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THE GREAT

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OF THE

THE PRESENT
RELIGIOUS CRISIS

BY
AUGUSTUS BLAUVELT



NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
27 AND 29 WEST 23D STREET
1882

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PREFACE.

AFTER having perused this volume, the reader will perceive that it is not designed to be complete in itself. On the other hand, it is put forth merely as the first of a series of volumes, the second of which will be entitled "The Religion of Jesus," and the third "Supernatural Religion."

Whether the author will or will not be able to develop the entire scheme of religious thought, which he has projected in his own mind, within the compass of these three volumes, without prolonging them to an undesirable length, remains to be determined. If he can, he will. Otherwise it will be abundant time to announce the specific titles of the remaining works after it becomes manifest that they must be written.

Like every other literary project or production, this one in particular has had its own inner and individual history. When the author says that he was graduated from Rutgers College, at New Brunswick, N.J., and also from the Peter Hertzog Theological Seminary, connected with the same institution, he has given a sufficient guaranty that his original instruction in divinity was of the most hyper-orthodox description. Nor does he concede that any alumnus of either Alma Mater ever went forth who was, to begin with, a more devout and implicit believer than he was in both the essentials and the non-essentials of the general orthodox theology, and notably that of the Calvinistic order.

It is needless to assure the reader, that, while he was a student at New Brunswick, the author was most securely

guarded against all contamination from modern infidelity. He does not remember, for example, that in those days he ever heard so much as the very mention of the name of Strauss. At the same time he does have an indistinct recollection, that, in a vague and general way, he was taught at once to dread and to abhor that modern theological monstrosity, namely, German Rationalism. Just why he should either dread or abhor it, he did not learn; but that it was a theological monstrosity of some sort or another, to be both dreaded and abhorred, he took for granted on the *ipse dixit* of those distinguished Doctors in Divinity whose special prerogative he then conceived it to be to form his opinions on all such subjects.

Thus matters continued even after the author's graduation, until some eighteen years ago. Then, for the first time, he chanced one day to get a formal introduction to Dr. David Friedrich Strauss, as that arch-heretic is represented in his first "Life of Jesus."

From that time onward the author has devoted himself, with a constantly increasing degree of exclusiveness, as a specialist, to investigations connected with the various departments of modern biblical and religious research.

The specific purpose with which he originally took up these investigations was to vindicate the traditional Protestant conceptions about the Bible and religion against all the assaults of the modern unbelievers. But from the very outset he conceived the idea, that, to make this vindication of any actual and permanent service to those conceptions, it must itself be actual, it must itself be scientific, it must itself be something decidedly more than merely theological. In other words, whatever inherited conceptions about either

the Bible or religion he found he could not establish by valid evidence and by legitimate reasoning, he resolutely determined that he would never make the effort to establish either by any such distortion of evidence or by any such illegitimate reasoning as he had fortunately come to discover to be only too characteristic of the mediæval apologists.

The longer he has prosecuted his researches from this standpoint and in this spirit, the more he has become astounded at the aggregate results to which he found himself arriving. Contrary to all his original anticipations, he has come more and more distinctly to perceive that the traditional Protestant conceptions about both the Bible and religion, instead of being scientifically defensible even down to details, require a revision and re-statement of the most revolutionary nature.

Some suggestions towards such a revision and re-statement the reader will find attempted in this series of volumes ; the first of which is herewith submitted to the consideration of that portion of the public which feels an interest in current biblical and religious discussions.

In the preface to his thoughtful and scholarly work on "The Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel," Dr. William Sanday says : "In looking back over this first attempt in the difficult and responsible field of theology, I am forcibly reminded of its many faults and shortcomings. And yet it seems to be necessary that these subjects should be discussed, if only with some slight degree of adequacy. I cannot think it has not been without serious loss on both sides, that, in the great movement that has been going on upon the Continent for the last forty years, the scanty band of English theologians should

have stood almost entirely aloof, or should only have touched the outskirts of the questions at issue, without attempting to grapple with them at their centre. It is not for me to presume to do this, but I wish to approach as near to it as I can and dare ; and it has seemed to me that by beginning upon the critical side, and taking a single question in hand at a time, I might be not altogether unable to contribute to that perhaps far-off result which will only be obtained by the co-operation of many men and many minds."

In like manner the present writer feels that any suggestions which he can personally make towards that fundamental revision of the traditional misconceptions about the Bible and religion which the present age and hour demand, must of necessity be more distinguished for their many faults and shortcomings than for any thing beside. But here in America the average theological considerations of these subjects have thus far been, in comparison with those of Germany, even more superficial, even more unintelligent, even more mediæval, than have been those of England. And it is high time that we began here in America to grapple in earnest with these questions at their very centre ; seeking to come to a thorough-going understanding with them, in view of the most advanced developments of present biblical and religious enlightenment, and even speculation.

If the author can only succeed in stimulating other and far more able minds, other and far more accomplished scholars, to contribute something towards a radical and satisfactory adjustment of these issues, he will after that be perfectly content to see his own crude conclusions discarded and forgotten.

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THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS CRISIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRISIS.

DR. GERHARD UHLHORN, a leading evangelical divine of Germany, affirms that "since the first days of the church, when she had to defend her faith against heathen calumny and heathen science, the attacks upon Christianity and the church have never been so manifold and so powerful as at the present time. The contest is no longer upon single questions, such as whether this or that conception of Christianity is the more correct, but the very existence of Christianity is at stake." ¹ Indeed, says Professor Christlieb, likewise of Germany: "Whether you visit the lecture-rooms of professors, or the council-chambers of the municipality, or the workshop of the artisan, everywhere—in all places of private or social gathering—you hear the same tale: the old faith is now obsolete." ²

Canon Liddon thus speaks for England: "The vast majority of our countrymen still shrink with

sincere dread from any thing like an explicit rejection of Christianity. Yet no one who hears what goes on in daily conversation, and who is moderately conversant with the tone of some of the leading organs of public opinion, can doubt the existence of a wide-spread unsettlement of religious belief. People have a notion that the present is, in the hackneyed phrase, 'a transition period,' and that they ought to be keeping pace with the general movement." 3

Professor Macpherson thus depicts the state of things in Scotland: "All religious questions seem to be at present once more thrown into the crucible, to undergo a fiery trial. Not merely the truths of revealed religion, but those truths which constitute what is termed natural religion, are subjected to this trial." 4 "It is also a characteristic of our times, that this contest respecting the foundation of religious belief is not confined, as it used generally to be, within certain circles of speculative men. All classes in society are taking part in it. The press, now so powerful in its influence, has involved rich and poor, learned and unlearned, in this great conflict." 5

Pressensé, speaking for France, declares that a formidable crisis has there commenced alike in the history of Catholicism and of Protestantism, and that nothing will check it. There is not a single

religious party, he says, which does not feel the need either of confirmation or transformation. All the churches are passing through a time of crisis. Aspiration toward the church of the future is becoming more general and more ardent." ⁶

In a private letter to the author, Professor J. F. Astié thus speaks for Switzerland: "In America, the theology of the past is still powerful. With us, orthodoxy has lost the control. At the utmost the old theology is here without hold, except upon such minds as are at once narrow and fanatical. May you never know in the United States the sad condition in which we are here; for we are here suspended between a past which cannot be restored, and a future which cannot be born. May you not have, as we have had, a theological and ecclesiastical revolution, but rather a religious evolution which is at once calm and peaceful."

But that we are, at least in some initial way, beginning to pass here in America, either through an agitated theological revolution, or through a comparatively calm and peaceful religious evolution, is patent on the surface. Modern unbelief, in one form or another, constitutes to-day one of the uppermost topics of our nation and our times. Our pulpits, according to the modern or mediæval attainments of their respective occupants, make it one of the most prominent subjects either of their discus-

sions, or their declamations, or their semi-imprecatory supplications. It pervades all departments of our domestic literature, whether secular or religious: It is being discussed by us, now in our private conversations, now in our social gatherings, now in our lyceums or club-rooms. Special professorships and lectureships are devoted to its demolition. Our popular platform orators find it to their pecuniary profit to promulge it.

Nor is the radical religious revolution which is to-day sweeping, or beginning to sweep, over this, in common with all other Christian countries, either a mere matter of the moment, or due to any temporary or evanescent causes. Adam Storey Farrar, in his Bampton Lectures for 1862, puts it down as the fourth great historical crisis of the Christian faith, and finds himself obliged to treat of it in connection with the development of modern thought in three nations for two centuries. These are, first, English Deism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; secondly, French Infidelity in the eighteenth century; and, thirdly, German Rationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷

The present religious crisis, then, has already been in progress for more than two hundred years, and has gathered up into itself all the motion and momentum imparted to great religious epochs by international scholarship and thought. Nor can it

be doubtful that the underlying causes which have thus far imparted to it this persistent vitality will continue to increase in volume, and to push the crisis forward until every one of its profoundest problems, which is capable of a solution, has eventually been settled, and settled to the satisfaction of every cultured mind.

In Germany, where its development has been the most complete, its results have been the most disastrous to all the traditional conceptions of Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant. And elsewhere throughout Christendom, in proportion as its influences extend, almost in that proportion do the like results obtain, or threaten to obtain.

As for us who have become more or less inextricably involved in this onward religious movement, it certainly cannot be premature for us, on the one hand, to make the effort to discover, in so far as may be possible, whither we are tending; and, on the other hand, to provide ourselves, in so far as we may be able, with at least some provisional religious beliefs and hopes, to take the place of those beliefs and hopes from which we have undoubtedly departed, and departed never to return.

CHAPTER II.

DOGMATIC THEOLOGY.

IN his Cunningham Lectures for 1873, Dr. Rainy confesses that he finds himself confronted in Scotland, not merely with heresy, but with heresy persistently professed, and such heresy as is subversive of what is fundamental in the current views of Christianity.¹

Some specimens of this heresy may be found by the reader in the volume entitled "Scotch Sermons," issued in 1880. Thus, one of the contributors, the Rev. W. L. M'Farlan, professes to speak for a class which includes in it many of the religious teachers in all the churches. This writer, among other things, proceeds to exhibit some of the sections of scholastic theology which these religious teachers regard as specially untenable. These sections, he affirms, comprehend the following dogmas: 1. The descent of man from the Adam of the Book of Genesis; 2. The fall of that Adam from a state of original righteousness by eating the forbidden fruit; 3. The imputation of Adam's guilt to all his posterity;

4. The consequent death of all men in sin ; 5. The redemption in Christ of an election according to grace ; 6. The quickening in the elect of a new life ; 7. The eternal punishment and perdition of those who remain unregenerate.²

This single example suffices to illustrate, that, within the bosom of all the Protestant denominations, there exist to-day representative persons who have undergone a more or less radical revolution of opinion concerning almost every dogmatic statement of doctrine which has come down to us from the dogma-making epochs. The creed cannot be named, which is so brief that some more or less considerable party in the Protestant churches does not to-day contend for its abridgment. The dogma cannot be instanced, which is so fundamental that some representative minority in the Protestant ranks does not to-day contend, either for its revision and restatement, or for its absolute abandonment.

Let us who are on the extreme wing of this progressive movement within the Protestant ranks declare our position, if possible, with even more distinctness. Our rupture with Protestantism does not relate to those mere minor matters of belief which divide Protestants into all their wearisome array of theological sects and cliques. All these sects and cliques combined could not to-day put forth any mere abstract and consensus of their belief so short

that we would not cut it shorter, or so fundamental that we would not either greatly modify it, or reject it altogether.

To illustrate. We find in the Constitution of the Evangelical Alliance a brief summary of the consensus of the various evangelical or Protestant confessions of faith. The opening article—which we need alone to cite—is this:—

“1. The divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.”

Do we, the representative minority of religious revolutionists still classified with Protestants, and presumably in question,—do we accept of even this consensus?

If we do not, we may no longer deserve the name of Protestants; we may no longer deserve in any traditional sense the broader name of Christians; but do we accept of this consensus?

Before we give any decided and decisive answer on this point, it will be well to come to such an understanding with ourselves as to render it certain what sort of an answer we alone can give with entire mental rectitude, not to say with entire moral honesty.

And, in the first place, let us direct our attention to a portion of Article VI. of the Church of England. Here it is: “Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is

not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church."

With this, so far as our present purpose is concerned, all the Protestant churches will substantially agree.

Over against this the Dogmatic Decrees of the late Vatican Council fulminate as follows: "All those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith, which are contained in the Word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church, either by a solemn judgment, or by her ordinary and universal magisterium, proposes for belief as having been divinely revealed." ³ "And these books of the Old and New Testament are to be received as sacred and canonical in their integrity, with all their parts, as they are enumerated in the decree of the said Council." ⁴

The semi-scholarly reader will perceive, therefore, that Protestants, first of all, affirm that the Scriptures alone can furnish the Christian church with a divinely authoritative subject-matter for her dogmas. Catholics, on the other hand, allege that the written books of the Bible, and the unwritten traditions of the

Church, are equally of a divine authority in all matters of Christian belief, so long as those traditions are only duly proposed and sanctioned by the ruling powers of Rome. But, if the unwritten traditions of the Church be excluded from the problem, we begin at once to approximate to something like a consensus of opinion, even between the Catholics and Protestants. They both concur, that is to say, in the view that the Bible—the written Bible—is divinely authoritative in matters of religious belief, alike for Protestants and Catholics.

And yet they, of course, have their well-known traditional dispute concerning what the written Bible is. What sacred books together constitute the written Bible? The Catholics say that this was all settled by the sacred Synod of Trent, and that the apocryphal books of the Old Testament must be admitted in the canon. The Protestants contend quite as stoutly that these apocryphal books must not be admitted in the canon. But, if this further bone of contention about the canonical character or uncanonical character of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament be cast aside, we find the high contesting parties standing again almost peaceably together. In other words, while the Catholics will not concede that the Protestant Bible contains, in the Old Testament division, all the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures, they will not merely concede,

but insist, that all the books which the Protestant Bible *does* contain are undoubtedly canonical.

Nor can any Protestant body, no matter how supremely anti-Catholic, desire a more emphatic statement of the divine and infallible inspiration of the Scriptures than is presented in the Vatican Decrees. For those decrees explicitly affirm that both the Old and New Testaments contain revelation with no admixture of error, for the reason that, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author.⁵

But not only do Protestants and Catholics to-day concur in the view, first, that all the special books which together constitute the Protestant Bible are sacred and canonical, and, secondly, that these special books, taken in their integrity and with all their parts, present the traditional theological dogmatists with a subject-matter for their dogmas which is at once divinely inspired and therefore absolutely devoid of every kind of error. Catholics and Protestants have from the very outset held this view in common. It is indeed true, that, on the former point, neither the Protestant divines nor the Catholic divines would to-day regard some of the leading reformers and biblical scholars of the sixteenth century as supremely orthodox. Thus Luther denied the canonicity of the Book of Esther. He repudiated the apostolical authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the

General Epistles of James and Jude, and also of the Apocalypse. The Apocalypse in particular Luther placed very much on a parity with the Fourth Book of Esdras, — which latter book he talked of throwing into the Elbe. And to him the Epistle of James was but an epistle of straw.

Dr. Davidson, who is our authority for the above statements concerning Luther, likewise affirms that Bodenstein of Carlstadt divided the biblical books into three classes, namely, those of the first, those of the second, and those of the third rank, in point of dignity and authority; that Zwingli pronounced the Apocalypse to be uncanonical; and that Œcolampadius would not permit either the Apocalypse, or James, or Jude, or Second Peter, or Second and Third John, to be compared with the other portions of the Scriptures.⁶

But all this is scarcely more than an individual development — an almost accidental feature — connected with the Reformation. The questioning of the canonicity of the books to-day composing the Protestant Bible did not then become general; and did not, even so far as it progressed, meet with any thing like an ultimate and general Protestant acceptance. For whether we consult the Helvetic Confession, the Gallic Confession, the Belgic Confession, the Westminster Confession, the Confession revised and accepted by the Synod of Dordrecht, or consult

the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, what do we discover? We discover simply that the Reformation of the sixteenth century decided, in its aggregate and final outcome, as that outcome found expression in the sub-Reformation theology, that the Protestant churches would reject the apocryphal books contained in the Catholic canon of the Old Testament Scriptures, but would retain all the other books of the old Catholic Bible, as being truly sacred and canonical, and making up together their own Holy Scriptures.

As for the second point, we only need to cite by way of proof the following remark by Adam Storey Farrar: "The belief in a full inspiration was held from the earliest times, with the few exceptions observable in occasional remarks of Origen, Jerome, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Euthymius Zigabenus in the twelfth century." 7

Looked at, therefore, only with reference to the leading issues and controlling outcome, it was with regard, neither to the canonicity of the various books at present composing the Protestant Bible, nor to the divine and infallible inspiration of those books, that the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century came to an open rupture with the Church of Rome. On both of these points they found themselves practically accordant with the views already existing in the Church of Rome. All they did was

simply to accept and adopt both these points almost precisely as they found them in the Church of Rome, as being common postulates alike of Catholic and Protestant theology. And that they did this without any due examination of either the one postulate or the other, all modern biblicists are perfectly aware.

But since the sixteenth century, and especially during the present century, both these postulates have been examined into with some degree of thoroughness, and still an increasingly profound and searching and scholarly examination of them continues to progress. As Strauss has it: "The old Reformation had an advantage in this, that what then appeared intolerable appertained wholly to the doctrines and practices of the Church, while the Bible, and an ecclesiastical discipline simplified according to its dictates, provided what seemed a satisfactory substitute. The operation of sifting and separation was easy; and, the Bible continuing an unquestioned treasure of revelation and salvation to the people, the crisis, though violent, was not dangerous. Now, on the contrary, that which then remained the stay of Protestants, the Bible itself, with its history and teaching, is called in question: the sifting process has now to be applied to its own pages." ⁸

What has been the result of this modern sifting of the traditional Catholic and Protestant views about

the Scriptures? Can we, who are more or less thoroughly conversant with the sifting process, any longer believe, for one thing, that all the books and portions of books which together constitute the Protestant Bible are canonical? Can we any more believe all those books and portions of books are divinely inspired, and therefore utterly devoid of every sort of error?

If we should accordingly ask ourselves afresh whether we can accept any mere abstract, no matter how brief, any mere consensus, no matter how unanimous and fundamental, of the various evangelical or Protestant confessions of faith, what must we answer? The indications are already becoming somewhat pronounced that we will be obliged to answer, that, with us, all further questions about the various Protestant confessions of faith are obsolete; and that it is extremely doubtful whether we can even accept any mere abstract and consensus of those fundamental, traditional views about the Bible which Protestants and Catholics alike agree upon, and which are placed at the very basis of all Catholic and all Protestant dogmatic formulations of what they are pleased to call sometimes Christianity, and sometimes the true religion of the Bible.

CHAPTER III.

THE VALIDITY OF THE BIBLICAL CANON.

WE have already adverted to the traditional dispute between Protestants and Catholics as it concerns the canonical or uncanonical character of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament. Leaving these parties to share their individual opinions on that subject, we will now proceed to examine very briefly into the validity of some of the leading reasons which the Protestants in particular have been in the habit of advancing in support of the canonicity of the several books composing the Protestant collection of the Holy Scriptures.

The chief argument which the older Protestant divines present for the canonicity of the Old Testament books, which they accept in common with the Catholics, consists in the allegation that all these books, and none others, received the explicit sanction of Jesus and his apostles. But among modern Protestant biblicists this line of argument must have a very modified value. Thus Professor W. Robertson Smith affirms that neither the Book of Esther,

nor that of Canticles, nor that of Ecclesiastes, is ever referred to in the New Testament.¹ Moreover, Dr. Davidson frankly concedes that the New Testament writings betray a familiarity with the ideas and expressions of the apocryphal books, as James with those of Sirach, Hebrews with those of Second Maccabees, Romans with those of Wisdom, and Jude with those of Enoch.²

Regarded from this point of view, therefore, modern Protestant biblical scholars would be compelled to admit that at least three of the non-apocryphal books — Esther, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes — must be excluded from the Old Testament canon, and that at least four of the apocryphal books — Sirach, Second Maccabees, Wisdom, and Enoch — must be included in such canon.

Again : The exact principle which guided the original collectors in the formation of the biblical canon is confessedly obscure. Still no one can question that authorship, or supposed authorship, had very much to do in deciding whether a particular book was to be accepted or rejected at the hands of such collectors. It is well known, for example, that, in the early ages of the Christian church, the New Testament writings were divided into two distinct classes. The first class was characterized as the *Homologoumena*, and the second class as the *Antilegomena*. The *Homologoumena* consisted of such

books as were universally recognized; the *Antilegomena* consisted of such books as were acknowledged in some parts of the church, but disputed in others. And, according to Professor W. Robertson Smith, the books in the first class were those of admitted and undoubted apostolical authority.³

But as early as the fifteenth century we find Erasmus denying the apostolical origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of Second Peter, and of the Apocalypse, but leaving the canonicity of these books unquestioned.⁴ And in the sixteenth century Calvin draws a corresponding distinction between the canonicity and the apostolical origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of Second Peter.⁵ And now, in the nineteenth century, something like a consensus of opinion is beginning to obtain among the modern, as distinguished from the traditional, Protestant biblical authorities, that, as Dr. Davidson observes, the canonicity of the books is a distinct question from their authenticity.⁶ Thus the general rule is laid down by the late Dean Stanley, that the authority or canonicity of a sacred book hardly ever depends on its particular date or name. For, says he, if for these purposes it was necessary that the writers should be known, nearly half the books of the Old Testament would at once be excluded from the canon.⁷ Nor need it scarcely be remarked, that, if authenticity should be made the standard of their

canonicity, not a few of the New Testament books would share a corresponding fortune. For it is not merely true that in these days a very large percentage of the Old Testament writings are decided to belong neither to the authors nor the ages to which they are traditionally accredited: it is equally true that Professor W. Robertson Smith merely expresses a prevailing modern scholarly conclusion when he affirms that a considerable portion of the New Testament is made up of writings not directly apostolical.⁸

In a subsequent chapter we will discover, in the New Testament department of modern biblical criticism, what slender claims the Gospels in particular possess to having been written by the original apostles or disciples of Jesus, whose respective names they bear. Just here it will suffice, for the benefit of such readers as are not familiar with these subjects, to instance a few of the considerations in view of which so much of the Old Testament literature is to-day decided to be of a more or less unauthentic character.

One of the clearest and most exhaustive expositions of this topic at large, existing in the English language, is that developed by Professor W. Robertson Smith, in his "Lectures on the Old Testament in the Jewish Church."

