

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

NO. 5.—JULY, 1888.

I. THE CONTRA-NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE MIRACLE.

NONE but the maintainers of a rigid process of evolution, enforced by a law of blind, immanent necessity, would deny that man has degenerated from his primitive condition. He has fallen from the estate of holiness and happiness in which he was created into one of sin and misery. That being admitted, it is obvious that the scheme of religion which he originally possessed is now utterly inadequate to his wants. The law which it contained as a rule of action has been violated, and its condemning sentence renders impossible an acceptable obedience to its requirements. So far as that scheme of religion is concerned man is doomed.

On the supposition that God the Moral Ruler were willing to reveal to sinful man another scheme, not merely legal but redemptive, as a directory of faith, a guide of life and a basis of hope, it would be just, if not indispensable, that its credentials should be so clear as to admit of no reasonable doubt. They ought to be not so much deductions from speculative premises however apparently well-founded, as phenomenal facts easily apprehended by consciousness, or immediate and necessary inferences from those facts, and therefore of equal validity with the original data themselves: the concrete results of observation and experience, or good because logical consequences from them. While the revelation itself is to be proved, its proofs ought to be as nearly as possible autopistic.

VII. CRITICISMS AND REVIEWS.

MANLY'S BIBLE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION EXPLAINED AND VINDICATED. *By Basil Manly, D. D., LL. D., Professor in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.* New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 714 Broadway. 1888.

This book is as sound as a dollar; and sound books are, alas, becoming somewhat rare, particularly as regards the inspiration of the Scriptures. The soundness and ability of Dr. Manly's book might have been asserted in advance from what one knows of Dr. Manly himself. Dr. Manly is sound, but Dr. Manly does not go to the extreme of defending the Mechanical theory, which, in fact, so far as we are aware, has been abandoned everywhere. The compact volume before us advocates the doctrine of the divine plenary inspiration of the sacred writings, and maintains that they are not only completely and thoroughly divine, but also completely and thoroughly human; while he holds that they are exempt from much human frailty, and are in no degree tainted with human error.

The author of this valuable and opportune treatise agrees with those who hold that the Bible contains the word of God, and that not merely in the sense that the Bible *includes*, or *envelopes*, the word of God, but also in the sense that the Bible (as defined and circumscribed by the Protestant churches) *is* the word of God. The inspiration asserted is thus not merely an act of God terminating upon the souls of certain men, but also a divine product that manifested itself in their spoken and is perpetuated in their written words.

The learned author shows an extensive and very competent knowledge of the literature of his subject. All the erroneous or inadequate views are fairly stated and elucidated, and then impartially examined and calmly condemned. We do not remember that Dr. Manly adopts in terms the orthodox form of the Dynamical theory, but he does so to all intents and purposes; indeed, no one can do otherwise who is orthodox and at the same time rejects the Mechanical hypothesis. Our author (like his predecessors, William Lee, Gausson, Tayler Lewis, Bannerman, *et al.*) carefully distinguishes between the inspiration of divine infallibility, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the inspiration of ordinary literary genius or the inspiration of ordinary spiritual illumination. He holds, as against such writers as Parker and Morell, that the difference in question is not simply one of *degree*, but one of *kind*. Lee concedes too much in allowing to the adversary that the inspiration of the sacred writers may not have differed *generically*, but only *specifically*, from the illumination of ordinary believers. Lee is, nevertheless, exactly right in his main idea upon this point. Bannerman goes so far as to declare the inspiration of the men of God to have been *miraculous*. Such a statement, of course, puts one's orthodoxy beyond question. It is largely an affair of definition. Inspiration

was no *technical* miracle, but was strictly analogous to the miracle of grace, with which, however, it is by no means to be identified. As in the work of grace, so here man coöperated with God; man put forth his faculties and accomplished a certain result, freely and characteristically; but it was God that wrought in him "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." In both cases God's work is (or was) mysterious, inscrutable, supernatural, exceptional, extraordinary; but in the case of inspiration the work was exceptional and extraordinary, not only as regards the collective mass of human beings, but also as regards the collective mass of true believers, and as regards the successive ages of church history.

