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ART. I.—SACRED HERMENEUTICS.

“THEN he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. —And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke xxiv. 25-32.)

Again: “He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke xxiv. 44-49).

We have before us a new work, poorly translated from the German,* on the art and mystery of understanding the Holy Scriptures, which are able, we are told, to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ; and we must confess the impression made by it upon our spirit is dismal and dreary in the extreme. Can it be possible that this, or anything like this, is to be received in the way assumed by both the author and his translator, as the last best result, and pure net outcome of our modern theological science, on the field of what has been claimed here as its central ornament and distinction? Is this in reality the answer of the age to the question, How shall we communicate with the mind of God in his Word, so as to know that it is indeed his very voice we hear, and not the sound simply of man's voice, or the mere echo possibly of our own thought reverberated upon us from the inspired oracle? For many, the question may seem a matter of indifference. They are content to have the Bible just in that ambiguous shape. But no living faith in the Bible can ever be satisfied with any such view. It is a case of which we may say with the deepest emotion, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" And just for this reason, a feeling of boundless desolation has come over us in reading the book to which we refer. We have not indeed pretended to read it in full. A cursory survey has been sufficient to put us in possession of its contents, as far as we could have patience to study them; but this has been enough at the same time to make us sick at heart. We once had some faith in the modern science of biblical exegesis. But for years, we have regarded it only as a great snare of the devil; and now we feel as if the last vestige of respect for it were fairly swept away from us by this late Berne-Andover publication.

Let it be well understood at the beginning, it is not with the idea of exegetical science universally, that we are declaring war, but only with what has come to be known specifically as

* HERMENEUTICS OF THE NEW TEST. By Dr. A. Immer, Prof. of Theo. in the University of Berne. Translated from the German by Albert H. Newman.

this science in modern times. We are not dreaming for a moment, of subjecting the interpretation of God's Word to any other rule, than the objective theopneusty to which it owes its birth. No outward Church authority, no inward light of enthusiasm can ever rightly put itself in the place of this. The sense of God's Word must proceed from the Word itself; and this we see at once implies the necessity of its being so read, so studied, and so understood in its own heavenly constitution, that it shall be for men, in fact, the divine revelation which it claims to be in such form. Here then is room enough plainly to conceive of a true science of biblical hermeneutics, calling for the largest learning and profoundest thought that can possibly be impressed into its service. It is not with sacred philology in such character that we have here any quarrel. On the contrary it is just in the interest of the true method of studying the Bible in this manner, that we feel constrained to lift up our voice against the reigning hermeneutical science (falsely thus named), which has so mastered the general mind of the Christian world, that few alas have any power even to think of entering into the sense of the Scriptures scientifically in any "more excellent way." Our object is, to discredit and condemn the common theory of biblical exegesis; not just because we hold it to be false and bad in itself; but more particularly for the purpose of calling attention to what must be considered, in the nature of the case, the only true conception of any such science. And in order also, we may add, through the light of contrast and opposition, if possible, to awaken with some at least (rightly predisposed for the purpose) such an inspiration of faith in this conception, that they will find it impossible any longer to "seek the living among the dead;" but be led to look for themselves with open face into the Scriptures—where "beholding as in a glass the GLORY OF THE LORD, they may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18). Something immeasurably beyond all the learning of such men as Semler and Ernesti, in its best form.

It may appear to some, perhaps, that we wrong the modern science of exegesis, by speaking of it as a common whole, bearing everywhere the same character from the beginning down to the present time; whereas, it comes before us in fact in the form of various more or less diversified, if not actually conflicting theories and schemes; each needing its separate judgment, and all showing at the same time a real historical movement of the dialectic sort, such as Dr. Dorner for example, in his *History of Protestant Theology*, tries to make out for the cause of Protestantism in general. We admit of course the force of this objection as far as it goes. There has been, indeed, a very observable historical movement with the science of biblical hermeneutics, reaching from the age of the Reformation to the present age; and we are willing to admit, moreover, that this movement has involved in it a real dialectic progression from the beginning, by which through continuous action and counteraction—the conflict of successional denyings and affirmings—the true interior sense of the science in question has come more and more decidedly into view, until it has become in full what we find it to be in our own day. In such view the history of it is full of instruction, quite as much so as the history of any other theological discipline or doctrine. But all this does not disturb for us, in the least, the force of our general proposition in regard to the science as a whole. It could not be historical without changes such as we have mentioned; but so neither could it be historical, without the unity of a common general life underlying these changes. And it is just of the science in such total view that we wish to be understood as now speaking, when we declare it to be unworthy of confidence altogether as a key to the right understanding of God's Word. Our business here is not at all with any secondary questions and points belonging to the scheme in its historical explication, but with the scheme itself back of all such details. What we wish to fix attention upon, is the essential radical defect of the scheme in its universal character. It is based from the outset on a wrong principle; and it is not pos-

sible that this wrong principle should not be found working in it as a power of falsehood and confusion in whatever aspect it may come into view.

The ground falsehood here charged upon the science of biblical hermeneutics in its reigning modern form, is nothing less than a misconception of the whole nature of divine revelation; by which the idea is virtually shorn of all real theopneustic sense, and made to resolve itself into the notion of divine thinking, brought down to the measure of human thinking, and so then compressed also into the terms of mere ordinary human speech. This is simple naturalism in its most hideous form. What we mean by it exactly will become more clear as we go forward.

The history of modern hermeneutics begins properly with the sixteenth century, and proceeds from that time onward through successive stages, with a movement answering in general to the law of progression ascribed by Dr. Dorner to the Protestant theological sciences in common. Writers on the subject take pains usually to decry all previous methods of explaining Holy Scripture (Jewish, Patristic, Medieval,) as childish, superstitious, or fantastic, for the purpose of magnifying the merit of what they affect to regard here as a new era gained at last for the study of the Bible.* All before served at best, it is assumed, but to prepare the way negatively or positively for

* And yet the old exegesis, we verily believe, rested on a better foundation than the modern. It abounded in all sorts of arbitrary license. It set grammar, logic, and common sense alike at defiance. But with all this it did full homage in its confused way to the idea of an infinite supernatural in the oracles of God, something very different from the light in which they are commonly viewed at the present time. Origen, we are told, stands at the head of this ancient Christian school. "Pre-eminent among his commentaries is that on the Gospel of John. His Christian Platonism appears here in full, arrayed against empty Ebionism, as well as against unbelieving Paganism. He adopts a threefold sense of Scripture, answering to the trichotomy of body, soul and spirit in man. He owns the literal sense, but sees in it only the shell of what is higher, just as the earthly nature of Christ was the shell of His divine nature. It was partly an exaggerated *idea of inspiration*, that led him often into fantastic, over-refined explanations." Exactly so; and just for that reason how immeasurably he transcends the level of interpreters, such as Hugo Grotius, J. Aug. Ernesti, or Moses Stuart.

