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I. THE OBJECT AND SCOPE OF WRITTEN REVELATION.

WE use the term Revelation, in its wider signification, as the name of the Sacred Scriptures, and as implying divine authority for the whole, just as we call the whole the Word of God. Both of these names imply the orthodox view of inspiration. We shall assume that the book is as distinctly divine as if it all were actually revealed, while it is as distinctly human as if it all were of human origin. It is the analogue of the Incarnate Word, in whom perfect divinity and inerrant humanity meet in one person—the God-man. While it is not the purpose at this time to discuss this view, it will, no doubt, appear incidentally that no other working hypothesis is so satisfactory as this, no matter what inductions we seek to make from the Scriptures.

Writing looks to permanent preservation in unvarying form, and carries authority when duly authenticated. The “Ten Words” were written on tables of stone by the finger of God, and kept in the ark of the testimony under the most awful sanctions. Moses wrote his law in a book, and put it either in or beside the ark for a witness. Samuel wrote the “manner of the kingdom” in a book. Christ said to Satan, “It is written.”

There is no difference of opinion here. Nor is it important to settle whether there were previous writings from which much of the earlier books of revelation was taken, nor how far such writings may have been inspired.

It is now popular to say that the Scriptures are a growth, a de-

velopment from a few germinal truths into a complete system of doctrine and morals, keeping pace with the exigencies of the race in passing from infancy, so called, to full maturity. This view finds the whole Scriptures congruous and coherent, like a growing plant adding shoot to shoot and leaf to leaf, and flowers and fruit at the appointed season. It finds the whole Gospel logically and coherently contained in the Protevangelion, just as the plant is contained in the seed, but not discoverable except as unfolded in successive stages of growth from century to century.

There is another theory closely akin to this, which finds blemishes and incongruities, and misapprehensions of truth, and barbaric and semi-barbaric codes, the crude products of a still crude humanity, to be superseded, as the race advances and light increases, by sounder doctrines and purer morals, down to the close of the canon. Some who hold this theory find a continuation of this evolutionary process in the "Christian consciousness" until it yields a fruitage not found in the Scriptures at all, and even impossible there, because of the still narrow and contracted view of the sacred writers themselves; or in other words, the spiritual insight of the nineteenth century "would have been an anachronism" in the first.

These two theories are one, in that they both assume a "continuity of doctrinal development." But the former is far more coherent with our notions of the Divine Teacher and Revealer; while the latter, if true, might be cited to prove the same stages in the development of divinity as are argued for humanity.

It is worth our while to consider whether there be any such doctrinal development in the Scriptures as would justify either theory. Looking backwards into the Scriptures from our standpoint, it is evident that some things seem much clearer and are far more emphasized in the later books. Good and substantial reasons may be found for this, other than the hypothesis of development; and it may be that the facts are utterly inconsistent with this hypothesis.

We are often cautioned not to read into the Scriptures our own preconceptions, and especially not to read into the earlier books views of truth gotten from the clearer teachings of the later.

Without disparaging this caveat, it might be well to emphasize a counter caution, not to read out of the earlier Scriptures many things which are necessary to their having any signification at all, to the utter emasculation and invalidation of the later also.

No one will deny the historic development of the race into families, peoples, and nations, for the Scriptures exhibit this fully. Nor will any one dispute the growth of the volume of the Scriptures from century to century. It remains, however, to discover the law of that growth by a careful reference to the facts they furnish, before we can set up the "historic continuity of doctrinal development" as the law of that growth. There are certainly many facts found in them which not only set aside much of the argument for this hypothesis, but do suggest another hypothesis wholly incompatible with it, which may be stated in the following propositions:

1. The whole body of truth was known to the ancients as a concrete unity, prior to our present written revelation.

2. Apparent modifications and additions are but the practical adaptation and application of old truth to new and varying conditions.

