

The Princeton Theological Review

OCTOBER, 1916

DOES MY NEIGHBOR EXIST?¹

Kant has said that there are some questions which should never be asked, and there is apostolic authority for the injunction to "avoid foolish questions". Only the fool has said in his heart that he is alone in the universe; but since philosophy has seriously raised the question of the existence of my neighbor and of the way in which I may come to know him, it may be not without interest to notice (i) how the problem has emerged, (ii) the importance of the problem for modern philosophy, and (iii) some leading solutions that have been offered.

I. Our social environment is no doubt the most important factor in our every-day life. The belief in the existence of other men's consciousness, as Clifford has said, "dominates every thought and every action of our lives." On the other hand there is a sense in which we not only die alone, as Pascal says we do, but live alone as well. One man's thought and feeling is not directly accessible to the consciousness of another, and each man has an unsharable feeling, to use James' language, "of the pinch of his own individual destiny as he privately feels it rolling out on fortune's wheel."

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live alone.

How for the philosopher this "unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea" is to be crossed or bridged is the question before us in this paper.

Some of the problems of philosophy are perennial and

¹This paper was read at a conference of former students in the division of Philosophy, Psychology and Anthropology at Columbia University, April 18th, 1916.

A DISCIPLINE THAT CALLS FOR RECOGNITION

“Of what value to the religious man is the Old Testament in the light of modern literary and historical criticism?”¹ This question will serve to suggest at least in a broad general way the function and method of the discipline that the writer has in mind. The question reminds us that the books of the Old Testament claim to possess or are alleged to possess a unique value for “the religious man”—that is for man as a being characterized by religious instincts that crave satisfaction. The same claim, of course, is made for the books of the New Testament, certain of the Apocrypha, the Koran, the Book of Mormon—not to mention other writings. Hence all of these would come within the purview of the discipline whose function it is to test the validity of this claim in its somewhat varying forms. The distinctive method of this discipline is simply to set the claim—whatever its specific form—“in the light of modern literary and historical criticism”—one or both. The peculiarity of modern literary and historical criticism to which attention is here tacitly directed is the fact that both disciplines rely for their conclusions not upon direct, but upon indirect or circumstantial evidence.

Historical criticism has, of course, to do with the origin of the book whose claim is being tested. And here it should be borne in mind that by the term “origin” is not meant either the time and place of composition of the book and its author’s name, or its literary history, but rather its genesis—that is to say, the complexes of influences that by their concurrent action and interaction have both caused the book to be and to be what it is, and that in every particular and to its innermost core: that have determined its contents—and that not merely as to material, but also as to their mental, moral, and spiritual quality; its structure; its literary form and the use made of that form; and its purpose. Central and dominant among these several com-

¹ *Biblical World*, Feb., 1912, p 75.

plexes of influences are those proceeding from the author or authors of the book. And because this is true, the historical study of literature, that is to say, the study of a book in its making, transforming the trite saying "the style is the man" into "the book is the man," gives it a new and stringent significance. It teaches us to see in a book the visualization through written characters of the activities of a given personality at a particular stage in his personal development, as he is acted upon, and himself reacts to and upon, the various influences that are in play at a particular time and place. It teaches us to see in a book an intimate revelation made by its author himself, though unconsciously to himself, of what manner of man he was—the ends he was seeking to effect, his equipment native and acquired, his ethical standards, his methods, and the like. In a word, historical criticism, as applied to books, aims to be, according to the facilities that it can command, nothing less than "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" of the author or authors of whatever book it may have under investigation. All this is implicated in the term "origin". Hence, however closely connected the two, when we speak of the findings of "modern literary and historical criticism" as to the origin of a book, we are speaking of something very different from the determination of the time and place of its composition and the name of its author. And it is with conclusions as to origin that the discipline here under consideration has to do. It does not inquire as to whether Deuteronomy, let us say, was written by "Moses the servant of Jehovah" or by some one else; whether it was written by one hand or many; at one time or at different times. Such inquiries do not fall within its province: they belong obviously to historical criticism. Nor does our discipline ask, what manner of man or of men was the author or authors of Deuteronomy? whence did they derive their material, and what use did they make of it? what was their relation personal and official to the events they purport to describe,

the ends they seek to accomplish, the persons whom they seek to influence? These are one and all questions of origin. As such they fall within the sphere of historical criticism. On these and all similar matters our discipline accepts the conclusions of historical criticism, so to speak, out of hand. So far as it is concerned, these conclusions may be correct or they may be incorrect. Our discipline neither affirms, denies, nor challenges them. What it undertakes to do is to determine the value of Deuteronomy to "the religious man" in the light of such and such an alleged origin, whatever that origin may be.

And just as little does the discipline, whose claims to recognition we are considering, intrude itself into the sphere of literary criticism. It is for the latter discipline to determine what literary form or forms have been employed in Daniel, let us say; for what purpose they have been employed; and with what skill they have been used for effecting that purpose. So far as our discipline is concerned the opening chapters of this book may, or may not be history, and its closing chapters may or may not be prophecy. All that it undertakes to do is to determine the significance of one set or another of conclusions touching these matters for the value of the book of Daniel to "the religious man".

Here we cannot do better than pause and inquire more precisely into what is meant when we speak of determining the kind and degree of value "the religious man" is justified in according the books of the Bible. Only atheists deny that the Bible possess an exceptional value for "the religious man". Indeed, it is wholly possible that those from whom I have borrowed the phrase "the religious man" may have intended it to include at least some atheists. If so, then, even these atheists would no doubt hold that the books of the Bible possess exceptional value for man regarded as a being characterized by "religious instincts." Again many deists, if only permitted to put their own meaning on the phrase, would not hesitate to speak of

the Bible as "a message from God to our souls". But they would not hesitate to make the same statement, and in identically the same sense, of a score of other books. Obviously the only issue possible in such a case is one as to the relative value of the Bible as compared with other books ministering each according to its measure to the satisfaction of man's "religious instincts". But with this issue our discipline has only the most indirect and remotest concern. On the other hand, even those who agree in placing the Bible in a class to itself, and in ascribing to it a truly unique value for "the religious man" conceive of it as possessing very different kinds and degrees of value for him. Thus there are those who allege that it is "an infallible rule of faith and practise", and, of course, the only such rule. Others, denying it this particular kind and degree of value, still speak of it as an "inspired" book. It is true that some of this last class profess themselves at once unable and unconcerned to explain what they speak of as "the nature of inspiration"—by which they must mean the ultimate and essential effect of inspiration; but they are very strong upon what they call "the fact of inspiration". Again some allege that the Bible is, or contains, what they call "a special, direct revelation"—defining these several terms with no little care and precision. Others, on the contrary, while they also apply the term "revelation" to the Bible, either leave the term undefined, or else characterize it by the term "progressive". This latter term—"progressive"—however, cannot be regarded as distinctive, because those who allege that the Bible is "a special, direct revelation" also think of it as progressive, though by no means with the same implications as those that attach to the term in the previous case, nor for the same reasons that it is there used. Now, while our discipline concerns itself with these claims severally, it concerns itself finally and principally with the element which, as we have seen, is common to them all—namely, with the claim that the Bible, whether we speak of it at "infallible", or as "in-

spired", whether we allege is to be "a special, direct revelation" or "a progressive revelation"—possesses for "the religious man" a value that is unique, wholly *sui generis*; a value distinct not only in degree, but also in kind from that possessed by any and all other books that undertake to satisfy man's "religious instincts". In the light of their origin and the literary forms employed in them it will determine the value to "the religious man" of the books of the Bible as a "special, direct revelation: but it will go farther and test the validity of its claim to be such. It will determine their value as "inspired": but it will first test the validity of their claim to be "inspired". It will determine their value as "a progressive revelation: but after it has tested their claim to be "a revelation".