what now took place, namely, the exaltation of the Bible to its proper supremacy as the rule of faith and practice for the Christian world. The interpretation of the Bible, however, soon came under the domination of the new Protestant system of doctrine. Hence, a period of scholastic tradition running into one-sided intellectualism, cold, hard and dry. Next, in the way of protest against this, we have in the seventeenth century the reaction of the Christian heart in the form of Pietism, inaugurated by Cocceius in the Reformed Church, and by Spener in the Lutheran Church. A most respectable, and at the same time most necessary movement all round, as may be easily seen. But the principle of the movement unfortunately could not be confined to its own limits. The Pietistic revolt against ecclesiastical dogmatism made room for a similar Rationalistic revolt against the same authority, which easily extended itself to a revolt against the authority of the Bible itself in every supernatural view. This is the form in which sacred philology, along with sacred criticism, is found challenging our consideration in the eighteenth century. It is common to speak of this as the transitional period of the modern science of biblical hermeneutics (as of our modern theology in general,) through which it has been happily led out of its previous wilderness of difficulty and doubt—not without vast conflict—into the state of rest and promise where it is now found. Two names stand especially conspicuous in connection with the movement,—Semler and Ernesti. The first is known as the father of modern biblical criticism. To the second belongs the credit of what we may call the instauration at least of modern sacred exegesis, in its present latest form.

Ernesti's *Institutio Interpretis Novi Testamenti* made its appearance in 1761, and soon found general acceptance in Germany. It fell in happily with the religious genius of the age, and became the natural expression of its want of firm faith in the supernatural character of the Bible. Ernesti himself still clung professedly to this faith, as did also his great cotemporary Semler, who seems at last to have shrunk in dismay

from the consequences of his own unbridled criticism. The truth is, however, the older supernaturalism could stand no longer in its old form. It carried in it a principle of self-dissolution from the beginning; and that principle had now got so far with its internal waste, that there was no longer any clear distinction between supernaturalism and the enemy it pretended to be fighting against on the opposite side. That is largely the theological amphibology of the eighteenth century, reaching over into the nineteenth century, and very generally, it is to be feared, down even to the present time. A rationalism on the one side, which affects to be the highest sense of the supernatural and divine. A supernaturalism on the other side, which affects to be the divine let down into the forms of ordinary natural thought and speech. These two engaged forever in a sort of mock combat, which resolves itself forever into mirage and mist, the only actual result being the commingling of the sham forces more and more into one and the same frightful array of common practical unbelief. For in such issue as this, it is not possible that the rationalizing supernaturalism should not ultimately give way before the open and confessed rationalism. Even its visionary victories are sure to be substantial defeats. It belongs at heart to the "army of the aliens" from the outset, and there only in the end it finds its proper home.

It is this phase of the theological life of the modern Christian world, in its relation particularly to the Bible, that Ernesti seems so well to introduce and represent in the eighteenth century. His system of interpretation has not been allowed indeed to pass without censure. It was not possible that the real religious life of the Church—which no rationalism could effectually extinguish—should not recoil, more or less sensitively, from the wrong it was thus made to suffer in the house of its pretended friends; and hence it is that we find subsequently strong efforts made in different directions, to break away from the shackles of the Ernestian doctrine, in favor of a more spiritual and vital interpretation of the Divine Word. And this, some would fain persuade us, has resulted in a new, higher

standpoint, doing away with the thorny dilemma of naturalism and supernaturalism altogether, and bringing in a general reign of peace, where all before was confusion and discord.

As something comically characteristic of the spirit of the age (in Germany especially), with regard to this subject, we cannot do better than to quote here a passage at some length from Dr. Immer's new book on Hermeneutics: "It lies in the nature of historical development," we are told, "that upon a dominant negation something positive must follow, and upon the domination of empty intelligence the reaction of a spiritual and heartfelt tendency. Various circumstances prepared the way for this revolution; other circumstances gave the immediate impulse. First of all, it was the appearing of the great German poets and their praiseworthy works, which awakened and disseminated the sense for the beautiful, the ideal, the purely human. Influenced in part by this awakening, and himself in part powerfully helping it, *J. G. V. Herder* (1744–1803) became a great source of influence, as for German literature and culture in general, so in particular for a more lively conception and treatment of the Bible. Diametrically opposed to all dogmatism and scholasticism, borne along by the idea of *Humanity*, he looked at the biblical writings also from the view-point of the beautiful and the purely human. In this interest, he wrote his treatise, *Die älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschichts*; his *Lieder der Liebe* on the Song of Solomon, otherwise always explained allegorically; and his brilliant work, *Der Geist der hebräischen Poesie*. He sought also to revive the study of the New Testament through his *Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament aus einer neu eröffneten morgenländischen Quelle*. From Herder proceeded the æsthetic treatment of Scripture; and though his works on this subject are more brilliant than thorough, more inspiring than exhaustive, yet must he be designated as the forerunner of the more recent theology. Another preparatory auspice was the change wrought in German philosophy through Fichte, Jacobi, Schelling, Hegel; indeed the vibration from absolute idealism and

subjectivism to ideal realism was already accomplished even in Fichte. This change ministered essentially to a fundamental and living comprehension of religion as we have it in Schelling's *Religion and Philosophy*, and in Daub's *Theologoumena*, but most of all in Schleiermacher. More than all else, however, did the years of war, and the inspiration of the war of liberty (1813 ff.), contribute to the awakening of religious earnestness and faith."

So our Berne Professor of Theology here; following out the same familiar line of thought that we meet with in Dorner, Hagenbach, and other German writers, who lay themselves out to span our modern ecclesiastical history with the rainbow of promise, where there is so much of dark cloud otherwise, it must be confessed, that looks ominous only of despair. Poetry, philosophy, humanism, the heavy scourge of the Napoleonic war—these are regarded as opening the way gradually, for Bible exegesis, from a dead past over to a living present. Mention then follows of different tendencies and endeavors, which are supposed to have worked together somehow (though by no means harmoniously) for the accomplishment of this end, during the progress of our own century. These we need not now more particularly notice. It is enough for us to say, that they do not amount in any case to a radical breach with what must be considered the general error that underlies the hermeneutical theory of Ernesti. They appear as qualifications simply of that theory, intended to hold the practical use of it under proper and safe control. The ground doctrine of Ernesti, therefore, must be regarded as being here the true and right test still for the modern science of biblical exegesis universally. The science has not got beyond the Ernestian basis anywhere. By this system then let it be judged. It may have other worth not drawn directly from the scheme it is thus found to rest upon; but that amounts to nothing for what we have here in hand. All must stand or fall together, along with the system or scheme on which all is bottomed.

