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I. THEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE.

Our age, on its religious side, has been characterized as an age of doubt. We are constrained to admit that there is a propriety in this characterization. Doubt with regard to religious matters is more widespread at present than it was in days gone by. This is not saying that the Christian religion has not a stronger hold upon men to-day than ever before, for it has. The mustard seed sown in the ground and springing up into an herb is growing yet, though already the greatest of all herbs. The leaven hid away in the meal is still permeating the mass, and will continue till the whole is leavened. The doubt of our age does not furnish sufficient ground to justify the believer in entertaining pessimistic views of the future. But there is none the less a widespread spirit of questioning and uncertainty concerning things religious. It is not confined to the student's cloister, but is found among the masses. It appears in a good deal of the popular literature of the day, and tends to create for itself a congenial soil, if that be not already found. But as has been remarked by those observant of the trend of theological thought in our day, while doubt is more general than it was in a former age, it is not of the same intensity. It is not so much a positive denial as it is an enquiry. A century ago unbelief was very sure of itself. It sneered at faith, and assumed a happy, even a lightsome attitude. But such self-complacency has largely disappeared from the theological world, and in its place there is more of earnest investigation.

VIII. THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A STUDY OF THE MODES OF REVELATION.

We derive our knowledge of God from the manifestations he has made of himself in the works of Creation and Providence; in the written Word; in the person and work of the Redeemer; and in the work of the Holy Ghost. Some of these modes of revelation are natural, others supernatural, while one at least combines both elements. As revelations they are neither independent nor unrelated, and all are no doubt necessary to a full display of the perfections of the Godhead. It is not our purpose in this article to discuss any of these forms of revelation, but to give expression to some reflections suggested by their character and relations.

All Protestants agree in teaching that "the Word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice." The infallibility and divine authority of the Scriptures are due to the fact that they are the word of God; and they are the word of God because they were given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. No better definition of inspiration can be given than this from Dr. Charles Hodge: "An influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of certain select men which rendered them the organs of God for the infallible communication of his mind and will." It is thoroughly scriptural. The sacred writers do not pretend to speak in their own names; nor do they demand assent or obedience to their teachings on the ground of their having discovered the truth, or their ability to defend it. They speak always as the messengers of God, and claim for their messages divine authority. The Prophet under the Old Testament, as the name imports, spoke for God. When Paul was criticised at Corinth because he did not conform to the rules of rhetoric his reply was that he received both the truth he communicated and the language in which he conveyed it, from the Holy Ghost. Further than this we have not time to deal

with the nature of inspiration. That the sacred writers claim it in this sense there can be no reasonable doubt. But how is the claim sustained? What proof is there that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? It may be said that the claim itself is sufficient proof. That the writers are the best witnesses in the case. They certainly knew under what influence they wrote; and their honesty was attested both by the quality of their writing and the sufferings they endured in consequence of their authorship. Or it may be said that the unity of the Scriptures is a demonstration that the human authors were inspired. That so many books, written at intervals through so many centuries, in so many different countries and languages, developing the vast scheme of human redemption, while teaching collaterally of the greatest variety of minor subjects—that these books should each fit into its place in one organic whole is an impossibility on any other supposition than that they were all the products of one mind, and that one omniscient. Or it may be said again that the effects which have attended the scriptures, wherever they have been known and heard, show that there is a divine power connected with them. These and other considerations are not without force. But they would not fit the case in the first instance. How could a Jewish Assembly know that Isaiah was commissioned to speak for God, or how could a Gentile city know that Paul was an Apostle? Certainly not by their mere assertion. Nor would the unity nor effect of Scripture avail, for the reason that these as yet were not apparent. Nor are considerations such as these we have mentioned the ground on which the Scriptures rest the doctrine of inspiration. When the age of Theophanies was closing and the day of inspiration was at the dawn the Lord gave Moses a commission to deliver his people from their bondage in Egypt. When Moses objected that neither Pharaoh nor the Elders of Israel would believe that the Lord had sent him, the Lord said unto him "thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." Of the preaching of the Apostles it

