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THE OLD TESTAMENT IN HISTORY; OR, REVELATION AND CRITICISM.

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CHRISTIAN students need not object to the aggressiveness of what is commonly styled Biblical Criticism; but they certainly have a right to complain of its rashness. Crude sentiments, partial and partisan views of history, mooted opinions, and even conjectures, are frequently put forth by many who claim to be authorities on such subjects, as if they could be combined into unquestionable arguments against our religious beliefs. And the speculative and sceptical theories based on such foundations are heralded through every avenue the press affords, and urged upon public opinion, as if they were the most solid fruits of scientific research.

It is of course practicable and proper to trace and expose such reasonings in detail. But the very popularity of such speculations suggests that it is desirable to go farther. The Scriptures have nothing to fear and everything to gain from the closest scrutiny. It invites the most thorough research. At the same time, there is one thing which modern criticism cannot do. It may attest, but it cannot *establish*, the truth of Scripture. That is already done. We maintain that it can be demonstrated that there is in history a basis for our faith in its truth, so broad and deep, that the argument to establish the truth of Scripture is a closed argument. Give criticism the most ample scope, and such is the might of the testimony already in our possession, that we may safely say beforehand, that whatever results it may attain, the truthfulness of the Scripture record will always remain, a fact beyond the possibility of intelligent denial.

This is the fact which we propose to illustrate. Before taking up the argument, we shall briefly invite attention to the rational-

istic theories in regard to the nature of the Bible and of inspiration, as set forth by the biblical critics to whom we have referred.

RATIONALISTIC THEORIES OF THE BIBLE AND INSPIRATION.

We are confronted with the fact that under the sounding name of Biblical Criticism, the credibility of Scripture, and especially of the Pentateuch, at least in that sense in which they are now and have always been received by the Church at large, is either deliberately questioned or boldly denied.

The theories formerly advocated by Spinoza, DeWette, Ewald, and recently by Kuenen, have been popularised in English literature by Bishop Colenso, by writers in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and by Professor W. Robertson Smith, of the Free Church of Scotland, in his "Lectures on the Old Testament in the Jewish Church." They assert: (1) That the Pentateuch is not of Mosaic authorship; (2) That it was not written in Mosaic times; (3) That its Ritual of Worship, in its present form, was the work of the later prophets; (4) That the name of Moses was affixed to these productions of later centuries, simply by way of a legal fiction.

These propositions challenge our attention. But before proceeding to consider them, let us disabuse our minds of the idea that they acquire any weight by being put forward under the name of Biblical Criticism. For the scope of that science—if it is a science—its functions, its methods, and its laws, are matters which are not themselves settled.

According to Davidson, its sole object is "to discuss all matters belonging to the form and history of the text, showing in what state it has been perpetuated and what changes it has undergone." According to Hagenbach, its province is "to decide the origin and authenticity, as well as the integrity of the sacred books." Between these definitions there is room for boundless speculation. And it may well be, as Delitzsch says, that "many of the former results of the critical schools are now out of fashion. Its present results often contradict each other." And Lange forcibly observes that "biblical criticism has been subjected to great errors, and requires, therefore, a criticism upon itself."

In view of these facts, and because of the great moral interests involved, Christian people have a right to complain of the flip-pant manner in which professed critics too often undertake the discussion of these high themes.

It would seem to most minds that the theories of those writers are disproved by their own principles. It is admitted by all of them that at least "the Scriptures *contain* the word of God." If, then, they maintain that the Pentateuch, on which the whole Scripture record is based, and with which all the other Scriptures are more or less involved—if these are untrustworthy, the rest of the record becomes clouded with suspicion. In that case, unless a new revelation shall separate the truth from the error, they must abandon that claim to our entire and unhesitating confidence which is indispensable to a rule of faith. And in that case the paramount authority of Scripture as a law of conscience, becomes a mere illusion; and it must have always been an illusion.

We cannot fix the period when the chosen people first possessed written records. But we know that contemporary peoples possessed them from the earliest antiquity. We know, however, that some of these records of their faith have existed for more than thirty centuries. They always regarded them as we now regard them. They knew them as the word of God, and so they have been regarded through all intervening time. And it is well known that God consented to this view of the Scriptures. We are asked to accept theories which imply an uninterrupted delusion on the part of all the ages, in reference to the true character of the record. It is implied also that they were deluded by divine consent, if not by divine approval. It is implied that during the larger part of the world's history, "his word was *not* truth," and that in carrying out his holy purpose of enlightening men by the truth, he preferred to make use of a corrupted record!

If this is a fair inference from those theories, it proves that the theories are untenable.

In order to present more clearly the point of view of those writers, we advert to their theory of the Bible as a book. In Prof. W. Robertson Smith's Lects., p. 25, he says: "We have got to go back step by step and retrace the history of the sacred

volume up to the origin of each separate writing which it contains. In doing this, we must use every light which can be brought to bear upon the subject. Every fact is welcome, whether it come from Jewish tradition or from a comparison of old MSS. and versions, or from an examination of the several books with one another, and of each book in its own inner structure.

“It is not needful, in starting, to lay down any fixed rules of procedure; the ordinary laws of evidence and good sense must be our guides. And these we must apply to the Bible, just as we should do to any other ancient book.”

But there is an objection to this statement; and it is fatal to the theory. The Bible has one unmistakable characteristic: it is God's Book. The controlling element of the Book is confessedly divine. Possibly you may not be able to say precisely how or in what measure the divine element is to be recognised. But if such an element dwells in it, you cannot deal with it just as with any other human book. The “Thus saith the Lord” in it creates a difference which no criticism can bridge over.

Let us try to conceive of each separate book of Scripture awaiting at the tribunal of modern criticism the separate decision which, when every one of those books shall have secured it, is to enable us to say to ourselves that the Bible is divine! In this case it is plain that there is no Bible for us until the process is completed.

But let us inquire whether, in that case, we should have one afterwards. We will suppose the decision favorable. But the verdict must be reached by a process of verification known only to an infinitesimally small proportion of mankind. It would be the decision of one class, and it would thoroughly commend itself only to the very small fragment of mankind who belong to that class. It would be practically shut out from every other. For it would not be possible to impart weight enough to the verdict of any school of biblical critics to satisfy the conscience of mankind. So that if we have no Bible now, it will never be in the power of biblical critics to give us one. The word of God is intended for mankind. It must needs bear its own credentials; and those credentials must be so decisive that the Book will speak

with authority, as it has always done, to the conscience of every race and every age.

Such being the nature of the Bible, the internal cannot be separated from the external evidences. You may take any ancient book and subject each particular part to an absolute criticism, and make the whole book dependent on the result of the process. But you could not deal in that way with a living organism. You could not take the eye, the arm, the foot, and the other members, and refuse to admit the reality of the whole body till you had tested each member. On the contrary, every member is studied in its relations to the whole. And in like manner the Bible is not to be dealt with "just as we should do to any other ancient book," for the divine element that dwells in it constitutes it a living unity. And we must conclude that the value of each individual part inevitably depends on the relations it sustains to the organic whole to which it belongs.

We cannot omit in this connexion some notice of their theory of inspiration. "To try to suppress the human side of the Bible," says W. Robertson Smith, *Leets.*, p. 19, "in the interests of the purity of the divine word, is as great a folly as to think that a father's talk with his child can be best reported by leaving out everything which the child said, thought, and felt. . . . All that earthly study and research can do for the reader of Scripture, is to put him in the position of the man to whose heart God first spoke."

The supposition here put forth is, that the individuals who received revelation understood it better than those who came after them. In regard to some of the most important communications ever made to man, we are expressly assured that such was not the case. If this were true, why should "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently what the Spirit of Christ in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory to follow"? Or, suppose we were to place ourselves in the mental and moral attitude of Isaiah, when he was inspired to record that glorious fifty-third chapter of his, will any man suppose for a moment that we should have a truer idea of its mean-

ing than we now have? Certainly not! The theory is contradicted by the facts of the history.

If the writer means that revelation is simply that consciousness of God's meaning which the inspired person possessed, it could only have a subjective reality. It would be simply a personal conviction, wrought by God himself; nor could it serve as a revelation to another until the same conviction was wrought in him by the same power. In such a case revelation could have no objective reality nor general authority.

The writer may mean, however, that revelation is objective, but modified by specific conditions. But if that were so, revelation would always need to be interpreted; and it could only be interpreted by discounting those conditions. In other words, to understand the significance of the text, we must first know perfectly the mind which received it; and then subtract from the natural meaning of the text all that was personal or local, or that belonged to the mind of the prophet. The result, according to this theory, would be the significance of the revelation for us.

The difficulties connected with this theory are too great to make the theory helpful. For, given the inspired message, we shall at once need the aid of another inspiration to discover all the influences which affected the prophet's moral or mental point of view. Again, we should need the aid of inspiration to balance those influences or to eliminate them. Again, we should need the aid of inspiration to verify our process of reasoning. And again, we should need the aid of inspiration to guarantee our conclusion. Such a theory implies that God is practically helpless, and frustrates his purpose in communicating his will or purpose to man. It proposes to relieve difficulties by multiplying them.