Speaking with special reference to the Pentateuch,

Professor Smith, among other things, observes : " The idea that Moses is author of the whole Pentateuch, except the last chapter of Deuteronomy, is derived from the old Jewish theory, in Josephus, that every leader of Israel wrote down, by divine authority, the events of his own time, so that the sacred history is like a day-book, constantly written up to date. No part of the Bible corresponds to this description, and the Pentateuch as little as any. For example, the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which, on the common theory, is a note added by Joshua to the work in which Moses had carried down the history till just before his death, cannot really have been written till after Joshua was dead and gone. For it speaks of the city of Dan. Now, Dan is the new name of Laish, which that town received after the conquest of the Danites in the age of the Judges, when Moses' grandson became priest of their idolatrous sanctuary. But, if the last chapter of Deuteronomy is not contemporary history, what is the proof that the rest of the book is so? As a matter of fact, the Pentateuchal history was written [not in the wilderness, but] in the land of Canaan. . . . In Hebrew the common phrase for westward is 'seaward,' and for southward, 'towards the Négeb.' The word Négeb, which primarily means parched land, is, in Hebrew, the proper name of the dry steppe district in the south of Judah. These expressions for west and

south could only be formed within Palestine. Yet they are used in the Pentateuch, not only in the narrative, but in the Levitical description of the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exod. xxvii.). But at Mount Sinai the sea did not lie to the west, and the Négeb was to the north. Moses could no more call the south side the Négeb side of the tabernacle than a Glasgow man could say that the sun set over Edinburgh. The answer attempted to this is, that the Hebrews might have adopted these phrases in patriarchal times, and never given them up in the ensuing four hundred and thirty years ; but that is nonsense. When a man says towards the sea, he means it. . . . Again; the Pentateuch displays an exact topographical knowledge of Palestine, but by no means so exact a knowledge of the wilderness of the wandering. The narrator knew the names of the places famous in the forty years' wandering ; but for Canaan he knew local details, and describes them with exactitude as they were in his own time (e.g., Gen. xii. 8, xxxiii. 18, xxxv. 19, 20). Accordingly, the patriarchal sites can still be set down on the map with definiteness ; but geographers are unable to assign with certainty the site of Mount Sinai, because the narrative has none of that topographical color which the story of an eye-witness is sure to possess. Once more: the Pentateuch cites as authorities poetical records which are not earlier than the time of Moses. One of

these records is a book, — the Book of the Wars of Jehovah (Num. xxi. 14). Did Moses, writing contemporary history, find and cite a book already current, containing poetry on the wars of Jehovah and his people, which began in his own times? Another poetical authority cited is a poem circulating among the *Môshelîm*, or reciters of sarcastic verses (Num. xxi. 27, *seq.*). It refers to the victory over Sihon, which took place at the very end of the forty years' wandering. If Moses wrote the Pentateuch, what occasion could he have to authenticate his narrative by reference to these traditional depositaries of ancient poetry?" 9

Such, then, are a few of the considerations assigned by Professor W. Robertson Smith, in proof of the position, that, as a whole, the Pentateuch never could have been written by Moses in the wilderness, but must have been written by some subsequent author, or rather by some subsequent series of authors, in the land of Palestine. And as of the Pentateuch, so of most of the other books, alike of the Old and New Testament. The more rigidly the subject of their authenticity is inquired into, the more doubtful does their authenticity become.

It should be carefully noted, however, that it has all along been quite aside from the present writer's purpose to enter at length upon the full and formal discussion of the general subject of the authenticity

or unauthenticity of the various biblical books. His design has been merely to permit Professor Smith, in the most summary manner possible, to place the ordinary reader, by an illustrative argument or two, on an understanding relation with modern biblical scholars on this question. The question itself has already been canvassed backward and forward, and over and over again. As the result of this discussion, biblical scholars have already become permanently divided into two well-defined classes, — the new and the old. Broadly speaking, the old continue to adhere to the opinion that the various biblical books belong to the authors and the ages to which they are traditionally referred. The new have reached the final conclusion that, exceptional instances aside, such is not the case.

Modern biblical scholars accordingly find themselves confronted with the following dilemma. Either they must admit that most of the books of both the Old and New Testament are not canonical; or else they must insist, after the manner of Dr. Davidson, Dean Stanley, and Professor W. Robertson Smith, that the authenticity of these books is no proper, or at least no necessary, criterion of their canonicity.

But, if authenticity be no necessary criterion of their canonicity, what criterion is to be adopted? Why, says Dr. Davidson: "Canonical authority lies in the Scripture itself; it is inherent in the books,

so far as they contain a revelation, or declaration of the divine will. Hence there is truth in the statement of the old theologians, that the authority of Scripture is from God alone."¹⁰ Or, as the same thing is substantially expressed in the Vatican Decrees: "These books of the Old and New Testament the Church holds to be sacred and canonical, not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by her authority, nor merely because they contain revelation with no admixture of error, but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself."¹¹

The general subject of the inspiration of the Bible is so large a one, however, that we shall be obliged to devote a special chapter even to the preliminary aspects of its consideration.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

THE extremest view of biblical inspiration is that promulgated in the extract from the Vatican Decrees which is cited at the conclusion of the foregoing chapter.

This view represents the entire biblical literature, from Genesis to Revelation, as having been so written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that it contains not merely a revelation, but a revelation without the least degree of error. And not only is this the view of the subject which is officially proclaimed to-day by the Church of Rome: it is likewise the view of the subject contended for, even in this nineteenth century, by the super-orthodox among the Protestant divines.

The question is thus raised, whether, as a matter of fact, the Bible does contain no elements of error.

In the New Testament department Strauss in particular has exhibited in great detail, and with a microscopic minuteness, the discrepancies and contradictions alleged to exist in our present Gospels.

Thus he points out, that, after a stormy passage across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus meets a single demoniac coming out of the tombs, according to Mark and Luke, but meets with two, according to Matthew.¹ So in the narrative of a certain cure of blindness said to be performed by Jesus at Jericho, Matthew duplicates the single blind man of Mark and Luke; and Luke makes the cure take place on the entrance of Jesus into Jericho, whereas Matthew and Mark make it take place on the departure of Jesus out of Jericho.²

But not only are such discrepancies and contradictions as these pointed out by Strauss, almost *ad nauseam*, all through the Gospels. Corresponding discrepancies and contradictions are pointed out by Zeller, Baur, Kuenen, and other so-called destructive critics, all through the Bible.

Every biblical scholar is familiar, of course, with the manifold expedients resorted to by the traditional harmonists and apologists, to explain away these discrepancies and contradictions. But modern, as distinguished from mediæval, biblical scholars, have too much intellectual self-respect to take refuge in any of these harmonistic and apologetic subterfuges. They prefer, on the other hand, frankly to recognize the facts, and to say that the Bible doubtless does more or less abound with errors, and such errors as destroy the proposition that it is infallibly inspired.

Thus, in a special test case, Professor Christlieb concedes that there are incompletenesses, inaccuracies, and non-agreement in details, in the Gospel histories of the Resurrection. He also assumes the general position, that faith depends not on the letter of Scripture, but on the essential substance of the facts recorded in it.³ But, as Renan well observes: "Errors of detail are no more compatible with the inspiration of the Holy Ghost than impostures are."⁴

Professor Tischendorf likewise says: "But the reply will be made to me, that with all this the contradictions of the Gospels are not solved. That such are, in fact, presented, though many have been arbitrarily and erroneously alleged, I do not deny. . . . We have, of course, no right to affirm a mechanical inspiration of the Evangelists which secures against every error."⁵

Pressensé affirms that there exists between the Synoptics and St. John a grave discrepancy, and one which has not yet received a satisfactory explanation, in relation to the date of the death of Jesus, — which event the fourth Gospel places on the 14th, and the Synoptics place on the 15th, of Nisan.⁶ This same writer insists that the first Gospel has assigned a wrong date to the celebration of the last passover.⁷ He also reasons that whereas, in recording the account of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, St. Matthew speaks of two asses, while the other

Evangelists mention only one, therefore the author of the first Gospel must have been guided by the parallelism of Zech. ix. 9, instead of giving us the correct statement of an ocular witness.⁸ "In fact," says Pressensé, with reference to the general characteristics of the Synoptics: "In parts they are almost absolutely identical. And yet they show numerous differences. . . . Often two of the Synoptics agree together, while the third relates the same fact with very considerable variations. How explain these resemblances and these differences? The theory of literal inspiration cuts the knot of the difficulty, for those at least who can accept an arbitrary system which does violence to the best-established facts, and in reality identifies the action of the Divine Spirit with a mechanical or magical force. We are happily not reduced to this desperate resource."⁹

Thus, without making any further exhibition of the evidence, do we already come upon another broad line of demarcation between the modern and the mediæval biblicists. The mediæval maintain that the Bible is infallibly inspired. The modern recognize the prevalence of a greater or less degree of error all through the Bible.

Nor is this recognition made by the destructive critics alone, who deny *in toto* that the Bible is inspired. It is made equally by modern critics who contend that the Scriptures contain, and contain in

the proper sense, a divine revelation. Here, for instance, Christlieb and Strauss, Tischendorf and Zeller, Pressensé and Baur, Professor W. Robertson Smith and Dr. Kuenen, are perfectly at one.

Thus far, however, the infallible inspiration of the Bible has been impugned chiefly with regard to what is characterized as the letter of the Scripture, in distinction from its substance. But how about the substance? To illustrate, Professor W. Robertson Smith directs our attention to the various conflicting statements which are made concerning the same events in the Chronicles and Kings.¹⁰ Take two or three examples. Chronicles affirm that Josiah's reformation began in his eighth year, before the law was found; Kings, that it began in his eighteenth year, and in pursuance of his having heard the law read after it had been discovered.¹¹ According to Chronicles, the expenses of the temple services were defrayed, in the early years of Jehoash, by a special collection levied upon all Judah; according to Kings, they were defrayed, during the same period, as a burden upon the priestly revenues brought in by the worshippers.¹² According to Chronicles, the local high places were abolished both by Asa and Jehoshaphat; according to Kings, they were abolished neither by Asa nor Jehoshaphat.¹³

Professor Smith admits that people may shake their heads at all this, and say that he is touching

the historical character of the Book of Chronicles. But his answer is, that our first duty is to facts. And the facts are doubtless as he states them.

Still further. Every one knows that for many centuries both the Catholic and the Protestant divines were accustomed to maintain that the Scriptures speak with a divine decisiveness in the department of physical science as well as in the domain of ethics and religion. But the Bible, at least as aforesaid interpreted, having proved to be a very fallible criterion in the former department, the general tendency of the mediæval biblicists in our own times is to take refuge in the position that the Scriptures were never designed to be considered as a scientific treatise or authority at all. Thus the Vatican Decrees themselves appear prepared to affirm that the Bible is infallibly inspired only in matters of faith and morals.¹⁴ "It is of supreme importance, moreover," says Dr. Geikie, "that we demand no more from Scripture than God intended it to yield. It was given to reveal him to us, and to make known his laws and will for our spiritual guidance, but not to teach us lessons in natural science."¹⁵ "It must therefore be an error to look for the exactness of scientific statement in the Scriptures. They were given for a specific purpose, and for that only, and in other matters use only the simple language of the senses, which all ages, from the earliest to the latest, can understand."¹⁶

So far as this argument goes, it may be accepted as a more or less complete vindication of the scientific inexactitude of very much of the biblical language in relation to physical phenomena. Thus, when the Bible affirms that the earth is fixed, or depicts the sun as rising and setting, it would be a manifest injustice to insist, after the manner of the old clerical persecutors of Copernicus and Galileo, that the Bible designs to teach, as a matter of scientific verity, either that the earth *is* fixed, or that the sun *does* revolve about our little mundane sphere. In all such instances as these the Bible doubtless speaks of natural phenomena only incidentally, and in the current language of appearance, — not as they would be spoken about in a formal scientific treatise, but merely as they would be spoken about in any popular book, or even in our ordinary conversation.

It materially militates against the present and the future fortunes of mediæval biblicism, however, that this argument does not go far enough to cover all the case in hand. For the Bible not merely speaks in an incidental way concerning physical phenomena, with no pretensions to teach the scientific truth about them. It likewise speaks concerning such phenomena as its direct subject-matter, and after such a fashion also that it must either declare the precise scientific truth about them, or else declare a scientific falsity. For instance, says Principal Daw-

son: "With respect to the history of creation and the subsequent references to it, we cannot rest in the general statement that the Bible is not intended to teach science, any more than we can excuse inaccuracy as to historical facts by the notion that the Bible [*e.g.*, the Book of Chronicles] was not intended to teach history." ¹⁷ "In the first chapter of Genesis we find an obvious attempt to give the method of creation, or at least its order in time. This narrative of creation trenches on the domain of science, and refers to matters not open to direct observation. It must therefore be a revelation from God, or a result of scientific induction or philosophical speculation, or a mere myth." ¹⁸ Which is it?

On the whole, Professor Haeckel considers that this Jewish account of the creation contrasts favorably with the confused mythology of the creation current among most other ancient nations. But he points out and emphasizes the fact, that the record represents the results of the great laws of organic development as being the effects, not of such laws, but of the direct actions of a constructing Creator.¹⁹ And it is notably with reference to this special aspect of the record that Professor Huxley must be understood as speaking, when he affirms, first, that the account of the origin of things given in the Book of Genesis is utterly irreconcilable with the doctrine of evolution; and, secondly, that the evidence upon which the

doctrine of evolution rests is incomparably stronger and better than that upon which the supposed authority of Genesis rests." ²⁰

Now, whether one personally adopts the evolution theory of the origin of things, or still adheres to the special-creation theory, this much is certain: the evolution theory has already secured a very widespread acceptance, and is constantly gaining fresh adherents; and that not merely among the professional physicists, but likewise throughout the reading, thinking world at large. And, in the estimation of all such persons as these, the Book of Genesis stands convicted of a scientific misstatement of the most fundamental character.

This conclusion is an *ex parte* one, indeed; but it is a conclusion which no modern biblicist can fail to recognize, and mention with respect.

Again: Principal Dawson frankly concedes these two things: first, that on no point has the Bible appeared to insist more strongly than on the creation of the earth and its inhabitants in six ordinary days; and, secondly, that nothing can be more surely established, on the basis of scientific induction, than the vast periods which such creation must have consumed, according to the evidences revealed by the strata of the earth's crust. ²¹

But Principal Dawson proposes to extricate the Bible from the charge of affirming a demonstrable

scientific falsity on this subject, by having recourse to the well-known rejoinder of the traditional divines that the Hebrew word *yom* does not of necessity mean a natural day of twenty-four hours.²² This no Hebraist will of course dispute. *Yom* sometimes signifies a natural day, and sometimes signifies a much greater lapse of time. Thus in Gen. ii. 4, it covers the entire period of the creation, however prolonged that period may have been. But if it ever means a natural day of twenty-four hours anywhere in the Scripture, it means that in the connection now immediately in question. Each of the six *yoms* is explicitly defined and limited as being a natural *yom* with a morning and an evening. Besides, the use of the word in Gen. ii. 2, 3, and in the Decalogue, is even more precise and fixed. God worked six *yoms*, and rested on the seventh. The Jews were to work six *yoms*, and rest on the seventh. And, according to all the best established laws of language, there is no more reason to say that *yom* means an indefinite geological epoch in the one instance than in the other.

Now, if the author of Genesis did not originally design to declare that the six *yoms* in which God created the heavens and the earth were six natural days, he was clearly bound to say so. If he had any idea that the creative *yom* was a different thing from the ordinary *yom*, instead of confounding them, as he

notably does in the Decalogue, his business was to distinguish them. And it was precisely as easy a thing for any Hebrew writer to do this, as it was for him to distinguish the Sabbath *yom* from the other *yoms* of the Jewish week, or the *yom* of the Atonement from the other *yoms* of the Jewish year.

But the case is even worse than this. If the alleged inspired author of Genesis had any conception that the work of creation consumed an almost indefinite lapse of ages, he might better not have employed the word *yom* at all in dividing up those ages into six special eras of development. Instead of *yom*, the word *olam* was the one for him to use. *Olam* conveys exactly that idea of almost indefinite eternalness which precisely corresponds to the modern scientific conception of a great creative epoch. And if, in the Decalogue and in the other passages of Genesis now being considered, it had only been asserted that God created the heavens and the earth, not in six *yoms*, but in six *olams*, how delighted the mediæval biblicists would have been to-day! We should then have heard them proclaiming far and near that the Book of Genesis had anticipated by many thousands of years the latest demonstrations of modern physical science concerning the almost immeasurable periods during which the creation of the cosmos must have been in progress. Nor would they then have been without an overwhelming argu-

ment. in favor of the supposition that, in so far at least, the Book of Genesis must have been inspired. As it is, Genesis says that the creation took place not in six *olams*, but in six *yoms*, and not in six creative *yoms*, but in six *yoms* so limited and defined that it is perfectly apparent that six ordinary *yoms*, corresponding to those of the current Jewish week, were explicitly intended. And under these circumstances, the less there is said either about the scientific correctness or the infallible divine inspiration of this portion of the Book of Genesis, the more respect thus much of the Bible will enjoy, and the less will be the ridicule to which the mediæval biblicists stand exposed in the estimation at once of every modern physicist and every modern biblicist.

Passing forward to the consideration of another detail of this so-called Mosaic account of the origin of things, Professor Huxley contemptuously observes that it would be an insult to ask any evolutionist whether he credits the preposterous fable respecting the fabrication of woman therein recorded.²³

Some time since the present writer directed the attention of a prominent physical scientist, who is also a conspicuous orthodox biblical apologist, to this remark of Huxley, with special reference to its bearing on the subject of biblical inspiration. We asked him in our letter whether he had any reply to make to Huxley here, and, if so, whether he would

communicate such reply to us in private, with permission to make it public. His answer, *italics and all*, runs as follows: "I would *not* be *referred to* as having expressed any definite views on the subject. But you will find what seem to me the best and most judicious statements I have met with, in Macdonald's 'Creation and the Fall.' He does not, however, define the *precise physiological nature* of excising the rib, or separable portion of the side, and building it into a woman. Very probably the original seer to whom the fact was revealed did not understand this any better than Huxley; but he had, no doubt, more faith and less brutal views of humanity. We *know* absolutely nothing of the *precise mode* of extraction of either man or woman; but to me the origin of man from the dust of the earth, and of the woman from the man, appears infinitely more probable than that of either from apes."

But in saying all this our distinguished physicist, after the manner of a model mediæval biblicist, manages to evade the real point at issue. The question is not whether he can explain the precise physiological nature of excising the rib, and building it into a woman, any more than it is whether he can explain the precise mode of the extraction of either man or woman. The question is, whether he is willing in this nineteenth century to come before the public, and openly declare, in his capacity of physical scien-

tist, that he veritably believes that the Deity did, as a matter of scientific record, and even as a matter of divinely inspired scientific record, cause a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and after any physiological process whatever excise one of Adam's ribs, and in any mode whatever build that rib into a woman. Put in this way, however, our eminent physicist does not care to be so much as *referred to* as having any definite views to express on the subject. But this much is not to be denied. Genesis affirms that Jehovah built Eve out of one of Adam's ribs, just as explicitly, just as circumstantially, and just as literally, as it affirms that Noah built an ark out of gopher-wood.²⁴ And if in these days we cannot conceive such a statement as this is to be scientifically tenable, it matters little after that by what special name the narrative in which it occurs is called. For whether it be called a preposterous fable, or a palpable myth, or an integral portion of the Sacred Scriptures, it is equally fabulous and false.

Among the ethical difficulties objected to the inspiration of the entire Old Testament, none have been more frequently discussed perhaps than those presented by the imprecatory Psalms.

If the reader needs to have his memory refreshed concerning the perfectly awful maledictions poured forth in these productions, he may read the one hundred and ninth Psalm by way of specimen.

Is such a class of literature as this divinely inspired? If so, what are we to think of the Deity who could have inspired it?

To these questions various answers have been attempted by the orthodox divines. And, of these answers, the most plausible one is to the effect that the Scriptures are made up of two different elements, — the divine and the human, — and that the Psalms now being considered are accordingly to be regarded, as Dr. Hessy expresses it in his Boyle Lectures for 1872, as the unrestrained expressions of the feelings of their respective writers.²⁵

But, from the standpoint of mediæval biblicism, there is, first of all, the fundamental objection to this theory, that it practically abandons the position that these special Psalms are in any sense inspired. For, if they are to be looked upon as the unrestrained expressions of their respective human writers, manifestly the Deity could have had no more to do with inspiring than restraining them. Besides, this theory makes a radically incorrect division of the Scriptures in its efforts to cover the case in hand. That is to say, instead of affirming that the Scriptures are composed of the divine element and the human, it would be requisite to affirm that they are composed of the divine element and the inhuman. For more inhuman expressions, in a more inhuman spirit, than these very Psalms abound with, it would be difficult

to instance in any language under heaven, whether civilized, semi-civilized, or barbarous.

Nor are these imprecatory Psalms by any means the only portions of the Old Testament which are regarded in these days as not deserving, from their very nature, to be accorded a position among the divinely inspired portions of the Scriptures. For example, Professor W. Robertson Smith puts down the Song of Solomon as a mere lyrical drama, in which, according to most critics, the pure love of the Shulamite for her betrothed is exhibited as victorious over the seductions of Solomon and his harem.²⁶ And M. Renan very pertinently inquires whether the author of this charming little poem ever could have suspected that he would one day be taken from the company of Anacreon to be set up as an inspired bard who sang of no love but the divine.²⁷

Thus, even upon this very partial and very superficial examination of the evidence, do we arrive at two well-established conclusions. The first of these conclusions is, that the Bible, as a whole, was never so written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost as to be devoid of every sort of error. The second of these conclusions is, that a greater or less proportion of the subject-matter of the Bible is of such a nature as utterly to preclude the supposition that the Holy Ghost ever could have had any thing whatever to do with its inspiration.

The question accordingly arises, in what manner the entire subject-matter of the Bible ever came to be regarded as having been immediately inspired by the Deity himself.

Every biblical scholar is aware, that, as a matter of historical fact, it was only by a very slow and gradual process that the various biblical books ever came, one after another, to be regarded even in the light of Scripture. Thus, in the days of Ezra, the Pentateuch alone appears to have enjoyed any such distinction. But by the close of the first Christian century the entire Old Testament literature seems to have arrived at that distinction likewise. It was not, however, until the second half of the second century of the Christian era, that, as a whole, the New Testament writings attained the eminence in question. But, from that time onward, the New Testament and the Old stand precisely on a parity. They are alike and indifferently cited as Scripture. They, together, make up the one sacred book — the one Holy Bible — of the Christian church at large.