Canon Kirkpatrick cites Bishop Westcott as saying that "the student must not approach the inquiry into the origin and relations of the constituent books of the Old Testament with the assumption—sanctioned though it may be by traditional use—that God must have taught His people, and us through His people, in one particular way. He must not presumptuously stake the inspiration and the divine authority of the Old Testament on any foregone conclusion as to the method and shape in which the records have come down to us."² This is perhaps well enough, but it stops far too short. What urgently needs to be said, and heeded, is that prior to the testing of their claim in the light of their origin and the literary forms employed in them, the student of the Old Testament must not assume that God has in any special sense taught either Israel or us through Israel in these books. What urgently needs to be said, and heeded, is that we must be prepared to stake the inspiration and divine authority of the Old Testament and the New also upon the facts as to their origin and the literary forms employed in them. At any rate the discipline now under consideration is prepared to stake its right to recognition upon

² *Hebrews*, p. 493: cited in *The Divine Library of the OT.*, p. 89.

the proposition that we have absolutely no option but to do this very thing.

In vain do one set of scholars plead for what they call "believing" as against what they call "unbelieving criticism", and another set of scholars proclaim that they "assume the inspiration of the Old Testament" in their investigations into the origin and literary forms of its several books. Hyphenated criticism is really not criticism at all. Real criticism implies that we "perfectly exclude our presuppositions" whatever they may be "as part of the case". Literary and historical criticism must be absolutely untrammelled—by everything except the evidence—as to their conclusions. And on the other hand those simply deceive themselves who suppose that they can escape the consequences involved in the conclusions of historical and literary criticism as to the origin and literary forms of the books of the Bible by insisting that they "assume the inspiration" of these books. Is, then, the claim that the Bible is "inspired" to be regarded as immune from criticism? Is this claim itself not to be tested by all the available evidence? Is the light that modern literary and historical criticism may throw upon this momentous claim to be ignored? Or have the findings of "modern literary and historical criticism" no light to throw upon "the value of the Old Testament" and the New "to the religious man? Or are we to have minds open only to light in reference to the time and place of composition, the authorship and literary history of these books, and the literary forms used in them, but hermetically sealed to all light upon the most important issue that can be raised regarding them? Is this, then, the expression of our boasted "critical freedom" and "critical boldness"?

It only remains to be added in this connection that when we speak of testing the validity of the claims made for the books of the Bible, and of determining their value for "the religious man", we must not overlook the remark of Sir William Hamilton when he says, "But if our criticism

from the internal grounds alone be, on the one hand, impotent to establish, it is, on the other, omnipotent to disprove."³ This statement of Hamilton is not here cited to suggest that when the value of the books of the Bible "to the religious man" is being tested by the findings of criticism as to the origin and literary forms of these books only negative results are possible. Such is not the case. All that is meant is to call attention to the fact that on the main issue—that is on the issue as to whether the books of the Bible are absolutely *sui generis*, whether they are in an altogether unique sense "a message from God to our souls", the result of the test may be merely negative. And now let us return to the discipline whose claims to formulation, and a name and a place among recognized Biblical disciplines the writer ventures to advocate.

The legitimacy of this discipline and its necessity rest upon two postulates neither of which can be denied. One is this: every effort rationally and finally to determine the origin and literary forms of the books of the Bible must sooner or later take account of all the available circumstantial evidence bearing upon these matters. This proposition will hardly be denied. The other postulate is: every effort rationally and finally to determine the value of the books of the Bible for "the religious man" must sooner or later take account of all available light as to the origin and the literary form of these books. Unfortunately enough, nothing has been more common than the indirect, tacit denial of this proposition. And yet a number of considerations concur to place its correctness beyond reasonable question.

For example, it is clearly impossible, apart from a knowledge of its meaning, to appraise the value of a given book to "the religious man"; and, apart from an adequate knowledge of its origin, of its literary history, and of the literary forms employed in the book, how shall we obtain an adequate insight into its meaning? The necessity for the historical study and interpretation of the Scriptures certainly

³ *Logic*, p. 471: cited by Dr. Briggs in *Biblical Study*, p. 92.

does not need to be re-argued at this late date. Nor does the vital relation between a knowledge of the literary forms used in a writing, and a correct exegesis of its contents admit of question. All then, that has been so convincingly written upon these points indirectly but powerfully emphasizes the determining relation that exists between a knowledge of the origin and literary forms of a book and a just estimate of its value to "the religious man".

But again, the books of both the Old and the New Testaments will be found to make certain claims as to their origin and the literary forms employed by their respective authors. True, these claims are not always explicit, though quite frequently they are. But whether explicit or implicit they are none the less real, and to be reckoned with. Explicit claims will occur to every one. Luke i. 1-4, Deut. i. 1-3, and Isa. i. 1. will serve as examples. Thus, the writer of Luke i. 1-4, whatever may have been his name, asserts explicitly that the material in his narrative has been derived from those whom he speaks of as "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word", and that in every instance he has been careful to verify the statements that he has made; so that his narrative of past events is at least as true to fact and as trustworthy "as the fallibility of human testimony will permit". And so the author of Deut. i. 1-3, whoever he may have been, and whenever he may have written, and regardless of whether the phrase "These are the words &c." refers to what precedes or what follows, and regardless also of the "the literary usages" of his time, claims explicitly to be transmitting to his readers words spoken by Moses to Israel at a given time and place, or times and places. Similarly the author of Isa. i. 1, whoever he may have been, whenever he may have written, and to whatever parts of our present book of Isaiah he may have intended his words to apply, states explicitly that these parts of the book proceeded from "Isaiah the son of Amoz" "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah"; and that they belong to the literary form known as

"vision"—that is, prophecy. Will any one affirm that such claims as these are not to be taken account of in estimating the value of these books to "the religious man"?

True, under stress of controversial exigency, the late Dr. Briggs permitted himself to say:

"The question of the authorship of the Bible is whether God is its author: whether it is inspired. This cannot be determined by the Higher Criticism"—by which term Dr. Briggs evidently means here historical criticism—"in any way, for the Higher Criticism has only to do with human authorship, and has nothing to do with divine authorship, which is determined on different principles."⁴ Here, it will be observed, Dr. Briggs asserts that there is absolutely no relation, certainly no determining relation, between what he calls the "human authorship"—but which would more accurately and illuminatingly be called the personal origin—of a given writing and the validity of its claim to "inspiration". But evidently in saying this he has for the moment forgotten the dictum of Sir William Hamilton cited above, touching the omnipotence of "criticism from the internal grounds alone" "to disprove". This is apparent from that fact that in another connection Dr. Briggs himself says: "In considering the question of authenticity"—which with Dr. Briggs is simply a synonym for "authorship"—"we have first to examine the writing itself. If the writing claims to be by a certain author, to doubt it is to doubt the authority and credibility of the writing. If these claims are found to be unreliable, the credibility of the writing is gone, and its inspiration is involved."⁵ The present writer would prefer to say, the inspiration of the writing is gone and its credibility is involved. A deliberate misstatement as to the authorship of a writing, while it disproves the trustworthiness of the writer from whom it proceeds and casts a suspicion upon the trustworthiness of all of his other statements, does not necessarily

⁴ *Whither*, p. 89.

⁵ *Biblical Study*, p. 222.

disprove the truthfulness and still less the credibility of all his other statements. Even a liar may tell the truth: and many things that are not true are nevertheless in themselves, and until their truth has been disproved wholly credible. But will any one deny that a proven deliberate misstatement as to the authorship of a writing disproves its inspiration? Certainly the inspiration of the proven misstatement itself is disproved. The God of truth does not inspire men to make false claims. Certainly such a misstatement creates a presumption against the inspiration of the writing as a whole.