We turn away from these grotesque theories to the simple teaching of Scripture itself, and we see at once that the highest spiritual view of inspiration is at the same time perfectly natural. In conveying divine messages to mankind, the prophet is an instrument of God. Not a chance instrument, but a selected instrument; not a crude, unformed, or unsuitable instrument, but an instrument formed and adapted to his purpose; not an instru-

ment designed merely with reference to times and scenes then present, but one designed to correspond with his purpose, extending to all times, and embracing all subsequent progress. As bearers of their message, Scripture gives us to understand that those men perfectly suited the infinite knowledge and wisdom of God, as well as the weakness and limitations of the mind of man.

Those ideas touching the origin of the Pentateuch, the Bible as a book, and the nature of inspiration, are, as we have seen, self-destructive. A biblical criticism or a biblical scepticism which is founded on them, must therefore be fallacious. Although it might temporarily perplex, it could not control the mind of man. If not refuted, it must fall to pieces by its own weight.

The emergence of such theories from time to time seems to imply a providential purpose. It is a summons to the Church to reconsider the evidences with reference to the continually changing forms of thought and conditions of society, and to show by its response to the inquiries which attend every step of human progress, that it is a divine book.

We hold it to be a sufficient answer to speculations such as we have been considering, to point out the vital relations which subsist between the Bible and the history of mankind.

The question which lies at the threshold of the inquiry is, How has the world acquired the knowledge of a true system of faith and worship?

I. HISTORY EXHIBITS A REVEALED FAITH AND WORSHIP.

Experience makes it abundantly plain that reason cannot invent an adequate system of faith and worship. In the first place, man needs an authoritative disclosure of the doctrine of God. And the Bible declares itself to be an authoritative revelation of the righteousness of God. This is the peculiarity of the Bible. The moral instincts of man have always confessed that God is righteous. They have suggested many noble views of his character. But the complete and symmetrical picture of a perfectly righteous Being is found in the Bible alone.

The noblest production of the natural reason—the Nicomachean Ethics—is entirely unable to reach the idea of a Deity ruling the

world in righteousness, as the real foundation of social morality. Even if we could suppose to be gathered into one view all the ideas of God which are to be found scattered through the world of thought, and if we could further suppose that they would then form a complete and symmetrical whole, this would simply form a *conjecture* of God, and not an actual discovery. However beautiful the idea, our own speculations could not clothe it with certainty.

The same thing is true as to a perfect standard of morality. Reason may perceive many of the details of such a standard, but the rule must be promulgated by authority, in order to carry with it the binding obligation of law.

Conscience, moreover, has always confronted man with the fact that he is a sinner. This fact must impair the quality of all our moral ideas. We may presume that there would be a natural analogy between the truth and the religious notions of an unfallen being. But the taint and infirmity of a sinful nature must show themselves in lack of clearness of perception, of purity, and of moral energy. The bias of the mind to evil interposes an effectual barrier to a certain discovery of God and his Law; as the conflicting opinions of philosophy testify. Hence the whole subject of our relations to our Maker is involved in an obscurity that no eye but his own can penetrate. Thus the logic of our moral instincts points to the necessity of a knowledge which reason can but dimly conjecture, and to which reason can never lead us.

Yet reason indicates the drift of destiny. Always and everywhere it asserts that God is righteous and man a sinner. The conclusion is plain. Sooner or later the sinner must stand before God. And if there be no atonement, he must perish through the whole extent of his being.

Hence the question of all ages has been, "How shall man be just with God?" Historically, that question is the pivot on which the religious thought of mankind has turned. But here, reason moves in an unchanging circle. Increasing knowledge, development of experience, and changing civilisations shed no light on this question. Each succeeding age reiterates the questionings of those which preceded it. And under the unalter-

able conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, the question ever grows more urgent, more complicated, and more appalling. The solution of such a question can be found only in the purposes of God. Whether a righteous God can entertain a gracious purpose? whether he *has* done so? and if he has, how it can be made effectual for our safety? God only can know these things. He only could reveal them if they be so. And nothing less than his own explicit authority could warrant us in making such possibilities a basis of conduct and a rule of faith.

It is nevertheless a fact that the adorable mercy of God *has* devised and provided an atonement, and that by means of it there is secured for us a valid righteousness—"even the righteousness of faith." It is an astounding declaration that God can be "just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus;" and that "the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," even as "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This implies an entire change in the destiny of man. This new view of destiny so far transcends the capacity of reason, that we cannot accommodate ourselves to it, without a fuller knowledge of God and of ourselves. For that purpose we need a practical acquaintance with the nature and operation of the principle of righteousness by faith, its sufficiency for the heart and for the activities of life. Man needs a record as well as a doctrine. In other words, to fully realise the plan of mercy, we need just such a book as the Bible is.

The Bible sets forth the righteousness of God, in the proclamation of his attributes, in the record of his dealings with men and nations, and in his promulgation of a universal standard of moral obligation in the Decalogue. Here is law for man in all his relations to God and to society. Brief and simple, it is an exhaustive expression of God's righteous authority and of man's obligation to God.

The Bible illustrates the power of "the righteousness which is by faith," to satisfy the heart and conscience. It causes to pass before us the panorama of life, and shows how faith has entered every form of human experience and pervaded it; and how, by

its transforming power, life's weakness was made strong, its darkness changed into light, its sorrow turned to joy, and death itself was converted into a messenger of hope.

The Bible illustrates the fact that "righteousness by faith" is a potential principle of life. There were the patriarchs under the overshadowing influence of the earlier civilisations, in the world but not of it, calmly but effectively, through the victory of faith, overcoming the world.

There was enslaved and helpless Israel rising against the consolidated strength of Egypt into a nationality which lasted longer than that of ancient Rome. There was David, the man after God's own heart, going forth single-handed from the sheepfold, and winning his way to greatness and dominion. In these and hundreds of other cases, faith found no aid nor sympathy in worldly surroundings, but came in direct collision with every other power and principle by which men live, and like the rod of Moses among the enchantments of Pharaoh, proved its supremacy by overcoming them all. It is thus made manifest that it is a principle of God's moral government, that "the just shall live by faith." The voice of God himself is speaking in this manifold experience of men through so many ages. It invests the doctrine with his constant endorsement. It is the unmistakable proof that it has been revealed by his authority, and that the utterances of the Bible concerning it, are the inspired word of God.

A Revealed System of Worship.

It is only in the Bible that we find an adequate system of religious worship.

The considerations which show that man cannot form an adequate conception of God and his authority, also show that he cannot devise a system of worship adequate to express the kind of homage we owe, or need to bring us into communion with him. The impulse which prompts men to seek God, at the same time prompts us to use methods of worship to propitiate him.

Those methods have been as various as the points of view, the surroundings, the moral or the intellectual conditions of men. By means of images or objects gathered from the whole range of

material nature, they symbolised man's highest conception of God, and represented reason's highest conception of what is due to God, and what is pleasing to him.

It was the boast of philosophy that "man is the measure of all things." This stipulates for a religion which flatters the pride of intellect, ministers to the vanity of display, and gratifies men with a moral standard congenial to their inclinations. But as this is the highest to which man can attain, it simply proves that a revealed worship of God is as truly necessary as a revealed doctrine of God. History teaches that symbolism misrepresents God and degrades our idea of him, by substituting in place of God a creation of fancy. The worship of God by means of symbols, leads to the worship of the symbols themselves. It generates a morality which is based upon a perverted or false idea of the divine character, a morality corrupt, gross, revolting, and destructive of society. There can be no more perfect description of the pernicious effects of symbolism on the mind and heart than the apostle gives in the first chapter of Romans. It is a description which all history confirms.

The chosen people were solemnly prohibited from symbolism in every form. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Ex. xx. 4, 5. Yet symbolism was destined to play a tragic part in their history.

But here we must observe the great difference between the symbolism inaugurated by them and that of the heathen nations. The Israelites worshipped the true God. They based their symbolism on their conception of the God of their fathers; it was a low conception, and their symbolism represented a low conception. But it was different from that of the heathen. At the same time it was apostasy, as it involved a rejection of God's appointed method of worship. It is startling to see this evil tendency finding expression in the solemn presence of Sinai itself. Their conception of God and their worship were idolatrous, no doubt. But they did

not consider their worship of the golden calf apostasy, any more than the ten tribes did who followed Jeroboam.

“Behold thy Elohim which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” 1 Kings xii. 28. “And Aaron proclaimed a feast unto Jehovah.” Ex. xxxii. 5.

Ezekiel, ch. xx, develops the fact that though often dealt with for their apostasy, the generation that left Egypt cherished idolatrous conceptions of God throughout the whole of the desert life. Under the Judges, their history is a constant succession of reformations and relapses and chastisements. But the most striking example of the deadly struggle between the carnal reason and the dictates of faith, is found in the example of the wisest of men, the builder of the temple and organiser of the temple worship, King Solomon. State policy led to heathen alliances; and then conjugal affection led him to temporise with idolatry, and then he is found building altars and offering incense and sacrifices to Chemosh and Moloch. 1 Kings xi.

This would seem to be nothing less than heathenism and sheer apostasy. Yet we find this very man so sensitive to the honor of Jehovah, that he would not let his Egyptian wife dwell in the house of David, because the ark had been there. 2 Chron. viii.

