Our Father's Book;

or the Divine Origin and Authority of the Bible.

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OUR FATHER'S BOOK:

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DIVINE ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY

OF

THE BIBLE.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE purpose of this book is to help common readers, especially among the young, to perceive and to feel the Divine character of the Bible. It is not addressed to scholars, though what are supposed to be the conclusions of the best scholarship have been carefully consulted in its preparation. Disputed topics, such as the authorship of the Pentateuch, and the like, have been mostly avoided, or but briefly alluded to, as have also technical forms of statement, which are not generally well apprehended.

Particular care has been taken with the subject embraced in Chapter V., viz., how the Divine thought and will are to be discerned in the words of the human authors, many of them entirely unknown. It is believed that here is one of the greatest difficulties in securing respect and obedience for the Bible as the Word of God. The

writer has more than once been asked how Psalm cxxxvii. 8, 9, can be inspired; or Ecclesiastes iii. 17–22; or the Song of Solomon; or in what way these and many like passages communicate God's will to us. It is well known that they are the abiding stock in trade of infidels and mockers of the Scriptures, and it was thought that no better service could be rendered to the Book than to show the principles upon which they are to be interpreted consistently with the claim for them of a Divine authority. For this purpose, one of those portions, the Song of Solomon, usually acknowledged to be hardest of all to explain, has been exhibited at greater length than was at first intended. Our readers will judge with what success.

May the Divine Spirit graciously accept every endeavor, however unpretending, to facilitate the devout acceptance of His own truth.

Portland, Me.,
New Year's Day, 1885.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE general subject intended by the Inspiration of the Scriptures is one of vast extent. It includes the origin, composition, structure, authenticity, genuineness, preservation, and authority of the Book, or rather of that collection of books, which we call the BIBLE. An exhaustive consideration of these would require another volume as large as itself. As usually presented, it involves discussions and technicalities scarcely appreciable by ordinary readers, and which do not seem necessary for the purposes now in view. We propose to approach it in the simplest manner possible, in such a line of argument and illustration as shall be obvious to the plain common sense of every reader.

This venerated volume, the Bible, comes to us purporting to be a communication from heaven. It is OUR FATHER'S BOOK. Such is its claim, and such the character and authority conceded to it by all Christians. What we wish to inquire about now is the rightfulness of that claim. And in so

doing, let us remind our readers that it is not a case where mathematical demonstration is applicable. We cannot reason upon it as we do upon a problem in geometry or a question of arithmetic. It is rather like the cases which are brought before our courts of law, where facts are submitted to the intelligence and sound judgment of a jury. The verdict they are expected to render is not that of absolute knowledge or infallible certainty, but of what is true according to their best conviction and belief. And this is enough for all practical purposes. Property, reputation, liberty, and even life itself are among all civilized nations made dependent on such verdicts.

Is this Bible our Father's Book? Suppose we had to decide a similar question respecting the alleged writings of an earthly father. Here is a volume containing sixty-six letters and other documents, long the cherished possession of the family, which purports to be a collection of the papers of their absent father, sent from time to time for the instruction and training of his children. It is an old book; it has been long in use. The children to whom it was first addressed are all dead. The paper is stained by age, and the style is quaint and old-fashioned. And now, in the lapse of time, as bearing on some question of legacy or transmitted obligation, the question arises as to the genuineness of that old book. How should we proceed in answering it?

Two ways would be possible. Leaving the book itself, we might go outside of it, and seek for evidence there. We might ask if there were those who personally knew of the father's writing, who saw him doing it, or saw the communications in passing, or knew of their actual delivery to the family. We might seek for any who remembered the children speaking of the letters they had received, and what they did in obedience to them, and what was said or done by the neighbors in consequence. All the external history, not only of the communications, but of the family, their friends, the times in which they lived, the state of the country and the world, would have some bearing on the subject, and, so far as relevant, might well be used in helping to judge of the credibility of the claim made in behalf of the book.

Or we might look into the book itself, and see whether its contents corresponded to the claim. Here, if genuine, a thousand things would be found so corresponding. If not genuine, as many would soon be discovered inconsistent with it. In fact, this would be one of the very best tests. The outside evidence, from the lapse of time or other circumstances, might be meager. Witnesses might be dead, or their memory at fault. Corroborative facts might be forgotten. But the inward evidence would by its very nature be unchangeable. And so it is with what is called the internal

evidence of the Bible. It is many hundred years since its several portions were written, and a great part of the evidence which history could once have afforded has been lost or is inaccessible. But the inward evidence remains. Therefore it is that the Bible itself is its own best witness, and our most direct and conclusive method is to begin by opening its sacred pages.

CHAPTER II.

ITS FORM.

ONE of the first things which we notice when we open this volume is the peculiar *form of its contents.* A book of human instruction would be apt to be a single treatise, didactic in its method, from one author, and in one general style of statement and illustration. The Bible is very different; and its peculiarities in this respect are worthy of some distinct consideration. We mention three: *variety of its compositions*, *variety of its authors*, and *variety in its grades of instruction.*

SECTION I.

Variety of Compositions.

NOTHING can be more miscellaneous than these writings. They are in fact a library rather than a volume, as indeed its name imports, "*Biblia Sacra*," the holy books. Here, for example, is an extended treatise of history, containing a great deal that apparently does not and cannot concern mankind generally, and describing persons, events, sentiments, manners, wholly unlike those of our time, and often repugnant even to our moral sense. There we find a drama or dialogue, in which per-

sons dispute about questions in which none of them seem to be right or very well informed. Next is an old law-book, containing a curious code of statutes, — civil, military, religious, — all now obsolete, except so far as the substance of them may be incorporated in other legislation of later times and nearer home. Interspersed throughout are poems and songs, — here a pastoral, relating how a fair young widow won the love of a wealthy and noble stranger, or a beautiful queen saved the lives of a whole nation; there songs martial, devotional, and even love songs. Other pages disclose collections of proverbs and pithy sayings; others still, impassioned declamations in loftiest poetry against prevalent wickedness or foreign oppressions, coupled with predictions of coming reforms, and purer and happier times. A second and later part of the volume contains several chapters of interesting biography, sketches of the origin of new institutions, and a collection of letters which discuss a great variety of questions, both of belief and conduct, in relation to practical affairs.

What must we say to all this? Is this the way in which a parent would be likely to instruct his children? Were another book of this sort found, pretending to be a volume of such instructions, could we readily accept it, made up in this miscellaneous way, as being what it claimed to be?

1. Let us remember, first, that the pure didactic

method is not always *the best* for the purpose in view. To tell a child incessantly, this is so, and that is so, and you must do this, and you must do that, becomes irksome at last. Conscience itself becomes blunted under perpetual blows. Many an impatient boy has been driven into outbreaking misconduct under the constant nagging of an injudicious parent. Somebody has said that "Don't twit" and "Don't tease" ought to have been put among the commandments.

2. Moral truth is never so *acceptable* as when presented in the concrete, embodied in the forms of actual life. "Tell me a 'tory, mamma," is one of the very earliest demands of the little one, and in this form it literally drinks in instruction with its mother's milk. Nor is the story any the less palatable, — often it is even more so, — that it suddenly discloses at the end the little moral lesson, the admonition, the counsel, or even the reproof, skilfully concealed till the right moment, and then opening with its full demand upon the conscience and the heart. And so it is that narrative, parable, fable, biography, and history become the most important vehicles for the instruction of mankind. In a similar way with the more ideal classes of writing, poetry, oratory, the drama, and even works of fiction. What discriminating parent is there who, in providing a library for his library, does not aim to place all these in it? Who would ever think of filling it up with bare didac-

tics, — sermons and moral essays and rules for holy living and dying, or would expect, if he did, that his boys could be driven to its use by any other means than the rod?

3. Moral instruction is infinitely more *effective* when conveyed through these diversified forms than it could be in any other. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." It is human life, in all its outgoings and self-revealings laid alongside of human life, that is the most effective of teachers to the latter. It is the charm and the power of all history and all biography, of fable and speech and song. This is what gives such force to the story of the Pilgrims in the Mayflower, of the battle of Bunker Hill and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, of the firing on Fort Sumter and the fields of Vicksburg and Gettysburg. It is this which thrills us as we read the immortal speeches of Adams upon the Declaration, of Webster in reply to Hayne, of Lincoln at the Gettysburg Cemetery, or hear the noble strains of the Star Spangled Banner and the Hymn to America.

4. In like manner, we gain instruction in the *greatest variety and abundance*. The Apostle John says that if all the things which Jesus did should be written every one, the world itself could not contain the books. So if all the directions necessary to teach men how to live should be written out singly and separately, so as to meet the infinite

variety of conditions attending upon all human lives, the books would be without number or end. It is like the English common law; no statute book could hold direct legislation made for every actual case that occurs in the innumerable transactions of every day business. If law is wanted in a particular instance, it is found, in the absence of positive statute, in the long record of precedents of the past; that is, in the *principles* embodied in other cases, more or less similar, occurring throughout the existence of the nation. So always, history, biography, fiction, poetry, and letters, are repositories of *principles*, which he who is honest in the search of truth can discern and apply for his own practical guidance, and often with far greater nicety of adaptation to his exact wants than he could find in any professed treatise of morals whatsoever.

5. Moral instruction so conveyed is a discipline not for the conscience only, but for the *judgment and the heart*, indeed, for the whole intellectual and moral nature. Every wise father knows that his child's mind is not a mere receptacle into which wisdom and virtue are to be poured, as water into a cistern. Education is *e-ducing* i. e., drawing out the mind, not stuffing it. The moral faculty needs to be taught how to discern for itself what is truth and what is error, what is right and what is wrong. It ought to know how to learn from men's mistakes and follies, and even sins, as it certainly

should from its own. The foolish virgins have a lesson for us as well as the wise. So the whole diversified forms of composition we have supposed are so many diversified forms of instruction. They constitute in the aggregate a transcript of human life as it is; of the great world in which we and all men, in their successive generations, are to live and work out their moral history and destiny. Can anything be better than these for that training? Instead of being a mark of ungenuineness in a book purporting to be a summary of a father's instructions to his children, would they not be, when duly and rightly considered, strong confirmation, not only of its claims, but of the profound wisdom which so shaped and composed it?

6. Once more, an instruction book of this kind would *never become obsolete.* It would last as long as the family life lasted; nay, it would serve with slight adaptations for all families and all time. And this, because *principles* are immortal. Laws change from age to age; an essential part of the business of every legislature is repealing. Ethical sayings vary among different people and in different times. But the lessons of history never grow old; the story of Joseph is as fresh to-day, and as full of counsel and pathos, as it was thirty-five hundred years ago. The Roman poet boasted that he had in his graceful odes "reared a monument more lasting than brass." So while the world stands, the fifty-

first Psalm will be the vernacular of every penitent soul in tears before God, as the twenty-third will be the calm thanksgiving of him who dwells as a happy and contented member of a flock within the care of his heavenly Shepherd.

It will scarcely be necessary for us to apply our illustration in detail to the composite character of the Bible. Let the reader do it for himself, and we are sure he will soon see why this wonderful Book has acquired and retains such a place as it has in the estimation of mankind. It is as if our heavenly Father took each of us by the hand and led us through the long gallery of human life and action for four thousand years. He *shows* us here what man has been and done, his good deeds and his evil ones, his wisdom and his folly, his joys and his sorrows, while in the mirror of the past he holds up to us the foreshadowed vista of the future. All along this gallery he *talks* to us with a Father's ineffable tenderness, explaining mistakes, inculcating lessons, and sometimes pointing, even, without an added word, in sad and significant silence, to the false and wicked and shameful things the world has seen. And then, at last, he opens another room of ampler space and clearer light, and recounts to us the lives and sayings of apostles and martyrs; and, chief among all, pauses before *One* figure, the Man of all men, his own Son, and tells us what He said and did, and what lessons of more than human wisdom He left for

all men and for all time. And shall we now doubt, as we look back through the long corridor we have traversed, even though it have many figures and many scenes, and though the lessons have been infinitely varied in number and form and significance, that it is a Divine Wisdom which planned it, and a Divine Hand that has been throughout our Guide?

Section II.

Variety of Writers.

A SECOND peculiarity in the form and method of this book is that so many different persons were employed as its *writers*. It may be easy to comprehend why so many styles of composition were used, but they should have been written, one might affirm, by the Divine Hand directly. Instead of that, when we open the sacred volume, we find almost as many authors as books. And what adds to the difficulty, a large portion of these are anonymous. So that we have a double task set before our faith, to *accept* as the Word of God what, certainly as they come to us, are the words of men — to a large extent of unknown men — and to *distinguish* between the human and divine, so as to find the Word of God in the words of men. Let us look at these difficulties in the light of the illustration we have already used.

Here, then, is a volume — or rather a library of many volumes — showing the handwriting and

being confessedly the work of many writers. We find among these:

1. A number who profess to have been *amanuenses*, persons who say that they were employed by the Author to take down the words spoken by his lips, the commands, the promises, the reproofs, the counsels designed for the instruction of the absent family. They expressly disclaim any personal share in the authorship. Some of the sayings they recorded they did not themselves understand; some were unwelcome utterances, as painful to write as to read. In all cases they affirm that they wrote just what was commanded them. No discretion was allowed them in omitting anything, in modifying any idea, or softening any word. We write, they say, just what was given us to write; no more, no less.

2. Another class wrote *historically*. They were annalists, recorders, biographers. Sometimes the matters of which they wrote were within their personal knowledge or recollection; sometimes they were derived from the Author himself in his earlier writings or sayings; sometimes they were transcripts, more or less extensive, from public archives; sometimes compilations from other writers, revised and edited for the present purpose. From whatever source derived, or into whatever form cast, they were intended and prepared for the use now designated, viz., to be a volume of instructions, to teach in the way of history, chronol-

ogy, memoirs, and the like, the family for whom this loving and thoughtful Father is ever mindful, and for whose welfare he is assiduously laboring.

3. A third class of writers employed in the preparation of this library were *interpreters*. From intimate personal acquaintance with the Father and long experience in his service, they have come to be very familiar with his opinions on all common topics and with his wishes respecting the family. They are employed, therefore, to write down those opinions and wishes in a detailed way, on a variety of practical subjects. The larger portion of these are in the form of letters addressed in the father's name to some of the eldest children. The language and style of these are various, bearing, indeed, the mental peculiarities of the writers themselves, yet all agreeing in substance with each other, and with what is otherwise known of him of whose sentiments and will they profess to be interpreters.

4. Lastly, we find a class of writers, if not so conspicuous, yet no less important and responsible than the others, who were employed as *compilers*. For it being, as we saw in the preceding section, advisable that the volume which should suffice for the instruction of a large and diversified family for all time should contain a large and diversified body of compositions, it became a work requiring great discretion to select these. Especially when, out of the abounding materials existing, there were

ever very many unsuitable ones offering themselves for the purpose; works of false sentiment, erroneous history, or in some of many ways unworthy of the place they were intended to fill. All who have to prepare reading matter for the public know that it is much easier to find a good writer than a thoroughly judicious *editor*. The former, indeed, are those who win the honors, whose names are emblazoned in public and enjoy the popular applause, but no less deserving are they who have the gift of discerning true merit, of detecting the unworthy, and are wise and courageous enough to brand with disapproval what has no claim for acceptance.

Thus, then, the Book of which we have been conceiving was prepared. Confessedly the Father did not write it with his own hands. He employed amanuenses, narrators, interpreters, compilers. Sometimes he dictated; sometimes referred them to things formerly said or done by him; sometimes sent them to public records or the works of other authentic writers; sometimes gave them commission to explore existing literature and gather from it materials suitable for the purpose, to diversify, to enrich, to give roundness and completeness to his plan, in a word, to make up the Book as it is. All the while he kept the oversight of the work; he appointed the writers, directed them what to do, approved each particular part done, and at the last, when all was

completed, formally adopted and confirmed it as his own, declaring it to be his book.

Thus there has come to us this divine Book, — not so much a volume as an encyclopædia, a library. Is its high claim to be questioned because of the way it was made up? Is He whose name and credentials it bears any the less its Author because it was not written, like the tablets of stone given to Moses, with his own fingers? Was the Code Napoleon, that masterpiece of jurisprudence which has become the foundation of legislation in almost all Europe, though composed and compiled through a period of years by a large body of skillful jurists, statesmen, and scholars, any the less the enactment of the great emperor whose name it bears?

Reserving now, for the present, the evidence of the fact of such a Divine adoption of this work, and the methods by which we are to distinguish between what is of the Divine Author and what of the human writer, let us glance at some of the advantages resulting from this manner of preparing the Book.

1. Comprehensively, *it brings God near to us.* Like the revelation of the Infinite in the person of Christ, it is a second incarnation of the Divine in the words and thoughts of men. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." So, except once or twice when

the heavenly voice addressed Jesus, no man, since the days of Sinai, when God uttered the ten words of the Law, hath *heard* God at any time, and even then it was such a voice of awe that the people begged not to hear it any more. "Speak thou with us," they said to Moses, "but let not God speak to us lest we die." So, accordingly, he has spoken with men through Moses and the prophets, and in later days through his Son and the apostles, using human language, and fitting divine thoughts to human words, framed after our own finite conceptions, and uttered in our own familiar ways by speech or pen.

2. With all this, we have also the attractions of a *human interest* thrown over the divine communication. The heavenly thought comes to us borne upon the sweet sounds of our mother tongue. We go into the tent life of the patriarchs, and hear mothers singing to their children; we follow the poor slave boy from the sheep pastures of Dothan to the palace of the Pharaohs; we bend with the princess and her train over the little papyrus cradle on the brink of the Nile, and trace thence the career of the noble youth, the liberator, law-giver, prophet, and historian, till he attains that angel-guarded grave on Mount Nebo. We hear Deborah's song of victory. We see the pious Hannah giving thanks for her son, and making yearly the little coats in which he shall appear before the Lord in Shiloh. We are with

David in the sheep pastures; in his battle with the boastful giant; in his minstrelsy in the palace of Saul; in his own accession to the kingdom; in his honored old age, and his peaceful death. We listen to the hymns he sung as the shepherd-boy, the warrior, the king, the penitent sinner. We visit with "the queen of the south" the court of Solomon, and see all his glory, and listen to his wise sayings and his impassioned songs. We are thrilled with the lofty utterances of the prophets, the grand oratorio of Isaiah, the sublime hymn of Habakkuk. Then we come down to Bethlehem and Nazareth, and read of that wonderful child and his beautiful virgin mother, and their home life, when he wrought with his father as a carpenter. We follow him to the Jordan to be baptized, and to the wilderness to be tempted, and thenceforward through all the weary way of toil and teaching, of beneficence and suffering, till it culminates at Pilate's hall and Calvary. Then the story of the works, the writings and the deaths of apostles and martyrs, and the glorious apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem, in which the long, sad drama of earth and time shall end. How *human* it all is! How interesting for its own sake! How do children hang delighted over its stories, and poets and artists vie with each other in reproducing their ideals in numbers and painting! What myriads, attracted first by this human element, have been led at last to discern and to

yield to the divine which gave inspiration and power to the whole.

3. A revelation so given is *most easily understood.* Paul was once taken up to Paradise, and heard things in the proper language of heaven; but he says they were *unspeakable*, and such as none might utter. But the things which he wrote in his earthly letters to the churches he had planted and suffered for could both be spoken and understood. If they wanted commentaries upon them, he bade them take *him.* Be followers of *me;* walk as ye have *us* for an ensample. It was the divine brought to men in the human, and this the human could understand. So throughout the Bible. If you want to know what faith is, go and spend a night with Abraham when he is on that lonely wandering journey, not knowing whither he went. If you would see a real Greatheart escorting his pilgrims, follow the career of Moses. If you want an ideal of a pure home affection, go and see the parting between Ruth and her mother-in-law. If you ask what is true repentance, go into David's bed-chamber, and listen to the broken voice which utters the fifty-first Psalm. So there is not a duty, a virtue, a grace of character, or lofty ideal of attainment, that you cannot find described and set before you in living example here. There is not a fault, a weakness, a folly, a sin, of which you cannot find both specimen and warning in this Book of books. There is not so knotty a question

of morality, so difficult a problem of duty, that you cannot find a thread of right and safety through it. It is adapted to every age and every station, the child and the sage, the prince and the peasant; it is a light that never goes out, a fountain that never runs dry.