Suppose, now, we go farther and ask, Why any statement whatever about authorship? What is the only rational purpose of such a statement? It is not to appraise us of the personality from whom the writing proceeds—not merely of the name of this personality, please observe, but of the personality himself? And why apprise us of the personality from whom the writing proceeds? Whatever it may be in other cases, in the case of a deliberate misstatement—a pseudepigraph—the purpose cannot be merely to increase the popular reputation of the actual author of the writing. Why, then, impute the writing to the personality to whom it has been falsely ascribed? We have had our answer already. For have we not already agreed that a single proven deliberate misstatement disproves the truthworthiness of the writer who makes it and that the virus of his untrustworthiness necessarily imparts itself to his writing as a whole? Here, then, we see one illustration of the closeness of the relation that exists between the personality from whom a writing proceeds and the product of his pen. That relation is not only close, but genetic. “Like father, like son” applies to the progeny of one’s brain as well as of one’s body. The qualities of a writer tend to impart themselves to his writing. Hence to ascribe a writing to a writer of distinction and authority—as the pseudepigraphist did—was to invest the writing itself with the authority and distinction of its

alleged author—or to attempt to do so. Hence, again, to ascribe a writing actually written by a given person, living in a given period, and surrounded by the life of that period, to a person living in another period and related in manifold ways to the life of that period is to render it a tissue of subtle falsehood. Even the truths which such a writing may contain are smirched with falsehood. Is it credible, then, that the God of truth would mediate a message to our souls through “a worthy”—nameless or named—who would introduce His message with a lie—or let us say simply, with a deliberate misstatement—which when discovered to be such would necessarily render His message as a whole untrustworthy, or worse still, would transform His message into falsehood, and contaminate even the truths it contained with untruth?

It only needs to be added that what is true of claims as to authorship is true also, according to their character, of other claims. However they came to be where they now are, and whatever may have been the point of view and motives of the person or persons who placed them there, the words of Deut. i. 1-3 are now an integral part of the text of the Book of Deuteronomy as it lies before us today. The claims set up in those verses cannot be discredited without two results following automatically. One of these is that Moses, the son of Amram, reputed to be the divinely appointed leader and lawgiver of Israel during the period of the Exodus, ceases any longer to be “the responsible guarantor” of the contents of the Book of Deuteronomy. To say that this will not materially affect the value of the Book of Deuteronomy for “the religious man” is to say what many will find it simply impossible to believe, and that on the ground that it flatly contradicts all that they have been so sedulously and insistently taught as to the genetic study of literature. The other equally automatic result must be to discredit either the information and carefulness; or the literary methods and ethical ideals; or the veracity of the person or persons who placed these verses where we

now find them. But to do this is, so far forth, materially to impair the value to "the religious man" of such parts of Deuteronomy as came from those who set up these discredited claims. To say that the person or persons who wrote Deut. i. 1-3 simply acted according to the standards and methods of their day, if true, may and should avail to modify our judgment of these writers themselves. But even if true it cannot modify our judgment of their ethical standards and their methods. The latter we have long since judged upon the basis of their essential character and their uniform effect. Upon that basis they have been irrevocably condemned and, as we all hope, finally discarded.

Nor is it explicit claims alone nor claims to personal origin alone that are potent factors in fixing the value—at least the practical value—of the books of the Bible for "the religious man". Witness the following statement that appeared editorially in a magazine that has for years devoted itself unremittingly to expounding and promoting the literary and historical study of the Bible:

"In the third place, the changed attitude towards the Old Testament books has enabled us to discover far more perfectly than we knew them before the real teachings of these books, and the real history of the Old Testament religion. So long as we read these first books of the Old Testament as the scientific record of how the world came to be, and the ancient nations arose, so long we missed of necessity the great ethical and religious ideas of which the prophet to whom we owe them made them the medium of expression. So long as we assumed that the first books were also the oldest, we read the history of Israel's religion in no small part wrong end to. The tedious documentary analysis, and laborious arranging and dating of documents and books are slowly issuing in a reconstructed history of the origin and growth of Semitic and Israelitish religion, in the light of which this unique divine revelation appears as never before."⁶

⁶ *Biblical World*, Dec. 1906.

To comment in detail upon this remarkable statement would only serve to distract attention from the one point upon which it is desired to center it. That point is the relation, the fundamental and determining relation, that the statement as a whole assumes to exist between one's view of the origin and literary form of these first books of the Old Testament, and one's view of their practical value to "the religious man". The statement, it will be observed, distinctly attributes what its writer conceives to be the inability of certain persons to grasp "the great ethical and religious ideas" of these opening books of the Bible to what he conceives to be their misconceptions in part as to the origin of these books and in part as to the literary form employed in them. And what he evidently flatters himself is his own juster appreciation of "the significance of this unique divine revelation", the writer of the above cited paragraph just as distinctly traces to what he is pleased to regard as his own juster insight into these matters. Let us assume for a moment,—though it may well be but for a moment, and then merely for the sake of illustrating an important, but much overlooked truth—that the *Biblical World* is right, and then notice what follows: Simply this: "the prophet" who made these books of the Old Testament the "medium of conveying his "great ethical and religious ideas" was so unfortunate as not to make plain to his readers the nature of the literary form that he was using, or perhaps one should say that he failed to make plain to them the use to which he was putting the literary form that he employed, with the result that for milleniums his readers mistook his "legends shot through with religious ideas"—let us not say for "a scientific record" of anything, for such a statement would lack even the appearance of historical verisimilitude, but—for an ordinarily honest and reasonably well informed account of actual events; and with the farther result that they "missed of necessity the great ethical and religious ideas" that "the prophet" strove to convey. So close, then, may be the relation between the origin of a book and the use

made by its author of the literary forms which he employs; and its value for "the religious man". And now turning aside from all that is debatable in this statement of the *Biblical World*, so much, it seems to me, is indisputable—namely, the claims that a Biblical writer makes, or seems to make, as to the literary form that he is employing in his book—be these claims explicit or implicit—must necessarily profoundly affect the value of his book for "the religious man". Nor is this equivalent to saying that only this or that literary form is suitable to convey "a message from God to our souls". It is simply to say that a writer may so veil the literary form that he is using as to cause his readers to mistake it for one that is totally different. He may, for instance, so completely clothe legend in the forms of history as to mislead all except the very elect. If he does this consciously and of purpose, he is, of course, a deceiver: and "no lie is of the truth," no matter how "pious" the liar. And even if one could perform such a feat "in the uprightness of his heart", the result would be a cryptogram only intelligible in a polychrome edition, which, to say the least, would be a bizarre form in which to present a "divine revelation".

As further establishing the determining significance of the origin and literary form of the Biblical books for their value for "the religious man", we should not fail to notice that in the Christian Scriptures themselves the value that they possess for "the religious man" is repeatedly made to turn upon their origin and their literary form. Thus, in Dan. ix. 2 we read: "In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years." These words preface and explain the prayer of Daniel that follows; the explanation being given, of course, not for the benefit of Daniel, but for that of his readers. It is significant, therefore, not only of his point of view, but of their's as well. Now, the language used

makes it perfectly plain that the weight attaching to the books to which he refers, turned, both in the case of Daniel and in that of his readers, upon the origin to which both he and they ascribed them, and to the literary form to which he and they alike referred them. That "the books" mentioned—or certainly that portion of them specifically referred to—were "the word of Jehovah" was evidently certified to Daniel and his readers by the fact that they came to them from "Jeremiah, the prophet". And that they produced the effect that they did upon Daniel's conduct was due to the fact that he assigned them to the literary form known to us as "predictive prophecy". The same observations, for substance, apply to the language used in the eleventh verse of this same chapter: "Therefore hath the curse been poured upon us and the oath that is written in the law of Moses, the servant of God. Here the character of what is called "the law", as "the law", is determined for Daniel by its origin—that is by the fact that it was mediated to Israel through "Moses, the servant of God". And the words, "the servant of God", like the words, "the prophet", in the second verse emphasize official position and commission as factors of fundamental importance in "origin". And the whole tenor of Daniel's prayer reflects the importance attaching to literary form. His mind recognizes instinctively, and in each case reacts appropriately to certain specific literary forms found in what he calls "the law". Now it is "the precepts", "the commandments", "the ordinances", and now the "history" that determines the tenor and contents of his prayer. Nor are the foregoing statements affected by any particular view of the authorship of the Book of Daniel. Be the author and time of composition of that book what they may, the force of what has been said remains unimpaired. And that the Old Testament abounds in similar passages will hardly be denied.

