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Doctrinal Theology.

BIBLIOLOGY.

This chapter of theology was by our earlier dogmatists commonly dealt with in their *Prolegomena*, where they treated of the nature and the principles and source of theology. It was not unreasonable to dwell on the source of doctrine before exhibiting the substance of Christian doctrine as comprised in *Theology proper*, *Anthropology*, *Christology*, *Soteriology*, and *Eschatology*. This was the more pertinent as the principal positions of Bibliology, especially the divine origin and authority of the Bible, were generally conceded, and to impugn the inspiration of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments would have been looked upon as preposterous by theologians of all churches and schools. The great ancestors of modern Protestant theology, Zwingli, Calvin, Melancthon, never theoretically or dogmatically assailed this stronghold of scriptural theology. Even Calixt, the Noah of the present generation of neologists in what is called the Lutheran Church, did no more than plant the first germs of unscriptural Bibliology for future development and would probably have been amazed and appalled at the growth of thorns and thistles gone into seed in these latter days.

Yet we hold that the Prolegomena were not the best place for the exhibition of the points of doctrine which should make up Bibliology. The doctrines of the inspiration, the properties, and the purposes of the Bible are themselves as truly articles of faith as any article of Christology, and more eminently so than certain points of Anthropology. And, furthermore, the biblical doctrine *de Scriptura Sacra* is in our day more violently assailed and more flatly and directly denied than any other point of revealed theology. For this and other reasons we deem it eminently proper that doctrinal or systematic theology should, especially in our day, transfer Bibliology from the prolegomena to the corpus doctrinae itself, embodying this doctrine or cluster of doctrines in the dogmatical system proper, making the *Locus de Scriptura Sacra* the opening chapter of dogmatic theology.

The propriety of this arrangement will appear very clearly when we define *Bibliology* as *the doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the origin, the properties, and the purposes of the Bible*. If this is Bibliology, it is certainly a chapter of doctrinal theology itself. If doctrinal theology considered *in concreto* is *the knowledge and acceptance of the doctrines of divine revelation and the aptitude to exhibit such doctrines in themselves and in their proper relations to each other, or in the abstract sense the aggregate of the doctrines laid down in Holy Scripture, which should be known, accepted, properly applied, and strenuously defended by a theologian*, the aggregate of all that the Bible teaches concerning *itself*, nothing more, nothing less, is Bibliology, just as the aggregate of what the Bible teaches concerning God is Theology proper, and the aggregate of what Scripture teaches concerning Christ is Christology. What the Bible teaches concerning the Bible, we teach and believe because it is taught in the Bible, just as we teach and believe what Scripture teaches concerning the trinity in unity and the person of Christ because it is taught in Scripture.

The testimony of the church is neither more nor less in Bibliology than it is in Christology, and again, our assurance of the divine origin, the authority, and the efficacy of the Bible is just as little based upon human authority and just as truly a divine and supernatural assurance as our assurance of the grace and mercy of God and the divinity of Christ, being derived from and based upon the infallible word of the living God. In fact, our faith in Christ cannot consistently be more firm and enduring than our belief in the divine authority of Scripture. He who draws his pencil through scriptural Bibliology is but consistent when he draws it through all the succeeding chapters of dogmatic theology, and again, we are only consistent when we deem a theologian heterodox whose Bibliology is not that of the Scriptures, just as we deem a synergist heterodox because his anthropology and soteriology are not in accordance with Scripture.

We are, of course, prepared to hear the objection that to base the doctrine of the divine origin and authority of the Bible upon Scripture itself is inadmissible, because it is taking the testimony of Scripture in establishing its own claims. But to raise this objection is not only poor theology, but also poor law. The testimony of a person in his own behalf is everywhere considered as good as the person himself. Even a defendant in a court of record is allowed to plead "Not guilty" and to take the stand to testify for himself, and that testimony stands until the contrary is shown to the satisfaction of the judge or jury. Now, in our eyes Scripture is not a defendant at the bar of justice, as modern critical theology would make it, but the voice of God manifesting itself as coming from the mouth of Truth everlasting, and if that testimony is not good and sufficient proof, no truth has ever been established by evidence of any kind. To us the testimony of Scripture is more reliable evidence than the testimony of our senses; we are more firmly assured that the Scriptures are indeed the word of the living God than

we are that the sun is in the sky at midday, since the latter assurance is human while the former is divine.

