

The Bible
and Modern
Investigation

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*THREE LECTURES DELIVERED TO CLERGY
AT NORWICH AT THE REQUEST
OF THE BISHOP
WITH AN ADDRESS ON THE AUTHORITY OF
HOLY SCRIPTURE*

BY
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THE BIBLE AND MODERN INVESTIGATION

LECTURE I

THE subject on which your Bishop has done me the honour to ask me to address you is that of "The Bible and Modern Investigation." The subject, as thus stated, is more general in character than that which has become so familiar to us of late years under the title of "The Higher Criticism." It includes, for instance, the question of the light which may be thrown upon the Bible by archæological investigations, and it refers to the New as well as to the Old Testament. At the same time it would, of course, be impossible to survey all this ground in the course of three lectures, and I shall probably be consulting the wishes of those who proposed these lectures, and of those who are attending them, if I consider mainly the question of the light which has been thrown upon the Old Testament by modern

researches. It is an advantage, however, that by choosing this title, the Bishop has placed the question of criticism in its true light. The word "criticism" may seem to some minds to suggest a critical, or even sceptical, temper on the part of those who practise it; but no such meaning ought to be in our minds in dealing with the subject. Such a disposition has undoubtedly existed in many critics, especially in the leading critics abroad; but the questions which are now so much occupying the mind of the Church and the world have taken their origin from the process, not only legitimate but necessary, of investigation. A vast mass of information respecting ancient history on the one side, and ancient Hebrew literature on the other, has been brought to light by the literary and archæological investigations of the last century, and it is an imperative obligation upon all thoughtful men, and particularly upon all thoughtful Christians, that they should consider what bearings these investigations have upon the books on which their faith in great measure depends, and upon the facts which those books assert and presuppose. Other people will do it, and have done it, if we do not; and if they approach the matter with bias, as many of them have done, one-sided conclusions may be drawn from such investigations, which

may mislead the public mind and unsettle the faith of Christians.

But it cannot be requisite to spend any time, in an audience of Clergymen, in urging the necessity of taking part in these investigations, and of making ourselves acquainted with their results. It may be worth while, however, to illustrate in one or two instances the nature and scope of such critical inquiries. That branch of them which, at the moment, arouses the greatest interest is called the Higher Criticism; but its function may be very well illustrated by the Lower Criticism, which is that of the text of the Scriptures. Take, for example, the work of scholars like Dr. Westcott and Dr. Hort, and the Revisers. Their work mainly consisted in ascertaining what is the true text of the sacred books. The facts brought to light since the time of the Reformation have made it clear that such a position as that practically assumed by the Roman Church at the Council of Trent, that any existing text of the New Testament could be accepted, without inquiry, as an authentic representation, is wholly inadmissible. The opportunities afforded us for the collation of manuscripts, and for reading the Fathers of the Eastern as well as of the Western Church, have made us aware of the fact that there are a large

number of variations in the texts which have been handed down to us, and that careful inquiry is necessary in order to get as near as we can to the originals. Take, for instance, the text respecting the three witnesses in the First Epistle of St. John. It is now generally recognized that important words in that text are not part of the original composition, and criticism has rendered the Church a valuable service in establishing that fact. Every one would desire to avoid treating as a part of the Word of God words which were not written by its inspired authors. Or take the conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel. Whether we agree with the view of the Revisers that those concluding verses were not part of St. Mark's own Gospel, or whether with Dean Burgon and Dr. Salmon we think, as I do myself, that there is not sufficient reason for rejecting them, no one can doubt that their authenticity, in view of the difficulties connected with them, is a proper subject of inquiry, and that the Lower Criticism is doing a valuable work in carefully investigating the subject. What it is doing for us in all such cases is to render us more sure than we otherwise could be of what is the actual inspired revelation on which our faith relies. The Higher Criticism aims at performing the same service in a higher sphere of

investigation. We know what has been the result of such criticism during the last half-century respecting the New Testament. When I entered the ministry, more than forty years ago, the air was full of vague rumours that the German critics had undermined the authenticity of the Gospels and of St. Paul's Epistles; and I remember a very eminent Oriental scholar, a late Professor of Arabic at Oxford, telling me that two German laymen, Baur and Ewald, had done more to elucidate the Bible than all the clergymen in England. The result, however, has been a strange comment on such an observation. German and English scholars and divines have, by purely critical methods, dispersed these doubts, and the books of the New Testament now stand on firmer ground, as authentic productions of the persons to whom the Church has always attributed them, than they did before; their text has been purified and rendered more exact; and our faith that we can use them as the Word of God, spoken by His inspired Evangelists and Apostles, has received an invaluable confirmation.

These considerations will best illustrate the process which, amidst many difficulties and confusions, is now, no doubt to our great ultimate advantage, going forward with respect

to the Old Testament. Men are inquiring respecting the Old Testament, as they did during the last half-century respecting the New, (a) What is its true text, and (b) Whether its books are rightly attributed to the authors whose names they have traditionally borne. Take, for instance, the Book of the prophet Isaiah. It is certainly a very interesting and, in some respects, important subject for inquiry, whether the latter half of that book is by the Isaiah of the first half. There are still scholars on both sides ; and it is happily a question which may be discussed, and on which differences of opinion may prevail, without involving, as some other critical questions do, vital considerations respecting the trustworthiness of the sacred writings. But, according as it is decided one way or the other, considerable light is thrown upon the nature and range of ancient prophecy. Or take the subject of the Psalms. Their current popular title affords a very good illustration of the nature of the critical questions with which scholars are at present more especially concerned. It is clear that it is not possible to regard all the Psalms which bear the inscription of a Psalm of David as being really his ; and that, for example, when at the end of Ps. lxxii. we read in the Hebrew, "The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are

ended," although there are Psalms of Asaph and of the sons of Korah in the collection thus concluded, it cannot have been intended to say that all the Psalms were those of David. It became therefore an imperative matter to ascertain, as far as possible, by such criticism as that of Professor Kirkpatrick in his valuable edition of the Psalter, or that of the equally valuable and instructive work of the late Rev. John Sharpe, what Psalms can be justly attributed to David, and what tests we can rely upon in the matter. The question, for instance, whether Psalm xviii. can, as Professor Kirkpatrick considers, be regarded as truly ascribed to David involves most important considerations respecting the character of the ancient Jewish religion, and, consequently respecting the whole history of the Jewish dispensation. Questions such as these must needs be asked with respect to every book of the Old Testament. Not only is it impossible to prevent their being asked, but in a right spirit they ought to be asked; and those who are confident of the truth of their Christian faith will also be the most confident that, in the end, the answer will be of the greatest possible benefit to that faith. There may, indeed, be a painful interval of doubt and confusion, as there was with respect to the New Testament; but this is a necessary

consequence of our infirmities of mind and heart, as well as of our comparative ignorance ; and they constitute part of the strain and trial through which faith has had to pass in all ages.

Having premised this brief recognition of the necessity and value of Criticism in general, let us pass to the main critical problems of the hour, those which relate to the authenticity and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. Of these problems the most important, because the most decisive in their general bearing, are those which relate to the Pentateuch. It is not, in this case, a mere question whether the so-called five Books of Moses are correctly attributed to him, or whether parts of them, at all events, are from other or later hands. As in the case of Isaiah, it is quite conceivable that questions of that nature might be discussed without affecting the substantial value of the books, and without any consequences to the general view taken of the Old Testament as a whole. It is true that as early as the Books of the Chronicles (2 Chron. xxv. 4 ; xxxv. 12) and Ezra (vi. 18) not only Deuteronomy but Leviticus and Numbers are quoted as "in the Book of Moses" ; so that, as Dillmann observes in the opening of his famous discussion on the composition of the Hexateuch, the name Torah, and the opinion that Moses

was the author of the whole Pentateuch, acquired from that time an almost dogmatic authority. Nevertheless it might reasonably be urged that the books were so called *a potiori*, as it is said, because Moses was regarded as the chief author, and that the title need not really mean more than the current appellation of the "Psalms of David"; not implying that all was his, but that he was the chief author and originator. It must, I think, reasonably be allowed that expressions in the New Testament, such as "the Law of Moses," cannot fairly be pressed to imply, of necessity, more than that the five books on the whole are of Mosaic origin and authority. By common consent the conclusion of Deuteronomy, describing Moses' death, cannot be ascribed to him, and similar exceptions might be admitted with respect to other parts without inconsistency with the general title given to them by the Chronicler, or by the New Testament writers. Even then, of course, it would be a grave question how far the denial of Moses' authorship was to be carried; but there seems no inconsistency with Jewish and Christian tradition in admitting the inquiry in principle.