The same is true of the New Testament. To the determining force attaching to certain aspects of origin, the salutations of the several epistles bear emphatic witness.

Similar witness for other aspects of origin is borne by passages like Luke i. 1-4., Acts i. 1, Jno. xxi. 24, 1 Jno. i. 1-4; to others yet by Heb. i. 1-4, ii. 1-4; and to others by Luke xx. 42. To get clearly before the mind the full force of the New Testament conception of the significance of origin for value, all that is necessary is to attend to the implications of a passage like Jno. vii. 9. "Did not Moses give you the law"? asked our Lord, placing upon origin an emphasis that is as instructive as it is unmistakable. No one in his senses, of course, supposes for an instant that the point and power of our Lord's challenge lie in the name "Moses" merely as a name. But as little can any one doubt that the form of His appeal is not accidental, nor unimportant. On the contrary, by means of this name as symbol and summary our Lord brought to bear upon the understandings and consciences of His hearers the personal and official characteristics and qualifications of him who bore it. Not only so, He brought to bear upon them the probative weight of the whole series of divine providential energies that, so to speak, had found focus and outlet through him who bore the name "Moses". That is to say, like a calcium light, our Lord's challenge reveals the wide ramifications of the term "origin"—ramifications apparently hidden from the eyes of those who have talked most about the "modern genetic conception of history". And not only the ramifications of the genetic influences summarized in the term "origin", but the determining significance of those influences for the value of the writing in which they have registered themselves is strikingly signaled for us. "The law"—if indeed its origin was what is implied in our Lord's challenge—to those whom He addressed, yes, and to us of today, stood for Sinai and the exodus from Egypt, with its attendant miracles; and the covenant with Abraham; stood, in a word, for all the history that was antecedent to, prepared the way for, and reached its predetermined culmination in Sinai and the Sinai covenant. I say that the

written record called by our Lord "the law" stood for all this history because it had its origin in this history, its whole content was determined by the history, it conserved and perpetuated all the essence of this history and much more. Hence the unanswerableness of our Lord's appeal to this "law" as an authoritative "message from God" to the souls of those whom He addressed. Hence also the determining significance of "origin"—once the connotation of the term is fully appreciated—for value. Those who accept the "origin" posited for "the law" by our Lord always have, always will,—yes, always must posit for it the value as "a message from God to our souls" that He posited for it. Such an "origin" stamps it ineffaceably with such a value.

But the Lord's question not only reveals the necessary and determining significance of "origin" for value and the reasons for the indissoluble relation existing between the two, it does more. It likewise reveals—at least indirectly—the significance for value that attaches to literary form. For Him and for those to whom His question was addressed the document known as "the law" was "a record of past events as nearly true as the fallibility of human testimony will permit". It may have been more, but it was certainly that. In other words He classified the record under the literary form known to us as "history". How do we know this? I answer, by the way in which His rational soul reacted to the record. How it reacted is declared by the whole form and force of His question. Upon any other view, such a question would have been inconceivable, because futile, and even imbecile. The rational soul, because it is a rational soul, cannot but react differently to different literary forms. And in the case of any writing the character of its reaction will and must be determined by its conception of the literary form used in the writing, and of the use to which it conceives this form to have been put. Why this must be so will be obvious to reflection. Literary forms have their roots deep in the

needs of the human spirit. In them the human spirit finds self-expression and has communion with its fellows. Hence they must be at least relatively stable and relatively universal both in their essential characteristics and in the appeal they make and the response they elicit. Otherwise they would fail to answer the purpose that gave them being. But fail they do not. No sane mind reacts in the same way to what it conceives to be "history" and to what it regards as some form of "fiction."

As further evidencing the fact that the Christian Scriptures make their value to "the religious man" turn not only upon "origin", but also upon literary form, the language of 2 Pet. i. 16 is in point. "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables," says the writer, "when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty". The word here rendered "fables" is "*mythoi*". It is a technical term for a particular type of literature current in the days of the apostles, and it is here used in its technical sense. Now it cannot escape the attention of any thoughtful reader that the writer is at pains to distinguish his own composition from this particular literary type. And so soon as we learn what were its characteristics, his reason for so doing becomes clear. The implications of both terms in the rendering "cunningly devised fables" are needlessly offensive. Cleverly wrought out and phrased speculations would, perhaps, come nearer expressing what was in the apostle's mind when he used the word "*mythoi*". At any rate, these "*mythoi*", from which he is so careful to distinguish what he himself has written, were the speculations of acute, ingenious, and what we would now call "religious" minds about God and His relations to the world. Why, then, the apostle's care to put his own writing in a different category? Clearly because for "the religious man", if he be also a sober-minded man, a kind and degree of value attaches to an account of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" that is based upon the testimony of

competent eye-witness totally different from any that can possibly attach to the most sober and pains-taking speculation touching such a matter.

But we may and must proceed a step further. It is not only Scripture personages, then, who make the value of the books of the Bible to "the religious man" turn upon their origin and literary form. All the rest of us do the same; all without exception—radical and conservative, the man in the street and the scholar. I do not mean, of course, that all who accept the Christian Scriptures as "a message from God to our souls" assert for the several books of which they are composed a specific origin and a specific literary form. Nor do I mean that all who accept them consciously and formally base their estimate of the value they severally accord these books upon a given view of their origin and their literary form. Least of all do I mean that everybody frames before his mind a clear and logically coherent theory of the various—and only too often obscure and complex—genetic influences, to the combined effect of which each book of the Bible owes it being, literary form, contents, and structure. On the contrary quite a large body of reputable Biblical scholars give little evidence of having done this. But I do mean that in the case of every one of us inspection will prove that our estimate of the kind and degree of value to be accorded the books of the Bible is based formally or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously, upon his view of their origin and their literary form. Certainly, even those who concern themselves least with such matters still think of each several book of the Bible as having been produced during some period, at some place, by some person. No doubt in most cases the period, place, and person to whom the production of the book is referred is conceived of only in the most general and vaguest way. Usually, so far as genetic influences are concerned, at most only one or perhaps two of them—if any—stand out with some measure of distinctness before consciousness. Take, for instance, the Book of Isaiah, and what

is likely to stand forth in the consciousness of the average person in connection with its origin—by which I mean here, has always, the sum total of the genetic influences that have crystallized into the book known by that name—will be the fact that it originated with “a holy man of old” named Isaiah”, or with “a prophet” of that name. Or, if it be a book of the New Testament that is under consideration—an epistle of Paul, let us say—then, that which will stand out in the consciousness of most persons in connection with its “origin” will be simply the fact that it was written by the “apostle” “Paul”: or, if it be the third Gospel, that it comes to us from “Luke”, “the companion of Paul”, and “the author of the Book of Acts”. It is further true that the average man is usually little concerned consciously and precisely to analyze the content, and to determine the significance of the terms “a holy man of old”, “prophet”, “apostle”, “the companion of Paul the apostle”, “the author of the Book of Acts”, “Paul”, “Isaiah”, and the like. At the same time, it will hardly be denied that, for a variety of reasons, even to the average person, these terms are pregnant with latent meaning.

When, however, we turn from the average man to responsible scholars who have some appreciation of the gravity of their task, nothing perhaps is more noticeable than their laborious efforts to discover the “sources” from which the material in the several books of the Bible has come and carefully to assign every part of this material to its proper “source”. Thus, to cite only two of many instances, Dr. Shailer Mathews distributes into at least four main groups the genetic influences to which we owe our Gospels as we now have them. Of these distinct sets of influences, so he tells us, one proceeded from certain “Eastern religions” other than Judaism, one from “Judaism”, one from Jesus Himself, and the fourth from those who came after Jesus—that is the disciples generally and their leaders.⁷ And as is well known, what Dr. Mathews attempts to do for the

⁷ *The Gospel and The Modern Man*, p. 74.