3. In the earlier Scriptures those things were written and emphasized which were most readily corrupted or most easily forgotten

4. The volume of inspiration grew to keep pace with the obscurations which sin and Satan sought to put on the old truth. As new perversions and heresies arose, new prophets, divinely accredited, set up the old truth in refutation. In the completed canon we have the record of the conflict—truth triumphant, Satan discomfited.

An exhaustive presentation and discussion of the facts that bear upon this question would require a volume. It may be profitable here, however, to cite the surface facts and indicate their significance in such form as to "blaze the way" for a more exhaustive induction.

- I. The human race had no such infancy as is assumed, for which a small modicum of truth would have been sufficient. Primitive man was in all respects a wonder in creation, a wonder until now; in body, perhaps a giant, certainly of iron constitution, ten-times

as long-lived as now, even after the curse and blight of sin and the death-sentence had passed upon him; in spirit, "made after the image of God in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, with dominion over the creatures." Such was man—marvel of marvels! Who will deny that his necessities and exigencies were as extensive as his faculties, and as varied as his millennial experience? or that his God-given knowledge was equal to them all?

II. There was ample provision, both before and after the fall, for his thorough indoctrination, and for preserving and conserving the same, in the probable absence of written doctrine. There was face to face converse with the Lord Jehovah, the mediator of all the covenants, and the theophanic revealer of the ages, all for purposes of instruction. The family was made the locus of a "holy seed," and the Sabbath the special time for teaching "knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness," just as now. The head of every house was a priest, and had the oracle by virtue of his office, a fact often overlooked. There were also inspired visions given for instruction and easily distinguished from ordinary dreams, whether understood or not, and also inspired expositions of the same. To all this was added tradition, made valuable by the long lives of the patriarchs, and by the oft-repeated testimony of actual experiences and realizations of truth, and guarded by the inspiration of priest and prophet. And ages later, when the family priest was superseded by a priestly caste, the prophetic order was greatly expanded so as to guard against the possible evils of a hereditary priesthood on the one hand, and to supplement a partial canon on the other.

III. The actual knowledge of the first generation was far more than a mere germ. When we consider the brevity of the early history, the wonder is that we find so much expressed or implied. The record in Genesis was written for the Jewish people, and is to be understood as they understood it. For example: When they read that Cain and Abel made their offerings, there was no need to mention the distinction between the sin-offering and the meat-offering, and all the details thereof; the mere mention of the offerings was ample exposition; and when Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," there was no need to define the

doctrine of providence; it is simply assumed as fundamental in her creed. Indeed it is noteworthy that statements of doctrine in the earlier Scriptures are commonly made in concrete form by assumption and by implication, rather than by categorical statement. The same is true of the later Scriptures also, except when, in refutation of some heresy, it becomes necessary to set up the old truth in positive categories.

IV. The fulness and completeness of truth from the beginning may be amply illustrated :

(a.) The constitution of the family is so definitely given that neither Moses, nor Malachi, nor Christ add anything to it, but rather quote the same in refutation of the heresies of their day.

(b.) The Sabbath must have had its full significance from the beginning, because subsequent references to it in the law are a reminder of older obligations rather than new legislation; and Christ's careful expositions are but a re-definition of its original limitations, made necessary by perversions of the true nature of Sabbath observance.

(c.) The knowledge of God was as complete and accurate in the early ages as since. An Eternal First Cause is assumed as the creator of all things. He is man's friend and counsellor, lawgiver and judge. He vindicates truth, and determines heresy as final arbiter. He passes sentence on the sinner, and executes the same, or protects the criminal for a purpose. He declares his mercy in the very face of forfeited favor, and stays the death penalty. His blessing on all the works of his hand and the interlacing curses vindicated his attributes of justice, goodness, power, and knowledge in those early days as clearly as now. He was recognized as the God of creation, of providence and of grace.

And if it be true that the name Jehovah—Jahveh—translated LORD in so many versions, as well as in the New Testament, was the specific name of the second person of the Godhead, as can easily be shown, then the doctrine of the Trinity was the very surface doctrine of the earliest records, and the supposed necessity for the distinction of "Elohistic and Jehovistic" absolutely fails the critics.