Still, the Lord communicated with him. The comment on his course is merely that “his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God.” 1 Kings xi. 4. Now this may imply grievous error, but it does not imply absolute heathenism.

The relaxed morality of the wise king yielded to the subtle sophistry that there must be some common ground of truth and right between the worship of Jehovah and that of the false gods. This granted, there was nothing to hinder a Jewish pantheon. And does not even a Christian poet sing:

“Father of all, in every age,
In every clime adored;
By saint, by savage, or by sage,
Jehovah! Jove, or Lord!”

[Pope's Ode to the Deity.

The poet goes farther than the king. He endorses the pantheon of Solomon, and then embraces the logical result. He

claims that the worship of Jove, one of the vilest creations of depraved fancy, is *identical* with the worship of the holy Jehovah. The king did not thus confound the identity of Chemosh with that of Jehovah, nor the altar of Moloch with that of the temple. He proposed merely to add to the revealed worship, not to ignore its distinctive character. He ventured to add to the word of God. To add to God's word is to corrupt it. It is apostasy from the truth, and leads to the confusion of all moral distinctions. This was the apostasy of Solomon. And for this, the kingdom was rent from his house for ever. 1 Kings xi.

When Jeroboam set up the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel, the fact that we meet with no great public outcry against it, shows how much corrupted public sentiment had already become. Yet it was not his purpose in doing this to renounce the worship of Jehovah. He imitated the institutions of the temple, and made a feast "like unto the feast that is in Judah," and refused to admit that he had rebelled against the Lord. 1 Kings xii. 32. All he aimed at was to substitute a different *form* of worship for that which had been revealed. Between this and the worship of Baal there was a marked difference. And this is indicated both in 1 Kings xvi. 32, where Ahab's raising an altar to Baal is noted as a greater sin; and in 2 Kings x. 28, where Jehu is commended for overthrowing the worship of Baal, though he did not give up the worship of the calves; and 2 Kings iii. 2, where Jehoram is said to be a better man than his father, because, although guilty of the worship of the calves, he was not guilty of the worship of Baal. But though not meant for apostasy or idolatry, that was what, both in form and substance, the abandonment of the revealed worship became. Baal and Ashtaroath were the sure result, with all their multiplied abominations. The rejection of the exact form of revealed worship was followed by the rejection of "the statutes and the covenant;" and the ruin of Israel is traced back to Jeroboam's symbolism. 2 Kings xvii.

The Kingdom of Judah.

In the kingdom of Judah the revealed worship had every guaranty of protection; the presence of the temple and its imposing

worship rose continually before them. It appealed to their national pride; they taunted the Israelites with having forsaken the God of their fathers, and boasted of being the exclusive custodians of the national honor. It was to the interest of the whole Levitical tribe, now settled in Judah, to animate the religious life of the people. The limited extent of the kingdom now brought the whole population in close neighborhood to Jerusalem, and under its influence the religion of the temple was the religion of State, and could not be rejected while the State lasted. And besides this, the frequent succession of pious kings checked idolatrous tendencies, produced great religious revivals, and restored the worship of Jehovah to supremacy. Hence there could be no analogy between the history of the public apostasy of Judah and that of Israel.

It would seem that the form of their apostasy was suggested by Solomon himself; his influence was no less fatal to Judah than that of Jeroboam had been to Israel. Like Solomon, his successors and the people set up other altars, and worshipped other gods, doubtless influenced by the same spirit of compromise; possibly supposing that concession to heathen conscientiousness implied a liberality of spirit which could not be disloyalty to Jehovah. But to abase the highest conception of worship is to undermine it, and to prepare the way for abandoning it. It was so in their case. "According to the number of thy cities so were thy gods, O Judah." Jer. xi. 13. Their worship degenerated amid the hymns of the temple, and the degeneracy was rapid. The obstacles interposed by the reigns of the pious kings were but temporary, and the current only rushed on the more rapidly when the obstacles were removed. Spiritual worship died out with spiritual life. The rationalised liberalism which tolerated other altars and other worships, came to prefer foreign altars and neglect the temple. The temple worship was practically supplanted. And kings, priests, and people gave themselves up to idolatry. At length they did after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of Jehovah. Therefore them that escaped the sword he carried away to Babylon: to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

The history of Israel, united or divided, shows that rationalism in the worship of God, even when combined with revealed truth, inevitably leads to the darkness, the degradations, and corruptions of idolatry. A true worship, as well as true doctrine, addresses itself to faith, to a conception of God higher than our own. Hence the necessity of a revealed worship. The prosperity and virtue which marked the career of the chosen people while they adhered to the revealed worship, and the disaster and ruin that attended their apostasy, stand as the historic affirmation of its divine authority.

All history shows the inability of human reason to devise an adequate system of faith or worship. The fact that we find them in the Bible is a conclusive proof that the Bible came from God.

II. THE WITNESS AND REPRESENTATIVE: THE SECOND HEBREW COMMONWEALTH.

The Appointed Witness.

But suppose we are asked to verify the ancient record of revelation; to show that we possess it in the form in which it was originally given. Who are the witnesses? We must admit that there is but one people who were qualified to testify on that subject, namely, the people who were originally entrusted with the oracles of God.

But as the record of revelation is at the same time their national record, it is important to ascertain whether they ever occupied a position sufficiently external to the record to warrant us in considering their statements as independent evidence. This question is answered in the second Hebrew commonwealth. This history is in some respects anomalous. Until the Captivity, national events, and even personal incidents, are set down with a minute particularity unknown to any other ancient history. But suddenly this is all changed. From the completion of the second temple the sacred record seems to lose sight of the chosen people. They entirely drop out of the history. We see the story, springing like the curve of an arch from among the times of Ezra and Malachi, and then it fades away until we see the other foot of the

arch planted amid the surroundings of New Testament times, but of the sweep of the curve or the length of the span there is no inspired writer to tell us a word.

It is true that the record of revelation under the Old Testament dispensation was closed. The last word of the last prophet had been spoken. Nothing remained but to fulfil what had been declared. The Jews themselves do not claim canonical authority for their records of this period. The period from Malachi to John the Baptist does not belong to sacred history. But neither does it belong to profane history. It simply bridges the gulf which separated them. And this doubtless was its purpose: to form the connecting link between the inspired story and the history of mankind.

The Jews are no longer the subject of the sacred record. They thenceforth stand outside of it. But they are its expounders, its representatives, and its official witnesses. And through the whole of this eventful period, they stand like an appointed herald, proclaiming testimony to the world.

For this great work they were fitted, from the fact that the second commonwealth was a theocratic republic, whose capital was Jerusalem, but whose branches extended throughout the world.

The Historic Faith.

The hand of Providence had been preparing the Jews for a great mission; and the Captivity had much to do with it.

“One of the most momentous and mysterious periods in the history of humanity is that brief space of the Exile. What were the influences brought to bear upon the captives, we do not know. But this we know, that from a reckless, lawless, godless populace they returned transformed into a band of puritans. The religion of Zerdusht, though it has left its traces in Judaism, fails to account for that change. Nor does the Exile itself account for it. Many and intense as are the reminiscences of its bitterness and its yearnings for home that have survived in prayer and song; yet we know that when the hour for liberty struck, the forced colonists were loath to return to the land of their fathers. Yet the change is there, palpable, unmistakable, a change which we

may regard as almost miraculous. Scarcely aware before of the existence of their glorious national literature, the people now began to press round these brands plucked from the fire, the scanty records of their faith and history, with a fierce and passionate love." Deutsch on the Talmud.

And from that time the Jews became a nation of witnesses. The home of their faith was Jerusalem; but its children were scattered through the world. A vast number remained between the Tigris and the Euphrates, whence they circulated through the farther East. And of those that returned to Palestine, war and persecution expatriated some; ambition carried others to the marts of commerce and political centres, where intelligence and capacity met the highest rewards. And inasmuch as their mechanical skill, industry, and thrift were notorious, the founders of new cities often coveted them as citizens, and deported them in large numbers to the new cities, such as Alexandria or Antioch. They were well known in every part of the empire. "It is hard," says Strabo, "to find a place in the habitable earth that has not admitted this tribe of men, and is not possessed by them." Jos. Antiq., 14, 7, 2.

"And if," exclaims Agrippa, appealing to the Emperor, "you are kind to the Jewish people, it will be felt throughout the world, for they are found in every part of it." Philo. Every civilised people came in contact with the Jews. But though associated by material interests with the people in Asia, Africa, and Europe, they nevertheless remained a peculiar people. Their faith rose like a wall, to separate them from every other belief and worship and isolated them from every other people. In this they were exclusive and uncompromising; and it was construed as a badge of universal hatred and defiance.

"An accursed race!" cries out the courtly Seneca.

"Superstitious observers of Sabbath," says Juvenal; "adoring no deity but the clouds and sky; regarding pork as if it were human flesh; practising circumcision; trained in contempt of the laws of the Romans, and neither studying, practising, nor reverencing anything but the Judaic law, and whatever Moses transmits in his mysterious book. They will neither discover the way to a

benighted traveller, nor a fountain, except to such as are circumcised like themselves." Satire XIV."

"Connected among themselves," says Tacitus, "by the most obstinate and inflexible faith, the Jews extend their charity to all of their own creed; but towards the rest of mankind they nourish a sullen and inveterate hatred." Hist., V., 5.

