



A PLEA

FOR THE

CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES,

AGAINST

ROMANISM AND RATIONALISM,

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BY

✓
REV. MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS, D. D.

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS INAUGURATION AS PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL AND ORIENTAL LITERATURE IN THE
WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT ALLEGHENY CITY, PA.

April 12, 1852.

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PITTSBURGH, MAY 13th, 1852.

REV. M. W. JACOBUS, D. D.

Dear Sir:—At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Western Theological Seminary last evening, the following Resolution was unanimously adopted, viz:

RESOLVED, That a committee of three be appointed to request of Professor JACOBUS a copy of his Inaugural Address, delivered before the Board of Directors this evening, for publication in Pamphlet form.

The undersigned committee take great pleasure in conveying to you the above resolution, and respectfully request as early a reply as will suit your convenience.

LUKE LOOMIS,
F. G. BAILEY,
J. SCHOONMAKER.

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ALLEGHENY CITY, }
May 14th, 1851. }

To MESSRS. LUKE LOOMIS, F. G. BAILEY, J. SCHOONMAKER:

Gentlemen:—In reply to your very kind note, conveying the Resolution of the Directors, I submit a copy of the Inaugural Address, &c.

With high respect, Yours,

MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

“I know but little of the Hebrew,” said one of the great Reformers, “but the little that I know, I would not exchange for worlds.” This was the Reformation spirit, roused, at length, after the slumber of ages, to protest against any infallible expositor of God’s Word—to assert the right of private judgment under the promised guidance of the Holy Ghost, and to subject every opinion to the test of Sacred Writ as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The Protestant principle looked beyond versions, as it looked beyond creeds. It would be content only with searching out the very mind of the Spirit. Papacy and Infidelity can forego this task. And in proportion as the Scriptures have been held in reverence as the very Word of God for every man, in that proportion has the study of the originals been pursued.

Hence we challenge Romanism on the one hand, and Infidelity on the other, with the Scriptures in the sacred tongues. Our Protestant Bible is not King James’ version, nor Luther’s, nor the Geneva—not any nor all of these—so much as it is the Hebrew and Greek Testaments. But the Romanist’s Bible is *the Latin Vulgate*, with its apocrypha and the endless traditions which they have set above the word of God. And this Bible of theirs is not as old as Christianity by some six hundred years. And hence let me say, that Church itself cannot be older than the seventh century, unless it was a Church without its Bible.

And what claim has their Bible to be the standard in Christendom? Though it was pronounced by the Council of Trent to be the only authentic text “from which no one, upon any pretext, should

presume or dare to differ," Pope Sixtus V soon after, decreed it to be erroneous, and issued another most infallible and from which no one should dare to differ. But in two years after, another Pope ordered this one to be suppressed, as swarming with errors, and sent forth his own rival infallible Vulgate, differing from the former in upwards of two thousand instances!

But the Protestant principle is *this*—to appeal from all versions to the primitive Scriptures. The Papist tells us that our Bible is not the Word of God. We confront him with the very law and the testimony in the original tongues. We claim no doctrine or rule of faith on the authority of a mere version which is human. And we are willing to contest every inch of ground on this sole platform of the *primitive and inspired* record. Rome has built her own system on a version of man. And thus it is that she alone, of all the Churches in the world, has a *Sectarian* Bible.

Under the Papacy until the Reformation, the Hebrew language was confined within the walls of the Synagogue. The Papal Church, true to its despotic policy, had uniformly ignored the study. During all its sway in the dark ages, it was not until the middle of the 14th century that the first Christian author, since Origen and Jerome employed the Hebrew language for the interpretation of Scripture. And the first dictionary and grammar among Christians, date as lately as the opening of the XVIth century, just prior to the Reformation in Germany. No wonder that the relative position of Scriptural study to a Reformed Church should have entitled JOHN REUCHLIN "the father of the German Reformation." Without grammar or lexicon, as we have them, he obtained his tuition of a Jew, at a golden crown a day. And the man who dared to construct so formidable an apparatus as a grammar and dictionary for unlocking the stores of Scripture, found himself by the necessity of the case, a Protestant. And just because the study of God's Word, with such new facilities of drawing from the pure fountains, met with Romish opposition, it led also to the Christian Reformation. Long had that corrupt Church been growing more and more debased

