

mission of the curse? His very words lead your friend to the confession that beneath the law of natural heredity lies a law of moral heredity. And if such is the close and communal relationship of men to each other that "a strictly just God" can afflict one for another's sin, may he not in as strict justice bless one for another's righteousness? But, indeed, the transference of Christ's righteousness has more ap-

parent justice in it than the transference of parental sin; for we are but passively recipient of the sin, while by active consent we appropriate the righteousness. We long for, ask for, the latter. We connect ourselves voluntarily with Christ, by repenting of sin and putting on a new purpose of holiness. The very faith we exercise is a germinal righteousness.

CURRENT RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF CONTINENTAL EUROPE.

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Great diversity of views respecting the inspiration of Scripture prevails. Aside from all historical and critical questions, the doctrine depends on the relation God is held to sustain to man. Those who place Him beyond all sympathy and contact with human affairs, are only consistent when they deny the possibility of revelation. What is called historical criticism, is, in many cases, really philosophical, starting with the doctrine that should first be proved. A philosophy which denies that revelation and miracle are possible, has adopted a rule which must interpret away all that claims to be revealed or miraculous, whatever the historical testimony in its favor may be. From the time of Baur and Strauss to Wellhausen, this has been a favorite method of procedure with a class of writers who are apt to boast of being free from presuppositions.

Dr. E. Böhl, in his book, *To the Law and the Testimony* ("Zum Gesetz und zum Zeugnis"), opposes the destructive criticism of Wellhausen. He shows that this method is based on a philosophy which constructs history according to its preconceived notions. Böhl regards as fundamental for the criticism of the Old Testament a correct view of the law, the covenant, and prophetism, and investigates their meaning; but he also enters into a discussion of the origin of the separate books. He does not advocate a verbal inspiration, but defends Scripture as a reliable basis for faith and hope.

Even among the orthodox, the degree of inspiration is regarded as an open question. Few would probably go as far as the recently deceased theologian, Philippi, who held that "even the possibility of errors in secondary and accidental matters in Scripture must be denied *a priori*." Some simply claim that, as far as the plan of salvation is concerned, it gives absolute truth; others hold that Christ is the centre and substance of all revelation, and that the whole question is to be determined by the relation of the teachings to Him. No particular view of inspiration is regarded as a test of orthodoxy: the views respecting Christ are much more generally

held to be such a test. Sometimes a distinction is made between the word of God and the Scriptures which contain that word. It is held by more liberal theologians that, while special grace was given to sacred writers, their works have not the stamp of divine authority; only by criticism can it be determined what is true and valuable. Those of the negative school, of course, treat the Bible exactly like every other book. The question of inspiration must not, however, be confounded with that of the reliability of Scripture as the ground of Christian faith and practice. The appeal to inspiration of course has no weight with those who reject it. Respecting New Testament criticism in particular, the burning question is, whether the authors were eye-witnesses of what they relate, or, whether they were able and desirous to tell the truth? Except in works on dogmatics the doctrines of inspiration and revelation are but little discussed.

While liberal theologians speak of a general revelation of God through human consciousness or through the conscience, and put Scripture on the same level, or regard it as only a higher degree of this general revelation, the evangelical theologians insist on a difference in kind, and that, consequently, Christianity cannot be placed in the same line with Buddhism and other religions, but is peculiar, unique, and truly divine in its origin, though human in its adaptation. Scripture is thus viewed as both divine and human. Hofmann (of Erlangen) has promoted the view that Scripture is a history of the divine plan of salvation as it is realized in humanity; it is a record of the development of the kingdom of God. This development is organic, and the divine words and deeds adapt themselves to and enter into the peculiar circumstances of the times. Beck (of Tübingen) also viewed revelation as an organism, as the spirit and the spiritual life which God develops in this world. Prof. Kaehler (of Halle) speaks of Christianity as a history, in which a supernatural element is active. Out of the fullness of the separate elements of Scripture, faith finds that which is essential, and discovers the unity amid the diversity. The Christian religion is peculiar, in