

The gain, then, in interpretation of Scripture during the past fifty years does not consist in the mere multiplication of books, but in the new method, the new ideas, the new resources used by the interpreter. The difference between the past and the present may be measured by the difference between Thomas Scott, who, in my boyhood, was still being issued in expensive editions, and the revised Meyer. Reading to-day Jowett's essay on the interpretation of Scripture, which was, thirty years ago, considered one of the most dangerous of the essays and reviews, or the *Septem contra Christum*, as some one called them, it is difficult to understand how so much disturbance should have been caused by a paper which clearly sets forth principles of interpretation now universally adopted. Jowett's main contention is that Scripture, like other books, "has one meaning which is to be gathered from itself without reference to the adaptations of fathers and divines, and without regard to *a priori* notions about its nature and origin. It is to be interpreted like other books, with attention to the character of its authors, and the prevailing state of civilization and knowledge, with allowance for peculiarities of style and language, and modes of thought and figures of speech." But the disturbance and suspicion aroused by this essay show that at the date of its publication, barely thirty years ago, the Christian people of this country still held the mechanical theory of inspiration, which taught that the writers of Scripture were the mere pens of the Holy Ghost, and which Canon Westcott denounces as "at variance with the whole form and fashion of the Bible, and" as "destructive of all that is holiest in man and highest in religion." It might have been supposed that the absurdity of such a theory would have been sufficiently recognised when the Wittenberg faculty, in 1638, "decreed that to speak of barbarisms and solecisms in the Greek of the New Testament would be blasphemy against the writers of Holy Scripture and against the Holy Ghost." While such a deliberate closing of the eyes to the plainest facts of Scripture, such irreverence and faithlessness under the guise of reverence, such audacious telling of lies for God continued, there was no possibility of a return to the splendid candor of Calvin and Luther, and no possibility of an advance to the sane, full and fruitful interpretation of our own day. Archdeacon Farrar most