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# AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT COLUMBIA, (S. C.)

MARCH 28, 1832

AT THE

INAUGURATION OF THE AUTHOR,

AS

**PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE,**

IN THE

**THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

OF THE

*Synod of South Carolina and Georgia.*

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BY

**GEORGE HOWE,**

[PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.]

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## ADDRESS.

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The ceremonies of this day have introduced me into one of the most responsible offices in the church of Jesus Christ, and have led me to feel, in my inmost soul, how insufficient I am for the work before me. If an apostle could say as he looked upon the labour of his ministry, "Who is sufficient for these things!" the exclamation may be repeated with the sincerest humility by one who is appointed to teach those who are soon to be the instructors of others; by one who is to expound to them, and through them, to the churches, the inspired oracles of God.

It has indeed been doubted whether there is any necessity for seminaries of Theological learning, and whether it is proper to delay the student from the work of the ministry to pursue a course of Theological study, filling a period of three years in addition to his collegiate education.

But these doubts arise from inadequate views of the compass of Theological study, and of the demands the present age is making for talents and learning in those who are the watchmen and defenders of the church. Which of the studies included in this three years course can be omitted by the minister at the present day? Can he who is the authorized interpreter of the word of God well dispense with a knowledge of the tongues in which that word is contained? If not, then will he find ample employment for one year in acquiring this knowledge, and in learning to apply it in the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures. When his office is to explain and defend the faith once delivered to the saints, can he safely assume this office till he has settled firmly in

his mind all the doctrines of Theology, and has systematically arranged them? Should he not have established every doctrine by fundamental investigation, and have felt the firm immoveable foundations on which it rests? Who will say that another year is more than sufficient to accomplish this? And should the student be allowed to enter the pulpit untaught in the lessons of wisdom the history of the church affords, or uninstructed in the immediate duties of the pastoral office, or with a diction uncultivated, or with no adequate idea of the proper structure of a discourse, his education would in some important respects be deficient, and he, in his ministry, would suffer loss. Considerations like these have induced the framers of our Theological Seminaries to extend the studies through the term of three years. They could easily see how in some cases, these studies might be continued longer with advantage, while they could not fail to deem that candidate for the ministry unfortunate who should satisfy himself with less.\*

To me in the office on which I this day enter, is committed the department of Biblical Literature, which in theory,—would that I could add,—*which in practice*, has been considered the foundation on which a theological education must be based, as well as the instrument by which it is to be obtained.—These obvious uses of Biblical Literature have given it the first place in point of time in the arrangement of Theological studies, suggesting the propriety of devoting the principal portion of the first year to the topics it embraces.

Surely it will not be pretended that the Christian Theologian is to settle his religious belief in the same way as Plato settled his, i. e. availing himself of no other sources of information than were in the possession of this philosopher. Nor will it be pretended in a land of Protestants, that the student in Theology is to receive his opinions on the authoritative mandates of any power, ecclesiastical or civil.

\* See appendix, note A.

Were it so, he who aspires to the ministry might learn the catechism of his church, and rest satisfied with his acquisitions. He that so believes, is unworthy to be numbered with the followers of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin. They laid down the doctrine that the Bible; *the Bible* is the only religion of protestants; and in defence of this doctrine ventured their all. Breaking away from the principle that the church is the infallible interpreter of the scriptures, and its decisions the rule of faith, they held, as every one free from bigotry will hold, that the Scriptures alone are our ultimate standard of faith and duty. The student of theology then must seek his opinions in the word of God. To the Bible he must go to form his creed. This creed must include whatever doctrine is there taught, and should express it clearly. To pursue an opposite, but too frequent course, to frame our creed, and *then* go to the Scriptures and press texts into the service of that creed, what is it but to treat the word of God with irreverence and violence, and its blessed author with impiety? It is to slight the document God has sent us to tell us what is infallibly true, and by arriving at our opinions independently of this, to prefer our own wisdom to the wisdom of God. If then we go and select texts of Scripture *merely* to give currency to our opinions, or to satisfy an accusing conscience, we steal the signet of heaven, and affix it to the forgery of our own hands.

But the student of Theology has a previous question to settle. The Bible was written at different periods and in different ages. Its earliest writings are at least three thousand, its latest, almost eighteen hundred, years old. Until the art of printing was invented, copies of the Scriptures could be multiplied only by the pen. The text then has been repeatedly copied by uninspired transcribers. The state of the text as we have it, is as subject of primary importance. Is it free from errors? Are its words, or rather are its ideas the identical words and ideas written down by

those whose names it bears. If not, then is it not infallibly the word of God, then is it not the legitimate source of religious faith. To discuss and settle *this* question is one of the objects of the department of Instruction allotted to me ; since it is clear, that unless we are satisfied of the genuineness of the text, we cannot abide by its decisions. Every student ought to ascertain how he comes to have the Scriptures which once existed in single and scattered manuscripts, in their present form, and should be acquainted with the proofs on which their genuineness rests. Otherwise, he can only plead his ignorance, and adhere with unphilosophical obstinacy to his belief in their integrity when this is called in question, a course which gives the subtle adversary of the faith an easy triumph over him.

Abundant materials exist to satisfy every reasonable doubt on the point now mentioned. Impartial and extensive investigations made with incredible labour and expense go to confirm the fact, that in no important point does the received text depart from that of the original writer.\* If, in the ancient books, as for example, in the writings of Moses, there are insulated passages evidently added by a later hand, this is no new discovery, nor does it for a moment impugn the genuineness of these writings, since there is sufficient proof that these additions and explanations were sanctioned by an inspired man, himself the writer of one at least of those books constituting the sacred canon.†

The genuineness of the text being established, another inquiry arises in this department of instruction : By what laws shall the Bible be interpreted ? The brief answer to which is, By the same principles as those to which we appeal in interpreting the language of daily discourse, and by which we ascertain the meaning of any ancient author. Though these principles are founded in the common sense

\* See appendix, Note B.

