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I.

OUR LORD'S TEACHING CONCERNING HIMSELF.

THIS is a subject of fundamental importance, the subject which underlies and determines every other portion of our Lord's teaching—His teaching concerning God and concerning man. For if we admit His claims in regard to Himself, we know that through Him alone we can come to the knowledge of the Father, and that by Him man's place and character and destiny are determined.

Moreover, it is a unique subject. The theme is identical with the Teacher. This is unparalleled. A true teacher keeps himself in the background. Whenever he refers to himself, it is as to one who is himself a disciple, and whose place is always subordinate to the truth to which he bears witness. But our Lord identifies Truth with His own Person. He makes Himself the supreme Subject of His teaching and the sole medium through whom Divine Truth can be revealed or apprehended. His words were, as the disciples recognized, "the words of Eternal Life"—not merely promises of life, but vehicles of life, for in them His life energizes and quickens those who receive them. As Hort says:

"His *ρήματα* were so completely parts and utterances of Himself, that they had no meaning as abstract statements of truth uttered by Him as a Divine oracle or prophet. Take away Himself as the primary (though not the ultimate) subject of every statement and they all fall to pieces."*

The self-assertion which would be a mark of weakness and egotism in other men, in the man Christ Jesus impresses us with reverence

* Hort: *The Way, the Truth and the Life*, p. 207.

IV.

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP: PRACTICE VERSUS THEORY.

MEN'S theory and practice are not always in accord. As shown in a previous paper,* there is a tendency to-day to minimize and belittle the importance of the question of the authorship of the books of Scripture. The purpose of the present paper is to show that, whatever men's theories on this subject, in practice they universally and habitually treat the question of the authorship of a writing as one of real and great significance. This they do to-day. This they have always done. The proof of these statements is abundant, as witness the following facts:

1. Is it not more natural or more reasonable to ask of a book, What is it about? than it is to ask, Who is its author? So far is the latter question from being one of idle curiosity, that the answer to it is frequently decisive of the fate of a book. Long experience has taught publishers the importance attached by the general public to this matter of authorship. Hence it is that they are so shy about undertaking to bring out the productions of new and unknown writers. Indeed, the importance which in the public mind, rightly or wrongly, attaches to this question receives a curious and instructive illustration from the weight they are disposed to attach even to the name of the firm by which a book is published. When a writer is personally unknown to the public, he is always anxious to have his book brought out by a well-known publishing house. Why? Simply because in such a case the publishing house stands before the public, at least temporarily, as *in loco auctoris*. Such is the importance which attaches even to what one might perhaps call vicarious authorship. The truth is that, so far from underestimating, most of us are prone, at least in practice, to allow our judgment of books to be unduly influenced by the "mere" matter of authorship. Take a concrete case. Doubtless Mr. Lias' estimate of the value of *The History of the Norman Conquest* was largely determined, even prior to reading, by the presence of Mr. Freeman's name upon the title-page.

* PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, July, 1903.

That there are seeming exceptions to this rule I do not care to deny. These are furnished by ancient inscriptions upon coins, tombstones, tablets and the like, and also by public documents. These will receive proper attention in due time. For the present, I feel safe in saying that the exceptions they seem to furnish will be found upon proper examination to be merely seeming, and not real exceptions.

Here, then, is a fact that certainly ought not to be ignored or treated as of no weight in attempting to form an intelligent judgment as to the importance of the question of authorship in the case of the books of Scripture. We may well ask ourselves, Are these books *sui generis* in the sense that a question, upon the decision of which so much is made to depend in the case of other books, has no significance in their case? Before committing ourselves to such a position the evidence for it ought to be very plain and conclusive.

2. Further, it is worth while to note the fact that this practice of treating the question of authorship as though it were a matter of some importance is not a practice of recent growth. It is doubtless true that "There is no pride of authorship" manifested by the Scripture writers.*

Further, in the case of certain writings of Scripture, I am disposed, with an American scholar, to regard it as quite "*possible that there is a providential purpose in withholding 'the names' of those who composed them.*"†

Indeed, we might go further and say that this supposition is altogether safe and rational. And if from force of habit or from force of circumstances one were to indulge in the luxury of "pure conjecture," one might possibly agree with Canon Kirkpatrick, that

"The combination of the writings of different prophets in the same volume" (if, indeed it occurred at all, which, of course, is something to be proved) "may have been accidental or intentional. It may have happened accidentally through the combination of writings to form a roll of a certain size, or it may have been brought about intentionally, with the object of supplementing or completing an existing work. This may have been done without the slightest idea of fraud or bad faith, or wish to give currency to a prophecy by the authority of a great name. The Divine message was regarded as something far greater than the human channel through which it was communicated: it threw personality entirely into the background."‡

These and other equally conceivable suppositions may, I say, be

* *Living Papers*, Vol. III, Paper XV, p. 4.