Yet another objection will be liable to intrude itself upon our attention when we make the Bible itself the source of our Bibliology. We are told that in so doing we are in fact begging the question or arguing in a circle. But to raise this objection is not only poor theology, but also poor logic. Begging the question and arguing in a circle are logical fallacies, faulty processes of reasoning, endeavors to establish a truth by supposing that truth already established. But who has told our opponents that we are endeavoring to establish our Bibliology by a process of reasoning? To establish truths by reasoning processes may be good philosophy, better philosophy than that of our theological neologists is generally found to be, but is certainly not theology. We have said before this and say again: "Our theology concedes the dignity of a theological doctrine to no statement which may be derived even from a revealed doctrine by a process of reasoning only, but is not itself in all its terms actually taught in Holy Scripture."¹⁾ The logical blunder committed in the objection above stated is that of a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*. Philosophical truths are established to human minds by arguments of a human mind; but theological truths are established by the word of God as recorded in Scripture, and in no other way, and the truths of Bibliology in Christian dogmatics are theological truths not philosophically, but theologically established.

Being theological truths, the truths of Bibliology differ from philosophical truths also in this that they cannot be consistently assailed by philosophical arguments, and the proper defence of these truths must not be attempted so much by philosophical apology as by the testimony of Holy Scripture. This does not exclude that the impugner of scriptural Bibliology may be met by an analysis of his faulty

1) THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY, January 1897, p. 12.

reasoning where, as is generally the case, the antithesis will not even stand before the laws of logic and common sense; but a scriptural theologian must not suppose that he has performed his whole duty when he has shown how neologists are not even consistent with themselves, how the weapons with which scriptural Bibliology is assailed in our day are, philosophically considered, woefully weak because of the many flaws with which they come from the forge of modern theology. Also in the defence of the Christian doctrine concerning Holy Scripture the theologian should not allow himself to be drawn out of his fortress, which is the word of Scripture, or lay aside his proper weapons, which are again the utterances of the Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture. It is by fighting from this bulwark and with these weapons that a theologian will achieve his real and enduring victories over the assailants of the truths of scriptural Bibliology.

What are these truths? We have defined Bibliology as being the doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the origin, the properties, and the purposes of the Bible, and we will now first proceed briefly to exhibit what Scripture teaches concerning the *origin* of the Bible.

By its origin, the Bible or the Holy Scripture, consisting of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, *is in all its parts the word of God.*

The *canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments* are as really and truly a fixed magnitude as the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, the Westminster Creeds, or the Constitution of the United States in its present form. In several respects, the Canon of Scripture is even more firmly fixed than any collection of Symbols or any political Constitution. While the Symbols of a church and the Constitution of a state are, and in their nature must be, sufficiently definite to admit of an enumeration of their constituent parts, they are not necessarily restricted to their present compass for all future times. A Constitution may

be amended, and the Symbols of a church may be augmented, to meet the requirements of an age or exigency. But the Canon of Scripture will forever remain what it is to-day and has been for many centuries.¹⁾

The Old Testament Canon has stood unchanged and unchangeable as to its integral parts for 2300 years, its growth having extended through a millenium previous to its completion. The preservation of these books was the allotted task of a peculiar people from the days of Moses to the fulness of time,²⁾ from the hour when Moses committed to "the priests, the sons of Levi, the book of the law he had written, that it should be put in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord,"³⁾ where all the later inspired books were deposited,⁴⁾ to the days of Ezra and Malachi, the last of the Prophets, and from the "scribe of the law of the God of heaven"⁵⁾ to the days of Paul, when "Moses of old time had in every city them that preached him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day."⁶⁾ Even now, in the world's eventide, that Canon of 23,206 verses is being preserved and perpetuated in its original tongue not only in Palestine, but in Persia, India, and China, in the synagogues of Paris and London, New York, St. Louis, and San Francisco, and in hundreds of translations in more millions of printed copies than any other collection of writings, *one* only excepted, the *New Testament*.