4. And hence it is, finally, that it is invested with a *power* over mankind which surpasses every other. There is no other book that lays hold of human hearts as this does. Coleridge expressed it in a word, "It *finds* me." The man does not live who can go into his private chamber, and, with a serious mind, open and read an hour in this book, and not feel as if God had spoken to him. Of course, he may read to disbelieve and to scoff, and he will hear only the echo of his own blasphemous thoughts; but let him read to hear its true utterance, and the still, small voice of the Spirit will breathe in every page. The world over, to-day, this is the book for the closet, for the midnight hour, for solitude. And not less is it the book of life and action. Its principles underlie every code of morals; its teachings affect legislation and all the intercourse of peoples and nations. There is not another book so much read. There is none the copies of which are so multiplied. There is none which is receiving so much study and elucidation from all the sources of human knowledge. There is none which is so fast being translated into every language, and

becoming the universal book of mankind. It is the most human book in the world, touching more human beings, and touching them in more ways, than any other. It is the most divine book in the world, speaking and revealing things transcending all finite thought. It is the most *divine* book because it is the most *human.*

Section III.

Variety in its Grades of Instruction.

In providing a book of instruction for a family, which is to supply the wants of all, there must evidently be an adaptation to the wants of all. Indeed, in any such supposed case we should expect to find indications that, before the first written instruction, there had been a period of oral teaching. Before the little ones had learned to read, or had knowledge enough of themselves and things around them to make that method available, they had received many an important lesson. Home training begins in the cradle. Smiles and frowns are a significant alphabet there. Baby talk, that seems silly to others, is often a mother's wisdom to those who cannot understand any other. So, during all the days of the nursery, the reign of the dolls and the rocking-horses, of dissected alphabets and picture primers, the first slate and pencil and the multiplication table, there has been, if the parents were wise, a continued course of instruc-

tion and government of utmost importance in its bearing upon the character of the after-life.

After this come the schooldays, protracted often through the entire minority, till twenty-one or more. All this period is one peculiarly adapted to the sort of instruction we are contemplating. A father's or mother's correspondence with a child away from home, at school or in college, is often the golden chain of love and wisdom that does more to save from harm and shape the whole course of future life than all other influences combined. In such a repository of a father's letters as we have supposed, we should expect to find a large space filled with what was addressed to the sons and daughters in the forming periods of their school life.

At length youth passes into manhood, and the grave responsibilities of mature age are to be assumed. None so well knows as a father what need of wisest counsels then. New homes are to be formed, new social ties created. Occupations are to be chosen, and principles and habits adopted which are to rule in business, in politics, in society, and in religion. The letters of parental advice and suggestion show how warm the sympathy between the old home and the new, and in these we find the gravest lessons, the deepest discussions, the wisdom gathered from widest experience and observation, fondly bestowed to form the model of a noble and happy life.

Of course, we should find the letters addressed to different ages corresponding in their contents to the capacities and circumstances of those for whom they were intended. A letter for the schoolboy of ten would be very unlike that meant for the young man of twenty-one. Its subjects would be different, its style of composition different, its directions as to conduct and behavior different. The evidences of the father's authorship would be as apparent in the *adaptations* of his instructions to the varying ages, characters, and necessities of his children, as in their intrinsic wisdom.

The circumstances thus supposed are paralleled throughout in the Bible, and are, when duly considered, among the most striking evidences that it is our Father's Book. From the time of Moses, the date of its first writings, till the death of the apostle John, is a period of at least sixteen hundred years, probably more. Sixteen centuries of a family life imply great variety as well as long continuance. Indeed, we have here, as in the other case, numerous glimpses of a period of the world preceding the age of written instruction. When writing was invented nobody knows; what the dates of the earliest sculptures and papyri of Egypt is yet undetermined. There was, however, for mankind as a whole, a long period before and immediately after the deluge, when instruction was solely in oral forms. It was the period of *unwritten* revelation, the intellectual childhood of the

race. What precisely the contents of that revelation were it is impossible now to say. The few hints we have of the antediluvians show it to have been exceedingly rudimentary, though sufficient to give a knowledge of right and wrong and create moral responsibility. After the flood those glimpses multiply, and we have traces of the knowledge of the one true God, and the simplest forms of worship by sacrifice and prayer, in the ancestry of Abram. Thence, through the patriarchal period and the servitude in Egypt, we hear of occasional direct communications from God, appointing special acts of duty, and pointing forward to better things to come. All this long duration was the world's infancy, and it is in perfect analogy with what we always find in family history, that there was then no written and permanent revelation.

From the time of Moses to Christ was, so to speak, the *school age* of the world. This is the very designation given to it by the apostles. "The heir, before he comes of age, is under tutors and governors appointed by the father."[1] "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."[2] Here, now, we find a very different state of things from before. God reveals himself in his infinite personality as one God, Jehovah, the self-existent and eternal. He appoints modes of worship, and enacts a complex system of laws to regulate the

[1] Gal. 4:1, 2. [2] Gal. 3:24.

whole religious and social life. He says little of doctrine, he goes into no discussions of principles or abstract truths. He commands, "Do this and live; disobey and die." It is, throughout, a pedagogic system, of lessons and stints, of exercises and tasks, of calisthenics and gymnastics, enforced by rewards and punishments in keeping with the purposes of a proper school discipline. And the Old Testament is the record of it, telling us how it went with them, how they obeyed and how they sinned, how they sung and how they wept, how they were taught by the wisdom of sages, and how reproved and warned and cheered by the messages of the prophets, until the time came for this imperfect stage to close, and the manhood of the world to be entered on.

And now a new revelation adapted to this new age. Rites and ceremonies pass away, and principles succeed. Love takes the place of Law; Jehovah is made known as the Father, and instead of priest and prophet his Son comes to be the Teacher of men. It is true that the new lessons are hard to learn. Dull ears and sluggish hearts at first fail to comprehend them. And yet there is progress. Three and a half years the Master teaches in person. Then he appoints apostles, and endues them with power to speak in his name, and so the New Testament is filled up and is given as the finished and complete instruction book for the world and for all time.

In all this, how perfect the adaptation of the means to the end in view. We see revelation progressive, plastic, suited to every age and condition of those for whom it is intended. We see a wise Father sending his instructions to all as they are able to comprehend and profit by them. It is one of the lesser and perhaps not often noticed marks of the divine wisdom which shines in this venerable volume, and which accredits it to our judgments and hearts as the Book of our Father.

But there are some special facts of great importance growing out of this adaptation of the Bible to the different ages of the world, which need special consideration.

1. It accounts very perfectly for the forms in which the earliest teachings respecting *the universe and man* are cast.

One of the first things that men needed to know was that there is *one God* who *made the world* and all it contains. The tendencies of all untaught people have been to see supernatural powers in the great forces at work around them, in the sun and moon and stars, the winds and storms and seasons, in health and disease, in all wonderful things that happen, and all remarkable sights that are seen. Hence the origin of idolatry, the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, of Zeus and Jupiter, Apollo and Diana, and the innumerable deities of the heathen pantheon. And as these supposed powers were ever acting upon man, doing him

good or evil, gratifying or defeating his desires, so it became worship to the gods to do that over which they presided, to please Mars by fighting, and Bacchus by getting drunk, and Venus by debauchery, etc. Hence practical idolatry was everywhere unrestrained vice, and the orgies of heathen worship were too foul even for mention. It was then a first requisite for all true religion to know that there was one only God, the creator of all things, and the author of all those forces and appearances which mankind in their ignorance put in his place. So the Bible begins, just as it ought to, by first teaching this great foundation fact.

But *how* does it teach it? Just as a parent would teach the same thing to a little child. It says, first, generally, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And then, holding up the great Builder vividly before the child's mind, it tells how he "spoke" and was obeyed. He said, "Let there be light." He spoke to the great sky above and said, "Let there be a *division* there, so that the upper waters (clouds) shall be separated from the lower waters" (the ocean). He spoke to these lower waters, and gathered them into seas. He spoke to the ground, and made the grass grow; and to the sun and moon, and made day and night; and to the sea, and made the fishes; and to the earth again, and made the beasts. Read Mrs. Barbauld's Prose Hymns for children, and see a perfectly corre-

sponding way of teaching. And so the one great truth which man so much needed to know was taught. It was in a way which those of that age, and of all ages, have comprehended, and will so long as the world stands.

Now we say it is one of the marks of inspiration that this prime fact of the creation was taught in this way. Suppose the scientific way had been adopted instead. Moses begins with the primeval "fire-mist" and the "nebular theory." He goes on to tell of revolutions and condensations, and internal heat and external coolings, of the successive throwings off of planets and satellites and meteoric rings. He writes of crystallizations and stratifications, of granite and gneiss and plumbago and oolite, of azoic and protozoic and cænozoic ages, of evolution and development, of palæontology and anthropology, etc. Can anybody suppose that would have been a better way? As well talk to a child of the solar parallax and the differential calculus. Nobody in primitive times could have understood a word of it. If we had had a book pretending to be from God which exhibited its first lessons for mankind after that sort, that fact itself would be sufficient to brand it as an imposture.

So with another great first truth, *the fact and the origin of sin.* When mere scientists attempt to grapple with these subjects, they find them among the most difficult presented to human thought.

All men are sinners, as everybody knows; but how did they become so? What is the nature, and what are the limits, of that law of heredity which perpetuates in a child the character of his parents? Then, how did the first of the race become sinners? How can a holy being be tempted to sin, and how does the mind act when it sins? The most profound treatises that President Edwards, our greatest American philosopher, wrote, were on "Original Sin," and the "Freedom of the Will." Supposing the Bible had attempted to explain these abstruse matters in the childhood age of the world, and had given profound disquisitions on psychology and metaphysics. What futility and folly had it been, utterly unlike the wise methods of our Father in heaven!

Instead of this, he adopts, as before, a way which even the child can understand. He tells the story of the first innocent pair; of their home in a beautiful garden where God used to come to converse with them; of the command he gave to test them; of the serpent that came and talked with them, and told lies, and promised nice things if they would disobey; and how they listened to him and ate; and how God was angry, and told them they should not live in the garden any longer, and how their tempter should crawl on his belly and eat dust, etc. Now here we have the great *truths* which man needs to know, the fact of sin in the individual and the race, and that sin as the fruit

of temptation and the voluntary act of responsible moral agents, and that sinners as such cannot enjoy the favor of God, the very foundation truths of the entire system of salvation. Whole volumes of metaphysics are here contained in a simple story that appeals to every heart, and is found among the primitive traditions of every race of mankind.

2. In the same way is accounted for the apparent silence of the Old Testament respecting some of the most important *gospel truths*. We instance three which may serve as specimens of many, — the Trinity, the Atonement, and a Future State. These and similar doctrines are the "strong meat fitted for full-grown men, who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised." They have been the battle-ground of controversy during all the Christian ages. The last two, at least, are such a field of conflict to-day. Could we have expected that such subjects would be thrust upon the untrained and ignorant people who had come out of the house of bondage in Egypt? And yet glimpses of all these topics were given from the very earliest periods. Suppose a mother, in her first religious lessons in the nursery, had always used the name of God in the *plural*, teaching her child to pray to "the Gods," to love "the Gods," that "the Gods" would be pleased, etc.; and yet should always speak of "the Gods" as "He" or "Him," and moreover should expressly say that

there was but *one* God. Would not the child inevitably get at least the rudiments of the two essential ideas of the Trinity, a *plurality* and a *unity*. Yet precisely such is the Hebrew name of God — *Elohim*. So with the atonement; its central conception is that of sacrifice, which was instituted as early as the fall itself. And as to a future state; what could a Jew have understood by the phrases, "he died and was gathered unto his fathers," "the righteous hath hope in his death," the disobedient "shall be cut off from his people?" Remember that the eminent boast of the Israelite was that he, as one of the seed of Abraham, was in covenant with Jehovah. To be cut off from his people was to be shut out of that covenant, and be without hope and without God. Thus, it argues nothing against the divine origin of the Bible that it does not at first reveal in full the profound mysteries of doctrine disclosed in the New Testament. On the contrary, it is precisely in harmony with the natural method of parental instruction that it does *not* do that, while at the same time it gives hints and outlines of them to be the basis of the fuller instruction of the future. And this is precisely the mission which our Saviour claimed for himself as the great Teacher, "I came not to destroy the law, but to *fulfill*," — *i. e.*, to fill up the outlines, to disclose their principles, and teach mankind how to apply them to the practical conduct of life.

3. In like manner we account for the apparent imperfection of the earliest *moral instruction.* We can barely allude to this. Look at the first revealed law of God, the code which contained the entire system of ethics. It is called "The Ten Words" (Decalogue) and consists of ten simple commands, of which all but one are prohibitions. This is precisely the way the mother begins to legislate for her child. "*Don't.*" Don't strike; don't quarrel; don't touch the fire; don't use bad words; don't do this or that. Reasons why are not given, or but sparingly; they could not be understood if they were. So, among untaught people the standards of morals are always low. It requires an advanced stage of cultivation to comprehend the force of such a rule as Jesus gave, — the "Golden Rule" of all virtue, — or to carry it out into all its delicate and far-reaching applications. When skeptics sneer at the barbarity and coarseness and vices of the early Jewish people, even occasionally outcropping in such men as Moses, and Samson, and David and Solomon and Hezekiah, they ignore entirely the principle we are contending for. The best men and women that now live were not always paragons of virtue in their childhood.

Our subject grows upon us beyond our room; but its leading idea can easily be followed out in numerous directions. We say then, generally, that all the rudimentary and apparently defect-

ive teachings of the Old Testament find here a sufficient solution. Nay, not sufficient only, but natural and wise. Assuming that the Bible is a Father's Book of instruction to his children, they are just such imperfections as we should look for in the earliest lessons; and are therefore in themselves evidence that were given by One who knew men, and what was in them, and what was best for them, that they might be lifted up gradually, in the only successful way possible, to the ultimate highest plane of knowledge and virtue.

CHAPTER III.

ITS HISTORY.

THERE is much significance in the *mode* of a gift. If it be one from a father to his children, that mode will surely be worthy of it and of him. An imposture will be likely to have something doubtful and suspicious in its history. If God has given us his book, we may be confident that there are marks of his own wisdom and superintendence in the very channels through which it came. How, then, did we get our Bible?

We begin with our English Bible, and trace it back through the translations to the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, and thence through the formation of the Canon to the original writers.

SECTION I.

Our English Bible.

TWO hundred and eighty years ago, a company of fifty four learned men were appointed by the King of England to prepare a translation of the Scriptures into English. They were supposed to be the fittest men in the kingdom for that purpose; University professors, divines and scholars; men of venerable character and exalted piety.

Never was a book honored with such a corps of translators before. Never were men entrusted with a nobler charge, — to put what they believed to be God's word into the words of the foremost Christian nation, and a language that was to be spoken by uncounted millions of people through all coming time. The work was completed and published in 1611, and through innumerable editions, in every variety of form, has come down to us.

But whence did the translators obtain it? They had, first, a succession of previous translations, which had from time to time been made by eminent scholars, and long hallowed by sacred use. Two hundred and thirty years before, when the English language was forming by fusion of the Saxon and Norman tongues, John Wiclif, a learned professor at Oxford, with the help of the best scholars of that day, first gave to it a translation of the Scriptures, which more than any one thing served to impart to that forming tongue fixedness and perpetuity, and was the basis of all subsequent translations. About one hundred and forty years later, William Tyndale, another Oxford scholar, issued a new and improved version of the New Testament, sealing his work a few years later with his blood, being burned at the stake by Henry VIII. in 1536. From that date till the time of James I. no less than five versions were issued, commonly known as Coverdale's, Taverner's, Cran-

mer's, the Genevan, and the Bishop's Bibles, all prepared by men of eminent ability, all having their own special merits, but no one fitted in all respects to become *the* English Bible for the nation and the race. Hence the last undertaking by order of King James I., which, by the verdict of all scholars, has given us what, though not without some blemishes, is the masterpiece of English literature.

Second, they had the Hebrew and Greek originals, which, by the labors of such scholars as Erasmus and others, had been compiled from ancient manuscripts and recently published on the Continent. In Wiclif's day these were little known, and his translation was made from the Latin Vulgate, which came down from St. Jerome about A.D. 390. The revival of learning in the fifteenth century brought to light many of these manuscripts, and led to the preparation of revised texts of both Hebrew and Greek. The whole number of Hebrew manuscripts now known, of various ages, including fragments, is somewhat less than seven hundred; of Greek, over seventeen hundred. King James's translators, according to their statement on the title page, made their version from the original languages, diligently comparing and correcting it by the former English versions.

We add a few words here respecting the new Revision of 1881. The lapse of nearly three hun-

dred years has made some changes in our language, and a wider range of manuscripts has disclosed some errors in the texts formerly used. It had long been felt, therefore, that a revision of King James's version was desirable, to amend it in these and other respects. At length, in 1870, the two Houses of Convocation of the English Church appointed a committee to take the matter into consideration. Their report was favorable to the undertaking, and led ultimately to the selection of one hundred scholars, of whom sixty-six were British and thirty-four Americans. Their labors on the New Testament were completed, and the book was published in 1881. The Old Testament, it is expected, will appear in 1885.

Such has been the vast outlay of time, toil, learning, and expense to give us our English Bible. It has extended over a period of five hundred years, and has employed the highest talents, the profoundest learning, and the most saintly piety of the nation in that time. It has been sealed by the blood of martyrs, and favored with the patronage of kings. Upon it has been lavished more research and more learning than upon any other book the world ever saw, and it has been multiplied and circulated in numbers that no other has paralleled.. If it be Our Father's Book, the Word of God, it is worthy of it all; that it has commanded all this is most satisfactory evidence that its claim to be such is just.

Section II.

The Hebrew Old Testament.

By the help of the manuscripts employed by our translators, we ascend the past to the time of Christ; or more exactly, for the Old Testament, to a little less than three hundred years before Christ, and for the New Testament, to a hundred years after. We fix upon these dates because we have undoubted evidence that those books were then in existence in substantially their present form. And we now repeat the question already asked of our English version, whence did they come?

1. Formation of the Canon.

The earliest collection of the Old Testament books, of which we have certain knowledge, is what is called the "Septuagint Version." It is true that this does not give them in the Hebrew, but in a Greek translation; but that translation being made from the Hebrew, because that language had then ceased to be generally spoken, it tells us equally well what the Hebrew original was. There are, indeed, some discrepancies between it and our Hebrew Bibles, which scholars account for in different ways, but which are not important to our present discussion.

After Alexander the Great overran Western Asia, the Greek language and literature rapidly

spread throughout the East. The Hebrew had been much corrupted during the captivity, and, like other native languages, had been quite generally superseded as a spoken tongue by the Greek. About B. C. 280, the learned Jews of Alexandria in Egypt, which early became a chief center of Jewish learning, in order to have their Scriptures in a tongue that could be generally understood, translated the Pentateuch into Greek. This was followed from time to time with other portions, so that probably the whole Old Testament was extant in that language as early as about B. C. 230. Tradition has reported that the number of those translators was seventy or seventy-two, hence the name, the "Version of the Septuaginta," or Seventy. That version we have; and it tells us what was the Bible of that date. Other evidence to the same effect is given us in the enumeration of the sacred books by Josephus; also in the Fourth Book of Esdras, and elsewhere. This takes us about half way back from Christ's time to that of Ezra and Nehemiah.