† *The Authority of Holy S. S.*: An Inaugural Address by C. A. Briggs, D.D., p. 33.

‡ *Divine Library of the Old Testament*, p. 24.

true, and not merely plausible. They are far, however, from serving the purpose for which they seem to have been framed. They seem to be intended to create the impression that in the minds of the inspired writers at least, the question of authorship was one of small proportions.

Without entering into any discussion as to what may or may not have been the theories of the writers of the books of Scripture on this question, I desire attention to the fact that in practice they lay as much stress upon the matter of authorship as most moderns. Take the Chronicler, for instance. Those who would minimize the importance of the question of authorship, invite attention to the circumstance that his work is anonymous; and they are unquestionably entitled to whatever weight this fact may have. They overlook another fact, however, that may be even more significant, viz., that this same Chronicler, whom they would have us believe laid but little stress upon the question of authorship, goes to the trouble of mentioning by name the following books as sources of his history, viz.: *The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel; The History of Samuel, the Seer; The History of Nathan, the Prophet; The History of Gad, the Seer; The Prophecy of Abijah, the Shelonite; The Visions of Iddo, the Seer, concerning Jeroboam the Son of Nebat; The Histories of Shemaiah, the Prophet, and of Iddo, the Seer; The History of John, the Son of Hannani; The Midrash or Commentary on the Book of Kings; A History of Nizzah, the Son of Ahaz; The History of the Seers.*

Now this list, especially if regarded as coming from one who is supposed himself to have attached but little importance to the matter of authorship, is remarkable for its length and for the particularity with which it gives the names of these books and of their authors. However little importance the writer himself may be supposed to have attached to the matter of his own authorship, it looks as if he felt that his readers would regard the question of the authorship of his sources as possessed of a certain significance. For, if neither he nor his readers esteemed the question as one of any special weight, it is hard to understand why the Chronicler should have encumbered his pages with such frequent references to the books constituting his sources, giving not merely their titles, but in most instances giving also the names and the official positions of their respective authors. There is another point in this connection, to which I think fair-minded persons will allow weight. It is this: Either the Chronicler himself invented this list of sources, giving to each an imaginary title, including the name

and office of its author, or the list represents a collection of writings really in existence in his day, each bearing the name of its author. Upon the latter supposition we have multiplied evidence to the importance which, even at this early date, was attached in practice to this question of authorship: and upon the former we have impressive and conclusive evidence of the great stress laid upon the question of "mere" authorship by the Chronicler, at least in practice.

One receives a similar impression from examining the Book of Proverbs. Whoever its compiler may have been, and whatever may have been his personal theory in reference to the importance or non-importance of the matter of authorship, we find that he is careful to note the fact that the proverbs contained in his collection proceeded from no less than four authors. I say he is careful to note this fact, and so he is. He breaks his collection up into no less than seven distinct minor collections, assigning each of these to its own proper author. The superscription of the first of these minor collections is "*The Proverbs of Solomon, the Son of David, King of Israel;*"* that of the second is merely "*The Proverbs of Solomon;*"† that of the third is "*The Words of the Wise;*"‡ that of the fourth, "*These also are the sayings of the Wise;*"§ that of the fifth, "*These also are Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out;*"§ that of the sixth, "*The Words of Agur the Son of Jakeh, the Oracle;*"¶ and that of the seventh, "*The Words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him.*"**

I shall not sit in judgment at this time upon the compiler's information, his judgment, or his literary and practical ethics. The reader is doubtless aware that Canon Cheyne and others have been compelled—reluctantly, no doubt—to disagree with him in his judgment as to the authorship of certain of these proverbs. So far as my present contention is concerned, however, the Canon may be right and the compiler may be wrong, though, prior to evidence, we could not have been expected even to surmise such a thing. Be this as it may, the fact remains that, right or wrong, with information to justify him or without it, the compiler has noted and named—in five instances with particularity—the respective authors of each of seven minor collections of proverbs embodied in his book. Why he has thought it worth his while to do this I do not now inquire.

* Prov. i. 1.

‡ Prov. xxii. 17.

§ Prov. xxv. 1.

** Prov. xxxi. 1.

† Prov. x. 1.

|| Prov. xxiv. 23.

¶ Prov. xxx. 1.