† See appendix, Note C.

of men, and are necessary in their operation, yet must pains be taken to understand them, and to settle them firmly in his mind, by him who would interpret the sacred scriptures, or he will be involved, on all hands, in doubt and error. Pains I say must be taken to understand them, and this, because these natural and obvious principles have been departed from, sometimes only occasionally, at other times habitually, by the majority of the professed interpreters of Scripture in all ages, and others introduced instead, which the good sense of mankind would not tolerate for a moment in respect to any other book than that which contains the record of God's will.

The history of Biblical Interpretation will justify this language. The Jewish interpreters introduced the system of Allegorical Interpretation, by which they sought out a hidden meaning in the plainest and most obvious narratives of fact. So far was this system of Interpretation carried that to many the allegorical sense, which has no foundation in the divine word, but is the creation of human fancy, was exalted to the place of a revelation from heaven, while the literal or grammatical sense, the only sense which can lay claim to inspiration, was discarded as frigid and unworthy. It was even asserted by some that a literal sense never existed. They denied that there were ever any such persons as Hagar and Sarah; and Philo, a reigning spirit among them, represents the account of the creation which was performed in six days and succeeded by the seventh day of rest hallowed by God, as intended by Moses to teach nothing else than the peculiar sacredness of the number seven. And when God is said to have clothed our first parents in skins of beasts, this interpreter supposes that the words are neither to be literally understood, nor yet as implying that the providence of God so directed them that they availed themselves of clothing, but that the whole is an allegory by which is expressed man's dominion over the brute creation.\*

\* Morus Vol. 2d. p. 217. See Note D.

A single word is susceptible of a variety of meanings according to the connexion in which it stands. But in any one connexion in serious writing it can have but one sense. Otherwise there is no certainty in language, and no medium of intercourse between man and man. But the Jewish Doctors at one time interpreted Scripture by a rule widely different. God, they said, foresaw all the various interpretations which it was possible to give to any word, and adapted the language of scripture to sustain these various interpretations. They held that the whole meaning of Scripture is not obtained until we have combined all the meanings of which a word is susceptible. The words of Scripture, said they, mean all they can possibly be made to mean.†

Others went further and held that on every pinnacle of a letter were suspended mountains of sense, and from the direction in which these apices of letters pointed, and from the position which some of the letters assumed in certain places, drew senses extravagant and peculiar. To multiply the senses of words and thus to enrich the Scriptures they even felt themselves at liberty to transpose the letters of a word so as to form a word of entirely different sound and signification, which signification\* however, they considered as no less deducible from the text than the true and obvious meaning of the writer. I will illustrate this mode of interpretation by an example taken from the Lectures of Morus. The first word in the Hebrew Bible is **ברשית** (*Bereshith*,) *in the beginning*. By transposing the letters it may be made a different word which will signify *a fiery covenant, or covenant of fire*. They therefore teach us to understand this word, of the covenant made by God with the Israelites amid the flames of Sinai. But the first letter of this word is sometimes used as a numeral for the number two, therefore this letter must denote whatever things can be considered as two, the double law; i. e. the oral and written law;

† Morus Vol. 1. p. 36.

the two aeons and various other things which our fancy may supply. Absurd and dangerous as were these errors of interpretation, the early Fathers of the christian church adopted them almost without discrimination. The Jews had borrowed their allegorical interpretation from the Greeks; for long before Christ, they had begun to study the Grecian philosophy and to emulate the Grecian genius. In their days of philosophy and refinement, the ferocity of Homer's heroes, and his fabulous mythology, had become disgusting to the reflecting Greeks, and the commentators of this poet had long been accustomed to shield their author from reproach, by representing his poem as an extended allegory which was intended to conceal, and by concealing to inculcate, the truths of philosophy. Thus they answered every objection which might be urged against their author. This allegorising method, Philo pursued in imitation of the Greeks, in his comments on the writings of Moses.\* The early Christians, many of whom were Jews, and who derived the Christian religion from Judea by the ministry of the apostles naturally adopted the Jewish method. Many of the fathers too were Grecian philosophers before their conversion to christianity, and thus brought their heathen science to bear on the study of the inspired word. Hence, that the expressions of scripture might not seem at variance with the philosophical language of their schools, they would explain them as the Greeks explained Homer, to contain a mystic or allegoric sense, which was the sense inculcated by God. They found the doctrines, and even the technical language of the Platonic school in the writings of Paul, and a complete system of human science in the holy Scriptures.

With these absurdities of Interpretation, the Fathers, with few exceptions are filled; for this mode of interpreting cost little effort except that of fancy, and little learn-

\* See Marsh's Lectures—Lect. 17 and 18.

ing. It was very convenient when an opponent suggested objections to the literal sense, to resort to the allegorical, and it was thought the Scriptures were rendered more rich and instructive, if in the simple narration or the dry genealogy one might fancy other meanings to be inculcated than that which is suggested to the common sense of mankind. To them the contest which Abraham had with the invading Kings for the rescue of his brother Lot, looked beyond that event to another and more spiritual contest. Sodom was the kingdom of Antichrist; by Lot was intended the faithful included in that kingdom; and by the rescue, the deliverance of the faithful ones by their faith.\*

Will any one now assert that the Fathers are a safe guide in the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, or that any particular interpretation is the more likely to be true from their having believed it? Yet the Romish Church would take away from its members the rights of private judgment. Its council of Trent has consigned to punishment him "who dares wrest the sacred scriptures to his own sense of them contrary to that which hath been held, and is still held by holy mother church; or contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers."† She has thus sanctioned their opinions, contradictory as they often are, and has imposed them upon her members, while she takes away from them the right of following the dictates of their own common sense and judgment in understanding the Holy Scriptures.

Happily for us, the Reformation freed the world from the terror of the Pope, and emancipated the human mind from the fetters in which it had been held. Luther was himself well grounded in correct views of the Scriptures, and shook off the shackles of traditionary interpretation

\* See *Morus Hermeneutica Nov. Test.*, Vol. 2, p. 216.