is written, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his will." Here emerges a relation in this series of revelations which first of all we wish to emphasize. The word written is made to depend for its proper attestation upon God's revelation in nature. The reason for the arrangement is not hard to discover. May we not say it is obvious? Creation was God's first form of manifestation. This revelation is addressed to the reason of man. This is what the Apostle says of it in Romans 1:19. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them." What it teaches of God is said to be specifically "his eternal power and Godhood." Here is a book which the mind of man can read, and which carries its own credentials. The mind of man is so constituted that an inspection of this volume necessarily awakens the convictions that there is a God, and that he is Almighty. Nature is present to the view of all men in every age. Here, then, is a witness understood by all, and whose testimony is unimpeachable. We say its testimony is unimpeachable because it is never given except at the command of God. Rational creatures can acquaint themselves with the laws of nature, and by submitting to them, make them subserve their interest; but God alone can control what he has made. The miracle is the work of Almighty power. It is this fact that constitutes the value of this form of testimony. A miracle wrought in attestation of a divine commission was the seal of the Almighty. The greatest miracle was the resurrection of Christ, and of this it is written that he "was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." But all of our Lord's miracles attested his divine mission, and in the same way did the Lord confirm the preaching of the Apostles. Nicodemus expressed the common sentiment when he said to our Lord, "We know thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." We have been surprised and pained to notice the

position assigned to the miracle as proof of inspiration by some able and conservative American theologians. Rev. Francis L. Patton, D. D., in his little work, "The Inspiration of the Scriptures," says: "Whether the Bible is a supernatural production or not, it certainly does constitute, in its main features, a record of divine communications." Rev. Basil Manly, D. D., in his "Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," says, "To this argument (internal evidence) is added in some cases the peculiar seal of miracles." Dr. Charles Hodge, under the head of "General Considerations in Support of the Doctrine," remarks, that "On this point little need be said." We are not disposed to call in question the position of the first and second writers mentioned that the testimony of the sacred writers as to the influence under which they wrote should be admitted. Nor do we take issue with Dr. Hodge when he says that the business of the theologian is to set forth what the Bible teaches. But the questions will suggest themselves. Do the sacred writers testify to nothing but the fact that they were moved by the Holy Ghost? And does the Bible teach nothing concerning inspiration but its nature? It is said to be well to learn from an enemy. Certainly those who have assailed the inspiration of the Scriptures have directed their main assault upon the miracle. The English Deists questioned the credibility of miracles, and the modern German Rationalists have impugned their reality. Nor is this a recent device of the enemy. We find that the Pharisees felt the pressure of the miraculous deeds of Christ during his public ministry. Not being able to discredit them as facts, they ascribed them to Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. In regard to this matter the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. It seems to us that the Bible is as careful to state the proof of inspiration as it is to unfold its nature. And we find those who reject the proof upon which inspiration is made to rest in the Scriptures either deny the doctrine or explain it away. Hence it is that we feel pained when good and great men, such as we have mentioned, made so little of the mira-

cle as a proof of inspiration. Some of our readers no doubt remember a small volume which created a sensation when we were in course of training for the ministry. As we remember, the title was "The Christ of History." It proposed to do great things for the Lord. Leaving out the miraculous elements in the life of Christ, it would show from what was left that such a life was impossible under the circumstances except on the supposition that Christ was more than a man. Many of us read the book and applauded the author, He was the hero of the hour. A champion of the faith had appeared who could hold the fort without firing a cannon. We think differently now. Experience has taught us that God is the best judge of the kind of evidence needed to establish the truth of his Word.

The design of inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching. So far as the Scriptures are concerned, it appertains to the record. Revelation has a different design. It is intended to communicate knowledge. Inspiration is broader in its scope than revelation. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. As a record, the whole Bible is inspired, because holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But, when we consider the matter of the Bible, we find that, while some of it could be known only by means of supernatural communication, much of it comes within the scope of ordinary observation and experience. This latter element is not strictly speaking revealed truth; but, being attested by the Spirit of inspiration, it stands in the Bible on the same basis with the supernatural element. Both are received by faith, because both rest on the direct testimony of God. Here then we have a revelation made to faith covering the same ground as that which in nature is addressed to reason; and we have, in addition, an element in this revelation which transcends reason. Bishop Butler has found a basis here for his immortal Analogy. He says: "The design, then, of the following treatise will be to show that the several parts principally objected against in this moral and Christian dispensation, including its scheme, its publication, and the