Now, as there was this slow and gradual historical development of the idea that all the various biblical books deserved to be dignified with the name of Scripture, so there was a corresponding historical development of the idea that all those books were originally delivered to certain chosen men by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. If we

are to credit Professor W. Robertson Smith, for example, there was a period when the Jews assumed the position that the law of Moses, in and by itself considered, contained the whole revelation of God's goodness and grace, which either had been given, or ever could be given. They considered that the Psalms, the Prophets, and the other books were inspired indeed, but only in the sense of being authoritative interpretations and applications of the law of Moses.²⁸ But it will be perceived, that, even at this period, the conception that the entire Old Testament literature was in the fullest sense inspired, was slowly rising in the Jewish mind. And, when we come down to the days of Josephus, it had become natural, he says, to all Jews, immediately and from their birth, to esteem every one of the twenty-two books which he mentions as containing the decrees of God.²⁹ And presently we find Irenæus declaring the entire Scripture — inclusive of the New Testament as well as the Old — to be perfect, insomuch as it was uttered by the Spirit and word of God.³⁰

Thus, beginning in a germinal way simply with the Pentateuch, or the law of Moses, the idea, first of scripturalness, and after that of divine inspiration, became gradually attached by almost imperceptible degrees, during the long lapse of ages, to the entire biblical literature which we possess to-day.

We are now in a position to see the force of two

or three considerations of cardinal importance. The first relates to the almost nonsensical reasons in view of which both the later Jews and early Christians frequently came to associate the idea of a divine inspiration with the composition of their sacred writings. There was an opinion current among the ancient fathers, for instance, that Ezra himself, with five scribes to write at his dictation, within the period of forty days reproduced the entire Old Testament, in so far as it had been either destroyed or injured at the time of the Captivity. But the source of this superstition, Professor W. Robertson Smith assures us, was merely a fable to that effect existing in the Book of Esdras. The same authority informs us that the account of the origin of the Septuagint current in the days of Jesus was full of fabulous embellishments designed to establish the authority of the version as having been miraculously composed under divine inspiration.³¹ The very additions to the Hebrew text ventured upon by the Septuagint interpreters were considered to have been put in by the express authority of the Holy Ghost.³² Now, all this is simply childish; and so very childish that we must manifestly be upon our guard against accepting the entire biblical literature as having been divinely inspired, merely because it was so regarded whether by the later Jews or early Christians.

Another circumstance to note and emphasize is

this. The idea that the entire biblical literature is divinely inspired does not by any means inhere in that literature itself. On the contrary, it is an idea about the Bible, as a whole, which gradually grew up in the imagination of the later Jews and early Christians, in the manner pointed out above. In other words, while certain portions of the Scriptures profess to be inspired, other portions, and other very considerable portions, do not profess to be inspired.

In the New Testament department this is true, for instance, of the book of the Acts. The author of this book does not begin his record with the affirmation that he is about to write it in the capacity of a kind of amanuensis of the Holy Ghost. The key-note which he rather strikes is simply this: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach." On the supposition of the mediæval biblicists, which may for the moment be adopted, that the writer here is Luke, and that the former treatise to which he refers is the Gospel of Luke, we turn to the prologue of that Gospel for further information with relation to the point in hand. But, according to this prologue, the author of St. Luke's Gospel does not have the slightest suspicion that he is about to indite it under all the safeguards against every sort of error implied in the supervising inspiration of the Deity himself. He merely conceives himself to be one out of many con-

temporaneous writers who have undertaken to put on record the general subject-matter of his Gospel, and thinks it quite enough to say, by way of establishing his personal qualifications for the faithful execution of his task, that he was himself, from the very beginning, among the eye-witnesses of those things, his version of which he was about to write out systematically for the confirmation of the faith of his most excellent friend Theophilus. In like manner, if we compare St. John xix. 35 and xxi. 27, what do we discover? We discover merely that the author of the fourth Gospel declares himself to be, not a divinely inspired historian, but simply the disciple who wrote these things and knew that his testimony was true. In a word, you will search the four Gospels in vain to find them putting forth the internal claim of being divinely inspired records of the acts and words of Jesus. The Jesus of the four Gospels habitually speaks and acts, indeed, in the capacity of a divine messenger, and even of a divine revelator. But the Gospel records of Jesus' acts and words no more profess to be divinely inspired than do the current reports made in our modern newspapers of the movements and speeches of our leading public men.

And as of the New Testament, so of the Old. Not merely entire passages, entire books, do not profess to be inspired.

Let us, therefore, lay aside the altogether gratui-

tous assumption of the later Jews and early Christians, that these portions of the Bible are inspired, and look at them from their own standpoint; namely, that they are nothing more than ordinary human compositions.

Regarded from this point of view, the undeniable discrepancies and contradictions with which our present Gospels abound do not present the slightest embarrassment to the modern biblicist. No four human writers will narrate their several accounts of the same events without a greater or less degree of divergence in relation to the details.

The same remark applies with reference to the various conflicting statements which we have seen to exist between the Chronicles and Kings. For neither do the Chronicles nor Kings any more profess to be divinely inspired histories than do the histories of Gibbon or Macaulay.

So with regard to the imprecatory Psalms. The Psalms themselves do not pretend to be inspired. Aside from the single expression, "The Lord said unto my Lord," a "Thus saith the Lord" does not occur, so far as we recall, throughout the whole collection. "The Greek doctrine of the inspiration of the poet," Professor W. Robertson Smith observes, "never led to the recognition of certain poems as sacred scriptures. But the Indian Vedas were regarded in later times as infallible, eternal, divine." 33

In like manner the Psalms, originally claiming to be only a portion of the merely human religious poetry of Israel, gradually became converted, in the superstitious imagination of the later Jews, into the veritable Jewish Vedas, — sacred, eternal, and divine. But, looked at in their true light as purporting to be only purely human ancient Jewish poetry, the imprecatory Psalms cast no reflection whatever on the Deity. David may or may not have personally composed them. But, even if he did, the Holy Ghost stands no more responsible for their monstrous maledictions than he does for the murderous and adulterous animus of the letter which David wrote to Joab, saying: "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die." ³⁴

Another pertinent example would be the Song of Songs. Not only does this poem expressly purport to be Solomon's, not the Lord's. Even so recently as the apostolical era, R. Akiba hurled his theological anathemas at those among the Jews who sang it with a quavering voice in the banqueting house, as if it were a common lay.³⁵ As a mere Song of Solomon, or, as other critics maintain, of some other ancient Jewish writer, modern criticism would not incline to speak of it severely. But, as the Holy Ghost lays no claim whatever to its authorship, modern criticism does not feel at any greater liberty to foist its author-

ship upon the Holy Ghost than it does to foist upon the Holy Ghost the authorship of any corresponding amatory writing, which some critics regard as merely sensuous, but pure, and other critics regard as both sensual and positively immoral.

Nothing, however, could be more foreign from the present writer's purpose than to throw out the slightest intimation that the biblical literature does not contain its inspired elements as well as its un-inspired. If certain very considerable sections of the Bible do not profess to be inspired, other very considerable sections do profess to be inspired. And all that we maintain is simply this: Only those portions of the Bible which profess to be inspired can come legitimately before the modern biblicist for investigation when he comes specifically to consider in how far the general subject-matter of the Bible *is* inspired. Not that the mere profession of a biblical book, or portion of a book, that it is inspired, would be, in and by itself considered, sufficient proof of its inspiration. What we merely mean to affirm is, that if a given biblical book, or portion of a book, does not so much as claim to be inspired, no presumption is raised in favor of its inspiration: no starting-point is offered even to begin the formal consideration of its inspiration.

In a subsequent volume which the writer hopes to put forth on the great general subject of Supernatural

Religion, he will endeavor to give a detailed statement of the reasons why he firmly holds that the Bible contains, as well as professes to contain, an element which is the form of a direct divine revelation. But his immediate object — which is preliminary, not final — is abundantly secured if he has simply succeeded in vindicating the general assertion that the current conceptions of the mediæval bibli- cists concerning the divine inspiration of the entire biblical literature are fundamentally at fault; and that they consequently require a revision of the most revolutionary character.

CHAPTER V.

THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS.

WE have already seen that our present Gospels do not profess to be divinely inspired histories of the acts and teaching of Jesus ; but that, at the highest, they purport to be merely ordinary human histories, composed by his contemporaries and companions.

We have now to consider whether they were actually written by those original disciples of Jesus whose respective names they bear.

And, in the first place, however much modern bibli-cists may disagree about other things, they concur in the view, that, as Renan remarks, a proper name at the head of such works does not mean much.¹ Thus, in the Old Testament department, Professor W. Robertson Smith admits that all of the titles of the Psalms would be authoritative, if it were not for the fact that some of the titles, not being so old as the Psalms themselves, must be regarded as the mere conjectures of the individual copyists. It therefore becomes important, he says, to ask whether all the titles now found in the Old Testament go back

to the original authors, or whether some of them are not the merest surmises of the later copyists. And this question is naturally suggested, he maintains, by what we find in manuscripts of the New Testament, many of which prefix the name of Paul to the Epistle to the Hebrews, though it is quite certain that the oldest copies left the Epistle anonymous.²

The mediæval biblicists here interpose the objection, however, that to write a book in the name of another, and to give it out to be his, is to perpetrate a deliberate literary forgery; and such a forgery as would be destructive of all trustworthiness in the book itself.

To this Dean Stanley answers, that it is as absurd to charge the biblical writers with forgery because they very frequently wrote under fictitious names — as under the pseudonym of David, Solomon, or Daniel — as it would be to characterize the poet Burns as a forger because he places his address to the army of Bannockburn in the mouth of Robert Bruce.³

But neither by the mediæval biblicists, nor even by Dean Stanley, is the case here correctly stated, as it is understood by modern biblicists at large. For the allegation of the latter critics is not that very many of the biblical books were originally put forth in the name of a fictitious author. They merely maintain that the great majority of the biblical books, particularly in the Old Testament

division, were originally put forth anonymously, and that some subsequent editor or copyist, wishing to cover the contents of a given book with the authority of some great name in the ancient Jewish or early Christian annals, gave to the book a fictitious title. And, regarded in this light, it will be perceived that the charge of forgery does not have the slightest pertinency when it is applied to the subject-matter of the book, — however apposite it may be when it is directed against the alleged authorship of the production.

There is no sufficient historical evidence, therefore, that the formulæ, “according to Matthew,” “according to Mark,” “according to Luke,” “according to John,” are headings prefixed to our respective Gospels by the original authors of our Gospels. On the other hand, it is quite as probable that these compositions were originally put forth just as anonymously as the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that these headings were afterwards prefixed to them by some editor or copyist.

Again: among early ecclesiastical writers, Papias is the first who mentions the tradition that Matthew and Mark composed written records of the life and teaching of Jesus; ⁴ Irenæus the first who ascribes the authorship of the third Gospel to Luke by name; ⁵ and Theophilus the first who cites an undeniable passage from the fourth Gospel in connection with

the name of John.⁶ But Papias was bishop of Hieropolis in the first half of the second Christian century,⁷ Irenæus bishop of Lyons A. D. 178,⁸ and Theophilus bishop of Antioch A. D. 179.⁹

Roughly speaking, therefore, it is not earlier than from A. D. 150 to A. D. 175 that we find written records of the history of Jesus even traditionally accredited to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

What gave rise to that tradition? Did it rest on any more substantial basis than the mere headings of the Gospels, which were themselves presumably fictitious?

But if our Gospels were at least not demonstrably composed by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, possibly they may have been composed by contemporaries of Jesus. That much, at the lowest, is once asserted in the third Gospel, and twice asserted in the fourth. Still, whether we are to credit this assertion or not, we shall be in a better position to judge after we have given a cursory consideration to the question of the probable date of the composition of our Gospels.

All critics, indeed, agree with Strauss that thus much is certain: that towards the end of the second century after Christ the same four Gospels which we now possess are found in their present written form, both fully recognized in the Church, and freely quoted in the then current ecclesiastical writings, — particularly in those of Irenæus in Gaul, Clement in

Alexandria, and Tertullian in Carthage.¹⁰ But how much sooner than the end of the second century our present written Gospels existed as we have them in our hands to-day, is more or less a matter of conjecture.

Tischendorf, however, endeavors to carry the argument in favor of their earlier existence back even to the apostolical era, by establishing a connecting link between Irenæus and Polycarp.¹¹

Polycarp, it will be remembered, was a contemporary both of the original disciples of Jesus and also of Irenæus. And, in a letter to one Florinus, Irenæus, among other things, observes: "When I was a child, I saw thee at Smyrna, in Asia Minor, at the house of Polycarp. . . . I can recall . . . his frequent references to St. John, and to others who had seen our Lord: how he used to repeat from memory their discourses which he had heard from them concerning our Lord, his miracles and mode of teaching; and how, being instructed himself by those who were eye-witnesses of the word, there was in all that he said a strict agreement with the Scriptures."

And, in view of this, Professor Tischendorf demands to know who will venture any longer to question whether Irenæus had ever heard a word from Polycarp about the Gospel of John.

It so happens, however, that Polycarp, as reported above by Irenæus, does not say a single word about

the real point at issue; namely, about a Gospel which had been reduced to writing so early as the apostolical era, whether by St. John, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, or by any other eye-witness of the career of Jesus. He speaks, indeed, of hearing from such eye-witnesses discourses concerning the miracles and mode of teaching of our Lord, which he could still repeat from memory. But those discourses were manifestly verbal ones, not written ones. Had Polycarp only said that he had heard St. John, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke read the original manuscripts of our present Gospels, that would indeed signify something to the purpose of mediæval biblicism. And if, up to the time of their death, those apostles had, as a matter of fact, produced any such manuscripts, it is scarcely to be conceived that so intimate a companion of them as Polycarp purports to be should have been altogether excluded from their confidence concerning the very existence of those manuscripts; or that, having been made aware of their existence, he should not have mentioned their existence in the hearing of Irenæus.

The fair inference, therefore, is, that, to the best knowledge and recollection of Polycarp, no disciple and contemporary of Jesus had ever written out a formal history of Jesus.

The effort is made, again, to establish a comparatively early date for the composition of our Gospels

by appealing to the abundant quotations made from them, as it is alleged, in ecclesiastical writers of the first part of the second Christian century. But some of these writers do not mention any source from which they make their quotations, and hence leave it a perfectly open question whether they quote from any written Gospels, or only quote from traditions appertaining to the history of Jesus which still existed merely in an oral form.

Be that, however, as it may, Justin Martyr certainly wrote two Apologies, or Defences of Christians and Christianity, addressed to the Roman Emperor and Senate. The first of these was probably written about A. D. 147, and the second somewhat later.¹²

In these Apologies Justin speaks of Memoirs or Memorabilia of Christ, composed by the apostles and by companions of the apostles, and which were also called sometimes the Gospels, and sometimes collectively the Gospel.

Whether these apostolical Memoirs of Jesus which Justin mentions were or were not identical with our present Gospels, is one of the most hotly contested questions connected with modern Gospel criticism. And, in the first place, there is only the greatest vagueness expressed by the merely general and wholly indefinite title, Memoirs of the Apostles. Had Justin only subdivided this running title, and said here that he quoted from Matthew, there that he quoted

from Mark, here that he quoted from Luke, and there that he quoted from John, much more precision would have been imparted to his evidence in its bearing on the special point before us. It is, however, only in a single instance that Justin approaches to any such precision: that is when he speaks, not in a general way of the Memoirs of the Apostles, but in a specific way of the Memoirs of Peter.

Now, it is maintained by one class of critics that by these Memoirs of Peter, Justin must have designed to designate the same Gospel as our present Gospel of Mark. For, say these critics, to begin with, Peter was regarded by the ancients as having furnished the materials for the second Gospel, which Mark merely wrote down at the dictation of Peter; and hence it is not unlikely that in the days of Justin the second Gospel may have borne the name of Peter, who furnished its materials, though it subsequently became called after the name of Mark, who had originally acted only in the capacity of an amanuensis to Peter in its composition. Besides, these critics continue, when Justin particularly specifies the Gospel of Peter as the source of his information, he speaks of our Saviour as changing the name of Peter, and of his giving to James and John the name Boanerges, which are circumstances mentioned, so far as we are aware, exclusively in the Gospel of Mark.

But a large number of opposing critics contend,

that, when Justin refers to the Gospel of Peter, he cannot refer to our Gospel of Mark, but must refer to another and very different work, which, under various names, as under those of the Gospel according to Peter, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and the like, was circulated more or less extensively throughout the early churches.

Now, no one denies that there was a Gospel of Peter, which was not our Gospel of Mark, but which was condemned by Serapion, bishop of Antioch, as containing objectionable matter, and pronounced by Eusebius to be an evidently spurious production. But while there was a tradition, as we have seen, that Peter furnished Mark with the subject-matter of the second Gospel, the hypothesis is purely conjectural, or, at the highest, is strictly inferential, that the Gospel of Mark was ever cited, whether by Justin or by any other ancient ecclesiastical writer, under the name of the Gospel of Peter. And, until the lost Gospel of Peter has been recovered, it never can be demonstrated that it did not contain, in common with our Gospel of Mark, precisely those passages which Justin quotes in relation to the changes made by Jesus in the names of Peter, James, and John, and which, in the absence of the Gospel of Peter, have been preserved to us only in the Gospel of Mark. And, under all these circumstances, it becomes an exceedingly problematical question with

the perfectly impartial modern biblicist, whether, when Justin speaks of the Gospel of Peter, he means the lost Gospel of Peter, or means our Gospel of Mark, which, for the reasons assigned above, might at one time have possibly been called the Gospel of Peter as well as the Gospel of Mark.

But the main argument in favor of the supposition that the apostolical Memoirs mentioned by Justin are the same as our present Gospels remains to be considered. This argument is very clearly stated by Dr. Ezra Abbot when he affirms, first, that Justin nowhere expressly quotes the Memoirs for any thing which is not substantially stated in our Gospels; and, secondly, that there is nothing in the deviations of Justin's quotations from exact correspondence with our Gospels as regards either matters of fact, or the report of the words of Jesus, which may not be abundantly paralleled in the writings of the Christian fathers who used our four Gospels as alone authoritative.¹³

First, then, there can be no dispute that the quotations made by Justin from his Memoirs are substantially the same as they would have been had he quoted from our Gospels. For, while these quotations, regarded from a merely verbal point of view, deviate in almost every instance to a greater or less degree from corresponding passages in our Gospels, nevertheless not even the author of "Supernatural Reli-

gion" is able to gainsay that they usually agree in substance with such corresponding passages. And if merely substantial, as distinguished from strictly verbal, accuracy in quoting from our Gospels, would prove that Justin Martyr, in employing his apostolical Memoirs, did not employ our Gospels, it would equally prove that Eusebius and many other ancient Christian writers could not have used our Gospels as the source of their citations. Thus Dr. Abbot instances a single passage which is quoted by Eusebius not less than eleven times, but each time with some verbal variation.¹⁴ But every scholar knows that Eusebius, and the other Christian fathers referred to, just as undeniably had our present Gospels before them, or at least in their possession, as has any modern biblicist.

The supposition, therefore, is, that the earlier ecclesiastical writers were strangers to our modern custom of literal transcription from our Gospels, and that, when they had occasion to cite our Gospels as authority, they either quoted merely from memory, or only aimed to give the point and substance of a passage.

Let it be assumed, however, for the purpose of the argument, that Justin Martyr did not so employ his Memoirs. In other words, let it be assumed that his habit of citation was that of modern biblicists, — that when he quoted from his Memoirs he did so

verbatim, et literatim, et punctuatim. It would still remain true, that, while verbally different from our Gospels, his Memoirs were yet identical with our Gospels in their main outlines and in their substance and substratum. Moreover, Justin says that his Memoirs were statedly read in the Christian churches, or rather in the Sabbath Christian gatherings of his time,¹⁵ and that they contained every thing concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ.¹⁶ All the probabilities, therefore, are, that his Memoirs continued to remain, and be handed down within the inner Christian circles, as the recognized standard and exponent of the acts and teaching of Jesus, and that it was mainly, and more or less immediately, from *them*, that our present Gospels were eventually produced.

As early as the days of Justin, therefore, our present Gospels must have ceased to exist in a merely written form, and been substantially reduced to writing, — passing, however, still under the general name of the Memoirs of the Apostles. After this they must have undergone some changes indeed, but changes of a merely minor nature. Thus, on the conjectural supposition that Justin quoted from them as they existed in his age, verbally and literally, they must subsequently have passed through all those strictly verbal transformations which would be requisite to bring them into an exact verbal correspondence with our Gospels. A certain amount of

subject-matter must likewise have been eliminated from them, such as the traditions that Christ was born in a cave, that the Magi came from Arabia, and that Jesus, as a carpenter, made ploughs and yokes,¹⁷—subject-matter that would seem to have been in Justin's Memoirs, but which certainly has not survived them in our Gospels. Another change relates to the name of Justin's Gospels. By this we mean, that instead of continuing to be called merely, in a general way, the Memoirs of Christ, by the apostles and companions of the apostles, this title became in due process of time subdivided and distributed, so that each separate Gospel had its own special apostolical author, namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In this department of modern biblical criticism, where almost every thing is to some extent conjectural, we have accordingly arrived at a few provisional conclusions. And, in the first place, it would appear to be nearly certain that no original apostle, or disciple, or contemporary of Jesus, produced, in a manuscript form, any written record of the history of Jesus. On the other hand, this history would seem to have existed only in the shape of strictly oral traditions until the post-apostolical era had not merely opened, but to some degree advanced. Just when these oral traditions first began to be fixed in writing, however, is quite another question. But

since their composition was substantially completed in the days of Justin, the fair inference would be, that the initial stages of their composition must have commenced considerably before the days of Justin. In a general way also an apostolical authorship had already begun to be ascribed to these productions prior to the period of Justin. And when we come down to the days of Papias, Irenæus, and Theophilus, — A.D. 150 to A.D. 175, — each of the Gospels had then acquired for itself its own special apostle for an author. After which it only remains to add, that all classes of critics are agreed that by the conclusion of the second century our present written Gospels had passed through the final stages of their literary development; had ceased to undergo any further changes, whether as to their language or their subject-matter; had become permanently fixed in writing as we possess them in our hands to-day.