These declarations are the unmistakable utterances of minds profoundly hostile to the Jews. But they represent the universal sentiment of intelligent men. And making due allowance for the coloring of prejudice, it is a most emphatic and convincing testimony to the loyalty of the Jews to their ancestral faith, and to their belief that their sacred records were divine.

At the same time, the Jews were rendering an equally conspicuous testimony to their faith by the national life in Palestine. The location of their country, "in the midst of the nations," on the great highway of war and commerce, brought them into contact with every dominant civilisation. As each great world power rose and fell, the Jews changed masters and came into new political relations, but always exhibiting as their political characteristic the Mosaic institutions. And so, all along the march of empire, their faith was proclaimed as a public factor in the political life of the world. Brought into contact and into contrast with every code of ethics, every form of intellectual culture and of religious worship in the ancient world, they maintained and reasserted their peculiar institutions, and their national individuality, before them all.

In the terrible persecutions which befel them, their faith inspired them with a fortitude that survived all calamities. The attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to make them accept the religion of the Greeks, poured upon them for a quarter of a century all the horrors of heathen invasion. Their cities were burned to the ground, their fields were desolated, the women and children were exposed to the most exquisite tortures which Satanic cruelty could devise, the people were driven for refuge to the caves of the wild beasts. But their faith and courage did not falter; they preferred martyrdom to apostasy.

The Romans first patronised them, and afterwards oppressed

them. "Let all kings take care," exclaims the Roman Senate, "that they do no harm to our friends, the Jews." But when the Romans knew them better, they changed their tone. "It is a people," says Caligula, "that I hate more than any other in the world." This was the language of their masters. And "How sad," is the mournful comment of Philo, "how sad must be the lot of the slave whose master is his foe!"

Fidelity to their faith lay at the root of all their antagonisms with the Gentile world. It was a voice of protest and of judgment against heathenism. There was neither toleration nor compromise. And the world resented their fidelity with hatred and persecution.

"What people," exclaims Josephus, "have ever before died for their sacred records?" Had a shadow of doubt rested on the inspiration of those records, human nature could not have endured the ordeal through which that people passed. It would have sought shelter in compromise or despair. But their convictions were absolute. This is the only possible explanation of their history. When all their earthly hopes were overthrown, and the city and the temple were finally destroyed, they stood weeping, but inflexible, among the smoking ruins of the holy city. Despair itself could excite no suspicion of the divine character of those records, whose prophetic meaning was the seal of the national destruction.

The Historic Worship.

Their religious worship also was a guaranty of the authenticity of the Pentateuch.

At the establishment of the second commonwealth, Cyrus announced his purpose to restore the ancient worship. With that view the temple was rebuilt and dedicated. Hence, while the commonwealth lasted, the temple and its services stood as the representative of a religious worship which was associated with the times that preceded the captivity.

The customs of the Jewish nation at large is valid evidence on this subject. The Jews were, indeed, the only nation of antiquity which could give a *national* testimony to their religion. With the Romans religion was chiefly the prerogative of the Patricians;

among the Greeks its real significance was reserved for those initiated into the mysteries; among the Egyptians it was held in the custody of the priests; but among the Jews it was the possession of the whole people. It belonged no more to the prince than to the peasant, to the master than to the slave, to the learned than to the unlearned. The humblest shepherd was as much interested in its benefits as the high priest himself. This, therefore, was a religion to which the whole people could be witnesses; and such they were. Everywhere, as the Roman writers tell us, they had the same records, the same rites, the same domestic observances, the same community worship, the same connexion with the national religion through the annual feasts at Jerusalem. And this the Jews themselves claimed. "We have one sort of discourse about God, which is conformed to our law; one way of speaking of the conduct of life, and that all other things should have piety for their end. This you may hear even from our women and servants." *Jos. Cont. Apion*, 2, 20.

Here is the phenomenon of a people scattered over the world, whose principles, customs, and habits of thought are cast into the same inflexible mould. There is no explanation of it in any existing influences. There is no analogy in the history of any other nation. We must look to their origin, and admit that the Jewish advocate must be correct when he says: "Our legislator . . . not only prevailed on his contemporaries to agree to his views, but so firmly imprinted this faith in God upon all their posterity, that it could never be removed." *Cont. Apion*, 2, 17.

We find that the injunctions connected with the original giving of the law, provide for exactly this result. The legislator, *Deut.* vi. 6, says: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates."

The Institutions of Education.

Furthermore, a whole tribe was officially consecrated to the work of education. It was said of this tribe, Deut. xviii. 2: "They shall have no inheritance among their brethren, the Lord is their inheritance." "And of Levi, he said, . . . they shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law." Deut. xxxiii. 8. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should ask the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." Mal. ii. 7. The family of Aaron was set apart "to teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." Lev. x. 11. In the great reformation under Josiah, it was the Levites who were sent through the country to teach the law. 2 Chr. xvii. 8. Hezekiah, we find, 2 Chr. xxx. 22, "spake comfortably unto all the Levites, that taught the good knowledge of the Lord."

It was appointed that the Levites should be distributed among all the tribes, and domiciled in forty-eight cities. Thus the official teachers were brought into the neighborhood of every community. No part of the country was left unprovided with instruction in the law. Nor was there any room for the introduction of any other teaching except through apostasy, which, according to the law, was to be punished with death. Deut. xiii.

It might happen that there were some among the poor who felt unable to attend regularly the national feasts at Jerusalem. But that could not hinder the Sabbath and its services, and the Sabbatical year, from coming to them. And if there was no obstacle to a constant observance of the laws of Moses, when the Jews were scattered all over the globe, there could be no serious difficulty in the way when all the tribes were living together in a territory not as large as the State of South Carolina.

Their system of education was a part of the national constitution and history. And this is the explanation of the indelible impress made by the Mosaic institutions. Hence, Josephus vindicates Jewish customs by this fact, in his discourse against Apion, 2, 17. As he says: "Moses did not ordain religion to be a part of virtue, but he saw and ordained other virtues to be a part of religion. . . . There are two ways of arriving at learning and

moral conduct, by verbal instruction and by practice. . . . These he joined together. He left not practice to go without instruction nor hearing the law without exercise in it; but beginning at earliest infancy, and the appointment of every one's diet, he left nothing of the smallest consequence to be done at the pleasure and disposal of the person himself. He made a law what sort of food they should abstain from; what intercourse they should have with others, their labor and rest; that by living under the law as under a father or master, we should not be guilty voluntarily or by ignorance. He did not suffer the guilt of ignorance to go unpunished, but showed the law to be the most necessary of all instruction, permitting the people to cease from their employments, to assemble for hearing the law and learning it with precision; and this not once nor twice nor oftener, but every week."

This system of training continued through successive generations, must have produced its effect. It accounts for the uniformity and persistency of the religious worship of the Jews. Nothing less *can* account for it. And it qualified them to assert the Mosaic authority of their institutions. This was practically illustrated when, after the reading of the law by Ezra, Neh. ix., the people attested and endorsed it as the law of Moses.

The correctness of the record was thus maintained by the checks and balances which grow out of a wide diffusion of intelligence, and was guaranteed by the official functions of the tribe of Levi.

The Literary Tribe.

The documents were deposited in the side of the ark, which was under their care. It would be no less true of them—as Josephus observes—than of the Babylonian and Egyptian priests, that as a matter of course they should be entrusted with the care of the sacred records and the public registers. No other class was so fit; nor was there any place so appropriate as the temple for a public library. And if, in the course of centuries, the ancient records should come to require explanation, this was the class whose prerogative and official duty it would be to note such explanations on the margin of the record.

This was a tribe of professional scholars. They furnished the

literary officials for the State. David appointed six thousand of them as officers and judges. 1 Chron. xxiii. 4. Under Solomon, Josiah, and Hezekiah, they appear under the name of scribes, and are found in positions of the highest rank. They are finally better known by their official title than by their tribal name, and bear the name of scribes, instead of the name of Levites. It was their special business to give the official *imprimatur* to copies of the law, and to reproduce copies from the official copies. The Talmud says, they were called *soferim*, from the word *saphar*, "to count," because it was their duty to count the words of the law. In the New Testament times the scribes were the acknowledged teachers of the law. "A *sopher* must be in every synagogue, to read and expound the law." Wise, see Heb. Com., p. 34. Thus professionally and historically identified with the law, they were as a class responsible for its accuracy. And thus from the time it was given, they constituted the strongest possible barrier against innovation or change.

The second Hebrew Commonwealth is an historic monument of the authenticity of the Old Testament, indorsing it by the national life and institutions, and by the universal faith and worship. It is a chapter of history almost forgotten. Shut out from the sacred record and from the world's proud story, it is seemingly rejected of both. Yet this is the indispensable link which joins them in living unity. And so, like the stone which the builders rejected, it has become a head stone of the corner.

III. AN AUTHENTICATED CANON: THE SUPREME COURT OF THE THEOCRACY.

To this evidence, which seems to be entirely conclusive, we may add that which is afforded by the Jewish courts of law.

The Mosaic constitutions made all needful provisions for carrying the law into effect. "Judges and officers shalt thou make in all thy gates." Deut. xvi. 18. The elders, or heads of families in each community, were to constitute a local court. Deut. xix. 11.