Gospels a host of scholars have attempted to do for them and for the other books of the New Testament. Similarly Dr. Driver thinks that he has discovered that the Book of Deuteronomy is the product of no less than five distinct main groups of genetic influences. These for convenience he designates by the symbols JE, D, D², P, and R. True, for all except the initiated, these symbols, instead of suggesting, serve mainly to conceal even the general character of the several sets of influences for which they respectively stand; but this unfortunate circumstances in no wise affects my contention. And what Dr. Driver has thus attempted for Deuteronomy a large body of immensely active scholars have attempted to do for it and for all the other books of the Old Testament. It is at once curious and instructive to notice some specimens of their activities along these lines. In our recent Bible Dictionaries, for example, one may find not only the least of the books of the Old Testament resolved into two or more "documents", and the larger ones into "a great multitude which no man can number", but—and this is the significant fact—whether the "documents" be few or many; large or mere "fragments", he will also find that the analyst traces them back—one and all—to a "prophetic" origin—the same being sometimes an individual "prophet" and sometimes a so-called "prophetic school". The reason for the unanimity of these different scholars in converging upon this purely fiat "origin" will appear in due time. For the present it is sufficient simply to note the fact they do thus agree upon a common "origin" for these "documents" and "fragments of documents", and that such is the "origin" upon which they fix. While, therefore, there are the greatest diversities of opinion as to one or another aspect of the origin of the different books of the Bible; and while some of these opinions are unreasoned, vague, and even latent; and while others, though reasoned, are not much less vague, and in themselves seem singularly unreasonable, no scholar fails to posit some "origin" for each book.

The same may be said as to the literary form employed in the books of both Testaments. Gen. i-ii. 4a will serve as an illustration. By some scholars this passage is referred to one or another of the literary forms that group themselves under the general head of "free poetic inventions"; while others, like Dillmann, see in it the narrative of "a historian" and not "a poet":⁸ one reads Jonah as an "allegory", another as "a religious romance", and a third as a narrative of actual experiences; and so of all the other books of Scripture. But what none can in any case avoid doing is positing—though, of course, not always, nor even usually formally and consciously—a literary form of some description for the various books and parts of books. No doubt there is here also an abundance of lack of reasoning, of bad reasoning, and of unreason. That, however, is a mere incident and in no wise affects the main fact.

But it is not more certain that each of us posits some origin and some literary form for each several book of the Bible than it is that our judgment as to the origin and literary form of each several book ultimately determines the kind and degree of value that we accord to it. Habitually overlooked, and even confidently denied though it has been, this position will be found to be susceptible of convincing proof along more lines than one.

One or two typical concrete statements will serve as a starting point. Speaking of the Old Testament, Canon Kirkpatrick says: "And from the whole treatment of the Old Testament Scriptures in the New Testament, even more than from explicit statements, it is clear that they are regarded as being of divine origin, and as possessing divine authority; as being, in fact, what we generally understand by the term *inspired*."⁹ And a little further along in the same chapter, he tells us truly enough that "the *fact* of inspiration is an essential article of the Christian faith". And in precisely the same vein, Dr. Zenos tells us that "The

⁸ *Commentary on Genesis*, i, p 28.

⁹ *The Divine Library of the OT.*, p. 87.

question of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures is also of cardinal importance"; and adds that, on the basis of what he also calls "the fact of inspiration" those whom he calls "evangelicals" "have always used these writings as the ultimate court of appeal. . . . have planted themselves on their authoritativeness . . . adopted them as their organic principle and fundamental law, believing that they contain and are the infallible rule of faith and practice."¹⁰

With individual differences, then, as to detail—which do not here concern us—Dr. Zenos and Canon Kirkpatrick, speaking as representatives, agree in making the "*fact of inspiration*" the basis of whatever special value the books of the Bible may possess for "the religious man". This being the case, an inquiry immediately and necessarily arises as to what Canon Kirkpatrick calls, not very happily, "the nature of inspiration", meaning evidently the effects of inspiration upon the record said to be "inspired". On this point Canon Kirkpatrick frankly deprecates any attempt to go into precise details. He says, however,—and for the purposes of this discussion that is all sufficient—that the nature or effects of inspiration must "be inferred from the Scriptures themselves"¹¹ by which he manifestly means from the phenomena presented by the Scriptures. And can any one gainsay his answer or suggest another and more adequate? If not, then the question presses: How are we to ascertain what are the phenomena of Scripture—I mean, of course, its real as contrasted with its merely apparent phenomena, and how are we to construe to our understandings the true and intended significance of these phenomena, except in the light of the origin and the literary forms of the books of Scripture? Apart from the origin of Gen. i. 1-ii. 4a, for instance, who can say what is the literary form employed by its author? As Dillmann correctly discerns, our ability to determine the literary form with which we are here dealing turns upon our ability to answer the question,

¹⁰ *The Elements of the Higher Criticism*, p. 170.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

Whence had the author his information touching the matters of which he treats? If he had it from a competent witness of the creation of the world, then the record will have to be classed either as a "history" or as a "direct revelation" according as emphasis is placed upon one or another aspect of it. If, however, the author went to his imagination for his facts, then the record must be classed as some form of "free poetic invention" or "fiction"—though the word need not be used as derogating from the real merits of his production whatever, on this view, these may be. If, on the other hand, Gen. i. 1-ii. 4a represents the reasoned conclusions as to the creation of things reached by its author upon the basis of his own observations and those of others, then it must be classed, according to other characteristic features, either as "a scientific" account of creation, or else as "a speculation". A knowledge of its origin, therefore, is necessary in order to determine to what literary form this portion of the Bible is to be referred. And is it not equally obvious that it is only after we have determined the literary form, and only in the light of its literary form that we can appraise correctly the value of Gen. i. 1-ii.4a to "the religious man"? No doubt poetry as well as history may be made a vehicle for conveying to us a knowledge of God and of His relations to man. But the very fact that there is, as Canon Cheyne has said, "a truth of poetry as well as a truth of history" implies that we need to take careful account of what kind of truth it is that is engaging our attention in a given writing. And only in a religious *Alice in Wonderland* would any one be found to affirm that a "speculation" touching creation possesses for "the religious man" either the same degree or the same kind of value that would be possessed by a "revelation".

But let us approach from another and a practical side this matter of the determining relation that our view as to the origin and the literary forms of the books of the Bible sustains to our view of the kind and degree of value to be accorded these books. For sometime we have been

made familiar with the doctrine that the Bible is or contains what is spoken of as "progressive revelation". Negatively this doctrine consists of a denial that all the teachings of the Bible are of "equal and perpetual authority"—a phrase which itself needs much more careful exposition than those using it are accustomed to give it. Positively the doctrine summarily stated seems to consist in the affirmation of the "superseding of revelation by larger revelation".¹² To go into the merits of this doctrine lies outside the scope of this paper. The doctrine is mentioned merely to direct attention to the fact that it depends for its very existence upon the assumption that there is an invariable and an indissoluble relation between the origin and the literary form of this or that portion of the Bible, on the one hand, and its value to "the religious man", on the other. Thus, in the course of an exposition of the doctrine, we are told that one trained in it "will use the Bible gladly and intelligently as a source of supreme teaching, because it reveals to him eternal truths. But, because he knows that this truth came but gradually and through men conditioned and limited by circumstances and forms of thought in part or wholly outgrown, he will not confuse revelation in all its stages with final authority,"¹³ nor will he suppose that "revelation is always absolute or of equal authority for all time",¹⁴ but will recognize the fact that "revelation through morally imperfect men may be outgrown".¹⁵ The postulate, therefore, upon which this doctrine of a "progressive revelation" builds is simply this—namely, that such is the relation of the record of a revelation and the personal and other media through which, if made at all, it must be made, that it is impossible to appraise the value of any part of it without taking most careful account of the origin and literary forms of the writings in which it is documented.

¹² *Principles & Ideals for the Sunday School*, pp. 42-43.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

Whatever one may think of the theory based upon this postulate, the soundness of the postulate itself is beyond dispute.

