

which appear to be new; but when we come critically to analyze them, we soon discover that in principle and substance they are old, and that the only new thing about them is the mental idiosyncrasy of their author. The human mind is often the plaything of circumstances. A peculiar line of study, a favourite theory adopted from some school or master, not unfrequently an inherent longing for complete freedom of thought, and a consequent impatience of all real or fancied restraints of creed and traditional belief, so operate upon and influence the mind, that it becomes affected with a morbid scepticism, and is overcome with objections to the Divine authority of Scripture, which, were it brought into a healthier state, it would easily solve.

#### LINE OF EVIDENCE.

The basis of the external evidence of the Divine authority of the Bible is its own consistency. In the Bible we have a series of sixty-six books, written by some forty different authors, extending over a period of at least fifteen centuries, embracing an outline of leading events in the world's history, and discussing and developing subjects the most profound in mental, moral, and theological science; and all of them are in perfect harmony. To this there is no parallel in human literature, and there could be none. Unanimity among human authors upon such points would be impossible; and the unanimity of the sacred authors shows that they were all under the guidance of one omniscient, inspiring Spirit.

True, certain minute points of alleged discrepancy between the sacred writers have been pointed out by hostile critics, and these are supposed to be fatal to the claims of the Bible to Divine authority and infallibility. But it has been shown that every apparent discrepancy is capable of a satisfactory solution, when examined in an impartial spirit. Such examination, however, often requires skill, scholarship, and great research. We must look beyond the mere letter, and beneath the surface of things; we must take into account circumstances and events which are only dimly and partially revealed; and we must keep constantly in view the supernatural and predictive element which runs through the whole of the Bible, blending together, as it were, the past, the present, and the future. We must remember, too, that the Jews, who were the divinely appointed conservators of God's Word, often forgot and misrepresented, and even opposed, its teachings. Their religious history, therefore, which is sketched in the historical books of the Old Testament, not unfrequently appears to be at variance with the ordinances of God and the requirements of His worship. A failure to grasp these distinctive phases of the Sacred Writings has led to confusion, and has involved incompetent critics in a maze of difficulties and errors. The very harmony of the various books of the Old Testament, and the consistency and continuity of their history, springing from Divine guidance, have recently been adduced as proofs that the Old Testament, as we now have it, could not be of earlier date than the close of the Persian monarchy, in B.C. 331. Such harmony, it is alleged, either shows comparatively late authorship, or the results of comparatively late editorial revision. This is a shallow criticism, for it sets aside historic evidence; it ignores prophetic prescience; it practically eliminates, in fact, that which gives the Bible its distinctive place as a revelation from God.

The Bible is, in its whole plan and purpose, an historical revelation. The great truths which lie at the foundation of its theology, its ethical code, and its worship, were ever the same; but in their external development they were designedly adapted to the ever changing conditions of mankind, under the Patriarchal, the Mosiac, and the Christian economies. Typical rites and ceremonies, as well as social, national, and international regulations, and enactments, necessarily varied with the varying circumstances of the Jews in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Canaan, and during the captivity. In the historic revelations of God in the Bible all these changes were foreseen, and provided for, with a prescience which marked infinite wisdom. Laws and regulations