For litigated cases, and such as involved the most important interests, there was to be a high court of appeal, whose decision was final. Deut. xvii. 8.

There can be no doubt that it was such a court that Jehoshaphat intended to organise when he established the supreme court, described in the nineteenth chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles:

“In Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites and of the priests, and of the fathers of the people, for the judgment of the Lord and for controversies. . . . And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, and with a perfect heart. And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgment; ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you and upon your brethren. . . . And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord, and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites shall be officers before you.”

The number of members composing this court is not stated, neither is any distinctive title assigned it. It is designated simply by the classes of which it was composed, the priests, Levites, and elders of the people. Its organisation was simple but effective. It was such a court as might be easily constructed, easily assembled, easily perpetuated, and easily reorganised, if at any time it should be disbanded. Being founded in the constitution of the theocracy, and composed of representatives of the three great classes of the nation, it must always command public respect and confidence, and be a natural recourse and a supreme judicial authority.

Just such a high court we find in New Testament times, similarly organised and constituted, with its civil and ecclesiastical president; its membership of priests, elders, and Levites or scribes, with Levites or scribes for its officers, and designated by the classes of its membership. “Wherever the New Testament mentions the priests, the elders, and the scribes together,” says Emanuel Deutsch, “it means the great Sanhedrim. This constituted the highest ecclesiastic and civil tribunal. It consisted of seventy-one members, chosen from the foremost priests, the heads of families and tribes, and the learned, that is, the scribes

or lawyers." These classes are so associated in Matt. xvi. 21; xxvi. 3; Mark viii. 31; xi. 27; xiv. 43; xiv. 53; xv. 1; Acts iv. 5; vi. 12; etc.

That the Sanhedrim, as found in New Testament times, was recognised as a supreme constitutional court is clear from its composition, its organisation, its powers, its descriptive title; from the fact that it appealed for authority to Deut. xvii. 9, and from the fact that the Targums give the same name to the courts of the ancient State, as in Isa. xxviii. 6; Ruth iii. 1, and iv. 1; Ps. cxl. 10; and Eccles. xii. 12.

The Chaldee paraphrase on the Song of Songs asserts that the Sanhedrim existed during the Babylonian captivity. This was the opinion of Selden, of Leusden, of Grotius, and Reland. Sanhed., in Kitto. It would be impossible to account for the unanimous and elevated sentiment among the Jews at their return, without supposing some high and controlling judicial authority to have been among them during the times preceding. We have no precise nor positive evidence, however, on this point. But it is a striking fact, that as soon as the record resumes their history, we meet in the designation of the governing authority among them the precise phraseology which, both in the Old Testament and the New, is used to characterise their supreme court.

Ezra tells us, i. 5, that the chief of the fathers, the priests, and the Levites, initiate the return. It was the ancient men of "the priests, Levites, and fathers," whose weeping was so significant when they compared the second temple with the glory of the first. Ezra iii. 12. When Ezra despatched his costly contribution, viii. 29, he directed the messengers to report to "the chief of the priests, and the Levites, and the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem." And the plan to secure a better observance of the Law, was the result of a conference between Ezra and "the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites." Neh. viii. 13. The building of the temple and the city walls plainly required the supervision of some constituted authority; who it was is not stated in direct terms. But we find that the Mishna claims that it was the exclusive prerogative of the Sanhedrim to authorise additions to the temple, or to the walls of the city. Hile. Sanh., i. 5.

The edict of Darius was in these words: "Let the governor of the Jews, and the elders of the Jews, build this house of God on its place." Ezra vi. 7. Now, according to 2 Chron. xix. 8, the governor of the Jews, Zerubabel, prince of the house of Judah, was entitled to be the secular President of the Sanhedrim. And in verse 14 the elders who were associated with him in the decree, are represented as having themselves the control of the work. A comparison of the two passages plainly suggests that he was the official head of an organised body.

The Civil Government.

During the second commonwealth, their several masters, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, and Romans, allowed the Jews to govern themselves according to their own usages. The only attempt against their religious liberties was made by Antiochus Epiphanes, which resulted in the political independence of the Jews, after a war of twenty-five years.

Their government was a revival of the Theocracy, in a form stricter than ever known among them before. And it may be safely assumed that a people so tenacious of the minutest details of their laws, would not be satisfied with a mode of administering their laws which was not based on the best established and universally accepted Mosaic authority. The form of government, says their historian Josephus, Antiq., xi. 4, 8, "was aristocratic, but mixed with an oligarchy; for the high priests were at the head of their affairs, until the posterity of the Asmoneans set up kingly government." From this, it appears that the high priest was the head of an oligarchy, and the chief executive of the state. On many occasions we find him occupying the foremost position in their political intercourse with other nations. This explains why it was that their heathen rulers claimed the right to appoint the high priest. It was because he was also the representative of the state. And we find that Jonathan the Maccabee actually accepted the appointment to the high priesthood from Alexander, King of Syria. Jos. Antiq., x. 2, 2.

Josephus gives copies of a number of Roman decrees which recognise the high priest as Ethnarch of the Jews. Antiq., xiv.

10. And we find that as soon as the Maccabees had won the national independence, the people elected them to the high priesthood, and from that time they exercised the function of civil rulers, and transmitted the high priesthood as an inheritance along with the royal dignity. The attempt to separate the two offices, and divide them between the sons of Alexander Jannæus, paved the way for the usurpation of Herod and the extinction of the Asmonean race.

But if Josephus does not clearly designate the oligarchy which was associated with the high priest in the government, it is elsewhere referred to with sufficient plainness. He says, *Antiq.*, xii. 3, 12, that Antiochus the Great was received by "the Senate of the Jews," and that he granted them that they should be "governed by their own laws." He also reports a friendly letter, addressed to the Lacedæmonians by Jonathan the Maccabee "and the Senate." From such casual references it appears that the oligarchy associated with the high priest was a national assembly regularly constituted and organised.

An incident in the life of Herod, afterwards king, throws some light on the authority and power of this body. In his triumphant career as general in Galilee, Herod, on his own responsibility, executed a certain robber chief. The Sanhedrim at once decided that this was an infringement of its authority, denying the right even of a general in the field to inflict capital punishment without its authority. Hyrcanus II., at that time high priest and king, very reluctantly yielded to the demand of the Sanhedrim to summon Herod for trial. The Roman authorities became alarmed for Herod, and urged Hyrcanus to save him. With the influence of the king and the Roman government on his side, Herod escaped with his life. But he thought it necessary to his safety to leave the country until the danger should blow over. The incident shows how great and how firmly rooted was the power of the Sanhedrim, or Senate, among the Jewish people.

In the theocratic sense, the kingship could scarcely be said to exist. Royalty was simply a function of the high priesthood. The Sanhedrim was the great representative assembly, composed of priests, Levites, and Israelites. *Sanh.* iv. 2. Its jurisdiction

extended over all civil and ecclesiastical affairs. This was the oligarchy over which the high priest presided. According to Josephus, he presided at the trial of Herod. Ant. xiv. 9, 4. And also at the trial of the Apostle James. Ant. xx. 9, 1. He also presides in all those cases which are reported in the New Testament, as cases of trial before the Sanhedrim.

The powers of this body are enumerated in the Mishna. Sanh. i. 5. It may pass sentence on a tribe, or excommunicate a city; it can judge the high priest himself; it can declare war, or investigate the charge of blasphemy; or authorise to enlarge the walls of the city, or the porch of the temple; and the Sanhedrim must decide as to a false prophet. The king cannot go to war but under the authority of the Sanhedrim. And even the functions of the high priest on the great day of Atonement were under their supervision.

Such a body would be an effectual check on despotic government. It was thoroughly crippled by Herod, who massacred its principal members before he felt secure in his usurped authority.

The Sanhedrim.

The word Sanhedrim being Greek, many hold that the institution itself is modern, dating from the Greek domination, which began about three centuries before our era. It is a sufficient answer, that among a people so tenacious of their institutions as the Jews, it would not have been possible for such a body to arise suddenly in the history, and at once secure control of all civil and ecclesiastical power, without leaving some trace of conflict with previously existing authority. But as far back as it can be traced, the supremacy of this body is undisputed.

After the overthrow of the Persians by Alexander, it became necessary for the Jews to hold official intercourse with nations who used Greek as the court language. At that time the Greek became the polite language of the world, and prevailed in Palestine and throughout the East. In their new relations, a Greek term was most naturally chosen to designate "the highest judiciary and legislative body in the Hebrew commonwealth." Wise, p. 59. And no term could be more appropriate for a body whose

functions were so comprehensive. Polybius uses it as the equivalent of the Latin word *Senatus*. It is the equivalent of our English word "a council." The translators of King James' Version and the revisers of the New Testament so translate it. In every instance in which the word Sanhedrim occurs in the original, they translate it by the word Council, which is more than a dozen times. There is nothing, then, in the word itself which necessarily indicates modern ideas. If it were required to represent the most ancient institution of this kind to foreign ideas, this is just the most suitable title that could be employed.

