

## ARTICLE IV.

THE BIBLICAL CRITICISM OF THE PRESENT DAY.<sup>1</sup>

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BUT some of you may say, Is there no good whatever in the biblical criticism of the present day? Is it merely a stumbling over straws and a game of critical splitting of hairs? Or have you not heard of the very serious charges which are laid against the views of the ancient church? Did not these grave assertions, which, in spite of ourselves, compelled our scientific mind to agree with them, ever disturb your scientific conscience? And, if so, how can you harmonize your beautiful confession with them?

In response to which inquiries, allow me a single word, which, if it does not engage itself with particulars, holds itself true to principle and motive.

First, as it appears to me, the gigantic labor which our critics have devoted to the Scripture, is by no means lost. On the contrary, I have the firm conviction that in the end, and under God's gracious disposal, even the excesses of the most radical Scripture-anatomists will be productive of good. How could it ever be unimportant and to no purpose, as far as principle and reverence allow it, to study the origin of the Holy Scripture in the processes of its entering upon existence; to point out the seams where the pieces of the shining robe have been so beautifully woven together; and in a better way than was ever done before to frame, if not with mathematical cer-

<sup>1</sup> Concluded from page 442.

tainty at least with conjecture, the circle in whose midst, the author by whom, and the time in which, a book of Scripture originated? So little do I aim at the abandonment of these studies, that I would no sooner sanction an official ban upon these vivisectional excesses and physiological indelicacies with the *Corpus Scripturæ* than with the *corpus humanum*. But if, in the circle of the medical sciences, these vivisectional excesses and physiological violations of common chastity are not prohibited by law, has not the nobler-minded *medicus* the right, in virtue of the principle itself of his science,—i. e. in the name of the human character that belongs to it, because it has the home for its object,—to protest against these shameful cruelties, and the no less shameful indelicacies, as indecent and unlawful? Or, is it not true that in his bodily appearing man ceases to be worthy of the honor of furnishing an object for a separate science, when, treating the animal cruelly and himself having become bestial, he degrades himself to being little better than a *corpus vile*? And have we no equal rights, when it concerns the *Corpus Scripturæ*, to enter our complaints on the ground of the absence of feeling in the vivisectioners and the offensive profanities of the Scripture-physiologists; not in spite, but in the name, of our science; both because, by their actions, the principle itself of theology is violated, and because a patchwork quilt such as they make the Scripture to be does no longer reward the trouble of scientific investigation.

I welcome the finest perception by the senses (at a07j<w), also, in the domain of criticism. But even as our nerves and brains, the critical organ also can suffer from hyperæsthesia, so that it cannot do other than observe incorrectly; thus reaching that inharmonious condition which makes every noise seem louder, every touch more startling, and every uneven-

ness the rougher to its sense. Such a hypenesthesia becomes a power that governs the patient, the irresistible impulse of which is heightened by one's very efforts to resist. Wherefore not every one who announces himself needs to be heard, nor is all criticism indiscriminately to be taken into account, but it must first be determined, by the principle of theology itself, whether we deal with a normal observer, or with one who, abnormally excited, is not able to criticise correctly.

Finally, the Holy Scripture condemns the world and the spirit that governs it. Hence nothing can be more natural than that this spirit of the world, which has made itself so strongly felt in this age, should bend its energies toward the breaking-down of the authority of the Scripture. Either it must bend before the Scripture or the Scripture must bend to it, and it cannot be otherwise than that the spirit which inspires the world, must wage inexorable war against the spirit that inspired the Scripture. The antithesis formed by the two is diametrical. And since we also, who are investigators of the Scripture, have drunk of the spirit of the world, the danger is possible that our biblical criticism may adopt a tentative character, whereby, under the mask of honoring it, our study of the Scripture may tend to undermine its authority. This presumption has indeed become a probability by this single fact, that many men who attach no significance whatever to the Scripture, and scarcely believe in it at all, devote to it the best parts of their life and the choicest of their powers.