The general principles of Ernesti's scheme are sufficiently

familiar. They have been received, Professor Immer tells us, as "the imperishable heritage of posterity"; and amount to this: That the notion of a manifold sense of Scripture is to be unconditionally rejected, and the verbal meaning of the text to be everywhere held fast—so that no allegorical or typical interpretation may be allowed beyond what is explicitly set forth in the text itself. That the verbal or literal sense of the Scriptures is of one nature with the literal sense of human speech generally; something common, therefore, to sacred and profane writings, since the Bible, as a revelation made to men, must necessarily be for the ordinary thought and speech of men, and thus necessarily subject in such form to the ordinary logical and grammatical rules of all such thinking and speaking. That any pretence, then, of governing such outward verbal sense by an imaginary *real* interior or spiritual meaning, actuating the words of Scripture from within instead of being itself passively actuated by the words from without—must be derided as presumptuous and vain. "False and ruinous," we are told, "is all interpretation of Scripture that explains the verbal sense according to the presupposed actual sense instead of conversely deriving the actual sense from the verbal."

This is enough for our present purpose. Neither is it necessary here to take up the question, how far the particulars of Ernesti's scheme thus broadly outlined may be able to bear critical examination even on the low merely human plane to which he insists on bringing down his subject. It would be an easy thing to show, we think, that the relation between words and their proper sense even here is something vastly less mechanical than he is pleased to imagine; that words, worthy to be so called *are* indeed always things, and not simply outward signs of things; that as mere *voces et præterea nihil* they are but spectacular unrealities, amenable to no art of interpretation, sacred or profane; that there never has been and never can be, any intelligible speech of man, oral or written, that has not owed its intelligibility to the presence of some objective spiritual substance in it, looking forth from it as the life and

light of the soul look forth from the face of the body it animates—without being themselves in any sense whatever an efflux or derivation from the body. These are mysteries, that belong to the world's common life, the sense of which lies imbedded in the universal thought and speech of men, far down below their ordinary empirical existence; for which reason it is no wonder, that the mind of the Christian Church, in the higher realm of religion, has ever found it impossible to acquiesce steadily in the idea of subjecting the inspiration of God's Word to any such merely human measure of interpretation as is presented to us in this philological Procrustes bed of Ernesti. Hence the various attempts we meet with on the part of the best theological thought of Germany in its later form—as represented, for example, by such men as Schleiermacher, Lücke, Olshausen, Tholuck, Hengstenberg, Stier and others—to get clear of all such preposterous rule, by forcing into view, as it were, what must still be regarded as the indestructible right of the Scriptures to be interpreted primarily from the living spirit that is in them, rather than from their outward letter. Their right in other words to be read from the shekinah of the Lord's presence in the cloud, rather than from the darkness of the cloud unilluminated by such presence. But such strivings after emancipation, as already intimated, could bring no real help for the cause of sacred exegesis, so long as they were fettered still by the original sin of Ernesti's theory; by the view, namely, that the Scriptures in their human character are like all other human writings, and must therefore be interpreted by the same principles and laws that we apply to the interpretation of any other book written by men for the use of men.

Dismissing then all farther regard to secondary points and particulars, we confine ourselves now to this one proposition so generally accepted by the modern science of biblical hermeneutics; the salient point, we may say, of all its errors and confusions. Is there any truth in the proposition? We take it boldly by the horns, and answer No. It is a wild bull of

Bashan let loose into the garden of the Lord's house, which has wrought only unspeakable mischief within its borders, thus far, and which no art of man can ever effectually tame into the service of either truth or righteousness! The proposition, as a root principle, is fundamentally, radically and fatally false to the whole idea of divine revelation. It sweeps away the universal doctrine of inspiration (the soul of all that is properly signified by the WORD OF GOD), in any sense that is not arrant nonsense.

That the principle affirmed in the proposition has in fact changed the old doctrine of inspiration is commonly allowed, and is indeed too plain to admit of any serious question. But this it is pretended, should not necessarily be regarded as the giving up of the doctrine; it merely shows that the doctrine, in its older form, labored under a flaw in its view of the relation of the divine to the human in the case, which needed to be dialectically worked out of it by the movement of history; and which has now been so worked out of it in fact, with pure gain only to the proper substance of the doctrine as it stood before, and no real loss whatever. This is the pretence; but it cannot bear examination. The flaw in the old doctrine may be allowed; but it was not necessary that it should be eliminated by sacrificing the divine side of it to the human. What the inward logic of the mystery really required was a deeper apprehension of the divine, sinking the human by comparison into its proper nothingness. Only so in the end can the idea of any real revelation of God to man have place in the human spirit. Only so can the relation of natural and supernatural, as it lies at the ground of all religion come ever to any actual reality for the faith or life of the Church. The attempt to rectify the untenable mechanism of the older theopneusty, in the way pursued by our reigning modern biblical literature, has resulted in just the opposite of this. The history of the eighteenth century may be characterized as an open conflict, between supernaturalism in its previous form, and the coming in of a general declaration of independence against the pre-

scriptive authority of the divine in every such view. The vital nerve of that supernaturalism, as is now commonly understood, was virtually paralyzed from the beginning; and so it fell over more and more from its own professed principle to that of the enemy; till finally, in our own century, by a sort of drawn battle, the two camps have melted more or less into one—with a common banner overhead, inscribed on the one side *Supernatural Rationalism*, and on the other *Rationalistic Supernaturalism*. Hence a supposed general rectification of the older orthodoxy (which it sorely needed), and as part of it that imaginary rectified conception of Holy Scripture of which we are now speaking; the end of which has come to be what we have here sorrowfully affirmed, the conversion namely of the whole idea of the word of God into what turns out to be at last simply the word of man.