in the profligate manners of priest and people. Long had the exclusion of the Sacred Scriptures induced a cold and dead Scholasticism, reasoning about trifles and wasting precious life in pettiest disputes—and engendering a practical infidelity, as pernicious as the most avowed. Long had ecclesiastical authority undertaken to supplant God's revealed Word, and to hinder all free inquiry. So that ignorance and priestcraft, thus long identified must needs stand or fall together. "To the triumph of truth it was above all things necessary that the arms with which she was to conquer, should be drawn from the arsenals in which they had been laid aside for ages. Those arms were the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments. It was necessary to revive in Christendom the love and the study of the sacred Hebrew and Greek literature."* At this very crisis the Monks of Cologne had obtained a decree for the burning of Hebrew manuscripts. All that was rich in sacred learning, and replete with illustration and proof of Holy Writ in the writings of the Jews was to be cast into the flames. The plea was that which the execrable Saracen used centuries before, when he burned the priceless library of Alexandria—that if the books agreed with the Koran, they were useless, and if they disagreed they were pernicious. Reuchlin came out as the young David of Israel against this mailed and giant Goliath of the Philistines. His priestly opposers maintained that even the study of *Greek* would tend to heresy, because the Greeks were Schismatics—and the study of HEBREW much more, because all who engaged in *it were sure to become Jews!* But Reuchlin demanded that the best means of converting the Israelites would be to establish in every university, two teachers of the Hebrew tongue, who should teach the Christian theologians to read the Bible in Hebrew, and thus to refute the Jewish doctors. His was the true Protestant method, of overcoming error by truth, and not by torture; by teaching, and not by tormenting. Yet for this breach in their wall, the whole array of

* D'Aubigne.

priests and inquisitors fell upon him with fury. Like famished vultures deprived of their prey, they broke out in rage. They garbled his writings, perverted the sense, accused him of heresies, charged him with Judaism, and threatened him with the inquisition. But he went forward—he applied his great learning to the correction of the Latin Vulgate until men saw that the Romish Church, which had sanctioned the grossest errors in that version, was not infallible.

He writes: “I have composed a Hebrew grammar and dictionary, a work hitherto unheard of, which has cost me the greatest trouble, and a large portion of my fortune, induced to do it by the great worth of the sacred writings, as well as for the advantage of the students in them.” So says the historian, “It soon became a controversy about religion and truth at large—a battle for the restoration of knowledge against the iniquities of monks and priests, and against their arrogance and despotism.”*

And thus, even while he knew it not, he laid the axe at the root of priestly domination. That simple dictionary and grammar in the Hebrew language was the sling and smooth stone, by which the Romish Philistine was struck through the joints of the harness; and at once the reformed hosts were shouting in the light of God’s Word, as in the blaze of a new Revelation. Luther wrote to him: “The Lord hath acted in thee, so that the light of the Sacred Scriptures should begin to shine in this Germany, where for so many ages, alas, it was not only smothered, but totally extinguished.”

This same scholarly harbinger of the Reformation, applied himself also to the Greek language, which then, without lexicon and grammar, he learned, by dint of industry, of fugitives from the Ottoman barbarism. At once he applied himself to furnishing helps for the study of the Greek *Scriptures*. In this also the same benighted power of Romanism interposed. He wrote to a friend, “The old trammelled sophisters turn up their noses, and cry out in the most laughable way, that we carry on literary affairs adverse to Romish

*Barham’s Life and Times of John Reuchlin, page 116.

piety, for that the Greeks are Schismatics, and that we venture to diffuse their doctrines though forbidden by the laws of the Church." But he went forward. By this means he opened to the Germans the *New Testament*, which could never have been had in its pureness and power from the much falsified Vulgate. The German Reformers could never else have come forward with boldness, glowing with warm and clear opinions drawn fresh from the inspired fountains. The doctrines of the Romish Church were now subjected to the tests of God's own truth. And in the cultivation of this New Testament tongue, a daring enterprise was begun against the spirit of monkery, which in its ignorant dread of heretics, and its fervent love of persecution, used to label all Greek MSS. "*Graeca sunt non leguntur.*" "They are Greek, not to be read." Among the Netherland monks the proverb ran, "*Si est bonus grammaticus est hereticus.*" *If he is a good grammarian he is a heretic.* What wonder that John Reuchlin, the patron of Scriptural learning, and the man who furnished the keys to the stores of Scriptural truth, should be entitled "the father of the German Reformation."

But what a revival of Scriptural study sprang out of that rousing of the soul to personal responsibility and duty. What critical discussions; what learned investigations; what laborious and voluminous comments did not that impulse produce! Not that the translation of the Scriptures was a *new thing*, but only new since the sway of Popery. The English reformers pointed back to the Anglo Saxon Versions, of the time anterior to the Papal rule in Britain, to prove that the right to have the Scriptures in their own tongue, was their just inheritance—though interrupted—bequeathed to the people by their remote ancestors, and no new conceit of Cranmer, Cromwell, or the Reformation. And the Anglo Saxon Gospels we have yet extant and reprinted in our day, as a living testimony against the falsity and tyranny of Rome. So that you may trace the history of Scriptural Christianity by the history of Scriptural study. You can see where the Herod of Rome, for Herodias' sake, imprisoned and beheaded the Gospel of Christ.