The principle of theology itself, therefore, must needs watch against the degeneration of her scientific and sacred character, both as regards the extent of the principle, the assthesis of the investigator, and that which determines the tendency of the investigation. Hence I do not plead for conservatism. If that were my aim, I could readily make my task much

lighter by setting up Reuss against Kuenen, Schultz against Reuss, and the collaborators of Lange's Commentaries against Schultz, in order finally to assume for my own responsibility only so much as the most conservative have yielded to the claim of criticism. But what would this avail ? For the sake of secondary considerations, conservatism merely disparages theories whose validity one is bound to honor, and principles to whose spread one is prepared to devote his energies. There is no strength in this. And therefore I make no appeal at the bar of conservatism, but ask the encyclopedia of our science, what the proper principle of theology here both allows and disallows. And when, with respect to this radical question, we grant that theology, as was shown in the beginning of this article, having not the *creaturcly* but the *Creator* as object, takes no observations, but, in direct distinction from all other sciences, *becomes* sensible of facts, so that in the science of theology it is not the spirit of the subject but the spirit of the object which is the active investigator, it follows immediately that all study, which, as shown by its results, has ceased to be the instrument in the employ of God the Holy Spirit, falls, *eo ipso*, outside the boundaries of the theological domain. This is a position which, from the nature of the case, is absolutely devoid of strength to our opponents, and therefore is not intended for those, who, after having embalmed theology, i. e. "the science of God," have proclaimed that the science of "Religion" is queen; but which I maintain in its entirety in the face of every one who still professes with us to be priests in the temple of *theology*.

As long as we desire to be theologians, we may never raise the building of our science, save under and in the service of God the Holy Spirit, since he is our only Architect and Master-

builder. Thus if, as a measure of safety, we apply this principle first to another part of this science, we, as theologians, are in duty bound to dismiss the free-will services in the domain of ethics of both Martensen, the mediating theologian, and Van der Goltz, the full-blooded ethical, since the one condoned and called good the violation of an oath, and the other the violation of the commandment of honesty in persons of high station [Von Bismarck was here referred to]. The works of both these masters fall short of the seal of the Holy Spirit, and are as such, *eo ipso*, refused admittance, as contraband, at the theological frontier, where the blade of the cherub glitters, and the *Spiritus Creator* is worshiped as *Omnium Solns Doctor*.

If now we apply this same standard to the study of the Holy Scripture, the leading thought which we reach will be as follows:—

1. That every view, according to which what is holy can appear in the form of a lie, and by which, under the use of the shameful invention of the so-called “ pious fraud/” the Holy Spirit is made to counteract his own deepest character, must be rejected, as being based upon an erroneous investigation. To pretend, for instance, that in books which one accepts as canonical the Holy Spirit represents myths as history, and places before us a *vaticinium ex eventu* in a false form as prophecy, is to attribute absurdities to that Spirit which are inconsistent with his integrity.

2. Each theory—and this will be considered a little more at length—must equally be dismissed, whose result antagonizes what the Holy Spirit asserts in the Scripture concerning the Scripture.

No one denies that the Holy Scripture comes to us with an absolute principle. It asserts, indeed, that, all “ wisdom ” of the world is “ foolishness ”; that only the Spirit, who

speaks of himself as the searcher of all things, can teach us wisdom; and that, for this reason, every creaturely spirit must subject itself in its thinking, speaking, and acting, now and eternally, to that Spirit. This places us before an absolute dilemma; a choice with no way of escape. For this principle must either be contested, by doing which return is made to the wisdom of the world; or this principle must be accepted, and this gives it the right of way across the entire domain of our studies. With those who chose the first member of this dilemma, we can have no further dealings here: for them there exists no longer any Scripture. But of those who made the better choice, and who with joy and with an undivided heart have said "Amen" to this absolute Scripture-principle, we ask in all seriousness, "What claim is made in the Holy Scripture which it announces concerning itself as *Scripture*?"

And here our way separates itself irrevocably from that of the ethicals. For when we reach this point, the ethicals say: "This you must determine from the facts as they present themselves to you in that Scripture; and if you find errors there, it but shows, *co ipso*, that the Scripture does not pretend to be infallible." This, however, is no correct process of reasoning, and I reject it on these two decisive grounds: (1) because, sanction to pass such a judgment is only conceivable when one is in possession of the autographs themselves,—for, as the case now stands, it is possible that errors have crept in later on in what was written without error; and (2) because the self-witness of the Holy Spirit concerning his own work is far more authoritative than the judgment which you, O fallible man, form on the ground of this work of the Spirit. In a child, indeed, it would be presumptuous and disrespectful if he formed conclusions from his father's doings that are contradictory to the conscious self-witness of the father; and

how can you dare to pass criticism upon the self-consciousness of the Scripture when you have no other standard in hand than that which you assume to find in the Scripture?