There is no reason to suppose that at this last-mentioned date — the return from the Captivity — there was any definitely established canon of the Scripture as a whole. The law, comprising the five Books of Moses, was in their possession, and was formally imposed upon the people with great solemnity by Ezra and Nehemiah as the constitution of the new settlement. Others of

the sacred books were also extant, whose authority was acknowledged, and a few were at that time written. It was in that interval, therefore, of about one hundred and seventy-five years from the return to the translation of the Septuagint, — say from B. C. 455 to 280, — that the collection and arrangement of these into one volume were made.

The unanimous voice of antiquity assigns this work to Ezra himself and his learned associates who had returned with him from Babylon. Several of these were themselves prophets, as Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi, and perhaps others. It is possible that two or three of the very latest books had not been composed at that time, — such as Daniel, Esther, and perhaps Ecclesiastes. The opinions of scholars differ on that point. If not, they may have been added by the successors of Ezra in the sacred office, and been recognized by the synagogues as proper portions of the sacred oracles.

Besides these, there was a considerable body of other writings of a religious character which claimed acceptance. They are what is known to us as "The Apocrypha." They were written in Greek, at different dates, and were admitted into the Septuagint Version. The Jews, however, did not recognize them as authoritative, and they formed no part of the sacred canon as described by Josephus.

We are brought, therefore, to the origin of the

volume of the Old Testament, as a whole. It was at the period when the Jews, returning in small and straggling companies from their seventy years' servitude in the East, sought, under the direction of Ezra and Nehemiah, to lay anew the foundations of their city and nation. As their terrible chastisement from Jehovah had been in consequence of their neglect of his requirements, they would naturally wish to learn anew what they were, and make them henceforth their fundamental laws. We cannot doubt that these men, a saintly priest and a pious magistrate, with their prophetic associates, performed their great duties under the divine guidance, and the work which they did in collecting, supplementing, and arranging the venerable writings of the past was one of the highest dignity and importance.

2. The Writers.

There is a further question lying back of all we have said, and that is respecting the original writers of the sacred books. It is a question of no little difficulty, owing to their remote antiquity, and the fact that it was not customary, as in modern times, for authors to attach their names to their productions. The most we shall be able to do is to indicate what seem to be the conclusions of our ablest scholars and commentators.

The Pentateuch. — Until quite recent times the tradition of the Jews has been accepted, with

but little doubt, that these books were written by Moses, and they accordingly bear his name in our Bibles. But a theory quite adverse to this has been started by certain rationalists of Europe, and warmly advocated by Prof. W. Robertson Smith of Scotland, through whose lectures chiefly it has been introduced into this country.

It is based mostly on this alleged fact, that the great body of the rites and institutions inculcated by the Levitical law do not appear to have been actually in use during the whole historic period from Moses down to the time of King Josiah. Instead of a worship celebrated in the tabernacle or temple alone, under the ministry of the high priest, and with the elaborate ritual required, we find altars and high places set up all over the land where convenient, and served often by others than the priests. The three great festivals of the Passover, the Pentecost, and of Tabernacles were not observed. The actual religion in exercise in both kingdoms was a simpler and freer one than that prescribed in the ritual. In a word, the inference is that the latter was unknown ; *i. e.*, the Pentateuch, except those chapters which contain the ten commandments and the simple code in Exodus 21, 22, and 23, was not written. These exceptions, it is conceded, containing, so to speak, the kernel of the Hebrew national law, were very ancient, and were indisputably from the hand of Moses.

But the nation ever tended to run into idolatry, and bring upon it the divine chastisements for its sins. A few years after the captivity of Israel (2 Kings 17 : 6), the young king Josiah, under the influence of the prophets, undertook a reform of his kingdom of Judah. During the making of certain repairs upon the temple, a book was found and brought by the high priest Hilkiah to the king, which purported to be the ancient law, long lost, and by the neglect of which the judgments of God were impending over the nation. That book, it is said, was what we now know as the Book of Deuteronomy, from chapter 12 to 26 inclusive, which, as the name imports, was in fact the "Second Law." It was probably the work of the prophets, who, inasmuch as it embodied the spirit of the first code given by Moses, represented him as the author of this also; and thus a power was gained which rendered it efficacious in securing a practical reform of the nation.

But even this was superficial and transient. Judah was given up to the fate of her sister kingdom, and carried into captivity. During that period the prophet Ezekiel was favored with the vision of a new temple, and a new, elaborate, and complete temple service, as described in the last eight chapters of his book, which was to be established for the ritual of the restoration, the new state founded by the returned captives under the lead of Ezra and Nehemiah. This new, inflex-

ible, minutely-prescribed establishment, called the "priest code," was designed to be a wall of defense around the people ever after, to make sure that they should never again relapse into idolatry, and proved in fact successful for that purpose. It was reduced into a working form by Ezekiel and his associates, and constitutes the ceremonial law as contained in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Finally, the three codes thus described were "edited" by Ezra, or some of the learned scribes associated with him, supplied with an historical framework derived from ancient documents, traditions, etc., and thus brought into the complete and orderly form known to us as the "Pentateuch," or Five Books of Moses.

We have described this theory so fully because it has occupied so large a space in what is called the "higher criticism," and has been accepted by many as probably true. But the great body of scholars have failed to find sufficient evidence to support it, and the more it is discussed the more disinclined are they to receive it. We cannot go at length into the argument; it is sufficient to say that the evidence for the Mosaic authorship seems ample and decisive.

It is not doubted, however, that Moses made use of more ancient authorities existing in his day, especially in composing the Book of Genesis. Having been himself educated in the highest schools of Egypt, and learned in all the wisdom of

the Egyptians, which had come down from a far antiquity, he had extensive sources of knowledge apart from any supernatural revelation, as to the beginning of the world and the origin of nations. Neither is it questioned that a few additions, and what we may call "editorial notes," were supplied by a later hand, as the account of Moses' death, the mention of his character for meekness (Num. 12:3), of the Canaanite and the Perizzite (Gen. 13:7), of the king of Edom before there was a king in Israel (Gen. 36:31), etc. But these do not affect the body of the work or constitute any substantial reason for doubting that in all essential respects these five books should still bear, as they have in all ages past, the name of the great Hebrew lawgiver.[1]

JOSHUA. — The same things, nearly, are to be said of this book, Joshua himself being recognized as its author. It is properly a continuation of the Pentateuch, as Joshua's work was but the completion of that which had been wrought by Moses. The last chapter may have been appended by some of "the elders that outlived Joshua," to give completeness to the narrative.

JUDGES and RUTH. — The authorship of these books is unknown. The former is, doubtless, a

[1] See able refutations of this theory in "Sources of History in the Pentateuch," by President Bartlett; also in "A Vindication of the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch," by Prof. Charles Elliott.

compilation of various records covering the chaotic period of Hebrew history from Joshua to Samuel inclusive, about 410 years. The most that can be said is that the compiler seems to have lived in the days of Saul. He may have been Samuel, but it is not probable.

Ruth is thought to have been written near the time of David's highest prosperity. It has been suggested that the evidence it affords that David was descended in part from a Gentile source, was intended to render his sovereignty less forbidding to the mixed races whom he had subjected to his authority. If so, it must have been prepared by David's consent, perhaps by some one of the cultivated men that dwelt at court under the patronage of the king.

Samuel. — The two books of Samuel, so named not because Samuel was the author, but their subject, are also anonymous. They bear internal evidence of being compilations from various sources, documentary and traditional. Their date is probably not far from the time of Rehoboam, shortly after the division of the kingdom.

Kings. — The general opinion is that the two books of Kings, which in the Hebrew are one, were composed by the prophet Jeremiah, or more probably, Ezra, during the captivity or shortly after. They are professedly derived from older writings now lost, as the "Book of the Acts of

Solomon" (1 Kings 11:41), the "Book of the Chronicles (Heb. the days) of the kings of Judah," (1 Kings 14:29) and the "Books of the Chronicles (days) of the kings of Israel." 1 Kings 14:19.

CHRONICLES. — These two books are supposed to be the latest in the canon, with possibly one or two exceptions, composed by some learned scribe from official sources mostly, about B. C. 330.

EZRA and NEHEMIAH are believed to have been written by the persons whose names they bear. They were anciently appended to 2 Chronicles, probably by the compiler of the latter, who may have given them some slight touches in addition.

ESTHER. — The authorship of this book is purely conjectural, as is the date. Rawlinson assigns it to B. C. 425; others a hundred years later.

JOB. — Total darkness envelops the author and date of this book. It is useless to cite conjectures. Possibly a middle period may be deemed most probable, say about the time of Solomon.

THE PSALMS. — These are collections of religious poems by many authors and of different dates, from Moses till after the Exile. Moses, David, Asaph, Heman, and Solomon are the only names mentioned as authors, and some of these are uncertain. Forty-nine of the Psalms are anonymous. They were originally comprised in five

books collected at different times, principally, it is believed, with reference to use in the public service in the temple.

THE PROVERBS. — These also are collections of the pithy sayings and maxims of the Hebrew sages, chiefly of Solomon. Like the Psalms, they were gathered at different times, some, perhaps, in the days of Solomon, some by "the men of Hezekiah" (chap. 25:1), three hundred years after, and a few at a later date.

ECCLESIASTES. — The traditional conjecture that Solomon was the author of this book is now almost universally abandoned. It is attributed to some philosophizing writer after the Exile, who discussed the perplexing aspects of the present life, and reached the conclusion that to fear God and keep his commandments was the highest duty and good of man.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON is now regarded mostly in a similar light, as a work not written by Solomon himself, but about him; its special purpose being to contrast the happiness of a pure and virtuous love between a single pair with the splendid but guilty pleasures of a harem.

THE PROPHETS. — It is generally conceded that the prophetic books were written by those whose names they bear. Doubts have been thrown by some upon the authorship of Jonah, and indeed upon the historical character of the book, but they have not been allowed much weight. The dates

of the several books are usually given as follows, arranging them in the order of priority: —

	B. C.
Obadiah	890–880
Joel	850
Jonah	825–790
Amos	810–783
Hosea	790–725
Isaiah	760–690
Micah	753–710
Nahum	680
Zephaniah	639–609
Jeremiah	628–583
Habakkuk	608–590
Ezekiel	594–535
Daniel	605–536
Haggai	520–515
Zechariah	520–510
Malachi	443–424

It will serve to indicate more fully the times above specified to note that the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians was in B. C. 722; of Judah by the Chaldeans, in B. C. 588; and of the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, B. C. 536–446.

3. The Bible in the Time of Christ.

The collection of the inspired books thus made by Ezra and his associates came down to the time of Christ, and though the Hebrew in its ancient form had ceased to be commonly spoken, it was still preserved in the sacred rolls, and read in the synagogue worship of the Sabbath days. In com-

mon use among the people, the Septuagint, or Greek Version, was more frequent. Of these facts there is the most abundant and satisfactory testimony from writers of those times. Our space will admit of only that furnished by Josephus, who lived about forty years after the crucifixion of Christ.

"We have not a countless number of books, discordant and arrayed against each other, but only *two and twenty books* containing the history of every age, which are justly accredited as divine; and of these *five* belong to Moses, which contain both the laws and the history of the generations of men until his death. This period lacks but little of 3,000 years. From the death of Moses, moreover, until the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians after Xerxes, the prophets who followed Moses have described the things which were done during the age of each, one respectively in *thirteen* books. The remaining *four* contain hymns to God and rules of life for men. From the time of Artaxerxes, moreover, until our present period, all occurrences have been written down; but they are not regarded as entitled to the like credit with those which precede them, because there was no certain succession of prophets. Fact has shown what confidence we place in our own writings. For, although so many ages have passed away, no one has dared to add to them, nor to take anything from them, nor to make alterations. In all Jews it is implanted, even from their birth, to regard them as being the instructions of God, and to abide steadfastly by them, and, if it be necessary, to die gladly for them." *

These twenty-two books of Josephus are understood to be as follows: — 1, Genesis; 2, Exodus; 3, Leviticus; 4, Numbers; 5, Deuteronomy; 6, Joshua; 7, Judges and Ruth; 8, Samuel (1st and

* Against Apion, § 8.

2d); 9, Kings (1st and 2d); 10, Chronicles (1st and 2d); 11, Ezra and Nehemiah; 12, Esther; 13, Isaiah; 14, Jeremiah and Lamentations; 15, Ezekiel; 16, Daniel; 17, Twelve Minor Prophets (viz., Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi); 18, Job; 19, Psalms; 20, Proverbs; 21, Ecclesiastes; 22, Canticles. It is supposed that Josephus counted them in this way in order to make the entire number 22, corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Other writers of the same period, or later, numbered them somewhat differently, but the list as a whole comprehended the same books.

Thus much is sufficient for our present purpose, viz., to show what the sacred volume was in the days of Christ and the apostles. Further, it not only contained the same books, but, as can be shown from quotations in the New Testament, in the Talmud, in the writings of Josephus and Philo, the Jewish Rabbis, and the earliest Christian Fathers, it was in all its contents almost exactly identical with the volume of the Old Testament as we now have it. Not another book of antiquity can be named which has come down to us in such perfect preservation as this. We are not so sure that we have the words which Cicero and Virgil and Sallust and Plato and Xenophon and Homer actually wrote as those which were edited by Ezra, and were actually read on the

Sabbath in the synagogues of the Jews in all the then known world.

This Book was *our Saviour's Bible*. We shall presently see what he says of its divine authority.

Section III.

The New Testament.

It will doubtless seem surprising to many to be told that the formation of the canon of the New Testament, — its *make-up*, to use a familiar word, — is one of the most obscure topics of theology. The period within which most of its books were written, say from A.D. 50 to 70, and the subsequent one in which they were gathered, arranged, and at last formed into an accepted collection, covering nearly two centuries, are as a whole the least known of all in the history of the Church. Apart from the New Testament books themselves, there are literally no Christian writings surviving of the first century, and comparatively few of the second, and these mostly fragmentary. Not that there were no Christian writers of that first age, but that their genuine productions have mostly perished, probably because of the persecutions which raged at that time. The enemies of Christianity sought to destroy all vestiges of it, and often, doubtless, Christians themselves would conceal or put out of the way any writings in their possession which, if found, would endanger their safety.

Hence our knowledge of that period is mostly derived from tradition, or from the authors of a subsequent date, the third century or later, who often are silent on points of interest, or confess themselves ignorant of them.

The first form of Christian teaching was *oral.* It was the testimony of the apostles and others who had been eye-witnesses of the ministry and death of our Lord, and who told the story that was subsequently written out in the Gospels. Among the Jews this was accompanied with citations and arguments drawn from the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was the Messiah predicted by the prophets. Samples of this preaching are seen in Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost, Stephen's before his martyrdom, Paul's at Antioch of Pisidia, etc. Among the Gentiles a somewhat wider scope of topics was employed, as in Paul's address on Mars' Hill. But in all these cases the personal testimony was the largest and most impressive part. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," was a declaration which made its way to the heart of both Jew and Greek.

Thus for twenty years or more after the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost, the oral instruction of the apostles and their association — men like Philip, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Mark, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and others — was all that was had or was needed. But as time went on the condition of things was changed. Chris-

tianity had spread far and wide. The early preachers had grown old, and many of them had died. Troubles were thickening against the Jews, which ultimately led to the destruction of Jerusalem. Persecution broke out against the Christians at Rome. Personal teaching became insufficient in these circumstances for the wants of the churches. Hence letters began to be addressed by the apostles to those whom they could not visit in person. The story of the life, teachings, and miracles of Christ, which had been orally related, was written down for preservation after the "eye-witnesses" were dead. So, in the course of fifty years, — the last half of the first century, — a large number of writings came into existence bearing the names of Gospels, Epistles, and Acts, some still extant, and others now lost, out of which ultimately were selected and received as inspired that collection which we now have in the New Testament.

The earliest, and therefore the oldest, of these is, probably, the Epistle of James. He was not an apostle, but one of the four brothers, James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon, who, in Mark 6: 3, are called the "brothers" of our Lord. At the time of the crucifixion he was not a believer, but became such in consequence of a special appearance of the Lord to him. 1 Cor. 15: 7. He was the first bishop, or pastor, of the church at Jerusalem, in which capacity he presided at the first council

held there, to settle the question whether circumcision and the Mosaic law should be enforced upon the Gentile converts. Acts 15 : 13–21. The church at Jerusalem was the mother church, the first, and, till the destruction of that city, doubtless the most numerous of all. Its members, in consequence of persecution or in the pursuit of business, were scattered abroad through all the empire. Here they were subject to hostility and oppression both by Jews and heathen ; many were poor, and all in great danger of being seduced back into Judaism. Hence their pastor, it is supposed, about the year 50, addressed these absentee members of his flock this circular letter, exhorting them to steadfastness of faith, to purity of life, to patience under poverty and trial, and an unshaken trust in the promised Parousia, or coming of the Lord, which he assured them was near at hand, the Judge and Rewarder even then standing before the doors. James 5 : 8, 9.

At about the same time, and for nearly the same purpose, it is believed, the first gospel was written, and, as Schaff suggests, may have been sent out as a companion for said pastoral epistle. Almost nothing is known with certainty of the apostolic labors of Matthew. Some of the early fathers say that his gospel was written first in Hebrew, — *i. e.*, the mixed dialect often called Aramæan— which was then commonly spoken in Palestine. If so, he also wrote it in Greek, in

which language we now have it, and the Hebrew original has been lost.

The next earliest portions of the New Testament are believed to be the two epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians, the dates of which are well ascertained to be A. D. 53 and 54. His martyrdom at Rome is commonly supposed to have been in A. D. 67 or 68; hence his other epistles must date within the fourteen years intervening. Their chronological order is as follows: Galatians, Corinthians (1st and 2d), and Romans, between 56 and 58; the Epistles of the Captivity, so-called, — *i. e.*, written while their author was in prison at Rome, — Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, and Philippians, between 61 and 62; Timothy and Titus uncertain, except that 2 Timothy is the latest of all, written on the very eve of his execution.

The Gospel of Luke is supposed to have been written at Rome during Paul's imprisonment (A. D. 61, 62), in which Luke was Paul's companion, and was followed almost immediately by the Acts of the Apostles, by the same writer. The latter ends with that imprisonment. They were addressed to a distinguished person named Theophilus, conjectured to have been a Greek by birth, and a resident of Antioch, in Syria. Luke's gospel differs from that of Matthew in having been intended for Gentile Christians, especially Greeks, as the latter was for Jews.

The Gospel by Mark is traditionally connected

with the preaching of Peter at Rome. The early writers agree that he was Peter's "interpreter," by which some suppose that he translated the apostle's discourses into Latin for the understanding of the Roman people; others, that he merely committed to writing what was delivered by Peter orally. In this, however, is involved another difficult question, viz., whether in fact Peter ever visited Rome; and if so, when. We cannot go into this much-disputed topic. Our impression is, from all we can gather, that Peter did visit Rome near the close of his life, accompanied by Mark as his helper (compare Acts 13: 5) and interpreter; that the latter wrote down for the use of the Roman church the story of Christ's life as Peter had related it, and that this was the Gospel by Mark as we now have it. There is a tradition that he wrote first in Latin, but it is without weight. Latin was indeed the common speech of the people, but Greek was more frequently employed in writing books, especially those that were to be circulated through the empire.