Where this anti-scriptural apostacy arose, there the translation and circulation of Scripture ended till the Reformation. I have looked with wonder on the very Hebrew Bible, so diligently handled by Luther, and upon the original manuscripts of his version of the Psalms, now treasured in one of the great Protestant libraries of the Continent. When in the opening of the fourteenth century, one of the Popes in self defence, thought to provide for some knowledge of the Hebrew in the Papal Church, it was found impossible during two centuries to appoint a single professor in any university, excepting Oxford alone.

I. In urging a *critical study of the Scriptures*, especially in a *Theological course*, we plead first of all *that it is due to the Protestant principle, and to the very spirit of the Reformation.*

Our candidates for the holy ministry abjure in their hearts the Popish system on this point, yet how many fall into it in their practice. They scorn the thought of relinquishing private judgment in interpreting the word of God, yet how often they practically waive the privilege. Though the Bible is not forbidden to them in the originals, how many forbid it to themselves. And even while they are battling the theory with the Papal Church, they are themselves perhaps depending on some authoritative interpreter, rather than make personal examination. They are submitting to some current, traditional comment, as though they acknowledged the Church to be an infallible expositor of the word. Shall we say that the slight attention given to this department, as it deserts the Reformation ground, so, leads the way to apostacy from the great reformed principles. To maintain the principles, they must be kept in lively exercise. The right of private judgment is best asserted, not as a mere theory, but as a practice. The practical undervaluing of this inalienable right must tend to its theoretical abandonment. As we are jealous for the doctrine, therefore, as vital to the Christian Church, so are we jealous and zealous for the habit, as indispensable. Against the binding force of traditions, as qualifying the Scriptures; against the withholding of God's Word from the people;

against church authority as superseding God's authority in its interpretation; against any supplanting of the originals by a version, and against the whole system of lies whereby the truth of God is made void, we would have this practical protest entered, in a more intense and universal devotedness to the study of Holy Writ. What did the Reformers, to whom the Scriptures came as a new revelation, from within iron bars and dead languages? They translated it into every vernacular, until there have gone forth, from that holy impulse, Bibles for all tongues and people.

Has the world any such right is the question? And yet Popery abates nothing of her claims. And yet there are found even scholars and professors of the sacred tongues who defer to her pretensions. In face of the fact that modern European Infidelity has grown out of the abuses and absurdities which Romanism practises upon the world, some would argue back from Infidelity to Romanism itself. So the deluded and bewildered politicians of the Old World fall back from Socialism upon Popery. So the pendulum swings to either extreme. Men who have seen profane liberties taken with the Scripture, are found turning to the method of refusing liberty to the Scripture itself. And we stand pleading for our own Bible, against the sword on the one hand that would cut it in pieces, and the false mother on the other hand, who would claim it as her own begotten.

In an underground prison at Rome, a column on which Paul is said to have been beheaded, contains the inscription, "The Word of God is not bound." But this early Christian testimony, as against the heathen, is belied by the Papacy in the face of Christendom, while it rebukes as in the name of the martyred Apostle, the apostate Church itself.

II. But this critical study is demanded by any proper idea of INSPIRATION. If, indeed, according to Rome, the Church and the Priesthood be the inspired authority, it matters little whether the Scriptures be inspired or not—nay, whether there be any Scripture or not. Or, if according to the latest Infidelity, it could possibly be,

that the writers were inspired and not the writings, then could the Scriptures as such, claim no authority at all. Then could there be no proper sense in which this is "*the Word of God.*" What a satanic suggestion that Inspiration cannot be predicated of writings but of persons only. If it could be so, then what purpose could such an inspiration serve for communicating God's mind and will in any permanent form? If we believe the Scriptures to be God's Word, because we see the need of a revelation, and because this is such a revelation as we could expect, then any proper view of inspiration must cover the department of *Language*. Strange enough that we should have here to meet the new heresy that language is not sufficiently definite for the embodiment of Religious truth. And if not for a rule of Faith, then how for a rule of Life? If not for a Creed, then how for a Commandment. Let it not^m be thought that because language so often runs mad, there is no certainty in it. He who with His finger twice wrote the decalogue upon tables of stone, and often spoke in living words to men, has every way honoured language as the vehicle of His own law: shall we not say, has even constructed language to express it?

What a life and power is there often in a word, when it is a word of God—"Pardon," "Righteousness," "Salvation." Luther caught one of these terms in an inspired passage from Paul, and he says, "this word, I felt to me the gate of Paradise." So another has it, "A word of spiritual power has often sounded in our ears as if all the bells of the city of God were ringing to call us to worship, prayer, and praise."

