

II. *THE HOLY GHOST THE AUTHOR AND INTERPRETER OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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THIS subject has been put into my hands, but was not formulated by me. As it stands it is far too large to be satisfactorily treated in thirty minutes, the time at my disposal. I shall therefore be obliged to limit myself chiefly to the first section of the subject, and without entering upon any of the controversies that have arisen on the doctrine of Inspiration I shall indicate in briefest outline what I believe to be the truth regarding the general character and contents of the Bible as formed by the Holy Ghost—a Divine person acting as the executive of the Godhead.

The late Dr. John Cairns, Principal of the United Presbyterian College, Edinburgh, than whom no one was more competent to speak on this subject, in an essay published ten years ago, made the following concessions :

First, We do not need to hold that the question of the Canon has been fully settled. I for one have no quarrel with that settlement ; but though I might not see my way to accept the Book of Esther or the Second Epistle of Peter, if I held a Word of God, I might equally hold

that Word all inspired in the highest sense.

Secondly, We do not need to hold that the present text is the very Word of God. This remark is a mere extension of the foregoing. The change from the original manuscripts to the best extant critical text is so far a sacrifice of canonicity. But we know how little this really means, and how it is always becoming less. The calmness with which even the ordinary mind has taken all the discussion connected with the Revised New Testament, is creditable to public intelligence. We see that, to all intents and purposes, the word of God has not been lost in transcription, so that while we must draw the distinction, it is not a grave one, between the Bible as we have it, and as it first came from God.

Thirdly, We do not need to hold that the Bible is all, as to the matter of it, revealed for the first time.

No one can ever have held this, even when less freedom prevailed as to the question of Inspiration than now. * * * *

Fourthly, We do not need to hold that the Bible, as to the manner of it, is in such a sense the word of God, as not also to be the word of man. In recent times much more

*An address delivered in Stanley St. Presbyterian Church, Montreal.