And, therefore, I neither ask Rothe nor Rübiger what the Scripture claims to be, but the highest interpreter of the Scripture-organism itself; to-wit, the Christ and his anointed apostolate. If, then, Christ and his apostles declare that the Scripture of the Old Covenant is very really inspired, and that by this inspiration it is of binding authority even to the extent of the individual word; or, to cite a single point in detail, if, with a lifted finger, the Son of God says to me, "Thus and so has Daniel the prophet spoken; my disciples, consider it!" and I, like the ethicals, should form a contrary conclusion notwithstanding, then I would deem that I had forfeited the claim to the name of theologian, and I would consider myself to have entered into a flagrant contest with the real principle of my science, since I contradicted the Holy Spirit in the self-conscious declaration of his absolute interpreters.

3. Every critical study of the Holy Scripture must be rejected as being foreign to theology, which is governed by a philosophical principle which evidently reacts against the principle of the Holy Spirit. And this canon especially interprets a good deal.

Let us consider this in the following four points:—

(1) Indisputably the entire Scripture-study, especially that of the Old Testament, is at this moment governed by the question, whether there was a fall from holy to unholy, or whether there was a gradual ascent from the lower to the pure and holy. This question returns in three stages: First, with Adam; then with Israel in the wilderness; and, finally, with the early Christian church. And because this question is now answered in the negative, the hamartialogy of Genesis iii. must be the

product of phantasy; the nobler parts of the thorah must not be attributed to Moses, but lie at the end of the Israelitish development ; and the consciousness of the Christian church must only ripen gradually. And now I ask, “ Is there a tendency to be noted here, or not?” And when I know, that the elimination of the fall is at present the principle of all philosophy ; that the idea of such a fall is most deeply insulting to the pride of the human spirit; and that the Holy Spirit condemns the wisdom of the world in this very point; that, in giving holy gifts to Adam and to Moses, and graces and powers on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit exhibits the divine majesty, and in each subsequent falling away our deep corruption, is it not folly itself for us theologians to be train-bearers of a Scripture-study which at each of these three points secularizes the Scripture?

(2) Seeking an accord with the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the world runs again and again after *Synergism*, in order, by accentuating human activity, God’s in working may not merely be limited, but destroyed, particularly in its absoluteness. Likewise there is a tendency at work in the biblical criticism of the present day to undertake the same contest against the *sovereignty of inspiration* which Arminius waged against the *sovereignty of grace*. For whereupon does the denial of prophecy rest other than upon the denial of God’s immovable decree? What is the humanizing of inspiration other than a repeated protest against a grace, which, being irresistible, never fails of its purpose?

(3) The “wisdom of the world” constantly seeks to reduce the immediate work of God in history to ever smaller dimensions, and cannot rest until the factor “ God ” has entirely disappeared from the same. In like manner, the Scripture also, which lays its witness in the scale against this very process of



the wiping out of God's name, had to be distilled until creation passed away in a Darwinian evolution; the miracle w'ent hiding; inspiration was reduced to an unobservable touch of a soul unconscious of that fact; and, finally, the human author appeared so one-sidedly in the foreground that at length there remained no higher honor for the Divine Author (*Auctor primarius*) than the service of a laudatory editor with the people who still believe.

(4) It has ever been a trait of the wisdom of the world, and it is this especially in our days, to class the idolatries of the nations who do not know God, as very honorable forms of religion under the self-same category with the religion of Jesus. Its philosophical principle, that there is no wall of separation between the sacred and the profane, compelled and still compels it to do this. But this was bound of necessity to overthrow the whole Scripture-study, especially that of the Old Testament. The simple change of the name by which henceforth all idolatry, however defiant its character might be to the only true God, is called "religion," is a criticism on the Old Covenant that condemns its entire world-view. And so it came to pass, that, wholly contradictory to the teachings of Scripture, Israel's religious development was explained to have sprung from the same root as that of the heathen, and, finally, the nobler idolatrous nations were represented as co-operators in the work of establishing what Israel, yes what Jesus, confessed.