But in different circumstances and at different periods, this body had been known by very different names. After the fall of Jerusalem, it resumed its more ancient title, and was called the Beth-Din, or House of Judgment. Grätz, iv. 4. In the New Testament times it had been styled the *Gerousia*. Acts v. 21. And also "the Presbytery of the people." Luke xxii. 66. In the time of the Maccabees it had been known as the Beth-Din of the Asmoneans; and before their time it was the Beth-Din of the high priests. Wise, pp. 59, 111.

In addition to these titles, more or less special, we find one in common use among the people directly associating it with Old Testament times. We have given instances of the parallel designations in the Old and New Testament by the enumeration of the classes of its membership—Priests, Levites, and elders, or Israelites, which is also the form used in the Mishna. There is also another form strikingly peculiar. The Old Testament frequently refers to a constituted authority, styled the *Zekenim* or Elders. Ezek. viii. 11. "The elders of the house of Israel." Lam. ii. 10. "The elders of Zion." Joel i. 14, and ii. 20. "Gather, assemble the elders." Ezra v. 5. "The eye of God was upon the elders." Ezra vi. 8. "The elders of the Jews." Ezra vi. 14. "The elders of the Jews builded and prospered." Ezra x. 8. "The council of the princes and elders." We find this very term in common use among the people in New Testament times to designate the Sanhedrim. And as the Jews were entirely and jealously attached to Old Testament ideas, we cannot avoid the conclusion that public sentiment identified the Sanhedrim with

the *Zekenim* of the sacred records. Here, then, we have an oligarchy, which, with the high priest as its president, naturally constituted the government of the state. It was composed of the chief men of the three classes of the nation; it held its sessions in the temple; it exercised control of all civil and ecclesiastical affairs; it founded its authority on the Mosaic constitutions; it was constituted and organised in the same way as the supreme court of Jehoshaphat, which, from its first appearance in history, is clothed with the highest authority, and which has existed from time immemorial. The constitutional position and legal authority of the Sanhedrim is attested by our Lord himself when he says, Matt. xxiii. 2, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in the seat of Moses, whatever therefore they bid you to observe, that observe and do."

The Mishna.

This celebrated tribunal has left us a large collection of ancient usages, ceremonial directions, and statutory enactments. Some of them may have come down from Mosaic times, others are as recent as the second century of our era. They have been classified and recorded in the Mishna, which comprises a system of directions for the minutest details of civil and ecclesiastical life. For a long time these regulations were transmitted by memory or kept as private memoranda, and they compose what is called the Oral Law. The mass became so great that several attempts were made to compile them. The work was begun by Hillel about 30 B. C., and completed by Rabbi Hakkadosh, about the close of the second century. And though prepared simply for private use, to aid him in his lectures to the School of Tiberias, they have ever since been accepted as standard authority.¹

¹The TALMUD is the embodiment of the civil and canonical law of the Jews. The word means Learning, or Instruction. It is composed of the MISHNA, or Repetition, and GEMARA, or Supplement. The precepts of the *Mishna* form the *Hulachoth*, or Rules. The *Gemara* is the *Haggada*, or Comment.

There are two Talmuds—the Talmud of Babylon and the Talmud of Jerusalem. In these the Gemara is different, but the Mishna is the same.

The MISHNA, or the ORAL LAW, is believed by the Jews to have been

It is very interesting and important to know what relation the *Halakas*, or rules of the Mishna, sustain to the Mosaic legislation.

According to Dr. Wise, "The Sanhedrim, under Hyrcanus II., adopted a special provision that the oral law should not be written in books, in order that it might not be supposed to assume equal authority with the laws of Moses." Wise, Heb. Comm., p. 168.

Maimonides, on San. x. 2, describes the way in which the Sanhedrim legislated on cases which came before them on appeal: "If they had received nothing on the question by tradition, they discussed the rights of the matter according to the most certain conclusions drawn from the law, till all, or the majority, were agreed; and a dissenter was regarded as a rebel elder, for God said, Deut. xvii. 11, 'According to the sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee.'" What the elders gathered from the true conclusions of the law, and applied to such a case, was enjoined by God—as the law says, "Thou shalt do it."

It is plainly implied in this account that the Mishnic sustained to the Mosaic law merely the relation of statute law to the constitution. It was the authoritative interpretation and application of constitutional principles. Instead of being a rival system of law, it merely claimed to be the legitimate and efficient agent for construing and enforcing constitutional authority.

Among the many maxims which the Sanhedrim claimed to have received from the fathers, there was none more highly venerated than the injunction to "make a hedge about the Law." Pirke Aboth, i. 1. It implied a profound sense of the sacredness of the law, to suppose that it deserved this special protection. We have only to glance at the character of the Mishnic legislation to see what they meant by this injunction, and how transmitted by tradition from Moses. Maimonides classifies its contents as follows:

1. Interpretations received from Moses, which are indicated by the text of Scripture or inferred from it.
2. Decisions called "The Constitutions of Sinai."
3. Decisions sanctioned by a majority of the Sanhedrim.
4. Decisions intended to be a Hedge to the Law.
5. Laws of prescription in ordinary affairs.

earnestly they set themselves to carry it out. They construed the maxim to mean—Surenhusius *in loco*—that it was necessary to enact a class of restrictions which would prevent the actual infringement of the law, by advancing specific obligation a step beyond the actual requirement of the legal precept, thus interposing a barrier, so to speak, to defend or protect the precept from violation.¹ The ingenuity with which this principle is applied to every conceivable form of ritual or ceremonial obligation, is not only marvellous but multitudinous. Every page of the Mishna is an elaborate illustration of it. It is done constantly, and systematically, at the risk of ignoring the spirit of the law, and of absorbing attention with formal and often frivolous ceremonial. But it is to be noted that every such act of legislation, as well as the whole system, is a most emphatic testimony to the divine authority of the constitution. It is *homage*, even though it be *object* homage. And so—to use the language of a distinguished authority—“The Pentateuch remained, under all circumstances, the divinely given constitution, the written Law.” Deutsch.

This national parliament, the Sanhedrim, founded on the Law; this supreme court, for ages interpreting it; this historic legislature, applying its principles to the varying necessities of the people, presents in its threefold capacity of priests, Levites, and chiefs of the people, a judicial testimony to the Pentateuch as an inspired constitution. And its testimony is as valid and as conclusive as the testimony of the British Parliament to the constitution of England, or the testimony of the American Congress to the Constitution of the United States.

The Sanhedrim at Jerusalem was the supreme ecclesiastical authority for the Jews all over the world. From the facts cited, it will be apparent that no Scripture of any sort could obtain recognition as part of the sacred record, without its endorsement.

¹ For instance, the Law says, Thou shalt not labor on the Sabbath. The Mishna says, It is not lawful for a man to pare his nails, nor for a woman to plait her hair; it is not lawful to put out a conflagration; and it is not lawful for a tailor to carry his needle with him a little before dusk on the Sabbath, for fear he might forget, and carry it after the Sabbath has begun, and so be guilty of something akin to labor.

It was the custodian of the law, and bound to repudiate and denounce everything claiming to be inspired which did not proceed from the same divine authority. But it was at the same time just as truly bound to secure a place among the sacred records for every Scripture entitled to such a place. This follows from their official relations to the inspired law. Hence, from the necessity of the case, they were a court of adjudication of questions pertaining to the canonicity of the different books of Scripture which came under discussion, and were responsible for the whole canon of the Old Testament.

It was the general opinion among the Jews, sanctioned by an extensive tradition, that the canon of the Old Testament was closed by the great synagogue—*Keneseth Hagggedhola*. Tradition claims that the body of rulers described in Nehemiah, chap. viii., constituted at that time the permanent governing body of the state. It is said to have consisted of forty-four rulers or *sarim*, forty-four proxies or *seganim*, twenty-two priests and eight Levites. There were seventy permanent members. It met in the temple, and its presiding officer was the high priest or governor. This was a supreme judiciary and legislature. The functions of such a body at that time must have been very important. It was necessary to reëstablish the state, and to authenticate the canon of Scripture for the Jews throughout the world. Both objects were imperatively necessary, and we see no reason to doubt the general belief that they undertook and accomplished them. It is commonly held that this body was afterwards merged into the Great Sanhedrim, which appears in the history under the Greek domination. But it will be seen that the difference between the two bodies was merely in name. Wise, Heb. Com., p. 11, 24.

The description of the great Synagogue, its organisation, membership, and powers, is substantially a description of the great Sanhedrim. The Greek title, "Sanhedrim," could not have found a place in the Jewish vocabulary till the time when the two are said to have been merged. But the collective title of the great Synagogue, priests, Levites, and chiefs of the people or elders, as we find it in Nehemiah, is as we have seen, precisely

the designation of the great Sanhedrim in New Testament times. From the identity of name, of organisation, and of constitution and powers, we feel warranted in regarding the great Synagogue and the great Sanhedrim as being merely the same high court under different names.

But we must always bear in mind that though it pertained to the Sanhedrim to close the canon, it did not originate it, nor the rule by which it was completed. An inspired canon was an existing fact even before the nation itself existed. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the Pentateuch, the Constitution of the Theocracy, was deposited in the side of the ark before they entered the promised land. And this was the standard to which every subsequent Scripture must conform.

“The Pentateuch, in its present form, constituted the foundation of the Israelitish history, whether civil, religious, moral, ceremonial, or even literary.” Kurtz, *O. Cov't*, 3, 506.

