

with all its symbolic sacrifices and "shadows of good things to come;" the Tabernacle and Temples, with their patterns divinely foreshown; the Prophets with symbolic visions and voices, which they "heard but understood not;" and the crowning Revelation, full of sublime symbols and allegories, whose only "Temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb!"

And yet are we, as Protestants, shut out from seeking the spiritual interpretation of these symbols and these mysteries? I trow not; else what do you say of "Solomon's Temple spiritualized," by Bunyan, and the vast Puritan literature of its kind; with all the Hebrew names they gave to their homes, and their wanderings, and their children; not to speak of the ever-growing host of sermons and poems and volumes on scriptural symbolism, now more abundant and more edifying than ever before? Read Knox's First Book of Discipline, chap. I., Exp. 1.

Nay! "the Bible is the religion of Protestants." "The Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify Him." The whole Bible, pure and entire, is our Protestant faith. But the whole Bible has a spirit and life as well as a letter: 2. Cor. iii. 6; and John vi. 63. We therefore receive it not only in its *letter or natural sense*, as the natural man receives it, but also in its *spirit and life*, as the natural man will not receive it: 1. Cor. ii. 14. Now, this spirit and life of Scripture is just the Lord himself, the Divine Living Word: 2. Cor. iii. 6, compared with verses 17 and 18, and with John i. 1, etc. The true and scriptural doctrine is, that "the testimony of Jesus is the *spirit of prophecy*," whatever its letter may be: Rev. xix. 10. We therefore as Protestants are taught to seek and find the Lord as the spirit and life of every Scripture; since "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable:" 2. Tim. iii. 16. If in any Scripture we do not find the Lord, it is because we have not reached its spirit and life at all.

2. Prof. Smith says further on in his first lecture: "The inspired writers were so led by the Spirit, that they perfectly understood and perfectly recorded every word which God spoke to their hearts."

Now, how utterly different is this from the testimony of Daniel, xii. 8: "I heard, but I *understood not*;" then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are *closed up and sealed* till the time of the end." So also St. Peter tells us that the very prophets inquired and searched diligently "what the Spirit of Christ in them did signify, when it foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister those things, . . . into which things the very angels desire to look" (1 Peter i. 11, 12). So too St. Paul declares, "Now we see through a glass *darkly* . . . Now I know in *part*" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

It is hardly necessary to say more on this point, except to remark that the reiterated notion of Prof. Smith, that the true way to understand Scripture is to *take it just as its first writers understood it*, is fundamentally wrong. Rather, we should seek to understand it far better than they could: Rom. xix. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 5, 6; and 2. Cor. iii. throughout.

3. Prof. Smith says, further on, that the Church must try to get the whole meaning of every inspired writer by taking his book as a whole, realizing his position, "and following out in its minutest detail the progress of his thought."

This is capable of a good and true sense, which we would fain hope Prof. Smith intends; until the context, and especially his words in the early part of his second lecture, force us to think otherwise. There he states as "the great discovery of the Reformation," that "the real meaning of the Bible must *just be its natural meaning*."

How diametrically opposite to the inspired words of St. Peter: "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter i. 20); and to the inspired words of St. Paul: "We speak the wisdom of God in a *mystery* . . . But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are *spiritually discerned*" (1 Cor. ii. 7, 14). Also to the words of our Saviour: "Unto you it is given to know the *mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given" (Mat. xiii., all). We seek not merely the *natural* but the *spiritual* meaning; not merely the thoughts of the *writer*, but of the Divine

Author of Scripture, "whose thoughts are higher than man's as heaven is higher than earth" (Isa. lv. 9). We seek not merely the words of the prophet, but "*the word of the Lord through the prophet*;" not the letter merely, but also the spirit and the life—namely, the Living Word, our Saviour!

4. Toward the end of the first lecture Prof. Smith says, in italics: "*The whole business of scholarly exegesis lies with this human side*" of Scripture. Further on he urges that we must apply the ordinary laws of evidence to the Bible "just as we should do to any other ancient book."

Does scholarship then shut its eyes to the Divine side of Scripture? Or have its eyes never been opened to see the wonders of God's law and the mysteries of His kingdom?

The Lord's scholars at least have their eyes opened and their understandings enlightened to understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45), for His scribes are instructed in His kingdom to bring out even new truths as well as old (Mat. xiii. 52), for His Spirit in them searches even the deep things of God (1 Cor. ii. 10), and they do not put away the key of knowledge (Luke xi. 52), nor hide it (Acts iv. 20).

No doubt we should search the Scriptures and examine them with our best wisdom; but surely not by divorcing the Divine side, and criticising the poor human side alone! By this means you may obtain a private interpretation for every prophecy; but it will NEVER be the true one! "No prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter i. 20). You have merely reached the private occasion of its formal delivery; but its interpretation is ever spiritual and divine, saying with still small voice in conscience, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches;" not "what the Jew said to some ancient person or people."