Thus we see that this irresistible spiritual impulse of the philosophy of our age to transpose in every way the "*Deus-homo*" into the "*Homo-deus*," was bound of an iron necessity either disdainfully to cast off the whole Scripture or, when piety refrained from this, to take apart the joining map of that Scripture and put it differently together again, till at

length, in direct opposition to its own principle, the Scripture had guaranteed or subscribed this false hypothesis of the "wisdom of the world" with its seal. This, however, shows to us no less that that theologian tears up his credentials, who, instead of opposing hand to hand this process of roughly pulling out the leaves of this most precious of all the roses of Sharon, is either sufficiently cowardly or thoughtless to allow himself to be carried along by this current of the humanizing of the Scriptures and to present it under pleasing colors to the masses.

That, after the subtraction of all this, there still remains serious objections at several points to the absoluteness of the inspiration of the Scripture, we neither deny nor hide, even though one readily sees to what small dimensions this mountain of insurmountable obstacles has already fallen away. This, however, does not remove the necessity that, so far from passing lightly by the still remaining objections, the scientific theologian must look them squarely in the face, always bearing in mind this fourfold consideration:—

1. That some of these objections flow from the undeniable fact that the perfect autographs do not lie before us, but an imperfect text, which is a text with errors.

2. That the writing down by the Holy Spirit of what was inspired has nothing in common with the protocolization of an authentic official report, but that the several events and truths, yea, the same events and truths in their many-sided significance, have been brought to the canvass by the Highest Artist with a diversion of color and many-sidedness of interpretation which may indeed confuse the near-sighted cabalist, but which by its delightful harmonies fills the master-student, standing at a distance, with heavenly raptures.

3. It remains indeed the calling of apologetics to bring

out the passages of Scripture that sound contradictory to each other, in their real, even though it be covered, harmony. Hence the need of *loci paralleli*, not after the style of the departed supranaturalists,—ah, they, indeed, had no more theology!—no, but in the spirit of the Juniuses and Voetiuses; a spiritual, no narrow-minded Harmonistica; not a pitiful amateur effort, but a logical interpretation of our sense of representation by paying attention to the Wre;  $\tau\rho\acute{o}\delta\varsigma$ ;  $\acute{\nu}\tau\tau\acute{o}$  *rivos* and *Kara*  $\lambda\eta\varsigma$ .

4. If, then, there still remain seeming inexplicables, *cruces interpretum*, in the Holy Scripture, before which not I,—for that implies nothing,—but all confessing theologians stand, even then I do not hesitate a moment to say it in the hearing of the whole scientific world, that, facing the choice between leaving this question unanswered, and with the simple-minded people of God confessing my ignorance, or with the learned ethical brethren from scientific logicalness rejecting the infallibility of the Scripture, I firmly choose the first, and with my whole soul shrink back from the last.

For, to say with Rothe and his followers, that there are myths in the Scripture; the creation-narrative is pious phantasy ; phantasy likewise the narrative of the fall; the prophecies are products of a higher-tensioned spiritual life; the testimonies borne by Christ and his apostles concerning the Old Covenant are devoid of normative power; the apostolic representation of the truth is equally little normative and binding ; even the image of the Christ which they outline and paint is not fixedly reliable; and then solemnly to declare that the whole Scripture from Gen. i. 1 to Rev. xxii. 21 is their *Word of God*, is more than I can do; it is too bold for me; it looks wonderfully much like a *protestatio actni contraria*, which I hear, but of which I have no understanding. And when, more-

over, I observe that in the circles of these “ faithful ” ones the modernizing vivisectors are widely known, and that, on the other hand, the orthodox champions of inspiration—such as Gausen not only, but also such men as Hodge and Philippi; yea, even Beck and Mchring—are scarcely known at all, then, in all seriousness, I am filled with apprehension for the future; then I seem to hear the rushing sound as of rapidly falling waters; and I feel the “zeal of God” come over me which compels me to reject a “ word of God ” so-called but which is fallible, as a *contradictio in terminis*, which exchanges fixedness of principle for half-measures, and which, while ever going backward, with the face turned toward Christ, constantly separates itself but further from the “ Christ according to the Scriptures.”