If we look closely into the subject, we cannot help seeing that the doctrine of inspiration, as applied to the Bible, amounts commonly, with those who hold it at the present time, to no more than this—that we have in it, in some way, an outward communication of the mind and will of God made to us through holy men of God, in the forms of ordinary human thought and human speech. He is in heaven, we are on earth; but if He speak to us at all, it is assumed, it can only be by condescending in this way to meet us, so to speak, on the plane of our common natural life, where only his speech can be for us at all intelligible. How plausible this seems, how axiomatic one might say, for all common sense! How else, it may be asked, can the Bible be for us in truth the only rule which God has given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him, if it be not before us first of all in the shape of such an outwardly intelligible canon or codex, whose authority we can then interpret and bow down to with the obeisance of true faith? Here, accordingly, room is supposed to be found for the reasonableness of the Christian faith. It rests upon the word of God contained in the Bible. But we are not required to take that word blindly or in the dark. The Bible appears before us with proper credentials—

evidences, as they are called, of its authenticity, genuineness, credibility, and inspiration; whole volumes full of which we may examine, if we please, before we consent to accept it as God's voice speaking to us from heaven. This makes our faith *rational* to start with, after which it is clear nothing can be more reasonable than that we should yield unquestioning obedience thence onward to what we have thus, by fallible reason, ascertained to be the infallible rule that God has given us to walk by in order that we may obtain eternal life. That certainly deserves to be dignified with the title rational supernaturalism; for is it not reason posted at the gate of entrance to the Bible, to assure us that she—*sitting* there as the impudent janitress of heaven—has tested its claims, and can now vouch them to be all correct. Nor is that all: The office of reason, under the view of such *ab extra* priority, cannot possibly stop there with this insinuating self-sufficient scheme. The Bible, thus rationally proved to be the inspired Word of God, being this in common human form, subject to the conditions of ordinary human speech, calls for ordinary human interpretation. It cannot interpret itself. There must be criticism, history, grammar, in one word a whole hermeneutical apparatus to make sure of what it teaches; and, as any one can see, this involves the umpirage of natural reason again to an unlimited extent. Who can say that the supernaturalism of the Bible may not be made by such mode of treatment quite as natural as the Principia of Sir Isaac Newton or the Koran of Mohammed?

The view of inspiration just sketched is found in combination with the most diverse theories of religion otherwise considered. It falls in readily with all sorts of evangelical orthodoxy, and finds its home with like ease in any of the sects composing the Evangelical Alliance. Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians, show themselves to be here of substantially one and the same mind. And being of that mind, there is no real difference here in truth between them and others, who with more latitudinarian belief, and better insight, perhaps, into the real meaning of divine inspiration, openly

refuse to own it in any form. We do not mean to say that these various parties and tendencies in the Christian world regard the Bible in just the same way. Some, no doubt, may be better affected toward it, and render it better homage than others. But all suffer alike by falling short of the full idea of divine revelation. The ban of the modern science of biblical exegesis rests upon them alike. They labor alike under the common hallucination, that the natural must light the way for the right understanding of the spiritual in the Bible; whereas, it is only by the torch of the spiritual going before it, that the natural here can ever come at all to its true sense.

Who should not be able to see, that a divine revelation let down absolutely, by mere outward dictation or report to the plane of the simply natural, must cease to be a divine revelation altogether, in any strict and proper sense? The Bible in that view can be no more at best than a conveyance or translation of the divine over into the forms of ordinary human thought and speech, which in the nature of the case can bear no sort of proportion to the measure of the divine itself. Even the speech of angels must utterly refuse to fall into the circumscription of human speech in that way. How much more the speech or word of God? But just this monstrous presumption it is that lies at the foundation of the whole Ernestian theory of biblical hermeneutics, under the plausible sophism that when God speaks to men it can be only in the way of common human language, subject to its common rules of interpretation. That involves in fact a double metathesis or transposition; first, a change of the supernatural divine into the human or merely natural; and then a change of this back again, through human natural interpretation, to the beginning of the movement in the supernatural divine. But surely no such vicious circle as that can deserve to be taken for the direct speaking of God to man, which the full idea of inspiration implies. Human speech, as simply human, draws its quality always necessarily from merely human affection and thought. To be the vehicle of divine affection and thought then, it would seem to be plain, it must cease

to be merely human. It must, in some way, become immeasurably more than the common word of man, if it is to be strictly and truly the word of God.

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall MY WORD be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Is. lv. 8-11). What truly religious mind can help feeling in this passage—beyond all it means in the way of common philological exposition—the very power of the mystery itself which it so grandly proclaims; namely, the presence of the divine in its own transcendent character, shining directly *through* the veil of its human speech so as to make this also no longer human merely, but inwardly and essentially divine. The image of the rain and snow then, descending upon the earth, and causing it to bring forth seed for the sower and bread for the eater, is no longer image only, but positive living embodiment on a lower plane of what the word of the Lord is in the higher sphere of divine revelation; nothing less, in fact, than the life of the Lord, streaming forth continually from its own everlasting fountain in himself (Ps. xxxvi. 9), and filling the universe with its glory. Just, as everywhere in the Bible, indeed the order of things in the natural world in this way, is made to be the reflex and mirror (not dead, but living), of the order of things in the spiritual world. As where it is said, for example: “Forever, O Lord, THY WORD is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations; thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thy ordinances; for all are thy servants. Unless THY LAW had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction” (Ps. cxix. 92). So in the

19th Psalm: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy work.—In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.—His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.—The LAW OF THE LORD is perfect, converting the soul," etc. So, if possible, still more practically in *the* 147th Psalm: "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth; HIS WORD runneth very swiftly.—He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels; who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out HIS WORD, and melteth them; he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow. He sheweth HIS WORD UNTO JACOB, HIS STATUTES AND HIS JUDGMENTS UNTO ISRAEL" (v. 15–19).

It would be a waste of words, we think, to go into any discussion of these divine oracles, for the purpose of enforcing the thought we have here in hand; namely, that God's word or truth is one everywhere, "quick and powerful," as it is said (Heb. iv. 12), and in universal harmony with itself; and that the order of its action universally, therefore, is from heaven downward to earth primarily, and never, according to the common preposterous imagination of men from earth upward to heaven. The oracles must be left to speak for themselves. Their inward voice is for the inward ear. If that be wanting, there is no help for them. They must become necessarily dumb.

Our general thesis it will be understood, is this: That the accepted ground maxim of the modern so-called science of biblical hermeneutics, which declares the Bible to be a divine revelation from God to men in the form of ordinary natural human language—subject for the right understanding of its contents to the ordinary laws of interpretation, as these are applied to other books of simply human composition—is an unsound and untrue maxim, which must sooner or later, where it is accepted, undermine the idea of revelation altogether (as it has indeed already done largely in the modern Christian world,) by subordinating the supernatural to the natural, and raising the

human into the place of the divine. Thus far we have held our argument to what we may call the immediate internal evidence of the subject itself. There is an immediate self-contradiction, as we have tried briefly to show, in the very terms that are employed to set forth the hermeneutical maxim in question. The imprisonment of the divine—the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever—in forms of human speech, made to be the inhabitation of its presence in common grammatical, logical, historical human sense, is a huge solecism, quite as much, we think, as the fancy of the rude African who thinks of his god as similarly imprisoned in a fetich of common wood or stone. When it comes with us to that way of looking at the Bible, the true doctrine of its inspiration is gone. We may stickle still for the shell of it; but inwardly it will be found to have for us, more and more, no real significance or power. So, we say, the argument stands, as derived immediately from the nature of the subject itself. There are, however, other considerations clustering, as it were, around this central idea, in general confirmation of our thesis, which we are bound in duty to it not to overlook. To these we now pass.