(d.) And what of their moral code? No man can read the

first eight chapters of Genesis and fail to see that the moral law was as inexorable as at Sinai, and was enforced by stupendous sanctions, as the waters of the flood do testify.

(e.) But perhaps the Protevangelion was a mere germinal foreshadowing of a plan of salvation to be unfolded and understood after the lapse of four thousand years. If we study it in the light of its origin and setting—the covenant of works, the tempter, the curse, the promise, the Cain and Abel feud, the accepted bloody sacrifice, the rejection of the mere thank-offering, and the divine rebuke of Cain—we can but recognize the plan of salvation in its concrete entirety from which Cain and Socinus have taken nothing away, and to which Paul and Calvin have added nothing new. That plan of salvation revealed at Eden and transmitted in type and prophecy is, like its author, “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

V. For all practical purposes, however, our proper starting point is Noah, and the quantum of truth which he possessed was the heritage of the race when entering on its new career. When we remember that he was a “righteous man,” “perfect in his generation,” and a “preacher of righteousness,” enjoying the divine counsel both before and after the flood, it is safe to assume that all former truth was his, embracing, at least, what we have already sketched. All the facts of his life go to confirm this view, as witness his Sabbath, his sacrifice, his covenant, and his curse. We start here with no mere germ of truth, and with no imbecile infancy of the race, needing but a small modicum of knowledge. Whatever may have been the apostasies before the flood under the leadership of Cain and his sons, the race made a second start under conditions most favorable for preserving the knowledge of the true God and the way of life, and the old patriarch was their teacher for three hundred years. The families descended from him, and growing into nations, were of one faith and worship, just as they were of one tongue.

VI. In the course of time heresies were invented, and apostasies followed, and men started on the same career of evil as before the flood, except as retarded by the confusion of tongues and other causes. It became necessary in the economy of grace to

adopt a new expedient, or a new line of policy (I speak reverently), in order to save the truth against the time of general apostasy. Tradition had once failed with all its associated advantages, such was the perversity of sin and the cunning of Satan. While the danger was still remote, Abram was chosen, and made a party to a special covenant; a chosen people grew out of his loins, unique in their training and exceptional in their relations to God. They were to receive the "oracles of God" in written, permanent form for a testimony against encroaching apostasies, and so to bless all nations, and prepare the world for the coming of the true seed, the promised Christ.

VII. There is no evidence that apostasy was general in the time of the patriarchs, but rather the reverse. Abram found the "fear of the Lord" on the thrones of Egypt and of Gerar, and two hundred years later Joseph held no exceptional creed in Egypt. Melchizedek, king of Salem, was a high priest, and Abraham was only a temporary member of his constituency of family priests. There is no mystery about this man, if we recognize him as a high priest in a catholic hierarchy, to which, no doubt, belonged Potipherah, priest of On, Jethro, priest of Midian, of later date, and later still, Balaam, who was evidently high priest of his people, and of wide reputation, a priest of the Lord, officially as true as steel, but personally as corrupt as sin, himself marking a stage in a growing apostasy. The indications are clear enough that the Canaanite nations were not yet apostates in the days of the patriarchs. Two centuries, however, wrought great changes in Canaan and in Egypt, while sixty-six were growing into two millions; and they emerged at Mount Sinai to receive the written oracles none too soon to save the waning truth from her enemies. All the subsequent history shows that the nations were not ignorant of the claims of the Lord Jehovah, though they so largely rejected his authority. In David's day, Hiram, king of Tyre, was as orthodox in his expressions as David himself, so far as the history goes; and when Tyre and Israel had fallen into a common apostasy, the prophet Isaiah denounces against them both a captivity of seventy years, and apparently for the same reason. We need not cite similar knowledge of the truth at Nin-

evenh and Babylon at a later day, for other forces were at work besides natural succession. It is, however, pertinent to notice that the earliest idolatry of which we have any record was a ritualistic idolatry in worship of the true God. And the more we study the usages and traditions of pagan peoples, the more evident it is that they are all but secondary crystallizations from a common faith, and the detritus from a common original formation, the origin and details of which are in the Scriptures.