But this is not the point which creates anxiety at the present moment. What is alleged by a very influential school of Old Testament critics

on the Continent, and, I am afraid I must say, a school not less influential in England, is that the Pentateuch, in its present form and its apparent meaning, gives an entirely erroneous conception of the real course of Jewish history. The impression conveyed by it, and doubtless intended to be conveyed by it, is that God revealed Himself, from the outset of the patriarchal history, as the One Almighty God of heaven and earth; that He made a covenant with Abraham, and, through him, with the Jewish nation; that He then revealed Himself more definitely to Moses, and that Moses, in obedience to this revelation, laid down the great outlines of the religious and civil constitution of the Jews; so that the rest of the Jewish history is that of the manner in which the people either failed to obey these laws, or were elevated to a gradual apprehension and observance of them by a succession of prophets and kings, and, at length, by the severe discipline of the Captivity. But, on the contrary, the view now very generally adopted is that the history of the Patriarchs has no adequate historical foundation; that Moses introduced only the rudiments of the faith and the laws which became the characteristic of the Jews, and that the portion of the Pentateuch which describes those laws in detail is to be assigned in the main to

the period of the Exile, or subsequent to it; so that what is commonly known as the Mosaic system is really the result of a long development, and not its starting-point. This, it must be felt, involves nothing less than a revolution in the view of Jewish history and revelation which has prevailed, beyond question, in the Christian Church from its commencement, and in the Jewish Church at least since the time of the Chronicler. It is difficult to see how another very serious result can be avoided; namely, that the Pentateuch, at all events, was compiled or composed in such a manner as to convey to the Jews themselves, and to the whole Church for some two thousand years, a mistaken, and even a completely false, view of the religion and the religious history of the people of God. The eighth principle of the Jewish religion to this day, as stated by Dr. Friedländer, in his authoritative manual on the subject, is: "I firmly believe that the law which we possess now is the same which has been given to Moses on Sinai." "The whole Torah," he explains (p. 134), "including both history and precepts, is of Divine origin; nothing is contained in the Torah that was not revealed to Moses by the Almighty." From the time of Joshua "until the present the Torah, in its integrity, has been in the hands of the children

of Israel." It is striking to reflect that if the prevalent theory has grave consequences for the traditional belief of the Church, it would seem absolutely destructive of Judaism, from which it cuts the whole ground it rests upon. But I adduce this consideration, for the present, only to show what has been the impression produced by the sacred books of the Jews upon the Jews themselves. If that view could be established, the books of the Pentateuch would cease to convey trustworthy information to ordinary people.

Now, of course, if these views can be proved we must take the consequences; but in so grave a matter we are bound to be careful in ascertaining what is really proved, and I understand that what I am chiefly asked to do in these lectures is to give an account of the extent to which such proof or evidence has gone. In doing this it seems to be my duty to put my own views as far as possible on one side. It would be quite impossible in three lectures to review the whole controversy of criticism; and I might be justly deemed presumptuous if I were to attempt, on my own behalf, to controvert views admitted by such distinguished scholars, both in this country and in Europe. I will only beg respectfully that I may be allowed to reserve my own opinion on

various points which I shall mention as provisionally admitted by many scholars. With that proviso, I think I shall be consulting your wishes and the intention of the bishop if I lay before you a statement of the conclusions on which the majority of critical scholars are agreed, and of the questions on which they differ.

Those points of difference are not quite fairly, or, at least, not adequately, explained in most of the popular books on this subject. Ordinary readers, for instance, of Professor G. A. Smith's brilliant volume on "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament" would derive the impression that there was only one sort of criticism, and one set of results from that criticism. "We may say," he says (p. 72), "that Modern Criticism has won its war against the traditional theories. It only remains to fix the amount of the indemnity." "We have seen," he says again (p. 73), "that its main conclusions rests upon literary and historical facts furnished by the Old Testament itself. . . that they are as solid as the results can be of a science at work upon so remote a period of history." Now, if this were true, it would be vain for a person like myself to beg for a suspension of judgment upon such conclusions, with such resources as are at his disposal on an occasion like this. But you will

feel that it is a different matter to lay before you independent evidence of the results of criticism, and to point out as a matter of fact, and not of opinion, what the prevalent conclusions of modern investigation at the present stage really are.

Fortunately it is possible to do this very distinctly, not as the result of my own impressions, but in the statements of an eminent foreign scholar whose authority on the subject is unquestionable. I refer to the well-known name of Dr. Hermann Strack, Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin. He is well known for his own important contributions to Old Testament criticism and to Jewish learning; for the Commentary which, in conjunction with Professor Zöckler, he edited on the Old and New Testaments; and for his contributions, on some of the chief questions of criticism, to Herzog's Encyclopædia. He has published an "Introduction to the Old Testament," which in many respects, and particularly in the completeness of its account of the literature of the subject, is the most useful book of the kind; and the fifth edition of this Introduction, from which I shall quote, was published in 1898. He tells us in the Preface that "in relation to questions of criticism, my endeavour has been to state their present position as objectively as possible, not

putting my own opinion in the forefront. I believe," he says, "that a book of this kind may be a useful guide, in teaching and learning, to persons who, on many points, may have a very different opinion from my own." He himself is an earnest Christian, but accepts many of the critical conclusions he reports. I propose to lay before you, in the remainder of this lecture, statements made by this authoritative writer, in a book published in the midst of the critical world of Germany, as to the present position of critical inquiries into the Pentateuch, or rather the Hexateuch; for, as you will be aware, the Book of Joshua is regarded by most critics as closely connected, in respect to its composition, with the five so-called Books of Moses.

He says on page 31 *ff.*: "That the following propositions may be described as the results of investigation, up to the present time, which have received fairly general recognition:—

"(a) That five written sources lie at the foundation of the Hexateuch; namely, (1) P, commencing with the first chapter of Genesis, or the Priest Codex, . . . called by Ewald the Book of Origins, constituting the esoteric reproduction by a priestly hand of the oldest traditions of Israel; (2) H, the Law of Holiness, consisting of chapters xvii.–xxvi. of Leviticus, called by

Dillmann the Sinaitical Law ; (3) E, the Elohist, or second Elohist, . . . called by Dillmann the Book of the Israelite Legendary Narrative ; (4) J, the Jehovist, . . . or the Prophetic Narrator ; (5) D, . . . the author of the greater part of Deuteronomy.

“(b) Not a few sections, though they are only preserved in one or other of these written sources, are derived from an earlier time than these writings ; as, for example, the Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant in Exodus (chapters xx.-xxiii.), and most of the poetical pieces. . . .

“(c) P ; being the receptacle of the ceremonial laws, has, in course of time, received many, perhaps very many, enlargements. . . .

“(d) Among these writings there is a close relation, in language and expression, between P and H on the one side, and E and J on the other ; and, accordingly, the latter are sometimes described in their combination as J E.”

Such, says Dr. Strack, are the points of fairly general agreement. On the other hand, “substantial differences subsist at present in relation to the following points : the succession in time and the absolute age,” or, in other words, the relative and absolute age, “of these various written sources, the vicissitudes to which each of

them has been exposed up to the time of its being combined with one or more of the others, and the number and character of the various recensions or combinations which it has undergone. The first-named differences, those which relate to the relative and absolute age of the documents, are of the greatest importance."

Dr. Strack proceeds, accordingly, to discuss these more particularly. The Hexateuch, he says, begins with a passage from P ; namely, the first chapter of Genesis. For this reason, and also because the thread of P was evidently used for the purpose of arranging upon it the parts taken from other sources, it and the other Elohist source were for a long time regarded as older than the Jehovistic, and, above all, older than D. This remains, substantially, the view of Dillmann, by universal consent one of the two or three greatest names in Old Testament criticism, who died eight years ago. But to this view a direct opposition is offered by a school which is commonly described as that of Graf and Wellhausen, but which was really originated seventy years ago by the eminent Strasburg critic Reuss. For a long time it attracted very little attention ; but it was taken up by Wellhausen in 1878, and, in consequence of his brilliant exposition, it has since acquired a large

circle of enthusiastic supporters, which, said Dr. Strack four years ago, is still on the increase.

It is important, if we are really to estimate the nature of this view, to realize the form in which Wellhausen presents it, and the consequences which in his mind, it involves. I quote again from Strack. He says (p. 53), that "through Wellhausen and his following, the view has now acquired almost sole supremacy, that P in its oldest parts is only of Exilic origin, and, in the great mass of it, of post-Exilic origin, and that it is wholly untrustworthy for forming a judgment of Mosaic or even of pre-Exilic times. He calls it 'fiction,' 'downright fiction,' and says that it "has really succeeded in veiling the true time of its composition." The Tabernacle, he says, is not really the original, but the copy, of the Temple at Jerusalem; and another more temperate and reverent critic of the same school, Cornill, also maintains this view respecting the Tabernacle. It is the product, says Wellhausen, "of an imagination which does not simply paint a picture of the past, but calculates, and constructs, and produces nothing but dry schemes and skeletons." The incredible soberness of the narrative is, nevertheless, mere imagination; and so on. Strack observes that

this contention, "that the Tabernacle, with the innumerable particulars that are given us about its construction, relating to its materials, its measurements, its ornaments, can be due entirely to the imagination of the author of P, and that the very names and numbers, if they do not also occur in J E come from the same imaginative source, requires from the reader a considerable exercise of belief in psychological improbabilities." Yet Dr. Driver, though in this and other subjects he softens Wellhausen, gives a substantial adherence to his view by saying that in this and other points "there is a good deal in P which cannot be regarded as historical" ("Introduction," 6th edit., p. 128 n.), or, in plain language, matter of fact. Strack adds that he does not know of any satisfactory attempt to explain away the moral offensiveness of alleging the introduction of such deliberate untruths through Ezra. It cannot, he thinks, be denied that there are historical, geographical, and similar errors in the books of the Old and New Testaments, as in the chronology of the Books of the Kings; but avowed or implied charges of deliberate misrepresentation of facts are, he says, to be decidedly repelled.

However, he adds, the state of the scientific

struggle on this subject is, at the present day, "of so serious a character that the question whether Moses wrote anything, or how much, of the Pentateuch must for the time be regarded as a secondary matter." The point at issue now is "whether P, combined with the other documentary sources of the Pentateuch, does, or does not, afford a substantially true picture of the time of Moses, and whether P is previous to the Exile, or after it." He himself distinctly opposes the view of Wellhausen, as also did Dillmann. He points to such facts as that Egypt had from ancient times a numerous and influential caste of priests in various orders, and says it would be only natural that Israel should similarly, at an early date, have had an organized priesthood, and could not have waited for eight centuries without a written priestly law. Further, he observes that, in order to bring the Old Testament books into harmony with this new construction of history, they have to be violently handled, both critically and exegetically, and that the older historical books afford frequent evidence of matters in P which were known to them; also that P contains many laws which in the Exile, or after it, would be aimless or impracticable, while much is missed of which

the omission in a post-Exilic book would be incomprehensible. Strack also strongly opposes the view that Deuteronomy was composed in the days of Josiah. On the whole, he concludes that "the various sources probably existed for a considerable time independently, side by side; that in copying them archaisms would naturally disappear, and additions would readily be made in the historical, and particularly in the legislative, portions. Consequently the time of the composition of the various documents cannot well be defined, even approximately, but at present their age is generally estimated much too low."