The case is not different if we turn to the Book of Psalms. It contains, as every one knows, no less than one hundred and fifty distinct religious poems. As may be seen in the Revised Version, these were from quite ancient times divided into five books. Now it would have been noticeable if the entire collection of one hundred and fifty psalms had been assigned to some single author, or if the psalms in each of the five books had been assigned respectively to a single author. This, I say, would have been laying no little stress in practice upon the question of authorship. But the actual facts presented by the Psalter, and obvious to the examination of any one who cares to look into the matter, are an even more impressive testimony to the importance attached, at least in practice, to this question of authorship. What these facts are the reader will, perhaps, ascertain most easily by glancing at the following table, which gives a view of the contents of the Psalter, together with the authors assigned to the several psalms in each of the five books into which the whole is divided:

Book I.	{	i-ii	Anonymous.
		iii.-ix	David.
		x.....	Anonymous.
		xi-xxxii.....	David.
		xxxiii.....	Anonymous.
		xxxiv-xli	David.
Book II.	{	xlii.....	Sons of Korah.
		xliii	Anonymous.
		xliv-xlix	Sons of Korah.
		l.....	Asaph.
		li-lxv.....	David.
		lxvi-lxvii	Anonymous.
		lxviii-lxx	David.
		lxxi	Anonymous.
lxxii.....	Solomon.		
Book III.	{	lxxiii-lxxxiii.....	Asaph
		lxxxiv-lxxxv	Sons of Korah.
		lxxxvi	David.
		lxxxvii	Sons of Korah.
		lxxxviii.....	Heman.
		lxxxix	Ethan.
Book IV.	{	xc	Moses the servant of God
		xci-c	Anonymous.
		ci-ciii.....	David.
		civ-cvi	Anonymous.

	cvii	Anonymous.
	cviii-cx	David.
	cxi-cxxi	Anonymous.
	cxxii	David.
	cxxiii	Anonymous.
	cxxiv	David.
	cxxv-cxxvi	Anonymous.
Book V.	cxxvii	Solomon.
	cxxviii-cxxx	Anonymous.
	cxxxi	David.
	cxxxii	Anonymous.
	cxxxiii	David.
	cxxxiv-cxxxvii	Anonymous.
	cxxxviii-cxliv	David.
	cxlv-cl	Anonymous.

Now with this table before us, let us notice the several suppositions that have been advanced to account for the facts which it presents. One is, that the superscriptions which give the names of the authors are original, that is, that these superscriptions are, in each instance, from the same hand that wrote the psalm to which the superscription is attached. This, apparently, was the view of the Massorettes who have made the superscriptions a part of the psalm itself. If it be true, then note the fact that in the case of one hundred and one, out of the whole one hundred and fifty, the authors, for some reason—what I do not now inquire—thought it worth their while to attach their respective names to their several productions. How many psalms David may have written we do not certainly know. But we do know that, if the superscriptions can be relied upon, he signed his name to at least seventy-three of his compositions. And in the absence of any proof to the contrary, this simple fact would of itself create a strong presumption that it *was his practice* to sign his name to his writings.

But many deny very positively that these superscriptions are original. Indeed, it is quite the fashion now to scout this idea. Let us suppose, then, that they are the work of the compiler of our present Psalter, or that of the compilers of the several books into which, as we have seen, our present Psalter is divided. If so, they either did their work upon information, or without it. The former, at least prior to the findings of such distinguished scholars as Dr. Driver and Canon Cheyne, would certainly have appeared not only the more natural, but also the more reasonable and just supposition. But if the compiler, supposing that the superscriptions are all from one hand, did his work with conscientious care, it must have imposed upon him no little labor and research, for he lived some centuries after David. The same

will be true in even greater degree if we regard the Psalter as a whole, and each of its several books as a gradual growth. For what was true of one compiler on the previous supposition, on the latter, will be true of five; and further, on this latter supposition this labor and research will have been distributed, at intervals, over something like five centuries. How we could have more conclusive evidence than this of the importance attached in practice to the question of authorship, it is hard to see. But if, against all the evidence furnished by the mere distribution of names, as given in the table above, any one should still insist that these superscriptions, with their names, represent, not the conscientious care and labor, but merely the caprice or conjecture of the compiler or compilers, the case is not altered. Whether the result of conjecture or not, *there are the names*, six of them; and *there is the order in which they occur*. Not only so, there they will remain quietly to warn us to have a care lest we exhibit in practice that very same odious and vicious subjectivism which in theory some so wantonly impute to the compiler or compilers of our present Psalter.