VIII. The books of Moses put into permanent form all those things which were most liable to perversion, and which were in most need of emphasis amid changing conditions, whether they were ceremonial, civil, or social customs, or matters of moral obligation. They were not new, but were put in permanent and authoritative form against the corrupting tendencies of the age; *e. g.*, the elaborate provisions of Leviticus do but record the more briefly stated practices of the earlier patriarchs, with conceded new adaptations to new conditions; the Sabbath, the altar, the bloody sacrifice, the priest, the clean victim were of early origin, while the special provision for the continual burnt-offering was probably or at least possibly new; or in social law, the levirate marriage was as distinctly lawful in Judah's family as in the happier nuptials of Boaz and Ruth; or in civil matters, the principle of government by elders was as distinctly marked when Moses covenanted with the elders of his people in Egypt, as when at Mount Sinai, by divine command, he called out the same seventy elders and put honor and responsibility upon them; or in the moral code, the harlotry of Tamar was adjudged worthy of death centuries before the seventh commandment was promulgated from Sinai's top.

Were it not for the obvious fact that Mosaic codes and customs were not new in their general trend and underlying principles, and often in actual detail, hostile criticism could never have given them plausible origins elsewhere. On our theory, the hypothesis of earlier documents and earlier codes would tend to strengthen their authoritative codification at Mount Sinai, rather than to disintegrate and weaken. Indeed the vocation of the destructive critic would utterly fail him on our theory, for if the codification

and recension be only the making permanent the doctrines of the ages, what matters it whether such codification took place earlier or later? His criticism is largely in the interest of the evolution of doctrine, morals, government, and civilization, if not of humanity itself.

IX. There can be no question of the completeness of civil, social, and moral law as presented in Mosaic legislation, while the ceremonial seems to occupy too much space and attention. There is a reason for this, however. The ceremonial system is an elaborate book of prophecy expressed in object lessons instead of written language, eminently adapted to exposition by parent, priest, and prophet. It was necessary to fix the minutest details against corruption or loss. There is a minimum of verbal prophecy in the earlier books of Scripture because not then necessary; but in the later history, when the ceremonial was waning and "waxing old" and of increasingly difficult access on account of the dispersion, and was even suspended for a season, the volume of written verbal prophecy was rapidly expanded, and was promulgated through the synagogue, so as to set forth for all, both Jews and proselytes, that which had been so well expressed in type before. It was only a change of method and means to meet new conditions.

It may also be noted here that the prophets were much engaged in correcting abuses, restoring the law, and setting up sound principles against encroaching heresies in doctrine and practice. Here also the volume of inspiration grew to keep pace with the obscurations and perversions of faith and practice. Such truths as had not been attacked were little emphasized at an earlier day, or rather in the earlier Scriptures. The period of decline in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel was preëminently a time of apostasy. It is not surprising therefore that there was large work for the prophetic order and that their numbers reached five hundred at one time in the days of Ahab and Jezebel. The major and the minor prophets belong all to the period of decline and restoration. What wonder then that the truth seems to shine out with new light in their writings! They were the restorers of the old paths rather than teachers of new doctrines.

For example: When Isaiah arraigned formalism, and vindicated

the substance as against the mere form, was he promulgating a new doctrine, or was he not rather refuting a rampant heresy which substituted the form for the substance? a heresy scotched for a time, but not yet dead.

When Malachi said, "Will a man rob God?" was he teaching God's ownership of the tithe as a new doctrine? He was only unmasking that rank heresy by which they not only withheld the tithe but justified themselves in it—a heresy unknown to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, who evidently believed that the tithe was the Lord's.