Now, I am not adducing these differences for the purpose of throwing any general discredit on criticism. It is inevitable in such a science, especially when pursued so recklessly as I must needs say it is in Germany, that great differences should arise in the course of its development. The conclusion to which I would point, and which seems to me unavoidable, is that, in matters of the utmost consequence to our view of the Old Testament, no settled results can be said to have been yet attained on purely critical grounds. When we are told by a great scholar, writing in the purely objective spirit and method of Strack, that

the main question now at issue is whether we can derive from the principal documents of the Pentateuch any true picture whatever of the age of Moses, we are obliged to conclude that criticism, standing by itself, is entirely at fault in its investigations. English books, therefore, which talk of the ascertained results of criticism, without drawing adequate attention to those which are not ascertained, are under a mistake ; and are, however well intentioned their authors may be, misleading their readers. It may be that the majority of critics are right in analyzing the Pentateuch into five or six documents, as there is a large preponderance of opinion in favour of such analysis ; but as to the conclusions to be drawn from that subdivision there is at present a vehement dispute ; and some of the consequences which that dispute involves will be the subject of my second lecture.

LECTURE II

THE result of the evidence brought before you in the last Lecture was to show that there is a great division between two schools of critics on a cardinal point of historical fact. There are, in Dr. Strack's words, "substantial differences" still subsisting between them as to the relative and absolute age of the various documents out of which they believe the Pentateuch to have been compiled, and these differences involve grave consequences of historical interpretation. The point on which they are agreed is simply that the Pentateuch is compiled from those documents. Even this, indeed, still finds stout opposers. The late Dr. W. H. Green, once the Chairman of the American Company for the Revision of the Authorized Version of the Old Testament, strenuously opposed, to the last, what he called the divisive hypothesis; and only the year before last an eminent French critic, M. Halévy, writing, as he says, in complete indifference as to the date of the Old

Testament books, nevertheless says * that "the documentary hypothesis, by its violent and arbitrary expedients, makes of Genesis an exceptional and isolated composition; whereas the theory of the unity of its authorship brings it within the family of similar works in Semitic antiquity, and leaves everything in its place, without having recourse to various rehandlings and re-editings." I would only myself venture to say that the theory seems to me discredited by the excessive minuteness with which the division of documents is supposed to be carried out. When verses are split up into halves and thirds, and the different small sentences, or parts of sentences, or even words, are assigned to different documents, we seem to be at least in a literary atmosphere of which there is no other experience, certainly not at that date. The observation of Dean Milman † seems very forcible: "That any critical microscope, in the nineteenth century, can be so exquisite and so powerful as to dissect the whole with perfect nicety, to decompose it, and assign each separate paragraph to its special origin in three, four, or five, or more independent documents, each of

* "Recherches Bibliques," vol. ii. p. 182.

† "History of the Jews," 4th edit., Preface, p. xxiii.

which has contributed its part, this seems to me a task which no mastery of the Hebrew language, with all its kindred tongues, no discernment, however fine and discriminating, can achieve."

However, what I am endeavouring to do here is to take, as far as possible, what may be alleged to be the accepted results of criticism, and to see to what they point. Let me proceed, therefore, to ask a further important question, of which very little notice seems to be taken in most of the accounts of critical results. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that, as Dillmann puts it, the Elohist Narrative wrote his document in the first half of the ninth century; that J, or the Prophetic Narrative, composed his document about the middle of the next century; that Deuteronomy, in its present form, was produced not long before the eighteenth year of Josiah, or about 625 B.C.; and that P, or the Priest Code, was produced about the year 800. The question must surely present itself, On what were these various writings based? It is urged, by writers like Professor G. A. Smith and Mr. Ottley, that, in the words of the latter's preface, "it is well to recognize the fact that the patriarchal period is described to us in narratives which were compiled in their

present form about a thousand years later than the events they describe," and of which therefore, as Professor G. A. Smith observes, "it is simply impossible for us at this time of day to establish the accuracy." But because these supposed documents may have been *compiled*, in their present form, at the dates mentioned, does it follow that they were *composed* then, and that no older sources lay behind them?

It is instructive to listen on this point to the statements of Dillmann, in that classical discussion of the origin of the Pentateuch to which I have referred. He speaks (p. 614) of the conviction of the author of Deuteronomy that he was "reasserting the ancient Mosaic law, and unfolding to his time the most original spirit of the institutions of Moses. But he would not," says Dillmann, "have been able to assert this claim unless he had been conscious of having drawn the matter of his ordinances and laws out of the oldest codices then received as Mosaic; and the priest Hilkiyah . . . could not have recognized the Book of the Law in Deuteronomy as the Book of Moses, and assisted to bring about its recognition, unless he had been of the same conviction. We at the present day," he continues, "have no ground for doubting this conviction of him and his contemporaries. Quite the contrary. Where

we can test his proceeding, by the older books which still remain to us, the conscientiousness is evident with which he acted in the reproduction of the ancient law ; and this raises a favourable presumption for those parts of his ordinances and laws which we cannot similarly check." In other words, in Dillmann's view, Deuteronomy was put into its present form in the time of Josiah, but the material which is embodied in it is Mosaic, and we have every reason to trust the faithfulness of the author in reproducing the authorities on which he relied. Again, of the Elohist author (p. 619) he says : " Without doubt the author made use for his work of written sources, of which at that time, beyond question, many existed. The collection of laws in Exod. xx.-xxiii. was not composed by him, but incorporated with his work, and the fact that his language often recalls that of this codex may be explained by his having so often read it. Other written materials, of the same character, are the list of stations in the wilderness, and various songs, particularly the Book of the Wars of Jehovah, which may have been the first source of his narrative of the wars. The statement in Exod. xvii. 14, " The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua," may be

regarded as evidence of the same fact, and so may the historical material of Gen. xiv." Dillmann adds, indeed, that the author would have drawn most of his material from oral tradition, which, having in substance assumed a fixed form much earlier, still flowed in a full and living stream at this author's time ; and it is well known how tenacious such oral tradition may be in the East. The latter observation, however, is a mere opinion ; but there is, it will be seen, in Dillmann's view, distinct evidence that the writer in question, whoever he was, was able to use, and did use, written documents.

So, again, with respect to the Jehovistic writer, Dillmann says (p. 628) that he must have had, not only the written sources of the Elohist writer before him, but others. Again, discussing (p. 631) the argument that the Jehovistic writer is older than the Elohist, and not, as Dillmann says, later, he observes that the evidence does not prove that J is older than E, but only that for the time from Moses to Joshua he was able to use other and in some way better sources. Once more, with respect to the Priest Codex, Dillmann says (p. 665) that valuable sources were at the writer's disposal respecting the relations of the nations, as in the tenth and thirty-sixth chapters of Genesis ; and the tenth

chapter of Genesis affords us, as other evidence shows, the oldest accounts respecting the circle of nations there mentioned. Generally, with respect to the date at which Israelitish literature commenced, he says (p. 644) that the suggestion that it began in the eighth century is contradicted by the existence of many remains of older writings. Various reasons, and the testimony of Deuteronomy, point much rather to the early centuries of the occupation of Canaan, to the time of Samuel at the latest. The general movement of the Jewish nation, from Saul's and David's times onwards, presupposes, he says, that the Law of Jehovah had already exerted an educating effect upon them. With other ancient people it was the priests who originally concerned themselves in collecting the various ordinances promulgated in the Name of God; and there is still less reason to doubt that in such circles matters relating to the priest's duties and relations were handed down in short rules, either oral or in writing.

Observations of this nature, which are quite in the character of Dillmann's strong sense and historical capacity, take us back altogether behind the documents which, for the purpose of argument, we are assuming to exist. There is a memorable passage in Dr. Driver's discussion of

the date of the Prophetic Narrative of the Hexateuch which deserves attentive consideration in this connection. "The *terminus ad quem*," he says (p. 123, 6th edit.), for the date of J and E (that is, the latest date to which they can be assigned) is fixed by the consideration that they must be earlier than Amos and Hosea. "But," he proceeds, "the *terminus a quo*" (that is, the earliest date) "is more difficult to fix with confidence; in fact, conclusive criteria fail us. We can only," he says, "argue upon grounds of probability derived from our view of the progress of the art of writing, or of literary composition, or of the rise and growth of the prophetic tone and feeling in ancient Israel, or of the periods at which the traditions contained in the narrative might have taken shape, or of the probability that they would have been written down before the impetus given to culture by the monarchy had taken effect, and similar considerations, for estimating most of which, though plausible arguments, on one side or the other, may be advanced, a standard on which we can confidently rely scarcely admits of being fixed. Nor does the language of J and E bring us to any more definite conclusion. Both belong to the golden period of Hebrew literature. They resemble the best parts of Judges and Samuel

(much of which cannot be greatly later than David's own time); but whether they are actually earlier or later than these, the language and style do not enable us to say. . . . All things considered," he concludes, "both J and E may be assigned with the greatest probability to the early centuries of the Monarchy."