The Book of Deuteronomy furnishes us another interesting and impressive illustration of the stress which in practice the Scripture writers lay upon this question of authorship. The radical criticism is wholly confident that this book is a production of the times of Manasseh, or Josiah. Now, leaving the radical critics to solve the nice "cases of conscience" that result from their theory, let us, for argument sake, grant for the moment that it is true, and then note what follows. The general analysis of the book, which is sufficiently simple, is as follows:

C. i. 1-4.....	Prefatory matter.
C. i. 5-iv. 40.....	A speech.
C. iv. 41-43.....	A historical note.
C. iv. 44-49.....	Summary of preceding (possibly an introduction to one that follows).
C. v.-xxvi.....	A speech.
C. xxvii-xxviii.....	A series of blessings and curses.
C. xxix-xxxi. 6.....	Monitory address to all Israel.
C. xxxi. 7, 8.....	A charge to Joshua.
C. xxxi. 9.....	A historical note.
C. xxxi. 10-13.....	A charge to the Levites.
C. xxxi. 14-22.....	A historical note.
C. xxxi. 23.....	Another brief charge to Joshua.
C. xxxi. 24-29.....	A historical note and charge to the Levites.
C. xxxi. 30.....	A historical note.
C. xxxii. 1-43.....	A song.
C. xxxii. 44-52.....	A historical note.
C. xxxiii. 1.....	A historical note.
C. xxxiii. 2-29.....	A poem.
C. xxxiv.....	A historical note.

We find that this book contains five addresses of considerable length, each marked as distinct from, though connected with, the others; four brief charges, two poems, not to mention numerous historical notes interwoven here and there. Now the point to which I desire attention is that the author, or compiler, or compilers, or editor, or editors of this book have assigned to each of these addresses, charges and poems separately and severally an author. That one and the same person is named as the author of each several production does not, I think, necessarily or materially modify the significance of the fact here noted. Certainly all will agree that if eleven authors had been named, one for each address, charge and poem, we should have had here impressive evidence for the importance attached in practice to the question of authorship. Why should this tenfold repetition of the name of one and the same author be any less impressive? Leaving it to Canon Cheyne to decide whether this use of the name of Moses was a "fraud," or merely "a needful illusion"; leaving it to him also to make clear the distinction between his so-called "needful illusion" and "fraud"; leaving it to Dr. Driver to defend the "Deuteronomist" against the odious suspicions to which Dr. Driver's theory has certainly subjected him, the questions which I would press are these: If they attached no special importance to the matter of authorship, why did the "pious coterie" who are alleged to have put forth Deuteronomy assign an author to each several address, charge and poem contained in this work? Why did they assign one and the same author to each? And why did they light upon Moses as the person upon whom to father all of their addresses, charges and poems?

In this connection it will be proper to notice that of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, nineteen bear upon their front the names of the authors from whom they proceed. To these should be added the five books of Moses, the larger part of the Book of Psalms, and perhaps Ezra and Nehemiah. This leaves only twelve books in the case of which the question of authorship is not definitely and intentionally settled. And even in the case of these twelve the probability seems to be that those to whom these books were in the first instance addressed were intentionally advised of the authors from whom they respectively proceeded. Plainly, therefore, before taking up with current theories as to the non-importance of this matter of authorship, it will be only proper prudence for one to note the fact that these theories receive no countenance whatever from the Scripture writers, but are rather contradicted by the stress which, in practice, they lay upon it.

3. The foregoing, however, is but a very partial account of the attitude of those who wrote the books of Scripture. For, as I shall now show, not only their practice, but their express statements, both directly and indirectly, imply and affirm that they regarded this question as one of much practical significance. Take, for instance, this language of Dan. ix. 2:

"In the first year of his reign, I Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years."

All, I think, must agree that these words point to the conclusion that Daniel's attitude toward the writing he was examining was, or is represented as being, materially affected by his view of the source from which it proceeded; in other words, by his view of its human authorship. It was "the word of the Lord" to him, because it was spoken by Jeremiah, whom he believed to be a true prophet. Note again the following language used by Daniel in his prayer:

"Therefore hath the curse been poured upon us and the oath that is written in the law of Moses, the servant of God."

This unquestionably expresses Daniel's reverence for Moses. But this raises the question: Did not his reverence for the messenger reflect itself back and tend to enhance his reverence for the message? Do not the words clearly imply that the mere fact that the law came through "Moses, the servant of God," was an important factor in determining Daniel's attitude toward the law. Doubtless he would have yielded similar, possibly he should have yielded the very same, deference to a message coming from any other "servant of God." This makes nothing against the position that the question of authorship was in Daniel's eyes one of importance. It only brings out what a large and influential element *official position* is in the question of authorship.

References of similar significance may be found in 1 Kings viii. 53; 2 Kings xiv. 6, xxi. 23-25; 1 Chron. vi. 49, xxiii. 14; 2 Chron. xiii. 23-18, xxx. 16, xxxiii. 8, xxxiv. 14; Ezra iii. 2, vi. 18; Neh. i. 8, viii. 1, ix. 14, x. 29. Now, if all these multiplied allusions to the fact that "the Law" came "through Moses," was "given by the hand of Moses," was "commanded by Moses," "the servant of God," "the man of God," do not imply that those who employed them attached significance to the "human origin" of the "Law," then, all that can be said is that they are a perversion of language and exceedingly misleading.