Of the remaining books of the New Testament, five are believed to have been written in the years immediately preceding the overthrow of Jerusalem (A. D. 70), and while the shadows of that great tragedy were beginning to darken the horizon of the world. The 1st and 2d Epistles of Peter seem to have been written at Rome, and

both speak of that event as just at hand. 1 Pet. 4: 7, 12, 17; 2 Pet. 3: 10-13. The latter implies also that it was immediately before the writer's death. Ch. 1: 14, 15. Jude was a brother of James, and, of course, one of the four sons of Joseph, reputed to be the brothers of our Lord. The Revelation by John is now acknowledged by the best writers to have been composed in A. D. 68 or 69, and to be mainly occupied with matters pertaining to the same catastrophe. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows in Chap. 10: 25, 36, 37, that it belongs to the same period.

The Gospel of John and his three Epistles come latest in the sacred catalogue. They were written in the serene old age of the apostle, probably at Ephesus, which had been the principal seat of his ministry, and of whose church tradition reports that he was bishop or pastor. They all date from after the destruction of Jerusalem, and probably as late as A. D. 98.

Besides the above twenty-seven books, which long since gained a permanent place in the canon of the New Testament, there are numerous others which have claimed that place, but are classed as apocryphal. Some of them are undoubtedly genuine writings of the early fathers, as some are spurious, but they have all been pronounced as lacking those credentials which entitle them to be received as inspired. Among them are the so-called Gospels of James, of the Infancy, of Joseph,

of Nicodemus, of Peter, of Thomas, and to the Hebrews; the Acts of Peter and Paul, of Thomas, of Thaddeus, and many others; the Epistles of Paul and Seneca, the third Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the Epistle of Mary, the Apocalypse of Peter, of Paul, of Thomas, of Stephen, of Mary, of Moses, of Ezra, etc.

Such, as well as can be now ascertained, were the origin and dates of the books of the New Testament. There is one more question, then, to be considered, — In what way was the selection made, out of all these writings, of those that were to be accepted as inspired, and by what criterion was this done? In other words, how was the New Testament canon made up?

In reply, we may say of it as of the origin and growth of Christianity itself, it came not with observation. That selection was made privately and spontaneously by the churches, one by one, and each for itself, in the exercise of their own intelligence and judgment. The canon was not made up and imposed upon them by anybody. There was never any decree of bishop, magistrate, or council designating particular books or any particular collection of books, to be received as divine. There is no recorded vote of any single church adopting any one. Such votes there may have been; something equivalent there doubtless was; but no report of it has come down to us. Consequently, there *is* no history of the formation of

the canon. When history began to speak on the subject, it was already formed. The earliest writers only state what the canon was, — what books in fact were received by all or a part of the churches, but say very little or nothing of the mode in which they became so.

The first gleams of information we have on this subject are found in some of the later books of the New Testament itself. In 2 Pet. 3:16, the Epistles of Paul are mentioned, and are classified with "the other Scriptures." So Jude 17 exhorts his readers to "remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ," who said there should be scoffers in the last time. Now just these words are found in 2 Pet. 3:2. Both these references imply that the Epistles of Paul and Peter were already extant in the churches, at least in some of them, and were regarded as of inspired authority. This was before the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

The last quarter of the first century, A. D. 75–100, was the period of the "Apostolical Fathers," *i. e.*, of those who had been, in part at least, contemporary with the apostles, and had been taught by them. The three most eminent of these were Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna, the first two of whom died as early as A. D. 107. Some eight or ten epistles of these venerable men to the churches they had served still remain and are acknowledged

as genuine. All of them are profuse in their quotations from the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, as we now have them, with the exception of two or three of the smaller books. These quotations are not, indeed, usually in the form of express reference, citing chapter and verse, but they are no less unmistakable. A great many of the peculiar phrases, to be found nowhere else, are repeated, with allusions to "the Gospel," "the Apostle," "the glorious and blessed Paul, who, when he was among you, taught face to face, and when absent sent you some letters," "the holy Epistles," etc. No one can read these writings without feeling how deeply imbued their authors were with the phraseology of the New Testament books.

During the next fifty years — A. D. 100–150 — these references and quotations were greatly multiplied. One of the most illustrious fathers was Justin Martyr, born in 103, martyred in 167. In his apology for the Christians, addressed to the Emperor Antonine in 149, he says, speaking of them generally: "They read the memoirs of the apostles or the Gospels; they read them each Sunday in the cities and in the rural districts; they read them with the books of the prophets; and in every assembly where they had been read, the president took the subject of his exhortations from them." He makes a distinction between the two Gospels that were written by apostles and the two which were written by their companions

(Mark and Luke). He says, "There is among us a man named John, one of the apostles of Christ, who, in a Revelation (apocalypse) which was made to him, prophesied that believers in Christ shall pass a thousand years in Jerusalem." More than seventy similar references and quotations are counted in the fragments of his writings now remaining.

Even Celsus, the famous pagan enemy of Christianity, and several of the so-called heretics of that age, bear incidental testimony to the existence and repute of these sacred writings. They quote them, indeed, to oppose and often to revile them, but their evidence for that very reason is more weighty in proof of the fact that they existed and were regarded as inspired.

The next half century — A. D. 150–200 — presents us the names of those eminent fathers, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, who attest the existence and authority of our New Testament books in a multitude of quotations. We have no space for even a tithe of them. Irenæus wrote a long chapter expressly to prove that there were four and only four Gospels. He cites the Acts sixty-four times, and shows its correspondences with the Epistles of Paul. He quotes all these Epistles by name except Philemon, and several hundred times in the aggregate. Clement, in a single work, quotes sentences from all the Gospels, the Acts, all Paul's Epistles, except

Philemon, 1 Peter, 1 and 2 John, Jude, Hebrews, and Revelation. Tertullian was a voluminous writer, and in all his works constantly refers to these writings as the "Scriptures," the "New Testament," and "the word of the Creator." He quotes all the books as we have them, except perhaps the Epistle of James. Lardner remarks: "The citations from the New Testament by this father alone are more extensive and more abundant than those from the books of Cicero by all the writers of every class and age."

We have room to mention only one more, the illustrious Origen, who was born in A. D. 185 and died A. D. 254. He was the most learned man of his age, an historian, a public catechiser, a commentator. He edited the famous Hexapla, or Bible in six languages, and wrote a commentary on the entire Scriptures. According to Eusebius, his Notes and Homilies on Matthew filled twenty-five books; on Luke five, besides homilies in Latin; on John, thirty-two; on Acts, one; on Romans, twenty; on Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians, many; on Galatians, five; on 1 Thessalonians and Titus, several; on Hebrews, several; on Revelation, one. Besides these immense labors, he has left two formal catalogues of the New Testament books, both of them including the same we now have, though one of them says that doubts were entertained of some smaller books, of which we will speak hereafter.

It is not necessary to adduce testimony of later date, which might be done to any extent. After A.D. 200 they were multiplied greatly. The historians of the church gave numerous catalogues of the books received in the East, of those received in the West, and of those received by the whole church. There are eleven such catalogues of the fourth century, of which two were from councils, besides several from authors which are probably unauthentic.

Finally, the Emperor Constantine, about A.D. 331, by imperial command caused fifty copies of the New Testament to be made with the greatest care upon parchment at his own expense, for the public use of the churches of his empire. This command was executed by Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea and the biographer of the Emperor, and of course with all the care required by a commission so important. At that time the canon had become as well settled as it is now, and identical with it. It is the conjecture of Prof. Tischendorf, the distinguished discoverer of the precious manuscript in the convent of St. Catharine at Mount Sinai, that it is one of those identical copies, presented to the convent by its founder, the Emperor Justinian.

The New Testament, then, comes to us upon the unanimous testimony of the churches as early as the very first century. Consider the significance of this fact.

1. It cannot be questioned that the churches were *competent* to decide upon the character and claims of those writings.

It is not always remembered how extensive were the personal labors of the apostles and their companions in preaching the gospel. Our Lord had declared that this should be done among all nations before the fall of Jerusalem (Mark 13: 10); and Paul expressly affirms that it had been done (Rom. 16: 26; Col. 1: 23). Bearing this in mind, we see how well qualified the churches were which originated in such labors to determine the genuineness of the writings that appeared under the names of their first instructors. Take one of Paul's epistles, for instance, — say the earliest of all, the Epistle to the Thessalonians. Notice the many allusions in it to his ministry among them, its time and circumstances, what he said to them, his message to Timothy and the reply that came back, their own experiences and faults, and all his mingled reproofs and commendations, and we perceive how impossible it is that they should be mistaken as to its coming from him, or as to his apostolic right and authority to send them such a letter. The same thing applies for substance to all the epistles. False epistles and false gospels could no more have been successfully imposed upon the churches before A.D. 100 than a false constitution could have been imposed in 1789 upon the several States of our Union.

It is to be remembered, also, that these writings were, with possibly some exceptions, designed to be *encyclical*, *i. e.* to be passed around for the common instruction of all the churches. Paul charged the Thessalonian church by the Lord that his communication should be read by all the holy brethren (1 Thess. 5: 27). He directed the Colossians to exchange their epistle with that of their neighbors, the Laodiceans (Col. 4: 16), which latter, however, is now lost, unless, as has been suggested, it was the same as our present epistle to the Ephesians. Peter's allusion to "all Paul's epistles" (2 Pet. 3: 16) shows how extensively they were known among the churches of the Dispersion at that early date. The Apocalypse was ordered to be sent to the seven churches in Asia, but to those evidently as representatives of all others.

Still another fact of importance is that at a very early date distinguished writers and historians *traveled* extensively from country to country for the very purpose of ascertaining what sacred books were in use among the several churches of each. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, all traveled through Asia Minor, Egypt, and Greece; of course, communicating as well as gaining a knowledge of the subject. Thus the churches learned what had been accepted by their sister churches, and speedily the whole body of them in all countries came into

near agreement in this matter. The common code of the New Testament became as well fixed as that of the Old, and as generally recognized.

In this fact, then, of the universal acceptance of our New Testament books by the churches, we have testimony which was contemporary with their production, and in every way most competent to decide in respect to their character. Writings which came from the apostles were, of course, accepted at once. All Christians knew that these were inspired men, and specially commissioned to teach "whatsoever the Lord commanded them." If there were any which did not come from the apostles, they were scrutinized very closely. Mark was accepted because he was the well-known companion and "interpreter" of Peter, and his Gospel was therefore substantially Peter's Gospel. Luke held a similar relation to Paul, so that his Gospel and the Acts were virtually Paul's. The Epistle to the Hebrews, not bearing an apostle's name, was held in doubt for a little while by some, but full inquiry and interchange of views finally led to its acceptance, though we do not know exactly on what ground other than that, if not from an apostle, it was in full accord with the apostolic writings, and had apostolic approval. James and Jude were our Lord's brothers, the former the pastor of the mother-church at Jerusalem, and both the intimate companions of the apostles, and partakers of the inspi-

ration bestowed on the day of Pentecost. Thus the early churches knew both the authors of these books and their genuineness, and their testimony comes to us with a degree of force which admits no ground for any reasonable doubt.

2. Not only was this competent testimony, but it was given under the influence of motives which insured the *highest truthfulness.*

For, let us remember, that these early churches based their own spiritual hopes on the truth of these writings. The converts from Judaism turned their backs on the venerable institutions of Moses, which they had been taught to believe, as all their countrymen did believe, were the only means of salvation. Gentile converts forsook the wisdom of sages for the foolishness of the cross. Neither could have done this if they had not been sure of the premises on which their new faith was founded. No man in his senses ever rested his soul's everlasting interests on grounds which he knew had no foundation in truth.

This acceptance of Christianity, moreover, was social separation from all that they held dear. Jews anathematized them as heretics; Gentiles branded them as fools. They were held and treated as the offscouring of all things. It was literally true that to become a Christian, a man must "hate his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also." We are very certain that they who had to accept

the new faith upon such a penalty would scrutinize its foundations with all possible care. Documents of doubtful authenticity or genuineness or authority could not stand against the intense yearnings of human hearts over separations like these.

Nay, more ; to accept the words of Peter and Paul and John, and obey them, was, in vast multitudes of instances, to doom the believer to martyrdom. It was to be stoned at Jerusalem, to be scourged at Damascus, to be thrown to wild beasts in the Coliseum, or be crucified in the gardens of Nero at Rome. Now, men and women do not do such things in a cause which they know is a doubtful one. They do not die the most horrible deaths in obedience to authority which they know may be questioned. Let them have rejected the Christian writings; let them have said the Evangelists wrote myths, and Paul was mistaken, and the like (and remember they had the best possible opportunities for knowing if it was so), then they would have had no trouble. Life would have been secure; friends would have smiled upon them; priests and governors would have loaded them with honors. Instead of this they believed, and died. And every drop of their blood, every pang suffered in the flames and on the cross, attested that they knew the teachings they had received were true. The sacred writings they had believed were genuine, were inspired, were divine.

Such, then, is the testimony which has come to

us from the early churches in behalf of these New Testament books. It is competent testimony, and it is honest. From the very early period in which it comes; from the opportunities they had of knowing the facts; from the infinite motives they were under to inquire carefully and make a correct judgment, a conclusion which we know they made, in the clear consciousness that it would take them to the martyr's stake; from the absolute unanimity of their testimony, there being not a church in all Christendom in any age that ever dissented from it, however much they may have differed in everything else, — from all these facts combined, the result comes to us with irresistible force of conviction that these writings are what they purport to be. They were from the pens of men who were plenarily authorized to teach in the name of Christ, and who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Their words are the word of God.

CHAPTER IV.

ITS DIVINE AUTHORITY.

We have thus sketched in outline the history of the Bible, both as a whole and in its several parts, beginning at our own day, and going back through the several stages of translation, the formation of the canon, and the original authorship. It devolves on us now to show how this is a Divine gift, brought to us through all this human history by God, and constituting what we have called "Our Father's Book."

The claim thus made for it involves what is technically known as the doctrine of Inspiration. As usually treated, it is one of no little difficulty, giving rise to considerable differences of opinion, both as to the fact itself and its nature. That difficulty, as it seems to us, results largely from a too-restricted view of the word "inspiration," as implying always a direct divine influence upon the minds of the writers, dictating the words they should record, or the thoughts, or both. Such an influence does not seem to be asserted, at least in all cases, by the book itself, and it is doubtful if it be susceptible of proof. Inasmuch, then, as our

greatest difficulty lies precisely here, let us, before we attempt the proof of the doctrine, endeavor to get a clear idea of what the term means.

Section I.

Nature of Inspiration.

We can best give our view of this subject by the help of the illustration before used. Suppose an intelligent boy of fifteen should receive a birthday gift of books from his father. They are of various kinds and from many authors, and they are accompanied by a note expressive of his father's affection, and saying that they are given in the hope of affording him valuable instruction as to his course in life. And suppose that a friend, examining these books and learning of their contents, should express grave doubts whether they actually came from his father.

"Your father certainly did not *write* these."

"No, but they came to me from him just the same."

"But they are not all books of *instruction;* here are history and poetry and letters and old records, etc. You can't call these your father's counsels to you, can you?"

"Certainly, that is the form he chose to put them in; that is the way he wants to convey his will. He gave them to me for that purpose. Here is his own declaration to that effect."

"But there is a small book in the midst of the set of which nobody knows the origin. There is no name nor date to it; you don't suppose that came from your father, do you?"

"Why not? If I don't know who wrote it or when, perhaps he does. At any rate, he judged it suitable for his purpose, and so he selected and put it into the collection. It came with the other books, and is from him, just as much as they are."

"Well, but here is one which contains false and pernicious things. It says the world was made in six days, and your father knows it was not. He understands the science of geology, and would not give you to read the crude ideas and guesses of former days about such things. There is another that tells of dreadful wars and bloodshed; of fearful cruelties practiced upon conquered peoples, and of the false and barbarous sentiments which prevailed in those ignorant ages, even among the best people of those times. Such a book as *that* could not have come from your father?"

"But it *did*. I do not know about there being anything untrue in form, or false in sentiment and practice; but even if there is, can I not learn from these as well as from the opposite? I suppose my father thought I had common sense, and could distinguish between what was good and bad in itself. I certainly am not silly enough to imagine that, because such and such things are inserted

in these books, he approves of them, or would want to have me do or be like them. My father has given them to me for my instruction, and they are infinitely better than they would be if they were all sermons and moral essays and commands, of which I should be heartily sick in a single week."

It is needless to pursue this imaginary conversation further; indeed, we owe an apology to our readers for having supposed it necessary to introduce it at all. And yet upon this simple point has turned one of the chief difficulties in admitting the inspiration of the Bible. If God did not with his own fingers write it, or if he did not dictate it word by word to those that did, how can it have come from him? And our answer is, it came because what he did not write or dictate he *selected* for the purpose. If a man may make up a library in that way, so may God. And a library so made up and so given becomes just as much his gift, expressive of his will, and clothed with his authority, as if it had been graven with his divine fingers on the tablets of stone.

Consider how many things are involved in it.

1. It *might* include the composition of the books, or a part of them, by personal writing or through an amanuensis. This mode, of course, is not excluded; we only insist that it is not the only one, or indispensable. So there are parts of the Bible which were God's own words, taken

down from his lips or given by dictation through prophets and apostles.

2. It would involve the selection and instruction of those who were to make up the library; persons of experience and discretion, to whom he might communicate his wishes, and who would know best what would subserve the end in view. Such men were selected and employed in making up the Bible; prophets and learned scribes in the ancient church, and holy fathers who had known the apostles or their disciples in the new. These men were imbued with the Spirit of God, and were the representatives of the collective body of God's people in whom the Spirit has dwelt from age to age, and which is affirmed to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." Even, therefore, though we knew nothing of the original authors, yet any body of writing which the whole church accepted spontaneously to meet its spiritual wants and to be the vehicle of its communion with God may safely be regarded as more certainly given by him than if it only bore the prestige of a single great name, — as Ezra, or Isaiah, or David, or Samuel, or Moses. It would, indeed, include the combined inspiration of all, inasmuch as the inspiration of the whole church must be greater than that of a part of it.

3. It would involve the transmission of the library to the son, and, to accomplish this, its careful protection against being lost, or stolen, or damaged

in any way. Wonderful has been the evidence of God's ownership of the Bible. No other book of the age of Moses, or David, or Isaiah, unless in the cerements of some forgotten mummy, has ever come down to our day. Of none of the age of the New Testament has one been preserved in such integrity. It has ever had innumerable enemies, the malice of persecutors, the casualties of war and fire, the unwearied assaults of unbelievers in numberless forms, nevertheless the book has survived through all. Nay, it is as young and fresh as if it came yesterday from the press, and is diffusing itself with a rapidity surpassing that of any other period, making its existence, its ubiquity, and moral power over men and nations, the most wonderful phenomenon of the age.

Now, all these things go together to make up that grand result, — the gift of God's word to men. We include them all in that much misapprehended word, "inspiration." It comprehends whatever Our Father has done to provide for us this precious and venerated volume. It has operated through a long series of years, and in a variety of ways. It caused some to write, some to compile, some to copy, some to adopt unchanged. The result is this Book. The waters of a hundred fountains have been gathered to supply its ample stream. Those fountains may be remote, obscure, unknown to men. Whether they were natural or artificial, living springs evoked from the recesses

of the hills by the Creator's own hand, or rising from deep wells dug by patriarch or prophet, they alike flow along channels prepared for them by a Divine hand, till they meet and mingle in this "river of the water of life."

Bearing in mind, then, these distinctions, and definitions of the term "inspiration," we claim for this Book the following things: —

1. The Bible is *an inspired Book.* It is the work of the Spirit of God acting through the ages to this result, the production of works which, each in its day, served for the divine guidance of those to whom they were sent, and at length, when collected and completed in one volume, were given to the world to be to them through all time "the oracles of God."