† *Decreta et Canones Concillii Tridentini*,—appended to Cramp's, *Text Book of Popery*.

which the church had imposed. Following the doctrine of Origin, but *not* his *practice*, guided by Chrysostom as an example, and aided by his ardent love of truth, he did more than all other ages had done before him, to restore the true interpretation of scripture. And it is no slight recommendation of Biblical pursuits, that to them, as an instrument, is to be attributed that glorious reformation in which we so much boast. It was independent study of the holy Scriptures, not in endeavouring to find his own creed *in* the Scriptures, but in attempting to frame his own belief *from* the Scriptures, it was independent study of the Holy Scriptures, in their original tongues, which enabled Luther to achieve the Reformation. Since Luther's day there have arisen many interpreters in the *Catholic* church who have evaded the decree of the council of Trent, and interpreted the Scriptures according to those acknowledged laws of language which approve themselves to the enlightened and balanced mind. Among the Protestants of Germany, Ernesti, his commentator Morus, Storr, Schleusner and Kuinoel, and in Great Britain, Lowth, Campbell, and others, have done much to bring back the mind of man, perplexed and erring amidst discordant theories, to the true interpretation of the word of God.

And yet in this all important science much remains to be done. If its principles may be considered in a great measure settled, it must at least be confessed that Interpretation, as an art, has need to be cultivated and freed from the perverting influences which have affected it, and which affect it still. And one acquainted with English commentators, who has attempted to use them for the *critical* study of the Bible, cannot but regret that they have too little sought to explain the Scriptures from the usage and genius of the languages in which they were written, and that they have been too much influenced by traditionary interpretations which have come down from ancient times, and by the spi-

sit of mystical or allegorical exposition which still meets with too much encouragement from Christians of every name. Thus it comes to pass, that types and resemblances are sought for in the Old Testament history, when we have not the least evidence that a typical sense was ever thought of by the inspired writer, or intended by the Holy Spirit, and when such a mode of interpretation applied to any other writing, would be ridiculous in the extreme. To one who has been bred in the true common sense school of interpretation, the commentary on the Psalms by Bishop Horne, so beautiful in its language, and so pious in its devotion, is almost spoiled, by its disregard of the true grammatical sense, and its devotion to the spiritual or allegorical sense, which we must believe to be a mode of interpretation, indefensible, and open to every species of abuse. Its fine passages are often without force to him, they cannot please him, they cannot benefit him, for to him "there is nothing beautiful but truth."

But if the student has need to be cautions how he adopts the errors of the distinguished interpreters in his own language, still greater caution is needed in respect to those of another school, that of the rationalists of Germany. While they complain of the Fathers for explaining the scriptures in accordance with the Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy, they have committed an error, intimately allied with this, equally absurd, equally dangerous. The sole duty of an interpreter is to elucidate the book he interprets, so as to give the exact meaning of the author. When this is done, his work is finished. For the author's ideas he is not responsible; he is not at liberty to change them, still less to explain away their peculiarities. The German Rationalists have denied with Hume, the possibility of miracles, and they exclude from the Scriptures every thing supernatural. Consequently they deem it their duty to explain away whatever is miraculous, and account for all, on the ground

that the sacred writers were mistaken, and misunderstood what they saw. In their view no miracle was wrought to obtain the tribute money. Peter sold the fish he took, and paid the tax with the proceeds; the transfiguration was a dream from which the disciples were awakened by a storm of lightning; and the death of Ananias was caused by a wound given him by the enraged Peter.\*

Every one will see the necessity of freeing Theology from the operation of these absurd theories, so opposed to the simplicity of truth; so derogatory to the great Author of revelation; so suited to make revealed religion disgusting to men of sense and scientific accuracy. The operation of false principles of interpretation cannot be otherwise than detrimental. Should it be admitted that, notwithstanding these, the great essential doctrines of religion remain untouched, so clearly are they expressed; it is still evident that the cause of truth must severely suffer. If in support of the truth texts are adduced, which, when subjected to the laws of language, do not contain that truth, the enquirer who discovers this, will consider the doctrine itself unfounded, and will be inclined to reject it entirely. "Inadequate defence of truth is little better than libel."

To one who fills this office then, it is a solemn duty to direct the mind of the student to those practical principles of interpretation which he may safely follow, and to erect a beacon on the rocks and quicksands upon which others have been driven.

But it is not enough to have obtained the true principles of interpretation. *It is necessary that the student should learn the art of interpreting.* His labours in the Pulpit, and in the Lecture Room are to consist of an exposition, defence and application of the Holy Scriptures.

But it is obviously important for a man who would be a good interpreter of the sacred Scriptures, to possess a

\* See Paulus Commentar. passim. Heinrichs. See Note E.

knowledge of the languages in which these Scriptures were written. The English version is sufficient for all the purposes of piety, nor would I say one word to weaken your confidence in it. But something more than an acquaintance with this merely, is desirable in a professed divine. The very idioms of the oriental language are retained in this version, so that frequently the version itself cannot be adequately understood but by an acquaintance with the original. The fundamental law of interpretation is to interpret according to the usage of the language in which our author wrote. This law cannot be fulfilled when the language is unknown. He who reads only the English version, will remain ignorant of many passages perfectly simple to one acquainted with the Hebrew, and many others he will consider as conveying a meaning they were never intended to convey by the author who wrote them. If he depends on professed commentators, he will find them differing one from another, and the reasons on which they formed their decisions he will sometimes be unable to appreciate. I hesitate not say that two thirds of the difficulties which arise in understanding the Scriptures vanish at once before him who is able to read them in the languages in which they were written.

I know the complaint is often made, that the candidate has not time to study these languages. But this is too often the language either of indolence, or of mistake. If a minister is faithful he will spend much time in the investigation of the word of God while he lives. And the time which he loses in hunting through commentaries which frequently mislead him, and in fruitless search for definite views on difficult texts, would be more than sufficient to give him all the knowledge of the original languages of Scripture which it is necessary for him to possess. It is an economy of time, it certainly is an economy of effort, to obtain a knowledge of the Bible through the medium of the

original. A good Lexicon, a good grammar, a correct edition of the original Scriptures, and a disposition to use them well, are more valuable to a man for the mere purpose of illustrating Scripture, than all the commentaries in the world without them.