And how can you do justice to the Bible if it has a divine side like NO other book, and yet you shut out that side from exegesis, and try it by its human side alone, like ANY other book? This is insanity. Common sense would say "If the Bible has a divine side, let it have a fair trial at the very least. It is a mockery of justice to exclude that UNIQUE element from scholarly exegesis, and judge the book by its human side alone, just like *any* other old book." That is like Caiaphas ignoring the Saviour's divinity, and judging Him like any other agitator! To take the "human side" of Scripture apart from its "divine side" is spiritually to take the clothing off the Saviour and part it among the hostile sects which crucify him afresh! If you separate the spirit from the letter, you will kill it; and you may do as you please with the garments after you have slain your Lord! But He dieth no more. You only murder His image and remnant in yourself, and sin suicidally against your own soul!

These errors are plainly fundamental and fatal. They are diluted Rationalism. They open out wide and wider in Prof. Smith's earlier lectures, and run through them all as a gaping cleft, yawning from foundation to summit of this theory, and foreboding the fall of his whole system. We trust he will live to repent and correct them; but alas! we fear many may perish by them before that hopeful time shall come, and long after it too!

Prof. Smith remarks: "A book that is really old and valuable has nothing to fear from the critics." Ha! Say you so, in a world of sinners and blunderers eager to get quit of the Bible? Much rather might he say, "A really valuable professor has nothing to fear from the General Assembly." The clergy are not much less infallible than the would-be Omniscient Sceptical Critics!

I once knew a professor who pretended to be so great a judge of style as to be able to tell how many authors had a hand in writing the books of the Bible, and to point out the very verses written by each, and the nations and climates they came from. Some of us were really alarmed at his bearing and his boldness, lest he should rob them of the little faith they had left. But the happy thought occurred to us to try him by secretly exchanging our essays and re-writing them by the hands that gave them to him for examination. Well, the great critic never detected the ruse; and we had a laugh among ourselves you may be sure, as one of us cried out: "*Uve! Uve! He did na ken his ain stoddents' styles apairt, frae a' londs, an' yet he kens a' the styles o' twa thousand years agane! He'll never mak a heretic o' me!*"

Since then, we have never dreaded the "Omniscient Critics." We now look upon them as impudent pretenders, or radical blunderers.

Thus far I have given the Bible view of our Protestant theology, while correcting the opposite Rationalistic errors. I have not dealt on the many good gifts of Prof. Smith, because the far more needful work is to remove the dire delusions that have seduced so clear a mind. If my words are severe, it is with the severity of love; and my prayer is that God will give him perfect light, and overrule all this for good! In another article I hope to solve his principal difficulties as to the Canon of Scripture and its history; including the intensely interesting problems of the Hebrew text, and the alleged Jehovistic and Elohist editors. To many this hope may seem incredible. But already I see so clearly and feel so dearly the far-reaching power and the immense results of a few explanatory facts, that I have a quiet and steadfast trust that very many lovers of truth will soon rejoice in their light and adore their Divine Source.

#### A WAIF.

When the storm was fiercely blowing,  
When the sea was wildly flowing,  
Angry wind and angry billow  
Only rocked the Saviour's pillow,  
Jesus slept!

But when sudden grief was rending  
Human hearts in sorrow bending—  
When he saw the sisters weeping,  
Jesus wept!

#### "IT WILL LIGHT YOU HOME."

Going two miles into a neighbourhood where very few could read, to spend an evening in reading to a company who were assembled to listen, and about to return by a narrow path through the woods, where the paths diverged, I was provided with a torch of dry wood, or "pitch pine." I objected; it was too small, weighing not over a half pound.

"It will light you home," answered my host.

I said: "The wind may blow it out."

He said: "It will light you home."

"But if it should rain?" I again objected.

"It will light you home," he insisted.

Contrary to my fears, it gave abundant light to my path all the way home, furnishing an apt illustration, I often think, of the way in which doubting hearts would be led safely along the "narrow way." If they would take the Bible as their guide it would be a lamp to their feet, leading to the heavenly home. One man had five objections to the Bible. If he would take it as a lamp to his feet it would "light him home." Another told me had two faults to find with the Bible. I answered him in the words of my good friend who furnished the torch, "It will light you home."—*Amer Messenger*.

#### CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

An article in the "Baptist Teacher" on the "Question of Control" of the Sabbath school impresses in a lively way the advantage of Presbyterian over Congregational government in the Church. Says our Baptist co-worker: "Theoretically, the Sunday school is a department of Church service, and is therefore absolutely subject to Church control. But, practically, the Church as a body rarely or never comes together at a so-called business meeting, and it is the business meeting that exerts control. Ordinarily, the gathering consists of a very insignificant minority of the Church as a whole; but the individuals composing it, who may or may not be the wisest and holiest men in the Church, have been accustomed from time immemorial to be entrusted with the direction of the Church's affairs. It may be said that this is deplorable, but it is well-nigh irremediable." How much better is the Presbyterian system, by which men are chosen and appointed to do what a Church, as a mass, cannot and will not do. The session, composed of the pastor and ruling elders, is the body made responsible for the oversight and well-being of the school, as of the other religious interests and activities of the individual church.—*Westminster Teacher*.

THE Rev. Dr. Somerville, who for the past five months has been conducting a mission in the western and northern parts of Germany, has arrived in Glasgow.