

dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and had he said nothing further, and nothing were said elsewhere in Scripture on the subject, we might properly conclude that at death we should be "clothed upon with that house," that "building of God," but he goes on to say (verse 4), "not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon." What is this unclothing? Is it not the state of the soul separate from the body? This was not what the apostle—though willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord—so ardently desired, but to be "clothed upon with the house which is from heaven," the resurrection body, "that mortality might be swallowed up of life." And this is all the more noteworthy in Paul seeing that he had been given to know something of the blessedness of Paradise. Notwithstanding his knowledge of what was awaiting him at death, he looks forward with intense longing to the glory beyond, to the "crown of righteousness laid up for him," which "the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him at that day, and not to him only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

I have pleasure in admitting the force of what Mr. Nesbitt says on Acts ii. 34, but I can very well dispense with the support I too hastily found in the passage. My position is strong enough without it.

Mr. Nesbitt, in pitying consideration of my ignorance of these things, commends to my attention and perusal the writing of certain divines. The exercise of a very little Christian charity might have led him to credit me with some little acquaintance with them. My differing from some of their views is no proof that I have not read their writings. I owe much to them, but I can call no man master, and will never, in non-essentials, come under the bondage of a stereotyped theology.

I am glad to think that the discussion has awakened some measure of thought not only in Walkerton but elsewhere. An esteemed brother writes me from the west:—

"Permit me to thank you for your intelligent defence, in THE PRESBYTERIAN, of that branch of eschatology set forth in your letters, on which there is much vagueness, confusion and error. In funeral sermons and in obituary notices one is pained to read that so-and-so is enthroned, crowned, rewarded, etc. The teaching too that has been made prominent on the subject of Recognition places the recognition between the body's death and the body's resurrection, as if the separate state was all that a Christian anticipates. If the crown of glory is to be given before the Chief Shepherd appears, 1 Peter v. 4, and the crown of righteousness before the Judge makes His appearing, 2 Timothy iv. 8, and the recompense meted out before the time of the resurrection of the just, Luke xiv. 14, and the kingdom entered before the King invites them, Matthew xxv. 34, then we have ceased to make the divine record our guide, and a teaching akin to that of Emmanuel Swedenborg takes its place."

Alice, 11th May, 1882.

M. T.

[Our columns are not open for any further extension of this discussion.—ED. C. P.]

#### PREPARATION FOR THE SUPPER.

The very best help to preparation for the communion of the Supper is in the use of the word itself. It is a part of our creed that it is a "perfect rule of faith and practice." For the young and the illiterate we have "helps" of various kinds, but for educated Christians nothing can be compared with the inspired word. The "helps" are truth, more or less diluted; the word is less mixed, inspired, authoritative truth.

Would you feel and express before God true penitence? Is anything better than the penitential Psalms, such as the fifty-first? Would you hear Christ's words and seek communion with Him? Would you dwell on the thoughts He would have you cherish? Read the very words He spoke to the disciples in the very upper chamber of the first communion, in John's Gospel, chaps. xiv., xv. and xvi. Would you pray in the very spirit of a child—the "spirit of adoption?" Study John xvii.

Would you familiarize your mind with the details of the ordinance so that you may "discern the Lord's body?" Dwell on the general narratives of the institution, supplemented by Paul to the Corinthians, I Cor. xi. 17-34.

Would you learn the practical duties to which you pledge yourself afresh? You have only to study the practical portions of the Epistles—Rom. xii., xiv.; Gal. v., vi.; Eph. iv., v., vi.; Phil. iv.; Col. iii., iv.; Heb. xii., xiii.

Many a saint, languid in prayer, has been quickened as he turned into petition for himself the words of the Psalms, such as lv., lvi. and cxvi.—Dr. Hall.

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### REPLY TO PROFESSOR ROBERTSON SMITH.—II.

BY THE REV. F. MELVILLE, A.M., B.D., MOPEWELL, N.S.

#### THE BIBLE CANON.

To answer the anxious inquiries of a sincere soul is a perfect pleasure; especially when the inquirer is meek, modest, and quick to perceive each dawning truth presented. And even if he be perverse and positive, or dull and despondent, still pity prompts to solve his doubts and difficulties, and to share a dear delight in his deliverance.

Prof. Smith seems sharp as a lynx in detecting difficulties and "magnifying molehills into mountains," but too often blind as a mole to their solution, even when it stares him in the face and while he is stumbling over it. This will appear as we go on. Most of his difficulties arise from his peculiar views of Sacred Scripture, Bible Criticism, and Protestant Theology. They would soon be solved if he could but realize the following truths:

1. God's Word has in its every text and every sentence a human element and a divine element united.
2. Bible Criticism should embrace both in its exegesis, and seek the newness of the spirit in the oldness of the letter.
3. Protestant Theology studies Scripture in its own light, spiritual as well as natural; and not merely in the dubious light of Catholic dogma, or in the sombre shades of sceptical Rationalism.

Prof. Green, of Princeton, has so conclusively shown that the historical objections to the "Middle Books of the Pentateuch" are futile and fanciful, that we shall proceed at once to solve the principal objections which remain—namely, those regarding the standard Hebrew text of the Bible, its transmission and its authorship; including the famous problem of the alleged Jehovistic and Elohist writers.