It is objected again that those who have studied the original tongues in early life frequently lose the knowledge of those languages which they have once obtained. Why study that which will be laid aside altogether by and by? But these studies ought never to be discontinued. Yet admit they are, admit that the Hebrew the student has learned in his youth, is entirely forgotten; this student, if he be a reflecting man, who correctly distinguishes the influence which is still exerted over his mind by that early discipline, will say that he would for no consideration, part with what still remains of the habits then acquired. Long after the details of our early studies are forgotten, long after we have ceased to be able to pass that examination in the minutiae of science which a common school boy might pass, the general and more valuable knowledge acquired by our early studies is retained. To this man the Bible is in many respects a far different book, from his having been engaged in these forgotten pursuits. The insight he then obtained into the idioms of the Old and New Testaments can never be lost, but assists him in understanding many passages he would not otherwise understand.

All this knowledge of language, young Gentlemen, which I wish you to acquire, I do not wish you to acquire as a final object, much less for the purpose of being considered learned or great, certainly not for the purpose of triumphing over others who have not enjoyed the advantages which this age of Biblical investigation, and the liberality of your Christian patrons are laying at your feet. When you have enjoyed all the opportunities which this or any other Seminary can afford you, you will still be obliged to look up to

them as your superiors in wisdom,—wisdom you can gain only by passing through the school of experience, in which they have been disciplined. But this knowledge is to be obtained only as a means, a means to help you to understand that holy word which you came here to study, and which you are all your lives long to teach to others;—as a means to introduce you to its inexhaustible riches; and to enable you to transfer its living truths to your own bosoms, where they may spring up as wells of water, unto eternal life. You are to pursue these studies therefore, not as you would attain a mere literary acquisition. This knowledge you are to consecrate to God, to ask his blessing on your efforts in acquiring it, and to view it as a talent you are to employ, not for your own advantage, but in subservience to his glory.

Yet will it be lawful, when we enter the sanctuary of Biblical Learning, to stand and admire its magnificence and wealth. When we are reading those splendid specimens of Oriental Poetry, which the Old, and some portions of the New Testaments afford, of Poetry far excelling Homer and Pindar in sublime grandeur, or the elegiac tenderness of ancient or modern song in pathos, if we have the least sensibility or taste, our hearts will feel, our fancies will be enraptured.

To hear the harp of sacred poesy as it wails in tones of unaffected sorrow, or sounds out in notes of martial triumph, or breathes forth, deep and low, the awful grandeur of God who makes the clouds his chariot, and the winds his servants; if there is music in our hearts, will melt, will rouse, will subdue us.

Time does not allow us to dwell on this subject. But, if Providence continues our lives, and favours our pursuits, we shall know and feel more of the inimitable beauties of the Inspired Scriptures. We shall often listen to the harp

of the Shepherd King, as he sings in the simplest pastoral poetry, or swells with grandeur at the infinite works and 'unknowable' wisdom of the Great Being to whom his talents were ever consecrated. We shall wake to a higher state of being and enjoyment as we walk with Asaph, and the sons of Korah, amid scenes filled with the awful grandeur of Jehovah, or consider with them his instructive providences towards his creature, man. We shall ascend with Isaiah the mount of Prophecy, and look with him down the vale of future generations, admiring the genius, the rich fancy, the rapid thought, the powerful language of this man of God. We shall enter with Ezekiel the land of visions,—of visions sublime, supernatural, and pregnant with events. We shall contemplate with Daniel, the kingdoms which would rise and strengthen, and decay. We shall see in Malachi, the last of the prophetic band, that preparation which God made to introduce his beloved son on the theatre of his atoning sufferings; and with John shall behold, in poetic imagery, sublime beyond a parallel, the events of futurity, and above all, that great day when God shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire.

The poetry of the Bible suffers not in comparison with that of any age or country. Homer's description of Jupiter, shaking Olympus with his nod, sinks into tameness by the side of John's description of the Son of Man on the throne, "before whose face the heavens and the earth flee away, and no place is found for them."

But it is not merely for intellectual pleasure that the poetry of the Bible is to be studied. It excels all other poetry in the excellence, dignity, and practicalness of its subjects. It is to make you better men that you should study it—to sanctify your affections, to purify your imaginations. In vain shall you go to the literature of any other nation, Christian or pagan, for a purpose like this. Our own literature is pagan, is skeptical, is debauching.

Nor yet is the moral benefit of these studies the only one you are to expect. They are rich in fruit. Your own imaginations will be cultivated, and your style rendered vivid, in proportion as you catch the true spirit of sacred verse. And unless you are aware of the structure of sacred poesy, and the nature of its figurative language, you will fall into many errors respecting the interpretation of Scripture. How absurd would it be to interpret English poetry as we would prose. Yet how often is this rule violated in respect to the poetry of the sacred Scriptures. You will yet find that many passages have been misunderstood by yourselves, through ignorance of the poetic costume in which they are clothed, and that even doctrines of Faith have sometimes been found in poetic imagery, literally understood.

But these delightful and rich studies are not to be pursued without diligent labour. God has designed that mortal man shall attain no excellence but through a path of toil and exertion. Yet it is not in a thorny path these studies will lead you. There are cooling and grateful fountains by the way side; there are delightful spots, beautiful as the glory of Lebanon, and the excellency of Carmel, where you may expatiate and gather strength to pursue your way; and all along you will find your mind expanding with new truths, your bosoms swelling with new emotions; difficulties will soon be surmounted, and you may hasten on with free and rapid step.

May you but understand the languages in which Moses, Isaiah, and Paul wrote, may you but be able to judge for yourselves the mind of the Spirit without the intervention of any fallible medium, may you but be Scribes, well instructed, in the kingdom of Heaven, able to bring forth from the treasures of your hearts, things old and new, for the edification of the disciples of Christ,—no labours should seem too arduous, no sacrifices too great. Our bodies with all their powers, our understandings, our reason, our fancies, our

memories, our tongues, our pens, our time, all,—*all* are purchased by Christ; all,—*all* are to be employed, to our utmost, to advance his glory, to win for his church a power and influence over human minds.