Passing to the New Testament, we can hardly fail to observe that, if not in the majority, certainly in a multitude of instances

Christ and the apostles, in quoting from the Old Testament, quote from them, not under some general designation as the "Scriptures," or "the Law," or "the Prophets," or "the Psalms," but quote from specific books; and in quoting give the name and the official position of the author of the book. Thus Christ said, "Did not Moses give you the law? And yet none of you keepeth the law."* And on another occasion: "David himself saith in the Book of Psalms":† and again: "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying," etc.‡ I am well aware, of course, that there are those who say that the knowledge of Christ, in reference to questions of authorship, was merely that of his time; and also that there are those who see in the first two passages cited merely an *ad hominem* argument, which commits Christ himself to no expression of opinion upon the question of authorship. So far as my use of these passages goes, all this, and much else, that is said by persons of the same school concerning Christ and his apostles may be true, even though not suited to exalt Christ, and by many serious persons supposed to reflect severely upon his character and claims. The fact still remains that Christ did employ this language. And the reader can easily judge whether, even if used in an *ad hominem* way, it does not carry this necessary implication, viz., that for those who believe that Moses wrote the Law and that David wrote the 110th Psalm, the fact that the former proceeded from Moses and the latter from David is a matter of real significance and importance.

Other passages revealing the same views, both on the part of Christ and of the apostles, as to the importance of the matter of authorship might be cited, but it is not necessary. §

Before leaving this point I wish to notice two passages from the New Testament, which seem to be conclusive as to the importance attaching to the question of authorship, at least in the judgment of those from whom these passages respectively proceeded.

The first is from the preface to our Gospel of Luke. This Gospel is frequently spoken of as anonymous. This is proper enough, provided only it be remembered that *it is so only to us*. For everything points to the conclusion that its authorship was not only not hidden from, but, on the contrary, was carefully certified to, the person or persons for whom it was, in the first instance, composed.

* John vii. 29.

‡ Matt. xv. 7.

† Luke xx. 42.

§ Daniel is mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 15, Mark xiii. 14; David in Rom. iv. 6, Heb. iv. 7; Jeremiah in Matt. ii. 17, xxvii. 9; Jonah in Matt. xvi. 4; Joel in Acts ii. 16; Isaiah in Matt. iv. 14, viii. 17, xii. 17, xiii. 14 Luke iii. 4, John i. 23, xii. 38, 39. Acts xxviii. 25. Rom. ix. 27, x. 16, xv. 12, *et al.*

But wholly apart from this circumstance, the language to be cited speaks for itself. It is as follows:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative of those matters which have been fulfilled among us, *even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word*, it seemed good to me also, *having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.*"*

The writer here states clearly why he wrote. It was that Theophilus might have a comfortable assurance of the trustworthiness "of those things wherein" he (Theophilus) had been instructed. With equal clearness he states what is to furnish Theophilus with this comfortable, well-grounded assurance, viz., the fact that he, the writer, is qualified to present him with an accurate account of those matters in which Theophilus has such personal and practical interest. Not only so, but the writer of this preface is at pains also to state with perfect distinctness what it is that constitutes his special qualification for the task he has undertaken. This turns out to be nothing less than the circumstance that the narrative he is about to place in the hand of Theophilus is based upon the carefully investigated testimony of those who were themselves eye-witnesses of the events narrated. Now, all this does not look as if the writer of this Gospel viewed the question of its human origin as one that would be regarded with indifference by Theophilus. On the contrary, he quietly takes it for granted that Theophilus' attitude toward any writing coming into his hands would be determined by what the latter knew of the character and qualifications of the author—I mean, of course, the human author of said writing. And this I think will appear strange only to those whose very great reverence for their own "religious consciousness" and confidence in their own "critical insight" has begotten in them a proportionate disregard for the consensus of common sense upon such matters. Be this as it may, the writer of this preface deliberately stakes not only the historical, but the religious and ethical value of his narrative upon the character and qualifications of its author, and certainly expects Theophilus to apply the same test.

The second of the two passages referred to above is from the second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians. Its importance lies in the fact that it states Paul's uniform practice and the reason for it. The passage reads:

"The salutation of me Paul, with mine own hand, which is *the token in every Epistle: so I write.*"†

* Luke i. 1-4. The italics, of course, are mine.

† 2 Thess. iii. 11. Italics mine.