2. The Bible is *wholly inspired.* No matter as to the remote origin or composition of some portions of it, the Divine Spirit by *adoption*, if not by *dictation*, made them his own, and placed them in this book for mankind. The proof that he did so we will consider at another time; we now simply assume it. And this divine action — which we call Inspiration — extended to all and every part of it. If a father's Christmas present included sixty-seven volumes, they were *all* selected and put there by him alike, the first, the fifth, the twentieth; the large ones and the small ones; the history as well as the prophecy; the songs as well as the essays; the anonymous as well as those

whose authors appended their names. To attempt to single out a portion as the father's gift and exclude the rest is a simple impertinence, insulting to him as implying that he did not know what was best for the purpose in view.

3. The Bible is *verbally inspired*. That is, the *words* were given to men just as truly as the *thoughts*. Indeed, it is the *words* which make up the *Book*, and you could not have the Book without the words. In selecting a volume to put into the library, the father selects the words which are in the volume. If it is in rhyme, he selects the rhymes; if an acrostic, like several of the Psalms, he selects the acrostic; if a quotation in another language, as in Mark 5: 41, or 1 Cor. 16: 22, he selects the quotation; if in the singular number, as in Gal. 3: 16, he adopts that number. So in all cases. Whatever the Book *is*, that is his gift to us. Of course, we have reference to the originals, not our English translation; and the originals in their purity, not to any errors which have crept in by transcribing or accident of any sort.

4. Once more, the Bible, as an inspired book, is *complete*. That is, in legal phrase, as a written revelation, it contains "the *truth*, the *whole* truth, and *nothing but* the truth." There is no reason to suppose that any thing which was ever intended to be a part of it has been lost out, nor that any thing now in it was not intended to be there. The volume of a father's letters contains all that he

wrote for it, and contains nothing else. The birthday gift is complete, just as the loving Giver designed it.

Section II.

Proofs of Inspiration.

The way is now prepared for us to consider the evidence of the *fact of inspiration*, which has heretofore been assumed while we exhibited its characteristics and history.

The subject in its entire range is very wide; its details innumerable. A few considerations from the form and method of the book and its uninterrupted transmission to us through so many ages have been already presented. Very much more might be shown of the exalted character of the system of truth which it contains, the wisdom and beneficence of its laws, the purity of its morals, and the grace displayed in the plan of salvation it reveals for mankind. We cannot enter into these matters here, but must confine ourselves to a single topic which by all Christians is wont to be considered the most direct and conclusive so far as relates to the Old Testament, viz., *the testimony of Christ and the apostles*. It is not, of course, the evidence that is to be urged against atheists and infidels, who reject the authority of Christ himself, but it will be admitted as sufficient by all who pretend to be Christians.

We have before shown that the volume of what

we call the Old Testament Scriptures, both in the original Hebrew and in the venerable Greek version of the Septuagint, was in common use among the Jews in the time of our Saviour. Everybody knows that it was regarded by them as the word of God. Josephus says, "We have twenty-two books which are justly credited as divine." Philo calls them the "sacred Books," the "most holy Writing," the "Oracle of God." The New Testament everywhere shows us in what estimation it was held by all classes. The Talmuds and Rabbinical writings are simply commentaries and explanations designed to show its meaning and authority. Even the superstitions that were indulged in respecting it only the more strikingly demonstrate their veneration for what was to them God's word, which might not be added to or diminished by so much as a single letter. Thus the Talmuds say that when God changed the name of Abraham's wife from Sarai to Sarah, he took care to save the letter *i* (Heb. *yod*), from being lost because it had been written in, and was, therefore, a part of the law. He prefixed it to the name of Hoshea, the aid and successor of Moses, making it *Iehoshuah* (Joshua). It had been at the end of a woman's name, but was now honored in being put in front of the man's.

It was amid such views of the sacred volume, and into such beliefs of its origin and authority, that our Lord Jesus Christ was educated. Of

course, he rejected the superstitions and false interpretations that prevailed, but that he accepted its divine character is evident from all his words and conduct. Says Canon Geikie, "Mary and Joseph, we can scarcely doubt, were themselves the earliest teachers of Jesus. At their knees he must first have learned to read the Scriptures. Pious Jewish parents took especial care to have a manuscript of the Law in the old Hebrew characters, as their especial domestic treasure. Even so early as the Asmonean kings, B. C. 163, such rolls were so common in private houses that the fury of the Syrian king, who wished to introduce the Greek customs in religion, was especially directed against them. In Joseph's day the supreme influence of the Rabbis and Pharisees must have deepened into a passion the desire to possess such a symbol of loyalty to the faith of Israel. Richer families would have a complete copy of the Old Testament on parchment, or on Egyptian papyrus. Humble homes would boast a copy of the Law or a Psalter, and all alike gloried in the verses on their door-posts and in their phylacteries. Children had small rolls containing the S'chema, or the Hallel, or the history of creation to the flood, or the first eight chapters of Leviticus.

"His deep knowledge of the Scriptures shows itself throughout the Gospels. He has a quotation ready to meet every hostile question. It was so profound that it forced even his enemies to recog-

nize him as a Rabbi. His frequent retort on the Rabbis themselves,— 'Have ye not read?' — and the deep insight into the spirit of Scripture which opposes to rubrics and forms the quickening power of a higher life, prove how intensely he must have studied the sacred books, and that the zeal that drew him in his boyhood to the temple school at Jerusalem to hear them explained was the sacred passion of his life. In the Gospels we find two quotations from Genesis, two from Exodus, one from Numbers, two from Deuteronomy, seven from the Psalms, five from Isaiah, one from Hosea, one from Jonah, two from Malachi, two from Daniel, one from Micah, and one from Zechariah, respectively. The whole of the Old Testament was as familiar to him as the 'Magnificat' shows it to have been to his mother Mary. It was from the clear fountain of the ancient oracles his childhood drank in the wisdom that cometh from above. They had been his only school-book, and they were the unwearying joy of his own life. From them he taught the higher spiritual worship which contrasted so strongly with the worship of the letter. It was to them he appealed when he rejected what was worthless and trifling in the religious teaching of his day." [1]

To require a distinct formal declaration from one who habitually employed it thus, that the Old Testament is inspired, would be absurd. As

[1] Vol. I. chap. xvi. pp. 238, 239.

well demand a formal declaration in all our courts that the Constitution is the supreme law. It was the one thing that was assumed as a matter of course; the thing that nobody disputed; the first principle of all authority and all belief. And yet many utterances of his may be cited which are equivalent. We will give a few specimens.

1. He declared that his mission was not to abrogate or weaken its authority. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill." Matt. 5:17. "The Law and the Prophets" was a common designation of the Scriptures, as sometimes the Law was alone, and sometimes the fuller title "The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms." Of course, his hearers would understand him as referring to that collection of writings which had then been embraced in the sacred canon, and which we have in a single volume. It was important to him in the outset of his ministry thus to declare that he did not propose to teach a new religion, but the old one in a purer and higher form; to develop out of that sacred source of all wisdom its inner spirit and life, and so to fulfill, *i. e.*, to fill out and complete, what had hitherto been apprehended in the letter. Then he adds, in a formula of the most emphatic confirmation, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished." It is not possible

to conceive of any higher sanction being given to a book than this.

2. He severely reproved the Jews, notwithstanding their professed reverence for the divine commands, for making it void through their traditions. "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, hypocrites. Ye leave the commandment of God and hold fast the tradition of men. For Moses said, Honor thy father and mother, and he that speaketh evil of father or mother let him die the death, thus making void the word of God through your tradition." Mark 7 : 6–13. Observe, here, how Jesus throws the sanctity of God's word over the Pentateuch, the very five books of Moses as we have them, without any hint of a question as to the authorship of those books. So we may say, whatever the criticism of our day may conclude as to that question, if the Pentateuch was the word of God to Christ, it is his word doubly confirmed to us.

3. He commanded the Jews to search the Scriptures for proof of the validity of his claims, and declared that they were his Father's testimony, and their teachings throughout centered upon him. "The Father which sent me, he hath borne witness of me. Search the Scriptures — these are they which bear witness of me. I receive not glory from men." John 5 : 37–41. "All things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms,

concerning me. Then opened he their minds that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said unto them, Thus it is written — that the Christ should suffer," etc. Luke 24:44. All this is without meaning but upon the fundamental assumption that those Scriptures were divine; that they revealed the mind of God, and were to be received as decisive of any fact to which they might testify.

4. So, in defending himself against the accusations of his enemies, Christ habitually referred to the Scriptures as authoritative and final. In calling God his Father, they said he blasphemed, making out that he was a son of God. "Well," he replied, "your law calls civil magistrates gods. Have I said anything worse than that? Now that was the *word of God*, — and the Scripture cannot be broken," — *i. e.*, treated as void, or using terms improperly. The particular portion of Scripture alluded to in this case was Ps. 82:6. How clearly does he thus attribute to the entire volume the title of "the Law," and make it the divine word, and the standard of all right and propriety.

But, as we have remarked, it is needless to cite specific formal declarations of our Lord on the point before us. His entire course of teaching was an unfolding and amplification of the Old Testament Scriptures as the divine charter of his mission, the foundation of the new kingdom of

heaven, which was to be built on the everlasting covenant of God, as given to Abraham and Moses and the prophets.

And let it be noted, too, that this recognition of its authority extended over the entire volume. Never does he single out one part of it at the expense of another part. Never does he distinguish between known and unknown authors. Never does he speak of those who were more and those who were less inspired. Never does he concede divine guidance to those that recorded revelations beyond that granted to those that wrote history, or compiled genealogy, or edited fragments of antediluvian tradition and song, or told unscientifically the story of creation and the fall of man, or tuned the sweet pastoral "Song of songs, which is Solomon's." If he did not quote from every one of them for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, it was not because he did not recognize their place in the sacred canon, but simply because they did not contain what was relevant to the matter in hand. He made no difference between the primary and secondary writer; between the Elohist and Jehovist; the author and the redactor; the Psalms which celebrate the names and titles of Jehovah, and the book of the beautiful Jewish queen, in which the divine name does not once occur. To him the entire volume was a unit, and it was the Word of God. The temple itself was made up

of parts. It had its courts, outer and inner; its gates, some more and some less beautiful; its apartments of ever-varying use and dignity, from the closets which stored wood and ashes and salt, up to the awful, unapproachable Holy of Holies; but it was one sacred, august edifice throughout. It was the house of God. So the volume of the Scriptures, amid all its diversity in age, style, contents, authorship, diction, is one book, God's gift to man, that he may be made wise unto salvation. This book was *our Saviour's Bible*, doubly sanctioned to us in his acceptance and love, and doubly confirmed to us by his own divine authority as the Word of God.

Not less positive and abundant were the similar testimonies of the apostles, whom our Lord appointed to be the official instructors of his church, and to whom he gave those supernatural gifts which clothed their words with his own supreme authority.

These apostles were Jews, and as such shared in those opinions respecting the Scriptures which were common to all their countrymen. Nor is there any evidence that, in accepting the Christian faith, their views in this respect were altered in any degree, except to become stronger and more reverent. In very many matters of their Jewish training their opinions underwent great change. The whole system of Mosaic institutions they believed to be superseded by the gospel. Rites and

forms which they had been taught to consider as of the highest sanctity had become obsolete. The way of salvation and the divine requirements of men were, as they thought, new. But the Scriptures were still the *Word of God.* No jot of sanctity or authority had vanished from them. No less deference was to be paid to their lightest utterance. Nay, when St. Paul, after showing that Jews as well as Gentiles were alike sinners before God notwithstanding all their distinguishing history and spiritual privileges, and needed the same salvation as they, put into the mouth of an objector the astonished inquiry, "What advantage then hath the Jew, and what is the profit of circumcision?" he answered unhesitatingly and triumphantly, "Much every way; first of all that *they were entrusted with the oracles of God!*" This was the highest of all distinctions, because these were the most holy and precious of all gifts.

The testimony of the apostles to the point before us is so abundant and varied that we can only give specimens.

1. They declare that these writings are *holy.* Rom. 1: 2. "The gospel which God promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures." 2 Tim. 3: 15. "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures." Observe that this term is applied to the sacred volume collectively, containing the very same books which we have, with all their diversity of authorship, subjects, style, and

character. In this respect they all stand on the same footing; they are *all* "the *holy* writings."

2. They affirm that these Scriptures are *inspired of God*. 2 Tim. 3:16. "Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable," etc. Here the assertion is made of them not only collectively but singly. They are taken one by one, and "every one" declared to proceed from the divine inbreathing. 2 Pet. 1:21. "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Heb. 1:1. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the Prophets." Heb. 3:7. "The Holy Spirit saith." Rom. 16:26. "By the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God." Acts 1:16. "The Scriptures which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David."

3. They represent the utterances of the Scriptures as clothed with *plenary authority*. Whatever they say is decisive. Instances without number may be cited. Acts 17:2. "For three Sabbath days Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures." Acts 17:10. "They searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." Rom. 4:3. "What saith the Scriptures?" 1 Cor. 15:3. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," etc. Everywhere in the Epistles, the Scriptures are made the umpire to decide doubtful points and confirm the statements that are put forth.

4. They attach a divine authority to the very

words, and even the *grammatical forms of words*, in the sacred writings. In Rom. 4: 3, the doctrine of justification is built upon the word "counted" (R. V. "reckoned"). In Rom. 6: 2, the duty of Christian holiness on the word "died." In Rom. 12: 27, the steadfastness of the gospel on the single Greek word translated "once more." In Gal. 3: 16, the unity of the church of God on the singular number of the word "seed," not "seeds." Can we doubt what was the habitual way of regarding this volume by those to whom its very words and grammatical forms were thus sufficient to determine the gravest truths of doctrine?

5. They assign it as a special mark of *high qualifications as a teacher* that one is "mighty in the Scriptures." Acts 18: 24. And this, which was asserted of Apollos, is one of the reasons why the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is now by many ascribed to him. That Epistle shows a familiarity with all the details of the Mosaic institutions, and a skill in developing their spiritual import, which well entitle its writer to such a designation.

6. They constantly represent the gospel itself as but *the outcome of the Old Testament Scriptures.* Christ himself was the object to which all prophecy converged. Acts 17: 2. "Paul, as his custom was, for three Sabbath days reasoned from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behoved the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead."

John 5 : 39. "These are they which bear witness of me." 1 Cor. 15 : 3, 4. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." He "was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures." The Epistle to the Hebrews devotes itself in particular to the one purpose of showing that all the Christian doctrines are but the development and fruitage of the earlier system revealed in the rites and record of the Old Testament. Rom. 1 : 2. "The gospel was promised afore by the prophets in the holy Scriptures." The evangelists, in recording the works and sayings of Christ, habitually add, that in them was "fulfilled what was spoken of the Lord by the prophets." Thus the ancient writings are everywhere made the fountain from which the entire new dispensation proceeds, its divine Head, its institutions, its teachings. Even the church itself is built "upon the foundation of the *apostles and prophets*, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner-stone." Eph. 3 : 20.

7. They represent the Scriptures to be a *safe and sure ground* on which to build our faith and hope. 2 Pet. 1 : 19. "We have the more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed." 2 Tim. 3 : 16. "Every Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." "The holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

8. They declare that to pervert the Scriptures is *to endanger* the soul. 2 Peter 3 : 16. "The ignorant and unsteadfast wrest Paul's Epistles, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

But these explicit testimonies of the apostles in so many ways, striking as they are, come far short of exhibiting the whole truth. No one can read their writings carefully without perceiving that they were perfectly imbued in thought and feeling with the letter and spirit of the Scriptures in which they had been taught; and if we may so say, were in their spiritual natures as much the product of those Scriptures as the vegetation is the product of the sunlight in which it has its life. Professor Stuart, on the Canon, gives over six hundred instances of quotations from the Old Testament by the writers of the New. He says: "No one who has an intimate acquaintance with both Testaments in their original languages can possibly fail to recognize the numberless transfers of the spirit and modes of expression from the Old to the New. It is a thing to be *felt*, and not to be adequately described. It occurs so often everywhere, and in respect to everything, that one would not know where to begin or where to end such a description. No one must imagine that the list of quotations or cases of allusion above cited conveys to him any really adequate view of the subject. The truth is that it is no more than the mere beginning of

such a view. But it presents to every reader, whether learned or unlearned, what is palpable and undeniable, and what must serve to convince a candid mind that the New Testament writers everywhere lean upon, or stand closely connected with, the writers of the Old Testament."

The evidence now advanced, in this section and the last, must, we are sure, be sufficient for every one who accepts the declarations of our Lord himself and his apostles that the Old Testament Scriptures are the Word of God. Their origin and authority were derived from him. Whatever difficulties we may find in the external history, and in the form, structure, and diction of these ancient books, are covered by these clear testimonies of those who are our recognized supreme teachers in divine things. Our argument is not with the atheist or infidel, who reject Christ himself, and deny that there is or can be any revelation, or any God to give one. We write for Christians, who believe in God our Father, and who desire to see his name and word in "Our Father's Book."

CHAPTER V.

THE DIVINE MEANING DISCERNED.

The testimony of Christ and his apostles to the divine authority of the Bible, while conceded to be sufficient to establish the fact, leaves still something wanting to its full effect. We accept, of course, a truth of which we are assured on competent authority, while at the same time it adds to the strength of our convictions if we can also see the truth. By what rule, then, can we discern what is divine in the Bible? How, in a book that is confessedly written by man, and is so varied in its contents, can we discover the word of God? The inquiry is needful, not only to complete our study of its inspiration, but also to enable us to ascertain the divine thought and will for our own spiritual instruction.

Some years ago we presented to a lad of fourteen, as a birthday gift, one of A. L. O. E.'s excellent books for boys, entitled, "The Giant-Killer." As we remember it, it was an allegorical narrative illustrating the mode in which the faults that beset that period of life may be overcome under the guise of a warfare against the

"giants." The purpose of the gift, of course, was to be an incentive to a pure and manly character. Suppose, now, it had been asked of him, what did your pastor intend to teach you by this book? The *words* were the author's, but he has chosen them to convey to you *his* instruction. What, then, is that instruction? The answer, evidently, must be, "It is that of the book itself. Whatsoever the *book*, fairly interpreted, says, that *he* says."

It is thus that we answer the question, how we shall discern God's Word in this Book, written by man, so various in its contents, and of so wide a range in form, date, authorship, etc. Every book composed for a purpose has a meaning. Personified, we may say it intends to teach us something. Apart from and beyond what is said by the individuals mentioned in it, or what is cited from another, it has an utterance of its own, which by careful consideration can be distinguished from all others, and which constitutes the proper meaning of the book. And that meaning, in the case of the Bible, is God's meaning. What the book, in its own personality, says, *He* says.

We shall be obliged to illustrate this proposition at some length.

1. The first and simplest case is that where it reports *God's own words* spoken directly to men, as were the Ten Commandments, Ex. 20:1; Deut. 4:33. Of course, there can be no difficulty here.

But in order to determine what is the divine message *to us*, it is necessary to distinguish words which in their nature and circumstances were addressed to a single people only, as the Jews or some ancient nation, and what were designed for mankind at large. Thus even the Decalogue was spoken to the Jews. It is prefaced by the declaration, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." It commands, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land (Palestine) which the Lord thy God giveth thee." And yet, such is the nature of these requirements that their substantial meaning has ever been regarded as intended for all men. They were the Word of God *directly* to the Jews; they are his Word *indirectly* to us.

2. The same remarks apply to the *words of Christ* in the New Testament. He is himself the Divine *Logos*, or WORD, and his teachings are the very highest form of divine instruction to men. We are to distinguish here, as before, between what he intended specially for the Jews and what he designed for the world. His command to Peter to go and catch a fish and pay the temple tax with it was specific, and in form obligatory on Peter alone, but its moral import that the payment of lawful taxes is a duty is general, and as such is binding on all men.

