

cents. Flushed with all this success, I made one last effort and urged him to come down to a quarter of a cent; but they all laughed at me and said there was no such thing as a quarter of a cent. Whereupon the bargain was closed, the crossbow and arrow were passed over to him and he paid down the half cent. This was so near to nothing that I reported the transaction to my father with full expectation of his approval; but to my dismay, with unyielding severity he replied, that giving was giving and selling was selling. He held that the crossbow had not been given away at all, but sold, and he could not make me a new one. And no new bow has he made for me from that day to this. Salvation is free. Though the most precious thing in the universe and the costliest gift of the God of all grace, it is offered only as a gift. Only those may have it who are willing to take it as a gift. If your pride says you must pay at least half of a quarter of a cent for it then God says you must do without it. "For God as soon would abdicate his own as stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne." "Blessed are the poor." The gospel is for the poor. It is for those who have no money, no might, no merit. It is for the man with a crushing debt who has "nothing to pay." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor." Every soul that enters the pearly gates will sing, "Jesus paid it all! All to him I owe!" There will be no one there from the human family who ever paid the smallest dust of the balance for his redemption. Whoever is not willing to owe all to Christ must remain in the outer darkness. That great multitude which no man can number, arrayed in white robes and with palms in their hands, that starry host out of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues who shall serve him day and night in his temple, that glorious throng who shall hunger no more neither thirst any more, whom the Lamb shall lead unto living fountains of water and from whose eyes the God of grace shall wipe away all tears,—these all, all without any exception, are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; all join the new song and make melody unto him who was rich and for their sakes became poor that they through his poverty might become rich. They make the eternal mansions ring and shake the everlasting hills, with their sweet hallelujahs unto him who loved them and loved them from their sins by his blood.

The Inspiration of the Bible.

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On one point at least all Protestants are agreed. The Bible was intended by God for all the people. Chillingworth's much-used saying, "the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of the Protestants," understood in a right sense, expresses a truth taught in the Scriptures, and universally advocated by all outside of some two or more communions bearing the name Christian. If God intended His word for the people as a whole and not for any class or classes, it is surely an inference which ought not to be questioned, that He has put at the disposal of the learned and unlearned alike, the means of knowing that the Bible is from God. Macaulay's statement that as the facts found in God's Word are supernatural, the illiterate who have it in their own languages, are at but a slight disadvantage in its interpretation. Put this in only a partial statement of the truth. To make this plain, it will be necessary to seek for the essential qualification for knowing that the Bible is God's Word. Let this enquiry be as follows:—

We have this volume called the Bible composed of sixty six books. If required to point to the citadel of proof, that it had a divine origin, and is not of man, to what central fact would we direct attention? What does the Bible profess to be and to do? It claims to be a revelation from God, and the one great end it seeks is the deliverance of the human race from the bondage of sin. In the coming of God to man through the Bible, which of all his great attributes does he put in the front? The answer to this question is so obvious, that argument is unnecessary. The love of God is the pioneer attribute of the Father in his mission to his children on earth. Other attributes appear, but love is the moon among the stars. "God is love." But this essential in the nature of God is not passive; it is intensely active. "God so loved the world that he gave himself for us." The urgent and efficient force in this great undertaking was love.

The prophetic declaration of the Messiah, "I delight to do thy will O my God," had its root in the love of the Messiah's heart. In the hearts of his followers there was reproduced this love in kind; but not in degree. Compelled by it, when when the fulness of the time came God sent forth his son—compelled by it, Christ joyfully descended to the earth to accomplish the mission given him by the Father. This spring broke out in full tide in thousands of hearts at Pentecost. It also sprang up in the Pharisaical desert of Saul's heart near the Damascus-gates. By its force he was suddenly wrenched from a system to which, from childhood, he had been bound by blind bigotry. Saul of Tarsus had been judicially cold, inflexible and relentless. But contact with the heart of the eternal Son of God, which is wonderful kind, begat in him love for God and love for his nation, which enabled him to say, "I could wish myself accused for Christ for my brethren, my

kindred according to the flesh." As in Saul's case, so with many thousands in his day and millions upon millions until the present time. The mighty force that ever went out from Jesus of Nazareth was love. The same is true of Paul this most eminent apostle. "Now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love."