With the correctness or incorrectness of Julius Wellhausen's views touching the origin and the literary forms of the books of the Old Testament we have here no concern. But as to the relation between these views and the popular estimate of the value of the Bible to "the religious man", it will hardly be questioned that Wellhausen himself is a competent witness. Note, then, the following statement by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll. Referring to a personal experience, he says:

"More than twenty years ago, the present writer, walking with Julius Wellhausen in the quaint streets of Greifswald, ventured to ask him whether, if his"—i.e. Wellhausen's—"views were accepted, the Bible could retain its place in the estimation of the common people. 'I cannot see how that is possible', was the sad reply".¹⁶ In whatever direction we turn, therefore, we find that men's views as to the origin and literary forms of the books of Scripture are determinative of their views as to "the nature" or effects of inspiration, and accordingly of the kind and degree of value to be accorded these books by "the religious man".

How is it with "the fact of inspiration", upon which Canon Kirkpatrick and Dr. Zenos plant themselves, making it rather than, and as contrasted with "the nature of inspiration," the basis of the "Divine authority" and the "infallibility" that they respectively predicate of the books of the Bible? How is "the fact of inspiration" to be established? As all know, a number of methods have been proposed.

There are those, for instance, who make their appeal directly to what is known as the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti*. But it must not be forgotten that the appeal itself implies the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine, however, is derived exclusively from the Bible.

¹⁶ Cited in *Fundamentals*, vol. viii, p. 13.

Apart from Scripture, we would have to say, "Nay, we have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit". Shall such a doctrine as this, then, be accepted without regard to the source from which it comes? Is it not plain that "Holy Scriptures", or "holy prophets", or "holy apostles" are a condition *sine qua non* to a sane acceptance of the doctrine of the "Holy Spirit"? And do such phrases predicate nothing concerning what Dr. Briggs calls "the human authors" of the Bible? nothing as to the origin of the Scriptures in the sense of their historical genesis? Moreover the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is itself the result of an interpretational process. But Dr. Richard G. Moulton assures us "that it is vain to search into the meaning of a work until its outer literary form has been determined".¹⁷

In the case of the Old Testament, Canon Kirkpatrick and others base their acceptance of "the *fact* of inspiration" partly upon "internal evidences" and partly upon what may be called "expert testimony" by which is here meant the testimony of persons supposed to be specially qualified to give a decisive judgment. As a specimen of the appeal to "the internal evidences" the following must suffice: "Yet in all this diversity of *many parts and many fashions* there is a unity which binds together the various books into a single whole. It is no artificial and external uniformity, but a natural and organic unity of life and spirit. Natural and undesigned, so far as the several authors of the many books collected in the divine library of the Old Testament are concerned, and therefore all the more attesting itself as supernatural and designed".¹⁸ But can any one read these words and fail to see that the very underpinning of Canon Kirkpatrick's argument from the "internal evidences" is derived from certain alleged facts as to the origin and literary forms of the books of the Old Testament? Let us briefly follow it. Canon Kirkpatrick begins by calling attention to the great variety of literary forms

¹⁷ *The Literary Study of the Bible*, p. 329.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

found in the Old Testament—"the many parts" of which it consists, and "the many fashions" in these "many parts". Again, he says in effect: See these workmen separated from each other in time and space, working each in his own way, each upon his own particular "piece", none of them consciously collaborating with any of the others, and yet behold the splendid symmetry of the building that has resulted from these apparently desultory and disconnected efforts! Does not such an effect imply the unseen activity of a superintending architect competent to produce the result that we actually see? But what after all is this except an inference from certain phenomena presented by the origin and literary forms of the books of the Bible? What has just been said of Canon Kirkpatrick's appeal to "the internal evidences" applies equally to his appeal to Christ and His apostles as "expert witnesses". What court on earth would admit to the jury expert testimony without first requiring evidence that he who delivered it was an expert? But whence have we our evidence that in this matter of the books of the Old Testament our Lord and His apostles are in reality experts? Is it not from the books of the New Testament? And can their testimony be accepted apart from some knowledge of their origin, or understood apart from some insight into their literary form? Are there none to whom "our Lord" is not "our Lord", and others to whom He is not "our Lord" in the same sense that He is to Canon Kirkpatrick? And as for "His Apostles", who today is so "undemocratic" as to do them any special reverence. We who bend the knee to Jesus today must certainly be prepared to give both to ourselves and to others "a reason for the faith that is in us".

More plausible is the view entertained by many that wholly apart from any considerations touching their origin and literary forms "the *fact* of the inspiration" of the books of Scripture can be established by an appeal to "the efficacy of the doctrine", that is to say, the well known practical effects that have attended the dissemination of the Scrip-

tures. But can it? Is not Dr. Zenos clearly right, when he says: "The Bible is a religious book and has been the source of incalculable religious thought, feeling, and work. It has produced some most remarkable effects upon the world: and it has produced these results because it has been believed to be, or at any rate to contain the authoritative expression of God's will regarding the conduct of man on earth. If it had been believed to be anything else, it is reasonably certain that these results would not have been produced by it. . . . It is idle to hold that the Bible will hold the same place in the estimation of men whatever the results of criticism may be as to its origin."¹⁹ The legend of William Tell will serve for illustration and for confirmation. Commenting upon this legend, Professor John Martin Vincent says: "The fact that the tale was believed for nearly four centuries by the Swiss people is of the most profound significance in their history. As a patriotic influence and an example of heroism and devotion, William Tell was just as powerful as if he had been true. In the eighteenth century a preacher who in an unguarded moment spake of Tell as a Danish fable was nearly burned at the stake. . . . The future is to determine whether Tell is to be as powerful as a parable as he was as a belief".²⁰ Here, then, is an instance of a narrative wearing the livery of "history" and believed to be "history" which, because it wore the livery of "history" and was believed to be "history", produced deep and lasting impressions for good upon an entire people. Is any one so simple as to suppose for a moment that the influence of Tell "as a parable" will be comparable with the influence of Tell believed to be "history"? Whoever heard of a legend—a narrative universally recognized as and admitted to be a legend—having such a hold upon men as to put one who called attention to its being a legend in peril of being burned at the stake for so doing. For the truth, no doubt, and even for what they have

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 152, 154.

²⁰ *Historical Research*, p. 154.

mistakenly believed to be the truth, some have even dared to die—aye, would still dare even to die. But whoever heard of one's dying for what he himself and all others recognized to be a "legend"? "Legends" undoubtedly have a value of their own, a value even for "the religious man"; but it is not a value of that high kind.

May we, then, assume in the case of the books of the Bible that there is a "domain of faith" in which, apart from all consideration as to their origin and their literary forms, men may assure themselves of "the *fact* of inspiration"? May we assume that in the case of these books "the religious man" is endowed with some occult faculty that enables him directly to perceive "the presence of the divine Spirit" "in some way guiding and informing" the minds of those who composed them? To many, as to the writer, such an assumption cannot fail to appear to be a counsel both of despair and of confusion. It is but one of many illustrations of how the understandings even of the wise may entangle themselves with facile phrases. Direct vision of the "divine Spirit", as all of us know, is not possible to mortal minds. It is only by its effects that "the presence of the divine Spirit" can be known. His guidance and the information that He imparts register themselves in the phenomena of the record produced under the influence of His "guiding and informing" "presence", and in the characters and activities of those whom He is "guiding and informing"—not otherwise. But were it conceivably otherwise, it would still remain true that our estimate of the value to be accorded the books of the Bible would hinge upon our view of their origin—yes, of their human origin. This is only to say that we would still receive them as "a message from God to our souls" because they were mediated to us by men whom in some way or other we perceived to be under "the guiding and informing" "presence of the divine Spirit".