It cannot be concealed that loose theories of inspiration are current, even in the Church. A neglect of the originals has often fostered this—and this, in turn, has often led to a neglect of the originals. An inch given to the objector, has only emboldened him to take an ell; and after all the attempted reconciliations we find only more abhorrent views broached until we are driven back upon our original ground. The Scripture theory is the true theory of Scripture—that these are "not words which man's wisdom

teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" "explaining spiritual things by spiritual words," inspired things by inspired words. The few discrepancies to be harmonized in Books written in so many ages and countries, and by so many parties, show plainly how exact the dictation must have been. As if during a thousand years, there had been wrought in remotest cities, and by hands that were strangers to each other, the several limbs and features of a marble form, which somehow were brought together, and composed the Apollo Belvidere of the Vatican!* And slight verbal mistakes of transcribers, through so many MSS., are far more supposable than mistakes of the authors in such a work. And in the four Gospels, we have yet to learn whether every variation in the narrative of the different Evangelists may not have had some important object; just as a quadriform gospel may have been essential to give all those aspects of the Saviour's life and character adapted to the varieties of the human mind, and to the modes of teaching that obtain in various ages and countries."†

And the miraculous preservation of this volume can fairly be claimed, at length, as an argument for its Inspiration. Would it—could it have been so uncorruptedly handed down to us, but that it is the very written Revelation of God's mind and will to men? It is not on any Church decision alone that we rest the authority of the canonical Scriptures. This could not give an authority, when first it must get its authority from the Scriptures themselves. But these, as Trench has well said, have witnessed to their own right. "Like Aaron's rod which budded and blossomed, these have flowered and borne fruit, and so have made good their claim to be laid up in the Ark of the testimony forever. No Church authority could have made the canonical Scriptures potent, and the apocryphal impotent. Rather, that testimony in all time, is the formal acknowledgement of a fact, a submission to the witnessing Spirit, who inspired the genuine in eternal distinction from the spurious."‡ Skeptical crit-

* See *Cummings on Evidences*. † *Wescott*. ‡ *Trench's Hulsean Lectures*.

ics who are ransacking the originals to find discrepancies—Scholastic adventurers who study the Bible to prove it inharmonious and untrue, had as well dive into the depths of God's Works, to find that creation has had no Creator, because their dull ears do not catch all the harmonies—because in their dim vision each natural science with its world of facts, does not fully match with every other. An effort to account to us for the construction of Scripture without supernatural aid is winked at by certain Christian scholars. From the brink of such a yawning gulf, we fly back to the *higher* views of inspiration.

Though there is a sense, then, in which this Book is to be treated as other books, for arriving at the contents, who would deny that in a most important sense it stands alone? Should we not look for a fulness in its terms, a meaning in its history, and a scope in its prophecy befitting the Divine authorship? Would not the Divine foresight often beam in the simplest record, and make history seem sometimes like allegory, by reason of the great Gospel ideas that constantly shine out from the page? It is only that both Testaments are so much one. It is only that this light is shed forth from so many mirrors and reflectors, to increase the brilliancy. That which in the skeptic's eye is a myth, is really the pith of the revelation. Instead of being shadow without substance, it is indeed substance and shadow both. These nebulae which they would make to be star-dust, are really troops of stars! The very silence of Scripture often speaks—as Boyle has said—like the sun-dial, in which the shadow as well as the light informs us.

Look then at the language of PROPHECY. What is to hinder its having been so constructed as to embrace a *series* of fulfilments along the whole line of temporal events? Is it not rather what we could expect, as growing out of the boundless range of the Divine vision—that the Divine eye should take in a whole train of kindred events at a glance—the heads of history—as the morning spreads upon many mountain tops at the dawn—and that just as a long line of city lamps in a night may seem as one, all should be embraced in the view, no one exhausting it, and yet all contemplated, making

up a fulness that will yet be disclosed? How often these prophetic intimations lay folded up in some passage for ages, as only the bud to be gradually and sweetly opened to a perfect bloom by the rising Sun of Righteousness. The events were to be identified as a fulfilment under this developing process. "These things have I told you, that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them." John 16: 4. And hence, when an event is thus distinctly noticed in the New Testament history, and it is even said "all this was done that it might be fulfilled," why should we make this to be a mere happy quotation or allusion of the writer, rather than find, in the event, a fulfilment, though it be not the chief? What a proof, then, does this become of one Divine mind, pervading all temporal dispensations. Then the eighth Psalm which David sung for an evening hymn perhaps in its lowest sense, is proved to have had a higher reference, as quoted by our Lord himself—and we see it to be prophetic and Messianic in its fuller scope, glancing even at the Incarnation and the Hosannas in the Temple, and the glorious restoration through Christ. At the Jews' place of wailing in Jerusalem, I found a Rabbi going through the routine of lamentations, with his open Psalter in hand. I asked him if he would turn to the 22d Psalm? *Yes*. If he had read the New Testament? *Yes*. If he did not see remarkable connection between the history of Christ's crucifixion and the language there. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? They parted my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture. They pierced my hands and my feet"—"But" said he, "*you must see what this man says,*" pointing to the comments at the foot of the page. "*This Psalm refers to David when he fled from Saul.*" The Jews, before Christ's coming, found as many predictions of Him in the prophets as we have done, and more. But when He came, and was rejected by them, they began to dispute this reference. Yet Jews and Gentiles, though so opposed, agree upon the same canon of Old Testament Scripture. And they, with all Christendom, can be held to the same original Hebrew text. This fact alone would make the claim of the language upon us sacred indeed.