And should any one still answer that, judging as I do, I myself am not justified, since I acknowledge errors, if not in the autographa, at least in the texts at our service, then let me remove this latent objection by this other question, whether, if you held in your hand a cup of pure gold but whose edge is slightly damaged, and I held in my hand an entirely perfect cup but of gold which is not real, you would say, “ It is all the same to me: I will cheerfully take your imitation in exchange for my *golden cup* ”?

### III.

As has been shown, the biblical criticism of the present day deprives the church of her *theology*, and robs her of her *Bible*. What remains to be demonstrated is, that it also attacks the church’s right to her liberty in Christ, or, if you please, consigns her to the embraces of the worst, because intellectual, kind of clericalism.

A troubled soul, tossed with tempest and not comforted, is

filled with anxiety, and thirsts after certainty. In the heart of one who is so apprehended of the Lord, even though he be a plain day-laborer, the sacred things of the Almighty have found a lodging, and therefore in the depths of his soul the powers of hell antagonize those sacred things. Thus a conflict is waged as of giant-forces in his breast, and that oppresses him; he sees no way of escape; he faints beneath its tension, except He who is compassionate takes compassion on him, and sets him up upon the *Rock of the Word*. Only when he stands on *that Word*, does the oil of gladness drip in his soul instead of mourning, and the garments of praise begin to shine forth in place of the spirit of heaviness, and the man breaks forth in singing the praises of Him who has set him free from bonds; also from those oppressing bonds of dependency upon man, who at best is but a creature of dust. For to obtain real peace, an unshakable faith, and a full development of powers, our soul must, in the depth of depths and forsaken of all men, depend on God Almighty alone. To draw one's being immediately from God's own hand, consciously and continuously, this renders one invincible, enables one to become heroic, and makes us surpass ourselves. This was the secret of the power by which Calvinism once astonished the world. That forms character, steels the will with energy, and sets man, the citizen, the confessor of Jesus, truly free.

But how does the Lord impart this assurance, with and without the intervention of man, to the numbers of his elect, and through them to the church? We should look this question sharply in the face, for there are many reasons, because of which the Scripture, such as the churches and especially the laity have it in these days, in itself falls short of this certainty. In the first place, as far as we know, all the autographs of the books of the Holy Scripture have been lost, and we have

nothing at our disposal save incorrect manuscripts. Again, the number of books belonging to the New Testament has never been absolutely and infallibly fixed; even in the days of the Reformation heated conflicts were waged about the canonicity of more than one book. And, in the third place, what the ordinary layman can have, is never more than a translation of the original, to none of which translation the seal of infallibility is ever attached. If now with regard to the Scripture the church occupied the deistical viewpoint, that, after having created the word, the Holy Spirit abandoned that Word to itself, all the benefit of the inspiration would be lost to God-seeking souls. But this is not the case. Despising every form of deism, the church interprets the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Scripture in the sense of a rich and quickening theism, and the Reformed churches especially, in this also surpassing the Lutheran sister-church, have ever maintained that the Word by itself never amounts to anything, and never produces power other than as the instrument of the Holy Spirit, and hence, in all ages, has *never* been abandoned of that Holy Spirit. Her confession is, that by revelation the Holy Spirit has prepared the material out of which the garment of the Scripture should be woven. When that material was prepared, the Holy Spirit has inspired the individual pieces of Scripture in successive times. After that, through the agency of the church, the Holy Spirit has gathered the books which had been so prepared and finished. Furthermore, the Spirit has watched over the text of the Word which he had inspired. The Holy Spirit has no less irradiated the translations in which that Word was to come to the nations. That same Holy Spirit has ever afterward himself interpreted that Word through the official preaching, and has mingled it with faith in those that are called unto life. And with no one of God's

elect has the Holy Spirit rested, until the Word, infallibly inspired centuries ago, bare fruit equally infallible in that soul, as though it had been inspired for the sake of that soul alone.