Or take the Sermon on the Mount, when centuries later still, he that gave the law on Mount Sinai, expounded the same on the Mount in Galilee, brushing away Pharisaic glosses and interpretations and traditions by which they "made the law of none effect," and restored the law to its original and true significance. Phariseeism with its negative pole Sadduceeism, was the last great heresy of the ages. Christ and the apostles vindicated the old truth against all comers. They based their claims and their teaching on the known, accepted, obvious, and common sense interpretation of the older Scriptures. "Search the Scriptures," said Christ. "To the law and to the testimony," cried Paul. Their teachings and writings bristle with polemics. Even the gentle John cries, "Believe not every Spirit," "No lie is of the truth." There was no more powerful expositor of heresy and expounder of truth than he, and in his epistles we find the only complete, exhaustive, and final refutation of that most pestilent heresy, antinomianism.

For four thousand years the Father of Lies exhausted all his ingenuity and malice to destroy the bulwarks of eternal truth. He succeeded only too well in deceiving our race and destroying the hopes of man. The Prince of Peace, the Revealer, stood by his people and fought the battle with falsehood and sin. The enemy, when beaten on one field, planned his cunning assaults on another, till the whole ground was fought over. Every refuge of lies was overthrown, every hiding place was exposed, every possible heresy was sifted, and every truth vindicated.

The victory was won; the record of the conflict was written; the canon was closed. Prophet and oracle ceased because no

longer needed. The Book contains the universal and final appeal. We approach it with every hard question with the same confidence with which Joshua and Eleazar stood before the Shekinah. Satan can only go over the old battle field, and repeat himself and his tactics in order to deceive the unwary and the ignorant. His new pretences are all old; his new heresies are all obsolete; his new disguises are but the tattered remnants of the sheep's clothing so often torn from him by the great shepherd of Israel. The wolf can only prowl on the old battle fields, and the most timid believer may put him to hasty flight with a single weapon from this armory.

The recasting of old falsehoods in new philosophic forms of statement, and in new metaphysical nomenclature, is all that he now can do, and nothing pleases him better than when the defenders of truth handle the same weapons instead of that "sharp two-edged sword," which is the word of God.

Human experience had already been exhaustive in Solomon's day, and he put much of it in permanent form for the guidance of those to come after. The same things in essence had been re-enacted in divers forms by agencies divine, human, and satanic, but the historic argument, the logic of events was not yet complete. How much more may we now say with him, "The thing that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, see, this is new? It hath been already of old time which was before us."

What then is the law of the growth of the sacred oracles—the object and scope of written revelation? We answer in one triple proposition: To preserve and vindicate the old truth against all comers; to record the history of the conflict and its issues; and to expound and illustrate the way of life from Eden to the resurrection.

Objections to this theory arise from two sources: the mistaking of new historic facts and their obvious lessons for new revelations of truth; and a total misapprehension of the relations of the prophets to the Mosaic economy, and even of Christ himself to the same, and through it, to the older covenants. Suffice it to say

that the prophet was commissioned to enforce and not to modify ; and Christ was so "made under the law" to obey and to suffer, that it was not competent for him to add aught to, or take aught from that which he had before set up with paramount authority. He came "not to destroy but to fulfill."

Several valuable corollaries flow from this theory if it be accepted in its entirety.

1. The fixity of truth from the beginning, like the fixity of species, while it presents great variety in its applications and concrete manifestations.

2. The absolute sufficiency and completeness of truth, written and unwritten, at the successive stages of the mediatorial economy.

3. The lawfulness of constructing a whole body of divinity on a few recorded truths, just as comparative anatomy reconstructs the ancient saurian on a single discovered bone.

4. The superior value of the historic method, the logic of events, over the purely exegetical in the defence of truth. The methods of Augustine, Calvin, and Hodge seem to be a partial reversal of the methods of Christ and Paul, and just so far weaker and less satisfactory.

5. It supersedes the plausibilities of the humanitarian, the rationalist, the liberalist, and the destructive.

6. Christian apologetics rises to the higher ground of Christian polemics, putting the beast, the false prophet, and that old serpent to shameful rout with the word of God which is the "Sword of the Spirit."

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