But are not the Jews to be yet convinced and converted to Christ? And shall Romanism do this? How should the Jew be an idolater—a worshipper of the Galilean Mary? Where has the Jew suffered such grievous and relentless persécutions as at the hand of Papal powers? The Spanish Inquisition claims to have been set up for the extermination of his abused people. And to this day, as I could read to you, this malignity of nominal Christians is the argument against Christianity which he finds it hardest to give up. Or shall *Rationalism* do this work? How shall the blind lead the blind? And how is this to be done under a Christian ministry, that eschews the study of the Hebrew—that cannot reason with a Jew out of the original Scriptures? Can the church be in anywise prepared for an event so glorious and so at hand, with such inadequate training in this department? Other languages are readily mastered by our young men of business, at the demand of some worldly interest, and the Jews themselves, as a people, are acquiring in their dispersion, *the gift of tongues* in which they shall yet speak to men of every language, the wonderful works of God. They are providentially training (and without miraculous impartation) to act as a missionary body, and preach the Gospel to every creature. Yet to so many among us, a theological education seems sufficiently complete without any understanding of the language in which our theology is to be found.

And what shall we say about the language of *prophetic symbols*? Is the Church ready for this controversy? Must not false grounds be taken where there is no adequate investigation, because no furniture for the work? We may avail ourselves of others' labours, and use the results of critical inquiry, but shall this be satisfactory where the glorious map of the future lies before us, and the predictions which might stimulate our faith and zeal are a sealed record—a locked casket because of this neglect. How many points in all these glorious futurities lie in a single word—the *ἀναστασις*—the *παρουσία*.

But another point of interest in the inspiration of Scripture concerns the Language of MIRACLES. What is the only principle of

interpretation? Do, or do not the Scriptures mean what they say? "Many," says Trench, "have learned to regard miracles as so much perilous ware, from which it is always an advantage when the Gospels can be lightened a little." A class of Christian interpreters proceed upon the principle not to admit anything as miracle that can be possibly explained away. And so they would even "transfer the work of Creation from the department of Miracle, to the department of Natural Law." In this field of *natural science*, the battle is now pitched. Every new pretension and position demands of us, a critical acquaintance with the inspired word. We have nothing to fear from the developements of science; because God's works and God's word can contain nothing but God's truth, which is always as consistent as Himself. But the time will not allow of ignorance in the defenders of Scripture. Principal Cunningham has well said, that "the great contests of the day are to be waged on the fields of Scripture itself—by an actual, critical examination of the Hebrew and Greek originals." The post of attack is shifted from the department of Metaphysics to the department of *Physics*. And the plain simple question turns at length upon the verity of the record, and upon the fact of Miracle itself as an evidence of Christianity. But Miracles are not more a proof of Christianity than Christianity is now a proof of Miracles. The works first testified to the word. But the marvellous WORDS have outlived the *works* and will give them an enduring testimony. Romanism brings Scriptural Miracles into contempt by her winking Madonnas and bleeding wafers, and liquifying blood; and Rationalism on the other hand, denies the possibility of a Miracle, even on Scripture testimony. Now when from the controversies of past centuries, the Scripture Canon has been proved, and questions of authenticity and genuineness have been well settled—"now that the Gospels are seen to be impregnable beyond all that was known, until Strauss had exhausted his quiver"—now that the Inspired Volume has come out of fiery trials on questions of language, various readings, integrity of the text, &c., the aim with some is to refine away all real

Christianity into a dreamy mysticism, or a transcendental sentiment—anything that will emasculate this religion, destroying its life and power. But having gained such ground, as the life-long toils of Christian scholars have won for us, we have now to battle for the plain, unvarnished, and unabated meaning of the inspired word. The tendency of science in the hands of ungodly men to Atheistic Materialism, demands a knowledge of its latest disclosures in a jealous but fearless reference to the written word. What have those critics gained who have been so unwilling to find Miracles in the Scriptures—who have disparaged every thing miraculous where the slightest pretence could be found? They have seen the skeptical taste fostered and the position emboldened, until *all* that is supernatural in Christianity, is sought to be explained away!

The Rationalistic interpretation practices upon the language until it comes as has been well said, to substitute philological for historical wonders. What if we are told that the miraculous conversion of water into wine, was merely the bringing in of a new supply from without, and only so represented in the narrative? What if we hear that Peters' finding the money in the fish's mouth was only his catching as many fish as would sell for that money? The question then turns upon the use of language, and the common universal laws of interpretation.