The Holy Spirit effects this purpose in two ways; which as *tides hitmana* and *tides divina* must sharply be distinguished. *Fides humana* which is *Udes*, and therefore equally surely proceeding from God, is the reliance which the church places in the authority of the Spirit's work by means of the organism of the church, which aims at the canon, the determining of the text, the translation and the exegesis of the books. Concerning each of these, therefore, a brief word.

What books form the canon, is by itself as unquestionably certain as it is to the anatomist, what members do or do not belong to a normal human body. The Scripture is an organism. Nothing can be added to it or taken away from it. It is complete in the fullness of numbers and entirety of its parts. The question, however, whether at each given moment the church is in the possession of the anatomical tact which is necessary with a firm hand to decide upon each part of the Scripture, or each book that is presented with this claim, must be answered in the negative. That certainty fluctuates as the waters of spiritual life in the midst of the churches swell in volume or contract. But so far from lessening thereby the confidence of the laity, the Holy Spirit has so disposed the parts of Scripture, that those on which the life depends have never been doubted, and in the books that have never been doubted the stream of truth flows in all its fullness; and subsequently the Holy Spirit has directed also this canonical work with so firm a hand, that the generous recognition of by far the most books astonishes us far more than the continuous doubt expressed concerning a very few.

With respect to the text of the Sacred Scripture, the same

confession is in place. There is no official text in the original language for the New Testament, and the *textus receptus* is certainly stripped of much beauty by errors. Of this, however, we likewise confess that that text has not been abandoned to chance, but has been watched over with tender care by the Holy Spirit. It cannot be granted that, when finally, in the counsel of God, the great moment had come in which, some four centuries ago, the Word of God was to enter upon its vast circulation through the press, the text which was then chosen under the appointment of God can have been an indifferent one; a most imperfect and an almost hopelessly impaired and injured one; and it must rather be confessed that it is entitled to a peculiarly prominent place in the front ranks on account of its eminently historical significance. At the hand of other manuscripts the *textus receptus* may and must be subjected to corrections, but, disrobed of its spiritual preference, it never needs to make room for older witnesses as a castaway *per se*. For myself, at least, I have never felt the logical stress of the argument, that a manuscript of the fourth century, *eo ipso*, is a more correct copy of the autographon, than a manuscript of an early origin but perhaps following an older and therefore a purer text.

The direction of the Spirit also included the *translations*, even though it be least of all in absolute measures. Consider it well, that now in the translations alone, and not in the original, the Word *exists* for thousands who thirst after the living God, and who without that Word will never find Him. Even literary men declare that both Luther's version and the Dutch *staten-Bible* are such surprising products of sanctified genius, that, apart from a higher inspiration, they can scarcely be explained. Such translations by the church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, and offered to the laity in the very



prosperous period of her spiritual life, are for this reason the Bible to the people; to theologians indeed ever appealable to the original, and never in itself to betaken as authority, but of so great value nevertheless and of such spiritual significance, that, under the Spirit's leading, the layman is entirely justified who binds his conscience to this translation, and not to a text that was foreign to him.

And, finally, as to the exegesis of the Scripture, here also the Holy Spirit is the real exegete and, in difference of opinion, the *Supremus Judex*. This judicature the Spirit exercises by laying out the lines of the truth in the confessional standards of the churches; by impelling the preaching and the study of the Scripture in those lines; and even when, in the instrumental use of the Word, He accustoms the souls of believers to that fixed course.

But, however much this providence of the Holy Spirit may be able to quicken a *tides humana* in the churches, it does not finish the work of the Holy Spirit. For this human faith can never give absolute assurance, and Calvin himself recognized that an unregenerated man, provided he is a man of thought, cannot be convinced by us of the theopneusty of the Scriptures. The semi-somnolent masses may be held in rein by ecclesiastical authority, but independent, thoughtful spirits never. Not as though there were separate rules for rich and poor, but because, as Twisten correctly observes, "the absolute faith on the divine character of the Scripture can never rest other than on the immediately divine witness." For if human reason were ever able to demonstrate the divine, then reason would stand superior to the divine, and thus, *eo ipso*, the divine character of the divine word would be destroyed.