The interpreters of the Bible are now a great army—many of them men of ability, integrity and learning; but what have some of them made of God's Word? Their views range between the cordial adoption of the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and that of unreliable human production. Here is something fresh,—up-to-date in Henry Preserved Smith's "Old Testament History." Hear him. "The patriarchs cannot be taken as individuals. If individuals, Reuben, Gad, and Judah never existed. It is plain that individuals Jacob, Isaac, Abraham cannot have been substantial reality. We have to do here with figures of the poetic or legendary imagination." This is a specimen of the historic higher criticism.

It will not do to say that men of this class are lacking in ability, learning or honesty. Grounds for judging them differently must be found. If they place the Bible on a level with the so called sacred literature of non-Christian peoples, they must not be judged as intentional deceivers. Let us assign the lack of divine love in the heart, which involves entire submission to God, trust in God, and the illumination that love brings, as the cause of this rejection of the Scriptures, as the Word of God. It may be safely asserted that divine love is essential to a correct interpretation of God's Word. Adduce the case of Nicodemus. He was in the fog in regard to the interpretation of the Old Testament's predictions of the Messiah. He enquired of Christ about it. The reply in effect was, neither you nor any other man can see or enter this kingdom concerning which you make inquiry, except ye be born again—except you get divine love into your hearts. Here the enquirer was learned, cultured and honest. Love is the force that dominates all other forces in man. By it the will is conquered. When a man wills to do Christ's will, he then learns His doctrines. But back of the will is love. By this means a man is qualified to see the character and work of Jesus, and to obey His commands. The strongest light in which man can stand is the love of God. When Christ saw the illiterate about him, illuminated by love divine, His soul experienced an ecstatic gush of gratitude. "I thank Thee O Father, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

As a herald of Christ and Him crucified, Paul came in contact with men of letters and science. Systems of philosophy had been elaborated by men of genius and great learning; but Paul told one of the churches, located on ground where the results of keen, mental insight and rational investigation were known, that he did not come to them—the Corinthians—"with excellency of speech or wisdom;" but had come dogmatically heralding in their ears and to their hearts, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." To the philosopher of Greece, this preaching was "foolishness." The natural eye saw it not, the ear heard it not, neither did it enter the natural heart. Hence, to unconverted Greeks, His gospel was foolishness, to unconverted Jews "it was a stumbling block." But while the intellectual, natural eye, ear, and heart could not take in spiritual revelations, "God revealed them unto us by his spirit—unto those whose hearts had taken in his love. The holy spirit in the heart of love, "searches all things, yea the deep things of God." The lovers of all classes, of all degrees of attainment perceive Christ in the Bible. They have him in their hearts.

A dumb brute cannot fully interpret a man. The judge at least must be equal to the judged. It takes a man to understand and correctly judge a man. The spiritual man judges all things spiritual. Keeping in mind that it is the love of Christ that gives light to the soul, there appears an obvious and satisfactory reason why Henry Preserved Smith should condemn the Old Testament, and that Neader, Schaff and Cramp should see it as sacred history, written by men moved by the Holy Spirit.

Unless there is in the heart of the student of God's Word, love for the author of the book, there cannot be love for the book itself. We are not good interpreters of things or persons opposed or hated by us. Indeed, opposition and antagonism blind us—obscure our mental vision, pervert our reasoning powers and color our judgments. Not much confidence can be placed in the opinion of a man, who gives his belief about a neighbor whom he hates. But someone will say there is not sufficient evidence that the men who reject the Scriptures, as the word of God, are haters of God.

That is very true; but hatred is as subtle as it is dark. All are either for Christ or against him. Even believers who lapse are submerged again in darkness. "If that light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness." How phenomenally dense were the disciples just previous to the crucifixion, and indeed until the descent of the Holy Spirit. Peter's exposition of the Old Testament just before Pentecost, and at and after that event, were as unlike as are the interpretation of the Higher Critics of these days who, victimized by the slavery of a literal and rational interpretations give their opinions of the book and the expositions of the Hodges, the Hacketts, the Spurgeons, and the McLarens.

In a moment a clear summer sky may be overclouded. The sun disappears. As quickly will the sun of the Christian scholar's brow be darkened by intellectual pride, or any other evil which causes him to fail to recognize, as essential to a right understanding of the Scriptures, the love of God in the soul, and the Holy Spirit as light and guide. In no other way can there be found a satisfactory reason for the various conceptions of the inspiration of the Bible and the atonement by Christ. For example.—One says an inspiration that produces a higher type of literature than is found in the productions of non-Christian peoples—another an inspiration that makes the Bible the infallible Word of God. Light and darkness are the extremes found in these different interpretations. The distinguished Tholuck changed from a rationalist to a full orb'd, devout Christian on a sick bed. Then to him God's Word became another book. In similar conditions the intellectual conceptions of revelation were lost in a blaze of spiritual light in the experience of Dr. Chalmers. Indeed every man of talent and scholarship who is converted in mature years has the same experience. Saul of Tarsus is the grandest of all such outstanding illustrations.