We need, indeed,—he who addresses you, feels that he peculiarly needs,—wisdom which a Spirit above us only can inspire, to keep us right amid conflicting opinions, to guide us safely over a field of study, new and untried in a measure by any of us. Safest will it be for us; safest and best, not to lean too much on our own understandings; while we call no man master, and follow truth fearlessly where she leads the way, not rashly to depart from opinions sanctioned by hoary age, and long experience; while we cultivate our minds with all diligence, and leave no means untried, which study will supply, to arrive at the truth, to remember also, that *simplicity and godly sincerity are the great characteristics of a successful student of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.*

Let it never be forgotten by us, that for our advantages we shall have to account to our fellow men here, but shortly afterwards to him *whose eyes are as flaming fire, and who shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and shall purify the sons of Levi.*

## APPENDIX.

### NOTE A.—PAGE 4.

Experience testifies that the youthful clergyman who enters on his duties with an education thorough and extensive, stands on vantage ground while he lives, and has an influence over a circle of minds which a man of equal talents and zeal, unless he acquires this education, can never reach. However plausible it may seem that young men should be hurried into the ministry, that they may stop the descent of souls who are perishing daily, it is an argument too weak to sustain itself when examined: for all other things being equal, the best educated minister will be the most successful preacher, and will be the instrument of bringing the greatest number of persons to a knowledge of the truth.

It has indeed been said, that the ministers of Christ need take no thought what they shall speak, since he has promised to give them what they shall speak when called to advocate his cause. So that it is not only perfectly consistent for them to assume this sacred office without preparation, but to spend the week in providing meat to eat, and raiment to put on, and to enter the pulpit on the Sabbath days, depending on immediate inspiration for thoughts to utter, and language in which to express them. But the Scripture to which reference is here made, is misapplied, and were it not, still years of patient labour are necessary, properly to understand what the apostles knew, without learning, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. In this inspiration the youthful Timothy shared, yet even he was to give attendance to reading and meditation, and to devote himself *wholly* to the work of the ministry.

It requires but a small amount of knowledge to believe in the doctrines of the gospel. An ignorant man may frequently state them with sufficient correctness, but such a man cannot give as the minister of Christ is bound to do, a *reason* for the hope is in him. When his doctrines are attacked he either shrinks abashed from the contest; or exclaims against the impiety of his opponent; or urges a lame and stumbling defence of his belief. In either case he fails of sustaining the cause committed to his trust. Shrinking from the defence implies, in the view of the opponent, weakness in the cause itself; a charge of impiety irritates but does not convince, and an inadequate defence of truth, however well intended, is but a libel on that truth.

The apostle Paul has been *made* the enemy of learning, because he hath said "*knowledge puffeth up*." But this is an imputation on apostolic wisdom not to be endured; an imputation too which serves to show how necessary it is to study the Scriptures, that we may be freed from those false interpretations which have been wrought into the very texture of our minds with our earliest education.

The knowledge he thus describes is the smattering of the novice. It is ignorance which *thinks* it knows, and is proud of its fancied wisdom, and not that deep and genuine learning

"Which is humble that it knows no more."

He quotes the language of the superficial Corinthians, "Now as touching things offered to idols, *we know that we all have knowledge.*" "Knowledge," says he, meaning *such* knowledge as they professed, "puffeth up." If any man *thinketh* he knoweth *any* thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know. He hath but entered

the vestibule of wisdom, let him penetrate its recesses, and he will learn humility. We have heard much of *the pride of learning*, but the church has ever suffered the most, and still has the most to fear from *the pride of ignorance*.

There is reason to believe that the apostle would patronise seminaries of sacred learning, did he live at the present-day, when we know that Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, presided over the schools of the prophets in the days of the Kings of Judah.

NOTE B.—PAGE 6.

“When Kennicott undertook his great work of comparing several hundred Hebrew MSS. and editions, fifty years ago, all Europe was placed in the attitude of anxious expectation. One party who held (as Buxtorf had long before asserted,) that all the Hebrew MSS. the world over, were to a point and accent exactly the same, stood waiting, alternately agitated by the hope that the result would prove to be so, and the fear that it might turn out differently. Another party, who had been perpetually carping at the Hebrew text, accusing the Jews of having mutilated and interpolated it, and guessing what it *should* be, rather than learning to explain what it *was*, most eagerly expected a complete triumph over their opponents who had fought against this conjectural criticism, and doubted not that all the anomalies of Hebrew Grammar, and all the dark and difficult places of the Scripture would be thrown out.

Both were egregiously disappointed in the result. On the one hand, the various readings amounted to several hundred thousands: no two manuscripts or copies being found, which did not differ from each other in a multitude of places: on the other hand, not the one hundredth part of all this immense mass of various readings amounted, in point of importance, to any thing more, than the question whether the word *honour* shall be spelled with or without the letter *v*.

What Eichhorn said long ago, when remarking on the changes which Bishop Lowth had made in the text of Isaiah, appears to me very judicious, and strictly correct, viz. that *the better any one understands the Hebrew text, the less will he feel the need of emendations, and the less probable will they appear.*—[Professor Stuart's notes to his *Translation of Dissertations on the study of the original languages*.

NOTE C.—PAGE 6.

That Moses wrote the Pentateuch is proved by all the evidence we have any right to expect, in relation to any literary question of the same kind.

1. *The purity of its language shows that it can be no recent forgery.* Every book written in pure Hebrew, must have been written before the Babylonish captivity, or about the time of this event. About this time the Hebrew ceased to be a living language, and Jewish books were, from that time, composed in Greek, or Chaldee.

2. *Its style is that of an age anterior to David.* The Hebrew may be said to have its golden, its silver and iron ages, no less than the Greek and Latin. No scholar would refer the poems of Homer to the age of Demosthenes, the orations of Demosthenes to the times of Origen, or the commentaries of Origen to the days of Lascaris. For the same reason it is certain that the five books of Moses were not written in the time of David, nor the psalms of which David is the author, in the time of Malachi. The Pentateuch abounds in Archaisms, in words and grammatical forms not in use, so late as the times of David. Jahn and Rosenmueller have given a list of those words which are found only in the Pentateuch, and of words synonymous with these which are used by

subsequent writers. By these internal marks, the Pentateuch is referred to a higher antiquity than any other writings of the Hebrew Scriptures the book of Job only excepted. What character lived at that age, so likely to be the writer of this book as Moses.