#### (I.) THE STANDARD HEBREW TEXT.

Near the middle of his third lecture, Prof. Smith asserts that there were many and great variations of text in different copies of the Old Testament some centuries before Christ came in the flesh; but that all the varying copies of the Hebrew text disappear about that time. So that we have but one standard text since the first Christian century. He therefore charges the Jewish scribes with deliberately suppressing all the varying copies, as the Caliph Othman destroyed every Koran that differed from his favourite copy. Prof. Smith says positively: "There can be no question who were the instruments in this work. The scribes alone possessed the necessary influence to give one text or one standard MS. a position of supreme authority." Also, "There is no other explanation which will account for the facts."

Now, is this so? Not at all. There was quite another power both able and willing to suppress and destroy Hebrew Bibles. And he did so to his uttermost! History is plain and positive, that Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria and Palestine, B.C. 168, utterly massacred the men of Jerusalem and destroyed all copies of the Hebrew Bible he could find in his dominions, under penalty of death!

Surely this is enough to account for the disappearance of many varying copies, without laying the blame on the poor Jewish scribes, who perished in heaps in temple and city, trying to save their Bibles, even to the very direst deaths, on the sad Sabbath of their massacre!

Is it not most astonishing that Prof. Smith did not see this even while he was stumbling over it in the close of this very lecture! There he says, "Antiochus Epiphanes caused all copies of the Law, and seemingly of the other sacred books, to be torn up and burnt, and made it a capital offence to possess a Pentateuch." If we take his own words literally and rigidly (as he often treats the Hebrew scribes), not one copy of the Law escaped, to keep up even one standard text! He says ALL were burnt! Such a glaring double blunder on so very important a question should be remembered as the "standard error."

But although not a sparrow can fall without God's providence, yet might not all trusty copies of God's Word have perished then? Never! Heaven and earth must perish first!—Matt. v. 18, and xxiv. 35; Isa. xl. 6, and lv. 11.

#### (2) TRANSMISSION OF THE HEBREW CANON.

Prof. Smith also observes in his third lecture that we have no MS. of the Hebrew text much older than one thousand years, and that all the copies agree so well as to be essentially one text, the same as Jerome used 400 A.D., and indeed the same as the Jewish Rabbins used in the first centuries A.D. But he brings forward three witnesses to prove that there were various readings, additions and omissions, some centuries B.C. Let us see what this amounts to.

1. That by genuine MSS. it can be proved that the Jews have been most scrupulously correct scribes for the last thousand years; viz., as far as MSS. can go.
2. By Jerome, the Targumists, Aquila, etc., we can prove the unvarying accuracy of the scribes for seven or eight centuries further back; viz., as far as those witnesses can go; even to the verge of the apostles' days!

Well, is not that delightful? The Christian scribes of the New Testament must yield the palm of victory to the Jewish scribes of the Old.

Now let us examine the three witnesses which say the scribes were not so careful some centuries before the Incarnation.

1. The Samaritan Pentateuch, B.C. 430, is well known to be deliberately corrupted in order to make Mount Gerizim the site of the temple. Surely a scribe who could do THAT, is not to be trusted! This witness therefore fails and goes out of court.
2. The Greek Septuagint translation was made by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, an Egyptian king who wished to have a great library, about 280 B.C. The Seventy interpreters did their work very roughly, and added a lot of apocryphal books, to enlarge the volume. As their king desired it for recreation, not for salvation, it is probable he laid down rules for them very different from those which our own King James gave to his translators. Indeed their work shows that on the one hand they wished to preserve many old Hebrew tales and songs and proverbs, and on the other to modify or hide some esoteric doctrines from the heathen king and people, as Jerome also declares. This witness therefore is also unreliable.
3. The Book of Jubilees remains, by some unknown author, of very uncertain date, and still more uncertain transmission. Who can tell how often it has been redacted or interpolated? It varies often from the Hebrew text, but so does Josephus, and so he often intended to do, as we can trace his motives in many cases. This witness is the least reliable of all the three. Josephus and Philo are immensely preferable.

Such witnesses are merely as the dust of the balance when weighed against the Hebrew Bible, preserved with such amazing scrupulosity since the days of the apostles, and as far back as evidence can go. They simply prove that in the dim past, when books were few, some scholars copied the Bible for themselves very imperfectly, and added other little songs and stories to their private copies and Gentile translations. Surely this was to be expected, and by no means can it discredit the standard text of the sanctuary.

People will examine such witnesses for amusement, but sane people will scarcely dream of changing the Hebrew canon to suit them, or to suit the Koran, either!

In his fourth lecture Prof. Smith quotes some difficult passages in Samuel, to show the Septuagint text as preferable. Now, is not this rather odd, since it is an established rule of criticism that "the more difficult reading is *a priori* the more probable?"

#### (3) AUTHORSHIP OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

In the latter part of his fourth lecture Prof. Smith urges the theory of several authors or editors modelling or remodelling the same book in Scripture. He refers to Isaiah, for instance, whose book the critics have so often sawn asunder at the beginning of chapter 40, ascribing the parts to two prophets, as Manasseh sawed Isaiah himself asunder. It is due to Prof. Smith to say that he speaks modestly and reverently in this matter, and does not pretend to be wise above what is written.

But his strongest argument for editorial redaction is based on the extraordinary variation of readings between the Hebrew and the Septuagint text of Jeremiah, 27th chapter. Hence he very triumphantly argues, near the end of Lecture 4, that the additions in the Hebrew are the "spurious insertions of a thoughtless copyist," making the whole prophecy absurd and false; since the brazen pillars, etc., could not be