The church of the new covenant was not a new church with a new religion opposed to the church of the old covenant with its religion, but a continuation of the one true church of the one true God, of which Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Samuel and David, Isaia and all the Prophets, and all true Israelites according to the spirit, had been living members just as truly as Peter and Paul were in New Testament days, the

1) Heb. 1, 1. 2.

2) Rom. 3, 2.

3) Deuter. 13, 9, 24—26.

4) Josephus, Ant. 3, 3. Bell. Jud. 7, 5. coll. 1 Sam. 10, 25.

5) Ezr. 7, 12.

6) Acts 15, 21.

difference between Old church and New church Christians being chiefly this that *before* the fulness of time the children of God believed in the coming Messiah promised in Moses and the Prophets, and the true children of Abraham among Jews and Gentiles *after* the fulness of time believed in the living Savior preached by Jesus of Nazareth and his Apostles. And to this continuation of his church, the same spirit of God who had spoken through Moses and the Prophets vouchsafed a continuation of the Written Word, the light of which should unite its rays with those of the lamp which had illumined the path of those who had walked with God in the light of prophecy. Thus the Canon, which had been closed in Malachi, the "seal of the prophets," was reopened to be completed by the Apostles and Evangelists in not as many decades as the Old Testament Canon had seen centuries in its composition. Before the last Apostle had gone to join Abraham and David and all the "host of just men made perfect," New Testament Christianity was not only in possession, but also in the enjoyment, of a New Testament Canon.

Public reading was extensively practiced in the Roman world at the beginning of the Christian era. Moses and the Prophets were regularly read in the synagogues, not only in Palestine, but the world over. What influence the synagogue may or may not have exerted upon public worship in the Christian church in apostolic times we need not here investigate. It is sufficient to know that from the early days of Christianity to the present day Scripture lessons were read in the churches of Christendom throughout the Orient and Occident, and at an early date the office of anagnosts or readers was established in the church. Private reading was likewise quite or nearly as general in the days of Paul as it is to-day among civilized people. The great publishing houses, the establishments of Atticus, the Socii, Tryphon, Cn. Pompeius Phrixius, and others, provided the book market with an abundance of books, good, bad, and

indifferent, at very low prices. A copy of Martial was sold at 25 cents; and the author complained of 12 cents charged for his *Xenia* as being usuriously high, fifty per cent higher than it ought to have been. Not only the *Acta diurna*, the "Daily News," but also the works of Propertius and Ovid, were read in the city and in all the provinces from the Sahara to the Grampian Hills, by the officers and soldiers in the camps and by the ladies of Vienne and Corinth. The value of the books of occult science and arts delivered and burned at Ephesus under the eyes of Paul amounted to \$10,000.¹⁾ What city of like population might witness a like event to-day? And now, the churches of apostolic times received the word of the apostles preached to them "not as the word of men, but, as it was in truth, the word of God."²⁾ Would it be reasonable to suppose that they should have valued the written word of an apostle less highly than they esteemed his spoken word? How could they, when Paul himself expressly placed the two on the same level?³⁾ Besides, what was implied in the very fact that the Apostle *wrote* to them, was also the expressed will of the holy writer. The epistle which was probably the earliest book of the New Testament Canon closes with the solemn injunction: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."⁴⁾ And that his epistles were not intended for those churches only to which they were immediately directed appears from his order to the Colossians, saying, "When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."⁵⁾ Thus we see that from the very beginning the books of the New Testament were intended and designated for public reading in the various churches, and this designation was made known to the churches. And what

1) Acts 19, 19.

2) 1 Thess. 2, 13.

3) 2 Thess. 2, 15.

4) 1 Thess. 5, 27.