The Pentateuch plainly designates the criteria by which prophets or their writings were to be tested. In his preface to the Mishna, Maimonides enumerates them, and asserts that their force was binding. And thus the unity of Scripture was secured by the original canon itself.

The Mishna emphatically asserts the superiority of the law over all other Scriptures. *Megillah*, 3, 1.

The Babylonian Gemara enumerates the books which the Sanhedrim held to be canonical, and the list corresponds with that given by Josephus, which was recognised by the Jews everywhere as authoritative, and continues to be till now. *Baba Bathra*, fol. 13, 2; 15, 2.

Towards the close of the first century of our era, an incident occurred which illustrates its relations to the canon. The school of Shammai having secured a temporary majority in the body, called in question the canonicity of Ecclesiastes and the Canticles. After a very earnest discussion, all their influence was insufficient to secure the rejection of these books from the canon. *Grätz*, 4, 25. But no one denied the right of the Sanhedrim to deliberate on such a question. And the result of the discussion also shows that the canon had already been definitively

closed, and that it had been closed before their time, that is, by the Sanhedrim, before the beginning of the Christian era.

It was thus closed under the authority of the highest tribunal provided in the Mosaic constitutions.

Here we find a sufficient explanation of an otherwise mysterious fact, the universality and constant loyalty of Jewish testimony.

“We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us as the Greeks have, disagreeing with and contradicting each other; but only twenty-two books,¹ which contain the records of all the past times, and which are justly believed to be divine. Five of them belong to Moses, and contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind, till his death. . . . The prophets who were after Moses wrote down what was done in their times, in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of life. It is true that our history has been written very particularly since Artaxerxes, but it has not been esteemed of the like authority of the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time. And how firmly we give credit to our national books, is evident from what we do; for during so many ages as have passed already, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, or take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them.” *Contr. Apion*, 1, 8.

With *testimony* of this kind, the *assertions* of the biblical critics must be compared. For instance, that “the Pentateuch, as a whole, cannot have been written by Moses; and with respect to some, at least, of the chief portions of the story, cannot be regarded as historically true.” *Colenso on Pent.*, 1, 13.

“In its present form, it was written after the times of Joshua,” and could not have been completed till the times of Ezra; and “if we are shut up to choose between a Mosaic authorship of the

¹ In counting twenty-two instead of twenty-four books, Josephus probably counts Ruth as a part of the Book of Judges, and Lamentations as part of Jeremiah, as many of the early Christian writers did.

whole five books and the sceptical opinion that the Pentateuch is a mere forgery, the sceptics must gain their case." W. Robertson Smith's Lects., p. 307.

We simply confront such guess-work with the solid mass of evidence before us, and think it needless to offer any assistance to any unbiassed mind in reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

The critics assert that the worship of the second temple was more elaborate than that of the first. This is confuted by the fact that the same sacred utensils were employed in both. Cyrus returned the enormous number of five thousand four hundred that had belonged to the first temple. Ezra i.

It is further confuted by the fact that, even if Ezra contributed towards the strictness of the worship of the second temple, he could have had nothing to do with inaugurating that worship. According to his own account, he does not appear in Jerusalem until the seventh year of Artaxerxes, B. C. 458. Ezra also informs us that the temple had been dedicated in the sixth year of Darius, B. C. 515. The critics impose a severe tax on our imagination when they require us to conceive of Ezra inaugurating the worship of the second temple, when he himself informs us that it was done nearly sixty years before he came to Jerusalem, and perhaps before he was born. Ez. vi. 15; vii. 1-6.

Ezra also expressly tells us that the worship of the second temple was reëstablished "according as it is written in the Book of Moses." Ez. vi. 16.

According to the Jewish law, the prophet who undertook such a work as is imputed to Ezra, would have signed his own death warrant. To add to the law, or to take from it, in the smallest particular, was a capital crime. Moreover, such a crime would require the connivance of all the classes of the nation, and all the members of each class. It would imply a conspiracy of the whole people. But a forgery which would involve such a variety of interests and so many conspirators, could not have met with universal approval. Either in that or in some following generation some voice must have been raised in protest. It would be a greater wonder than that they wish to explain away, if a conspiracy of such magnitude and extent could have occurred and left no trace in history.

The idea that the Jews deliberately corrupted their sacred records is a mere conjecture, and a most unnatural one. We have no reason to think that such a thing was ever done by any people. We might fancy that among Gentile nations national interest or vanity could suggest forgery of this kind. But national interests and pride formed the strongest reasons with the Jews for keeping the record pure. Their hopes lay in the future. Their glory was enshrined in the predicted times when the coming Messiah was to crown their fidelity and reward their faith with greater blessings than their fathers had enjoyed. From their point of view, the burden of Scripture was simply the fulfilment of the national ambition. The strongest motives that can operate on the mind and heart, led them to venerate every letter of their record as a precious thing. To corrupt that record would have been dreaded as an occasion of divine wrath, an act of blind folly, a perversion of their religious faith, and a sacrifice of the charter of their national hopes. Hence their record has been cherished by all classes with a peculiar and unexampled devotion. They have pressed round "the records of their faith and history with a fierce and passionate love, even stronger than that of wife or child. And as they were gradually formed into the canon, they became the immutable centre of their lives, their actions, their thoughts, their very dreams." Deutsch, Talmud.

The world owes them the justice to admit the greatness of their trust and the fidelity with which it was discharged. Kitto, Masora. The canon of the Old Testament which they have transmitted to mankind, stands confirmed by every kind of evidence which such a record requires. It is confirmed by all the evidence which the nature of the subject would admit.

IV. THE MYSTERY OF THE AGES SOLVED BY THE FULFILMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Gentile Crisis.

With the beginning of the Christian era ancient history closes. New forces were introduced into the world's life, which were to revolutionise its civilisation and mould society into other forms.

Under the impulse of those mighty forces a new chapter of history begins, and it moves forward upon a higher plane. And after the lapse of eighteen centuries, those forces, with increasing energy, continue to bear humanity on, and to declare to mankind the path of destiny.

It was confessed that the religions of heathenism had failed to solve the problems of life. On the contrary, they made man's condition desperate. They overwhelmed him with superstition, corrupted society, and destroyed the foundations of personal virtue.

Nothing more significantly illustrates their failure than the effort of the great systems of Greek philosophy to find some real ground for virtue. It was with questions pertaining to the very essence of religion, that philosophy first occupied itself. "Thales," says tradition, "first taught that the soul is immortal." Their maxims were mostly ethical, as the fragments of the writings of the early philosophers show. They sought a true theory of life and duty. When philosophy was more developed, the chief inquiry was, What is the chief end of man, the chief good, and how is it to be secured?

It was to this end that Socrates recommended the Greeks to hearken to the inner voice of conscience; that Plato exalted the conclusions of reason; that Epicurus recommended to study the suggestions of the senses, and Pyrrho to distrust them; and that Aristotle advised to conform all things to the constitution of our whole nature. The whole subject of virtue was discussed from every point of view which uninspired reason can discover. In this manner philosophy aimed to elucidate the problems which religion had failed to solve. It at first seemed that philosophy might coöperate with religion. But the attempt of Socrates to reconcile them only won a martyr's crown. It revealed the fact of a deadly antagonism between heathen religion and morality, even in the imperfect form which Socrates taught. Next we find Plato boldly excluding from his ideal state the theologians of heathenism—the poets—as a necessity of public virtue. Next, we find a prevailing sentiment that religion is incompatible with intelligence as well as virtue, and only fit to control the superstitious masses.

And finally, the principle is arrived at, that the nature of religion is fundamentally different from the nature of virtue.

It is sometimes taken for granted that this startling conclusion implies that society, by a universal apostasy, desired to express its renunciation of all that is sacred, and reach by a final plunge the lowest depth of degeneracy. But the contrary is more likely to have been the case. It was an effort, when all moral principle was trampled under foot, to save something from the general wreck. It was a last protest of men's moral instincts against the pollutions of their religion. Scipio declared that the Romans considered comedies and theatrical displays (which formed part of the worship of the gods) so disgraceful, that they debarred the actors from the privileges of citizens; that they branded their names by the censor, and struck them from the roll of the Tribe. Aug. Civ. Dei, i. 62. The meaning of which is simply this: Religion has become the agent of vice; the state must legislate in order to protect virtue. Thus the moral instincts denounced the immoralities which belonged to their own religious worship, and sought to save virtue by separating it from religion.

The Christian teachers constantly reminded the heathen of the lamentable fact, that their spiritual hopes were linked with a religion whose practices their moral instincts must despise.

But those moral instincts unsupported could not maintain the struggle. Eventually they were overcome as a public factor of society. Nor even their splendid civilisation was of any avail to save society. "The idea of civilisation is not necessarily associated with the idea of virtue. Men of refinement of manners may be, and often are, exceedingly corrupt. And what is true of individuals is true of communities. The highest civilisations of the heathen world were marked by a very low code of morals, and by a practice lower than their code." *Contemp. Rev.*, Mar., 1881.

Out of this condition of things arose the despair of heathenism. Seneca describes society as a beleaguered city taken by assault. "As soon as the signal is given, every restraint of decency and honor is abandoned, and each one contributes his utmost to the universal ruin." *Benef.* 7, 27.

