ; and we should no more think of asking in what measure the latter quality belonged to the Lord, than of raising a question as to the amount of His bodily strength.

What attitude do we suppose our Lord to hold towards the great discoveries in the world of nature which the latter times have revealed—towards the astronomy, the geology, the physics of the present ? Are we to think of Him as one who knew all that we know and that greater region which is still unknown, but kept it all secret from men because it was not His Father's will that what man's intellect can discover should be made known to him by revelation ? If any one thinks himself bound to maintain such a belief, it cannot be disproved ; but the intercourse of our Lord with men, and His manner of speech among them, give no hint of any such thing. It seems inconsistent with the generous freedom wherewith He makes them partakers of the very best He has to give : " All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." We know that we must put *some* limits to the participation of the Divine attributes by our Saviour on earth. No one can ascribe to Him omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience all at once and all completely. And the very

slightest abatement from any attribute establishes the principle of limitation for the whole. Now when this principle is once established, what reason is there for imagining Him endowed with knowledge which would have been useless for His blessed work, and which He gives no sign whatever of possessing? Would not reason suggest to us that, as it is the ordained condition of humanity that, as surely as man is born in time and place, he must be content with the knowledge of his time and place, so our Lord, when He took humanity on Him in local and temporal conditions, took also the limits of natural knowledge which belonged to the condition He assumed? Christians should remember that the faith of the Church is given, not to a theophany, but an incarnation.

But then, it will be said, the knowledge now in question is not natural knowledge; it is religious. You cannot make such a distinction. The knowledge which we call natural has its religious aspect, and there is a great deal of the knowledge which we call religious which is in all respects subject to the same conditions with the natural, as purely matter of intellect and decisively assigned by God's ordinance to the patient search of the mind of man as the appointed instrument of its acquisition and increase. We have no right to take a certain kind of knowledge out of the category of science and place it in the category of religion, just because we ourselves connect it closely with our religion. And if there be anything which Christians should have learnt from the history of religion, it is the uselessness of attempting to set arbitrary limits to the work of the intellect. It has its limits, and these can be shown by its own discovery of its own impotence. But the date and authorship of the books of the Bible are not among the subjects which the intellect will ever be forced to recognise as beyond its sphere.

The intellect in this exercise, as in every other, requires

training, chastening, and example: practical helps which are far more important to it than the prescription of correct theories. Accordingly, if the Lord's attitude towards nature is, in its love, its reverence, and its submission to fact and law, such an example to the searcher into nature as makes the amount of His own natural knowledge very unimportant in comparison, so His treatment of the Bible seems to be a perfect example of its use in every stage of critical knowledge. He treats the holy book with reverence, yet with freedom. He discerns the spiritual point of every passage. He knows what in it is eternal truth, and what was written because of the hardness of heart of the generation to whom it came. He proclaims that man is greater than any ordinances made for man, and that the Son of man is Lord over them. This is His example for Bible readers: infinitely more important and more fruitful than it would have been for Him to anticipate the proper work of critical science.

If indeed the modern criticism of the Old Testament was so completely destructive as to recognise no mark of the Divine hand in its production, and to deprive it of its position as a record of ascertained religious truth, we might well consider such criticism as touching a central point of the Lord's teaching. It would assail His right to quote the Old Testament for religious purposes. But the critics deny that they entertain any such views; and it is not fair upon our part to assume that their profession is untrue. They do not shut their eyes to those magnificent spiritual revelations, independent of all questions of date or authorship, which have made the Bible the food of religious souls. We all recognise a human element in the Bible. The part which earthly circumstance and human will have so evidently played in its production appears to us one of the strongest proofs that the Divine power has been constantly exerted in order to evolve from humanity results

which humanity was naturally so unfitted to produce. We must not suppose that this constraint to acknowledge Divine inspiration, through inability to account otherwise for all the phenomena of a book which has so much that is human, ceases to operate just at that point where we ourselves think the human to stop and the Divine to begin. It ill becomes us to say that whoever recognises more of the human in the Bible than we do recognises nothing but the human, or that a particular date and authorship is indissolubly connected, either with the inspiration of a passage, or with our Lord's right to quote it as inspired.

We cannot wonder however that the very supposition that He quoted a Scripture book under an incorrect name should be a shock to many good people. Even if they grant that the perfection of His humanity involved His acceptance of the intellectual limitations of His age and time, they will think it a further trial to find Him using in argument a belief of His time which criticism may some day prove untrue. They find no difficulty in His use of the phrase "He maketh His sun to rise," although it is not the most correct form in which the phenomenon can be described, and conveyed as He used it a very different import from that which it conveys now. No one now is shocked at the Lord's application of the words, because it has been agreed upon, after long contention and many surprises to the faith of simple souls, that God in the Bible does not give us scientific information, and because it is recognised that, though the details of the natural operation be different from what was then believed, yet it is still truly brought about by God, and conveys the lesson which the Lord deduces. But what is there except our own habits of thought to show that the very same thing is not the case in these questions of Old Testament authorship and date, that we have not here also to do with matters which God does not teach us in the Bible, because they belong to the sphere of scientific

inquiry, and that the spiritual lesson does not here also remain true, though the historical detail be corrected?