5) Col. 4, 16.

is said of the first book of the New Testament Canon applies also to the last. The exordium or announcement of the Apocalypse of St. John says, "Blessed is *he* that readeth and *they* that hear the words of this prophecy,"¹⁾ thereby indicating that this book was intended for public anagnosis, where one person would read and many would "hear what the Spirit said unto the churches."²⁾ The facilities afforded by the book trade rendered it an easy matter to obtain copies of all the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists soon after their delivery to the first recipients. St. Peter, writing to the churches of Christendom, simply supposes them to be familiar with *all* the epistles of Paul as also with "the other Scriptures," and knows of their being both used and abused.³⁾ All the Christian writers of the second century teem with quotations from the "New Testament," as it was very commonly termed in Tertullian's day. Even the enemies of the gospel, those errorists of the *ψευδώνυμος γνῶσις* who infested the East and the West endeavoring to palm off their speculations and dreams as Christian truth of a higher order, could not do without the new Canon, simply because they had no show with Christian men and women unless they pretended to have New Testament Scripture on their side, and, though from garbled and mutilated copies, they quoted Scripture as the devil did in the desert, and to such an extent and with such effect that the defenders of the Christian faith, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others, met them with Scripture still more copiously quoted. Irenaeus not only refers to the Gospels incessantly, but devotes a chapter of his great work against the Heretics to an argument intended to show that there are neither more nor less than *four* Gospels.⁴⁾ He is acquainted with all the epistles of St. Paul, two or three of St. John, one of St. Peter, the epistle of St. James, and the Apocalypse.

1) Rev. 1, 3.

3) 2 Pet. 3, 15. 16.

2) Rev. 2, 7. al.

4) Iren. Ἐλεγχος κ. τ. λ. III, 2.

His contemporary, Tertullian, draws from the same fountain of truth in Africa. He takes Marcion to task for having mutilated the Scriptures, and even for arranging the Pauline epistles in an order differing from that observed in the collections in common use. But if Marcion had mutilated a Canon, he must have found a canon to mutilate, and he could not have deviated from a customary arrangement of the New Testament books, if those books had not been collected before and handed forward in a traditional volume. Marcion was, therefore, so far from being the first possessor of a New Testament Canon, that he is rather, in the hands of that African lawyer, a witness testifying to the existence of a well established Canon during the lifetime of those who, like Marcion, had been born when St. John was an old man.

The existence of this ancient Canon, a collection comprising the homologumena of the New Testament, accounts for the well known fact that a number of books now long since generally received into the New Testament Canon were for some time looked upon as of doubtful canonicity. These books had for various reasons failed to find a place in the collection which obtained early and general recognition in the East and West. Thus, f. ex., the second epistle of St. Peter, written shortly before the apostle's death, may have been lost sight of during the turmoil created by a paroxysm of persecution,¹⁾ of which the apostle was one of the victims, so that, when the epistle reappeared, it was difficult to procure sufficient testimony in its behalf. And the churches were very wary in recognizing a book as of apostolic authority. The existence of a collection of recognized Gospels and Epistles did not facilitate, but retard the admission of any additional books into the accepted Canon, and this all the more, since spurious Gospels and Acts and Epistles were at a very

1) We deem it an open question, whether Peter died under Nero, or under Flavian rule, when official action against the Christians as such had become the general policy of the Empire.

early day placed on the market and caused the churches to be doubly cautious.¹⁾ Thus the slowness of many churches to accept the antilegomena after the early universal acceptance of the homologomena is so far from weakening the New Testament Canon, that it is rather, like the incredulity of the disciples on Easter day, only another link in the chain of evidence whereby the incredulity, not of churches, but of schools and individuals, of these latter days must appear to have no case even in the court of common sense. We say, not of churches. While the various churches are deplorably at variance on many fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, there is one thing in which they all agree: the acceptance of the New Testament Canon; and that in spite of the fact that there is not one book in that Canon which has not been rejected by some critic or school of critics during the century now drawing to its close, and although there are but few modern theologians of recognized *scientific* standing who accept the Canon as it stands. Even Rome, though she has adulterated the Old Testament Scriptures by stamping the apocrypha canonical, has left the New Testament Canon intact in its ecumenical integrity. And again, there is nothing more clearly and distinctly set forth in the New Testament than the canonicity of the Old Testament Canon from Genesis to Malachi.