3. It contains Egyptian words not found in any subsequent Hebrew writing. With Egypt, Moses obviously was familiar.

4. The writer is evidently a legislator writing the history of his own legislation; writing at different times as the pressure of weighty business and the inconveniences of governing would permit, or as new materials were furnished to his hand. These particulars correspond entirely with the character of Moses, as we receive it from authentic history, but not with the character and circumstances of any other man in the Jewish nation.

5. The book itself professes in so many words to have been written by Moses. At the close of Deut. chap. 31: 9, it is expressly said, "*And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests that bear the ark, and to the elders of Israel, and commanded that it should be read once in seven years in the hearing of all Israel.*" This is the more remarkable as it occurs at the end of the book, and was intended to ascribe the authorship to Moses. What if this passage be written by a later hand. The authorship of many an ancient book rests on slighter testimony than this, yet it is never called in question. But there are other passages asserting the authorship of many separate portions of the Pentateuch. In Exod. 17, 14, Moses is commanded to write the conflict with the Amalekites, in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of the people. The article denotes a book already begun and well known. Chapt. 24: 4, after the giving of the law, it is said, "*and Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and in Vs. 7, " he took the book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath commanded we will do.*" When subsequently many other directions were given to Moses, he was commanded, "*Write thou these words.*" In Num. 33: 12, Moses is said to have written the journeyings of the children of Israel as they are there read. And the book of Numbers concludes with these words, "*These are the commandments and judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.*" And finally, at the close of Deut. which contains the sum and explanation of those laws included in the three preceding books, Moses in his exhortations to the people repeatedly makes mention of *this law*; and the *book of this law*, Deut. 17: 18, 19, 31: 9, 10, 11, 28: 61, 29: 19, 20, 26. And the passages before quoted from Exodus and Numbers clearly show that Deuteronomy is not the *only* writing included in the *book of the law*. In what other ancient writing are there so frequent and so decisive declarations respecting its authorship?

6. The Pentateuch contains the system of laws, civil, ritual, and moral. By these laws, *unless all history is a lying fable*, the whole civil, domestic, and religious state of the Jews was constituted from their deliverance from Egypt, till the destruction of Jerusalem their capital. Unless *all history is a fable*, these laws were invariably referred by the Jews and by all other nations who have ever mentioned the origin of this peculiar legislation, to Moses as the person by whom they were delivered. How was it possible for a whole nation to be in an error on *this point*? The *substance* then of the Pentateuch must have come from Moses, and unless we can suppose that these laws,—so numerous, so minute, so peculiar, and in some instances so severe,—were handed down as a mere *tradition*, (and who can believe this!) they must have been committed to writing by Moses, or, what is the same thing, under his inspection and correction.

7. All antiquity, Christian and Jewish, attributes the Pentateuch to Moses as its author. *Pentateuchum Mosi auctori attribuit omnis Hebræa et Christiana antiquitas*, says E. F. C. Rosenmueller, necque id vana quadam opinione, aut incerta fama, sed rationibus, quæ vel ex ipso ductæ sunt opere, vel aliis idoneis testimoniis nituntur. This Rosenmueller asserts, notwithstanding that opinion of the Fathers that the Pentateuch was restored (not written originally) by Ezra. This fable he considers as originating, in what the Jews tell us concerning the revision of the sacred books by Ezra and the Great Synagogue.

8. All Pagan writers who have had occasion to mention the subject, speak of Moses as a very ancient legislator and author. Among these are Manetho, Eupolemus, Artapanus, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Strabo, and Juvenal. Porphyry, one of the most acute and learned of the enemies of Christianity, admitted the genuineness of the Pentateuch. Even the Emperor Julian allowed that the books which bore the name of Moses were genuine, and that the facts that they contain are worthy of credit. These pagan testimonies do not mount up to the days of Moses. How could they? The Romans had no literature till a century before Christ. They have not a single author of the antiquity of Malachi and Ezra. The Greeks had but a few, and they had no knowledge of Hebrew literature. But as far as Pagan evidence reaches it is entirely in favour of the cause we defend.

9. In the Jewish writings (and the Jewish people alone are competent to testify on this point,) there is a continued line of testimony of the most unequivocal kind, referring the Pentateuch to Moses as its writer, AND ASCENDING TO THE VERY TIMES OF MOSES HIMSELF. In the line of this evidence we find Josephus, a Jewish priest, born A. D. 37. Philo a learned Jew A. D. 41. Our Saviour and his apostles by whom the Pentateuch is quoted nearly one hundred times. (See John 7: 22, 23, 19. Acts 28: 23.) Malachi (See Mal. 1: 7, 13. 3: 5, 7. 4: 4.) and Nehemiah, B. C. 412. (1: 8, 9.) In chapt. 13: 1. it is said, "In that day they read in the book of Moses, in the audience of the people, &c." Ezra, B. C. 478. (Chapt. 3: 2 7: 6, 10, 11, 12, 25) In the reign of Josiah B. C. 611. the book of the Law, called also, the book of the Law of Jehorah by the hand of Moses, was found in the temple by Hilkiah the priest, and the passover was celebrated, necromancers, magicians and idols, put away, and many other things done, according to the law of Moses. (2 Kings, 22: 8 seq. 2 Chron. 35: 15) Micah B. C. 754. and Hoseah, Amos, and Isaiah B. C. 777, frequently refer to the contents of the Pentateuch. Amaziah 811, B. C. spares the sons of murderers according as it is written in the Law of Moses; then follows a quotation *verbatim et literatim* from Deut. 24: 16. (See 2 Kings 14: 6.) About 1040 B. C. David expresses his most ardent attachment to the law of God, which is written in the volume of the book, and in his dying advice to Solomon attributes this law to Moses. (Ps. passim. 1 Kings 2: 3. 1 Chron. 16: 40.) Again, in the Book of Joshua we find express reference to the laws of Moses. In chapt. 1: 7, 8, Joshua is admonished to read the book of the law of Moses continually, and to observe the things written therein. In his old age just before his death, he exhorts the elders and Judges of Israel to do all things written in the law of Moses. In the last assembly he held, of the people, they enter into a new covenant with God, and Joshua wrote it in the book of the law of God, the same book which is elsewhere called the book of the law of Moses.