However much our fathers depended upon the theistic and

unceasing activity of the Holy Spirit with the Word, they have never attributed any higher value to the *Udes huntana* than of being a preparative and directing work, and their real power and actual strength has never sprung from any other source than the immediate Witness of the Holy Spirit. This Witness of the Holy Spirit was not taken in the Lutheran sense, as of a “*Spiritus Sanctus in ipsa Scriptura loquens et testificans,*” and much less still in the heavy sense of our present-day theologians, as a harmony of the reflex of the Spirit in us with the reflex of the Spirit in the Scripture; but a witness of the Holy Spirit which is born, as Calvin puts it, when that same God the Holy Spirit who spoke centuries ago through the mouth of the apostles and prophets enters into my heart, and by a supranatural witness imparts to me the indisputable assurance : I, God-myself, have inspired this Scripture, this divine Word.

This touches the heart of the question. He who has received that witness stands immovable as a wall. He who has not received it, undulates as a wave of the sea. And every effort of man to replace this witness of the Spirit by one's own demonstration, is sinful, falls short of the glory of God, and never accomplishes its purpose. All children of God receive this witness at his appointed time, so surely, that even the ethical theologians who came to life, after they had played through their entire *repertoire* of negations, had to come back to the church and confess that, after all, “this is the Word of our God ! ” And therefore, it is this witness of the Holy Spirit which breaks the teeth out of the mouth of all clericalism ; which, after the removal of every middle-link, binds the soul immediately to God; and thereby enriches each layman with that invaluable right of spiritual liberty, from which heroic courage, firmness of character, and real love of freedom

are born. This is the fulfillment of the jubilant prophecy, that a man need no more say to his brother, " Know the Lord," for that all shall know him, even from the least unto the greatest. Or, if you please, call it the, holy, divine, and only real equality which brings the profoundest scholar to his knees by the side of the humblest house-mother, with an assurance in the heart which is absolutely similar and unmovable.

But, and this is our complaint, the newer Scripture-study injures, likewise, this beautifully ordered state of things. It turns loose what was fast; it lifts each piece of the Scripture out of its grooves; and, unwilling and helpless, the laity are delivered into the hands of the men of Semitic and classical studies. Of course nothing remains of the translation, and youthful preachers who have scarcely an elementary knowledge of the original languages will, with appeals to the original text, substitute the translation by their own idea, until the humble layman is forced to exclaim: " What a wretched translation I have! Would that I could read Greek and Hebrew myself ! " But even this is not the end, misguided soul; for, hear how they tell you in all varieties of ways that the original text itself is hopelessly impaired, even to such an extent that the manuscripts offer no sufficient result, and turn on turn the conjecture-process must be risked; and then,—oh, the height of self-conceit, of which, drifting with that stream, I myself was guilty,—we see young men coming fresh from the academy who deem themselves fully matured and justified to train their wits by practicing the art of making conjectures at the expense of the Holy Scripture. And even if that were all. But then the poor laity must furthermore be told that *this* narrative is a myth, and the other has come to us from Parseeism; that not only with respect to editorship but also with respect to the *content*, the books of Moses are of much

later origin; that the reports of the creation and of the fall are sacred phantasies; that Daniel was a pious fraud; yea, even that the word of the apostles cannot be normative, neither for our confession nor for the picture which we form for ourselves of the Lord. To all this the laity must listen; and when it concerns the confessional standard, they are told, that God's Word, apart from every formula of faith, is the proper confession of the Reformed Church. And when one asks, "Do you mean by this the Scripture?" the answer runs, "No, but merely God's word in that Scripture." And when further it is asked, "Is it what is there recorded as God's word?" again the answer runs, "No, it is not that. The prophets called it so in a metaphorical sense, but it was really the product of their own thoughts." And this is what the church of God feels deeply hurt about, and against which she rebels with all the intensity of her thirst after liberty and zeal of fidelity to a sacred charge. She smarts under it as under the jeers that impugn the seriousness of her heart, and as under a game at the expense of the needs of her soul. It stings her as the insult of a jeering clericalism, and in the name of the Lord she resents it.

For, though I well know that even thus the Holy Spirit *can* and does work an inward and certain witness in the regenerated soul, by all this the historic consciousness is weakened;—and moreover, aside from the regenerated and the redeemed, there are still the children of the churches, and it makes the blood rush to the face to see how mercilessly and unpardonably cruelly these vivisectors of the Holy Scriptures deal with the souls of our children.