From this it appears that Paul made a practice of affixing his own signature to every communication addressed by him to the churches. He tells us that he did this as a "token." But why this "token," unless he considered it important that they should be certified as to the "human origin" or authorship of communications claiming such large authority over matters of faith and manners as is claimed in his epistles. This means, of course, that he, Paul, attached much importance to the question of authorship, and that he expected those to whom he wrote to do the same.

Now, I venture to believe that no one who will fairly weigh the evidence from Scripture can fail to receive the impression—the distinct and decided impression—that the Scripture writers themselves did, both in practice and in theory, attach the greatest importance to the question of authorship. They may have been wrong in this; that is not now the question. The question is one of fact: Do they, or do they not, lay stress upon the matter of authorship? No one, I think, with the facts above recited before him, can say, They do not. But if the Scripture writers make much of this question of authorship, then no one who wishes fairly to estimate its significance can ignore this fact. On the contrary, one will be obliged to allow it weight, just in proportion to his disposition to defer to the judgment of the writers of Scripture.

4. But I shall doubtless be reminded that there are anonymous books in the Bible. Indeed, the American scholar already referred to has come so much under the practical influence of the now current doctrine of idealization as to say:

"The great mass of the Old Testament was written by authors whose names and connection with their writings are lost in oblivion."*

It is worth noting, however, that this same writer frankly admits that "Tradition has assigned authors for all of these."†

It is true that personally he holds this tradition in small esteem. He says:

"But who tells us that these traditional names"—such as that of Moses and Isaiah, among others—"were the names of the authors of the Bible? The Bible itself? The creeds of the Church? Any reliable historical testimony? None of these. Pure conjectural tradition. Nothing more."‡

This, if not conclusive, is at least emphatic. One wonders, of course, why, of all others, this writer should affect contempt for what is "conjectural," seeing that conjecture is, as it were, the atmosphere in which he himself and his entire school "live and

* Dr. Briggs' *Inaugural*, *ut sup.*, p. 33.

† *Bible Study*, p. 222.

‡ Dr. Briggs' *Inaugural*, *ut sup.*, p. 33.

move and have their being." One also wonders whether the Union Seminary professor has forgotten that this tradition, so far at least as it relates to the Pentateuch, has the endorsement of the Chronicler and, as many believe, of Christ himself. The Book of Chronicles is certainly a part of the Bible, as is also the Gospel of John. But leaving these and other points to be settled, cleared up, or brushed aside by the distinguished scholar whose remarks are under consideration, the judicious reader cannot fail to observe that this contemptuous criticism bears rather upon the nature and significance of this tradition, than upon the fact of its existence. The fact, then, the admitted fact, to which I desire attention is that, rightly or wrongly, with grounds or without them, every single anonymous book in either Testament has been by tradition assigned to some well-known Scripture personage as its author or its compiler. There may be a question as to the origin or as to the value of this tradition. Its existence is an unquestionable fact. This fact is not gotten rid of, nor explained, nor is its force in the least abated by the use of sweeping statements and of contemptuous epithets.

Now let the reader ask himself, If the question of authorship be one of as little moment as it is now commonly represented to be, then why is it that from the times of Josiah downward men have puzzled themselves to find out the names of the writers of the several books of Scripture? Why is it that, failing in this, as is alleged, they have, as is alleged, invented names for them? Why is it that, in inventing these names, they have in every instance hit upon the name of some well-known Scripture person, and, further, some person either himself personally associated with the events recorded in each particular book, or else supposed to have access to contemporary information in reference to such events? This tradition may or may not be conjectural, but it gives unmistakable evidence as to what has been its regulative principle, and also as to what are its underlying assumptions. These are questions to which no one who really wishes fairly to estimate the inherent importance of the question of authorship should fail to seek a satisfactory answer.

Nor is another circumstance without significance in this connection. I refer to the fact that in comparatively recent years no less a person than Dr. Charles J. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester, a clear-headed thinker, and a scholar of high repute, has deliberately put forward what he calls a "rectified traditional view"* as to

* *Christus Cempobator*, p. 146ff.

the authorship of the major portion of the books of the Old Testament. This, of course, proves nothing as to the correctness of the traditional view, either in general or in this so-called "rectified" form. But it does strikingly exhibit and emphasize the tendency that exists in men's minds generally to refer the books of Scripture to well-known Scripture persons. It effectually vetoes the notion that the tradition in question is to be explained as the result of an irrational proclivity of undisciplined minds in unenlightened ages. It raises again and emphasizes this question: If this matter of the authorship of Scripture were indeed one of no special inherent importance, would there be this obstinate, incurable propensity to refer even the confessedly anonymous books of Scripture to well-known Scripture persons as their authors? What is the explanation of the existence of this tradition?