But it needs to be seen that Miracles were not mere arbitrary signs, to attest Christ's commission and the Divine revelation. They were chosen, peculiar signs—every one of them reflecting important truth, illustrative of the system under which they were wrought. While the Pantheistic deniers of the miracle would make it an impossible thing, against God's revelation of himself, and inconsistent with God, these miraculous works stand out in beautiful consistency with all the doctrine of the Fall and the Redemption. Under the New Testament, Christ appears in them as restoring the ruins of the fall, and in each redemptive act, hints to us of what the full redemption shall be. Hence it is history and picture both; not myth but truth, and truth pictorial, illustrative of other truth.

Miracles are thus prophetic, if you please, just as prophecy is in a sense miraculous.

But we urge further that this critical study of the Scripture is becoming ever more indispensable to the ordinary work of the ministry. If students have held the critical controversies as apart from their practical work, or that the language of God's Word might be left for the Theology of it—let them beware. As though one must not always prove his ignorance, while he knows not as yet the language in which his theology is found. This aversion to close analysis—to roots and idioms—to the business of grammars and lexicons—this impatience of immediate results in the conversion of men, must find the way everywhere contested. The great moral questions of the day are to be agitated and settled not so much on the old grounds of expediency or philosophy, as upon this ground of the letter of God's Word—the *Thus saith the Lord*. We have pleaded for the Sabbath, and for social order too much on grounds of mere utility. And when, at length, men reply that this is not their view of utility, or that indulgence is a higher law to them, where shall our practical preachers find themselves—having left too much the platform of God's Word? What will you say about the Mosaic record—about the institution and law of the Sabbath—about the theory that the Apostolic writings were designed only for that time, and have become mainly obsolete—what about the doctrine of Hell and Eternal punishment as a Jewish notion, not maintained by the terms of Scripture?

Skepticism is adopting the cheap tract system of sending its poisonous leaves broadcast, and sowing beside many waters. Shame on our educated ministry, that the great students in the originals, and the scholars in this day are so much the perverters of the truth! These must be met. Their sophistries in what is called the higher criticism, are coming freely among us. The emigration from the German States increases and is likely to increase. The most rabid Socialists of the West are said to have come out of the Romish Church. If indeed our day be, as Hengstenberg supposes, the season of Satan's being loosed, in every form of Skepticism and false

science, of social disorganization and priestly pretension, of war, and lust and crime, then can any be idle? Infidelity seems driven from its Judea and its Jerusalem, to go abroad in the earth, on its Satanic commission. Our new States are especially exposed to this learned Rationalism, and this vulgar Infidelity. The truth of Christ must have her numerous and well trained champions. The absence of Christian organization and religious restraint in our new territories will seem to give this enemy the field for a time, until Churches can be planted and strengthened. But the defences of Christianity must be popularized—must be brought down to the masses. And our students must be so abundantly armed as to furnish arms to others. The wants of the Church require eminently in our day, a ministry, (not to say a membership) learned in the Scriptures, familiar with the English version in all its parts, and versed in the originals. There needs, now, a dispensation, as of the last Apostle—a ministry raised up for carrying the Gospel to the learned Gentile world—as to the very schools of Athens, and the very courts of Rome—men who, for this end, have sat at the feet of whatever Gamaliel, in this day of most abundant helps. The contest becomes more radical, and so more biblical. The learned criticism that is merely Scholastic, separates itself from a living faith in Christianity, and treats the Bible altogether as any other book, and the writings as simply the productions of their authors—the Psalms as mere natural poetry. What we need is a criticism as learned, which is yet Christian, and which, from an inner citadel of faith, goes forth to defend the outworks. Errors of fact and of science, and discrepancies between the narratives, as of common writers, quite at war with the doctrine of a plenary inspiration, will be asserted by the crowd, as they are sometimes conceded by such scholars as are mere scholars. And then comes the question,—Is there such a thing as Inspiration? or miracle, or prophecy? Is there any written revelation? And is there any binding authority in the Bible? Is it the word of God?

Rome presses to the same Infidel questioning, by casting doubt upon the infallible word, in order to magnify her own infallibility.

Rome, like Infidelity, asserts the practical inutility of Scripture, the obscureness of the Divine oracle—the worthlessness, nay the mischief of the Bible in the hands of the people. She pleads that the field of inspired truth, is “a field of thickets and brambles,” and that God’s word is only the store-house from which all fatal errors have been gathered. And though Christ himself has commanded the people to “*search the Scriptures,*” Rome protests and gives counter command; and, worst of all, she puts forward a corrupt Church, and a more corrupt Priesthood, as the inspired authority! To meet all this, we must more fully arm ourselves with the Bible, and stand with the sword of the Spirit. Our arrows must be drawn from this quiver. “If Biblicism has been attacked among us,” says D’Aubigne, “the reason is that there is not enough Biblicism among us.”