Assuming the general correctness of these provisional conclusions, therefore, both the authorship of our Gospels, and the precise period of their composition, are among the unsolved and insolvable problems of modern biblical speculation. Still the period of their composition appears to have extended, say from some time before the conclusion of the first century after Christ, until some time after the middle of the second century. And, as to authorship, we can form nothing beyond the vaguest surmises

as to how many different editors and copyists there must have been who at one time and another, and in one way or another, contributed either verbally or substantially, or both, towards casting and fixing them in their present form.

And yet, by whomsoever and whensoever our Gospels were composed, they still possess a certain degree of historical value when regarded in the light of professed ancient histories of Jesus.

Taking up these documents, therefore, quite independently of all illusive questions about alike their authorship and date of composition, we will in the next place endeavor to arrive at some approximate estimate of their intrinsic historical worth.

It is well known that a certain very able and influential school of modern critics deny their historical character not partially, but wholly, in so far as they narrate the supernatural. And, while this feature of supernaturalism is perfectly intolerable to these critics even in the first three Gospels, it is superlatively intolerable to them as it is presented in the fourth. As Strauss has it, in the presence of this latter Gospel it is incumbent upon the modern anti-supernaturalists either to break in pieces all their weapons, or force it to disavow all claims to historical validity.¹⁸

Any thing like an adequate consideration of the various hypotheses which have been advanced to

explain away the supernatural relations of the several Gospels as utterly unhistorical cannot be attempted, however, either in this chapter, or even in the present volume. On the other hand, the subject is so large a one that its discussion must, of necessity, be deferred until we can find scope to take it up in a formal manner in our projected work on Supernatural Religion.

The supernaturalism of the Gospels being thus for the time altogether eliminated from the problem, the question arises: In how far are our Gospels historical? or are they historical at all?

The greatest difficulty here presented to the modern biblicist is, what historical position is to be accorded to the Gospel of John. And, in the first place, it is maintained by the most pronounced opponents of this Gospel, as by F. C. Baur and Strauss, that it more or less abounds with conscious and intentional fiction. But by some of these opponents the effort has been made to separate the Gospel into two distinct elements, one of which is comparatively historical, the other of which is little better than fictitious. These elements are, first, the narrative portions of the Gospel, and, secondly, those portions of the Gospel which purport to give the discourses of Jesus. But if either of these portions is historical, and the other one is not so, which one is the historical, and which one is not the historical? Weisse,

for instance, says that the discourses are historical,¹⁹ and that the narratives are fictitious; Renan — *vice versa*.²⁰ Now, Strauss concedes, that, if there can be degrees of impossibility, the genuineness of the speeches imputed to Jesus in the fourth Gospel is to some extent more inconceivable than the genuineness of its narrative portions. At the same time he insists on the untenableness of the entire hypothesis that this Gospel can be divided into the above-mentioned elements, one of which is historical and the other not historical, and contends that conscious and intentional fiction is characteristic alike of its narrations and discourses.²¹

It is fortunately possible for us, however, wholly to extricate ourselves from this entanglement by putting aside the narrative portions of the fourth Gospel altogether, and considering only the discourses. For, comparatively speaking, we have but an incidental interest to-day in the merely external facts and features of the history of Jesus. What most deeply concerns us, and what we particularly wish to know, relates the rather to those ideas and principles of personal living, both outer and inner, which Jesus did or did not bequeath us.

On the whole, therefore, are the speeches accredited to Jesus in the fourth Gospel genuine, or spurious?

And, to begin with, it is at least a notorious fact

that, in addition to our four canonical Gospels, the early Christian literature contained several other Gospels which are now designated as apocryphal, and rejected as being false and manufactured representations, or rather misrepresentations, of the acts and words of Jesus.

One of the principal reasons assigned, as by Professor George P. Fisher, for the rejection of these apocryphal Gospels, is that they present no claim to our attention on the score of age, — all of them having been produced at a demonstrably later date than Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.²² But this is an objection which applies with no inconsiderable force as well against the historical character of the fourth Gospel in comparison with the Synoptics. For all modern critics, including Professor Fisher²³ and Professor Tischendorf,²⁴ are perfectly agreed that the fourth Gospel certainly saw the light after the other three.

It is alleged again that the apocryphal Gospels are at a world-wide remove from the canonical Gospels in the character of their contents.²⁵ But it is likewise alleged, to use almost the exact language of Canon Westcott, that it is impossible to pass from the synoptical Gospels to that of St. John without feeling that the transition involves the passage from one world of thought to another.²⁶ With special reference to the point now before us, M. Renan

insists, indeed, that the fourth Gospel puts into the mouth of Jesus discourses the tone, the style, the manner, the doctrines, of which have nothing in common with the discourses reported in the Synoptics.²⁷

Since, however, no one disputes that a broad and fundamental diversity obtains between the discourses in question, there is no occasion to enlarge any further on this special aspect of the subject, beyond, perhaps, remarking that the most casual reader of the Gospels must have observed it for himself, or that, if he has not done so, he may readily observe it by contrasting the Sermon on the Mount, for example, with any extended report of the ostensible words of Jesus which may be selected at random in the Gospel of John.

It may here be interposed, however, that we are overlooking the real point of the argument against the genuineness of the apocryphal Gospels, as contrasted with that of the canonical Gospels, so far as the marked dissimilarity of their respective contents is concerned. For it is not a full and correct statement of the case when it is merely said that the apocryphal Gospels differ from the canonical Gospels in the sense that the fourth Gospel differs from the Synoptics. The discourses of the fourth Gospel differ from those of the Synoptics very notably, indeed; but the former do not differ from the latter as sense does from nonsense. The element

of dignity and elevation of thought is at least a common factor between the speeches of Jesus recorded in the Synoptics and the speeches accredited to Jesus in the fourth Gospel. But as contrasted with that of the canonical Gospels, a preponderating proportion of the subject-matter of the apocryphal Gospels is absurd and frivolous, — is mainly made up of almost silly tales about the nativity and infancy of Jesus, the glories of his mother, and other kindred stories, which are too palpably fabulous to merit any attention.²⁸

Over against this, it is to be remembered, that, among other things, the mighty personality and influence of Jesus imparted to his disciples and adherents a marked literary impulse after he was gone. And the manifestations of this literary impulse were as manifold as were the various classes of minds which yielded to its sway. Thus, in one direction, it resulted in the Pauline Epistles; in another, it gave rise to the Epistle to the Hebrews; and, in yet another, it produced the Book of Revelation. And if, in its action upon a certain class of minds innately inclined to find expression in the fabulous and frivolous, it resulted in an apocryphal literature after the general type either of the Gospel of Peter or the Gospel of Nicodemus, for example, it is quite within the limits of the possible that in its action upon a certain other class of minds, innately

inclined to be contemplative and metaphysical, it might have resulted in an apocryphal production answering to the general description of the Gospel of John.

Now, in all this, we do not design positively to affirm that the fourth Gospel, and notably that the discourses of Jesus in the fourth Gospel, are demonstrably unhistorical. We merely mean to declare, and to declare with the greatest emphasis, that there is no scholarly method of establishing their historical character beyond a reasonable basis of doubt. Not that this doubt will be shared by all modern biblicists, but that it will be shared by a very large proportion of them. In a word, the question of the authenticity of St. John's Gospel has already been discussed backward and forward, and over and over again, now for nearly half a century. And Dr. Ezra Abbot is perfectly correct when he states the aggregate result of this discussion to be, that, among scholars of equal learning and ability, as between Hilgenfeld, Keim, Scholten, Hausrath, and Renan, on the one hand, and Godet, Beyschlag, Luthardt, Weiss, and Lightfoot, on the other, opinions are yet divided, with a tendency, at least in Germany, toward the denial of its genuineness.²⁹

But it is a subject for congratulation that modern investigation into the historical character of the synoptical Gospels has for its aggregate outcome some-

thing more assured than a mere division of opinion. For, even among the so-called destructive critics, it now passes as a sort of common postulate, or axiom, that, aside from their elements of supernaturalism, and despite their hiata and their errors, we still possess in the synoptical Gospels a generally correct historical preservation, so far as it goes, if not of the acts, yet of the teachings, of Jesus.

With regard to the synoptical teaching of Jesus, however, it is important to note that the destructive critics all, or nearly all, accord the first rank to Matthew. Thus Strauss affirms, that, notwithstanding all doubt upon individual points, every one must admit that we have the speeches of Jesus in the first Gospel, though not unmixed with later additions and modifications, yet in a purer form than in any of the others.³⁰ And Renan does not hesitate to say that Matthew clearly deserves unlimited confidence as regards the discourses.³¹

In undertaking to determine, therefore, what is the actual historical teaching of Jesus, unless we would enter upon an almost interminable controversy at the very outset, it would be requisite to assume, as a common basis of investigation with those who reject the discourses of John, that the synoptical discourses, and particularly that the *Logia* recorded in Matthew, are to be regarded as the standard. Whether the discourses of John are likewise to be

taken into the account, or not, is a question which would remain for subsequent examination. And the decision of this question would hinge mainly on the conclusion which we might arrive at concerning this one thing; namely, whether the discourses of John are merely divergent from those of the other Gospels, or are so radically at variance as to be absolutely incompatible with those of the other Gospels.

But this is an aspect of the subject which can be adequately discussed only by a detailed comparison of the synoptical discourses with the discourses of John on all their leading topics, as on that of ethics, on that of theism, on that of the person of Jesus, and the like.

For the execution of such a task as this, however, the author has not space remaining in the present chapter; although he hopes in some measure to perform it in a future volume, to be devoted to a general consideration of the Religion of Jesus.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE.

IN depicting the present condition of things in England, Matthew Arnold says that clergymen and ministers of religion are full of lamentations over what they call the spread of scepticism, and because of the little hold which religion now has on the masses of the people. And it is the religion of the Bible that is professedly in question with all the churches when they talk of religion, and lament its prospects. With Catholics as well as Protestants, and with all the sects of Protestantism, this is so. What the religion of the Bible is, and how it is to be got at, they may not agree; but that it is the religion of the Bible for which they contend, they all aver.¹

With regard to what the religion of the Bible is, Protestants and Catholics not only now disagree: they must always continue to disagree. Why? Because, although they proceed upon the common postulate, as we have seen, that the Bible contains a divinely inspired revelation without the slightest

admixture of error, they yet adopt a radically different standpoint, and pursue a radically different method, when they would respectively determine how the religion of the Bible, exclusive of the subject-matter of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, is to be got at. For when the question is specifically raised, how the religion of the Bible is to be got at, the Catholics respond — to use the precise language of the Vatican Decrees — that, in matters of faith and morals appertaining to the building-up of Christian doctrine, that is to be held as the true sense of Holy Scripture which our Holy Mother Church held and holds, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and therefore that it is permitted to no one to interpret the Sacred Scriptures contrary to this sense, nor contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.²

The Protestants, on the other hand, contend, as every one knows, for the right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

But in employing their private judgment to determine what are the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, how do Protestants proceed? Their method is simply to compare Scripture with Scripture. As Dr. Rainy says: "The whole truth on any point which the Scriptures give, they give not always in complete single statements, but in

various statements which explain and guard and complete each other. . . . I must gather up and present to myself the joint effect of these statements, so far as I have understood them." ³ Or, as Dean Mansel puts it: "Scripture is to the theological dogmatist what experience is to the philosophical. It supplies him with the facts to which his system has to adapt itself. It contains in an unsystematic form the positive doctrines which further inquiry has to exhibit as connected into a scientific whole." ⁴

Contrasted with the Catholic process of determining what the religion of the Bible is, therefore, the Protestant process at least guarantees that the religion of the Bible will be got at with a comparative purity and correctness. For, according to the Protestant process, the teaching of the Bible on any given topic is gradually arrived at by a scientific collection and classification of all the detached and more or less widely-scattered subject-matter of the Bible bearing on the point. Thus, in the hands of Protestants, the Bible becomes its own expositor and its own interpreter. Thus, in the hands of Protestants, the religion of the Bible, in all of its various aspects, becomes developed from within the Bible itself, and will be guarded against the incorporation into itself of senses, ideas, and principles from without, which are foreign to the subject-matter of the

Bible. But the moment that any external authority, such as the Catholic Church, undertakes to determine from without what are the true sense and interpretation of the Bible, that moment a perfect flood-gate is thrown open for the inflow of senses, ideas, and principles, into the alleged religion of the Bible, which do not by any means inhere in the inner teachings of the Bible, but which inhere the rather in the self-interests, the misconceptions, and even in the vices and the superstitions, of the externally interpreting body.

But let it be assumed, for the sake of the argument, that, whether by the Catholic process or the Protestant process of getting at the thing, or both, the religion of the Bible has been more or less accurately determined. It yet remains true, as Matthew Arnold suggests above, that there is a wide-spread modern rupture with this very biblical religion.

This rupture is the most pronounced so far as the Old Testament element enters into such religion. There can be no question, for example, that multitudes of modern minds are fairly up in revolt against many of the theistic conceptions presented in that department of the Scriptures. Thus Professor Christlieb says that the objection is frequently raised, that, side by side with many exalted ideas of God, there are in the Bible, at least in the Old Testament, many views unworthy of him.⁵ Even believers in

the Bible, he continues, are sometimes offended by the manner in which the God of the Old Testament is appealed to in the Psalms as a God of vengeance, and also, generally speaking, by the whole spirit expressed in those passages in which the poet invokes destruction on his enemies.⁶

But so far as the theism of the Psalms is specifically concerned, we have already, in the chapter on Inspiration, cleared the Deity of the Old Testament from all reprehensibleness. The authors of the imprecatory Psalms habitually invoke Jehovah, indeed, as the most awful God of vengeance. There is no reason to suppose, however, that Jehovah either inspired those authors, or gave any answer to their fearful invocations.

But, when we come to consider Jehovah as a God of War, the manner in which he is to be vindicated before the tribunals of the modern judgment and conscience is not by any means so palpable.

One of the most notable attempts at doing this is that made by Canon Mozley in his "Ruling Ideas in Early Ages." In substance, the Canon proceeds to say, that such wars as the exterminating wars of Israel, done in obedience to a divine command, are strongly urged by unbelievers against Old Testament morality, — by which he means, of course, Old Testament theism. It is replied that God is the author alike of life and death, and that he has the right to

deprive any number of his creatures of life, whether by the natural instrumentality of pestilence or famine, or by the express employment of man as his instrument of destruction. As soon, therefore, as a divine command to exterminate a whole people becomes known to another people, they not only have the right, but are under the strictest obligation, to execute such a command. In what way, however, is a divine command for the destruction of a whole nation made known to the destroying nation? It is usually answered, and answered with truth, that it is made known to them by the evidence of miracles. Still, some distinction is yet wanted in dealing with this subject. For, while miraculous evidence constituted to the ancient Israelites a sufficient proof of a divine command to exterminate certain nations, it would not constitute a sufficient proof of any such command to us in modern times. Why not? Because there is a vast difference between the conceptions of those ages and our own, in consequence of which such commands were adapted for proof by miracles then, but are not so adapted now. In particular, our much more developed ideas of humanity and justice would now be an absolute bar to the execution of certain proceedings, against which the moral sense of the earlier ages of the world did not act as such a barrier. That is to say, in these days we should be divided in our minds between two con-

tradictory evidences, — the evidence of the miracle that such a command came from God, and the evidence of our sense of justice that it could not have come from God. But in olden times these commands had no resistance from the moral sense; they did not look unnatural to the ancient Jew; they were not foreign to his standard; they excited no suspicion, and created no perplexity; they appealed to a genuine but rough sense of justice, which existed when the longing for retribution upon crime in the human mind was not checked, as it is now checked, by the strict sense of humanity and justice. Such commands were, therefore, then adapted to miraculous proof, but are not so adapted now.⁷

But it will be perceived, that in all this Canon Mozley merely manages to extricate the ancient Jews from our modern execration for the part they took in the execution of the alleged commands of their Jehovah to slaughter their enemies by the wholesale, even to the women and the children. Semi-savages that they were, their conceptions alike of humanity and justice were so barbarous, in comparison with our own, that they could even conscientiously almost exterminate nation after nation, at the order of their Deity.

But what are we to think, in these days, of a Deity who could deliberately, repeatedly, and persistently command such wholesale human slaughters that only

a semi-savage people, like the ancient Israelites, could possibly carry his commands into execution without a moral shock?

But of this aspect of the subject, — which, after all, is the only vital aspect, — Mozley seems to be entirely oblivious.

Speaking directly to this point, the question is raised, whether, as a literal matter of fact, Jehovah ever issued any such commands to the ancient Jews. They were certainly capable of prosecuting precisely such wars without divine or even diabolical direction. We are informed, for instance, that, after Joab had besieged and captured Rabbah, David brought forth the inhabitants thereof, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes, and then proceeded to do the same in regard to all the cities of the children of Ammon.⁸ This, however, does not purport, in the record, to have been done by David in pursuance of any divine command, but was manifestly done by him in obedience to his own innate propensities to cruelty and barbarism.

On the other hand, it is not to be forgotten, that, according to the Old Testament representation of the case, if that representation is to be understood literally, either Jehovah had nothing to do with the exterminating wars of ancient Israel, or he had substantially every thing to do with them. For, fundamentally considered, these wars, according to the

general letter of the Old Testament history of them, were neither originally conceived, nor subsequently carried forward, by the Israelites themselves. On the contrary, Canaan was selected out beforehand by Jehovah for the Israelitish conquest; and it was he who personally took the initiative, and led the Hebrews forth on their career of death and desolation. In fact, the battles themselves were largely fought by Jehovah himself, in distinction from the Jews. Now he sends the hornet among the foe,⁹ now he hurls down great hailstones from heaven on their devoted heads,¹⁰ and now he fights against them, either with his thunders¹¹ or his destroying angels.¹²

Nor, so far as Jehovah is depicted in the Old Testament as personally mingling in these wars, is there the slightest use to make the attempt either to disguise or mitigate their horrors. They were wars to the knife, and wars to the death. According to his explicit direction, whole cities were to be obliterated; entire tribes, and even entire nations, men, women, and children, were to be destroyed.¹³

What have we to say to this? We have to say, simply, that because, literally construed, the professedly historical books of the Old Testament portray Jehovah as personally taking this terrific part in the Israelitish wars, it by no means follows that he therefore did so. As has already been observed, the Israelites were themselves abundantly capable of

butchering their enemies indiscriminately, without the slightest instigation or assistance from either deity or demon. Besides, the Israelites were by no means peculiar among their semi-savage contemporaries in regarding their divinities as being gods of war, to whom alike their defeats and their victories were to be immediately ascribed. Thus, when the Philistine lords had at last succeeded in getting Samson in their power and putting out his eyes, they gathered themselves together in the temple of their Dagon, and offered a great sacrifice, and held a mighty jubilation, saying: "Our god hath delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hand."¹⁴ In like manner, those same Philistine lords, after the slaughter of Saul and his three sons, and the general decimation of the Israelitish army, published the victory far and near throughout the houses of their idols, and deposited the armor of Saul in the house of Ashtaroth.¹⁵ So also when Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up, and invaded Judah, he treated with perfect contempt the assurance which Hezekiah had given to the Jews that the Lord their God would help fight their battles, and made it his public vaunt and taunt that thus far the gods of no nation whatever had been able successfully to resist either his own military prowess, or that of his fathers before him.¹⁶ And under these circumstances it was precisely as much a matter of course that the ancient Israelites

should refer their various fortunes in the field directly to their Jehovah, as it was that the Philistines, for example, should refer their various fortunes in the field directly to their Ashtaroth or Dagon.

But the Old Testament annals speak in such a matter-of-fact manner about the personal part ostensibly taken by Jehovah in the old Jewish battles, that they are well calculated to deceive us, unless we penetrate beneath the surface, and catch their real meaning. For, upon reading these annals, the first impression produced upon the mind is to the general effect that Jehovah himself was seldom absent from among the Israelitish hosts, as a sort of visible commander-in-chief, directing all their military movements; and that when he was not thus personally, and almost visibly, present in the field, he was yet always near at hand in a kind of theocratic pavilion, ready upon the instant to be inquired of through his aides-de-camp or prophets, and through them to issue his orders of the day. But, manifestly, all this is merely ancient Orientalism; is merely ancient anthropomorphism; is merely of a piece, for example, with such other biblical statements as that in the Book of Genesis, which represents the Lord God as walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, and talking face to face with Adam and his wife.¹⁷ And, if in these days we were called upon to narrate events corresponding to those related in

the Old Testament military journals, we would do so with little of this ancient Orientalism, and with still less of this ancient anthropomorphism. Suppose, for instance, that our subject were the career of Cromwell. We would then write—to give two or three illustrations—substantially as follows: The first military exploit of Cromwell was to occupy the city of Cambridge, and to seize upon the university plate, in the name of God, to defray the expenses of the war.¹⁸ Or thus: After the capture of Bristol, Cromwell wrote to the Parliament, saying, “This is none other than the hand of God, and to him be the glory.”¹⁹ Or thus: When Cromwell had been almost compelled to surrender his forces at Dunbar, upon seeing the Scotch advancing, instead of prudently delaying the battle, his exclamation was, “The Lord hath delivered them into our hands.”²⁰ Or yet again: After Cromwell had taken Drogheda by storm, he issued orders that nothing should be spared, and then piously added, “This bitterness will save much effusion of blood by the goodness of God.”²¹ That is to say, being sufficiently divested of their ancient Orientalism and their ancient anthropomorphism to be correctly understood in modern times, the Old Testament military annals would then merely affirm that Jehovah was personally engaged in, and personally responsible for, the old exterminating wars of Israel, only in the same sense

that we would now assert that Providence was personally engaged in, and personally responsible for, the general military course of Cromwell.

But how about the miracles which Mozley assumes were wrought in attestation to the ancient Jews that their warfare upon the surrounding nations was waged in obedience to the most literal and the most explicit injunctions of their presiding Deity? Two of the most notable of these alleged miracles are recorded in the Book of Joshua. The first is to the effect that the walls of Jericho were demolished without the employment of any other human agency than the blowing of seven trumpets made from rams' horns.²² The second consisted in the suspension of the apparent revolutions of both the sun and the moon, in order that the Israelites might have the opportunity to wreak their vengeance on their enemies.²³ But this latter so-called miracle is a manifest myth, which the author of Joshua, or at least that portion of Joshua, says he copied from the Book of Jasher.²⁴ And, if the former of these so-called miracles is not likewise a manifest myth, then we would thank the mediæval biblicists to instance one which they consider such in the whole range of ancient religious literature. In saying which we do not mean to affirm that all of the miracles recorded in the Bible are not historical. Far otherwise. We merely mean to assert that some of the miracles

recorded in the Bible are not historical, and to insist that the two specified above are—and that upon the very face of them—abundant proofs of this assertion.