Inasmuch, then, as the Bible has a historical existence, and is thus and in this sense a historical object, it can and must be historically determined by internal and external evidence just as truly, though not altogether by the same kind of evidence, as the Koran and the Novum Organum. But even the Koran and the Novum Organum claim more than mere historical recognition. In fact, neither the Koran, nor the Novum Organum, nor any other literary work, was written for the purpose of having its genesis and existence in time and space historically determined by higher

1) 2 Thess. 2, 2. 3, 17.

critics. Literary composition partakes of the purpose of language and speech in general. We speak and write in order to exert some influence upon the minds of those who hear or read what we speak or write. This is true even where words are employed not to utter but to conceal the truth, where the purpose is not to inform or enlighten, but to deceive. Thus the Koran demands faith and obedience,¹⁾ and Bacon's work claims attention and application and intellectual assent, on the part of the reader.²⁾ And while the more special purpose of a book is often announced on its title page or appears from the character of its contents, so that no one will mistake the purpose of Hoyle's Games for that of Bishop on Marriage and Divorce, or that of a Latin Grammar for that of a Hymn Book or a work on Surgery, authors often state still more particularly what points they endeavor to make or what effect they desire to produce. Lucrece, the Roman poet who served the philosophy of Epicure to his countrymen in Latin verse, would have it understood that his purpose was to "rid the minds of his readers from the bonds of religion."³⁾ Dr. Rhys Davids, in his book on

1) Koran, Sura II: "This is the Book which must not be doubted, a rule of piety to those who believe in the Mysteries, and perform their prayer and give alms of what we have graciously granted, and believe what we reveal."

2) "Est enim quod petendum videtur. Nos certe cogitationem suscipimus et curam adhibuimus, ut, quae a nobis proponuntur, non tantum vera essent, sed etiam ad animos hominum (licet miris modis, occupatos et interclusos) non incommode et asperè accederent. Veruntamen aequum est, ut ab hominibus impetremus, (in tanta praesertim doctrinarum et scientiarum restauratione) ut qui de hisce nostris aliquid, sive ex sensu proprio, sive ex auctoritatum turba, sive ex demonstrationum formis, quae nunc tanquam leges quaedam judiciales invaluerunt, statuere aut existimare velit, ne id in transitu et velut aliud agendo, facere se posse speret, sed ut rem pernoscatur: nostram quam describimus et munimus viam ipse paulatim tentet, subtilitati rerum, quae in experientia signata est, assuescat, pravas denique atque alte haerentas mentis habitus tempestiva et quasi legitima mora corrigat, atque tum demum (si placuerit) postquam in potestate sua esse coeperit, iudicio suo utatur." *Novum Organum, Praefatio ad calc.*

3) "Religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo." *De rerum natura*, I, 931.

Buddhism noticed in these pages, says, "I have endeavored, so far as in me lies, to bring out, in what I have already said, the essential points of the deeper view of life which lies behind all Buddhism;"¹⁾ and at the end of his course, "We may at least venture to hope that the series of lectures, of which this course is only the first instalment, will do much to promote that feeling of respect for opinions we ourselves can never hold," etc.²⁾ And an author is, other things being equal, certainly entitled to a hearing on his intents and purposes before others are heard on the same subject. That he has embodied such statement in the book thus determined, and thereby secured its getting before every reader of the book itself, should be *prima facie* evidence of his earnest desire to see his purpose achieved wherever his book is read. But even where such explicit statements are not made, common sense has always presumed and will always presume that books are not written without a purpose. Even where the ulterior purpose of an author is simply to make money, he would be a sorry simpleton if he utterly neglected the intermediate purpose of offering, by the information or entertainment furnished in his book, what the purchaser might consider an equivalent for the price of the book. The real purpose of a book may be in a measure hidden to the superficial reader. When Whately wrote his "*Historic doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*," his intention was not to rule Napoleon I out of history, but to censure certain methods of historical criticism; and Erasmus' *Moriae Encomium* was not intended for an encomium, but very decidedly for quite the reverse. And whatever foolishness may have been committed with or without an encomium, the fool does not live, not even among the "higher critics," who would write a book or even an epistle with nothing in view but to undergo the scrutiny of historical criticism however brilliantly executed, or merely

1) p. 181.