It is among the necessary conditions of human life that, in seeking truth, and still more in teaching truth, man must disregard unimportant corrections either of his own judgments or of those of other men. If we were to wait until we can put everything exactly right in every stage of thought, we should never get beyond the most preliminary steps. Partial error is in the very language which men speak, and there is nothing in which the true seeker and the true teacher is better distinguished from the pretender than in his power to touch the heart of the matter and pass by what is unimportant. As the great commander makes for the central position, disregarding many hostile defences, to which a pedant would have laid formal siege, so it is in the thinking and in the speech of those who wage the real war against falsehood: "non cauponantes bellum, sed belligerantes." To some it appears that there lies an important difference between that submission to human ignorance which is the inevitable lot of life, and the active use, in thought or teaching, of arguments in which ignorance mingles. But the difference is in truth only that between passivity and active work. It is quite easy to commit yourself to nothing doubtful, so long as you neither think nor argue. But the very moment you commence to do either of these things you enter upon a work, the very condition of which is that you must use imperfect conceptions for the sake of reaching or teaching the highest attainable truth. The higher and more spiritual the subject is, and the greater the change in men's minds which is aimed at, the more certain is it that there will be much in the argument which the critic will be able to correct.

Every argument that is to produce any real effect must be *ad hominem*; and to omit from your method whatever bears this character is to deprive it of life, and assign its

place to the limbo of that reasoning which defies criticism and moves no man. It is not the boast of an apostle alone, but the character of the religion which he preached, that it is made all things to all men, that it might by all means save some. And it was its Founder who placed it on this path. No characteristic of His moral teaching is more conspicuous than the fearlessness with which He utters things divinely true, if we take them with the circumstances in which they were spoken, but which, without these, become false. Have we a right to expect that His method would be more careful in history than in morals?

An argument which is merely and purely *ad hominem* is one which possesses no general validity, but derives all its force from some prejudice in the mind to which it is presented. We could not perhaps conceive such an argument used with perfect truthfulness, if it were the only one on which the conclusion depended. But it is otherwise if it is advanced to support something for which thoroughly valid reasons exist, which reasons however the mind that is dealt with is unable for the time being to appreciate. S. Paul's argument from the history of Sarah and Hagar is perhaps of this kind. The reasons for freedom and against bondage of the spirit are the highest that the human mind can feel. And will any one call the apostle untruthful or mistaken because he supports this faith, the nobleness of which must be the better known every hour that it is tried, by an argument adapted to the Jewish schools, whether he himself felt a force in it, or only knew that the persons addressed might do so? And if any of the quotations from the Old Testament which are made by our Lord had been arguments *ad hominem* of this kind, we ought to have considered, before impugning His perfections, what the truth was in support of which they were made, and attributed their form to the circumstances of the time. There is no analogy whatever between such a case



and one in which something false is voluntarily suggested in order to lead to a desired conclusion, or in which the conclusion aimed at is itself wrong or doubtful.

But it does not seem that any of the Lord's quotations from the Old Testament are *ad hominem* in this sense. The matter which criticism considers doubtful concerns, in every case, a point secondary to the Lord's purpose, and on which it would have been loss of time and loss of teaching power for Him to dwell. And in every case the argument He applies is truly contained in the passage He quotes, however the passage be viewed. The histories of Lot's wife and Jonah retain their fitness for illustration and warning, though they be viewed as visions or allegories; and Psalm cx. yields the meaning which the Lord takes from it, whether it was written by David or not.

If indeed we can be sure of the terms which the Lord used in quoting this passage (the gospel records have as usual verbal differences) we cannot deny that much of the point of the expression lies in the words, "Doth not David call him Lord?" But the point of the expression need not be the point of the argument; and in this case the argument would be weak indeed if it depended on the Davidic authorship. The Lord is not building a piece of formal reasoning on an isolated text; far less is He puzzling His opponents. He is pointing to a fundamental character of Messianic prophecy which they did not recognise: that the Messiah throughout the Old Testament is foretold and longed for both as God and man; enduring what none but man could have to bear, yet doing for man what God alone could do, and demanding a corresponding homage. This is the double stream of prophecy which met in His person, and which if the Jews could have understood, they would have known both how the Christ should suffer and how He should be raised from the dead. Could it make any essential difference whether the idea was presented to them in the words of

David, or of another prophet? and shall we lay any stress upon Christ's use of the current impression as to the authorship, in comparison with the spiritual insight which draws out the teaching for man's soul which lay in this record of the desires of prophets and kings of old?