We have thus far been considering some of those objections to Old Testament theism which are most frequently discussed. But we have discovered that these particular objections are directed rather against modern misconceptions of Old Testament theism than against Old Testament theism itself. One of the most prolific sources of these misconceptions is the mediæval theological custom of foisting upon the Old Testament Deity the personal inspiration of the more repulsive subject-matter of the ancient Jewish Scriptures—such as that of the imprecatory Psalms—which subject-matter does not, however, originally purport to be, in any sense, inspired by this Divinity. Another, and an almost equally prolific, source of these misconceptions is the mediæval theological habit of construing with the most absolute literalness the ancient Orientalism and the ancient anthropomorphism of the Old Testament methods of expression,—an illustration of which has been given in connection with the Israelitish wars.

But even if the Old Testament theism, or, in a more comprehensive sense, even if the entire Old Testament religious system, should be laboriously cleared from all these modern misconceptions, it

still would remain to affirm that this religious system would be almost inexpressibly repulsive to the modern religious sense, and that it would in no degree respond to the modern religious development and need. Assuming, for instance, that the highest external and national expression of this religion was to be met with in connection with the ancient Hebrew temple-worship, when that temple-worship was at its best and purest ; yet any truly religious soul could, in these days, almost as soon conceive of himself as resorting to an ordinary slaughter-house, as resorting to such an institution as the Jewish temple, whether to worship God or to hold religious fellowship with his common brotherhood of man.

Not that we are to be here understood as speaking in terms of unqualified reprobation of the ancient religious observances of Israel. Far otherwise. Those observances, even in their aspects of butchery and barbarism, were pre-eminently adapted to the ethical and the religious condition of the Israelites themselves. And, when contrasted with the religious observances then in vogue among the surrounding pagan nations, those of Israel must at once take rank among the greatest religious advances ever made in general human history. To illustrate. One of the commonest forms of religious observance prevailing among those surrounding pagan nations consisted in the worship of Baal joined with that of

Ashtoreth. But Baal, the sun-god, was regarded by his devotees as being the male principle of life and reproduction in nature, whereas Ashtoreth represented to them their conceptions of the female principle. And the religious worship of these divinities combined was, moreover, of the most revolting character. It was attended, for example, not merely with the wildest and most frantic dances, not merely with the laceration and the disfigurement of the persons of the worshippers with such instruments as knives, but likewise with the occasional offering of human sacrifices, and with the habitual enactment of the grossest and the most shameless scenes of sensuality, licentiousness, and even systematic prostitution. For as there were professional religious prostitutes connected with the Egyptian temple consecrated to Isis, and with the Grecian temple at Corinth dedicated to Aphrodite, in a like manner the daughters of Moab and Baal-peor were professional religious prostitutes connected with the grove and temple worship, or rather revels, of the ancient Canaanitish tribes.

Crude and coarse, bloody and revolting, therefore, as the religious rites and ceremonies of the ancient Hebrews doubtless were, when regarded from the modern religious standpoint, this single illustration suffices to show that they were, nevertheless, an almost immeasurable advance upon the surrounding

heathenish rites and ceremonies, from which they had begun in a most pronounced degree to separate themselves, and to separate themselves in the direction of a far greater social and sexual purity, and a far higher order of ethical and theistical conception. Here, in fact, we have the far-off and germinal beginnings of that special line of religious development and progress which has eventually resulted in the highest and purest forms of religious thought and service known among ourselves to-day.

But that which was, in the olden ages of the world, a much better form of religion than had been developed among the completely heathenish Canaanites, and which was also a very good form, if not the very best possible form, of religion for the semi-heathenish Israelites, is scarcely a form of religion to be either perpetuated or defended at so late a period as this. And while the Protestant and the Catholic churches do not go to the extreme length of keeping up the old Israelitish scenes of bloody sacrifice and slaughter in the courts of their respective places of worship, they yet do make the combined effort both to perpetuate and to defend the old Israelitish religion in many of its fundamental aspects, and that even in this nineteenth century. For is it not their common boast that their religion is the religion of the entire Holy Scriptures? In particular is it not at once the watchword and the war-cry of all the

Protestant denominations, that their religion is the religion of the Bible, of the whole Bible, and of nothing but the Bible? But the religion of the whole Bible contains in itself the religion of the Old Testament as well as that of the New. Hence it results that in all Protestant and in all Catholic statements of religious belief, Old Testament theism, Old Testament ethics, Old Testament religion, forms one of the most conspicuous features. But unless the world is to reverse its present forward mental and moral movements, and is to go back to the old Israelitish general conditions of semi-barbarism, the Old Testament element must either be very largely expurgated alike from Catholicism and from Protestantism, or else both Protestantism and Catholicism must hereafter increasingly cease to furnish a satisfactory form of religious belief and practice throughout the modern world of development and culture.

But, Catholicism and Protestantism quite aside, in what way and to what degree must the Old Testament element be eliminated from the general religion of the Bible, in order to bring up the general religion of the Bible to the requirements of the modern religious need? To this we would reply, that this work of elimination was specifically attempted upwards of eighteen centuries ago, and attempted by one whose entire competency to undertake the task no Catholic and no Protestant will question.

We scarcely need to add that we here refer to Jesus.

When we come specifically to treat of the religion of Jesus, in our projected volume on that subject to which we have already adverted, it will come legitimately before us to point out in detail how radically revolutionary the religious undertaking of Jesus was in nearly all of its relations to the old Israelitish system. But even here enough must be said to justify the general observation that Jesus doubtless was a most pronounced revolutionist, when he is regarded from the ancient Jewish standpoint.

And, to begin with, it is a very significant circumstance, that the personal religious life of Jesus was led and held almost entirely aloof from the temple at Jerusalem. In fact, according to the synoptical Gospels, after he had been once taken up by his parents to the holy city at the age of twelve, he never repaired thither again but a single time during his life, and that time was just before his death. And while there on this single occasion he took no part whatever in the temple rites and ceremonies, aside from partaking of the Paschal feast. He went frequently into the temple, indeed; but he went there to teach, to cast out the money-changers, and the like, but not to offer sacrifice, and not to perform, with the one exception instanced, any other ritual observance usually performed by the orthodox and pious Jew.

Separating himself thus almost absolutely from the temple at Jerusalem, Jesus went about from place to place, and chiefly among his fellow countrymen, gathering about himself his own disciples and adherents, and seeking to form those disciples and adherents into a distinctive religious body. This distinctive religious body he sometimes called the church, but much more habitually proclaimed to be the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven. And, so far from being a mere reformed reduplication of the ancient Jewish theocracy, this kingdom of God, this kingdom of heaven, which Jesus proclaimed, was something so entirely new in his conceptions of it that he said to his contemporaries, in one breath, that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and, in the next breath, that the kingdom of God had come unto them.

But wherein did this new kingdom of God, proclaimed and founded by Jesus, essentially differ from the ancient Jewish theocracy? It differed from the ancient Jewish theocracy in very many respects, two or three of which we now proceed to notice. And, in the first place, the Old Testament Scriptures constituted the great law-book—in fact, the only supreme law-book—of this theocracy. On the other hand, the personal commands of Jesus were to constitute the sole standard of appeal, the only law of the ethical and religious life, in his new divine society.

But what were the personal commands of Jesus, if they were not substantial repetitions and re-affirmations of the Old Testament Scriptures? To this we can best reply by first citing these remarks by Renan: "The Puritan reformer is particularly biblical, — starting from the immutable text to criticise the current theology which has been progressing from generation to generation. Jesus laid the axe at the root of the tree far more energetically. We see him sometimes, it is true, invoke the text against the traditions of the Pharisees. But in general he makes little of exegesis. At the same blow he hews down text and commentaries. He shows clearly to the Pharisees that with their traditions they are seriously innovating upon the religion of Moses, but he by no means claims himself to return to Moses. His aim is forward, not backward. Jesus was more than the reformer of a superannuated religion: he was the creator of the eternal religion of humanity." ²⁵

Now, that Renan does not here employ too emphatic language in depicting the hostile attitude assumed by Jesus toward the Old Testament Scriptures, is patent on the surface. It is useless for the mediæval biblicists to affirm that this hostile attitude was assumed only against the rabbinical additions to and corruptions of the Old Testament, but not against the Old Testament itself. To illustrate. In the single observation; "Render therefore unto Cæsar the

things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," Jesus abolished for his followers all those precepts and provisions of the Old Testament which had converted the old Jewish theocracy into a political organization as well as a religious. Again: Jesus provided for only two exceedingly simple ritual observances in his new divine society, — that of baptism upon entrance into the society, and that of the eucharistic feast to be observed within the society itself. And in this summary manner did Jesus at once and forever abrogate for his disciples almost the last traces of the ceremonial and ritualistic element in the Old Testament Scriptures. But Jesus went much farther, and struck much more deeply at the very fundamentals of Judaism, than even this. It is indeed true that he publicly declared that he did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them, — that is, to bring them to perfection. But the manner in which he proceeded to fulfil them was that of the religious revolutionist, not that of the conservative religious reformer. For to him the entire sum and substance of both the law and the prophets were nothing more than this; namely, that his disciples should love the Lord their God supremely, and likewise love their neighbors as themselves. And this remark suggests that Jesus was almost perpetually drawing a broad line of distinction between what had been said by them of old

time, and what he had to say himself, even upon the ethical side of the Old Testament injunctions and prohibitions, as with reference to what constitutes murder, adultery, and the like. Nor were the very theistical conceptions of Jesus the theistical conceptions of the Old Testament Scriptures. Take, for example, just here, a salient feature or two of contrast between the theism of the Decalogue and the theism of the Sermon on the Mount. In the one case we have a mere tribal divinity bringing up a special people out of Egypt; in the other case we have an universal heavenly Father, who regards all the nations of the world, without distinction or exception, as his beloved children. In the one case we have a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation; in the other case we have a benignant parent who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and who sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust.

CHAPTER VII.

RELIGION.

It is well known, that, in his final volume on "The Old Faith and the New," Strauss, as the arch-representative of the modern religious revolutionists, discussed these two leading questions: I. Are we still Christians? II. Have we still a religion?

The first of these questions Strauss answered without hesitation in the negative. But the general tenor of his conclusions in response to the second question is thus epitomized by himself in a single sentence: "We demand the same piety for our Cosmos that the devout of old demanded for his God."¹ Well, therefore, may M. Renan observe that when a German boasts of his impiety he must never be taken at his word. Germany is not capable of being irreligious. When it would be atheistic, it is so devotedly and with a sort of unction.²

But is not M. Renan himself one of the most conspicuous, not to say one of the most notorious, of the modern irreligious leaders? Such he is indeed thought to be by a great many very pious people.

Yet, if he be permitted to speak for himself, he becomes one of the most outspoken advocates of religion now before the public. Thus Renan says: "The sad but inevitable quarrel over the history of a religion, between the sectaries of the religion and the friends of impartial science, should not then bring on science the accusation of anti-religious propagandism." ³ "I am not unmindful of the misunderstandings to which he exposes himself who touches on matters that are objects of credence to a large number of men. But all fine exercise of thought would be forbidden, were we obliged to anticipate every possible perversion that prejudiced minds may fall into when reading what they do not understand. . . . By their leave one is pantheist or atheist without knowing it. They create schools on their own authority, and often one learns from them, with some surprise, that he is the disciple of masters he never knew." ⁴ "Far from seeking to weaken the religious sentiment, I would gladly contribute something to raise and purify it." ⁵ "All the symbols which serve to give shape to the religious sentiment are imperfect, and their fate is to be one after another rejected. But nothing is more remote from the truth than the dream of those who seek to imagine a perfected humanity without religion." ⁶ "Devotion is as natural as egoism to a true born man. The organization of devotion is religion. Let no one hope, therefore,

to dispense with religion or religious associations. Each progression of modern society will render this want more imperious." ⁷ "Religion is a thing *sui generis*: the philosophy of the schools will never take its place." ⁸ "It may be that all we love, all that in our eyes makes life beautiful, the liberal culture of the mind, science and exalted art, are destined to last but a generation; but religion,—that will never die." ⁹

Among other recognized leaders of modern thought, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Professor Tyndall have been frequently represented, both in the orthodox pulpit and in the general religious press, as being little better than the sworn enemies of religion. But John Stuart Mill expressly maintains that the influences of religion which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving. Besides, he specifically mentions, as among the other inducements for cultivating a religious devotion to the welfare of our fellow-creatures, these two cardinal considerations: first, that we shall thereby impose a limit to every selfish aim; and, secondly, that we shall thereby be acting in accordance with the feeling that we may be co-operating with the unseen Being to whom we owe all that is enjoyable in life. ¹⁰ Moreover, Herbert Spencer says that we must remember, that, amid its many errors and corruptions,

religion has always asserted and diffused a verity. The truly religious element of religion has always been good : that which has been proved untenable in doctrine and vicious in practice has been its irreligious element, and from this it has been ever undergoing purification.¹¹ Generally speaking, the religion current in each age and among each people has been as near an approximation to the truth as it was then and there possible for men to receive. Few, if any, are as yet fitted to dispense with such conceptions as are current. The substituted creed can become operative only when it becomes, like the present one, an element in early education, and has the support of a strong social sanction. We must, therefore, recognize the resistance to a change of theological opinions as in a great measure salutary.¹²

Nor is Professor Tyndall, any more than either John Stuart Mill or Herbert Spencer, justly charged with being arrayed in open hostility to religion. On the other hand, he repels this charge in the very strongest language. He says, for example : "The facts of religious feeling are to me as certain as the facts of physics. But the world, I hold, will have to distinguish between the feeling and its forms, and to vary the latter in accordance with the intellectual condition of the age."¹³ "The world will have religion of some kind."¹⁴ "You who have escaped from these religions into the high and dry light of

intellect may deride them; but in doing so you deride accidents of form merely, and fail to touch the immovable basis of the religious sentiment in the nature of man. To yield this sentiment reasonable satisfaction is the problem of problems at the present hour." 15

But the traditional divines may here interpose that the Apostle Paul speaks of a certain class of persons who are without God in the world, and may demand to know whether Renan, Tyndall, and the like, are not at least without God in their religion.

That these men are freely accredited with the most downright atheism by their orthodox opponents, no one will of course think to question. But we have already heard Renan, for one, in a general way disclaim that he is either a pantheist or an atheist. Elsewhere he more explicitly observes: "If your faculties, vibrating in unison, have never rendered that grand, peculiar tone which we call God, I have nothing more to say. You are wanting in the essential and characteristic element of our nature. Granting even that for us philosophers another word might be preferable, there would be an immense disadvantage in separating ourselves by our speech from the simple, who adore so well in their way. Tell the simple to live a life of aspiration after truth, beauty, moral goodness, the words will convey no meaning to them. Tell them to love God, not to offend God, they will

understand you wonderfully. God, Providence, Immortality, — good old words, a little clumsy perhaps, which philosophy will interpret in finer and finer senses, but which it will never fill the place of to advantage. Under one form or another, God will always be the sum of our supersensual needs, the form under which we conceive the ideal. In other words, man, placed in the presence of the beautiful, the good, the true, goes out of himself, and, being caught up by a celestial charm, annihilates his petty personality, and becomes exalted and absorbed. What is that, if it be not adoration?" 16

As John Stuart Mill mentions above, the conviction that one is co-operating with the unseen Being as being one of the strongest incentives to leading a truly religious life, there is no occasion to adduce any further evidence that he likewise is a theist, as distinguished from an atheist.

As for Herbert Spencer, we are free to confess that we do not just now remember to have met with the specific name of God, used in his own behalf, anywhere in his published writings. But Herbert Spencer is a philosopher, and does not seem to agree with Renan about the desirableness of not separating himself in speech from simple-minded people. Still Herbert Spencer is no more an atheist than is Dean Stanley or Canon Mozley, for example. Only, in all connections where either Stanley or Mozley

would employ the good old-fashioned name of God, Spencer prefers to speak of the Unknown Cause, the Inscrutable Power, or something of the sort.¹⁷

Professor Tyndall has been, over and over again, compelled by his clerical opponents to define his position on this point. Among other things, he says: "In connection with the charge of atheism, I would make one remark. Christian men are proved by their writings to have their hours of weakness and of doubt, as well as their hours of strength and of conviction; and men like myself share, in their own way, these variations of mood and tense. Were the religious moods of many of my assailants the only alternative ones, I do not know how strong the claims of the doctrine of 'Material Atheism' upon my allegiance might be. Probably they would be very strong. But, as it is, I have noticed, during years of self-observation, that it is not in hours of clearness and vigor that this doctrine commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it ever dissolves and disappears as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell, and of which we form a part."¹⁸ "Often, in the spring-time, when looking with delight on the sprouting foliage, 'considering the lilies of the field,' and sharing the general joy of opening life, I have asked myself whether there is no power, being, or thing, in the universe, whose knowledge of that of

which I am so ignorant is greater than mine. I have said to myself: Can man's knowledge be the greatest knowledge, and man's life the highest life? My friends, the profession of that atheism with which I am sometimes so lightly charged would, in my case, be an impossible answer to this question, — only slightly preferable to that fierce and distorted theism which still reigns rampant in some minds, as the survival of a more ferocious age." ¹⁹ "But, quitting the more grotesque forms of the theological, I already see, or think I see, emerging from recent discussions that wonderful plasticity of the Theistic Idea which enables it to maintain, through many changes, its hold upon superior minds." ²⁰

Thus, at no slight risk, perhaps, of proving somewhat prolix, if not positively tedious, we have endeavored to demonstrate that, — despite all the counter outcries of the orthodox divines, — in a broad and general way of speaking, we have all along been perfectly correct in characterizing the present as being a religious, as distinguished from an irreligious, crisis. Not that we would be understood as going so far as to affirm that there are absolutely no modern thinkers who have succeeded both in securing a certain limited degree of public recognition, and likewise broken with religion in every sense and form. We would merely claim to have shown, by the instances adduced above, that all, or

nearly all, of our really great modern thinkers, who may be fairly said to give at once an impulse and a direction to the general public thought, and who may be fairly said also to represent the extremest phases of what is popularly known as modern unbelief, — that these latter thinkers have, almost without distinction or exception, failed to take the final step of parting with all religious faith. They do not, indeed, all of them, still believe in a religion in any traditional sense or form; and yet, in some sense and in some form, they do believe in a religion still.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

ACCORDING to the conclusion arrived at in the preceding chapter, the modern religious world, as distinguished from the Protestant and Catholic religious world, may now be said to be divided into two leading classes,—those who still believe in a religion in some traditional sense and form, and those who still believe in a religion, but in no traditional sense and form.

The object which we next propose to ourselves is to discover the ultimate line of division which separates these classes the one from the other.

That this ultimate line of division cannot be any dogmatic system of theology, whether Protestant or Catholic, it would be almost absurd to do any thing more than merely to suggest, at the present stage of this discussion. That it can no more be the general religion of the Bible, is equally apparent to every thoughtful reader of the foregoing pages. What, then, is it? To this we answer that it is the religion of Jesus. For, as Professor Tischendorf remarks,

the life of Jesus has become, in Christian science, the great question of the day.¹ Or, as Strauss himself expresses it, it may surprise us that the debate as to the truth of Christianity has at last narrowed itself into one as to the personality of its founder; that the decisive battle of Christian theology should take place on the field of Christ's life.² Accordingly, Professor Christlieb demands to know: What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? And then proceeds to say that this is not *a* question, but *the* question, which, of all other questions, most deeply agitates the world to-day.³

But we must first of all protest against making the mere question of the personality of Jesus the one crucial, all-decisive question of modern religious thought. For by the personality of Jesus all parties to the debate mean specifically and professedly the proper divinity of Jesus. And the reason why we object to making the decision of this one subject substantially the decision of all other subjects now at issue in the general domain of religious investigation, will be apparent at a glance after we have attended to the following remarks by Strauss. He says: "It is indeed of importance to assure ourselves that Moses and Mohammed were no impostors; but in other respects the religions established by them must be judged according to their own deserts, irrespectively of the greater or less accuracy of our ac-

quaintance with their founders' lives. The reason is obvious. They are only the founders, not at the same time the objects, of the religion they instituted. While withdrawing the veil from the new revelation, they themselves modestly stand aside. They are indeed objects of reverence, but not of adoration. This is notoriously otherwise with Christianity. Here the founder is at the same the most prominent object of worship, and the system based upon him loses its support as soon as he is shown to be lacking in the qualities appropriate to an object of religious worship. This, in fact, has long ago been apparent; for an object of religious adoration must be a divinity, and thinking men have long since ceased to regard the founder of Christianity as such. But it is said now that he himself never aspired to this, that his deification has only been a later importation into the church, and that, if we seriously look upon him as a man, we shall occupy the standpoint which was also his own. But, even admitting this to be the case, nevertheless the whole regulation of our churches, Protestant as well as Catholic, is accommodated to the former hypothesis; this Christian cultus, this garment cut out to fit an incarnate God, looks slovenly and shapeless when but a mere man is invested with its ample folds." 4

In other words, if the standpoint be assumed, that, as Renan observes, Jesus never for a moment

enounces the sacrilegious idea that he is God,⁵ then both Protestantism and Catholicism do indeed become shaken at their very foundations. But in the mean while what has happened to the religion of Jesus? Nothing more serious than that Jesus has been simply restored to that position of a mere man in his own religious system, which no one more earnestly than Strauss contends is precisely the position that he personally conceived himself alone to occupy.

This is not, however, to pronounce any judgment for the present, either the one way or the other, on the general merits of the modern debate concerning Jesus' personality. It is merely to point out the only legitimate results of denying or even disproving his divinity on the ground that he personally professed to be nothing but a man.

But some one may here demand to know more specifically what is meant in these days when persons speak of the religion of Jesus.

In the chapter on the Religion of the Bible we discovered, for one thing, that the religion of Jesus, differs in almost every essential respect from the religion of the Old Testament, on the one hand; and the question now arises, how it stands related to the general religion of the New Testament, on the other.