I. And here first we have to urge the *testimony of the Scriptures themselves in regard to the character of their divine inspiration*. They claim to be the Word of God, not simply as a body of heavenly truth reported under divine direction, in the forms of ordinary human thought and expression, but as the veritable mind and voice of the Lord himself, reaching from their own infinitude into these finite forms, and imparting to them a new divine significance, wholly above and beyond all their merely natural meaning. The proof of this does not lie so much in particular separate affirmations, as in the quiet tenor rather of the sacred books taken as a whole. Their tone habitually is that of authority, which is felt to be more than human, and which few have it in their power utterly to disregard. Hence the impression of their sanctity common to all, as of something continually issuing from the very bosom of the writings themselves. We have just now spoken of the way in

which the Bible lays weight on the *Word of the Lord*, of which it is itself the perpetual habitation and home; showing it to be in very truth one with the eternal Logos, "who is before all things, and by whom all things consist." This, of course, is not something that holds good only of some parts and portions of Scripture, such as we have quoted. It must extend plainly to the Bible universally, as being throughout, in its own view at least, just what it means in speaking thus of the word of the Lord. And then, just as clearly, all the other terms which serve to diversify this fundamental conception,—such as the law, commandments, testimonies, judgments and statutes of the Lord,—must be understood in the same living and pregnant sense. They are not dead, outward rules. They are not to be thought of for one moment as mere human formulas, significant of heavenly and divine things. They are the very presence of the heavenly and divine. Most certainly the law given from Mount Sinai was nothing less than that. The whole Jewish ritual was that. So all the testimonies, statutes and judgments belonging to the Old Testament, of which we hear such glorious things all through the Book of Psalms. All these meet together in the general conception of God's Word, and are but so many variations of expression for that everlasting *Truth* of God, which is at the same time his everlasting power and glory—the word by which the heavens were made, and which as the breath of his mouth still holds the universe together.

In our two articles (January and April, 1876,) on the passage, *The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy*, we have shown at some length what is to be understood by the interior life which the Scriptures continually assume for themselves in the way here affirmed. They are instinct throughout with the revelation which God has made of himself in the mystery of the Incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ—by which room was made, through his glorified humanity, for the full advent of the new reign or kingdom of truth and righteousness in which is reached the last and highest sense of the world. This is the testimony of Jesus, the truth which he came into the

world to bear witness to, by the living actualization of it first of all in his own person. And the testimony of Jesus in such living view, we are told, is the spirit of prophecy, which means all Scripture given by inspiration of God. Such Scripture, then, is not a dead outward witness to the truth of the Gospel, mediated through the thought and speech of man in their common natural form; it is itself the very presence of the Gospel, its self-exhibition, not as notion or theory merely, but as positive life and power. The testimony of Jesus Christ in such living view, is in the Bible just as the soul of a man is in his body. And this single analogy serves at once to place the whole subject in its proper light. As the soul of the Bible, its vital inspiration, the testimony of Jesus must be in all and every part of the Bible. To talk of a distinction in it between what is Messianic and what is not Messianic, must be as absurd as to say that some parts of the body are animated by its soul and other parts not. And so then also, as it is only the soul shining through the body which can ever expound the true sense of the living man, it is but in keeping with this again to say, that the true interpretation of the Bible can never come from its exterior letter, but only from its interior spirit—the life of the Lord looking forth upon us from every part of the letter. The mystery in the one case is not a whit more difficult to comprehend, than is the mystery in the other case.

It does not need much reflection to see, that when Christ, after his resurrection, is said, in the text placed at the head of this article, to have “opened the understanding of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures,” it could only have been in this interior way. The illumination dawned upon them through the Old Testament Scriptures, lighted now into their true significance by his own presence seen and felt to be there; and while he talked with them, their hearts were made to burn with celestial fire. So it was then, and so it must be still, wherever it comes with man to any real understanding of what the Scriptures are as the Word of God.

II. *The order of all life in the world imperatively forbids*

the thought of any real entrance into the sense of divine revelation from the simply natural side of our human existence. A passing reference to this has already been made; but it is well to give it a little more direct attention. The universal creation of God cannot be thought of rationally at all, except as one grand whole bound together in all its parts, and distinguished at the same time into a succession of different spheres or grades, proceeding from God always in one view as the beginning of their existence, and in another view returning toward Him always as the end of their existence. This is that idea of order, of living law, of eternal truth, "forever settled in heaven," without which there can be no real faith in nature as the work of God, in divine providence, or in any economy of grace and salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. In such serial connection, every inferior sphere of life must be dependent on that immediately above it; owing to this in fact all its causal springs of action. For how else could the whole refer itself to God as the first cause of all? Hence, also, the lower (or say more outward) existence must ever find its real meaning and purpose in the next higher (or say more inward) existence; and this can be intelligible only from the light that is in this, and never primarily from its own light separately taken. The lower or more outward existence seems, indeed, to be all the time putting forth efforts of its own to reach what is thus above and beyond it; but it is only by the power of the above and beyond after all entering into these efforts, that they can ever be of any avail for their own object.

Not to lose time now with lower illustrations, let us look directly at the complex of our own human life in its simply natural form. Here it is a life of mere bodily sense, a life of reflection, and a logical or so-called rational life; the whole unfolding itself in this order from infancy on to manhood. It seems as if the first in time here must be first also in being—the senses stocking the memory with facts, and these facts then by what is called the process of induction, leading over to judgment and ratiocination. But this is a grand fallacy. To what could

sensations and facts ever come in this way, if they were not met from within, at the proper time, by the previously latent life of the soul in still more inward form, taking hold of the *rudis indigestaque moles* thus presented for its use, and reducing it to order and shape? In this case, the office of the senses is intelligible from the more inward life of natural thought, and the office of this again from the reasoning life; but there can be no reversal of this order. Any imagination of that sort is simply absurd.