3. We may next instance the teachings of the

apostles. The Book represents these to have been specially appointed by Christ to communicate his will; to establish institutions, and to instruct the churches in the principles and duties of Christianity. They were furnished with credentials to authenticate their instructions, in the miraculous and prophetic powers with which they were endowed. Such, at least, is the claim which the Book makes for them, and which for the present we take for granted. What they say, then, officially, in the discharge of this duty, is clothed with the authority of their appointment, and is properly the word of God. "He that receiveth you," said Christ, "receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me." The same distinction, again, is to be made here as before, between what was local and personal in form, and what is universal. Paul's direction to the Corinthians to take a collection for the poor disciples in Judæa on the first day of the week, was of the former class; but the duty of Christians to assist their poor brethren generally in a regular and systematic manner is of the latter. His declaration that he would eat no meat while the world stands, if it should be the occasion of a brother's fall, expressed his personal duty while living among idolaters; but the spirit of it expresses our duty in respect to drinking wine, in these days when thousands around us are ruined by habits of intoxication. The same word which said to him, "Eat not," says

to us, "Drink not," and it is the same Divine Word in both cases.

4. There is still one more example, that of the *prophets*. These were a class of men who claim to have been expressly appointed and accredited to speak in God's name under the former dispensation, as the apostles were under the latter. In the earliest times they were chosen by a direct call from God, and were taken from various ranks and conditions of men as pleased him. In later times, under the ministry of Samuel and his successors, a class of young men were specially educated with a view to this sacred office. They were the *teachers* of the Hebrew people, sometimes receiving new and original communications from heaven, and sometimes only expounding and applying those already given, like the preachers of our own day. These duly authenticated messages of the prophets, therefore, were to the people of their time the word of God. To a larger extent than those of the apostles they were local and specific, as in their denunciations of idolatry, and of violations of the laws of their land and their religion; yet under all these there was ever the assertion of great moral principles and truths which are immortal. They were in the letter the word of God to their contemporaries; they are in spirit the word of God to us and to all men.

Thus far the answer to our inquiry is easy. Whenever the sacred volume brings to us God's

own words, or the words of Christ who came to reveal God to mankind, or the writings of apostles and prophets who spoke and wrote in his name by virtue of the special commission they had received for that purpose, there we have the divine utterances. In the supposed volume or library presented by a father to his family, whatever portion was written by himself or at his dictation by persons in his employment, is manifestly his. But suppose a portion which was neither. It does not bear his name, it was not of his composition, its authorship is unknown. And yet it is a part of the collection. It was chosen and placed there by him for the purpose of carrying out his design, and equally with the rest bears the stamp of his authority. How can the family discern *his* thought and *his* will in this?

We answer, the father intended *whatever this book or anonymous portion properly means.* Let us endeavor to explain and verify this assertion.

We take, as an easy illustration, the genealogy of our Lord as given in the first chapter of Matthew. It is true that the Gospel of Matthew, as written by an apostle, comes under the first class of writings mentioned. But as probably this genealogy was not originally composed by Matthew, but was copied from the public registry of the Jewish families kept by the priests in the temple, it may well enough serve our purpose as a specimen. Who composed it we do not know, but

it was placed here to express the Divine Word to men. And we say that Divine Word is what the record *means*. It means evidently to inform us that Jesus was in family descent of the line of David. The prophets had all predicted this of the coming Messiah. Matthew, a Jew, writing according to tradition for Christians of Jewish lineage and training, feels it necessary, in order to establish the Messiahship of Jesus, to show from the public authorities, which nobody could question, that this first of all credentials belonged to him. He goes, we may presume, to the registry office, as a man would now go to the land registry to prove his title to a piece of land, and copies it off for the introduction of his narrative. And this record, so adopted, and by adoption approved, becomes of the same authority as if proceeding from his own inspired pen, and for this purpose is the Word of God. It is *as if* the Holy Spirit had dictated explicitly, "Jesus was a descendant from David."

And this holds true, notwithstanding any verbal errors which may be discovered in the record itself. For instance, Matthew goes on immediately to show that Jesus, in absolute strictness, was *not* descended from David. Perhaps Mary was, and Jesus through her, but that is not what *this* record says. Taking all things together, then, we correct our first reading. It does not mean that Jesus was a descendant of David by *natural* generation,

but in the well-known Jewish *legal* sense. He was legally the son of Joseph, who was in the line of legal descent from David. This is what the record, properly understood, *means*, and this, then, is what the Holy Spirit *says*.

So with other criticisms that may be made of this record. Comparing it with the history in the Old Testament, we discover that *three* generations are left out between Joram and Ozias, viz., Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. (2 Kings 8: 25; 14: 21; 15: 32. Ozias is the Hebrew Uzziah or Azariah.) Why this omission was made, either on the record or by Matthew in the copy, we do not know. So, too, probably, the name Jehoiakim has been dropped out between Josias and Jechonias (1 Chron. 3: 15, 16), and Pedaiah between Salathiel and Zorobabel (1 Chron. 3: 19). And further, the word "begat" evidently cannot be used in its natural sense. Jechoniah (or Coniah), according to Jer. 22: 30, had no children, and in Luke 3: 27, Salathiel is said to have been the son of Neri. The word, then, must be used in what we have called the *legal* sense. If a man died without children, his next kinsman became his heir and was legally reckoned his son (Numb. 27: 8, 11). In the public documents the language would be made to conform to this rule. All these criticisms of the words, however, do not alter the meaning intended to be conveyed by them. That meaning still is, Jesus, according to the law and the pro-

phets, was a descendant of David. That, therefore, is the *Word of God*, and is inspired.

We must not, however, make the mistake of inferring that the words themselves, unless involving errors in copying and transmission, are not also inspired. They are just the words which the Holy Spirit chose when he sent Matthew to copy them. Standing on the register itself, their value as an *authority* would be such that they had better be copied as they were than try to amend them, which might expose the evangelist among the captious Jews to the charge of tampering with the records for a purpose. For the record as it stood would mislead no one. It teaches just as well and as truly the fact intended, — viz, "Jesus was the son of David," — as if it had no omissions, and were as verbally accurate as a formula in algebra. If the purpose had been to show the strictly *natural* lineage, in the succession of actual parentage, the table, we have reason to believe, would have been differently constructed.

In other words, — and we deem the remark so important as to deserve a separate paragraph, — the Holy Spirit, in superintending the authorship of the sacred volume, was as *free* in the use of words, and in the form and structure of sentences and narratives, as any human author might be. The one thing to be done was to see that what was *meant* by his utterances, looking behind all verbal peculiarities, should be *the truth*. Indeed,

there is often a sublime indifference displayed by this Book as to nicer technicalities of language, a freedom that is almost startling. It uses popular speech, of the sun rising, the stars falling, the moon being turned into blood. It says God did tempt Abraham, and that he tempts no man. It gives three different copies of the tablet put up by Pilate's order over the head of Jesus on the cross. It says if all that Jesus said and did should be written, the world could not contain the books. So there is everywhere a noble liberty as multiform and as vast as the operations of Nature, yet never misleading to him who seeks to know the truth.

We next take an example from the Old Testament, the Book of Ruth. In very early times it appeared as an appendage to Judges; but there are indications in its language that its composition was of a comparatively late date. Who its author was is wholly unknown. It is a story of simple domestic life wrought with no small literary skill, yet apparently not one which would require any special supernatural aid for its production. This story has been given a place in the sacred volume, and as such claims to be a part of the Word of God. How do we discern that word in it?

We apply the rule already announced. God's word in this book is *that which the book teaches.*

First, there is an important lesson of genealogy.

It records the ancestry of David, the illustrious sovereign and psalmist of Israel, and through him of our Lord himself, and shows how the latter came to be a citizen of Bethlehem, thus confirming and illustrating the narrative of his birth in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. There is also, perhaps, a moral design, to abate the pride and bigotry of the Jews as the exclusive people of God by recording the fact that even David was descended from a Moabite, and the Messiah was a brother to Gentile as well as Hebrew. These facts, considering the sentiments and prejudices of that people, and the relations which Christ was to sustain to mankind, were of sufficient importance to be embodied in a brief but distinct narrative, as a constituent part of their sacred oracles.

Next, there are moral lessons of great force and beauty. These are so well sketched in the Preface of the book in the Speaker's Commentary, that we cannot do better than to quote them. "The book gives us a charming view of the domestic life of pious Israelites even during the most troublous times. Had we only drawn our impressions from the records of violence and crime contained in the Book of Judges, we should have been ready to conclude that all the gentler virtues had fled from the land, while the children of Israel were alternately struggling for their lives and liberties with the tribes of Canaan, or yielding

themselves to the seductions of Canaanite idolatry. But the Book of Ruth, lifting up the curtain which veiled the privacy of domestic life, discloses to us most beautiful views of piety, integrity, self-sacrificing affection, chastity, gentleness, and charity, growing up amidst the rude scenes of war, discord, and strife. In Boaz we have a model, not of the prowess of a warrior or the abilities of a statesman, but of the character of a rich man in private life. We see one whose deep faith in God breaks out in every word of his lips and every action of his life; one attentive to his own business and diligent in the care of his own property; kind and friendly to his dependents, and beloved by them; liberal, generous, and courteous to the poor and friendless stranger, observing and appreciating virtue in others, and practicing it himself under trying circumstances; respecting the rights of others, even when they interfered with his own wishes; observant of the laws of his country, though living in lawless times; mindful of his obligations to the living and the dead, alive to the ties of kindred, of country, and of religion, and uniformly humble, quiet, and prudent in his conduct. In Ruth we have a touching example of devoted affection to her husband's memory, of love and duty to an adopted parent, and of industry, modesty, and patience, grafted on to a resolute choice of the true God and his blessed service in one who was by birth a

heathen; while in Naomi we have a more commonplace specimen of a good woman whose religion shows itself in fidelity to her earthly duties, which she fulfills with quiet pertinacity, and female tact and contrivance, but not without constant dependence upon God both in prosperity and adversity.

"The moral of the history is also very encouraging to unselfish virtue. For while Orpah, whose love was satisfied with tears and kisses to her husband's mother, forfeited the place she had half gained in Israel, and returned unto her people and unto her gods; and while the kinsman, who in his selfish care of his own interests, withheld what was due to the living and the dead, has had his name blotted out from the record of God's worthies, Ruth, on the contrary, who sacrificed everything that could fascinate a young woman to the claims of affection and duty, and Boaz, who unhesitatingly did the kinsman's part, have their names crowned with blessings, and handed down to the church wherever God's Word is known, as worthy of all praise, and as the progenitors of that illustrious line which gave kings to Israel through near five hundred years, and from which was born at last, in the city of David, the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

These, then, are the things which this anonymous book teaches, and these, therefore, are the Word of God. They are surely worthy of that

designation, and of a place in the Book which is to instruct men in all ages. The Holy Spirit has taken this delightful human story, and through it has told us most divine things. Who is there of the commonest sensibility of feeling and perception that cannot discern what they are?

We proceed now to illustrate this principle generally in reference to the remaining anonymous books.

THE HISTORICAL.

The larger portion of the Old Testament is history, from Genesis to Esther inclusive. The writers of it in no instance affixed their names to their productions, and the real authors are assigned only by tradition, which, in most cases, is also conjectural.

The instruction conveyed by history is comparatively obvious. It is, first, the knowledge of the events related; and, secondly, the lessons derived from them on the great subjects of truth and duty. Of the Old Testament history, the first ten chapters are designed to teach us the origin of the world, of the human family, of its subdivision into nations, and the primary organization of society. Leaving, then, these general topics, the narrative takes up a single family and follows down its history from its cradle in Mesopotamia through its migration, and its patriarchal and servile states, until it emerges from Egypt and becomes in Pales-

tine a populous nation, which, receiving from God a peculiar and distinctive system of institutions, and coming under a special providential training, is made the medium through which, in the fullness of time, a Saviour and a universal religion are given to the world. It is not too much to say that a knowledge of this history is necessary to a knowledge of Christianity, which is its ultimate outgrowth. The later system has all its roots in the earlier, — nay, is itself but the consummate flower of that which had been growing and maturing within it during a period of not less than two thousand years. The instruction thus imparted is God's word to men.

Besides this specific knowledge, the narrative imparts those practical lessons of wisdom and duty which are incidental to all history, and as much more in this as God's design with the Hebrew people was loftier and wider than with other nations. The laws of the Mosaic code have been the fountain and model of legislation for the greatest nations of the world. Its spirit has been operative to soften barbarism, to diffuse the principles of liberty and personal rights, to elevate the condition of women, to teach equity and virtue, and the refining and uplifting influence of a civilization based upon a pure monotheistic religion. So, from the lives of patriarchs and sages, the heroic achievements of warriors, the counsels of statesmen, the conquests, the alliances, and the

public works of kings, and the innumerable examples of wisdom and goodness and piety in private life, have emanated through all the centuries those lessons, — the most effective of all because embodied in actual life, — which have tended to make the world better and happier. In them mankind have heard the voice of God speaking to the conscience and heart.

Between the historical and prophetical portions of the Old Testament is placed a series of books having special characteristics, — Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Some of these, especially the Psalms, are esteemed by all Christians as among the most precious portions of the sacred volume ; but if we attempt formally to establish their inspiration, and clearly to distinguish what in them is divine from what is confessedly human, we shall find the task by no means easy. We begin with

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Who wrote this book, and when, is unknown. The Jewish tradition which attributed it to Moses is not accepted by modern scholars. Its subject very much resembles that of some of the Psalms, viz., a discussion of the question why, under the government of a wise and beneficent God, good men suffer affliction, and bad men are often prosperous. Job and his three friends, with Elihu as a self-appointed umpire, deliver alternate speeches

on the question, all of them saying true and excellent things, yet all in some respects wrong. At length God himself interposes with a sublime rejoinder to the whole, reproving their presumption and self-confidence in attempting to settle by reason the profound mysteries of Providence, and teaching, as the true wisdom, humility and a trustful submission to Him who is wonderful in working, and his ways past finding out. Of course, the bare statement shows that none of these contestants were inspired men, nor their utterances to be taken as infallible truth. And yet the discussion is in the highest degree instructive. It voices the anxious inquiries of good men in all ages respecting this grand problem of human experience, and, followed as it is by the reproving words of God himself, is well adapted to teach the lessons of patience, confidence in the divine wisdom, and a reverent and humble spirit in all the discipline of life. Those lessons constitute the divine element of the book, and make it worthy of a place in the sacred oracles.

THE PSALMS.

Scholars reckon up *five* collections of these sacred lyrics, of many different authors and of different dates, from David, or possibly Moses, if he was the author of the 90th, to a period subsequent to the return from Babylon. These collections end respectively with the 41st, 72d, 89th, 106th,

and 150th. They are as varied in their contents as in their authorship and dates. Dr. Robinson suggests the following classes: 1. Hymns in praise of Jehovah; *tehillim* in the proper sense. 2. *Temple* hymns sung at the consecration of the temple, in the public temple worship, and the hymns of the "going up" or "Degrees," sung by the travelers on their way to Jerusalem at the times of the feasts. 3. *Religious* and *moral* songs of a general character. 4. *Elegiac* hymns, of lamentation, grief, penitence, etc. 5. *Messianic* songs. 6. *Historical* hymns. They are, as a whole, the utterances of devout men in the ancient church on a great variety of occasions, and expressive of a wide range of sentiment and feeling. There is adoration, thanksgiving, prayer for pardon and comfort and spiritual strength, for the welfare of Zion, for the overthrow of oppressors, for all things which could enter into the desires and aspirations of pious men in the ages when they lived. Yet these were all imperfect men, and their best devotions were often mingled with imperfections. We cannot say that their precise words were always the product of divine suggestion, or accorded with the divine will, any more than the similar productions of the best hymn-writers of to-day. But as the church of God itself, though full of imperfection, is divinely called and organized, and set before the world to be representatives and servants of the divine will,

so these utterances of his people, springing from hearts renewed by the Holy Spirit, are gathered and set forth in this sacred collection to be vehicles of the devotions of others, and inspirers of like faith and penitence and holy desire in all time to come.

And thus we undertake to answer the question, which is often proposed as a test of inspiration, "How is Psalm 137 the word of God?" It appears to have been written by one among the exiles in Babylon, and describes the pangs inflicted on their hearts at being subjected to the taunts of their heathen masters, the depth and constancy of their attachment to their native Zion, and the expression of a fervent desire, very vindictive, yet very human, that some heartless conqueror might retaliate upon their oppressors in kind: "Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!" Of course, neither these words, nor the feeling they express, though altogether accordant with the low plane of sentiment and even piety in that barbarous age, could have sprung from the divine suggestion. And yet the Spirit of inspiration, in making up a *book* for the instruction of the church, saw fit to place that song in it for the lessons it does teach, — of constancy in faith and attachment to one's native land and religion, and even as preparing the way to show by contrast

the infinitely purer and grander spirit of the coming dispensation of the gospel, which bids men to *love* their enemies.

THE PROVERBS.

These, too, are collections of the wise sayings of wise men, — Solomon and others, — mostly about secular affairs or ordinary morality. The principles we have stated and illustrated apply to these. It is not needful to ask whether every saying here recorded was directly communicated to the writer by the Spirit of God. No one will dispute that they are very instructive utterances. They have been incentives to virtue, prudence, good morals, and wise living for hundreds of years, and to some extent all the more effective because they are so manifestly the suggestions of human experience. For this reason, and it was a sufficient one, it was deemed suitable by the Divine Spirit to give them a place in this book, and being so adopted, all its valuable lessons became the teachings of that Spirit himself.

ECCLESIASTES.

Yet further removed from our preformed ideal of a divine work is this book; one of the very latest, probably, in composition, yet put forth by its unknown author, after a permitted custom of its age, in the name of Solomon. Few scholars of the present day view it as having been written by

that monarch. Taken as a whole, it may be regarded somewhat as the confessions of a converted unbeliever and sensualist, who, having run the round of worldly pleasure, records the result of his experience, and his conviction that such a life is vanity and vexation of spirit; that to fear God and keep his commandments is alike the whole duty and the highest wisdom of man. In this view, its ethical teachings are of great value, just as the recollections of Mr. Gough and others reclaimed from an evil life are powerful incentives to temperance and virtue. No wise parent would hesitate to place a volume of such confessions in the library of his family for the lessons that would be conveyed to them by it; and by the same reason we may assume that the Spirit of God, who directed the prophets in the preparation of the sacred volume for the instruction of mankind, caused them to give Ecclesiastes a place therein, and thereby made it, with the rest, the Word of God.

And now, last of all, what shall we say of

THE SONG OF SOLOMON?

From very early times this "Song" has generally been regarded as an allegory, designed to express the reciprocal affection existing between God and his people. The Jewish Rabbis, who were specially fond of this method of interpretation, held that it was Jehovah and the Jews. The

early Christian Fathers, especially Origen, modified the idea, and made it represent Christ and the church. There have always been the greatest difficulties, however, in developing the plan on either assumption. Nothing of the sort is apparent on its face, and only the greatest ingenuity and the most far-fetched and violent assumptions were sufficient to carry it out. Even so, almost no two commentators have agreed in the details; and thus it has turned out that of all ordinary readers of the Bible in our day, not one in a hundred, we suspect, pretends to have any idea what the real meaning and intent of the book, as a part of Holy Scripture, is.

The tendency of modern scholarship, as already intimated, is in a quite different direction. There is an inclination to adopt simpler and more natural modes of interpretation for all parts of the Bible. The question is even entertained, Why may not a composition whose theme really is, as this seems to be, the human passion of *love*, be made the vehicle of important instruction for men? No other passion, certainly, has more to do with human happiness and character than this. Why may not He who instituted marriage as the first and most sacred of all earthly relations, who enacted for its protection the most stringent laws, who made it the theme of repeated and explicit directions, both from Christ himself and his apostles, and who finally appointed it as the symbol

of the ineffable union subsisting between the Redeemer and the saints in heaven, place in the volume that declares his will one short poem of love, in form and language and style corresponding to its theme, which shall teach to him who reads it aright His own divine thoughts and will?