There could not be a more candid acknowledgment of the entire absence of any real grounds for the conclusion which is reached. Every reason alleged is hypothetical. All is a question of "our view" of such hypothetical matters as the period at which the traditions contained in the narrative "might have" taken shape, or of "our view," again, of the progress of the art of writing. There remains the supremely important fact, to which Dillmann draws attention, that the Pentateuch evidently quotes written sources which are at least as old as the age of Moses. If so, in estimating the historical value of the narratives of the Exodus, or of the Patriarchs, the important question becomes, not what is the date of those supposed documents of which the Pentateuch is now composed, but what was the date and the value of the ancient written sources which are employed in those documents themselves? It is entirely begging the question, and throwing an illusion over us,

to talk as if our authority for the ancient narratives of the Pentateuch were no earlier than the literary documents of which it is composed. The real question is, From what were they themselves compiled, and have we any reason to doubt that they have preserved to us faithful records of documents older than themselves? *Primâ facie*, the writers were honest men. We need not, at present, put their value higher than that; though, as I will point out in the third lecture, we may well be prepared, and ought to be prepared, to say more of them than this. But, at all events, in these documents we have records of older documents, and no one is in a position to say, either that many of those older documents are not contemporaneous with the events they narrate, or that they are not trustworthy. There are distinct statements, for example in the Pentateuch, that the records of certain events were expressly written by Moses. It is suggested, by what seems a strange want of logical force, that because it is distinctly said that Moses wrote certain parts of the work, we may assume that he did not write the rest. I submit that it is a much more reasonable conclusion that if he did write some parts of the Pentateuch, such as the passages referred to by Dillmann in Exodus, it is clear that he might

have written more, and that we have to deal with the distinct possibility that, as Milman, I think, has said, we have in the Pentateuch "the very note-book of Moses." At all events, by considerations such as these we are taken back far behind the documents of which so much is now made. Let them be, for the sake of argument, the compositions out of which the existing Pentateuch was compiled; but what were the materials out of which they were composed? Obviously, in some cases, written materials; and, if so, we have in our hands written evidence of a far earlier date than the current theories assume.

Considerations such as these have worked out, in Dillmann's hands, to very remarkable results. He was Professor of Theology in Berlin, and after his death the manuscript was found among his papers of the last series of lectures which he delivered in 1894, and these were published a year later under the editorship of Professor Kittel, himself a critic of great authority belonging to Dillmann's school. These lectures are remarkable, in the first place, for the decisiveness with which they reject the views of Wellhausen's school. In his introductory sketch of the history of the science he says that, according to his conviction, the views of that school are

entirely inconsistent with the statements of the Old Testament (p. 24). There has been no more able criticism of that view in this country than the work of Professor James Robertson, of Glasgow, entitled "The Early Religion of Israel as set forth by Biblical Writers and by Modern Critical Historians," and of this work Dillmann says (p. 59) that "reference should be made, in respect to the inner contradictions and impossibilities of the theory in question, to the work of James Robertson, of Glasgow." "It is a book," he says, "which is no doubt somewhat general in its treatment of the subject, but it hits the nail on the head." That book is treated with comparatively little attention by the so-called critical school in this country, and it should be more widely known that by a critic of such unquestioned authority in Germany as Dillmann it was regarded as hitting the nail on the head in respect to the prevalent theories. It is a book of the greatest interest, and should be in the hands of every one who deals with this question. In fact, as was said in the review of Dillmann's lectures in *Schürer's Journal*, he is in even angry opposition to the new school.

But it is evident that one reason for the earnestness of his opposition is that he is profoundly convinced of the internal verisimilitude of

the old Jewish and Christian view of the course of the Old Testament revelation. His lectures discuss in detail the main truths revealed in the Old Testament ; but the first part of them is a historical portion, in which he reviews, in considerable detail, the whole course of the sacred History as there narrated ; and it is most striking to find that he fully recognizes the substantial truth of the ancient traditions, and of the course of the Jewish dispensation as hitherto understood. He endeavours to combine, in fact, in a manner which may be to some extent inconsistent, but which is all the more remarkable and instructive, his critical view of the construction of the Pentateuch with a firm belief in its substantial trustworthiness. A characteristic illustration of his point of view is afforded by his opening remarks on the religion of the Patriarchs and its development. He allows, indeed, that the original narratives have been transformed and idealized ; but nevertheless he says (p. 82), "that in connection with the wanderings and the formation of nations which are associated with the names of Abraham, Lot, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, there was completed the formation of a higher and purer faith in God within the youngest of these families, the centre of them all, the family of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob ; and the whole narrative of Genesis has for its main object to exhibit this development of religion. If it be maintained that this representation rests upon a mere idealistic conception of later writers, and is not to be treated as historical, it must be replied that not merely Genesis, but the whole of the Old Testament speaks of a covenant, of a special relation in which God stood with the Fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; that Moses himself based his own work on this connection with the God of the Fathers ; . . . and that, consequently, even if the Book of Genesis had said nothing about it, we should be obliged to postulate the acquaintance of these Fathers with the living God, and their possession of a higher faith in God." But it has, he says, already been shown by him that "such a higher belief in God, such a belief as rises above heathenism, cannot be formed without revelation, and such revelation cannot be brought about without specially gifted men, of a lofty religious spirit, to be its bearers ;" and that, consequently, we should be obliged to postulate the existence of such "men of revelation," as he calls them, before that time, even if no names of them had been handed down, as they have been in the case of Abraham and his successors. "We may," he says, "readily admit that the names so

handed down were only the most important and the weightiest, while others, of a secondary character, have fallen into the background in the tradition, and gradually disappeared. Accordingly, on grounds of reason and fact, the representation given in Genesis of the course of the matter justifies itself, at any rate on the whole and in the main; and with this admission we have enough for our purpose."

Consequently he considers (p. 87) that Abraham, while eminent in many ways, is particularly distinguished in this—that even before his reception of special Divine revelations he possessed a simpler and more spiritual conception of God, and that this was deepened in him by the various experiences of his life. It is to this original disposition of Abraham that the special Divine revelation now attaches itself. According to the conception of the narrator in Genesis, Abraham's separation from his surroundings, his introduction to Canaan and its stranger population, were Divine means for producing and maintaining in him a loftier religious feeling and knowledge of God. "It was profoundly providential that, precisely at the time when the last remains of a simple faith in God were disappearing in heathen darkness, that special and saving witness from God commences which the Bible

comprehensively designates as 'the Covenant with our Fathers.'" Genesis, especially, in the narrative of the prophetic writers, draws a comprehensive picture of this special Divine process of revelation to Abraham and his descendants; and this narration expresses "the perfectly just conclusion, as the conviction of such writers, that the preservation of a simpler kind of knowledge and fear of God, among the Patriarchs of Terah's line, arose, and could only arise, out of the special and extraordinary working of God upon peculiarly qualified men, who were the leaders and heads of this house and family."

I quote these passages in order to illustrate how fully, in spite of the critical qualifications with which he accompanies his admissions, Dillmann accepts the historical truth of the narratives in Genesis respecting the Patriarchs, and how deeply he feels them to be connected with a true apprehension of the whole course of Divine revelation. He says at the opening of this part of his book (p. 75), in words which cannot be too earnestly taken to heart, in respect to our own position in this controversy, that his whole attention is directed "towards strict history; that is, to the investigation of the certain and indubitable facts through which the kingdom of God upon earth was founded and developed."

“It is,” he says, “firm, sure, historical ground that we must have beneath our feet if, in the present day, we are to meet, with any prospect of success, the disbelief which is spreading more and more widely amidst the scientifically educated classes in respect to the revealed character of the Biblical religion.”

Let me quote one other passage which affords a striking illustration of his keen sense of the historic truth of the narrative. He is referring to the scenes of violence and crime described in the Book of Judges, and says (p. 138) that “against such descriptions we must set the noble sketch of honourable and pious manners in Bethlehem-Judah, afforded, for instance, by the Book of Ruth, or the charming picture of the family of Elkanah and Hannah in Rama. Unless the religion of Jehovah had been exerting its quiet and moralizing influence on many families of the people; unless many men, both in the circles of the priests and at the central Sanctuary, had cherished the higher principles of the teaching of Moses; and unless, so far as in them lay, they had also worked for the maintenance of the Mosaic institutions, the new religious movement at the end of this period, and at the beginning of the period of the Kings, and the fruits of the Mosaic spirit which then burst forth, would not

be conceivable. We may also boldly maintain that a considerable part of the Mosaic institution obtained a firm development in these centuries under the guidance of the priests of the central Sanctuary, especially the system of sacrifices, the popular feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, the oldest basis of the Law and the Covenant. Although every neighbourhood and every tribe still went too much its own way, and though in all such matters extraordinary freedom prevailed, . . . nevertheless the endeavour to regulate these things more and more according to the institutions of Moses must have lived on."

It will be seen from such extracts that Dillmann's acceptance of the critical analysis of the Pentateuch is combined with a firm belief in the substantial truth of the narratives which are embodied in it. We may think it difficult to maintain this combination. We may question whether such an artificial construction as he describes in the Pentateuch, combined with the idealizing process he recognizes in some of the narratives, affords that firm historical ground which he nevertheless believes himself to possess; and we may consider that, as I will show in the next Lecture, we need, and we possess, higher guarantees for the historical truth of those narratives than such as even he allows. But,

at least, we have this important fact before us, that one of the great leaders of the critical movement in Germany—not a few people think the ablest and most learned man among them—remained, nevertheless, convinced that those ancient narratives contain, in the main, true history, and that they afford the only adequate explanation of the subsequent religious history of the Jews. To him Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and his successors, are not the dim shadows which are all that is allowed to us by such writers as Professor Adam Smith, but are living “men of revelation,” capable of receiving special revelations from God, and handing on those revelations faithfully to their descendants.