And what shall we say then of any such imagination, when applied to the whole natural life of man as related to his spiritual life? Here again that which is apparently first with us in time, is required to subordinate itself to what follows, so that this then is found to be in truth the deeper power that has wrought all along in what went before to bring it to its proper completion and sense. The Scriptures teach us most plainly the necessary unchangeable order of the process, by which alone it is possible for this great work to go forward with men; and all who have been awakened at all to the perception of what the natural and the spiritual are for men may easily perceive also how it is that they can be conjoined in this case only in that one way. The natural must be raised into one life with the spiritual and held in it by what is always the prior flowing of the spiritual into the bosom of the natural. This is what is meant by the mystery of regeneration, of which our Saviour says, Except a man be born again, born from above, born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, cannot indeed even see it so as to know at all what it is.

The mystery discloses itself first of all in the progressive coming together of the divine and the human in Christ himself, by which his humanity at last became fully glorified in and with the Father (John xiii. 32). There we have at once, not only the idea of the kingdom of God, but the entire actual power and possibility of it for men through all ages. The glorification of the Son of Man is the prototypal law of the new creation for all that are spiritually born into his image

and kingdom. He himself utters the law where he says to Nicodemus: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). Only he, therefore, can give power to others, believing on his name and thus receiving him, to become also sons of God—born in that case, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God in Christ (John i. 12, 13). That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and as such merely can never by any possibility get beyond itself. If we are to be ever more than that, an advance which our universal nature demands—"groaning and travailing in pain together" toward its own completion in the form of a higher life—it can only be by the life of the Lord himself entering into us from the interior side of our being, as spirit and *not* flesh. To this flesh-bewildering, flesh-confounding wonder, the flesh itself which is to be thus regenerated can contribute nothing. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: SO IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT" (John iii. 8).

Our object now in this brief exposition of the law which necessarily governs the relation of the natural to the spiritual in the kingdom of God—which is the law that presides in fact over the ways and works of God in the universe at large—has been to make way for its intelligible application directly to the subject we have here in hand; namely, the true order of thought and study for reaching the actual sense of God's word or speech as this comes before us by heavenly inspiration in the Holy Scriptures. That word there we have seen, must be concerned primarily and immediately, in all its parts, with the spiritual world and not with the natural. There we must look for its real animating soul. The natural side of it, therefore, can never be more than the external body of this soul, the enveloping cloud, so to speak, of the supernatural spirit that shines within. And how, then, are we to go about the task of understanding and interpreting the Scriptures, in which we find such strange marriage of the natural and the spiritual answer-

ing to the twofold construction of our own life under the same view ?

There are three imaginable methods of procedure in the case. We may make the outward natural our manuduction to the inward spiritual; or we may try to work the two together as co-ordinate factors; or we may throw ourselves absolutely on the inward spiritual as first in order and power. Which of these methods are we to trust ?

Our modern hermeneutical science, as we have seen, yields itself systematically to the first; only with more or less faint attempt to modify its bald rationalism in doing so, by coupling it irrationally with the second. But who may not see at once, how every such notion of mastering the spiritual by the natural—of seeing into the spiritual through the goggle-eyes of the merely natural—violates in reality the universal order of God's government; and is something therefore to be abominated as the sin of magic or witchcraft; the very conception of which indeed, as we have it in the Bible, is just the monstrosity of such diabolical inversion of the divine order of the world, nothing more and nothing less.

And hence it is that the Scriptures themselves everywhere, in the plainest and most unmistakable terms, pronounce the last or third method we have mentioned to be the only true and right door of entrance into their divinely inspired sense. What less than this is it, when St. Paul says: "What man knoweth the things of a man"—even his common mundane thoughts—"save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED" (1 Cor. ii.

11-14). "He that is spiritual," it is added significantly, "judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man;" which is just what we have been saying, of the order which holds universally between higher and lower, interior and exterior, in the constitution of the world. From heaven to earth, from spiritual to natural, from inward to outward, that O ye men of science, is the indestructible law of all truth, right, and good, in the world. On this hangs the benediction of light, righteousness, and eternal life. The opposite of it is confusion, darkness and death. Why the benediction, and why the curse? Just because the light of life which is in the spiritual man, comes to him from a still higher or more interior source. "We have THE MIND OF THE LORD," the Apostle adds. Not as bare doctrine certainly; not as outward letter; but as the life of the Lord dwelling in His Word, and making it to be the efficacious medium of real covenant union with Himself. That is heaven. The want of that, all may see, is hell.

"I am the door of the sheep," we hear Christ saying; "by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." This is of one meaning with the angelic word, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; and of itself determines the only possible order of entering into the sense of the Word of God, where only is to be found the true pasturage of God's people. "My sheep," he adds, "HEAR MY VOICE, and I know them and they follow me" (John x. 4, 5, 16). The Lord's *knowing* here (as in the Bible everywhere) goes causatively before the knowing that answers to it from the human side. The true sense, we may say, of Hagar's mystical word of old, *Thou God seest me*; expressing her sense of an inward illumination that came into her as it were from behind herself, a vision interior to her own (Gen. xvi. 13). In a profound sense, indeed, Malebranche was right; we *do* see all things only in God, or we could see absolutely nothing. To hear, to know, to follow, in the case before us, are as it were one act, brought to pass directly from the voice of the Lord, sounding in the depths of the soul. "I am the way, the truth,

and the life," Christ says; "no man cometh unto the Father but by me"—literally THROUGH ME (John xiv. 6.) No circuitous process in the way of outside teaching and knowing; but direct contact with the life of the Lord himself, present in his own Word. So only, and so always; "Every one that is of the truth," he says, "heareth my voice," (John xviii. 37). His voice in the Word comes to its echo and response, without outside intervention, in every such human spirit; and the only posture then meet for such divine correspondence, on the part of the human spirit, is that of the child Samuel in God's holy temple, "SPEAK, LORD, FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH" (1 Sam. iii. 9, 10).