Plainly, the question which comprises all moral questions, must turn upon sacred criticism. And in this field every licentiate should prove himself at home. It is vain to talk loudly of Skepticism, Infidelity, German Rationalism, Priestly Authority, False Science, if this be understood as only the hue and cry of ignorant declaimers, who boast their indifference to original and critical research. The people may soon come to demand of their ministers, the solution of difficulties proposed by learned deism, and by the latest analysis. It will be not declamation so much, as demonstration, that will be sought. And what we must have, is a ministry more thoroughly Biblical—in training, in arguing, in preaching. This will soon give us a membership better skilled in the defence of Christianity. We have demand this moment, for something not German but American—not for scholars as such, but for the Church at large, that shall bring home to every intelligent reader the results of learned research as to the authority, integrity, and interpretation of each of the canonical books, with reference to the latest inquiries. The explorations in the geography of Scripture, and the startling developments in antiquities, must force something of their results and evidence upon public attention. It is remarkable that testimonies to Holy Writ are gathering from most unexpected and indisputable

sources. It is almost the kind of proof asked by Dives in torment for his brethren on earth. One comes to us from the dead of history—from the mounds of the Tigris, and from the rocks of Sinai—and the men of Nineveh, are strangely rising up in judgment against this generation to condemn it. God had ordained the burial of ancient cities and records, it would seem, for a resurrection in our day—and strange confirmations of Holy Writ are dug up from old graves, to confront objectors in an age of boasting disbelief.

Astronomy, with its telescopes of ever more amazing power makes its new discoveries, and turns to the most ancient of the inspired writings only to find there the evidence of the profoundest knowledge, such as proves the divine origin of the record. These treasures of revelation, historical and scientific, as well as moral, are to be dug for in order to be found.

Need we urge, *finally*, that such a critical study of the Scriptures must be only more strengthening and enlivening to ones daily piety. Whatever gives confirmation to Christian faith is a means of grace. This is edification, whereby one is built more and more upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and finds Jesus Christ himself to be the chief corner stone of all truth. If Christian learning was ever feared as dampening Christian ardour, that time has past, except with dreamers and visionaries. Just as it confirms our faith to traverse now the very localities of Scriptural history, and just as the bold features of Jerusalem are found there so exactly corresponding with the records, that we recognize Zion, and Olivet, and Kedron, and Jehoshaphat, as the lines of a familiar face, and can walk the old footpath to Bethany as if with Christ himself—so to get the gospel in the very terms of it, is inspiring and refreshing beyond comparison. It is like washing in Jordan itself, rather than in Abana, or Pharpar of Damascus.

But it will appear from all the history of Scriptural study, that with the learning that is demanded, the PIETY is ever the most indispensable. God does not construct his revelation, whether in nature, in providence, or in Scripture, so as to force conviction. This is constantly a test of principle. One

may disbelieve, precisely what another believes. The difference shall be owing to the heart. Mere scholarship in Scripture will not command faith. The mere scholastic furniture may rather hinder it: just as the physician who studies anatomy and disease as a mere science may be skeptical of the Divine authorship by deifying natural law: just as the printer may set up the types of every learned volume, and never be learned. The fresh, evangelical spirit of our American Church might put minute research to the very best account. Based upon a lively piety and a believing spirit, a true Christian scholarship could now do more among us for the coming Kingdom than two centuries of mere investigation have done. Let it not be imagined that Scholasticism is what we want, any more than Monasticism. Mere grammar and philology have flourished and do now flourish where, alas, the simple teaching of the Holy Ghost, and the Bible knowledge of many an unlettered saint cannot be found. As Tholuck, in the view of such a system, has well said, "I have deduced a doctrine for myself that in reading the word of God, the right interpretation can by no means be reached by picking at the letter. Ye who squeeze and press the letter, though you do it with good intention, do but be reminded how often, when this, which may truly be named a genuine mother's breast, has been too much pressed, blood instead of milk has flowed forth." Luther too beheld the mischief when he said, "Human reason flits and flutters about the letter of the Divine Word, until it has got it to rights for itself. How often men who deal in keys, and are noted lock-picks, are thieves and robbers! I warn you that a critical skepticism may become fashionable here, as in parts of Germany; when to be a *savant* as some one has said, one must reject some canonical book, or bring forward some new theory of revelation. How many are rich in the grammar but poor in the grace! How many work in this laboratory night and day, and put the Scriptures, text by text, and word by word into their red hot crucible—and this is their business and trade! They may even make discoveries, quote authorities, crowd their treatises with learned terms, and yet they have only made a book on the Bible, and have not entered into the ves-

tibule of the Holy Temple of God. Like children they are ever swinging to and fro upon the gate, and never enter. How different a thing to devour the Bible physically—as in Russia, men are made in punishment, to eat their own book—or to receive the word, and live on “the pure milk of the word,” and “grow thereby.”