I would submit that this is, after all, the point we chiefly have to keep in view in these controversies. It cannot well be supposed that any discoveries will enable us to ascertain the exact history of the Old Testament books. It is scarcely to be conceived that any criticism, however painstaking and minute, can take us back to the exact original sources or authors, through the lapse of so many centuries. As Dean Milman and Professor Margoliouth have urged, the vicissitudes of the Hebrew text are comparatively little known to us, and it is

only reasonable to suppose that it has undergone many modifications since it was first committed to writing; and only the other day you may have noticed in the newspapers an account of the discovery of a Hebrew papyrus which appears to contain fragments of a text exhibiting important variations from the existing one. A very remarkable paper by Professor Margoliouth will be found in a small volume called "Criticism Criticised," consisting of addresses given at Oxford last February, in which this point is urged with all his learning and force. The real history of the Elohist redaction of some of the Psalms, for instance, is hardly known at all; but it is clear that at certain periods the text of the sacred books was modified, in deference to certain rules laid down by the Scribes. The only thing we can hope to attain is a reasonable assurance that the narratives, as they have come down to us, are substantially to be trusted.

It is notorious that a great philosophical bias has influenced many of the leading scholars of Germany in throwing doubts upon that trustworthiness, and they have expended infinite ingenuity and ability in endeavouring to give such a colour to the narratives as would bring them into conformity with the principles of that philosophy. But you have, on the other side,

the immemorial convictions of the Jewish and Christian Church as to the course of the sacred history, and you find, as I have shown, a great critical scholar like Dillmann impressed with its substantial truth. If we can be sure of that substantial truth, we have what we chiefly want for practical purposes, and it is difficult to see how, except by some fresh miracle, we could ever get more. I hope that the considerations which have been brought before you in this Lecture have sufficed to show that in the generally accepted conclusions of criticism, up to the present time, as recited by scholars like Strack, and illustrated by a critic like Dillmann, there is no sufficient reason to prevent our retaining that belief. But there are other considerations which I think will afford a confirmation of it, and will illustrate the Divine authority upon which it rests; and these I propose to bring before you in the concluding Lecture.

LECTURE III

LET me recall the point to which we are brought by the argument of the two previous lectures. We have seen that the chief question at issue in the critical controversy respecting the Old Testament is that of the truth of the account of the Patriarchal and Mosaic times which is conveyed by the Pentateuch, and that this involves the question of the trustworthiness of the documents out of which the Pentateuch has been composed. The question of the analysis of the Pentateuch, respecting which there is a fairly general agreement among critics, both at home and abroad, is not of primary importance for this purpose. We are carried back by those alleged documents behind themselves, and have to ask whether the written sources from which, in great measure at least, they must have been derived, are trustworthy. We have seen that it is possible for a great critic to maintain the main features of the generally received analysis, and, at the same time, to reject entirely the modern

view which places the Law after the Prophets, and to believe and assert the truth, in all important points, of the traditional view of the Jewish religion and history. At this point further material for consideration, of the highest value, is afforded by the archaeological investigations of the last fifty years. The excavations in Asia and Egypt, combined with the decipherment of the innumerable inscribed records which those excavations have brought to light, have thrown a new illumination upon the ancient history of the Egyptians and Babylonians, and upon the circumstances of that ancient world amidst which, from first to last, the history of the Jews was passed. It must be asked, with the utmost eagerness, whether the indubitable facts, thus recorded in almost imperishable stone, cast any light upon the Hebrew Scriptures, and either confirm or invalidate their narratives.

One broad fact should be noticed at the outset, to the importance of which due attention is not always given. That fact is that, at all events, nothing has been discovered to conflict with the truth of those Scriptures. It may be, as was mentioned in the last lecture, that on some points of chronology the Assyrian and Babylonian annals conflict with the historical books of the Old Testament, and that in some

details of that kind we must acknowledge inaccuracies, if not in the Scriptural records, at least in their present text. There are some points of uncertainty also, which cannot yet be regarded as settled, respecting the Book of Daniel. But, speaking generally, the results of archæological investigation have not brought to light any inconsistency in the Hebrew Scriptures with other historical evidence. It ought to be carefully considered how much is involved in this result. Before the recent discoveries, the Hebrew Scriptures were the only source generally accessible from which our view of a great part of the ancient world could be gained; and it is striking to reflect that for centuries, during which we had no direct knowledge whatever of ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian life, the Old Testament afforded some conception of all that momentous history to the Christian world. Nothing is more extraordinary than this characteristic of the Bible. It is the one book which brings us into contact with every form of civilization which we know to have existed, with man in his primitive state, with the nomadic life of Patriarchal times, with the venerable civilization of Egypt and the empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia; and, finally, with the empires and the civilization of Greece

and Rome. The children in every Sunday school in which the Bible is studied have thus been brought, to some extent, into touch with every form of civilized life in the ancient world ; and, if I remember aright, this circumstance was alleged, and very justly alleged, by the late Professor Huxley, as a sufficient reason why, independently of any question of religious belief, the reading of the Bible should be preserved in our schools. For the mere purpose of giving people an idea of the general course of the history of the ancient world, there is no book which can compare with the Bible.

I will presently refer more particularly to the question of inspiration ; but so far as it involves penetrating to the centre of things, and preserving the great elements of truth, there is no greater evidence of inspiration than that a succession of books should have been written, dealing with a period of about two thousand years, from the early records in Genesis to the books of the New Testament, in which the purpose should be consistently pursued, of giving an account of the history of the one nation which has lived through all those forms of civilization, and at last has given birth to the religion which is that of the leading races in the world's history at the present day. What mere human eye

could ever have discerned in the days of the Patriarchs, or of the Exodus, that the acts of Abraham, or even of Moses, were worthy of being picked out of all the surrounding history, and recorded in a continuous narrative for subsequent generations? But the Jewish history being thus brought into contact with every form of civilization, it follows that by every excavation, and every decipherment of the records of those various civilizations and empires, it is put to the test of comparison with undoubtedly authentic documents. It is, therefore, an extraordinary testimony to the truth of the Jewish records that they have stood that test, without any material inconsistency being revealed with the facts thus brought to light. More than this, the Jewish history and the records of Jewish prophecy are found to fit in, in a singularly natural manner, with the circumstances and the facts established by the ancient monuments. Few general considerations are of more value, or more fitted to impress us than this broad fact.

But we may carry the same argument with great force into details. Until a very recent period the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, giving the account of Abraham's encounter with the four kings from the East who invaded the

Jordan valley, was out of relation to any facts that we knew. It stood isolated, not merely from the rest of the Book of Genesis, but from all other knowledge that we possessed. Now, however—to quote the account of the matter by Dr. Driver, who is certainly not disposed, in his essay on Hebrew authority and archæology, to exaggerate the corroboration which the monuments have contributed to the Scriptural narratives—those monuments “have brought the four kings from the East, who were previously but mere names, into the light of history, and have told us many interesting particulars about three of them, especially about Amraphel (Khammu-rabi). They have shown further that these four kings were really contemporaries, and that at least three of them really ruled over the very countries which they are said in Gen. xiv. to have ruled—two facts which may be taken as an indication that the author of the narrative derived his names from some trustworthy source, in which (probably) they were mentioned together. And they have shown, thirdly, that several rulers of Babylonia, as well as one Elamite ruler (Kudurmabuk), claimed authority over the ‘West land,’ and that an invasion of Palestine and neighbouring countries on the part at least of a ruler of Babylon (Sargon) was,

in the abstract, within the military possibilities of the age" (p. 44). In other words, the monuments have shown that this fourteenth chapter of Genesis, not only in its general character, but in some of its particular circumstances, is true, not merely to the facts, but to the very names of that remote age. Dr. Driver, indeed, thinks it worth while to observe further that "the monuments have not shown more than this. They make no mention of the *particular* expedition into Canaan which forms the principal subject of Gen. xiv., and they name neither Abraham, nor Melchisedec, nor any one of the five Canaanite kings (verse 2) against whom the expedition was directed." Of course, if they make no mention of this particular expedition, they would not mention the kings against whom it was directed; but no one can reasonably expect the monuments to mention every fact recorded in every narrative, and there is no reason to suppose that Abraham was at that day a person of sufficient consequence for monuments relating to the great Eastern kings to have necessarily mentioned him. It is enough that, so far as the monuments go, the general historical verisimilitude of the description in Gen. xiv. is confirmed, and that one of the most obscure chapters of Genesis is thus shown

to be at least in harmony with the historical circumstances of the time.

Take, again, the the history of Joseph. Dr. Driver minimizes, again, so far as he can, the value of archæological testimony to its historical truth. Yet he acknowledges (p. 67) that “the *general* course of Joseph’s career (apart from particular details) cannot be said to be improbable; the Egyptian monuments supply examples of foreigners rising to positions of distinction at the court of the Pharaohs; while, as has been just remarked, the general congruity of the narrative with what is known independently of ancient Egyptian institutions may be regarded as supporting the opinion that the traditions underlying it are based upon a foundation of fact. On the whole, therefore, it may be said that, while not definite enough to be conclusive, and affording no guarantee for the historical character of particular details, the Egyptian inscriptions tend to show that the Biblical traditions respecting Joseph embody a genuine nucleus of historical fact.” This is, surely, to put the matter very weakly. Here, on the one hand, is a brief and vivid narrative of a remarkable career in Egypt, and, on the other, a mass of monumental information respecting the life and institutions of ancient Egypt; and it is found that the

narrative is in congruity with that information, and that there is no point in which it is contradicted by it.