5. I have but one additional fact to present. It is one, however, singularly instructive, and, if possible, even more convincing and conclusive than any of those yet mentioned. It is simply this: For many years no branch of Biblical study has attracted more attention to itself than that known as the Higher Criticism. This study has drawn to itself an increasingly numerous body of enthusiastic, able, devoted workers. None would resent more promptly and indignantly than they the charge that they are triflers, mere literary dilettanti. On the contrary, they claim that they are serious, God-fearing men; and, further, that the problems to the solution of which they devote themselves, as they are among the most difficult are also among the most important that can engage the minds of men. Their importance lies in this, that upon a proper solution of them depends (1) the very nature of the contents of the several books of Scripture—whether these are to be regarded merely as plain, matter-of-fact history, or as prose poems, grand, inspiring, uplifting stories, legends, folk-lore, and the like; (2) the true interpretation of the contents of the several Scripture writings—and this in the case alike of laws, prophecies, psalms or proverbs; and (3) nothing less than our conception of the entire course of Scripture history—our conception of the nature of revelation and of inspiration, of sin, and ultimately of whatever is embraced in the term religion. Those who have engaged in the attempt to elucidate these questions, far-reaching in their importance, have not all been of one mind as to the proper solution of them. Indeed, the two schools into which they have divided themselves have long been in open and bitter antagonism to each other. It would be hard to say which of the two

has shown most of the *fortiter in re*, and which least of the *suaviter in modo*. But in proportion to the denunciations which each has hurled against the other, have been the claims which each has made for the vital importance of its own findings. Take this as a sample:

“Upon the other hand, not a few, like Budde himself, who had been trained in the Ewald-Hupfeld theory, can testify that it was only after repeated and most laborious study of the positions advanced by Wellhausen that they were *constrained, on grounds of conscience*, to go over to his camp. Nay, more, *they can testify* that this conception of the history of Israel has deepened their faith, that they have learned in this way *better to understand the personality of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the New Testament.*”*

The italics here are mine. They are designed to direct attention to the claims made by the writer for the school which he represents and for their views. He says very plainly that his school have adopted their peculiar positions, not as a matter of preference, but of *conscience*, and that they have derived from them the most important *spiritual* benefits—benefits presumably unattainable apart from these views. Now these, unquestionably, are high claims, and very direct and practical benefits. Another member of this same school, addressing a distinguished body of representatives of the Anglican Church, uses this significant and insinuating language:

“If the Anglican Church is ever to renovate her theology and to become in any real sense undeniably the Church of the future, she cannot afford to be careless or intolerant of attempts to modernize our methods of criticism and exegesis.”†

According to this speaker, then, the future of the Anglican Church, and presumably of every other great communion, hinges to no inconsiderable extent upon the attitude which it may as a body assume toward the critical views of which he is a representative. It is only too evident from this that, in the judgment of Canon Cheyne at least, the views for which he stands are very far from being fine-spun literary fancies, which have no immediate practical significance for ordinary Christian folk. The following from the same source, sounds even somewhat ominous, revealing, as it does, the results which antagonists anticipate from the prevalence of Canon Cheyne’s views—results, be it observed, which the Canon is not prepared to say will not follow, at least in part:

“Supposing the theory of Kuenen and Wellhausen to be correct, it will no doubt appear to some minds (1) that the inspiration of the Levitical Law is at any rate weakened in quality thereby; (2) that a glaring inconsistency is introduced into

* *Expository Times*, March, 1899, p. 274.

† Canon Cheyne’s address before the Reading Church Congress (1883), cited in *Job and Solomon*, p. 2.

Divine teaching in Israel, which becomes anti-sacrificial at one time and sacrificial at another, and (3) that room is given for the supposition that the Levitical system itself was an injurious though politic condescension to popular tastes, and consequently (as Lagarde ventures to hold) that St. Paul, by his doctrine of the Atonement, ruined, so far as he could, the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ."*

It is true that the Canon undertakes—with what success we are not at present concerned—to show that these "inferences" are, in a measure, "unfair." They at least serve to show the gravity of the consequences which his opponents—men of no mean scholarship and powers of logical insight—think that they have reason to apprehend from the acceptance of the Canon's views.