We would plead, then, *for a critical study of the Scriptures in the whole community.* In the family, the Bible class, the Sabbath School, the English Bible, at least, should be studied—in its history, its canon, its connections, and in its defences. We must come to this, if we would fortify our youth against the arrogant assumptions of a corrupt hierarchy, or against the infidel objections which are on the lips of the multitude. If we would be saved from the scourge of up-start *new-versionists*, our own time-honoured version must be known, in its claims upon scholarly respect and reverence. Instead of removing from our colleges the departments of moral philosophy and natural science, as bearing upon God’s Word, let a greater attention be devoted to these branches in the collegiate course. Instead of transferring these studies to our Theological Seminaries, because they make a special claim upon our ministry at this day, let them rather have an enlarged place in our colleges, where all our young men can be taught them as essentials for any liberal profession or occupation. Would that our collegiate course could be more Biblical—more religious. Would that our candidates could come to their theological *curriculum* full masters of mental, moral and natural science—skilled in the defences of our Christianity, and critical scholars in the Scriptures, with knowledge of the Hebrew, no less than of the Greek language. This we need. And our Church in carrying out its noble plan of religious education may yet bring us this desideratum, with all the other blessings of such a work.

In conclusion, it is plain that the ministry of our day must battle right and left, against Romanism on the one hand, and Rationalism on the other. Against both alike we are called to assert and maintain the supreme authority of God’s Word. The one adds to the Scriptures what will suit its own system of error and superstition—using its traditions as Mahommed used his new revelations, merely

to serve his purpose of power, and to build up his scheme of delusion. The other takes away from the Scripture whatever it please—some things as uninspired, others as obsolete, others as erroneous, others as mystical, until it has cut and trimmed the Bible to its own liking. But against BOTH, the angel of the apocalypse utters the same awful and final anathema, “to add to them, all the plagues that are written in the Book,” or “to take away their part out of the Book of Life.” We stand on the simple platform of the *Word of God*, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The Religion of Protestant Christianity is the Religion of God’s Word. On either side of us, all is a sea of doubt and invention. We find ourselves assailed right and left—but this is our ground: “Tradition and innovation are the Scylla and Charybdis of our Theology.” The old bottles of Romanism, or the new patches of Rationalism, we alike reject. The Jewish old clothes of the Papacy, or the meretricious finery of Infidelity, we cannot buy at such a price as the pearl of God’s truth. The Church, like her Master, is now led up by the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil. And at every challenge, impious as it may be, we are to confront him out of the Scriptures, “as it is written”—“as it is written.” The right of private judgment which we assert is not the right of enthroning reason above revelation. It is rather a denial of man’s right to enthrone anything above the simple Word of God. We do not renounce authority. We denounce mere human authority to exalt the Divine. We reject the authority of the priest and the Church where they have usurped God’s authority as set forth in his word. And with the most profound submission, we bow to the written rule, knowing that no prerogative can transcend God’s own. The chief Romish author of our day declares that “*he who establishes his faith upon Scripture, or on the results to which his Biblical researches have led him, has no faith—does not know at all what faith is.*”^{*} And the latest Rationalism echoes the same sentiment, that “*Biblicism is not merely a Theological error, but a plague of the Church.*”[†] And so we see, it is Rome that plays into the hands of

^{*}Moehler.

[†]Scherer.

Infidelity—baptizes its most rabid aspersions upon Scripture and sanctifies its arguments. The pleadings of the Romanist and those of the Rationalist are most remarkably akin, as aimed against our position. Both contest our right of going directly to the Bible. Both deny its supreme authority. The former would overthrow it, to establish its own; the latter would overthrow it to establish nothing. They may protest that they have no liking for each other. But like Herod and Pilate, they conspire to crush the Eternal Word. Romanism like Herod, arrays Christ in a gorgeous robe, sets Him at nought, and sends him with pomp to Pilate. And Infidelity, like Pilate, coolly washes its hands of the awful consequence, and hands him over to the violent multitude for crucifixion.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS—

I have come to this work profoundly impressed with the demands of my department. I claim to bring to it only an enthusiasm—which I hope at least to impart to the students—and a sense of inadequacy to fulfil its high obligations. I could have shrunk from it altogether, but that providence was disabling me from my pastoral charge, yet leaving me some strength and furniture for this. And only your call, with the flattering unanimity of the General Assembly, could have satisfied me in removing from the field of my twelve years labor and reward.

Death is sadly invading the corps of this Professorship in our land. Two venerable and eminent names have lately been inscribed among the dead. Stuart and Edwards have gone from the same institution to the world of Revelation. Our own beloved Church yet weeps over the fathers who have recently vacated their different chairs for the heavenly seats. But the Great Teacher ever lives—the Inspirer of the word, and the promised Infallible Guide into all truth. And the Gracious Master, as Head of the Church, and Helper of his weak servants, gives the Holy Spirit to them who ask Him.