Whichever view is taken of its design, the first thing requisite to an understanding of it is to discover its *plan*. Even if it be an allegory, it must have some outline narrative as its basis. The parables of the New Testament and the Pilgrim's Progress have each a story, involving personages and actions, which serves as a thread on which the moral lesson is hung. It is confessedly very difficult to discern such a thread running through the Canticles. There is no formal narrative, explaining place, time, or circumstances. The poem is made up of speeches or soliloquies, but the speakers are not named, and where each begins and ends is not always easy to discover. And yet clews are not wholly wanting, especially in the original, from a careful study of which, with the aid of some historical facts recorded elsewhere, scholars have developed the following plan. We quote from Professor Ginsberg, in Kitto's Cyclopædia: —

"A village girl, the daughter of a widowed mother of Shulam, is betrothed to a young shepherd whom she met whilst tending the flock. Fearing lest the frequent meetings of these lovers should be the occasion of scandal, the brothers of the Shulamite employ her in the vineyard on their farm. Whilst

on the way to this vineyard she one day falls in with the *cortège* of king Solomon, who is on a spring visit to the country. Struck with her great beauty, the king captures her, conveys her to his royal pavilion, then conducts her to Jerusalem in great pomp, in the hope of dazzling and overcoming her with his splendor, and eventually lodges her in his harem. But all is in vain. True to her virtuous love, she resists all the allurements of the exalted sovereign, spurns all his promises to elevate her to the highest rank, and in the midst of the gay scenes assures her humble shepherd, who followed her to the capital, that her affections are sacredly and inviolably pledged to him. Solomon, convinced at last that all his addresses are in vain, allows her to quit the royal residence. Hand in hand the two faithful lovers return to her native place, and on their way home visit the tree under which their love-spark was first kindled, and there renew their vows of constancy and fidelity. On their arrival, they are welcomed by their companion shepherds, and she is rewarded by her brothers for her exemplary virtue."

Inasmuch as this view of the poem will be unfamiliar to many of our readers, and in order also to further illustrate the important method we desire to exhibit of seeing the divine in the human, we will venture to give the following translation, with a few explanatory notes: —

TITLE.

THE SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS TO SOLOMON.[1]

[The opening scene is laid in the country, as is apparent from the fact that in Chap. 3: 6, Solomon and his attendants appear

[1] The phrase undoubtedly attributes the authorship to Solomon himself, but it is generally conceded that the titles to the ancient Hebrew poems are without authority. The author of Ecclesiastes represents his work as having been written by the same monarch; but the claim is now almost universally rejected. For the evidence against the Solomonic authorship of this song, see the article in Kitto's Cyclopædia.

coming from the country to Jerusalem. Shulam or Shunem is a village on the southwest flank of Little Hermon, three miles from Jezreel, and about sixty north from Jerusalem. Its present name is Solam.

We first see the Shulamite in the women's tent of the king, with the other ladies of the harem, by whom she is attended and guarded. She sits pensively thinking of her betrothed lover, from whom she has been separated.]

SHULAMITH (*soliloquizing*).

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,
For thy caresses are sweeter than wine.
Thy perfumes are rich in fragrance;
Fragrance poured forth[1] is thy name;
Therefore the maidens admire thee.
Take me away —

THE LADIES (*interrupting*).

We will run after thee.[2]

SHULAMITH.

The king hath forced me into the harem.

THE LADIES.

We will rejoice and be glad in thee.
We will praise thy charms above wine;
Fittingly do they love thee.

SHULAMITH.

I am swarthy —

THE LADIES.

and lovely, —

SHULAMITH.

O daughters of Jerusalem,
As the tents[3] of Kedar —

[1] Poured forth; therefore pervading the air and more apparent than what is shut within its vase.

[2] That is, to prevent her escape. [3] Made of the hair of black goats.

THE LADIES.

as the tent-cloths of Solomon.

SHULAMITH.

Do not disdain me that I am dark.
Because the sun hath browned me.
The sons of my mother were angry with me,
They set me as a watcher of the vineyards —
My own vineyard I did not watch.[1]
Tell me, thou whom my soul loveth,
Where thou pasturest thy flocks,[2]
Where thou reposest at noon-day;
For why shall I seem like one straying
Unto the flocks of thy companions?[3]

THE LADIES.

If thou knowest not, fairest among women,
Go forth in the tracks of the flocks,
And tend thy kids
By the tents of the shepherds.[4]

SCENE II.

[*The king enters, and, seeing the young stranger, throws her a compliment.*]

To my mare[5] in the chariots of Pharaoh
I liken thee, my dear;
Lovely are thy cheeks with beads,

[1] That is, herself. She was so intent in guarding the fruit of the vineyards that she did not perceive the approach of the king's cavalcade by which she was captured.

[2] This is the description of a shepherd lover, and cannot possibly, so far as we can see, have been addressed to the king.

[3] Her lover, not knowing what had befallen her, might fancy from her absence that she had been untrue to him, and had gone away with some rival among the shepherds.

[4] Spoken ironically, as if to say that if she was so insensible to the advantages now offered her of being a favorite in the harem, she had better go back and be a rustic.

[5] See 1 Kings 10:26. The Septuagint says Solomon had forty thousand *mares* for his chariots. The comparison would not seem so strange to orientals, who have such a passion for beautiful horses.

Thy neck with necklaces;[1]
Chains of gold we will make for thee,
With studs of silver.

SHULAMITH (*aside*).

While the king was with his courtiers,
My frankincense gave forth its fragrance.
A packet of myrrh is my beloved to me;
It shall repose all night in my bosom.
A bunch of cypress-blossoms is my beloved to me
In the gardens of En-gedi.[2]

SOLOMON (*repeating his compliments*).

Ah! thou art lovely, my dear,[3]
Ah! thou art lovely;
Thine eyes are doves.

SHULAMITH (*apostrophizing her lover*).

Ah! *thou* art lovely, my beloved,
Yea, charming; *our* couch is the green (grass);
The beams of our house are the cedars,
The ceilings are the cypresses;[4]
I am a wild rose[5] of Sharon,
A lily of the valleys.

[1] Resembling the highly ornamented bridle and head-gear of his steed.

[2] This soliloquy is to be understood — "As long as the king was engaged in his business and did not trouble me with his addresses, I was happy in the thoughts of my betrothed." The figures she uses are but the carrying out of the conception with which she began, that he and his name were sweet perfumes to her. Such perfumes, of which so frequent mention is made in the poem, were profusely used by oriental ladies.

[3] There is much significance in the various terms of endearment used by the different persons. The one employed here is rather one of compliment than of affection. Very different are those used by the shepherd lover, and even by the king himself in the scene where he so ardently urges his passion. Chap. 7: 6, 9.

[4] All this in contrast with the splendors about her. How is it possible to make this an address to Solomon himself?

[5] That is, a simple uncultivated flower of the plain, suitable for her shepherd lover, but not fit for a palace.

SOLOMON.

As a lily among the brambles,
So is my friend among the daughters.

SHULAMITH.

As the apple among the trees of the forest,
So is my beloved[1] among the sons.
In his shade delighted I sit,
And his fruit is sweet to my taste.
He brings me into the house of wine,
And his banner over me is love.
Refresh me with pressed grapes,
Restore me with apples,
For I am overcome with love.[2]
His left hand is under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles and the hinds of the field,
That ye wake not, that ye incite not love,
Until it wills.[3]

SCENE III.

[*Shulamith and the Ladies. She recites the history of her love.*][4]

The voice of my beloved! Lo, he cometh
Bounding over the mountains,
Leaping over the hills!
Like a gazelle or a young hart is my beloved.

[1] Referring to her betrothed. It is the term constantly used by her, and would be appropriate for a lady only as referring to her husband, actual or intended.

[2] All figures carrying out the comparison of her lover to the apple-tree. His endearments she fancifully calls the apples. It is probable that the so-called "apple" in this book is really the citron, a species of orange.

[3] That is, true love must be spontaneous; it cannot be forced. Let the ladies desist from the attempt to enlist her affections for the king by constraint. The repetition of this language several times marks it as expressing the proper theme of the poem in which all the other parts center.

[4] For the purpose of showing how entirely her heart belongs to another, and cannot be the king's.

Lo! he stood behind our wall,
Looking through the windows,
Glancing through the lattices.
My beloved answered and said to me,
"Rise, my dear one, my beautiful, and come forth.
For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time of the bird-singing has come,
And the note of the turtle-dove
Is heard in our land.
The fig-tree spiceth its fruit,
And the blossoming vines give fragrance.
Arise, my dear one, my beautiful, and come forth.
O my dove, in the clefts of the rocks,[1]
In the recesses of the cliffs,
Let me behold thy form,
Let me hear thy voice,
For thy voice is sweet,
And thy form is lovely." —

SHULAMITH'S BROTHERS (*interposing*).

"Capture the foxes, the little foxes,
That despoil the vineyards,
Even our vineyards in blossom."

SHULAMITH.

My beloved is mine and I am his,
Who feeds among the lilies.
Till the day cools and the shadows fall,
Turn away, my beloved,
And be like a gazelle or a young hart,
On the mountains of Separation.[2]

[1] Supposed to allude to the situation of Shulamith's home on the rocky mountain side.

[2] The brothers of Shulamith, not approving of the shepherd's suit, indignantly interrupt his address, and roughly bid her, instead of staying to listen to compliments, go to her charge in the fields for the protection of the blossoming vines from the depredating foxes or jackals. Compelled

SHULAMITH RELATES HER DREAM.

Upon my bed in the night hours
I sought him whom my soul loveth,
I sought him, but found him not.
"I will rise now, and go about the city,
In the market-places and the streets;
I will seek him whom my soul loveth."
I sought him, but found him not.
Found me the watchmen,
Who go about in the city.
"Whom my soul loveth have ye seen?"
Scarcely had I passed by them,
When whom my soul loveth I found!
I clasped him, and did not let him go,
Till I brought him to the house of my mother,
And into the room of her that bore me.
I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles and the hinds of the field,
That ye wake not, that ye incite not love,
Until it wills.

SCENE IV.

[*The road to Jerusalem. The king returning in royal procession.*]

LADIES OF JERUSALEM.

Who is this coming up from the wilderness
Amid columns of smoke,
Exhaling myrrh and frankincense,
With every perfume of the merchant?

MEN OF JERUSALEM.

Lo, the palanquin of Solomon!
Sixty heroes around it

thus to leave, she reluctantly dismisses her lover, and says he must go and wander like a lonely deer over the wild wastes of "Separation." It is to be remembered that all this is what she relates to the ladies of the harem. She then continues with a tale of the dream she had the following night, concluding, as before, with an appeal to them not to try to make her love any one else.

Of the heroes of Israel,
All skilled with the sword, trained to war,
Each with his sword by his side,
Against alarm in the nights.
A palanquin for himself King Solomon made
Of the woods of Lebanon.
Its standards he made of silver,
Its canopy of gold,[1] its seat of purple,
Its linings embroidered by love
By the daughters of Jerusalem.
Come forth, ye daughters of Jerusalem,
And gaze upon King Solomon
In the tiara in which his mother crowned him
In the day of his espousals,[2]
And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

SCENE V.

[*In the palace in Jerusalem.*]

SOLOMON.

Ah! thou art beautiful, my dear,
Ah! thou art beautiful;
Thine eyes, under thy locks, are doves;[3]
Thy tresses are like a flock of goats
Reposing upon Mount Gilead.
Thy teeth like a flock of shorn ones
Coming up from the washing,
All of them twinning themselves,
And none without her mate.[4]
Like a scarlet thread are thy lips,
And thy speech is charming.
Like a slice of a pomegranate

[1] Perhaps silken tissues of golden hue.

[2] Probably at his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings 3: 1.) It was "a peculiar marriage custom, according to which the mother, in token of her approval of the alliance contracted by her son, with her own hand adorned him with a festive crown." — *Zöckler.*

[3] Peeping forth like doves from their windows.

[4] In even pairs, upper and under.

Thy temples under thy locks.
Like the tower of David thy neck,
Built for weapons of war;
A thousand bucklers are hung upon it,[1]
All shields of the mighty ones.
Thy bosom like young twin fawns,
Feeding among lilies.

SHULAMITH.

Until the evening breeze blows,
And the shadows steal on,
I will retire to the Mount of Myrrh,[2]
And to the Hill of Frankincense.

SCENE VI.

[*Shulamith and her lover. The Palace gardens in Jerusalem.*]

THE SHEPHERD.

Ah! thou art all beautiful, my dear one,[3]
And there is no blemish in thee!
With me from Lebanon, my betrothed,
With me from Lebanon come;
Look off from the top of Amana,
From the summit of Shenir[4] and Hermon,
From the dens of lions,
From the mountains of leopards.

[1] The pendents hanging from her ears and hair.

[2] Disliking this style of compliment, she signifies her wish to retire for the rest of the day. The "mount" and "hill" here named are thought to be secluded places in the gardens of the palace.

[3] Learning of her capture, her lover, with a company of friends, has followed her to the city, and has contrived to gain an interview with her, possibly in the gardens. He is first delighted at her new beauty in the splendid dress and ornaments given her in the palace. He then bids her flee with him to the remote summits of Lebanon, whence they can look off on the plains of Damascus. The sight of her in her beauty, he says, has strengthened his courage to do and dare anything to rescue her. How, we beg to ask, is all this conceivable if put in the mouth of Solomon himself?

[4] The native name of Hermon. See Deut. 3:9.

Thou hast made my heart strong,
My sister, my plighted one, —
Thou hast made my heart strong,
With one (glance) of thine eyes,
With one chain of thy neck.
How lovely art thou, my love,
My sister, my plighted one.
How much sweeter thy love than wine,
And the sweetness of thy perfumes
Than all fragrance!

SHULAMITH.

Thy lips drop honey, my espoused;
Honey and milk are under thy tongue,
And the smell of thy garments
Is like the odor of Lebanon.

THE SHEPHERD.

A garden locked is my sister-spouse,
A spring inclosed, a fountain sealed.[1]
Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates,
With fruits of excellence,
Henna and spikenard,
Nard and saffron,
Sweet calamus and cinnamon,
With all shrubs yielding frankincense,
Myrrh and aloes,
And all chief spices;
A fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.

SHULAMITH.

Wake, thou North wind,
And come, thou South;

[1] A delicate way of saying she is still pure and chaste, true to him alone. The epithets following are expressions of his admiration, in keeping with the fancy that she is a safely inclosed "garden." It is a garden which yields to him abundant sweets.

Breathe upon my garden,
And let the spices exhale.
Let my beloved come into his garden
And eat his fruits of excellence.[1]

THE SHEPHERD.

I come to my garden, my sister-spouse,
I breathe my myrrh with my perfume,
I eat my honeycomb with my honey,
I drink my wine with my milk.[2]

THE SHEPHERD'S COMPANIONS.[3]

Eat ye, O friends, drink and be satisfied,
O ye loving ones.

SCENE VII.

[*The Harem. Shulamith and the Ladies.*]

SHULAMITH'S DREAM.[4]

I slept, but my heart was awake;
The voice of my beloved knocked: —
"Open to me, my sister, my dear,
My dove, my perfect one,
For my head is filled with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night."
"I have put off my robe," I said,
"How can I dress me?
I have washed my feet,
How can I soil them?"

[1] She responds in the same strain, and gives him permission to enjoy them.

[2] He accepts her gifts.

[3] These are supposed to have accompanied him for protection and companionship on his dangerous errand, and to have remained a little in the background while he advanced to find Shulamith. They overhear the tender conversation of the lovers, and, charmed with their innocence and beauty, involuntarily bid them Godspeed.

[4] The scene just described repeated itself in her dreams the following night, which she here relates to the ladies, except that the details of it are changed. Her lover, she thought, came to her in the night to persuade her to flee with him, etc.

My beloved put his hand through the lattice,
And my pity was moved for him.
I rose to open to my beloved,
And my hands dropped myrrh,
And my fingers flowing myrrh upon the handle.[1]
I opened to my beloved,
But my love was departed, was gone!
My soul went from me at his word!
I sought him, but I found him not;
I called him, but he answered not.
The watchmen who go about the city found me;
They struck me; they wounded me;
They lifted my veil off me, —
The watchmen of the walls.
I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye find my beloved, tell him
That I am languishing with love.

THE LADIES.

What is thy beloved (more) than another beloved,
Thou fairest among women?
What is thy beloved (more) than another beloved,
That thou dost so adjure us ?

SHULAMITH.

My beloved is fair and ruddy,
A bannered one among a myriad.
His head (crown) is of virgin gold,[2]
His locks flowing and dark as a raven.
His eyes like doves by the brooks,
Bathing in the white foam
And sitting by the full waters.
His cheeks are as beds of sweet flowers,
Like trellises of perfumes;
His lips are lilies dropping liquid sweets;
His hands circlets of gold,

[1] Her lover had taken hold of the door on the outside with profusely anointed hands." — *Zöckler.*

[2] A brilliant yellow turban or cap.

Set with Tarshish stones;[1]
His body shining ivory,[2]
Overlaid with sapphires;
His legs are columns of marble,
Set in golden sockets (sandals);
His countenance is like Lebanon,
Majestic as the cedars;
His lips are the sweetest,
And he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

THE LADIES.

Whither has thy beloved gone,[3]
Thou fairest among women;
Whither has thy beloved turned aside,
And we will seek him with thee?

SHULAMITH.

My beloved has gone down to his garden,[4]
To the beds of balm,
To feed in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine,
Feeding among the lilies.

SCENE VIII.

[*The same apartments.*]

SOLOMON.

Thou art lovely, my dear, as Tirzah,[5]
Beautiful as Jerusalem —

[1] Topazes; perhaps referring to his polished finger-nails.

[2] His close-fitting white tunic or vest.

[3] Probably spoken ironically; taking literally what she had said of their "finding" him.

[4] That is, repelling their irony, he simply has entered her *heart;* he enjoys her affections.

[5] A city about nine miles east of Samaria, in a very beautiful position, the capital of the kingdom of Jeroboam and Israel (1 Kings 16 : 8).

Formidable as bannered hosts![1]
Turn away thine eyes from my face,
For they agitate me.
Thy hair is like a flock of goats
Reposing upon Gilead;
Thy teeth like a flock of shorn ones
Which come up from the washing,
All of them twinning themselves,
And none without her mate.
Like a slice of pomegranate thy cheek
From behind thy veil.
There are sixty queens,
And eighty concubines,
And maidens without number.
One only is my dove, my perfect one,
The only one of her mother,
The choice one of her that bore her.
Daughters saw her and congratulated her,
Queens and concubines, and they praised her.

THE LADIES.

Who is this that looks forth like the morning,[2]
Fair as the white one (the moon),
Bright as the hot one (the sun),
And formidable as bannered hosts?

SHULAMITH.

I was walking to the garden of nuts
To look at the fruits of the valley,
To see the blossoming of the vines,
The budding of the pomegranates;
Ere I knew it my soul had put me
Among the chariots of nobles.[3]

[1] Referring to her frowns at being addressed with new compliments by the king.

[2] Echoing the words of the monarch, as if with astonishment at her presumption.

[3] She had been so engrossed in thought that she did not perceive the approach of the royal guards. This is her answer to the accusation of being cold and frowning; she is a *captive*. Here she apparently turns to leave the room.

THE LADIES.

Come back, come back, O Shulamith,
Come back, come back,
That we may see thee.

SHULAMITH.

What would you see in Shulamith?

THE LADIES.