This is the sort of support which the monuments afford throughout to the ancient Hebrew narratives. They prove, to say the least, in Dr. Driver's language, that they are in congruity with the facts and circumstances of the times to which they relate; and that is, at any rate, a very important element in establishing the trustworthiness of the record. But there is one other general fact which the monuments have established, which is perhaps of more importance than anything else; namely, the fact that writing was in general and systematic use, not only in the time of Moses, but long before the time of Abraham. Those whose memories go back long enough to remember the discussions of a generation ago will best be in a position to appreciate the importance of this fact. The first volume of the "Speaker's Commentary" was published in 1871, and at the outset of Bishop Harold Browne's Introduction to the Book of Genesis he observes, that "the first question which naturally occurs is, was the art of writing known as early as Moses? and, especially, was it known to the Egyptians and the Jews?" He refers to Ewald on the subject, and we find

Ewald saying ("English Translation," vol. i. p. 47) that "the accounts of the Patriarchal time contain no sure traces of the use of writing in that early age." He says, however (p. 49), that "the two Tables of the Law are an incontrovertible proof that there was writing in the age of Moses; and when writing once existed, the greatness of the Mosaic age was exciting enough speedily to develop the germs of historical composition." We now know not only that whole libraries of inscriptions existed in the time of Abraham, but that an elaborate code of laws was enacted by his contemporary Kham-murabi,* and that long before Moses there was an active correspondence between Egypt and Palestine.

This striking light has been thrown upon the circumstances of the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages within the last thirty years; and its importance consists in the fact that it has entirely altered the presumption respecting the trustworthiness of the accounts which have been handed down to us of events and persons in those distant ages.

* See the January number of the *Oxford Journal of Theological Studies* for a striking account of this elaborate code. The code itself has since been published by the Rev. C. H. W. Johns, lecturer in Assyriology at Queen's College, Cambridge, under the title of "The Oldest Code of Laws in the World" (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark).

When, as in Ewald's time, it was believed that writing was not known in Patriarchal days, it followed that nothing but oral traditions of those times could have been handed down to posterity. But now that we know that writing was common, that the ordinary transactions of life were recorded on tablets so permanent in character that they have survived at least four or five thousands of years, the presumption is the other way, and renders it probable that circumstances and events deemed of importance would be consigned to a permanent record. There is therefore, at all events, nothing unlikely in the supposition that the earliest compilers of the Pentateuch had ancient records before them, and such a supposition must appear the most probable explanation of the preservation of such details as have been noticed in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis.* It can no longer be questioned that the records, from which the narratives in Genesis were taken, might go back to a period coëval with the events themselves in the lives of the Patriarchs. We have, in other words, unquestionable evidence that all the necessary conditions existed for the

* See the remarkable work of Colonel Conder, R.E., published since the delivery of these lectures, entitled "The First Bible," especially the chapter, "The Bible on Bricks."

preservation and handing down of trustworthy records ; and when we further bear in mind that, as has already been said, no monumental evidence has been discovered which is in conflict with those narratives, the records may fairly claim to be taken and examined as *primâ facie* trustworthy witnesses.

Let us now advance a step further, and consider whether there is anything in the records themselves to give a more than ordinary value to their testimony. Here we enter upon a class of considerations which are strictly in the nature of internal evidence, and which require, for their due appreciation, something of a higher order than either the Lower or the Higher Criticism. There are certain parts of the Book of Genesis, and certain statements in it, which afford us the means of judging whether we are dealing with writings of more than ordinary truth and insight. If we find that we are, then it is only reasonable to extend to the rest of the narrative in which these are embodied the confidence which they evoke from us. Now the mere fact that the Pentateuch, and the Book of Genesis in particular, should occupy itself with the history of the family of Abraham, out of all the nations of the earth, and that it should state, in doing so, the belief that in him and his family

all nations of the earth should be blessed, is alone sufficient to vindicate for it a more than human prescience, and, consequently, a more than human authority. But the most important of all passages of this character are those early chapters of Genesis which give an account of the creation and the fall of man. There is nothing more extraordinary in the whole of human literature than the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. That it corresponds in details with the results of modern science is denied by some critics ; but, at all events, a former distinguished President of the British Association stated, not long ago, that "it would not be easy, even now, to construct a statement of the development of the world in popular terms so concise and so accurate" (*Expositor*, February, 1894, p. 119). Now, whether this remarkable statement can be sustained or not, let us ask, to put the question at its lowest, whether there is any other account of the origin and evolution of the world, of which it would ever have been possible for any scientific authority in Sir William Dawson's position to make anything approaching to such a statement. In the controversies which have been raised of late, respecting the accuracy of the first chapter of Genesis in details, the really wonderful thing is that there should be any

document of the age of the first chapter of Genesis, even if it be assigned to the date assumed by Wellhausen, in respect to which the question of its scientific truth should be merely one of details. Its marvellous revelation of God, and of His relation to Nature and to Man, is unique in its profound truth. The description which the chapter gives of man's place and function on the earth is not less striking and momentous. It states that God commanded man "to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it, and to have dominion" over everything that moved upon it. Lord Bacon discerned in these words the charter of the human race and the cardinal principle of science, entitling his great work "*De Interpretatione Naturæ, et Regno Hominis*" ("Concerning the Interpretation of Nature and the *Dominion of Man*"). Men have always been under a temptation to escape from this commission, and to seek happiness in some speculative or purely religious occupation. But the knowledge and the welfare of mankind have progressed in proportion as they have been content with this simple duty; and the races which, at the present day, hold the leading place in the world, are those who are best fulfilling this primary charter of mankind. No philosopher,

so far as I know, ever laid down such a definition of man's place and function except Lord Bacon, under the guidance of this chapter; and in this insight, at the very outset, into human powers and duties, we appear to have a striking illustration of the Divine inspiration vouchsafed to the sacred writers.

It is, indeed, now commonly said by critics of various schools that this wonderful chapter is derived from Babylonian sources. I am at a loss to know on what reasonable ground this can be so positively asserted. There have been found in the Babylonian records accounts of the history of the Creation which present strong resemblances to the narrative of Genesis, though they are conceived, as Professor Driver says, in a spirit of "exuberant and grotesque polytheism" ("Hebr. Authority," etc., p. 14). But in the mere fact that there is this resemblance between the two, where is the evidence that the Babylonian myth preceded the simple and profound narrative of the Book of Genesis? The same may be said of the record of the Deluge. The Babylonian narratives on that subject are of great importance, as independent evidence of the prevalent belief that a great convulsion of the nature of the Deluge really occurred. It seems too much to say, as Dr. Driver does, that the substantial

identity of the two narratives is unquestionable ; but even if this were true, it affords no evidence whatever that the Hebrew narrative is dependent on the Babylonian ; instead of being a still more ancient record, of which the Babylonian is an expansion.* However, what we are concerned to observe for our present purpose is that, in intimate connection with all the Patriarchal records, we have statements respecting the origin of the world, the nature and the fall of man, and the course of future history, which indicate an insight and a foresight so amazing as to be superhuman. Is it not reasonable to suppose that we see in such records the unmistakable indications of a Divine voice and hand, indications which we cannot avoid extending to the other narratives of which they form an organic part ? To a great extent this is a matter of spiritual discernment, and so, it may be added, are, to a large extent, questions of criticism affecting the Psalms and the Prophets. If a man can regard the early chapters of Genesis as a mere adaptation, however admirable, of a Babylonian myth, he may

* A weighty argument to this effect will be found in the lecture by Professor Kittel, of Leipzig, on "The Babylonian Excavations and Early Bible History," of which a translation has just been published by the S.P.C.K.

feel under no requirement to put a very high value on the narratives by which they are accompanied. But if he regards them as independent embodiments of the profoundest truths respecting nature and human nature, he will look with a similar reverence at the whole book in which they are organically embodied.

But we are enabled, and we are bound as Christians, to take one further step in this argument. Have we any independent testimony to the inspired truth and authority of these early records? The Christian's answer must needs be that we have the clear and decided authority of our Lord Himself and of His Apostles. It has been already admitted that the expressions in the New Testament which speak of the works of Moses cannot fairly, of themselves, be pressed so far as to see in them a declaration that Moses was the author of the whole. But there is a point on which our Lord's testimony appears perfectly unquestionable, and incapable of being evaded—that, namely, of the inspired truth and Divine authority of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. There is no question, it should be observed, that when our Lord speaks of "the Scriptures" and "the Law" He is referring to the very same books as those which constitute the Old Testament in our present Bible. But

of those Scriptures, as we now have them, He spoke again and again as of impregnable truth and of absolute Divine authority. It is only necessary to remind you briefly of the nature of His language: "How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" He quoted passages from the early chapters of Genesis, including the account of the creation of man and woman; He referred expressly to Abraham as a historical and living person, to the history of Moses as recorded in the Book of Exodus; and to the history of David. He quoted passages from Deuteronomy, in His own temptation, as embodying the Will of God; and, after His Resurrection, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded" unto the two disciples "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." His testimony as to questions of human authorship may be too general to be decisive of critical questions; but His testimony as to the Divine authorship or authority of the Old Testament is overwhelming in its breadth and depth. I do not see how His repeated utterances on the subject can possibly be regarded as giving less than His express authority to the truth of the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms—in at least all their substantial elements. There is, moreover, one

point, not often noticed, to which attention has lately been drawn, and which would seem of great importance : Is the narrative of the Transfiguration true or not ? Was our Lord seen by the three disciples communing with Moses and Elias ? If He was, then He was in personal communication with the great prophet of whom He so often spoke, and his references to Moses have a peculiar weight and credibility.