III. The reversal of this order in our reigning mode of biblical interpretation, tends directly toward *the immersion of the spiritual in the natural, and is altogether opposed to the true idea of religion*. The spiritual side of our being here, in our present fallen state, labors under continual disadvantage from this; that it is necessarily enveloped, as it were, in our simply natural existence, which stands in direct open communication with the outward world through the body, and is able in this way to assert easily a bad precedence over the spiritual, by which the very reality of this is liable all the time to fall into obscurity and doubt, and too often, alas, into absolute practical negation. The only help for this is found in the new heart and new spirit, which the Lord has promised to put within his people. That regeneration from on high comes only through the celestial grace of his word, and the discipline of his providence, directed perpetually toward the one great purpose of humiliating the outward natural man in us, so as to make room for his own coming into us in the power of the new spiritual man. Answerable now to this twofold nature of man, plainly enough, is the twofold constitution of the Holy Scriptures also, in which we have what St. Paul calls the letter that killeth and the spirit that giveth life (2 Cor. iii. 6). How both are to be regarded and used for their common end, admits of no question. The spirit must rule the letter, being for it, in fact, just what the

living soul is for the body. And hence, just as the immersion of a man's mind in corporeal and terrestrial things is for him at once the eclipse of all spiritual and heavenly things—causing them to be for him as though they were not—so also, it is not possible that the putting of the literal or corporeal side of the Bible before the inward spiritual side of it, should not be attended with darkness rather than light in the same way. Alas, how much of our biblical study and learning for the last three hundred years, may it not easily enough be seen, has been just such an obscuration of the true spiritual glory of the Lord in his Word, through the merely natural thought and reasoning of men—"the sun and the air darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Rev. ix. 2).

IV. Evidence of such disastrous evil we have abundantly *in the actual results of the modern science of biblical hermeneutics, reaching down from the century of the Reformation to the present time.* They show themselves, in one word, as a wilderness of thorns, an arid waste of unfruitful sand; reminding one only too easily of the prophetic malediction: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be *like the heath in the desert*, and shall not see when good cometh" (Jer. xvii. 5, 6).

To listen to the voice of the science itself, one might suppose just the contrary of this; namely, that all had been darkness with the study of the Bible in previous times; that the first appearance of the science was as the rising of a new sun in the ecclesiastical heavens; that through more or less historical conflict, it has been all the time since battling its way to brighter and better success; and that now it may be regarded as being all that is to be wished, for the right understanding and explanation of the inspired volume. It needs, however, only a glance over such a work as Dr. Immer's *Hermeneutics of the New Testament*, to see the hollowness of this pretension. Hardly a point is made, hardly a question raised, in the discussion of the subject, which is not at once involved in mist, and brought into serious perplexity and doubt. At the very threshold we are

met with the question of divine inspiration—fundamental of course for all that follows—which is so muddled with cloudy definitions and distinctions that in the end we are able to make nothing of it whatever. Then comes the notion of revelation in its supposed relativity to inspiration, and along with this the more or less ambiguous resolution of both into the idea of special divine providence. Then the nice balancing of the divine and human elements in such fluctuating scheme of inspiration, turning it still more into fantastic unreality. The broad question again of the relation of the Old Testament to the New. How far the Old Testament is to be considered prophetic or typical at all of Christ: and by what rule we are to determine its Messianic portions (if it has any), from those which regard mere Jewish history in its proper natural form. Let these instances serve as examples simply of the way in which all things belonging to the book are given over to doubtful disputation; so that it would seem to be really in the end a sort of art and discipline for promoting uncertainty, far more than certainty, in the study of God's Word.

It is not too much to say of our reigning biblical exegesis, that so far as the sense of any real divine inspiration in the Bible is concerned, it is no better than chaos all round; a miserable wreckage of revealed truth, rather than the orderly science of it in any view. Passing by other things now, only see to what it has brought us with its critical and hermeneutical treatment of the Old Testament. An endless apparatus of learning, an almost boundless amount of herculean work; and the net product as near to zero as could well be imagined! Universal bewilderment in our churches on the whole great question, What think ye of these old Jewish Scriptures? Are they of God at all, in any sense transcending mere nature? and if so, in what measure and degree? In response to such crucial interrogation, in one direction, open unbelief; in another, silent mistrust; and in still another, the sheer obscurantism of blind obedience to dead tradition, determined to hold on to its confidence at any cost. All around, in this country at least, an

ecclesiastical confessionalism, in a dozen different forms ; calling itself evangelical and orthodox ; sworn to maintain such dead tradition, and ready to do so by mere brute authority, if need be, against all opposition ; and yet itself, all the while more or less consciously, unable so much as to define even its own shibboleth in the case, and too cowardly then of course to venture a word beyond the barest *non possumus* of the Vatican in its defence. In the meantime, to all practical intents and purposes, the whole cause of what was once considered to be the *inspiration* of the Old Testament, allowed to lapse quietly into a sort of pious myth, much like the inspiration of Homer with the Greeks. Any real divine life, then, there may ever have been in it, fairly smothered out of it now by the preponderance assigned everywhere to its outward letter. This made to be the great battle-field, accordingly, for an endless war between the Bible and secular science ; where the champions of the Bible are sure to come off always second best, because fighting, in truth, always on the same side with their naturalistic opponents.

In these circumstances, *by far the largest portion of the Old Testament history is taken to be a record of mere outside facts*, appertaining to the Jewish nation, loosely put together, with a great deal included that savors much more of man than it does of God, and which needs distillation by the most powerful alembic, to bring out of it any spiritual edification whatever. The Jewish ritual is looked upon still more as a congeries of many things that are unmeaning, joined with a few things that are darkly instructive as types, to be accepted as the Word of God only in the like loose way ; and besides, has it not all come to an end, so that for us at least the divine that may have been once in it is all gone ? Darkest of all in some respects are felt to be the prophetic parts of the old Jewish volume ; largely rhapsodical—hard to understand—having often indeed, apparently, no grammatico-historical sense, as it is called, whatever.

Such, in general terms, is a faithful picture of what the Old

Testament has come to be for the life of the Christian world in our time. Either neglected altogether for the ends of vital godliness; or so externalized in the mere corporeity of its own historical form as to be shorn of its true God-inspired power of living sanctification altogether. And surely it needs no prophet to tell us that this catastrophe is but the legitimate fruit of the false hermeneutical science we have now under consideration; as it needs no prophet either to assure us also, that the catastrophe can never be helped in the least by this science. If the Old Testament is ever to be restored at all from such Babylonish captivity, it must be by a new advent of the Lord, and through the life of the Word itself. Then, and not before, will be fulfilled the oracle: "I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. ii. 21-23).

