

we must in the long run surrender them. We ourselves, as believing Christians, apply this test without hesitation in discussing such writings as the Epistles of Clement and of Barnabas. For centuries these works hovered on the fringe of the New Testament Canon. The celebrated Sinai Bible contains one of them, and the Alexandrine contains the other. In the end they were excluded from the collection by common consent, on grounds of which we are largely ignorant. But we justify that exclusion now, among other reasons on the ground that Clement gravely accepts the wholly unscientific fable of the Phoenix, while Barnabas, on a number of points, shows himself hopelessly astray in his natural history. Similar charges against any of the writings within the canon, if fairly proved, would be a valid reason for discrediting their authority in like manner. We are bound, in all honesty, to look at the matter dispassionately, and see whether any such objection can be clearly made out, when we take them in their natural meaning as determined by the usual laws of literary interpretation. No unfair advantage can be given them because of their venerable character. But on the other hand, we have a right to ask that no unfair advantage be taken of them, because they happen to have attained a position of religious authority in the estimation of the church. There must be fair play on both sides and the issue honestly accepted.

Furthermore, it must also be frankly admitted that scientific criticism has greatly helped us to a more rational interpretation of the Scriptures. The blame for the apparent antagonism between the Bible and science, must not be laid wholly upon the shoulders of the scientists. It has been due quite as largely to the extravagant claims and the erroneous interpretations of the theologians. With the best intentions in the world, they have often read meanings into the casual statements of the Bible, and based views upon them for which there was no manner of justification whatever. These criticisms have compelled them to revise their canons of interpretation, so as to restrain its dogmatic teaching within due limits. Sci-