But it is clear that He was followed in this view of the Divine authority and inspiration of the Old Testament by His Apostles. St. Peter's speeches in the Acts, St. Paul's speeches, and, in a peculiarly striking and touching manner, the speech of St. Stephen, rest absolutely on this belief. There may be inaccuracies of detail in St. Stephen's speech, but the whole argument of it, delivered on the verge of martyrdom and at the first great crisis in the Christian Church, depends upon the substantial truth of the traditional view of Jewish history, in the very points in which it is most directly contested by that school of critics to which I have referred. St. Paul's most characteristic arguments are based upon the history of Abraham, and upon the nature of the Law and its relation to the rest of the Jewish religion. In short, as Lord Hatherley showed in his remarkable little book

on "The Continuity of Scripture"—just republished, I am glad to say, by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—the writers of the New Testament bear witness to the truth of the Old Testament throughout its whole course. The case of the Epistle to the Hebrews is again peculiarly strong. The most momentous truths respecting the Office and the Sacrifice of our Lord are based upon illustrations derived from the ancient Tabernacle and the ancient Sacrifices; and that those Sacrifices should possess such a profound significance would be incomprehensible, if the appointment and regulation of them arose in the manner supposed by the critics we have been discussing.

We come, therefore, at last to the Divine authority of our Lord as the ultimate basis on which we rest our belief in the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures; and we cannot dispense with it. It is important to observe that from the earliest times the authority of those Scriptures would seem to have rested on a similar basis. Josephus has recorded for us the view of the Jews of his own day that their national records were attested by prophetic men; and it was not as fairly trustworthy historians, but as men endowed with a prophetic gift, that the Jews regarded the authors of their sacred

books. It is to be borne in mind that the New Testament is a clear witness, within historic times, to the operation of the Spirit of God in producing inspired records. We know at least this much about the nature of inspiration, that our Saviour distinctly told His apostles that the Spirit He would send them would guide them into all the truth, and would bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them. We have much need, at the present time, of bearing this in mind in respect to the authority of the Gospels themselves. They are too often quoted by scholars, and by divines of authority, as if their value was no more than that of a contemporary historian. The question is openly put whether the evidence of one or two Evangelists is sufficient to support an account of miraculous action. That question can only be raised upon the supposition that the authority of the Gospels is no more than that of any other contemporary narrator, or of a historian writing a generation after the events he describes. But the Christian Church has always believed that the authority of the Gospels is something different in kind from that of an ordinary historian, and vastly superior to it. The Church has always believed that the Spirit of God fulfilled our Lord's promise, that all

things should be brought back to the remembrance of His Apostles, whatsoever He had said unto them, and that He would guide their utterances.

In fact, if we are to accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, in the sense and the spirit in which our Lord regarded the Scriptures of the Old Testament, we must rest, in the last resort, upon a belief in their inspiration. We cannot properly, indeed, commence such an argument as it has been my duty to offer you with alleging the authority of our Lord, as affording such a proof of inspiration as to render it superfluous or improper to inquire critically into the facts respecting the sacred books. It is reasonable, for the purpose of defending our position before those who question it, that we should show, in the first instance, that the results of critical investigations respecting the origin of the books, as well as their internal character, are such as to render admissible the belief that their authors were not only honest historians, but inspired men. This preliminary proof has been, in outline, offered you. It has been shown that the generally accepted results of modern critical writers are in no way inconsistent with the supposition of the books of the Old Testament being compiled

from authentic sources ; and that, however the books may have been ultimately brought into their present form, they themselves contain evidences that they rest ultimately on earlier documents. It has been shown that the marvellous discoveries in archæology in recent years render it not only possible, but probable, that such records existed, and were preserved from the highest antiquity. We have seen that the contents of these ancient books contain marks of such profound spiritual and moral truth as to suggest more than a merely human source for them. It is thus shown to be in entire congruity with the facts presented by the documents themselves, and with the circumstances in which they were produced, that they should be fitting materials for the use of the Divine Spirit ; and we can then reasonably appeal to the witness of our Lord and His Apostles as giving the final stamp of Divine authority to the whole volume of the Old Testament Scriptures. Criticism will pursue its proper and useful task of ascertaining the text, and investigating the historical circumstances, of the sacred books ; but we may thankfully recognize that its investigations in modern times have brought nothing to light which is inconsistent with the ancient belief, in both the

Jewish and Christian Churches, in their historical truth and their Divine inspiration ; and we may confidently reaffirm our “unfeigned belief in all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.”

ON THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE *

THERE is no question of greater importance at issue in the present day than that of "The Authority of God's Word"—that is to say, of those Holy Scriptures which are constantly designated in our Prayer-book by that title, or by the fuller and more emphatic title of "God's Holy Word" or "God's Most Holy Word." The question is not simply that of its truth, but that of its authority. The two questions, indeed, are intimately bound up together, for if the Holy Scriptures be not true, they cannot be authoritative. But it is possible, and in the present day it is not uncommon, for persons to admit—I might almost say, to condescend to admit—the existence of profound truth in the Scriptures, while evidently not admitting that they are authoritative writings, to which we have to submit our judgment, and towards

* An address delivered at the Islington Clerical Meeting on January 13, 1903.

which our proper function is not that of judges, but of interpreters. The writings of a great poet or historian or philosopher may be recognized as containing profound truth without being recognized as authoritative. That is the position to which the history, the psalms, and the prophecies of the Bible are reduced by many modern writers, and even reverent modern writers. It is supposed, for instance, in one of the most popular books of the moment on the criticism of the Old Testament,* that nothing is lost if we are not able to be sure of more respecting the narratives of the Patriarchs "than that they contain a substratum of actual personal history." The sacred writers have "achieved the creation," we are told, "of types of character essentially historical," but their plain statements of fact cannot be treated as historical. "To the sacred authors of these 'stories,'" we are told, "we cannot refuse a license of dramatic and ethical expansion which we, more consciously, permit in our own preaching, and which every powerful preacher of the traditional school has fearlessly employed." But in this case their value is of the same kind as that of other great

* "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament." By Professor George Adam Smith, pp. 107, 108.

teachers and preachers, and we act as judges of the extent to which their teaching is to be acknowledged.

But the question which agitates most minds in the present day, and which has been of vital moment throughout the history of the Church, is not whether we have in our possession sources of moral and spiritual truth, but whether we possess authoritative sources. Is there an authority to which we may, and to which we must, look up as containing positive revelations of God Himself, of His will, and of His acts? The craving for such an authority is as intense now as it ever was. The fact that the Roman Church claims to exercise that authority invests her with an immense attraction; and if that attraction is to be effectually withstood, it is necessary to be able to offer men and women an equivalent authority. It is not enough to point them to the Bible, and to tell them that, although its statements are not literally or even historically true, yet, by processes of analysis and criticism, the highest spiritual and moral truths can be elicited from them. That is, in effect, to refer us ultimately to the oracles of our own spirits, and to leave us with nothing of the nature of a real authority which the ordinary Christian can trust. If—to take a

still stronger example—as some high authorities at our universities now say or imply, the Evangelists were liable to be mistaken as to the real nature of the events which they described as miracles, and as to the meaning of some of our Lord's sayings, then the Evangelists become historians out of whose narratives we may extract the truth by our critical judgment; but they cease to be authorities to whom our judgment must be submitted, and on whose guidance we may unhesitatingly rely.

The question, therefore, which has to be answered is whether the Scriptures are of this authoritative character, so that their statements and revelations impose themselves upon us as being the revelation and the word of God, as superior to our judgments, and requiring our submission. Now, I would submit that the only effectual way of answering this question is to appeal to the one authority which is by common consent supreme—I mean the authority of our Lord Himself. Amidst all the confusions of thought and belief among us, there is, happily, one principle which may be still assumed as allowed by all who profess and call themselves Christians, namely, that the authority of our blessed Lord is Divine and beyond appeal. In the Christian world there is one voice which no

one would presume to question, and that is the Voice of Christ. Difficult critical questions may be raised, here and there, respecting the text of the Gospels and the exact import of particular sayings of the Saviour; but if there be a point on which His voice and judgment have been clearly expressed, upon that point all Christians acknowledge that there is, or ought to be, an end of all strife. Amidst the perplexities of our times it is impossible to appreciate too highly, or to insist too strongly upon, this precious truth—that there is one authority in the Christian world which no one dares question, and that whatever that authority has decided is decided for us absolutely. But perhaps it is requisite, even in reference to this point, to insist on the fact that in accepting the authority of Christ we are bound to take the whole Christ—the whole of His authority and the whole of His teaching. Every one is ready to exclaim, in the words of the hymn—

“Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find :”

but they are not always conscious that what they want is not merely a certain part of Christ's teaching—the part which commends itself to them, the part they understand—but all that is in Christ, all His teaching, all His

revelation, all the principles that He exhibited in His Own life and inculcated by example and precept. In particular, if He lived in a certain relation to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, if He exhibited by word and by example what He regarded as their character and their value, then that view of the Scriptures, that relation to them, is a part of that which Christ ought to be to us—a part of that which we ought to find in Him, an essential part of that want which He supplies. Let us inquire, then, what was our Saviour's relation to the Scriptures, and what character did He attribute to them?

In answering this question let me guard against its being supposed that I would invoke our Lord's authority to settle, by the mere use of customary phrases, the minor questions of the structure and authorship of the books of the Old Testament. It would not be fair to press His use of such an expression as "the Law of Moses" as deciding the question whether Moses wrote the whole Law; any more than if a man uses the expression "the Psalms of David," he can be held to have implied that all the Psalms were written by David. Christ's authority, moreover, is too solemn and too sacred to be entangled unnecessarily in such questions of detail. But there is a broad question of

principle involved in His treatment of Scripture which is quite independent of these critical details, and is at the same time inseparable from the character of His teaching. That broad question is the very one which is now before us—that of the authority of Holy Scripture. Did our Lord simply use the Old Testament for the purpose of illustrating His teaching? Did He point to the sacred historians and prophets simply as persons whose writings contained profound truths? Or did He refer to those Scriptures as authoritative, as containing statements and revelations to which submission, and not merely recognition of their truth, was due?

