

God of revelation made use of men of the most varied types and times and conditions; a book, then, which is not less human than it is divine, in which the human side is sometimes more prominent than the divine, and sometimes the divine more prominent than the human.

As man consists of a soul that is the life-giving principle in him, and of a body that receives from the soul its vitality, thus, too, in the Scriptures we can distinguish the inspiration as their central fact and life-giving spirit form their body—that is, the external features forming their periphery. Not as if we could say, “So far goes the inspiration, and there it ceases.” Just as the activity of the soul in the human body is felt even to the tips of the fingers, thus the spirit of inspiration permeates the whole of the Scriptures, from their centre to the farthest circumference, and of the whole is true what Isaiah says (xxxiv. 16). And yet there is always a difference in what in the Scriptures can be compared to the vital principle of the soul and to the life-receiving body. There are Old Testament selections, such as Psalm cxxx, which reflect almost completely already the religious standpoint of the New Testament, and there are others, like Esther ix. 7–10, in which the Old Testament standpoint is represented in an almost repellent, carnal phase. And yet the book of Esther belongs to the Old Testament Scriptures, for its purpose is to show us, according to its divine purpose and plan, how, on the one hand, the Sun of the New Testament was nearing the horizon, and how, on the other hand, the old covenant was becoming old and weak, more and more.

But why these thoughts to-day, at the annual celebration of our Jewish mission work? These thoughts are to prove to us that in those portions of the Scriptures, too, from which our mission work draws its authority and the certainty of being acceptable to God, the divine and the human are found together, and that, in accordance with the demands of the New Testament spirit, we must set aside the Old Testament restriction, in order not to forsake the Christian standpoint for that of pre-Christian Judaism.

As clear and light as the sun are those passages which proclaim it as our right and our duty to proclaim to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ; they are divine words which our Father in Heaven has put into the hearts and mouths of the Prophets and Apostles. Even more than this, they are direct divine words—words of Christ Jesus, in which the Old Testament longing for an earthly visible appearance of Jehovah have been fulfilled. Israel had the first right to the fruits of development. He Himself declares that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And He commands His disciples not to go into the streets of the Gentiles, or into the cities of the Samaritans, but to seek the lost sheep in Israel. But when after His death He as the Risen One had entered into the limitless life of perfection, in which His whole work is referred in a like manner to all men, the mission,