proof which God has afforded us of its truth ; that the particular parts principally objected against in this whole dispensation, are analogous to that which is experienced in the constitution and course of Nature." Origen had observed that "he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of Nature." To this Butler adds : "And in a like way of reflection, it may be added, that he who denies the Scripture to have been from God, upon account of these difficulties, may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him." But this comprehensive feature of the Bible has generally been regarded in a way very different from that taken by Butler. As is well known, this common ground of reason and faith has furnished the field of battle to the friends and enemies of supernatural revelation. Every new science in modern times has been employed as an instrument in an effort to convict the Bible of error. Not only so, but, from the conceded function of reason in the sphere of natural religion, liberty has been taken to claim for it the right also to judge in the realm of the supernatural. Indeed a ground has been discovered in this comprehensive feature of revealed religion for the professed friends of the Bible to stand upon and wage interminable theological strife. From the days of the schoolmen at least, two sets of opposing theological views have been attended invariably, each by its own philosophy of moral agency. Into this wide field we have neither time nor disposition to enter. We have sketched it only that we may indulge in a few general reflections. In the first place, Bishop Butler has shown true discernment in finding in the structure of the Bible means of defence rather than of criticism. Either element of Scripture can be shown, in a way different from that of Butler, to point in that direction. We are aware that those who treat of the office of reason in regard to revelation assign to it only a negative judgment in natural religion. If, for instance, true science should be

able to show that the Bible, correctly interpreted, teaches error there could be but one conclusion. Reason would decide against the claims of such a revelation. We have no sympathy with erroneous theories of inspiration which have been invented to save the credit of God's word. They are not needed. And, if they were, they would not avail. If the Bible is inspired in the sense claimed for it by the sacred writers, then it rests upon the direct testimony of God. Error is inconsistent with such a claim. And there can be no doubt of the right of reason to judge whether or not the Bible does not contradict known truth. It is also true that the mere fact that a pretended revelation teaches known truth is not proof of its claim. And yet Butler shows that analogy may establish a probability that nature and Revelation have the same Author and Cause. If now we connect with Butler's suggestion the history of the true religion, we have a strong probability. It is certainly suggestive that, while false religions have been exposed by this native function of reason, the Word of God has thus far remained unimpeached. That it should have been associated with all the varied forms of philosophical opinion and escaped responsibility for the errors they contained, inclines one to ascribe it to a divine source. If now we turn to consider that element of Scripture which is in the strict sense revealed truth we will find ourselves led to the same conclusion. Here we find the function of reason reversed. It can affirm, but is unable to deny. That it can affirm the truth which it cannot discover is, we think, a certainty. "As we demonstrate, in natural theology, the being and perfection of God from the order and beauty of his works, and infer the relation which he must sustain to the worlds he has made, so the scheme of Providence, disclosed in revelation, may, in its majesty and grandeur, its harmony, beneficence and purity, contain such memorials of Deity as to render skepticism little less than madness. In the case of Christianity, for instance, the glory of God is so conspicuously displayed in the provisions of the Gospel that to the called it would be as easy to doubt the shining of the sun in the

heavens as the divine mission of Jesus. Redemption is its own witness." To this testimony of Dr. Thornwell we may add the following on the same subject, regarded from another point of view: "Such transcendent elements as the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son, the work of the Spirit, personal election and particular redemption are not the ingredients which man was likely to use in devising a system of religion."

Passing, however, from this protest against the war the enemies of supernatural revelation have forced upon its friends, let us view for a moment the far more unseemly strife within the field. Historical theology is a history of controversies. Behind these controversies over the doctrinal teaching of the Scriptures we generally find certain conflicting philosophical principles. The respective parties to the debate have come to the study of the Word of God armed with principles of interpretation drawn from the armor of speculative reason. The common domain of reason and faith is again the pretext. But in this case there is really no excuse for the heat of the conflict. Both parties claim to regard the Scriptures as the Word of God. Both claim to be seeking to know what they teach. It would seem, in advance of the result, that both parties would be willing to take their philosophy, as well as their theology, from the Bible. The Author of redemption is also the Creator of man. The provisions of grace are intended to meet the necessities of the sinner. The Bible does not formally teach ethics or psychology; but it assumes all that these controversialists are fighting over. And the assumptions are always in accord with sound philosophy. Possibly there is some compensation for the weariness of debate in the fact that God raises up now and then men like Edwards, Alexander and Dabney to show how beautifully harmonious is the plan of salvation with the actual constitution of the human soul; and how well adapted to its depraved condition. It is certainly a comfort to know that plain Christians are not troubled with these speculative difficulties.