Doctor Manly, once more following Lee and Bannerman, draws a sharp and radical distinction between inspiration and revelation. Bannerman and Lee have fallen at loggerheads in reference to the extent of revelation, Bannerman holding, and Lee denying, that whatever the sacred writers tell us by inspiration was equally a matter of *revelation* to them. It is very much the story over again of the two doughty knights and the shield of gold and silver. Bannerman takes strong and masterly ground when he contends that the relation between God and his inspired messengers is, in one view of it, essentially that of an employer and an errand boy. The whole message in the case, adduced by way of illustration, is that of the employer, and must be made known as such to the errand boy, and conveyed as such by the errand boy to the person to whom it was originally sent. Just so the whole message of the Bible was God's message, and as such was made known (or *revealed*) to the inspired men, and through them to mankind in general. This is just and of vital importance, and is a point that has been too much lost sight of in the sound but rather vague statements of former writers. It is not enough to say that the Bible is *true*. A book may be true from beginning to end and yet not be infallible. Examples of such books are furnished by the Elements of Euclid and the Principia of Newton; possibly also by the First Book of Maccabees, or even by the lucubrations of the Son of Sirach. It is furthermore conceivable that a book might be throughout infallible and yet not be in any part of it a divine revelation; that is to say, it is within the bounds of rational conjecture that God might make certain men infallible in all that they should aver on any subject, and then leave them to aver anything that they pleased. In such a case the utterances of the men would not any of them be a revelation from God.

The orthodox writers before Lee and Bannerman were sometimes careless in their statements upon this point. To say that the inspired writers were the recipients of a supernatural influence which made them infallible is consequently an insufficient account of the matter. In order to a complete statement it is necessary to maintain, with Lee, that the inspired writers were the recipients of a supernatural influence which made them the infallible spokesmen of Jehovah. This last statement covers the whole ground; and it is substantially identical with the statement that the whole Bible is a revelation from God. This is Bannerman's most important contention, who even goes so far as to affirm (merely in this sense, however,) the fact of a "*plenary* revelation." Lee, on the other hand, looking at the matter from another angle, urges that a "*plenary revelation*" would involve the omniscience of the human messengers. The truth is, there are two senses in which the term "revelation" may be used, the one narrow and technical, the other broad and popular. In the first of these two senses, it is contrary to the fact to allege that

every part of Scripture is strictly a "revelation," albeit the whole Bible is equally inspired. In the second of the two senses of the word, it is fundamentally important to enounce that the entire mass of the Scriptures, and every part and parcel of them, are equally and to the fullest extent, to borrow Dr. W. H. Harper's favorite expression, "God-given," a supernatural revelation from the author and fountain-head of divine truth. By "revelation" in the narrow and technical sense is meant the supernatural communication of matter previously unknown, and often, if not always, unknowable, to prophets and inspired teachers. When the term is taken in this way the distinction is sharply drawn betwixt "revelation" and inspiration. In the other use of the term "revelation" that distinction is disregarded. Bannerman appears to have confounded these two meanings of the same word, and, because he perceives so clearly the fact and prime importance of a revelation from God that shall be coextensive with God's entire message to mankind, has jumped to the conclusion that this revelation must always be distinct from inspiration, and has failed to observe that the necessity in question does not involve anything more than is embraced in the doctrine of "plenary *inspiration*" when properly defined—as it is defined by Dr. Lee. Bannerman is so erect that he leans backwards. He actually contends that Luke must have had a special revelation of the fact that Paul stood on Mars' Hill, and that he himself sailed with him on the Mediterranean. Dr. Manly explicitly protests against this extreme, and agrees with the late Dr. Archibald Alexander, both the Hodges, Dr. Lee, and the majority of older and contemporary writers, in holding that much of the matter infallibly and divinely communicated to us in God's Word was accessible to the unassisted powers of the human instruments, and, in many cases, actually within their knowledge. It was inspiration, and not a special "revelation," that converted a part of what was already known to the holy men into God's infallible message to the world. Bannerman argues ingeniously and impressively from the acknowledged duplication of much of the same essential teaching that is given us in natural, in "revealed" religion. On the whole, however, as has been pointed out, this view is extreme and unnecessary. Yet it must not be forgotten that a large, and that the most important part, of the matter communicated to us in the Scriptures demanded a supernatural "revelation" in the strictest sense, and was originally given in that mode, although equally with the matter not thus given the product of divine inspiration.