It has already been seen that the religion of Jesus, as it is set forth in the fourth Gospel, is maintained by a very large number of modern biblicists to be so

incompatible with that religion, as it is set forth in the other three Gospels, that, if the synoptical representation thereof be accepted as historical, then the Johannean representation must be rejected as on the whole not historical. We now advance to say that the Rev. Mr. Bernard, in his capacity of Bampton Lecturer, feels himself under obligation to combat the strong disposition which is evinced by many of the most eminent of modern writers and preachers to make a broad distinction between the religious teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, and the religious teaching of the apostles, as such teaching finds expression in the Book of the Acts, in the Epistles, and in the Book of Revelation.⁶ Not that there is any thing particularly modern in this. On the contrary, Dr. Ferdinand Christian Baur cites Neander as his authority for affirming that even in the primitive days of the Church there existed a party of Christ, just as there existed another party of Paul, and still another party of Apollos. And Baur then goes on to reason that this party of Christ must have adhered to the teaching of Jesus alone, to the entire rejection of the teaching of the apostles.⁷ And, coming down to later times, Adam Storey Farrar says that Bolingbroke, following the example of Chubb, insisted that there exists a broad distinction between the gospel of Jesus and the gospel of Paul.⁸ And, according to Dean Mansel, Locke likewise

maintained that the teaching of the Epistles is separated from that of the Gospels, and that it is not to the Epistles but to the Gospels that we must go if we would learn the fundamentals of the faith,⁹—by which he means, of course, the fundamentals of the religion of Jesus. And, still later yet, we find John Stuart Mill in a general way placing the precepts of Jesus far above the Paulism which is the foundation of ordinary Christianity, and specifically making the Apostle Paul responsible for atonement and redemption, original sin and vicarious punishment, but entirely exonerating Jesus from ever having taught any such repellent doctrines.¹⁰

Now, whether the religion of Jesus, particularly as it is developed in the synoptical Gospels, is or is not thus at a fundamental variance with the religious system developed in the remaining portions of the New Testament, is a subject which we shall hereafter discuss in our formal volume on the Religion of Jesus. Just here, however, it suffices to say that to raise and discuss the question whether it is, or is not, thus at variance, is by no means to inaugurate an attack on the religion of Jesus. It is merely to make the effort to discover what the religion of Jesus is, on the one hand, as distinguished from what the religion of the remaining portions of the New Testament is, on the other. But manifestly to make the effort to discover what the religion of Jesus actually is, amounts

to a vastly different thing, both in its animus and intention, from making a formal assault on that religion after it is discovered. And, to bring out the one practical point which it is now our sole object to impress upon the reader, we will argumentatively assume for the time being, that, as the result of investigation, it has been satisfactorily established, first, that the data of the religion of Jesus are to be found almost exclusively in the synoptical Gospels; and, secondly, that the data furnished by the fourth Gospel, the Book of the Acts, the several New Testament Epistles, and the Book of Revelation, would give us a religious system of quite another realm and order, when compared with that of Jesus.

Assuming this standpoint, it is, first of all, to be distinctly recognized that the most progressive religious thinkers of the present epoch do not profess to have broken with the religion of Jesus altogether. Take one or two examples. And, to begin with, John Stuart Mill remarks: "Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left,—an unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. The tradition of fol-

lowers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which he is reputed to have wrought. But who among his disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort. . . . What *could* be added and interpolated by a disciple, we may see in the mystical parts of the Gospel of St. John. . . . The East was full of men who could have stolen any quantity of this poor stuff, as the multitudinous Oriental sects of Gnostics afterwards did. But about the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with a profundity of insight, which must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from

the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." ¹¹

In like manner Renan says: "Having reached a higher plane than man ever reached before, Jesus founded the eternal religion of humanity." ¹² "It will never be possible to surpass him in the matter of religion, whatever progress may be made in other branches of intellectual culture. Religious faith has doubtless perfected itself since his time by becoming disengaged from many a superstition, and from belief in the supernatural. But this progress bears no comparison with the gigantic stride that Jesus caused humanity to take in the career of its religious development." ¹³ "The religion of Jesus is in some respects the final religion. Whatever may be the transformation of dogma, Jesus will remain in religion the creator of its pure sentiment. The Sermon on the Mount will never be surpassed. No revolution will lead us not to join in religion the grand intellectual and moral line at the head of which beams the name of Jesus. In this sense we are still Christians, even though we separate upon almost all points from the Christian tradition which has preceded us." ¹⁴

Having thus shown that the most radical religious revolutionists of the day do not propose to come to a total rupture with the religion of Jesus, it still remains to say that they nevertheless do propose

to come to a rupture with that religion in more respects than one. Thus, on the one hand, Strauss is prepared to admit that every point is fully developed in the religion of Jesus which has reference to love towards God and man, and also to purity of heart and of life. At the same time Strauss insists that it is a perfectly fruitless undertaking to attempt to decide, upon the precepts and after the example of Jesus, what the action of a man ought to be as a citizen, and what his conduct should be in connection with the enrichment and embellishment of existence by trade and art. On these latter points, Strauss contends that something is intrinsically wanting in the original religious scheme of Jesus, which needs to be supplied from the circumstances of other times, and other states, and other systems of cultivation.¹⁵

It is, however, on the side of its supernaturalism that the most advanced wing of modern religious revolutionists has come to the most absolute breach with the religion of Jesus. It may, indeed, be denied by them that Jesus personally professed to be either a God, or in any other sense a superhuman being. It may also be denied by them that Jesus personally professed to perform any such wonderful works, or miracles, as are accredited to him even in the synoptical Gospels. But it cannot be denied by them that the Jesus of the synoptical Gospels

was a most pronounced believer in the supernatural. This Jesus believed in miracles. This Jesus believed in the efficacy of prayer. This Jesus believed in special providences. This Jesus believed in special and direct divine revelations. And this belief of Jesus in the supernatural, the miraculous, is integral, inwrought, vital to his religious system. But here the religious revolutionists more immediately in question propose to put the religion of Jesus into precisely the same category with all other traditional forms of religious faith which postulate the supernatural, and part company with it, not partially, but completely. In the ultimate analysis, the religion of Jesus is in their estimation the highest, and incomparably the highest, form of religion which we have inherited from the past, and the one which of all others is in many respects destined, they grant, to have the grandest career in the future. It is moreover, of all other inherited forms of religion, the one for which they have the profoundest respect, and which they can, at least on its ethical side, in the largest measure adopt. Still it is a form of religion which requires of them either to break with it fundamentally, or else to place their credence in the supernatural. But, as for the supernatural, that is to them unspeakably offensive. And it is in this way, therefore, that the religion of Jesus becomes what we announced it to be at the opening of the

present chapter ; namely, the ultimate line of division between those among us who having ceased, indeed, to be either Protestants or Catholics, still believe in a religion in some traditional sense and form, or still believe in a religion, but in no traditional sense or form. We of the one class still believe in the religion of Jesus, supernaturalism and all. We of the other class relegate the supernaturalism of the religion of Jesus to the same regions with all other superstitions ; that is, what are to us all other superstitions.

CHAPTER IX.

RELIGIOUS REPRESSION.

It is indeed true, that, at least in its merely physical forms, ecclesiastical persecution and punishment do not confront the heretic in this nineteenth century. He can both privately hold and publicly proclaim religious opinions which attack the very foundations at once of Catholicism and of Protestantism without any apprehension of either the theological Star Chamber, the rack, or the stake. And yet even in these days ecclesiastical persecution and punishment are by no means either non-existent, or of such a nature as not to make the general observation of Canon Mozley still perfectly true, that a man who in religious matters throws off the chains of authority and association must be a man of extraordinary independence of mind, and strength of mind. When, in 1835, Strauss published the initial volume of his first "Life of Jesus," he was occupying the position of a theological instructor at Tübingen, with the most brilliant prospects before him, and beloved and honored of all. But even before the

appearance of the second volume he was summarily ejected from this position.¹ As the unparalleled commotion created by his work continued to increase, his own father turned away from him in anger; his early teachers in divinity hastened to disavow all complicity with his opinions; and "as for the friends and companions of my studies," says Strauss himself, "these I had the mortification of seeing exposed to so much suspicion and annoyance for their merely rumored intimacy with me, so far as they refused to sacrifice it, as some did, to circumstances, that it became a point of conscientious duty not to expose them to still greater odium by any public memorial of our friendship."² In fact, had it not been for the steadfast sympathy and practical pecuniary assistance rendered to Strauss by his affectionate brother William, his life for many a year after the publication of "*Das Leben Jesu*" would have been one of more or less complete social isolation, and he might have also been either compelled to forego all future religious research, or else have been reduced to such straits to secure his livelihood as well-nigh to take up the lamentation: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the modern religious outcast has scarcely where to lay his head.

Take another illustration. Says a recent biographer, M. Henri Harrisse: "The faculty of the

Theological Seminary of Saint Sulpice were once engaged in preparing their annual examinations, when a young candidate for the deaconship, who had always been noted for his great modesty and studious habits, asked leave to submit a number of questions which perplexed his mind, and seemed to depress his religious spirit. Unless they were solved to his satisfaction he could not hope to enter into holy orders. His earnestness astonished and alarmed the entire faculty. They refused at once to examine questions which to them appeared novel or subversive; and justly fearing that a neophyte who, on the threshold of the priesthood, was besieged with such misgivings, might become a cause of strife in the Church, they withheld their protection, and bade him depart from the consecrated place. This inquisitive and conscientious student was Joseph Ernest Renan." 3

After bravely and patiently enduring an ordeal of poverty and privations almost without precedent in the history of a Parisian student, even in the Latin Quarter, M. Renan eventually succeeded in passing, with the highest honors, his examination for University Professor of Philosophy. In due process of time his scholarly attainments and reputation became so pre-eminent that the professors of the College of France, together with the members of the French Institute, proposed to him that he should accept the

professorship of the Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Syriac languages and literature; and he was thereupon appointed to this position by the emperor.⁴ The clerical party looked upon the elevation of this heretical thinker to the oldest chair of the first institution of the land with mingled anger and alarm. Forming themselves into a cabal, they endeavored, by their clamorous interruptions, to prevent his being so much as even heard on the day of his inauguration; and on the day following, the official columns of "The Moniteur" contained a governmental decree suspending his course of lectures indefinitely.

The clerical party had thus defiantly thrown down the gauntlet at the feet of Renan; and just one year from the date of the memorable scene enacted in the College of France his answer appeared, in the form of the "*Vie de Jésus*."⁵ And, immediately upon the publication of this work, he became denounced from one end of Christendom to the other; and that by Protestants as well as Catholics. In all orthodox circles he had become, in fact, at once as famous, and as infamous, as Dr. David Friedrich Strauss.

Nor is this repressive theological method of dealing with the modern heretic at all peculiar either to Germany or France. No sooner, for instance, had the volume which was entitled "Essays and Reviews" appeared in England, than petitions, numerousl

signed, began to be presented to the bishops to take judicial action against its authors. One of these petitions is computed to have contained the signatures of not less than nine thousand clergymen of the Established Church. Judicial proceedings were commenced; and Dr. Williams and Mr. Wilson were cited before the Court of Arches, the chief ecclesiastical tribunal of the country. This court decided that the parties arraigned had departed from the teachings of the Thirty-nine Articles on the inspiration of Holy Scripture, on the atonement, and on justification. The culprits were accordingly sentenced to undergo suspension from the performance of their clerical functions for a year, with the further penalty of costs, and the deprivation of their salaries. Fortunately, however, their case was subsequently brought before the Privy Council, where the decision of the Court of Arches against them was reversed.⁶

While the commotion caused by this ecclesiastical trial was still running at the highest, Dr. John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal, in South-eastern Africa, began to issue his work on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. This at once diverted the attention of the general Anglican theological police force from all further formal pursuit of the Essayists and Reviewers, and they began forthwith to hunt down the bishop.⁷

Crossing over to Scotland, every one knows how

the declarations of certain modern scholarly views about the Bible, by Professor W. Robertson Smith, recently aroused the mediæval biblicists to place him on trial for heresy, and resulted in his dismissal from the professorship of Hebrew in the Free College of Aberdeen.

The simple truth is, that not a single man of any noted scholarship or genius connected with the modern religious movement has ventured to speak his mind in opposition to the traditional religious conceptions in any so-called Christian country, without being forthwith made to feel the full force either of ecclesiastical discipline or of ecclesiastical punishment, in so far as that discipline or that punishment could be brought to bear upon him. If he happened to be a clergyman, what he had to undergo is sufficiently indicated above, in what is said of Professor W. Robertson Smith, Colenso, and Strauss. If he happened to be a layman — well, Renan is a layman. Besides, Professor Huxley suspects that there are one or two other laymen still living, who, if the twenty-first century studies their history, will be found to have been recognized by the Christianity of the middle of the nineteenth century only as objects of vilification.⁸ If laymen can be made to experience the effects of incurring the orthodox theological odium in no other way, they can at least be stigmatized as anti-religious propagandists, material atheists, or something of the sort.

But, when we speak thus of the orthodox theological odium, it becomes incumbent upon us to do justice to a certain very considerable class among the Protestant divines. "It is my privilege," says Professor Tyndall, "to enjoy the friendship of a select number of religious men, with whom I converse frankly upon theological subjects, expressing without disguise the notions and opinions I entertain regarding their tenets, and hearing, in return, these notions and opinions subjected to criticism. I have, thus far, found them liberal and loving men, — patient in hearing, tolerant in reply, — who know how to reconcile the duties of courtesy with the earnestness of debate." 9

Nor is the experience of Professor Tyndall here, as a representative modern heretic, by any means exceptional. The orthodox divines *do* include among themselves this select number of men, who both in private intercourse and in all their public declarations, whether from the pulpit or through the press, treat the most revolutionary opponents of their religious views as if the latter at least belonged to their common human brotherhood. Nor is this the case when they have to deal with the laity alone. Even when it becomes their official duty to participate in the formal ecclesiastical proceedings which may be instituted against any among the clergy who may stand charged with a more or less fundamental

departure from the teachings of the doctrinal standards of their respective churches, the present writer, for one, has abundant reason to testify that they do so in a liberal, loving, patient, tolerant spirit, and with the manifest reluctance of persons who have a painful task upon their ecclesiastical consciences to discharge, rather than with the manifest relish of that other, and far different, class among the orthodox divines who pass through the entire procedure as if it were at once their very meat and drink to aid in stamping out yet one more enemy of the faith once delivered to the saints.

And yet even this latter class among the orthodox divines doubtless act with perfect conscientiousness. In attempting to put down at once the heretic and his heresy, they verily believe that they are doing God service. Indeed, the very sternness and relentlessness of both their measures and their methods arise from this conviction. Nor can there be the slightest question, that, when they have to deal with any thing like a flagrant instance of heresy within the ministry itself, all the technical aspects of the case are plainly on their side. The orthodox clergyman has entered into a formal compact that he will promulgate and defend certain specified doctrines, and that he will neither promulgate nor defend any contravening doctrines. So long as he adheres to the perfectly well-understood conditions of this com-

pact, he is of course entitled to all the privileges, emoluments, and remunerations stipulated in the specific arrangements which he may have entered into with any given congregation, denominational institution, or the like. The moment he violates those conditions, at least in any fundamental manner, he is plainly and even justly, from a merely ecclesiastical point of view, at the mercy of his ministerial associates or superiors. But all this does not alter the fact, that every orthodox or evangelical clergyman is liable to be repressed for the expression of non-evangelical religious opinions, and that, if he comes to indulge any such opinions in private, the only way in which he can hope to escape from being repressed, so far as it lies in the power of his particular branch of the church to repress him, is simply to keep both his tongue still and his pen still.

But, if the orthodox divines have thus at least the manifest technical right to put down heresy within the ministry itself, it may still be inquired by what right they can proceed to make their theological onsets upon the heretical element among the laity. The answer to this inquiry would of course be evident enough when the offending layman stood in a formal covenanted relation with any given orthodox organization or society. Church-members, as well as church-ministers, become the legitimate subjects of what is characterized as ecclesiastical discipline

in case they come to an open rupture with the theological standards of the churches to which they belong.

Still the orthodox divines do not by any means confine their theological jurisdiction to either the ministers or the members of their respective churches. Renan, for example, does not need to be a member of the Church of Rome, or Tyndall or Darwin or Huxley to be a member of the Church of England, in order that the orthodox divines should regard it as their peculiar prerogative and privilege to do their utmost to keep him out of any position of prominence and power, corresponding to that of the College of France for instance, and to do what they can likewise to destroy his general public influence by stigmatizing him as an atheist and anathematizing him as an infidel and worse than an infidel. But even in this aspect of the case the conduct of the orthodox divines is not without its explanations, and certainly not without its provocations. For when laymen, who are also non-churchmen, as Renan and Tyndall, declare an open warfare upon the very religious ideas and principles to propagate and defend which the great Catholic and Protestant churches have their organized existence, they at once place both the Catholic and the Protestant divines on the defensive. And it is not for those who declare the war to wonder, much less to complain, if they receive as well as give some ugly sword-thrusts.

But it may be replied to this, that while the orthodox divines are doubtless perfectly justifiable in defending their various dogmas as best they may be able to do, when their dogmas are assaulted, they are clearly bound to do so by the employment of legitimate methods. The implication here is, that ecclesiastical repression is not to be numbered among such legitimate methods. Still, say what we will upon this point, the orthodox divines will continue to insist that ecclesiastical discipline is not merely a legitimate method of dealing with heretics, both among the orthodox ministry and among the orthodox church-membership, but that it is precisely the method of being dealt with to which both the orthodox ministry and the orthodox church-membership have explicitly agreed that they will submit themselves upon becoming heretical. And yet even the orthodox divines ought by this time to be getting their eyes tolerably well opened to the fact that even if, from the strictly ecclesiastical point of view, ecclesiastical repression is to be legitimately employed in putting down heretics and heresy within the church itself, from a logical point of view, ecclesiastical repression, considered merely as a means to an end, can have no relevancy whatever when it comes to be applied to the heretics and the heresies peculiar to the present religious epoch. For there is scarcely a single great religious or biblical ques-

tion now up for discussion and decision which is not a more or less strictly intellectual one. Take, for example, the question of the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, or the question of the probable date, authorship, and general literary origin of the various books composing the Protestant canonical Scriptures, or the question of biblical inspiration, or the question of future punishment, or the question of the relation of the religion of Jesus to the religion of the Old Testament, on the one hand, and the general religion of the New Testament, on the other, or the question of Darwinism, or the question of evolutionism. What possible bearing can trials for heresy, ejections from professorships, depositions from the ministry, excommunications from the churches, anathemas and vilifications, have upon the intelligent and satisfactory solution of these and kindred problems? And from this time onward the orthodox divines will come increasingly to discover that the less they presume to exercise mere ecclesiastical force simply to stifle out, whether on the part of the ministry or on the part of the laity, a full, dispassionate, scholarly, and scientific consideration of all these subjects, and manifold more which might readily be instanced, the better they will in the end subserve the very cause of orthodoxy. For, in the present condition of the general public temper, there is no disposition to permit the down-

right suppression of intelligent objections to the traditional theology, whether Protestant or Catholic, or to the traditional theological views, whether of the Bible or religion, which objections demand investigation, research, reasoning, calm, judicial judgment. And any cause which condescends to undertake to defend itself against a purely intellectual assault *vi et armis*, will, for that very reason, more or less alienate from itself the general public sympathy, and tend to destroy confidence in itself in every thoughtful and cultured community. For it is simply inevitable that thoughtful and cultured people should everywhere come more and more distinctly to perceive that any cause which is even apparently driven to silence, rather than to answer its opponents, is a cause which is at least very unpleasantly open to the suspicion that it is not intellectually capable of responding to its assailants.

CHAPTER X.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

As has already been observed, the orthodox ministry, as a class, have entered into a formal ecclesiastical compact that they will promulgate and defend certain specified views of religion, and that they will neither promulgate nor defend any contravening ones. But this is merely another form of stating the fact that the orthodox ministry, as a class, have, for certain considerations of one description or another, formally relinquished their rights to the exercise of any thing but a perfectly one-sided religious liberty. They are, indeed, free enough so long as they promulgate and defend their various denominational dogmas. But the moment they come to a radical rupture with any of those dogmas in their private convictions, and begin to think of proclaiming those convictions, they are at once confronted with the stipulated conditions of their ecclesiastical contract. If they venture openly to declare their denominational heresies, they must stand prepared to do so at every professional cost and every ecclesiastical peril.

Now, at least in the milder senses of the term, there are a great many heretics in the ranks of the evangelical ministry to-day, who are anxious to know in how far, despite the strict provisions of their ecclesiastical compact, they are yet justified in employing their respective pulpits in making known, both to their parishioners and to the general public, in what particulars they can no longer either promulgate or defend the articles of religious belief which are set forth dogmatically in their several denominational standards. Well, the only way in which they can practically solve this problem is simply to try the experiment. Some orthodox churches will accord to their individual ministers great liberty in this direction, whereas other orthodox churches will accord to them either none or next to none.

But the heretics among the modern evangelical ministry should never forget that how much or how little of their heresies shall or shall not be heard from their respective pulpits, is a matter which primarily belongs, as between themselves and their congregations, not with themselves, but with their congregations, to decide. Orthodox congregations have their religious rights as well as the class of heretics in question. And among the religious rights of orthodox congregations none can be more manifest than this, — that they first of all are to be the judges whether they will or will not permit a

clergyman, whom they expressly salary and support to promulgate and defend their denominational dogmas, to turn directly about, and covertly undermine, if he does not openly assail, those dogmas. If any among these heretics desire a larger religious liberty than they can find any orthodox church prepared voluntarily to accord them, then let them either go and enjoy that liberty in some of the heterodox churches, or else abandon the ministry.

But it is high time that both the orthodox churches as a body, and the general religious public, should thoughtfully consider the question in how far it is a desirable or an undesirable thing that there should exist great ecclesiastical organizations in which religious thought, or at least in which religious expression, is free only within the limits of their denominational creeds and catechisms. And, in the first place, at such a transitional religious period as the present, this arrangement operates with a most demoralizing effect upon a very considerable element within the orthodox ministry itself. This element is the heretical one. And that this element among the orthodox clergy is already quite a large one, and that its proportions are constantly on the increase, no one at all familiar with the facts of the case will for a moment think to dispute. It is not an element, indeed, which is inclined to betray its confidences to the heresy-hunters of the day, whether clerical or laical. But

it will take any one who is himself a well-known heretic many a year to get over his surprises at the heretical confidences which gradually become reposed in him on the part of those who, as the expression goes, are still in good and regular standing in the orthodox ministry. Now it will be the pastor of some prominent pulpit, now it will be the editor of some leading evangelical organ of expression, now it will be some distinguished doctor of divinity who is either a college professor or even a theological professor, by whom the confidence is reposed. Indeed, we venture the suspicion, based upon our own personal experience, that there is not a pronounced and outspoken heretic now before the public who could not make it exceedingly troublesome for a great many hitherto unsuspected heretics in the orthodox ministry, if he could only be base enough to bruit abroad the secrets which have been imparted to him.