One of the dances of Mahanaim.[1]

SOLOMON.

How beautiful are thy sandaled feet,
Thou princely daughter!
The girdles of thy hips are like necklaces,
The work of a skilled hand;
Thy girdle clasp a round bowl filled with wine;[2]
Thy bodice a wheat-sheaf bound with lilies;
Thy bosom like young twin fawns;
Thy neck a tower of ivory;
Thine eyes pools in Heshbon,[3]
By the gate leading to Bath-rabbim;
Thy nose like the tower of Lebanon
Looking towards Damascus.
Thy head upon thee is like Carmel;
The locks of thy head like royal purple,
The king is held captive in its ringlets.

[1] An evident allusion to Gen. 32:2. *Mahanaim*, in the dual number, signifies the two hosts or camps; hence, the rendering given by our English version. The "dance of Mahanaim" is therefore supposed to be a dance of two companies of ladies responding to each other with singing and music, like that of Miriam and her companions at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:20). As Shulamith claims to be only a simple country maiden, the court ladies bid her perform a dance of that sort for the amusement of the king. She is obliged to obey, and while so employed he addresses her the voluptuous song that follows.

[2] That is, a round brooch or clasp consisting of a ruby set in a golden circlet.

[3] Heshbon, the ancient capital of Moab (Deut. 2:24). A pool of water mirroring the blue sky is a beautiful simile for the liquid blue eye of a lady. Probably reference was made to known features of the city.

How fair and how charming, love,
Art thou in pleasures!
This thy stature is like a palm-tree,
And thy bosom like its clusters.
I said, I will climb the palm-tree,
I will grasp its branches,
And thy bosom shall be to me
As clusters of the vine,
And the breath of thy mouth like apples,
And thy palate like good wine
Going down for my beloved smoothly,
Awaking the lips of the sleeping.[1]

SHULAMITH.

I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me.
Come, my beloved, let us go into the country;[2]
Let us lodge (on the way) in the villages.
Let us rise early to reach the vineyards;
Let us see whether the vine flourishes,
The grape blossoms are opening,
The pomegranates are budding.
There will I give my loves to thee.
The mandrakes breathe fragrance,
And at our gates, all precious things,
Both new and old, my love,
I have garnered for thee.
Would thou wert as a brother to me,[3]
That nursed the bosom of my mother;

[1] The lascivious meaning of this address is unmistakable. How is it possible to see in it any expression of the love of Christ for his church? The very suggestion seems to us shocking. Viewed as an address of a royal voluptuary to a new recruit for his harem, it is entirely in keeping. Shulamith's only reply to it, worthy of her insulted dignity and purity, is that she belongs to her lover only.

[2] An apostrophe to her lover, urging him to come and take her to her home.

[3] Spoken apparently in sudden remembrance of the harsh treatment her brothers had before shown to her. Would that her lover was like a brother rather than a lover, for then she might receive him to her home without being repelled.

I would find thee in the street;
I would kiss thee, yet they would not despise me.
I would lead thee, I would bring thee
Into the house of my mother.
Thou wouldst instruct me.
I would give thee to drink spiced wine
Of the juice of my pomegranate.
Thy left hand should be under my head,
And thy right hand should embrace me.
I adjure you, ye daughters of Jerusalem,
That ye wake not, and that ye incite not love,
Until it wills.

SCENE IX.

[*Home again.*][1]

VILLAGERS OF SHUNEM.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness[2]
Leaning upon her beloved?

THE SHEPHERD (*arm in arm with Shulamith*).

Under this apple-tree I waked thee (to love),[3]
There thy mother travailed with thee,
There travailed she that bore thee.

SHULAMITH.

Oh, set me as a seal upon thy heart,[4]
As a signet upon thine arm;
For strong as death is love,
Unrelenting as Sheol is jealousy;
Its shafts are brands of fire,
A lightning flash from Jehovah.

[1] Her repulse of the king seems to have convinced him of the hopelessness of his suit; and we next see her with her lover on the way to her native village. The inference is that the monarch yielded to her passionate entreaties, and permitted her to leave the harem.

[2] The open country; leading up to the village on the mountain side.

[3] Some spreading tree in the garden or field where the lovers first pledged their affections.

[4] A passionate appeal from Shulamith that he will be true to her, as she has been to him.

Many waters cannot extinguish love,
Nor rivers overwhelm it.
If one give all the wealth of his house for love
With scorn shall he be scorned.[1]

SHULAMITH'S BROTHERS.

We had a sister, a little one,
And she was yet a child, —
"What shall we do for our sister,
In the day when she shall be spoken for?
If she shall be a wall,
We will build upon her a silver tower;
If she shall be a door,
We will close her with a plank of cedar." [2]

SHULAMITH.

I am a wall, and my bosom like towers;
Then was I in his eyes [3]
As one that findeth peace.
Solomon has a garden in Baal-Hamon;
He committed the garden to keepers,
Each brings, according to his fruit,
A thousand (pieces) of silver.
My vineyard, which is my own, is before me.

[1] Probably an allusion to the attempt which Solomon had made to win her by his riches and grandeur. Herein is the great moral lesson of the poem. LOVE MUST BE SPONTANEOUS; IT CANNOT BE BOUGHT. Golden words, worthy to be made the motto, the guiding truth, in every home of the world.

[2] This seems to be a recital by the brothers, who, after the death of their father, had had the guardianship of Shulamith, of what their plans had been for her when she was young. They had resolved that if she grew up virtuous and firm in honor like a wall, they would make her rich, but if she debased herself, like an open door free to all that came, they would keep her in ignoble confinement, like a door stopped up by a rude plank. The thought and the expression are highly figurative, after the sometimes grotesque conceptions of oriental fancy.

[3] That is, Solomon's. Shulamith declares that she was firm under her trial, and her very charms, which exposed her to temptations, she made as towers of strength for her defense; in consequence of which she won the favor of Solomon himself.

The thousand (pieces) are for thee, O Solomon,
And two hundred for them that keep the fruits.[1]

THE SHEPHERD.

O thou that dwellest in the gardens,
Our friends are listening to thy voice.
Let me hear it.

SHULAMITH.

Haste thee, beloved!
And be like a gazelle or a young hart
Upon the mountains of sweet Spices![2]

Our readers will compare this translation, made in accordance with the plan of Professor Ginsberg, with the more usual hypothesis of an allegory, and judge for themselves of its reasonableness. Whichever view is preferred, or even both if there be warrant for both in the recognized

[1] The meaning is obscure, but may be reasonably inferred from the usage of the poem in making a vineyard or garden and its fruits representatives of a person and his pleasures. Compare chap. 1:6; 4:12–16; 6:2. Solomon's garden is therefore his royal state and equipage as it came to Baal-hamon, near Shunem. His officers and ladies are its keepers, ministering to his pleasures, each their share, viz., luxuries of all sorts, money, wines, rich garments, perfumes, and women. These are his thousand silver shekels. In contrast with his splendor, she had only one little vineyard, but it was her own, and its fruits could not be bought. Let Solomon have his luxuries; let his courtiers and women share in them, each according to their deserts; enough for her that she was free and at liberty to give her affections as she pleased.

[2] These words of the lovers are apparently a playful allusion to those spoken by them when last together here, at the time of their separation (Ch. 2:14–17). He addressed her then as dwelling in the mountain cliffs; now she is in the gardens of freedom. Then the "companions," her brothers, overheard them, and frowned upon her; now they hear her, and approve. He asks then anew, as before, "Let me hear thy voice," and her reply is the same, with one significant variation. She then bade him wander as a lonely hart on the mountains of *Separation;* she now bids him speed exultingly to the mountains of *sweet Spices!* Does there need to be an interpreter of her meaning?

laws of interpretation, is sufficient to make this book worthy of a place in the volume of God's Word. If for ourselves we give our preference to the former, it is solely because it seems to us best to accord with the rules which should govern us in the exposition of all parts of the sacred volume. At the same time, neither view necessarily excludes the other. We may suggest upon either hypothesis some of the divine lessons taught us herein.

1. Take the primary sense of a *love poem*. We have here, first, a delineation of a simple, natural, mutual affection, such as God, our Father, and the author of our being, inspires. It has sprung up in appropriate circumstances between two young hearts of like age, outward condition, occupations, and tastes. It is pure in its origin and in its desires. Not a taint of mercenariness, unholy ambition, or sensuality defiles it. It inspires, refines, and elevates their whole characters. It idealizes life and the world, and throws over all the work and care and monotony of this earthly existence a halo of poetry. In the words of its own beautiful eulogy: —

> "Strong as death is love,
> Unrelenting as Sheol is jealousy;
> Its brands are brands of fire,
> A lightning flash from Jehovah.
> Waters many cannot extinguish love,
> Nor rivers overwhelm it.
> If a man would give all his riches for love,
> With scorn should he be scorned."

Side by side with this pure affection, and in direct hostility to it, is pictured another of a different sort. A king, rich, powerful, voluptuous, has captured one of these young lovers, and seeks to add her a willing inmate to his harem. He offers her jewels and silks and perfumes. He causes her to ride in splendor in his royal processions. He employs the bedizened ladies of his court, poor victims of his sensuality, to sing to her his praises, and, if possible, seduce her to be one like themselves. He loads her with flatteries and caresses. He will set her above princesses and queens. But all is in vain. The simple village girl, strong in her constancy and fidelity, repels all his endeavors. Standing before him in the dignity of injured innocence, her sweet, severe countenance, he confesses, terrifies him, —

> "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
> And formidable as bannered hosts."

At length, just when our hearts begin to ache for her, both in sympathy for her trial, and through fear lest she will not prove strong enough to hold out, she reaps the reward of her constancy. The good-natured monarch relents; she is "in his eyes as one that found favor." She is dismissed from the palace, and, rejoining her lover, crowns his fidelity as well as her own with a union upon which we instinctively feel the blessing of the Lord will rest.

Now we submit that the two lessons thus taught are worthy of God to teach, and most needful for mankind to learn. Marriage, as he appointed it, is the first of all institutions, and the most fundamental to the happiness and purity of mankind. Marriage perverted, debased by worldliness, sensuality, and oppression, has been in all ages a most fruitful source of sin and woe. One of the first evidences that man had fallen from his primeval state was that he began to oppress woman, and from the days of Lamech, the first polygamist, to Sultan Aziz and Brigham Young, the annals of that foul wrong have continued to defile human history. Can any divine word of command or counsel intended to repress this awful wrong, and teach mankind the true idea of God's primal institution, and of that sacred affection which gives it its strength and purity, be unneeded or out of place in his holy Book?

Let this divine poem, cleared of its obscurity, and made to utter distinctly its true instruction, be read alongside of that shameful record of the debauchery of Solomon in the eleventh chapter of 1 Kings. May we not see a reason why such a book should have been then written and given to the Hebrew people? The splendor of the great king had been the wonder of the world. He was the visible earthly head of the kingdom of Jehovah. And such a head! On that marble-crowned summit of Moriah was the temple which Solomon

had built and dedicated to Jehovah, most Holy. And there beside it was Solomon's own house, the lawful mistress of which was Solomon's queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. Somewhere, too, near by was that other establishment filled with "women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites," "seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines." Now, one reason why many think it impossible for Solomon to have written this Song is found in just these facts. Would he have suffered the virtuous young Shulamite to escape in the way here intimated? And if he did, would he be likely to have written out the story of his defeat and shame, to be quoted against him in all time to come? Much more probably was the poem written a little later, by some prophet in the spirit of Nathan, who reproved David for his sins, in order to teach the church, and especially the young, that Solomon's establishment was not an ideal one for domestic happiness, — that better a simple cottage under the apple-tree in the country, with one true, faithful, loving heart to share it, than all the glory and guilt of the most exalted monarch.

And even in our own day, what more salutary or needful instructions can be taught, especially to the young, than those which we have ventured to suggest as included in the primary intent of this sacred book? What mother could ask for her son,

about leaving home to encounter the temptations of a city, wiser counsels than those here imparted? Monastic habits are not practicable nor desirable. The young of both sexes are made for society. It is in this that the inspired maxim becomes eminently wise and true, "Keep *thy heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Amid the allurements which gayety and fashion and pleasure hold out, let them never forget the charms of simplicity and purity, guided by the fear and love of God. There are no sweeter songs than those which were sung three thousand years ago between two young, pure, constant hearts on the hills of Palestine, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

2. If now we revert to the other theory named as to the interpretation of this book, we shall find our way not a little facilitated by the view already presented. A theory so ancient, and consecrated by the faith and devotion of the church for so many ages, even though it be not in strict accord with our latest exegetical science, is certainly to be regarded with profound respect.

This theory supposes that the personages which are mentioned in the song typify the Lord and his people. One of the chief difficulties, however, in carrying through the allegory consistently has commonly arisen from assuming that there is but one who claims the affections of the Shulamite, — or in other words, that the king and the shepherd-

lover are the same person, representing Jehovah under the old dispensation, and Christ under the new. Says Kitto's Cyclopædia: "What is most subversive of the allegorical theory is the fact that *three* principal persons appear in this Song, — viz., a shepherd, a shepherdess, and a king, and that it is the shepherd and not the king who is the object of the maiden's affection. This has been recognized by some of the most learned Jewish commentators of the middle ages, — viz., Ibn Ezra, Immanuel, etc., — and must be evident to every unbiased reader of the Song of songs."

To remove this difficulty, then, we need to introduce *three* correspondent persons into the allegory. If the shepherd and shepherdess represent Christ and his church, we need only suppose that the king who would seduce her from her allegiance represents the prince of this world employing his temptations to detach her from her constancy to her betrothed. Thus viewed, the allegory becomes simple and effective. The church, though solemnly espoused to her Lord, is nevertheless in the territories of his rival, the world. She longs for the society and the affections of Christ, but she must remain here, subject not only to the power of the world, but to the blandishments which the people of the world exert to draw her with them. Worldly glory assails her, — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. She is flattered and caressed; she is promised riches and

glory. But all is in vain. Invincible in her love for her Lord, she resists all these inducements, with her triumphant song, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." At last the Tempter retires baffled, and the Saviour, in reward of her constancy, receives her into a more intimate union here, which is consummated and perfected on the resplendent hills of rejoicing in heaven.

It will not be difficult, for those who know what the love and fellowship of Christ is to a soul which has betrothed itself to him, to carry out the analogies suggested in this Song. We might cite the testimonies of many who, in the overflow of their hearts, have poured forth the utterances of their love. Thomas à Kempis, Fénélon, Madame Guion, Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, Edwards, Payson, and a thousand more, have left us songs as sweet, and set to the same tune as this ancient Song of songs. To such as they no word of ours will be needed to show us the divine in this book. Said Rabbi Akaba: "No man in Israel ever doubted the canonicity of the Song of songs, for the course of ages cannot vie with the day on which this Song was given to Israel. All the Kethubim (sacred writings) are, indeed, a holy thing, but the Song of songs is a Holy of Holies."

CHAPTER VI.

RECAPITULATION.

We subjoin at the close of this discussion a brief review of the argument, in a somewhat different order from that which was followed in the preceding pages.

Taking, first, the Old Testament, we showed that it existed nearly in the form in which we now have it, in the time of our Saviour, and that it was used by him, and declared in many ways and times to be the Word of God. Indeed, he founded his own mission and claims as the Messiah upon its predictions, and commanded his disciples to search it as a witness that testified of him. All, therefore, that accept his authority must receive the inspiration of the ancient Scriptures as among the first Christian truths.

The same fact was asserted with like directness and frequency by the apostles. Everywhere, when they went forth to proclaim the gospel of salvation, they based it upon the teachings of the Scriptures, "opening and alleging that the Christ must needs have suffered, and that this Jesus whom they preached was the Christ."

Starting, then, from this well-attested fact, we look into the Book itself to observe its history and origin. The growth of the various writings which composed it into a definite collection, called the Canon of the Old Testament, was gradual, and was not fully completed until at or very near the Christian era. The precise stages of this process we cannot assign, it having been gradual and spontaneous, like all living growths, and therefore leaving no formal record of itself in history. The fact of such process we have assured to us by the *result*, the book as it is; and the divine superintendence which made it the Book of God, by the testimony already adduced of Jesus and the apostles declaring it to be such.

The Book so made up and so authenticated to us, — the Book which was Christ's own Bible, we have designated as *Our Father's Book*. And this authentication extends, by its very nature, to all the constituent parts. The father who presents to his son a birthday volume or library for his instruction gives him all that it contains. That son does not need to trouble himself about the sources from which it was obtained. He need not inquire who were its authors, what sort of men they were, when or where they lived, or any other fact pertaining to their personality. Some of them may be wholly unknown. They may have written originally for some purpose of their own without any forethought of the use which would afterward

be made of their writings. They may have derived their materials from original sources, or they may have used what had first been employed by others. We do not mean that all these points are without interest or importance, and worthy of being inquired into, but simply a full knowledge of them is not essential to the authority of the book. That authority is derived from the father's own acts in selecting and presenting the work. He knew their origin and characteristics, and his gift of them is all the *imprimatur* they need.

This view of the case shows how little occasion for alarm or anxiety there is in consequence of recent critical discussions as to the authorship of the Pentateuch and other Old Testament books. They who claim that Moses did not personally write the five that bear his name, but that they were compiled and edited at a much later date, out of fragmentary materials coming down from him in the way of tradition, etc., do not therefore impeach their truth or their divine authority. The learned and pious men of the Jewish church, priests and prophets, scribes and magistrates, who lived in the centuries following Moses, had opportunities for knowing the facts, and *their* action in accepting these books is sufficient evidence of their genuineness. Suppose five hundred years hence a question could arise as to the origin and authority of the Constitution of the United States; would not an historian of that day point to the fact of its

actual adoption by the several states within a brief period following as conclusive, even though the records of the Convention that framed it were lost? So with all critical discussions of like character. They no more affect the divine authority of the Book, than a question as to the authorship of the Imitation of Christ, or whether it was bought in New York or London, would affect the question of its genuineness or value as a portion of the father's gift.

We dwelt at much length upon the characteristics of the Sacred Writings, upon their variety of composition and of style, and their adaptations to persons of all ages and capacities, and in all periods of the world. We showed how these qualities increased their intelligibleness, their interest for all classes, and their power to move the heart. They are in all these things precisely in the manner of a wise father's instructions for his children, and are themselves among the most clearly marked evidences that they came from the source of all wisdom and goodness.

We referred also to the principles which should aid us in distinguishing between what is divine and human in this Book, or, in other words, in discerning the divine *in* the human. The one test which is to be employed, and which is sufficient to guide us safely, is to ask what the *Book* means. Thus in Job, the divine thought is not to be found in what Eliphaz, or Zophar, or Bildad,

or Elihu, or even Job himself says, — for they were all wrong on the main question in dispute, and were reproved by the Lord for darkening counsel by words without knowledge — but in what the work as a whole is designed to teach, viz.: the inscrutable sovereignty of God's Providence over mankind, and the duty of men to be humble, submissive, and obedient, and to wait for a full understanding of it till it can be read in the light of a better world.

In respect to the New Testament, our remarks scarcely need a recapitulation. The result of the whole discussion we earnestly hope will be to confirm all who have read it in a clear and steadfast faith in this Book as the Word of God, which worketh effectually in all them that believe. We hope the young, especially, will see that the demand made upon their faith is not without warrant. There is much aggressive skepticism abroad in our day. There are daily assaults upon the Bible by those who are hostile to it, from the learned agnosticism, which makes it a merit to "know nothing," to the coarse blasphemy of Ingersollism, but they have done no more to shake the foundations of God's Word than the storms and the waves of the Atlantic to disturb the eternal calm of the profound ocean depths. Despite all the pretensions of its foes, it remains true still, and never more so than to-day, that *the world's intellect bows to the authority of the Bible.*

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