If the question be fairly faced in this broad aspect, it would seem that there can be no doubt as to the answer. Our Lord treats the whole of the Old Testament, from the first chapter of Genesis onward, as authoritative. Not long ago at a Diocesan Conference, during a discussion on the obligation of the observance of the Lord's day, a distinguished speaker objected to an argument being founded on the account of the institution of the Sabbath in the first chapter of Genesis, on the ground that the chapter in which that account is contained belonged to one of the later documents of the Pentateuch. But when our Lord was questioned as to the true

law of marriage, He referred to that very chapter as throwing a decisive light upon the question, asking, "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female?" On the principles of the modern critic there would have been no authority in that statement; but to our Lord there was. But this is only one illustration, though a striking one from its contrast with modern tendencies. What it is of cardinal importance to observe is, that our Lord recognized the Scriptures, from Moses to the Prophets, as of such obligatory authority that even He Himself, His life, His work, His acts, were subject to them. It is not merely, as Lord Hatherley puts it in the preface to his admirable little book on the Continuity of Scripture, that "our Lord has not only recognized the whole body of the Old Testament included by the Jews in the threefold division of 'the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets,' has not only told us that 'they testify of Him,' but has cited or directly referred to passages from every book of the Pentateuch, and has in like manner borne testimony" to the Books of Samuel, of Kings, of Chronicles, to the Psalms, and to the Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi. It is not only, as Lord Hatherley further says, that our Lord

refers over and over again to the Scriptures as a whole—those Scriptures being, by common admission, the same as the Old Testament which we possess—but it is much more than this. The most striking point is that He speaks of those Scriptures, again and again, as possessing an irrefragable authority, as constituting a law to which His life, His death, and His resurrection could not but conform. What else is the meaning of such expressions as “The Scripture cannot be broken?” “How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” “Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” “These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me.” “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.”

Other passages of similar import might be quoted, without taking into account the similar treatment of the Scriptures by the Apostles. Though their authority on such a point must be regarded as sharing in His Own, yet, for the

present purpose, it is best to confine ourselves to His Own words. Can any fair interpretation be put upon such language than that He treated the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as we have them, and in the sense in which they were understood by the Apostles, as not merely true, but as authoritative, as containing an authoritative revelation of God's will to men, of the course of God's providence in the past, in the present, and in the future? Can we, moreover, by any fair interpretation escape from the fact that He appealed to the historic truth of the ancient Scriptures, and of the patriarchal narratives, as bound up inseparably with the truth which He reveals, and even with His Own personal experience? What a momentous contrast there is between the statement which I have quoted from a popular critic, that "it is impossible to be sure of more" than that the patriarchal narratives "contain a substratum of actual personal history," and the solemn, vivid declaration of our Lord, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad"! Our Lord, in a word, appeals to the Book of Genesis, to the lives of the patriarchs, to Moses, to the Law and the Prophets, accepted in the plain historical sense common at that day, for certain principles, definitely laid down in those

sacred writings, to which He Himself had to bow, and which consequently must be of supreme authority for His followers and for mankind. It will be seen, I trust, that these considerations raise the whole question far above matters of critical detail; that they show that any treatment of the Scriptures which casts doubt upon the historical truth of the patriarchal narratives and of the history of the Jewish people, as understood in our Lord's day, is inconsistent, not with mere inferences from our Lord's passing references to them, but with the position of supreme authority which he assigns to the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole, and to their particular statements.

But the question may be asked whether, by insisting on this broad statement of the case, we are absolutely rejecting or barring all the work, if not all the results, of modern criticism. Of course, if modern criticism and investigation can be said to have shown that the history of the Old Testament—the narratives of the Pentateuch, for instance—do not possess the historical and authoritative character which is manifestly attributed to them in our Lord's words, we must take the consequences; and those consequences, as is evident from many signs around us, would be of the gravest possible import in respect to

men's belief in our Lord's person and authority. Of course, we can neither bar any of the processes of reason, nor can we reject their results ; nor can any one seriously wish to do so. But it is strange that it should have become necessary to say, plainly and positively, that no results have been established by criticism which are inconsistent with the truth of the records of the Old Testament as assumed by our Lord. Popular assertions are, indeed, current to the contrary, which can only be characterized as reckless and inexcusable. Books are written by popular writers—I grieve to say they are even placed on the list of books recommended by Bishops to candidates for Holy Orders—I grieve still more to say that they are written by Bishops themselves—which assume that criticism has established in substance that view of the ancient history of Israel, and of the origin of the Pentateuch, which is practically that of the School of Wellhausen. That is the dominant school on the Continent, no doubt ; but until Dillmann has been answered or suppressed, such representations of the case are quite unjustifiable ; and Dr. Strack, the eminent Professor at Berlin, is a living witness against such assumptions. I will not presume here, where it would be impossible to adduce adequate arguments, to question the truth of

that analysis of the Pentateuch into its various documents which the majority of scholars are now agreed upon. But those documents, as Dillmann allows and urges, rest on sources—certainly in some cases written sources—earlier than themselves; and nothing whatever has been established to forbid the belief that the patriarchal narratives were compiled from written or inscribed contemporary sources. Indeed, it seems impossible on any other supposition to explain the correspondence with recently discovered inscriptions of facts and names preserved, for instance, in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis.

In fact, there seems some ground for anticipating that the ultimate result of recent critical and archæological investigations may be to put the ancient books of the Old Testament in a similar position to those of the New; and that if the compilers of those ancient narratives could now speak, they might adopt the very language of St. Luke: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, . . . it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order." The atmosphere in which we view the

Old Testament Scriptures, and the presumptions from which we must now approach them, are completely altered from those of thirty years ago. At that time, if we look at such a writer even as Ewald, we find that the utmost that could be assumed with respect to documentary sources was that writing was in use in the days of Moses. Consequently, the whole of the early narratives of the Pentateuch were necessarily left to rest either on tradition, or on a peculiarly miraculous inspiration. But we now know that there is no reason whatever why inscribed memorials of the transactions of the patriarchal age should not have been preserved ; and all we have to assume is the same sort of inspired guidance, in their preservation and their ultimate combination in a continuous work, of which we have historical examples in the New Testament. This is the point on which, in the present stage of criticism, we may safely take our stand. Our Saviour gave the stamp of His authority to the historic truth, in substance at least, of the records of the Old Testament. Has anything been established by modern investigation inconsistent with that truth ? We may unhesitatingly reply " Nothing." From this point of view, the speculations of the critics as to the analysis of the documents composing the Pentateuch are of a similar character,

and a similar interest, to the speculations of other critics as to the documents out of which the four Gospels have been composed. But the truth of the ancient history, on which our Saviour and St. Stephen and St. Paul and St. Peter relied, is untouched by such speculations; and we need have no hesitation in resting, in accordance with the ancient faith of the Church, on the authoritative character of that history, and on its authoritative revelation of the will and the providence of God in the redemption of the human race.

It will be enough to apply briefly similar considerations to the New Testament. Our Saviour's authority extends backwards to the Old Testament and it extends forwards to the New. We have His express assurance that His Spirit would be sent to guide His Apostles into all the truth, to bring to their remembrance all that He said unto them, to take of the things of Christ and to show it unto them. Unless we are to suppose that that promise was not fulfilled, it is inadmissible for a Christian to criticise the Gospels and the Epistles as if they were the productions of ordinary narrators, or the letters of men who had no other than their natural powers to rely upon. Those words are a distinct promise that the Apostles would be endowed with an

inspiration which would guide them into the truth; and that is a practical definition of inspiration which suffices to explain the homage which was paid by our Lord to the books of the Old Testament. Their writers, as inspired men, were guided into truth. Criticism will properly inquire into the genuineness and authenticity of the writings ascribed to them. The Church will exercise a just jealousy, as we know the early Church did, in admitting books into the Canon of Scripture which claim this inspired character. We must use our reason, our conscience, and our heart, to ascertain, as far as may be, who it is that is speaking to us in such books, and to reduce them to their purest and most authentic form. But so far as we have the words of inspired men, we have words of authority; we have the Word of God, as being that which His Spirit superintended and assisted, as well as being the record of actual words spoken by Him to men and women. We have in Scripture an authority to which our Lord Himself submitted—books written by men whom He solemnly declared to have the special guidance of His Spirit; and in those books—"all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament"—we possess, not merely compositions and records from which we can draw lessons of

religious and moral truth, and which contain relics of ancient history, but authoritative records, prepared and preserved under the superintendence of God's Spirit, of God's dealings with mankind from the very commencement of human history, and authoritative statements of His will. It is time for evangelical men to grasp these principles with greater firmness, and to assert them with more persistency, and perhaps with more courage. It is time for us firmly to repel suggestions that there is anything mythical or legendary or unhistorical in those ancient Scriptures to which Christ and His Apostles appealed. It is time for us boldly to use the Old Testament as our Saviour used it ; to speak of the early revelations of the Pentateuch, of Abraham, of Moses, and of David, as He spoke of them ; to trust ourselves, in a word, to His guidance respecting the authority of those Scriptures which are ours because they were His, in a settled confidence that, whatever perplexities criticism may create for the time, its ultimate result can only be to add fresh support to the example and the teaching of Him Who said, "Before Abraham was I am."

THE END.

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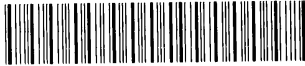
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