VI. Through this whole dream of mastering the interior sense of the Scriptures from their merely natural outside, there runs what we may call this judicial, self-stultification, *that the theory is never able to come to any clear apprehension of what is meant by the spiritual-internal in the Bible, as distinguished from its natural-external.*

Some sense of such a distinction there must be, of course, with all who consider the Bible to be a divine book; but it is wonderful how easily this is allowed to resolve itself with most persons, into the notion of a merely natural difference, such as we have in all common human speech. Words in this view have two sides, related as formal and material, or sign and thing signified; the first outward or corporeal, the second inward or spiritual. Then again the inward side here—the meaning of the word—is itself sundered into the distinction of literal

and tropical; which is felt somehow to open the way to what is still more inward; especially when the so-called tropical sense comes to figure as allegorical, or runs itself out into regular types. The lowest conception of a divine revelation in the Scriptures, however, find, itself, as it were, self-constrained to reach after something beyond this again, namely, felt communication in some way with the living spirit of such a revelation regarded as divine. So we have attempts in various ways to rule the exposition of the Scriptures, from a realistic plane of some sort supposed to be in themselves, above the immediate voice of their outward letter. The moral interpretation of Kant, the poetical interpretation of such men as Lowth and Herder, the dogmatical interpretation of theological sects and schools generally, may be taken as examples of this; very different in their animating spirit, we can readily see, and yet strangely enough, coming together here in what must be considered a common wrong against the true internal sense of the Bible regarded as the Word of God. For it requires, surely, no great effort of thought to see, that all these attempts are after all, as such, but reaches after the spiritual on the part of the natural man, which can have no power whatever in themselves, to induct him into the actual interior sense of the Bible in its own supernatural form. Instead of that, we must not hesitate to say, they work obstruction only to the apprehension of any such sense.

How much at fault our modern biblical exegesis is with regard to this subject generally, may be seen from a glance at the highly respectable work of Fairbairn on the Doctrine of Types, which has for its object, the author tells us, "to rescue the typology of Scripture, if possible, from the arbitrariness and uncertainty which have hitherto enveloped it, and to derive from it somewhat of real and substantial service toward the interpretation of the inward purposes of God." In looking into the book, we are struck at once with the way in which type and allegory, under the same general view, are made to take up the whole idea of what has been called the inward mystical

sense of the Bible in distinction from its literal sense. The early Church is blamed for its allegorizing spirit in this view, as guilty of a wild abuse; although it is only too plain that with such men as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose and Augustine, this so-called abuse rested on a much deeper and sounder apprehension of the interior divine constitution of the Bible, as being the Word of God, than we meet with in Fairbairn himself and the modern typologists in general. For this modern typology, with all it has to say, more or less problematically, of a divine ordination in Scripture types as it understands them, never sees in them the very presence of the divine itself at all. They are at best but tropical expressions for what is supposed to be divine, on the plane of ordinary human thought; and in that respect just of one character with the disguised naturalism, which is all the time gnawing in the way we have seen, at the root of our reigning exegetical science generally. Fairbairn himself, indeed, in common with such men as Glass, Witsius, Cocceius, and Vitranga, sees Christ to be in some way the key to the right understanding of the Old Testament. He protests against the poor and meagre rule accordingly, "That just so much of it is to be accounted typical as the New Testament affirms to be so, *and no more*;" and nobly adds, "Were men accustomed, as they should be, to search for evidences of Christ in all Scripture, and to regard the inspired records of both covenants as having for their leading object the TESTIMONY OF JESUS, they would know how much they were losers by such curtailment of the typical matter of Scripture." This witness is true and good so far as it goes. But with all this, Fairbairn's Typology of Scripture brings no relief to the cause it undertakes to help. It does not get beyond the idea of what after all is only a natural outside testimony of Jesus in his own Word. It fails to recognize what that testimony means as the SPIRIT OF PROPHECY, the supernatural soul of the Word, present and active all the time in every part of it; a thought, before which the whole idea of type and allegory falls away, and all Scripture having the inspira-

tion of God in it, is felt to be a direct living effigy and parable of the divine in its own heavenly form.

Fairbairn's doctrine of types fails entirely in what it proposes to reach, namely, a sure and stable rule for the typological interpretation of Scripture, in opposition to the wilful extravagance that has too generally governed it in past times. There is no material difference, in this respect, between him and the early church fathers. He is just as arbitrary and uncertain in his rational way, as they are in their spiritual or mystical way. Only while their way was from inward to outward, from soul to body, *his way is just the reverse*—from outward to inward, from body to soul; the general *principle* of procedure being thus, as we have already said, unquestionably sounder on their side than it is on his side. He lays down five rules for determining the existence and meaning of types in the Bible; but the rules themselves are arbitrary altogether, and the application of them perfectly precarious.

His very first rule for example, involves his whole subject in midnight; declaring as it does, *that nothing is to be regarded as typical, which is of an improper or a sinful nature.* Were this so, we should have to cut off at one stroke the spiritual significance of the entire history of the Jewish nation; for so far as the people themselves were concerned, that history answers but too truly, from first to last, to Isaiah's appalling picture: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isa. i. 4.) ~ Moses: "They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them" (Deut. xxxiii. 28). And what shall we say of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, or of Jacob himself? What shall we say of the incestuous Judah, of whose spiritual significance it is prophesied nevertheless: "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee" (Gen. xlix. 8-12).—Judah—type, forerunner, representative of

the Messiah himself, the "Lion of the tribe of Judah!" The rule plainly is altogether untenable. The nexus between type and antitype, letter and spirit, in the Bible, is not moral in the way here supposed, anymore than it is through logic or grammar. Let us thank God that the case is thus; that the credit of Christ and his kingdom is *not* in any degree staked on persons or transactions foreshadowing them in the Old Testament; and that we are not therefore put upon the desperate task of defending the religious character either of the Jewish nation collectively, or of particular bearers and representatives of its life, in order to vindicate the real inspiration, truth and sanctity of the Old Testament itself, or the divine spirituality of the New Testament as the legitimate birth and fulfillment of the Old.

We might urge still other considerations against the general Ernestian theory of biblical interpretation, going to show clearly how it contradicts the true glory of divine revelation, and throws over it continually (as with the Jews of old) the veil of Moses that *should* be taken away in Christ (2 Cor. 13: 15). But we have said enough for the present; and so conclude with the spirit-stirring prayer of THOMAS A KEMPIS :

Non loquatur mihi Moyses, aut aliquis ex Prophetis: sed tu potius loquere, Domine Deus, inspirator et illuminator omnium Prophetarum; quia tu solus sine eis potes me perfecte imbuere, illi autem sine te nihil proficiunt. Possunt quidem verba sonare, sed spiritum non conferunt. Pulcherrime dicunt, sed te tacente cor non accendunt. Litteras tradunt, sed tu sensum aperis. Mystera proferunt, sed tu reseras intellectum signatorum. Mandata edicunt, sed tu juvas ad perficiendum. Viam ostendunt, sed tu confortas ad ambulandum. Illi foris tantum agunt, sed tu corda instruis et illuminas. Illi exterius rigant, sed tu fecunditatem donas. Illi clamant verbis, sed tu iudicii intelligentiam tribuis. Non ergo loquatur mihi Moyses, sed tu Domine Deus meus, æterna veritas.

J. WILLIAMSON NEVIN.