Now, what ethical effect have the various Protestant methods of confining at least all religious expression within certain dogmatical limitations upon this special class of heretics? It forces them to a systematic and habitual concealment of their actual religious opinions. It frequently drives them to the public advocacy of religious opinions which they no longer either personally believe, or consider that any one else can give a valid reason for believing. It is very true that the way of escape from this slow but

sure process of moral deterioration and disintegration is open to them, if they can only make-up their minds fearlessly to declare the altered condition of their religious views, undergo a formal trial for heresy, and have their very names stricken from the rolls of orthodoxy.

Some of the clergymen in question have already made up their minds to adopt this latter course, and others are doubtless on the point of doing so. At the same time we must not judge over-harshly those others among their number who still continue to promulgate and defend the old conceptions about the Bible, about religion, and the like, while they have come secretly and more or less fundamentally to accept the new. To illustrate. Said Froude to the English clergy in 1864: "We can but hope and pray that some one may be found to give us an edition of the Gospels in which the difficulties will neither be slurred over with convenient neglect, nor noticed with affected indifference. It may or may not be a road to a bishopric; it may or may not win the favor of the religious world; but it will earn at least the respectful gratitude of those who cannot trifle with holy things, and who believe that true religion is the service of truth." 1

Now, this is all perfectly easy for Mr. Froude to say. Mr. Froude is not himself a professional clergyman. Mr. Froude has no prospects of a bishopric

to renounce. Mr. Froude has no particular reason to consider, in any of his proceedings or his publications, whether he is about to secure the favor or the disfavor of the religious world. But let Mr. Froude, for the moment, put himself in the professional clergyman's place. Let him then conceive that he is confronted with the question whether he will, or will not, put forth such an edition of the Gospels as he suggests above. He will then begin to say to himself: "If I do this, I will first of all be thrown out of my profession. I am rapidly approaching, if I am not actually beyond, the meridian of life. I have not merely myself to support, but a wife and children, for whom I must, in some way, provide at least their daily bread. I am more or less unfitted, by my whole clerical education, training, and experience, to take up any other pursuit in life. Possibly I might become a teacher, for example. But that would indeed require to be a very rare and a very exceptional combination of circumstances which would enable me, after I became a branded and excommunicated clerical heretic, either to secure a remunerative position in connection with the general educational institutions, or to anticipate, with a reasonable degree of assurance, something like an adequate amount of purely private patronage."

Looked at in this light, therefore, Mr. Froude will perceive that this whole matter of outspoken heresy

is to the professional orthodox clergyman intensely practical; and that it is likewise fraught on every hand with the most painful perplexities. And nothing can be more certain than this; namely, that if Mr. Froude were himself a professional orthodox divine, and were about to issue still another edition of the Gospels, he would be sorely tempted, consciously and intentionally, to slur over a great many difficulties with a very convenient neglect, and to notice many more with the customary nonchalance of the mediæval biblicists when they have a case in hand which it is particularly embarrassing to manage. Whether he would, or would not, yield to this temptation, is not, however, quite so certain.

All honor, therefore, to that clergyman in the orthodox ranks, who, having ceased any longer to believe in a greater or less proportion of the more cardinal tenets of the general evangelical systems of theology, manfully speaks his mind, courageously undergoes the severest ecclesiastical procedures which can be instituted against him, accepts his ejection from the ministry with mingled dignity and fearlessness, and heroically begins the battle for the maintenance both of himself and those who may be dependent on him in some other calling or profession. But let us, at least, neither think too severely, nor speak too severely, of that heretical clergyman in the orthodox communion who, whether from an innate

timidity, or from a primary regard to those merely temporal considerations by which the average human brotherhood must ever be most powerfully and most decisively influenced, cannot bring himself up to the point of becoming at once a hero and a martyr.

And it is precisely here that the immense practical importance of the remark we made above arises. Were it an easy thing for the heretical minister to renounce his profession as an orthodox divine, it would be a very easy thing for him to escape the moral damage which he must inevitably receive by remaining in his profession. But inasmuch as it is almost a life-and-death matter — not merely with himself, but likewise with his household — that he should remain in his profession, he will indeed need to be a man of exceptional resolution and of exceptional regard to his absolute ethical integrity, if he does not remain in his profession, promulgating religious doctrines which he no longer personally approves, and defending denominational dogmas which he has abundant reason to know have long since been exploded.

The orthodox divines who continue in perfect good faith to adhere to the traditional theological dogmas do not, of course, experience any of the evil ethical effects which we have pointed out as affecting the heretical class, by reason of having their religious thinking and their religious declarations confined

within the limits of their dogmas. But they do receive a mental damage which is as deplorable as it is undeniable. To illustrate. After the author had begun the composition of the present chapter, he chanced to get into conversation with an orthodox theological professor, whose mediæval biblical attainments are such as to have secured his appointment among those distinguished biblical verbalists who are now at work upon the Oxford revision of the Scriptures passing through the press. The author refreshed the memory of this theological professor with regard to the very familiar fact that two of the Evangelists represent a certain miracle of Jesus as having been performed on the departure of Jesus out of Jericho, whereas another of the Evangelists says, as explicitly, that this same miracle was performed by Jesus on his entrance into Jericho. And what solution of these contradictory statements between the Evangelists do you think the professor undertook to give? He said that when he himself was a student in divinity, the following explanation had been offered to his class: "It is probable, or at least conceivable, that when the miracle was performed the different Evangelists had arrived upon the scene in an entirely different condition, — two of them worn out and weary, the other fresh and vigorous. When they afterward sat down, each by himself, to place the miracle on record, to the two Evan-

gelists who were worn out and weary at the time of its performance it appeared as if the prodigy could not have been wrought until the departure of Jesus out of Jericho ; whereas to the other Evangelist, who was fresh and vigorous at the time of its performance, it seemed as if the wonderful work must have been done as early as the entrance of Jesus into Jericho." And, unfortunately, we have here only a representative example of those intellectual puerilities which are begotten even among orthodox theological professors, and which are perpetuated from one generation to another of those professors, in consequence of their being obliged professionally to confine all their mental movements within the narrow limitations of their little churchly dogmas.

Moreover, even when the ratiocination of the orthodox divines is not so perfectly vapid as in the instance adduced above, its unsatisfactoriness and its evasiveness are as characteristic as they are notorious. It will be remembered, for example, that Professor Tyndall some time since enclosed, with his approval, an anonymous communication to the editor of "*The Contemporary Review*," proposing that the controverted question of the efficacy of prayer as a means of restoring the sick to health should be decided by means of a series of scientific tests.² This communication was afterward announced to have been written by Sir Henry Thompson ; and the

point of his proposal is thus stated by himself: "I ask that one single ward or hospital, under the care of first-rate physicians and surgeons, containing certain numbers of patients, afflicted with those diseases which have been best studied, and of which the mortality rates are best known, whether the diseases are those which are treated by medical or by surgical remedies, should be, during a period of not less, say, than three or five years, made the object of special prayer by the whole body of the faithful; and that at the end of that time the mortality rates should be compared with the past rates, and also with those of other leading hospitals, similarly well managed, during the same period. Granting that time is given, and numbers are sufficiently large, so as to insure a minimum of error from accidental disturbing causes, the experiment will be exhaustive and complete. I might have proposed to treat two sides of the same hospital, managed by the same men; one side to be the special object of prayer, the other to be exempted from all prayer. It would have been the most rigidly logical and philosophical method. But I shrink from depriving any of—I had almost said—his natural inheritance in the prayers of Christendom. Practically, too, it would have been impossible. The unprayed-for ward would have attracted the prayers of believers as surely as the lofty tower attracts electric fluid. The experiment would be frustrated. But the

opposite character of my proposal will commend it to those who are naturally the most interested in its success; those, namely, who conscientiously and devoutly believe in the efficiency against disease and death of special prayer. I open a field for the exercise of their devotion. I offer an occasion of demonstrating to the faithless an imperishable record of the real power of prayer.”³

No sooner, however, had Professor Tyndall become the public sponsor and the general theological scapegoat of this proposal by Sir Henry Thompson, than the orthodox divines began to treat him, he says, to a “free use of the terms ‘insolence,’ ‘outrage,’ ‘profanity,’ and ‘blasphemy.’”⁴ But what possible relevancy had this “considerable amount of animadversion”⁵ against Professor Tyndall towards deciding, from the experimental, scientific standpoint, whether prayer does, or does not, possess a veritable and verifiable sanitary value?

Still, some of the orthodox divines did something more than simply to denounce Professor Tyndall for lending his countenance to Dr. Thompson in connection with his suggested prayer-test. Of these President M'Cosh may be selected as among the best examples. The President offered two leading objections. He said: “1. The proposal is not consistent with the method and laws of God’s spiritual kingdom. The project, in fact, is imperious. . . . The project is

not prescribed by God, nor is it one to which we can reasonably expect him to conform. Every intelligent defender of prayer has allowed a becoming sovereignty to God in answering the petitions presented to him. . . . 2. The project is not consistent with the spirit in which Christians pray. They pray because commanded to pray. They pray because it is the prompting of their hearts, commended by conscience. They pray because they expect God to listen to the offering-up of their desires. They pray because they expect God to grant what they pray for, so far as it may be agreeable to his will and their own good. But they shrink from praying as an experiment. . . . Such prayer, they feel, would imply doubt on their part, and might give offence to one who expects us to come to him as children unto a father. They fear that it might look as if they required him to answer prayer in a particular way, whether it may be for good or evil, and unjustifiably expose him to reproach, provided he refused to comply with the uncalled-for demand." ⁶

But all this is evasion, and evasion almost pure and simple. It is indeed true that the precise method of testing the sanitary value of prayer outlined by Dr. Thompson is not propounded in the Bible. And yet a much more crucial test *is* propounded in the Bible. That is where St. James explicitly instructs the Christian brotherhood, that,

if any one of them is sick, he is to send for the elders of the church, in order that the elders may come and pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And to this apostolical injunction is attached the specific assurance that the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick.⁷ If, therefore, President M'Cosh, as a representative of the orthodox divines, did not feel at liberty to decide the matter in dispute according to the project of Dr. Thompson, he certainly should have felt at liberty to challenge Dr. Thompson to have it decided according to the project of St. James the apostle. But no. The orthodox divines shrink from praying as an experiment. They fear that they might unjustifiably expose their Deity to reproach, provided he refuses to comply with the uncalled-for demand. As if the very object of the experiment, on the part of the unbelieving scientific world, would not be to discover the truth, whether there be any Divinity whatever who will hear the prayers of man in favor of the sick! As if the very object of the experiment, on the part of the believing, religious world, would not be the practical verification of the fact that the God of the Bible *does* heal the sick, as well as instruct men to pray to him that he will heal them! And as to the demand being uncalled for, certainly, in an age when every thing that is supernatural is being more and more widely called in

question, if ever the Deity — we speak it with reverence — should delight to have his children invoke some special and signal demonstration of his practical regard and personal helpfulness to the suffering human brotherhood, that time is now.

But just here we must guard ourselves against all misapprehension. Personally we do not by any means occupy the same standpoint in regard to the general subject of prayer with either Dr. Thompson or Professor Tyndall. Personally we not merely believe, if only as a matter of hereditary habit, in the efficacy of prayer, but endeavor to lead something like a life of prayer. And if ever an experimental hospital should be established where the efficacy of prayer in the treatment of disease could be tested in the same scientific manner that the efficacy of good ventilation, or of any other remedial agent or agency, real or supposed, is tested, we should most assuredly be personally found upon the praying side, — at least, until the experiment had clearly, proved a failure. But the whole trouble with the orthodox divines is inadvertently disclosed by President M'Cosh when he furthermore observes: "The proposal made in the letter forwarded by Professor Tyndall is evidently regarded as likely to be troublesome to religious men. If they accept, it is expected that the issue of the experiment will cover them with confusion. If they decline, they will be

charged with refusing to submit to a scientific test.”⁸ Accordingly President M'Cosh, in common with his entire class of professional religious evasionists, coming to the private conclusion that the most prudent course would be to decline the experiment, undertakes to give the public certain reasons, such as they are, for not accepting it. But to this sort of thing Professor Tyndall very pertinently responds: “The theory that the system of nature is under the control of a Being who changes phenomena in compliance with the prayers of men is, in my opinion, a perfectly legitimate one. But without verification a theoretic conception is a mere figment of the intellect. And while science cheerfully submits to this ordeal [of verifying or exploding its various hypotheses], it seems impossible to devise a mode of verification of their theories which does not arouse resentment in the theological mind.”⁹

The simple fact is, that the entire mental life which the orthodox divine is compelled to lead is such as to render his whole mental cast precisely the reverse of scientific. For the primary object in all truly scientific research is simply to discover the truth, whereas the primary object of the orthodox divine is simply to defend his dogma. That his dogma is true, he is always obliged to postulate. Whether his dogma is true or false, he is never at liberty candidly and impartially to inquire, except,

indeed, argumentatively, and then only to proceed to contend that his dogma is doubtlessly true, and true beyond any reasonable sort of question. Which is all very well so long as the truthfulness of his dogma can be established by valid evidence and legitimate reasons. But by this time it must be perfectly apparent to the general reader that his dogmas are far more frequently false than true. And, having such an enormous aggregate of false dogmas to support, he must of course endeavor to support them by evidence which is not valid and by reasoning which is not legitimate. Hence his intellectual puerilities, hence his mental make-shifts and evasions, hence his apologetic subterfuges, hence his substitution of repression for argument, hence his employment of anathemas when he is unable to give an answer, hence, in a word, his theological, as opposed to his scientific, tone and temper.

Such, then, are some of the ethical injuries inflicted upon the heretical element among the orthodox divines; and such are some of the intellectual injuries inflicted upon the non-heretical element among the orthodox divines, in consequence of their having all their religious thinking, and particularly all their religious expression, confined within the limitations of their various denominational creeds and catechisms.

Still this is a matter of direct practical moment

only to the orthodox divines, and is of interest to the general public only to the extent that the general public is interested in the best ethical and intellectual condition of a special class of the common brotherhood of man.

But there are other aspects of this subject in which the general public has a much more immediate and vital interest. And, in the first place, if there has been any aggregate advancement made in the sum total of human knowledge which is fatal to a continued credence in many of the traditional theological dogmas, the world has certainly no reason to congratulate the professional conservators of these dogmas for this advancement. And notably have the traditional theological conceptions about the Holy Scriptures been erected by those conservators as a barrier against any such advancement. To illustrate. When the once celebrated question of the Antipodes first began to be discussed, the Bible was made, according to Professor Tyndall, the ultimate standard of appeal. And while such theologians as Augustine, for instance, did not go so far as to deny the possible rotundity of the earth, still even Augustine did deny the possible existence of inhabitants at the other side, "because no such race is recorded in the Scripture."¹⁰ Again: when, after refraining to publish his book, "*De Revolutionibus*," for thirty-six years, Copernicus eventually

ventured upon its publication, the Inquisition condemned it as heretical, and the congregation of the Index denounced his system as that "false Pythagorean doctrine utterly contrary to the Holy Scripture."¹¹ Nearly a century afterward Galileo also was accused of imposture, heresy, blasphemy, and atheism, for promulging the alleged anti-Scriptural theory that the earth revolves around the sun, and was compelled upon his knees, and with his hand upon the Bible, to abjure and curse this theory.¹² In like manner, when Columbus proposed his voyages of discovery, the irreligious tendency of his proposal was pointed out by the Spanish ecclesiastics, and condemned by the Council of Salamanca; and its orthodoxy was confuted from the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Prophecies, the Gospels, and the Epistles.¹³

Now, in view of such unquestioned and unquestionable historical facts as these, Professor John William Draper certainly does not over-state the truth when he insists that the Church, having set herself forth, Bible in hand, as the arbiter of knowledge, became a stumbling-block in the intellectual advancement of Europe for a thousand years.¹⁴

But it may be objected that all this happened centuries ago, and at the hands of the Catholic Church, not of the Protestant. And yet Professor Draper is not altogether aside from the mark when he further-

more maintains, that, so far as science is concerned, nothing is owed to the Reformation.¹⁵ The Reformation adopted for its fundamental postulate the dogma that the Bible is the divinely inspired and therefore the infallible standard of truth. And it is well known that Protestantism has never been able, either in the past or in the present, to tolerate any scientific hypothesis or increment of knowledge hostile to the Bible. If any such hypothesis has eventually secured any thing like a general scientific acceptance, or any such increment of knowledge has come to prevail, it has done so in despite of Protestantism, and in despite of all the efforts of Protestantism at its suppression. If, for example, men no longer believe that the cosmos was created in six natural days of twenty-four hours, if Darwinism has gained any converts, or if the evolution theory of the creation has met with any considerable progress, no thanks are due to Protestantism. All of these scientific truths, or theories whether true or false, and all other scientific truths, or theories whether true or false, which come in conflict with the teachings of the Bible, and which have been promulgated even in this nineteenth century, have been both combated and denounced alike by the Protestant pulpit and by the Protestant press from one end of Christendom to the other.

Let it accordingly be distinctly understood. If

Protestantism, pure and simple, could have its way, the Bible, or rather an organized and most powerful body of theological police force in the name of the Bible, would dominate thought, would dominate research, would dominate discovery, and never permit the world to get beyond that measure of intellectual development and progress peculiar to those far-off ages of the world when the Bible had its origin. And it is high time that the general Protestant public should become more and more familiarized with the fact, that the fundamental postulate of Protestantism concerning the infallible truthfulness of the Bible is a fundamental falsity. And it is high time also that the general Protestant public should begin to arise more and more *en masse* against that organized and most powerful body of theological police force, which, in the name of the Bible, still undertakes to say alike to the physicist, to the philosopher, to the educator, to the journalist, and to the man of letters, for example: "Thus far shall you go, but no farther. Either promulgate what the Scriptures teach, or else we will combine in the effort to repress you."

But the general Protestant public, or at least a very large element in that public, is concerned in demanding its emancipation from the domination, not to say from the domineering, of this theological police force from the religious point of view as well

as from the more or less strictly intellectual. It is true that for certain millions of very excellent and pious people the Catholic Church still continues to furnish a perfectly satisfactory form of religious belief and practice. It is equally true that for certain other millions of very excellent and pious people the various Protestant churches still perform a kindred service. But it is likewise true that for thousands and hundreds of thousands of the most deeply religious natures scattered all over Christendom neither the Catholic Church, nor all of the Protestant churches considered as a body, can any longer pretend to have the remotest religious mission. And while these latter persons are resignedly willing to be still further expostulated with, and prayed over, and would be only too thankful to return to the faith of their fathers if such a thing were possible, they must still most earnestly protest against having their heretical heads any longer belabored with the orthodox ecclesiastical police clubs. While they recognize the perfect right of the Protestant to remain a Protestant, and of the Catholic to remain a Catholic, without either repression or denunciation, they also claim the perfect right both to become and to continue neither Protestant nor Catholic, without being either stigmatized as anti-religionists, or vilified as infidels and atheists.

Lest, however, in speaking as we have done of the

orthodox ecclesiastical police force, we may appear to have done a flagrant injustice to not a few among the orthodox divines; we hasten to make this qualifying remark. Very many of these divines — and we here refer specifically to very many of these Protestant divines — have inherited the very worst spirit and the very worst characteristics of the very worst of the old-time inquisitors. There is among them more than one Calvin, there are among them more than one thousand Calvins, who, if such a thing would be tolerated in this nineteenth century, would not hesitate for a single moment, either to burn every modern Servetus, or to make him publicly renounce his heresies. But, while this is true, it is likewise true that a very large proportion of the Protestant clergy of the present day, who still remain essentially orthodox in their religious belief, do not in any sense partake of the old inquisitorial spirit. As we have already said in the foregoing chapter, these latter clergymen are at once liberal and loving in all their relations with us modern heretics. Nor is this all; for their voices are always heard, both in the pulpit and in the press, and even in the collective ecclesiastical councils, bravely uplifted in favor of the most catholic religious toleration, and the widest religious liberty.

We must here also distinctly recognize, as we did in the preceding chapter, that the lineal descend-

ants of the ancient heretic-killers, which still more or less abound among the Protestant divines, act with perfect conscientiousness. They believe, for one thing, that every assailant of their dogmas, and notably that every assailant of the traditional theological views about the Holy Scriptures, is an open and impious enemy of the very truth of God, and that, as such, it is among their most binding religious obligations to kill, no longer himself indeed, but his entire public influence, — if they can, and as they can. But we certainly discovered enough above, when discussing the question of the inspiration of the Bible, to be justified here in insisting that it is perfectly preposterous any longer to maintain that the Holy Scriptures, as a whole, contain the very truth of God, and nothing but the truth of God. And under these circumstances it becomes a perfectly legitimate undertaking to seek to discover in how far the Holy Scriptures *do* contain the very truth of God, and in how far they likewise contain errors of almost every description incident, and necessarily incident, to the times and conditions under which the various biblical writings were originally composed. And as for us modern biblicists who have undertaken in one way or another, and from one standpoint or another, to contribute something towards the solution of this most important problem, we have simply to say to the Protestant divines in question: "Let us alone.

We have precisely the same right to search for the actual truth, as distinguished from the actual error, which exists in the Bible, as we have to search for the actual truth, as distinguished from the actual error, which exists in any other book, or in any other department of investigation. And, what is more, we propose, whether you let us alone or not, to exercise this right until we have eventually arrived at something like a full and final answer to this problem."

Another element which enters into the entire conscientiousness of the would-be modern Protestant heretic-extinguishers is their profound and most devout conviction that the eternal well-being or ill-being not merely of the heretic himself, but of all others whom the heretic may influence, hangs suspended on the prompt and utter extinction of all religious views which fundamentally contravene the religious views propounded in their dogmas, or, as they might prefer to say, propounded in the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. But these Protestant divines should remember, that in the Papal Syllabus of Errors it is explicitly maintained that no man may obtain eternal salvation in any form of religion except the Catholic, and that all Protestants in particular are put without the pale of everlasting hope, and impliedly consigned to the everlasting burning.¹⁶ Does this frighten Protestants? No

more does it frighten us modern heretics, who are neither Protestants nor Catholics, that we are ecclesiastically consigned to the everlasting burning because of our radical rupture with all the traditional forms of religion save that of Jesus and Jesus only. Jesus, as we have substantially shown above, was neither a Protestant nor a Catholic. No more was Jesus, in any current conception of the term, a Christian. That is to say, the religion of Jesus is not only a vastly different thing from all the dogmatic systems of theology, whether Protestant or Catholic, but likewise a vastly different thing from the religion of the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. And if in adopting the religion of Jesus, in distinction from all the other traditional forms of religion, whether Protestant or Catholic, we modern heretics come to find ourselves in the eternal world lamenting our condition in the deepest depths of darkness, it will be at least one drop of water to cool our parching tongues that we are keeping company with Jesus. In other words, our devotion to Jesus — the personal Jesus of history — is so great, our confidence in his religious system is so complete, and our consecration to his service is so absolute, that we are perfectly resigned, not only to follow after him in life, but likewise to share his fortunes after death, whatever may be the nature of those fortunes.