There are some very striking points of analogy between

the written and the incarnate Word of God. When David says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," we understand him to speak of the Written Word. When John says, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," we understand him to refer to the Incarnate Word. But, so close are the resemblances, that there are passages in which it is difficult to say which is intended. No man was more genuinely human than Christ, and yet the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him. The Son of God became man by taking to himself a true human body and a reasonable human soul. In like manner, in the Scripture we have the union of the finite and the infinite. God's mind and will are clothed in the dress of human speech. We may go further, and find an analogy in the genesis of the respective manifestations. The human nature of Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin; and the words of Scripture were given by the Holy Ghost, but written by holy men of God. Close as the resemblances are, however, the Scriptures make a wide difference between the written and the incarnate Word as modes of divine revelation. Without disparaging the written word in the least, or any of the other forms of divine manifestation, the Incarnate Word is celebrated as the only full and complete manifestation of the perfections of God. He is called "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), and "the express image of his substance" (Heb. 1:3). Such terms are never applied to nature, providence or the written word. In the nature of the case they could not be. They are applicable only to a person constituted as Christ was. They imply his consubstantiality with the Father, his separate personality and his incarnation. If Christ was not the same in substance with the Father he could not be said, in a real sense, to be the image of that substance. If he was not as the Son, a separate and distinct person, he could not have received the image. And, if he had not been made in the likeness of man, he could not have expressed that image to us. These declarations concerning him bring before our mind all that is involved in the wonderful

constitution of his person. The manifestation of God made in Christ was full and direct. In speaking of it to Philip he said, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It is the boast of Dr. Dorner that "the Person of Christ has again come to the front in its exegetical, historical and dogmatic sides, and has been seized by a more profound movement than at any time since the early centuries. The most vital need is widely spread, to gain a true and living view and knowledge of the person of Christ. The conflict of theological and ecclesiastical parties moves increasingly around the person of Christ, as an earnest battle may finally gather around the person of a general." Said of the person of Christ in the Scriptural sense, these would be inspiring words. But let us hear him further: "As the gain of the more recent science since Schelling, the knowledge that finite and infinite do not exclude each other has been demonstrable. Human nature is not finite merely, but has something infinite in it, at least in the form of receptiveness. That which is of infinite value—the moral and the knowledge of the truth originally resting in God alone—does not transcend the idea of man, but belongs to his reality, though derivatively. . . . With this knowledge of the internal relation or coalescence of the Divine and human according to their essence. . . . the spirit of the more recent speculation again turned with delight to the problems of the Trinity and the Incarnation of God." This part of the quotation detracts materially from the value of the other. An impulse to speculate on the person of Christ that arises from the doctrine of the Oneness of God and man—whether that phrase be used in a Theistic or Pantheistic sense—is not a matter of congratulation. In either case, the Scripture doctrine of two natures united in one person is destroyed. And in either case, the satisfaction of Christ—the great work for which he took our nature into union with himself—is rendered impossible. "The Gospel for an Age of Doubt" was criticised on the ground that it ignored the Work of Christ: That would have been a pertinent objection if the work had been sound on the person of Christ.

The person of Christ is not a gospel for sinners apart from his work of mediation. But criticism that called attention to the connection that obtains between hazy views of the person of Christ and inadequate conceptions of the necessity and nature of the atonement, would have been more appropriate. May our Southern Presbyterian Church never forget how to answer the question, How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man ?

It was our intention, when we began to write, to include in this article some reflections suggested by the other two modes of revelation—Providence and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the misfortune of a busy man, however, that he has not time to be brief. The article has already expanded beyond the orthodox limit. Prudence demands that the remainder of the discussion be suppressed, at least for the present.

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