Such, then, is the state of the controversy, and such the issues between those who have devoted themselves to the problems of what is known as the "Higher Criticism." It is no part of my present purpose to attempt to decide the question at issue between these high contestants. Mine is a much simpler task. I merely wish to ask, What are the problems of the Higher Criticism? What is its special function in connection with the books of Scripture? The answer is, to consider them "as to integrity, authenticity, literary form and reliability."† Now of these several points, which is the most important, both in itself and because of its necessary influence upon the others? Unquestionably that of "authenticity." But what are the questions which are involved in this subject of authenticity. Simply these:

"Is the writing anonymous, pseudonymous, or does it bear its author's name? If the author's name is given, is the title genuine, or is it a forgery? What reliance can be placed upon tradition with regard to the authorship of anonymous writings?"‡

From this it appears that the very centre and core of the Higher Criticism, that subject which has set all Christendom by the ears, is nothing more nor less than the question of the authorship of the several books of Scripture. An evolutionary philosophy may have furnished those who are known as radical critics with a fulcrum, but the question of authorship has undoubtedly been the lever with which they have attempted to overthrow the citadel of their opponent's faith. The Reformers may not have been "anxious about human authorship," but no clear-headed man can affirm this of Kuenen, Wellhausen, Driver, Cheyne and Briggs. Prove the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and the critic of the next decade would ask of Wellhausen's theory, as Dr. Carl Heinrich Cornill has recently asked of Baur and his theory,

* *Job and Solomon, ut sup.*, p. 3.

† *Bib. Study*, p. 86.

‡ *Bib. Study*, p. 87.

“Where is it now?”* And would answer with the same high authority:

“Dissolved into smoke and wind, while the Church of Jesus Christ remains.”†

Prove the Mosaic origin and, with it, the inspiration of the “Levitical Law,” and Lagarde loses his last chance of purging the Christian system of what he regards as the corrupt and corrupting doctrine of the Atonement, foisted upon it by Paul, who was innocent enough not to suspect that instead of the teachings of Moses he had been taken in by what was in reality “an injurious though politic condescension to popular tastes,” devised by astute but unethical ecclesiastics of post-exilic times. Prove the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and some future Dr. Carl Heinrich Cornill may rise to say of a book known as “*The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch.*”

“You will recall the tremendous excitement which it caused; and where is it to-day, after twenty-four years? Submerged and forgotten. I think even the most innocent small-beer Philistine would be ashamed and feel antiquated in culture if he caught himself quoting or mentioning this book.”‡

Prove the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and fancy the mortification that would overwhelm Carl Budde, for instance, for having taken the public into his confidence and assured them that he had strengthened his faith by feeding it upon the east wind. No; it is not true that the question of the authorship of the books of Scripture is one toward which any class of critics, conservative or radical, radical or conservative, has assumed in practice an attitude of indifference. The conservative has not contended more strenuously for the Mosaic authorship than has the radical for a post-Mosaic date and non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; in the case of both alike the controversy has centred around the age and person of the author or authors of this portion of Scripture.

Men may then, if they please, call this question of authorship “a mere literary question,” whatever this means, or “a mere archæological question,” or whatever else suits their fancy or their necessity, but it will still remain true that there is no one who has taken part on either side in the controversy that has waged over the Higher Criticism who has not in effect—if not in word also—

* Speech in “Motion against the Professors,” delivered October 30, 1896 before the West Prussian Provincial Synod, and translated in *The Open Court*, January, 1897, p. 38,

† *Ib.*, p. 38.

‡ *The Open Court*, *ut sup.*, p. 38.

unequivocally declared that the question of authorship is one of vital, immediate, practical importance. I have only to add here that no one who wishes fairly to estimate the importance of this question for himself can afford to ignore or to overlook this fact.

Looking merely at the facts, then, the case stands thus: The question of authorship is to-day treated as one of importance; it was so treated by the Scripture writers of both the Old Testament and the New; its importance is emphasized by the circumstance that tradition has busied itself to ascertain and preserve or else to invent and perpetuate names for the authors of every anonymous book of both Testaments; it is constantly treated as important by both parties to the controversy that has waged and is waging around the Higher Criticism, nay, both parties to this controversy have over and over again, in the plainest, most explicit and emphatic terms, declared this question of authorship to be one of the most immediate, practical and fundamental importance in its bearing upon the determination of the character of the contents of the several books of Scripture—I mean in determining whether the matter contained in these books is to be regarded as history, in the true and proper sense of that term, or as simply grand, inspiring, uplifting religious stories: in its bearing upon our interpretation of these histories or stories, and of the laws, prophecies, poetry and proverbs contained in them: and finally in its bearing upon our conception of the course of Hebrew and early Christian history, our conception of the nature of revelation and of inspiration, our conception of the doctrine of sin, and, in a word, our conception of the whole subject of religion. I do not now affirm that the view of this question upon which the Scripture writers, the makers of tradition, the parties to the Higher Criticism controversy and the general public in our own day have acted, and do still act, is abstractly considered the correct view. I do say, however, that no one is at liberty to assume that it is incorrect; and further, that no one can intelligently determine his own proper personal attitude toward this question of authorship without recognizing these facts and allowing them due weight.

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