But what of that other class of modern heretics

who have broken with every traditional form of religion, even to the extent of parting company with the religion of Jesus, at least altogether on the side of its supernaturalism? To this we answer, that, so long as these heretics continue to adhere — as we have seen above that the vast majority of them do continue to adhere — to the ethical side of the religion of Jesus, and to put that ethical system into practice, perhaps their prospects for the future are not so utterly appalling, after all, excepting only in the groundless apprehensions of the orthodox divines. For with these heretics, as with all others of the common human brotherhood, it shall, for example, remain forever true: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. But in what Gospel does the historical Jesus declare that the divine benedictions and beatitudes shall hereafter be bestowed on those, indeed, who continue faithful unto death in believing in the supernatural, and that from all others those benedictions and beatitudes shall be withheld by the Deity of Jesus, — even though the Deity of Jesus doubtless is conceived to be a God who answers prayer, performs a special providence, and even works perhaps, now and then, a miracle?

Besides, no matter how far the one class or the other class of the heretics now immediately in ques-

tion may, or may not, have gone astray in their conscientious religious convictions, hard words can never reclaim them ; and no priestly pledges of good things in the long hereafter can allure them any more than any priestly predictions of bad things in the long hereafter can intimidate them. So far as that hereafter is concerned, they are impervious alike to priestly bribes and priestly threats. If they are actually wrong in their religious views, they do not wish to hear any mere jingling of the traditional ecclesiastical keys, accompanied with such observations, in effect, as these : Accept this set of religious views, and here is for you the master-key of an everlasting heaven : reject this set of religious views, and here is for you the master-key of an everlasting hades. They wish to be convinced by calm and dispassionate reasoning, and by downright demonstrable fact, that they are indeed in error. And, if this be not done with them, they will remain, as Professor Huxley substantially remarks, content to follow their own conceptions of reason and fact, in singleness and honesty of purpose, wherever they may lead, in the sure faith that a hell of honest men will be to them far more endurable than any mere paradise replete with — angelic shams.¹⁷

But, positively, incomplete and fragmentary as it is, we must now begin to bring this discussion to a termination. The fact is, that the topic here touched

upon, like all of the preceding topics, is one to which a volume, rather than a chapter, might have easily been devoted. But we have all along proceeded on the supposition that we are addressing ourselves to an audience of exceedingly busy men and busy women, who would prefer to have a series of what Froude would characterize as short studies on great subjects, than to have an exhaustive and elaborate study on any given subject. Specialists in the various departments of modern biblical and religious research would, of course, prefer the volume to the chapter; the elaborate and exhaustive study to the short one. But busy men and busy women, who are not specialists, and yet who are by the hundreds of thousands at the present religious epoch most profoundly interested in every department of this research, only care to have some of the bottom thoughts and data placed before them, in view of which they may be able to arrive at their own conclusions, and that not so much concerning details as concerning outlines, not so much concerning special aspects as concerning large controlling issues.

When we shall have made one or two additional observations, therefore, in connection with the subject of this chapter, we will then consider that we have trespassed upon the reader's time and attention as far as we may presume to do so. And, in the first place, there can be no question that the general cause

of religious liberty is making an advancement to-day in all the Protestant churches which is at once astonishing and well-nigh incredible. The old dogmas are no longer preached by the vast majority of the Protestant divines with any thing like the old emphasis, persistency, and stringency. The heretical element among these divines is, as we have said, already large, and continually on the increase. The liberal, loving, tolerant, catholic-minded element among them is already a recognized power within the ranks of Protestantism, and destined ere long to exercise a more and more controlling influence. And, as for the laity, it is difficult to say what heresies they may not now both privately indulge in and publicly promulgate, with none so brave as to inaugurate a formal movement to cast them out of the synagogue. In a word, particularly the clergy, to say nothing of the laity, in nearly all the Protestant communions, without distinction or exception, can to-day take religious liberties with almost a perfect impunity, which a quarter of a century ago, or even ten years ago, they could not have ventured upon without at least incurring the risk of being promptly cited before their respective ecclesiastical police courts. And all of the present tendencies and indications are, that a still larger and larger religious liberty will come to prevail throughout the length and breadth of Protestantism. And yet nothing can

be more manifest than this ; namely, that Protestantism can never permit within its own ranks, and, above all, can never permit within the ranks of its own ministry, any such religious liberty as is demanded by the extremer religious developments of the present age and hour. To do so would be deliberately to become a party to its own dissolution. And it only remains for those who desire this latter kind of liberty simply to take it, and to take it by taking their public departure out of Protestantism, and to identify themselves, in every practicable manner possible, with what may be characterized as the Reformation of the nineteenth, as contrasted with the Reformation of the sixteenth, century.

Prolonged as this chapter has already become, it would still be unpardonable to bring it to a conclusion without a single specific allusion to that perhaps most potent of all modern public influences, by which we mean the press.

The domination of ecclesiasticism over this mighty public power in the past, we all know to have been almost supreme and absolute. And, had the matter only ended with the past, we might then be content to let the dead past bury its dead. But, even at the present moment, ecclesiasticism, and Protestant ecclesiasticism, would not hesitate to establish, if it could do so, a strict religious censorship over every volume, over every periodical, and over every daily

and weekly, issued anywhere in Christendom. And we are not here referring to the various denominational lines of religious literature. We do not deny the right of the Protestant potentates and powers to insist that their denominational publishing establishments, and their denominational organs of expression, shall publish, and publish only, in the interests of their dogmas. But what we do here refer to, and what we do here most emphatically protest against, is the effort made by these potentates and powers to dictate to the secular press at large what religious views it shall or shall not disseminate among the masses. To illustrate, and to speak of facts alone, of which we have a personal and inner knowledge. Even so recently as 1873, "*Scribner's Monthly*" — the name of which has since been changed to that of "*The Century Magazine*" — ventured to publish, for the present writer, a series of papers, entitled "*Modern Scepticism*." ¹⁸ For reasons which need not here be detailed, these papers were, to the very last degree, obnoxious to the potentates and powers in question. Some of them made a public demand for a new editorship of the *Monthly*. Others rushed into the pulpit, and denounced the *Monthly* itself, with the view of influencing their parishioners to withdraw from it their patronage. And one distinguished doctor of divinity in particular, starting out with the declaration that "'Scribner' must be

stamped out," not only undertook to organize, but actually succeeded in organizing, what was perhaps the most powerful ecclesiastical combination against the religious freedom of the modern secular press ever brought together in these United States.

To this the late lamented Dr. J. G. Holland — that brave and noble spirit, who was then the conducting editor of "Scribner" — editorially responded, that the papers on "Modern Scepticism" were only preliminary to others of a kindred nature, by the same author, which were to follow, and that from publishing those future papers no opposition could frighten him, and no amount of vituperation could drive him.¹⁹ "Our method," he said, "is simply to substitute a non-partisan investigation for partisan controversy, and to establish, by an appeal to the universal reason and heart, that which not only does not stand by force of ecclesiastical authority, but which totters under its weight. In this work we ask and claim the sympathy of all Christian men and women. To it we invite their attention. The letters which we receive from every part of the country, and our constantly increasing list of readers, show how deep an interest is everywhere taken in the subject, and prove to us that we have neither misinterpreted the signs of the times, nor misdirected our efforts."²⁰

Meanwhile the author, on his part, had, in the main,

retired again into the silence of his study, in order to make something far more remotely approaching to an adequate preparation before presuming to begin to spread before the public some of the more important results which must inevitably obtain when the non-partisan and the non-controversial method of investigation comes to be faithfully and impartially applied to nearly every fundamental tenet of the traditional theology.

After an additional year or two had been passed by us in this way, we ventured at last to forward to Dr. Holland a specimen paper, in which some of these results were stated, or rather were foreshadowed.

In reply, the doctor wrote to us, May 21, 1875, among other things, as follows: "Your last article was received, and I have read it to-day. At the conclusion of its perusal I find myself called upon to make the most important decision that has ever come to me for its making since I became an editor. I must be frank with you. I believe you are right. I should like to speak your words to the world; but, if I do speak these, it will pretty certainly cost me my connection with the Magazine. This sacrifice I am willing to make, if duty requires it. I am afraid of nothing but doing injury to the cause I love. . . . In short, you see that I sincerely doubt whether the Christian world is ready for this article. The belief in the Bible is so deep, and so sincere, that an article

like this, unprepared for, — without having been led up to, — would produce an awful shock. American Christians at large are not ready for the revolution which this article inaugurates. Instead of the theologians, the people would howl. . . . I cannot *yet* carry my audience in such a revolution. Perhaps I shall be able to do so by and by; but, as I look at it to-day, it seems impossible. I hope you understand that I do not shrink from personal sacrifice in this matter, and that I am afraid of nothing but making the people believe that I have betrayed them. The article is a thunderbolt. . . . My dear friend, I believe in you. You are in advance of your time. You have great benefits in your hands for your time. You are free and true. And I mourn sadly, and in genuine distress, that I cannot speak your words with a tongue which all my fellow Christians can hear. They *will not* hear them yet. They will some time."

So far as we can recall, the article referred to above by Dr. Holland related to the divine and infallible inspiration of the Bible. How far the views put forth in the present volume on the same subject were, or were not, germinal in that paper, which has long since been destroyed, we cannot just now be certain. Still we deem it only simple justice to say that nothing in the foregoing letter should be construed by the reader as lending the personal indorsement of Dr. Holland to any of the heresies promul

gated in this book, whether on the subject of biblical inspiration or any other subject. In such matters as these 1875 is a long while ago; and we are ourselves so much more of a heretic at large to-day than we then anticipated that we should ever become, that we have not the remotest idea that Dr. Holland could have possibly kept up an equal pace with us in his departure from the traditional Protestant conceptions about the Bible and religion. Indeed, so far as we can affirm any thing from our personal and positive knowledge, we should say that, broadly speaking, he must, on the other hand, have departed this life in the firm belief, not in all, but in most, of the leading essentials of the faith of his fathers.

It would also be the gravest injustice to Dr. Holland to impute his reluctant decision not to publish our paper instanced to any lack of moral courage. Other things he may have lacked, but moral courage never. This country—at least in our judgment—has yet to produce the man who would have braved more, or, if need be, would have sacrificed more, in standing firmly by his deepest conscientious convictions. But he was altogether in the right in giving earnest heed, lest by the insertion of that particular paper in “Scribner” he should give the people occasion to believe that he had betrayed them. The name which “Scribner’s Monthly” bore, the publishing-house by which it was issued, and Dr. Holland’s

own pronounced religious position before the country prior to his becoming its editor-in-chief, were in the form of a pledge to the general orthodox religious public that the periodical would not, at least under his conductorship, inaugurate any revolutionary attacks upon the current orthodox conceptions about the Bible and religion. In a word, Dr. Holland possessed just that combination of moral heroism and practical judgment which the exigencies of his editorial position demanded at such a transitional religious epoch as the present. He knew just in how far it was right for him to permit us modern heretics to find expression through "Scribner," and from permitting us to find this expression no super-orthodox ecclesiasticism could either intimidate or drive him. He also knew in how far loyalty to the general orthodox constituency of "Scribner" demanded that he should not permit us modern heretics to find expression through its columns, and there the matter ended. And yet all this does not in any wise militate against the fact, that the orthodox religious domination over the secular press of this country is still so great that even Dr. Holland, with all his popular prestige and power, did not care to venture the experiment of publishing in the pages of "Scribner" for 1875, an article, no matter by what author, against the current conceptions of the infallible inspiration of the Bible, which article he believed to

be essentially in the right, and also to follow this up with the publication of other kindred papers, which he felt perfectly assured, however mistakenly, would, in the final outcome, prove of signal service to his times.

And just here it deserves a special mention, and demands a special emphasis, that the prematurity of the article in question constituted the underlying reason why Dr. Holland felt that it would cost him his editorial position on the staff of "Scribner," in case he gave it to the world. Here, in fact, this special aspect of religious domination over the secular press simply continues to repeat itself. Were a scientific discussion, for example, now to appear, corresponding to the "*De Revolutionibus*" by Copernicus, not even the Catholic Church would presume to place it in the Index, merely because of its advocacy of the heliocentric conception of the cosmos. It is only when an anti-theological or an anti-Scriptural theory, or thought, or system of thought, is before its time, and begins to struggle for expression, that the orthodox religious world undertakes to interdict the secular press from its publication. After it has once found expression through the secular press, and been either established or exploded, then the full freedom of the secular press, either to promulgate it further, or to let it die in silence, is quietly conceded. But, if experience can teach the orthodox religious world

any thing except the persistent repetition of its blunders, experience should certainly have taught the orthodox religious world by this time that nothing can be more futile than for it to prolong this idle effort of seeking any longer to intimidate the secular press, whether of this or any other so-called Christian country, from being the first to bring the more advanced thinkers of the times into communication with the public,—no matter how subversive of all the traditional religious conceptions their thoughts or theories may be. The orthodox religious world may indeed succeed, and does, as a matter of fact, succeed, in causing this or that particular representative of the modern secular press to shrink from doing this. But what one publishing-house or periodical or newspaper lacks the moral courage to publish, another publishing-house or periodical or newspaper is sure to give to the people. The simple truth is, that there does not exist to-day anywhere, in at least the Protestant portions of Christendom, a single thorough-going heretic who needs to die in silence, even though he be in advance of his generation by a whole millennium. If he really has any thoughts or theories to place before his contemporaries which are worthy of their consideration, whether those thoughts or theories are true or false, some modern secular editor or publisher is just as certain to stand prepared to lay them before the public as the present century is the nineteenth and not the sixteenth.

Nor are these secular editors or publishers just referred to precisely what they used to be. To explain. Professor Philip Schaff evidently rolls it as a sweet morsel under his tongue, that he can say of George Eliot's—or rather of Miss Marian Evans's—translation of the first "Life of Jesus," by Strauss, that it "was republished in New York by some obscure house in 1850." ²¹ Well, we suppose that, so far back as 1850, it would have been only some obscure house in New York, or any other city of this country, which would venture to give such an arch-heretic as Strauss a formal introduction, even to the most limited circle of American readers. We suppose, also, that at that time it would have been only some obscure and so-called infidel sheet which would venture to disseminate the views of Strauss, in the abridged form of statement peculiar to the daily or the weekly newspapers, with any degree of truthfulness and fairness. It must have been somewhat later than 1850 that Renan remarked: "Of all the thinkers of Germany, Strauss is least appreciated in France. Most people know him only through the abuse of his adversaries." ²² And, unless our memory is very much at fault, it must have been somewhat later than 1850 that Strauss was likewise known by most people on this side of the Atlantic only through the abuse of his adversaries. In those days nearly every prominent publishing-house and religious organ

of expression was open enough indeed to the orthodox assailants of Strauss, but neither to Strauss himself, nor to any other radical and fearless modern religious revolutionist. But it is a characteristic of our times, that, in all matters of this practical character and moment, a changed condition of things, having once fairly begun to prevail, progresses so rapidly that the former condition of things appears to have receded, as in an instant, to almost forgotten epochs. The transition from the old condition to the new is almost telegraphic. It can scarcely be said, for example, that the American translation of Renan's "Life of Jesus" was published by some obscure house in New York in 1868. On the other hand, it was published by one of the best-known and most respectable publishers in the metropolis. And what is true of the American publisher of the principal works of Renan, is likewise true of the American publishers of the principal works of Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, Haeckel, Büchner, and the like. These publishers are among the most prominent, the most powerful, the most reputable, now connected with our general American literature.

Another circumstance of paramount practical importance to us modern heretics is this. We question whether twenty-five years ago a single respectable bookseller in this country would have openly exposed what was then called an infidel book for sale in his

place of business. He might or might not have been willing to secure a copy of it upon order, to oblige a patron. But, even if he did so, he would, in all probability, have done so stealthily, and, in a manner, secretly. But in these days no leading bookseller hesitates any more to expose a heretical work for sale, or to furnish it on order, than he would in case it were the most orthodox production of the most orthodox divine, and, at the same time, in the highest favor with the general religious world.

So far as we heretics are concerned, therefore, we have little more to desire in this direction. We not only have our fair proportion of the most influential bookmakers to publish for us; we likewise have the booksellers of the nation, almost in a body, to circulate our volumes far and wide among the people.

Nor have we any thing to complain of, on the whole, at the hands of the periodicals. It is true that the great majority of the leading popular magazines are still too largely dependent upon the orthodox patronage to make it judicious for them to permit us to inaugurate any formal religious movements in their pages of a very revolutionary nature. Still, even they will now and then become our public mouth-pieces in saying some decidedly heretical things, and such heretical things as will throw pretty much the entire orthodox world into something like that common condition of uproar into which the heretical Paul once

threw the orthodox populace at Ephesus. And, if this be not enough, the mere names of "The Contemporary Review" and of "The Nineteenth Century," in England, coupled with those of "The North American Review" and of "The Popular Science Monthly," here among ourselves, furnish a sufficient guarantee, that, in so far as we have any occasion to employ the periodical press, the periodical press is already sufficiently accessible to us, and, even beforehand, placed at our disposal.

Our acknowledgments are likewise due to nearly every one of the great leading daily papers. If a communication be sent to them touching upon any one of the more popular aspects of modern biblical or religious discussion, they will never for a moment pause to inquire whether such communication is orthodox or heterodox. Their only question about the communication will be whether, both in its subject-matter and in its limits and method of presentation, it is adapted for publication in their columns, and is, at the same time, likely to prove of general interest and concernment to their readers. But, other things being equal, the signature of Professor Philip Schaff, for example, or President M'Cosh, or Principal Dawson, will no sooner secure for it an insertion than would the signature — say of Professor Tyndall, Professor Huxley, or even Ernest Renan.

The orthodox religious world, therefore, cannot

come either too soon or too thoroughly to understand the fact, that, so far as all practical purposes are concerned, the days of its religious domination over the secular press of Christendom at large are among the by-gones. It can continue, indeed, to rule over its denominational organs of expression, over its boards of publication, over its tract societies, and the like; but the secular press does not propose any longer to submit even to a religious censorship, much less to a religious dictatorship.

In fact, not a few of the distinctively religious journals are in these days making themselves exceedingly vexatious, not to say to the last degree obnoxious, to the super-orthodox among the Protestant potentates and powers, by the liberties they are taking. Contrast, for example, in this respect, such publications as either "The New York Independent" or "The Christian Union," with such other publications as either "The Christian Intelligencer" or "The New York Observer." The latter represent the conservative, the non-progressive, the mediæval, the repressive, the inquisitorial spirit; the former, within evangelical limits, represent the progressive, the modern, the liberal, loving, and catholic-minded spirit, in present Protestant journalism.

And now another paragraph or two, and we have done.

Professor Hurst informs us that when the first

"Life of Jesus" — that earthquake-shock of the nineteenth century — appeared in Germany, the most obscure provincial journals contained copious extracts from it, and vied with each other in defending or opposing its positions.²³ Pressensé says that the people of France have been initiated into the conclusions of Strauss, though they may have never even heard of the famous "*Leben Jesu*," and that Renan's "*Vie de Jésus*" has been there, as elsewhere in all Christian countries, very widely circulated. He likewise laments that scepticism should there find its way into the lightest publication; that the novel and the newspaper should emulate each other in its diffusion; and that the short review articles, skilled in giving grace and piquancy to erudition, should furnish it with arguments which appear weighty, because they are so in comparison with the pleasantries of Voltaire.²⁴ And Professor George P. Fisher feels it his duty to warn the very Christian teachers of this country that they are not aware how widely the seeds of unbelief are scattered through books and journals which find a hospitable welcome even in Christian households.²⁵

Under these circumstances we modern heretics may well take heart again, and address ourselves, in the various departments of modern biblical and religious thought and research, with a renewed energy and vigor, to whatever task may have been

specifically and individually allotted to us in connection with the great religious movement now in progress throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. With at least the secular press so manifestly and so generally for us, what does it signify, even though the whole orthodox religious world should be against us? In a word, into the hands of the secular press we may now confidently commit both the present and the future fortunes of the highest religious thoughts we have to utter, and the most progressive religious conclusions at which we may hereafter, from time to time, arrive. Granted that these higher religious thoughts, as we conceive them to be, will in all cases be to some degree erroneous, and in some instances will be positively untenable. Granted, also, that our more advanced religious conclusions will always demand a much more rigid and exhaustive verification than we have been able to give them in private, no matter how many years we may have felt constrained to withhold them from the public, and no matter, likewise, in view of what prolonged and patient processes of investigation we may have come eventually to adopt them. Still, when we have fairly done our personal part in private to eliminate from our higher religious thoughts their elements of error, and to verify, as best we can, our more advanced religious conclusions, we then have the manifest right, through the secular editor or

publisher, or both, to submit them to the consideration, to the criticisms, to the acceptance, or to the rejection of the heretical, or modern religious brotherhood at large.

As for the rest, much as still remains to say in order to treat of this immensely important question of religious liberty with any degree of completeness, we will only add that we can just now recall no more noble and stimulating words in which we may conclude than these by Herbert Spencer: "Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks the highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may re-assure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realize the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social [and religious] changes, and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction, leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles, and repugnance to others. He, with all his capacities and aspirations and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that while he is a descendant of the past he is a parent of the future,

and that his thoughts are as children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die. He, like every other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause [by which some of us at least will understand the Divine Heavenly Father], and when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief, he is thereby authorized to profess and act out that belief. . . . Not as adventitious, therefore, will the wise man regard the faith which is in him. The highest truth he sees, he will fearlessly utter, knowing that, let what may come of it, he is thus playing his right part in the world; knowing that if he can effect the change he aims at, well; if not, well also, though not *so* well." ²⁶

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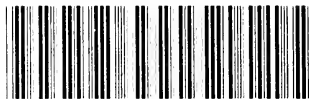
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