But here again, we shall do well to turn away from abstract reasonings to consider some typical concrete illus-

trations of how all unconsciously to themselves, apparently, men's belief in "the *fact* of inspiration" evidences itself to be determined by their view of the origin of the books they accept as being "inspired". Thus, contrary to the tradition that runs back at least to the time of the composition of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, Canon Cheyne holds that the book of Deuteronomy, instead of originating in the time of Moses and with Moses, originated with certain reformers in the days of Josiah. But even so, he feels compelled to pay unconscious tribute to his own intelligence and to that of his readers by speaking of these reformers as a "pious coterie" and as "prophets".²¹ We need not pause to inquire critically into Canon Cheyne's conception either of piety or of prophets. It is enough simply to ask, Why "pious" and why "prophets", if one's conception of origin is not determinative of one's view of value? And so Dr. Briggs, bent upon putting to confusion those who frankly make their estimate of the value of the books of the Bible in matters of religion hinge upon their view of the human origin of these books—but evidently without pausing to get before his own mind any very clear notion of the connotation of the term "origin", or any very clear idea of the significance of the phenomena of onymity—seems to imagine that he has accomplished his purpose by saying: "We desire to know whether the Bible is from God, and it is not of any great importance that we should know the names of those worthies chosen by God to mediate His revelation".²² Perhaps not—though had Dr. Briggs stopped long enough to formulate for himself some rational account of the problem of onymity, he would doubtless have expressed himself with somewhat more of reserve. But, however that may be, it is manifest from what he says that even he, unconsciously to himself, was governed in his estimate of the value to be accorded

²¹ *The Men of the Bible series: The Prophet Jeremiah; His Life and Times*, p. 63.

²² *Inaugural Address*, p. 33.

the books of the Bible by certain very definite views as to their "origin". Is not as much clearly implied, when he speaks of those through whom these books were mediated to us as being "worthies"—that is, presumably, persons of moral and spiritual worth, and as having been "chosen by God"—that is, persons having a commission and presumably qualifications peculiarly their own? But, if "origin" be merely a convenient term for the sum of the genetic influences to which the books of the Bible owe their being and their specific character, could there well be more essential factors than those mentioned? Once more, attention has already been directed to the fact that those who have elaborated the "endless genealogies" of the books of the Bible which fill our latest Bible Dictionaries are in the habit of assigning every "document" and every "fragment" to some fiat "prophet" or "prophetic" school. This, of course, is not an accident. It is an unconscious recognition of the determining significance of "origin" for value.

But let us return to the case of Canon Kirkpatrick. Like many others, Canon Kirkpatrick, while he stresses what he calls "the *fact* of inspiration", is, as we have seen, chary of what he calls "a clear-cut definite theory" of inspiration. His reason is that such "clear-cut definite theories may come into awkward collision with facts". Now, we need not pause to inquire whether, even if it were desirable, it is always possible to live in a state of perpetual mental fog: nor whether—until its claim to be a "fact" has been fully established—the alleged "fact of inspiration" is any less a "theory" than is the "nature of inspiration"; nor whether, after all, the so-called "fact of inspiration" is not just as truly an inference from "the Scriptures themselves"—that is from the phenomena of "the Scriptures themselves"—as is the "nature of inspiration". For our present purpose it is enough to remind ourselves that vagueness here is a vain thing for safety. For, it can hardly escape attention that the so-called "fact of inspiration" itself, quite as easily as any "theory", may come into disastrous "collision" with

other alleged or really "awkward facts". Thus, as Canon Kirkpatrick truly says: "We are familiar with the old objections to the inspiration of the Bible drawn from its moral character. How, asks the sceptic, can you maintain that a book that contains such crude anthropomorphic representations of God, such imperfect ideas of morality, so much that is revolting to an enlightened conscience, is inspired?"²³ Here, it will be observed, it is not "the nature of inspiration, nor any "theory of inspiration"—either vague, or "clean-cut and definite"—but the "fact of inspiration" itself that is in question. Further, it should be noted, that the reality of "the fact" of the inspiration of the Old Testament is challenged and denied upon the basis of alleged facts as to its origin—yes, and its literary form. For what is the Old Testament, the morality of which is impugned? Is it anything more than an organized collection of visible symbols through which have been mediated to us the moral ideas and ideals of those from whom these symbols have proceeded? "The moral character" of the Old Testament, then, is a mere metonymy for the moral character of those with whom its several books originated. And why do I refer to literary form? Because, whatever else they may be, in the view of those who raise such objections, these Old Testament narratives cannot be "history"—a negative judgment as to literary form, it is true, but with very positive results for our estimate of the value to be accorded the Old Testament by "the religious man".

Even yet, however, we have not heard Canon Kirkpatrick to the end—"the bitter end", one may be pardoned for saying. He continues: "But in the present day we have new difficulties to meet, in view of the results at which criticism arrives as to the origin and character of the books of the Old Testament. In what sense, it may be asked, can this legislation that is now said to be Mosaic in elemental germ and idea only, and to represent not the inspired deliverance of a supremely great individual, but the

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

painful efforts of many generations of law-makers; these histories which have been compiled from primitive traditions, and chronicles, and annals, and what not; these books of prophecy which are not the authentic autographs of the prophets, but posthumous collections of such writings—if any—as they left behind them, eked out by the recollections of their disciples; these Proverbs and Psalms that have been handed down by tradition, and altered, and edited, and re-edited; these histories which contain errors of date and fact, and have been perhaps ‘idealized’ by the reflection of the circumstances and ideas of the writers’ own times upon a distant past; these seeming narratives which may be allegories; and these would be prophecies which may be histories;—in what sense can these be said to be inspired?²⁴ Here, as before, it is not any “theory of inspiration”, but the very “fact of inspiration” itself that is in question. And here, as before, the alleged “fact of inspiration” is in question because it comes into “awkward collision with” certain alleged “facts” as to the origin and the literary forms of the Old Testament. Canon Kirkpatrick speaks only the truth when he follows his recital of these alleged “facts” with the statement: “The problems raised are grave”. Grave they certainly are for those who in the face of such alleged facts feel compelled to contrive some “theory of inspiration” sufficiently amorphous and sufficiently elastic to enable them still to hold on to the theory of “the fact of inspiration”. One is not surprised that Canon Kirkpatrick should discourage the attempt to formulate a theory of inspiration to fit such “facts”. Moreover, he would be lacking in proper sympathy for one in imminent peril of making shipwreck of his dearest hopes who could wish Canon Kirkpatrick less success than the latter has in his effort to avoid the inevitable “awkward collision” with “the alleged results at which criticism arrives as to the origin and character of the books of the Old Testament” and his theory that the in-

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

spiration of these books is a "fact". What does he do? For one thing he cites the well-meant, but none too clearly conceived or too carefully phrased, caution of Bishop Westcott commented upon above.²⁵ But surely it is one thing "presumptuously to stake the inspiration and Divine authority of the Old Testament on any foregone conclusion as to the method and shape in which the records have come down to us" and a very different thing to cling to "the inspiration and Divine authority of the Old Testament" in the face and teeth of such "results" of criticism as those alleged by Canon Kirkpatrick. Are we, then, to be open-minded and submissive to the evidence only when criticism is busy with the matter of the origin and literary forms of the Old Testament, but the reverse when criticism turns to consider the significance of its findings touching these matters for the alleged "fact of inspiration"?

But evidently Canon Kirkpatrick's chief reason for clinging to "the fact of inspiration" even when confronted with such alleged results of criticism as those that he enumerates in the passage cited above lies in the fact that "the Old Testament is placed in the hands of the Christian Church as the inspired, authoritative record of God's revelation of Himself to His chosen people, and of His education of that people. We accept it as such on the authority of Christ and His Apostles."²⁶ In a word, to save "the fact of the inspiration" of the Old Testament, when confronted with alleged results of criticism such as those we have been considering, Canon Kirkpatrick falls back upon "the authority of Christ and His Apostles". One can only regret that here the Canon has not followed his own futile advice, and so avoided creating an embarrassing dilemma, if not for others, at least for himself. For evidently he overlooks some things of no small importance. For one thing, he overlooks the fact that there is nothing in the New Testament to suggest that our Lord's endorsement of the

²⁵ *Supra.* p. 604.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

inspiration of the Old Testament either was given or would have been given with any such alleged facts as those enumerated above before His mind. Further still and more vital, Canon Kirkpatrick overlooks the fact that an endorsement, no matter by whom given, does not and cannot impart any value to the instrument upon which it is placed, nor character to the person from whom the instrument proceeds. At most it certifies to the value that the endorser believes the writing to possess, and to his estimate of the character of him whose name the writing bears. Finally, Canon Kirkpatrick overlooks the fact that, because this is true, many an endorser has simply bankrupted himself, without benefiting him for whom he endorsed. So much at any rate is indisputable—namely, that it is alleged facts touching the origin and literary forms of the books of the Bible similar to those cited by Canon Kirkpatrick that have led men like Kuenen, Wellhausen, and F. Delitzsch to volatilize the notion of inspiration “till all distinction between Scripture and other books is obliterated, and the inspiration of Moses and Isaiah is held to be not materially different from the inspiration of Solon or Aeschylus”. Nor will it do to say that the denial of “the fact of inspiration” in the case of such men is due to “philosophic postulates”. Their conclusions as to the origin and literary forms of the books of the Bible have unquestionably been materially affected by their “naturalistic world-view”. But their denial of “the fact of inspiration” is directly traceable to their conclusions as to the origin and literary forms of the books of Scripture. They themselves trace it to this source.