The specific difference between "revelation" and inspiration, when the distinction is made, is that revelation is the supernatural influence which communicated to the recipients truth before unknown to them and undiscoverable by their unaided faculties; whereas inspiration is the supernatural influence which enabled the recipients to convey God's message, whether naturally or supernaturally communicated to them, infallibly to the rest of mankind. Dr. Lee's principal claim upon our admiration is the skill and accuracy with which he has indicated and maintained this fundamental line of demarcation. Dr. Manly is as clear as a bell on this point.

In the two hundred and fifty odd pages of this neat duodecimo all branches of the subject are presented in an orderly manner, and handled with perspicuity and force. We suspect that in one or two instances a better analysis would have grouped what are now separated points under a common parental head. The first chapter

is preliminary. Then come distinctions and explanations, followed by a summary of the most influential views now prevalent. The two remaining chapters of this, the first part of the discussion, are made up of the negative and positive statements of the doctrine. The second part is taken up with the proofs of inspiration. These are comprised in three chapters: on the Presumptive Argument, the Direct Evidence to be expected, and the Downright Proofs. It has escaped us if our excellent author has adverted to the undoubted weight of what we may style the *psychological* argument for verbal inspiration. The third part is devoted to the objections. Here, as also in the second part, there is discernible a certain air of strait quarters—probably due to unavoidable curtailment. More prominence might have been given to the fundamental challenge of Fichte and Morell. H. C. ALEXANDER.

INSPIRATION CONFERENCE PAPERS.

THE INSPIRED WORD. A Series of Papers and Addresses Delivered at the Bible-Inspiration Conference, Philadelphia, 1887. Edited by Arthur T. Pierson. 8vo., pp, 358. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Company. Price, \$1.50.

In May, 1887, a circular letter was issued, opening as follows:

It has been decided to hold a Conference in Philadelphia, November 15–20, on the subject of *The Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures*.

Irreverent sceptics persistently attack the foundations of our most holy religion, while professing friends of christianity are doing incalculable injury through their adverse criticisms on the Bible. Thus timid disciples become discouraged, many of whom make shipwreck; while the army of doubters increases on every hand. Such a conference is needed in order to confirm the faith of christian believers in the canon of Holy Scripture, which, in its original languages, has been held by the church in all ages as the product of the Holy Spirit in all its parts and terms. Men of God spake and wrote as they were moved by the Divine Spirit. . .

This call was signed by a committee of influential representatives of several evangelical churches, of which committee Rt. Rev. William R. Nicholson, of the Reformed Episcopal Church, was chairman.

Of all the many and varied religious conferences and conventions which have become such a characteristic feature of the last decade we recall none which enlisted our interest so heartily as did this; and it was with peculiar gratification that we read the announcement of the publication of the various papers read, the volume to issue from the sterling old firm, A. D. F. Randolph & Co., under the editorial supervision of Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D. D.

The book contains seventeen addresses, delivered by as many different speakers, some of whose names are of national fame and others presumably prominent in the leading denominations: the Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, Congregational and Presbyterian. The topics discussed are: Questions Concerning Inspiration; The Relation of the Gospels and the Pentateuch; The Testimony of the Scripture to Itself; Bible Miracles; Principles of Interpretation; Alleged Objections to Inspiration Considered; Theories of Inspiration; Difficulties of the Bible as Tested by the Laws of Evidence; The Testimony of the Apostles to Inspiration; The Wonderful Book; The Bearing of Prophecy on Inspiration; Jesus the Supreme Witness and Example of Inspiration; The Moral Glory of Jesus a Proof of Inspiration; The Canon of Scripture; Preach the Word; The Spirit and the Word; The Organic Unity of the Bible.