Thus the book of Joshua carries the chain of evidence up to the days of Moses himself when the circumstance of the authorship of the Pentateuch must have been known, and deception respecting it have been impossible.

There has then existed in all ages of the world, up to the time of *Moses*, a book universally attributed to him, at least until its genuineness was questioned by modern skeptics; a book known by the names of *the law*, *the law of God by the hand of Moses*, *the law of Moses*, *the book of the law*, *the book of Moses*, *the book of the law of Jehovah by the hand of Moses*, *the book of the law of Moses*, *the volume of the book*, *the book*; a book by which all the affairs, civil, domestic, and religious, of the Jewish people were regulated; a book commanded to be read to the people in full assembly once in seven years, and which for a long time was so read, and which has been publicly read in the synagogues since the Babylonish captivity; a book which was for centuries deposited in the side of the ark of the covenant, and has always been regarded by unusual veneration by a whole people.

10. Those parts which are supposed to bear marks of a more recent age do not invalidate the argument for the genuineness of the book. Excluding such as, when properly understood, will naturally be referred to the age of Moses, the number of these is very small, and they are easily distinguishable from the rest of the text. In how many ancient authors do we find passages inserted by a later hand. Critics point out portions of the *Georgics* and the *Æneid*, which were evidently written since the days of Virgil, but who denies that these poems are the genuine productions of the Prince of Roman Bards.

11. *The hypotheses which make the Pentateuch a more recent work are all untenable.* To notice but one—that which ascribes this book to Ezra. How can Ezra be the author of a book written, as history informs us, before he was born? (See under No. 6.) The opinion of the Fathers who held that the law was lost during the Babylonish captivity, and restored by Ezra, cannot be sustained. Daniel had a copy in Babylon. (See Dan. 9: 11, 13.) How many other copies were in existence we cannot tell. But when the first caravan of Jews returned to Jerusalem by the permission of Cyrus, we read that they kept the dedication of the house of God; offered sacrifices, and set the priests in their courses, as it is written in the book of *Moses*. Ezra 6: 16—18. Comp. chap. 3: 2, 4. There was then at that time a book of *Moses*, prescribing the same services as are enjoined in the present Pentateuch. Ezra as yet had not visited Jerusalem, and did not do it until the return of a second caravan under the reign of Xerxes 1st, sixty years from the dedication of this temple. He therefore, could not have been the author of that book. And when Ezra did return we have no evidence in the sacred volume that he then, or at any other time, wrote the Pentateuch. On the contrary, Ezra is represented as a ready scribe in the law of *Moses*, which the Lord God of Israel had given, Ezra 7: 6, and in the letter of Artaxerxes himself, he is described as a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, vs. 12. and is commissioned to enquire concerning *Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of his God which is in his hand.* vs. 14. comp. vs. 25.—language evidently implying that there was in existence a volume universally known as the law of God, of which Ezra was not the author, but the teacher and expounder, γραμματεὺς Heb. Sopher. The people assembled together of one accord and besought Ezra not to write, not to dictate a new book, nor to produce one which he had before originated—but to bring forth the book of the Law of *Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.* “He read therein from a pulpit of wood to all who could understand.” Neh. 8: 1—4. But many of the people had forgotten the language of their fathers, and it became necessary to interpret it to those who understood only the Arameau. 8 vs. “So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

By what process of impartial interpretation are these circumstances made accordant with the belief that the Pentateuch was written by Ezra. And how could a man living in an age when the Hebrew language was corrupted by foreign words and idioms, produce a book which is not only free from foreign admixtures, excepting a few Egyptian words which are among the incidental proof of its genuineness, but which contains modes of expression that had fallen into desuetude hundreds of years before Ezra lived.

On the whole "there is not in the world,"—I quote the words of Jahn, *Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, "there is not an ancient profane book, for whose genuineness we can show such a succession of witnesses, from the demise of the author, downward through all following ages, from which so much has been cited, and so frequently by other writers in all ages; which circumstance establishes the conviction among posterity that it is the very book the ancients meant and read. To establish the genuineness of other writings we seldom possess more than some few proofs; and it is not very frequently the fact that any thing of their contents occurs in other writers, but we regard such writings notwithstanding as genuine, and their contents as the very same with those the ancients perused."

Still it is the universal testimony of the Jewish church that Ezra collected the several manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures then existing, and after having given them a revision, caused them to appear in their present form. For although we have some reason to believe that the sacred canon was not entirely concluded till the time of Simon the Just, whom Jewish history mentions as completing the revision of the Sacred books; yet we are to believe that all the *earlier* writings received the sanction of Ezra, the distinguished teacher and expounder of the law of God. That those important passages of the Pentateuch which have been acknowledged to be later than Moses existed in the day of Ezra, is evinced from the circumstance of their being found in the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Pentateuch, the Samaritans must have received before the great hostility between them and their neighbours, commenced; probably as early as the day when a priest was sent to them from Esarhaddon 1 Kings, 17: 28, to instruct them in the religion of their fathers. This being the case, these passages of the Pentateuch by whomsoever added, have passed under the revision of Ezra, and have received *his* sanction, which we believe to be the sanction of inspiration.

The facts in relation to those passages which are alleged to be of a date subsequent to Moses, appear on the most impartial examination to be these,

1. That many of those passages which have been adduced by infidel writers as bearing marks of a later date, have this appearance only in the translation. When read in the original that appearance vanishes. See Horne's *Introd.* vol. 1. chapt. 2.

2. That many of those referred to by the German critics are evidently prophecies, and would be so understood by every impartial reader. These Germans have proceeded on the supposition that the Pentateuch is the work of a human mind unassisted from above, and they call all those references to a future time which are to be found in the blessing of Jacob, and the prophecy of Balaam, so many evidences of the recent composition of the Book.

3. These two classes of passages being deducted, the remainder of those which have been referred to a date later than Moses is very small, and these are easily distinguishable from the rest of the text. They received the sanction of inspired prophets, (in common with the rest of the Pentateuch;) of Ezra; and of Jesus Christ; of course they are to be received as a portion of the divine word.

4. A few may still remain which have suffered from the fallibility of transcribers, and a few which are glosses that have crept into the text. But these do not materially modify any doctrine, or affect the truth of any historic narrative. They are in nothing different from those various readings, which are to be found in collating the manuscripts of any author of considerable antiquity, and which do not affect the credit we repose in them.