Such, then, is the discipline that, at least since the time of Eichhorn, has been seeking to get itself recognized, formulated, and suitably named: and such are the postulates upon which its claim to recognition securely rest.

But readers who have followed this discussion thus far are likely even yet to find their minds disturbed by two questions. How, they will ask, is it possible that a discipline

so obviously legitimate and necessary as the one whose claims we have been considering could fail to get itself promptly recognized? Before answering this question, it is important to notice that it is one thing for a discipline to get itself recognized and formulated, and another and totally different thing for it to get itself used. It is safe to say that all disciplines have gotten themselves used long before they have gotten themselves formulated or even recognized as distinct entities. And so it has been with the discipline we have been considering. Used long before the time of Eichhorn, it has been used more and more extensively since his time. But men have, so to speak, merely blundered into the use of it—and accordingly have blundered constantly and abundantly in their use of it. They have used it unconsciously; and the result has been great confusion and needless bitterness. Hence the need of getting it formally recognized and organized. How they could thus have used this discipline and yet could have failed to recognize the instrument they were using and the fact that they were using it will become clear from a glance at the origin of disciplines in general. What we call “disciplines”, are neither fortuitous, fiat, nor conventional products. They originate in an inner necessity of the human spirit and develop under the operation of an inner law of their own being. They are, and they are what they are *ex necessitate rei*. Given a felt need or craving of the human spirit, then immediately the latter sets itself to work to meet the need and to satisfy the craving. The result is what we call a “discipline”—that is an organized rational method of mastering a given subject or of affecting a given end in the realm of the spirit. This result, however, is usually slowly and tediously brought to pass. The discipline at the outset comes “without observation”, and gets itself gradually more and more developed through use—the use consisting of many tentative, abortive, and even unconscious strivings of the mind to attain its end or satisfy its craving. Without going into

details it must suffice here to say that disciplines are frequently intimately interrelated and interdependent; they are engaged upon the same subject-matter—though, of course, upon different aspects of it; or, if upon the same aspect, for different purposes; or, if upon the same subject-matter and for the same purpose, still they approach it from different sides. Hence a discipline may and usually does long remain undifferentiated from associated and kindred disciplines, and is longer still in securing recognition as a distinct entity. Even to this day historical criticism—that is the discipline that deals with origins, with all origins of everything and of every kind, and with the genetic relations of things—when engaged with the origin of a book, or of a literary form is habitually spoken of as literary criticism, especially if it uses literary data for determining origin. But, of course, this is a mere infelicity of usage—though, as it appears to the writer, not only a needless, but an embarrassing infelicity. Literary criticism, as it seems to him, is a term that may well be limited to other aspects of books than their becoming and subsequent vicissitudes. At any rate, one reason why the discipline that we have been considering has hitherto failed of recognition as a distinct entity has been because of the intimate relation in which it stands both to historical and to literary criticism. Scholars have started consciously upon an investigation into the origin of a book, or into an investigation into the literary forms employed in it; and when they have reached their conclusions they have either dismissed the whole matter from their minds, or else have more or less unconsciously passed on to consider the significance of their historical and literary conclusions for other features of the book without taking account of the fact that when historical and literary criticism have reached their respective conclusions they have also reached the end of their respective tethers and can go no further. In other words, they have failed to notice that just so soon as we ask, What is the significance of the conclusions of

historical criticism for this or that feature of the book, we must look for the answer to some other discipline than historical criticism, which with the determination of origin has become *functus officio*. Further, in the case of the discipline whose claims to recognition we have had under consideration there have been special reasons why Christian scholars, when investigating the origin and literary forms of the books of the Bible, have found it easy not to raise the inquiry, What is the significance of the conclusions that we have reached for the value of these books to "the religious man"? All Christian scholars were agreed that the value of these books to "the religious man" arises from their "inspiration"; and all were officially committed to "the fact of inspiration". Consequently they felt neither the disposition nor the necessity for raising the question, What is the significance of the results of historical and literary criticism for the inspiration of the books of the Bible? They were, and many of them still are content to "assume the fact of inspiration". And this brings us to the second question that may well have puzzled my readers—namely,

How was it possible for intelligent men to fail to see, and for honest men to ignore, the determining relation that conclusions as to the origin and the literary forms of the books of the Bible sustain to their value for "the religious man"? The answer to this question differs in different cases. That many Christian laymen of high intelligence should be misled was almost inevitable. Nothing would be easier than for them to see in the question of "origin", for instance, a mere question of dates, place and names, and in the question as to the literary forms used in the Bible a mere question as to the abstract propriety of using this or that literary form as a vehicle for a divine revelation. They did not fail to perceive that these questions are matters of historical and literary criticism. So regarding them, their innate common sense, as well as all their training in modern ideas and methods, satisfied them that

it was futile to attempt to hold the Bible immune from historical and literary criticism, and unreasonable to make the inspiration of its several books turn upon a mere matter of date—except, perhaps in very extreme cases and such as did not seem to them actually to occur—or the name of the author, or of the use of one literary form rather than another. And in these illusions they were encouraged by the loose thinking and looser statements of not a few Christian scholars. But what doubtless decided many of them in the belief that the inspiration of the books of the Bible was not and could not be affected by one's conclusions as to the origin and literary forms of these books was the fact that they saw men of equal intelligence, equal honesty, and equal "piety" unite in declaring that the Scriptures were of the highest value to "the religious man" though they differed from one another *toto caelo* upon the question of the origin and the literary form of these books. Nor could even intelligent laymen reasonably be expected to trace this strange agreement to its true, but hidden source. For, though unquestionably true, it sounds in the last degree paradoxical to say that men will often agree in pronouncing the Bible to be of the supremest value to "the religious man" simply because they differ *toto caelo* as to the nature of religion itself. But the appearance of paradox here will disappear before a little reflection.

The case of the Christian scholar calls for a somewhat different explanation. In this latter instance we have a striking illustration of the fact that, where there is a will not to do a thing, men usually find a way not to do it. As we have already seen Christian scholars entered upon the work of the historical and literary criticism of the books of the Bible already committed officially and otherwise to "the fact of the inspiration" of these books. If at times embarrassed by the alleged results of criticism, they contented themselves sometimes by decrying the obscurantism that objected to historical and literary criticism of the Bible; sometimes by saying "faith came before criticism";

sometimes by calling themselves "believing or evangelical" as opposed to "unbelieving or rationalistic" critics; and sometimes simply by saying, "in all our work we assume the inspiration of the Bible". And the futility of all this was hidden from their eyes, because they flattered themselves that their faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures rested upon a foundation that could not be affected by any conclusions of criticism—for example, upon the witness of the Divine Spirit; or the wonderful and beneficent results that have invariably followed in the wake of the acceptance of the Bible; or, best of all, upon "the authority of Christ and His Apostles". Finally, the notorious elasticity of language is responsible for the "blindness in part" that befell not a few of them, this elasticity enabling them to make confession in the vocabulary of the creeds when, as a matter of fact, they were thinking in the terms of modern deism.

Columbia, S. C.

W. M. MCPHEETERS.