For of course, when the Scripture is open to question as they say it is, a common copy of our version becomes an almost worthless volume; the country-pastor is the only one who can explain it from his books; the Orientalist and the Grecist

become the seers of our days, whom all Israel must counsel ; and the speciality in introduction-studies becomes the High Priest of a new-born church, before whose oracle the astonished masses bend their-knees.

Add to this that, in consequence of this all-disintegrating criticism, every new preacher has other things to proclaim in the self-same congregation; also, that this theistic, never-ceasing activity of the Holy Spirit is ignored; yea, that above all else the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the same way as inspiration is either weakened after the Lutheran style, or in the Fichtean sense is subjectivated,—and, in all seriousness, I ask, Is it said too much, is it spoken too crassly, when, after having exhibited this vivisection that has presumptuously been applied to the Scripture, as the corruptor of our theology and the annihilator of the Bible, I at length no less seriously brand it as an avenue to clericalism; and that therefore, as a free-born son of a nation which purchased its liberty from Spain and on the ground of this Testimony of the Holy Spirit, I protest against this violation of the right of the churches and this injury worked against the liberty of the laity?

I have come to the end of my task, and my threefold protest against the biblical criticism of the present day has been entered. I find no fault with what is done by those who are outside, nor with what has been done by any in the capacity of Semitic philologists. But I deplore that in the domain of the church of Christ, and in the very temple of the sacred theology, the Holy Scripture has been so roughly handled by those who profess themselves to be Christian theologians, that at their hand the Holy Bible has been recklessly and unsparingly carved and torn loose in its several parts, and has had its organism remodeled after philosophical hypotheses. I think

I have shown with logical accuracy both the encyclopedic, dogmatic, and ecclesiastical ruin which this critical vandalism has perpetrated, and, that I might shun the very appearance of spiritual cowardice, I have boldly and candidly set over-against this my own confession respecting the Holy Scripture. I did this in the still consciousness that, with no cover or fingers over my eyes, I looked the criticism squarely in the face; condoned and mollified nothing; and that with an honest, scientific conscience I stand immovably firm in the confession of the inspiration by the Spirit. I am quite prepared that this will occasion surprise with one, bitterness with another; but why should I be denied the right to speak, when it has come to this pass, that even they who confess the name of Jesus offer the incense of approbation to the most radical anatomists of the Scripture? God the Lord has granted me the courage of my conviction, and though this conviction may seem utter foolishness to our modern Greeks, and to our ethical Israel a stone of offense, I hold myself fast to it, even as all the dear people of God have embraced it these nineteen centuries, as "the Power of God," a power given us of God not for the pleasing of our pride, but for the making sure of our salvation.

And if with this I take my departure both from my modern and ethical opponents, I say to the moderns among my critics, "Even though, as it seems to me, you wander and err, yet with you there is logical consistency; for, as you say, the Scripture is a scripture like other books, entirely human of origin; and therefore there is no inspiration either, no more regard for the elect who call for certainty, and the whole *sancta theologia* is metamorphosed into the science of religion." To the ethicals, on the other hand, who, because they still confess the holy name of the Lord, are still my brethren; to them I say: "Smelt

away the philosophical alloy from the pure gold which still hides in the kernel of your faith. Be done with that limping on two mutually excluding principles. Choose once more a form that will suit the glorious life in which you also desire to lave and satisfy ydur soul. Above all, have pity, have mercy, upon those who are deeply hurt, because they are the church of the living God." And if the younger among them were to ask, if then they must violate their insight and do violence to their scientific conscience, I would answer, " No; never do that. It is never safe to do anything against the conscience, and no difficulties of conscience may ever be called conquered before they are conquered indeed. But if you would do violence, if you would try your strength against something, oh, then, in the name of the Lord, let me urge you to do violence indeed against the highness of our human thinking, cast your biblical criticism, and not the Bible, into the melting-pot, and, as theologians, and as shepherds of the flocks, cease from aspiring to be anything else, or anything higher than small in your own wisdom and correspondingly more richly endowed instruments of the Holy Ghost."







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