Suppose that all experts some day assure themselves that the psalm is post-Davidic with a certainty such as we feel that a piece of the time of Dryden was not written by Chaucer, do we really think that speculative arguments as to the extent of our Lord's human knowledge would stand against a conclusion thus scientifically proved? And in that case, how obvious would reasons such as we have given appear! how decidedly would all Christians disconnect the Lord's authority from the question of the date! how completely would the steady refusal to make this separation, to which now, while the point is doubtful, many Christians unreservedly pledge themselves, be left the sole property of the infidel! But the infidel might recall to mind, as Protestants do in the case of the pope, that Christians considered infallibility to be pledged to the date, until it was found that the date was wrong.

The view we have taken of the intellectual conditions implied in the Lord's humanity is that which is to be gathered from the general tenor of the gospel record. But certain passages are relied on as showing that He was in some sense omniscient. These instances however are either due to perfect spiritual discernment or come under the head of prophecy, which is a species of miracle. Now the Lord uses powers in miracle which it would be heretical to suppose inherent in His humanity. He walked on the water; but to exempt His body from the law of gravitation would be docetism. Nor are the Lord's prophecies of such a tenor as to support the belief that to Him the future was as clear as the present. How indeed could the future be as clear as the present to One who prays, "Let this

cup pass from Me," and, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me"?

But there is still one point, and that of supreme importance. How shall we be sure that, if the Lord did not know the authorship of Psalm cx., He was not also incorrect as to His own Sonship; or that the words in which He claimed from His disciples faith in that transcendent fact were not wanting in the perfect authority which shall warrant us in resting upon them a conclusion so tremendous? How shall we maintain that "David calleth Him Lord" may be taken loosely, while "I and My Father are one" shall impart to us, not merely a truth of human history, but a revelation of the supernatural?

We answer plainly, that it is a mistake to regard those words of the Lord which concern His own supernatural claims as if they were information brought by Him to our minds from some foreign region, regarding which His mental powers and opportunities enable Him to instruct us. He never addresses men in this fashion when He is teaching them religion; nor are His utterances to be paralleled for a moment with information as to the authorship of a book. He addresses all men as possessing moral and spiritual powers which respond to spiritual truth and to the exhibition of a Divine life. These powers in man essentially belong to his nature, and every man, if he doeth truth, ought to be able to exercise them; and the external truth to which they correspond is not the contingent truth which belongs to earthly events. It is very nigh, in the mouth and in the heart, for it is the voice of God; that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life. These are the powers in us upon which He depends for the recognition of His spiritual claims. May we not humbly believe that it was the corresponding spiritual powers of His own perfect and

unfallen humanity, and not merely His intellect, that were the medium of His own apprehension of those claims for conveyance to us.

It is true that spiritual truth must be expressed in intellectual forms, and revealed in earthly facts. But as if to prevent us from resting in facts and forms, and imagining that appeal is made to our mental powers when it is really made to our spiritual, a singular want of strict carefulness is shown in the New Testament as to the intellectual form through which the spiritual Presence speaks straight to the spirit of man. The words of the Lord are repeated with many variations, and so are the facts of His life and work. It would seem as if the more human the form in which the appeal to the spiritual faculties of man is made, the better is it fitted for its purpose of raising him to God. The ruling principle is, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Does the method in which the New Testament is presented to us lead us to expect information upon authorship and age when Jesus quotes from the Old? In both, the appeal that is made is to reason, spirit, and conscience; and the proper substance of the revelation consists, not of dates or circumstances, but of Himself.

We look to our Saviour to furnish in perfection that which we aim at without ever attaining. First, perfect morality: which implies perfect conduct in all circumstances and relations into which His human life brings Him, but not the overpassing of the conditions of human life. Second, perfect intelligence: which implies the perfect understanding of all that life brought to Him in its true meaning and connexion, but not the ascertainment of contingent facts, the knowledge of which life did not and could not furnish to Him. Thirdly, perfect spiritual perception: which implies the unerring comprehension and communication to us of the

Divine claims of His Father and Himself, of His spiritual relations to His Father and to us.

It seems to us therefore, that we need wait no further information to be sure that the Lord is not pledged to any belief which the Old Testament criticism of the day calls in question. Let that criticism be jealously sifted, but let no man dream of surrendering his faith in Christ, whatever the issue of the controversy be.

RICHARD TRAVERS SMITH.

*THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.*

III.

(1 COR. xv. 45, 46.)

AT the close of the verse immediately preceding the point now reached by us, St. Paul had laid it down as a settled and incontrovertible principle, that, "if there is a natural (or, rather, sensuous) body, there is also a spiritual body." The words present all the appearance of having been regarded by the apostle as an axiom. They rest upon the conception which universal experience compels us to attach to men whenever we think of them as living beings, that is, whenever we think of them in the only light in which they are a matter of concern to us. As living beings we know them, care for them, and must reason about them. But this living being of theirs, as known to us, consists of two things, a life-force and a body in which the life-force dwells. Extinguish the one, and you have nothing but a dead framework hastening to corruption. Extinguish the other, and you have but a shadowy phantom, not a man. When therefore we have the one, we may rest assured that God, who will not leave His creatures hopelessly stunted and imperfect, will add the other. But there are two wholly