2) p. 222.

to secure the historical testimony of its existence, though it be the *testimonium ecclesiae*.

It is, furthermore, evident that the intended purpose of a book cannot ultimately be determined or established by the mere external testimony of its readers. The purpose, yea, the very substance, of a book was in the mind of the author *before* his thoughts and sentiments were couched in the form of words employed in the composition of his work, and the book itself is an embodiment or a representation of that substance for the achievement of that purpose. If not, it is a failure or a lie. The author composes his book in order to convey his thoughts from his own mind to the mind of the reader, not by immediate impact—for this cannot be done—, but through the medium of language. Thus also the reader cannot receive what is in the author's mind by direct communication. The transitus of thought from one mind to another is through language, spoken or written, and the substance of a book is simply thought *in transitu*. The reader takes what the author has laid down, and can take it as coming from that author only where that author has laid it down, and nowhere else. The book itself is the repository of what came from the author's mind in the composition of the book and is to go to the reader's mind in the reading of the book. External testimony can not add to nor subtract from the substance of the book as such, since the substance of the book is what came from the *author's* mind into *this* book, while external testimony comes from *other* minds, or from the same author, but by *other* channels. External testimony may agree or disagree with the substance of a book, may promote or counteract the effect of its contents, may convey additional information, but can never change the essence of the book. Even the second enlarged and revised edition of a book by the same author is not the same book, while a simple copy or reprint is, the substance of the work having been changed in the former, but not in the latter.

Let us apply all this to the Bible, or the Canonical Books of the Old and the New Testaments. We must not underestimate the testimony of the church before and after the fulness of time. The Jewish church was in position to know by very reliable information and by traditions more trustworthy than those of any other nation what books were composed by Moses and the Prophets. The churches of New Testament Christianity were at a very early date unanimous in their testimony concerning the apostolical origin of the homologumena, and that testimony is all the more entitled to acceptance and confidence because of the evident discrimination of the churches against such books as did not at once appear sufficiently attested to justify their general and unqualified recognition. It is safe to say that the authenticity of no book or collection of books is more reliably confirmed than that of the writings ascribed to the Apostles and Évangelists by the testimony of the church. We, furthermore, know from the same testimony that these books were from the early days of Christianity the source of Christian doctrine and the rule of Christian life; and this testimony is corroborated by that of errorists like the Gnostics, who quoted, by heathen writers like Celsus, who assailed, and by pagan persecutors like Diocletian, who sought to destroy, these Scriptures of the Christian church in those early days of its existence and marvelous growth. In view of all this it is simply preposterous to deny or doubt the authenticity of the homologumena of the New Testament, and even the antilegomena of our Canon can freely claim sufficient testimony in their favor to justify their canonical standing.

All this we would here reassert both thetically and antithetically as in full agreement with the verdict of the churches of Christendom and against the skeptical tendencies of certain schools of modern theology. But, at the same time, we hold that all the testimony hitherto adduced is but external evidence when the intrinsic character of the

Scriptures is to be determined. While the cumulative testimony of the church of all lands, and of the enemies of Christianity, may powerfully corroborate, it cannot supplant or even supplement, the internal evidence of Scripture itself whereby the divine origin, the properties, and the purposes, of the Bible must be established and by virtue of which the Bible itself is the source and norm of theological Bibliology. As from the *Novum Organum* alone we can authentically learn what the *Novum Organum* is, so from the BIBLE alone we can authentically learn what the BIBLE is.

A. G.

(To be continued.)

Exegetical Theology.

THE GENESIS OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK.

(Concluded.)

The changes which languages undergo are of two kinds; they are either structural or functional, the former pertaining to the substance and form, the latter, to the use, of words.

The structural or organic changes of literary languages move in two distinct directions, toward simplification of form and toward increase of vocabulary.

The tendency of languages toward simplification in form may be exemplified from the English language. In Wyclif's time a plural form of the verb was in constant use. We quote: "And after that the hadden scorneden hym, thei unclothiden hym of the mantil, and thei clotheden hym with his clothis and ledden hym to crucifie, and as thei geden out, thei founden a man of syrenen comynge fro the towne, Symound bi name, the constreyneden hym to take