Tacitus exclaims: "The times have come to such a pass that we can neither tolerate our evils nor the remedies."

Meanwhile a strange rumor begins to mingle among the superstitions of the times. Suetonius tells us that "A firm persuasion had long prevailed through all the East, that it was fated for the empire of the world at that time to devolve on some one, who should go forth from Judea." Life of Vespasian.

And thus the heathen world expressed its testimony to the need of a Redeemer.

The Crisis of Judaism.

At the beginning of the Christian era, the second Hebrew commonwealth also had nearly fulfilled its appointed mission. The canon of the Old Testament was closed, and the official witnesses had rehearsed the prophetic story to the world. The sceptre was departing from Judah. Its nationality was passing away. It was soon to be erased from the list of independent states, and to be known merely as a Roman province.

The Lawgiver, also, was soon to cease by the perversion of his office. The system of interpretation, which put a hedge around the law, practically ignored the meaning of the precept by obscuring or mystifying it. It associated the primary conviction of duty with the artificial injunction substituted for the precept. Hence the law itself, as a rule, was removed from the sphere of practical life, and, to all intents and purposes, "made void by their traditions."

This refined subtlety of interpretation, continually accumulating the mass of special precepts, gradually formed an impassable barrier between the learned and the common people. The learned at length treated their unlearned brethren with as great contempt as they felt for the heathen themselves; while the people returned a bitter hatred for their scorn and oppression. See Grätz.

Thus the common bond of loyalty to law, which once had united the people of all classes, was now severed, and was replaced by mutual hatred, by faction, and by fratricidal strife.

The crown of the priesthood had also become tarnished.

Although under Augustus the internal administration of the

government was left in the hands of the Sanhedrim, there always stood by its side the Roman procurator, representing the proconsul of Syria, who was to collect the taxes and watch over the peace of the province. His legal authority was limited. But Roman suspicion afforded him ample pretexts for assuming the power of a dictator. Thirteen of these men bore rule in succession over Judea.

Herod had already established the precedent of making the tenure of the high priesthood dependent on his royal pleasure. The procurators claimed the same authority, and enriched themselves by it. The procurator conferred the investiture. This sacred office was put up for sale to the highest bidder, and rival candidates shamelessly contended for it with intrigue and bribery. A woman purchases it for her lover. One man sends his son to the procurator with a large measure filled with silver coin; the successful candidate sends a similar measure filled with gold. Each high priest, knowing that the tenure of the office will be brief, makes the most of his purchase by putting his sons and nephews in the lucrative positions in his gift, and by sending his officials and bondmen to scour the country, burst open the granaries, and seize their contents as tithes in the name of the high priest. And thus the very name of the high priest was made odious. It is said that eventually the people came to hold in equal execration the Romans, who had robbed them of their liberties; the house of Herod, which had robbed the nation of its honor; and the high priesthood, which had robbed religion of its sanctity. Raphall, 2, 367.

The dispensation to which the second commonwealth belonged was rapidly disintegrating. And thus Judaism itself was indicating that the old system of things was passing away, and that the time was at hand when a new dispensation was to take its place.

Thus, both for Jew and Gentile, "the fulness of time" had come. The capacity of their respective civilisations had been exhausted. It had been announced to the Jews that their Messiah would also be a light to the Gentiles, and that in his day the Spirit would be poured out on all mankind. The histories of

Jew and Gentile had thus been moving on converging lines; they were appointed to meet and blend together in "the desired of all nations," and to flow on thenceforth in a common channel. Among the Jews it was deeply felt that the time was at hand. The New Testament history refers to several false messiahs who easily induced multitudes to follow them (Acts v.). Josephus informs us that many impostors deceived the people with impunity. The facility with which the people were led astray by impostors shows the strength of the popular conviction that the days of the Messiah were near.

Such expectations had long been growing in certainty and strength. And we trace them to their sacred records. The Scriptures are full of the Messiah. He is the burden of prophecy. The minuteness of detail in prophecy respecting him is marvelous. But the Messianic element of the Old Testament comprises much more than these special predictions. It constitutes the nervous system, so to speak, of the Old Testament religion. This is set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was the soul of their ritual; it was the light of the Psalms; it gave point and energy to doctrine, and controls the history from Genesis to Malachi. Liddon's Sec. Bampt. Lecture.

For the coming of the Messiah all history had been preparing. In him it was to find its solution. The hand of Providence had been gradually building all the ages of history into one grand pedestal, whose summit was to be crowned with the Chief of empire, the Masterpiece of God: him of whom the whole family in heaven on earth is named—Jesus, the Messiah, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." To Jesus Christ and his cause the world contributed nothing except a *pedestal*, enhancing the splendor of his glory by the contrast with its own misery. It has received all things of his fulness. And in him it found rest. Every utterance of this adorable personage must be intensely significant. There can be no appeal to any higher authority. From his lips language falls freighted with a deeper burden of meaning than ever it bore before. His official title is "The Word of God." And it is but what we should expect when he says of himself, "I am the light of the world"; "I am the truth."

In declaring himself to be the truth, the Messiah identifies himself with the Old Testament. He is the truth, not by originating any new system, but by conforming exactly to what had been already revealed. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). He endorses, by using it, the classification of the Scriptures adopted by the Sanhedrim, "The Law and the Prophets," or, "The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms." He declares that "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 18). He declares that Moses was the giver of the law (John v. 19): "Moses gave you the law"; Matt. x. 8: "Moses commanded"; Matt. xii. 9: "Moses wrote"; Luke xvi. 29: "Ye have Moses and the prophets."

Twelve times he refers to Moses by name; in fourteen places he refers to the law; in five he couples the law with the lawgiver; seven times he refers to the Pentateuch as the word of God; in thirteen places, also, he sets the seal of his authority to persons or events it describes. Kitto, Pent. In the sublime and awful conflict in the wilderness, where, as our representative and example, he demonstrates that faith in the inspired word of God is the appointed means to overcome the power of the tempter, we find that every one of the passages which he resorts to as inspired is selected from the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Messiah thus emphatically indorses the Pentateuch as the law, the inspired revelation of God, which he himself came to fulfil.

With these facts before us, while we can admit that the Bible is an "ancient book," we must also admit that it is not like any other ancient book.

1. It is the only ancient book which furnishes a rational account of the origin and moral condition of mankind.

2. It is the only book, ancient or modern, which grasps all history from beginning to end.

3. It is the only book which furnishes an adequate idea of the Creator.

4. It is the only book adapted to the moral nature and condition of the whole race of man.

5. It is the only book the world has ever seen which furnishes a universal rule of faith and life.

6. It is the only book which officially sets forth the principles of God's moral government.

7. It differs from every other book in the fact that it has God for its author, grace for its subject, and eternal life for its end.

8. It differs, moreover, from all others, that even when its accuracy is challenged, it can only be tested by its own facts and principles.

Hence the theory that the Bible is to be authenticated—"like any other ancient book"—breaks down at every point.

It is a shallow criticism which supposes that it can disparage the faith of the Church in the Bible by stigmatising it as a "traditional belief." The term implies that the Canon of the Old Testament has never been attested officially and by competent authority. The phrase, therefore, is at once a sophism and a slander.

What, then, are the proofs that our belief is not "traditional," but *historic*?

1. There is the admitted fact that the original Canon was formed as the constitution of the theocracy, and given to the Israelites even before their national life began.

2. A whole tribe, from the time that the law was placed in the side of the ark until New Testament times, existed by divine appointment as the custodians and teachers of the law.

3. There never has been a time when the Jewish people themselves ceased to be living witnesses to the truth of their sacred records.

4. Criteria were provided in the original Canon by which all subsequent Scriptures were to be tested.

5. The original constitution provided also a high court competent to apply those criteria.

6. That court, under its various titles of Beth-Din, Sanhedrim, priests, elders, and scribes, was always recognised by the Jewish people as a supreme authority. Its legal authority is enunciated by our Lord himself in Matthew, chap. xxii. And it is an historical fact that this court did exercise jurisdiction on these questions.

It is not necessary to ask whether this court was inspired. It is sufficient to know that they were constituted for this purpose; that they were furnished with the proper criteria; and that the Canon they indorsed was indorsed also by the whole Jewish people and by our Lord himself.

7. The Old Testament Scriptures, as we have them, were accepted by our Lord himself, by his inspired Apostles, by the Church they founded, and have commended themselves ever since to the conscience of the Christian world at large as the inspired word of God.

They have, therefore, been attested officially by competent authority, and in a manner entirely suitable to the dignity and importance of a revelation from God.

At the same time, the Bible, from the very nature of the case, challenges the closest and most constant scrutiny. The nations shall walk in the light of it; but by it also the thoughts of the heart of man are to be revealed. No doubt it will stir antagonism. It does not shrink from it. But it brings its own credentials with it.

“Here is a book which comes among men as a stranger, yet it is received with spontaneous gladness by every race and in every age. As soon as it is received, every heart is fired with zeal to propagate and perpetuate it. It has filled the world with love and strife. Other things grow old, but it lives in immortal youth. Through all the centuries it has survived alike its friends and its foes. Without a stain upon its garments, it rises above the thoughts of man in peerless majesty. And it stands to-day on the threshold of a career grander, perhaps, than all its wondrous history.”

“All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.