So stands the *literary* argument in respect to the Pentateuch. That the book is divinely inspired by the living God I firmly believe. This is not the place to bring forward the arguments for its inspiration. These, strictly speaking, belong not to its literary history. All I have aimed to do is to point out some of the arguments on which its genuineness rests. It is believed that the candid enquirer after truth who examines thoroughly both sides of this question, will settle down in the belief that the five books attributed to Moses, were written by him and are entitled to our perfect confidence as a historical record. The distinguished Le Clerc, in the earlier part of his life, in his "*Sentimens de quelques theologiens d'Hollande*," held that the present Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but he lived to renounce this opinion, and to write against it, in his *Diss. 2d. de Scriptorum Pentateuchi*, prefixed to his commentary on the Pentateuch.

At all times it is a sufficient argument in proof of the authenticity and inspiration of the writings of Moses that they were always referred to as the inspired word of God, and a rule of duty, by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To call in question their authenticity is to call in question the divine authority, and infallibility of the great founder of the Christian religion.

On this whole subject see Horne's *Introd. vol. 1 Rosenmueller Prolegomena to the Pentateuch*. Jahn's *Introd. to the O. T.*

NOTE D.—PAGE 8.

On the plain account of a simple matter of fact, related in the first chap. of Exodus, Origen in his 2nd Homily on Exodus imposes an interpretation, of which the following is the substance.

*Pharaoh, King of Egypt*, represents the *devil*;—the *male* and *female* children of the Hebrews represent the *animal* and *rational* faculties of the Soul. *Pharaoh, the devil*, wishes to destroy all the *males*, i. e. the seeds of *rationality*, and *spiritual science*, through which the soul tends to and seeks *heavenly things*; but he wishes to preserve the *females* alive, i. e. all those *animal propensities* of man, through which he becomes *carnal* and *devilish*. Hence, says he, "when you see a man living in luxury, banquetings, pleasures, and sensual gratifications; know that there the king of Egypt has slain all the *males*, and preserved all the *females* alive. The *midwives* represent the *Old and New Testaments*; the one is called *Sephora*, which signifies a sparrow, and means that sort of *instruction*, by which the soul is led to *soar aloft*, and contemplate heavenly things. The other is called *Phua*, which signifies ruddy or *bashful*, and points out the *Gospel*, which is ruddy with the blood of Christ, spreading the doctrine of his passion over the earth. By these the souls that are born into the church are healed; for the *reading of the Scriptures corrects*, and *heals* what is amiss in the mind. *Pharaoh, the devil*, wishes to corrupt the *midwives*, that all the *males*, the *spiritual propensities*, may be destroyed; and this he endeavors to do, by bringing in *heresies* and *corrupt opinions*. But the foundation of God standeth sure. *The midwives feared God, therefore he builded them houses*. If this be taken *literally*, it has little or no meaning, and is of no importance; but it points out that the *midwives, the law, and the gospel, by teaching the fear of God, build the houses of the church, and*

fill the whole earth *with houses of prayer*. Therefore these midwives because they *feared* God, and taught the fear of God, did not fulfil the command of the king of Egypt—they did not *kill the males*: and I dare confidently affirm, that they did not preserve the *females alive*; for they do not touch vicious doctrines in the church, nor preach up luxury, nor foster sin, which are what *Pharaoh* wishes, in keeping the *females alive*; for by these, *virtue* alone is cultivated and nourished. By *Pharaoh's daughter*, I suppose the church to be intended, which is gathered from among the Gentiles; and although she has an impious and wicked father, yet the prophet says unto her, "*Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.*" Psal 45: 10, 11. This therefore is she who comes to the *waters to bathe*, i. e. to the *baptismal font* that she may be washed from the sins which she has contracted in her father's house. Immediately she receives bowels of commiseration, and pities the infant—That is, the *church*, coming from among the Gentiles, finds *Moses*, the *law*, lying in the *pool*, cast out and exposed by his own people, in an *ark of bulrushes daubed over with pitch*, deformed and obscured by the carnal and absurd glosses of the Jews who are ignorant of its spiritual sense; and while it continues with them, is as a helpless and destitute infant, but as soon as it enters the doors of the Christian church, it becomes strong and vigorous: and thus *Moses the law, grows up*, and becomes, through means of the Christian church, more respectable even in the eyes of the Jews themselves according to his own prophecy—"I will move them to jealousy by those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." Deut. 32: 21. Thus taught by the Christian church, the *synagogue* forsakes *idolatry*; for when it sees the Gentiles worshipping the true God, it is ashamed of its idols, and worships them no more. In like manner, though we have had *Pharaoh for our father*, though the prince of this world has begotten us by wicked works, yet when we come unto the *waters of baptism*, we take unto us *Moses, the law of God*, in its true and spiritual meaning; what is low and weak in it we leave, what is strong and perfect we take and place in the *royal palace* of our *heart*. Then we have *Moses grown up*, we no longer consider the law as *little or mean*—all is magnificent, excellent, elegant—for all is spiritually understood.

Adam Clarke, from whose remarks on the first chapt. of *Exod.* this extract is taken, says, "I have given this large specimen from one of the *ancients*, merely to save the *moderns*; from whose works on the sacred writings, I could produce many specimens *equally singular and more absurd*."

NOTE E.—PAGE 13

"The imaginative, discursive, and metaphysical genius of the German, freed from those restraining and controlling influences which a humble piety exerts, and forgetting the impassible limits of the human powers, has presumed to sit in judgment upon the revelation from heaven, invented a standard by which to decide upon the merits of its doctrines, subjected its plainest declarations to the test of reason, rejected or explained away what it could not fathom, called in question the inspiration of the Scriptures, and scattered the seeds of Infidelity far and wide, even while clothed in the garb of a divine teacher, and an ambassador of Christ. The theological professor has not hesitated unblushingly to declare, when pressed with a genuine and well authenticated miracle: "*My philosophy forbids me to recognise the existence of a miracle.*"—[Preface to Prof. Patton's Translation of *Tholuck on the study of the O. T.*"]



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