Leathers says, "It is possible to hold the microscope so near to the object as utterly to destroy the relation of its parts, and evidently to lose sight of a large part of it. The microscope is a blessing fraught with blessings to mankind; but if our eyes were microscopic, the world, instead of being beautiful would be simply hideous. In like manner it is possible to turn the microscopic glass of scholarship on the text of Scripture to such a degree, as to utterly distort and practically misrepresent it. In his treatise on inspiration, Dr. Alvah Hovey has the following:— "Now if there is one principle in the interpretation of the Scripture which may be taken as fixed, it is this—that it was written not for scholars, but for men, for the human and not the microscopic eye. And to this I will add, that the eye of the unlearned and thoughtful reader takes in the great features of the pictures and judges them correctly."

Horatio H. Hackett, D. D., a keen Greek exegetical scholar, who has had no superior on this continent, did not use his microscopic eye in a tireless hunt for contradictions in the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles and the Revelations, as have the higher critics of this day, who have given to the public alleged mistakes numbering 700 to be compelled afterward to admit that they had been mistaken in 500 of them; but Dr. Hackett used his microscope to flash at certain points more beauty on the character, conduct, teachings and life of Christ and his apostles. It is refreshing to turn from Henry Preserved Smith's destructive microscopic interpretation of the Old Testament to the scholarly, calm writings on the same subject by men like the late Sir J. W. D. Wilson. Young men who sat in his Bible class at Montreal came under the power of a great system of divine truth, revealed to the world through holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—a system of truth of which Christ and Him crucified is the centre, the light and the life. A man who professes undying love for his mother and yet uses his microscope to find her faults and publish them to the world, may be suspected of deception. A scholar who declares himself a lover of the Bible, and yet displays great zeal in finding alleged errors in it, subjects himself to a strong suspicion that his love for the Word of God is not the love left for it by the Apostle Paul.

But it may be said that this magnifying of love is a tacit ignoring of the rational faculties. Not so. It is rather the illumination and truest employment of this endowment. Take for instance, the highest and strongest form of love—that of the mother for her child. By the exercise of this affection is she not raised nearer to her Creator? In the chronic blaze of this sympathy, does she not see her duty to her offspring, its claims upon her? Does she not employ her reasoning powers in so sound and forceful a manner, as to sweep out of sight all subtleties and fallacies, as she follows the lead of love in presiding over her home and in discharging her duties to her husband and to her children? Nothing more noble appears in the world than the mother, self-sacrificing like Christ, in her sphere, impelled in her manifold labors by love; and that under the direction of the soundest reasoning. Nor is she held within the sphere of her motherhood. By the mother-love in her soul, she is born out into the wide world of humanity, so that among women, none so broad so true, so grand as the mother; and she is not only not irrational, but true to the rational faculties. Her will is exercised in the electric light of maternal love.

It is true that from Celsus to Herbert Spencer, the Christian has been charged with blind fanaticism. The materialistic philosophy and all other schools unite in this charge. The charge, however, has been calmly met and disapproved by a thousand Christian scholars from Origen to Angus and Hodge; but it is still made—made by those in darkness—against those who dwell in the light of him who lights every man who comes into the world. Here reason acts in harmony with the will and the imagination, and takes into account that veritable and undying consciousness, firm and substantial in the centre of the Christian's soul. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," says Job in the twilight. "I know whom I have believed," says Paul in the daylight. When this love bursts in its full flood upon Peter at Pentecost, all the prophecies and doctrines of the Old Testament, many of which were in a nebulous, rudimentary state, stood out in his spiritual vision distinct and full. He was then, and not till then, qualified to expound the law and the prophets. The same was true of the acute, learned Paul. The Damascus vision was a personal Pentecost to him. Now he can interpret the Old Covenant. Before he was a literalist—a legalist, a higher critic—a slave to literalism and rationalism. As with the two apostles—one an impulsive, unlettered fisherman, and the other a learned, philosophic genius, so with all who come into the light after they have reached the years of maturity.

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