

## AN APPEAL FOR A HIGHER EXÉGESIS.<sup>1</sup>

“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.”—*Ps. cxix. 18.*

NOT many years ago an Oxford teacher “to memory dear” expressed the hope that the age of Biblical criticism was nearly past. He must have meant that the literary or philological study of the Bible had almost done its work, and that another guide was needed to lead disciples from the outer court of the temple into the Holy of holies. Need I justify myself as to some extent at least a critic for using such a phrase? *That* were to admit that there was some truth in the current prejudice that keen criticism and a firm hold on the unseen realities cannot be united in the same persons. But do our popular writers really imagine that critics are Nihilists, and seek to “burn up all the houses (meeting-places) of God in the land?” Do not we Biblical critics know as well as any simple-minded Christian that a most holy place exists, and that a certain tone of mind and quality of experience are required in those who would enter it? Need I protest that our critical freedom is not the freedom of scepticism, but of a purified faith—of a faith which, being spiritual and experimental, can afford to be patient while the security of its outworks is being tested? I count it a happy thing that protestations are needless today in an Oxford which is not divided into two camps, and in which differences of opinion do not issue in calumnious

<sup>1</sup> Preached as a University sermon in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, October 25, 1903, but with the hope of reaching a wider audience.

misrepresentations. Faith, as the Oxford of to-day knows full well, is the jewel of the soul alike to the critic and to the simple-minded Christian, and so, too, it was to the eminent teacher of whom I have spoken. Nor need any Biblical critic quarrel with this unflattering Mentor for the trenchant words which I have quoted. He surely meant that literary and textual criticism ought by this time to have led to something better than an exegesis which appeals predominantly to philological specialists. He longed for a turn in the road, but he knew that a more satisfying exegesis could not possibly arise till the old Christian principle of a revelation of divine wisdom, not limited to a single race, had been more fully accepted by modern theology.

The application of this principle may be still very imperfect, and yet it may be right for some of us to take a first step forward, and begin to deal, less with the grammar and the lexicon, and more with the religious ideas and beliefs of the books interpreted. The main results of a sound philological criticism must indeed be recorded in our Prolegomena, but not at such length as to divert attention from our highest and grandest object. Our ambition as interpreters is nothing less than to get to the heart of the Old Testament, and to trace the converging lines of a real and not merely theoretical development of ideas and beliefs, on the basis of a critical study of the several strata of the old Jewish writings in their historical connexion. And in order to get this connexion we must take some trouble about the ideas and beliefs of the neighbours of the Jews, historically regarded. We must not think it unseemly to compare any possibly related facts of the Babylonio-Assyrian, the Arabian, the Egyptian, or the Iranian religions, and to utilize the varied illustrative material provided by the comparative psychology of peoples and by anthropology. And as a condition of complete success we must approach the study of religious phenomena,

not in the detached spirit of an anatomist, or of a visitor from another planet, but with the sympathy born of the consciousness that modern religion is largely of primitive origin, and with the humility expressed in the prayer, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

And now, just because we desire, in the spirit of this prayer, to strengthen in ourselves and others a truly spiritual faith, and with a view to this, to get to the heart of the older Bible, it is our duty to listen to voices which call us back for a time to preliminary tasks as yet imperfectly accomplished. By all means let us, each and all, make what contributions we can to the higher exegesis, but let no one think it superfluous to scrutinize somewhat closely the text on which we still for the most part base our critical work. To the comparative soundness of parts—it is hardly safe to speak more definitely—of the received text, I bear my testimony; no one who has passed through the school of the great period now closed can do otherwise. And yet it is only too possible that some, or even many, parts may have been only half understood owing to a superficiality and a narrowness in our use of critical method. The mere suspicion of this ought to make us nobly discontented, and if it can be proved that there is more than a mere suspicion of it, we ought not to rest till we have begun the hard work of a re-examination of the texts. In the bracing air of a new century we ought not to feel any task beyond our powers, knowing that God, who allots to each century its task, can so intensify our will that we shall be able to do better than what has hitherto been deemed our best.

The subject is one which may fitly be referred to in this pulpit, because, though the evidences of true religion are in the last resort phenomena of experience, yet the material forms which the utterances of faith assume are supplied

partly by historical circumstances, partly by beliefs not strictly speaking religious, and these can only be ascertained by the careful study of ancient texts. Hence a theology which began by being dogmatic has to become in one of its chief aspects historical, and with this in view must be largely concerned with exegesis. But a really sound exegesis must be critical, and this involves a searching and methodical examination of the textual tradition. Let no one therefore despise textual criticism, or discourage attempts to raise that study, and first of all the Old Testament part of it, to a higher level. Provided that textual critics remember that criticism is not an end in itself, but has the privilege of contributing to something far higher and nobler, their work is as truly church-work as that of the historical theologian; indeed, I presume it to be quite possible that a textual critic may be also a historical theologian. Nor need those who aim at a higher ideal regret having to retrace their steps, and resume tasks supposed to have been in all essentials accomplished, for it is the condition of historical progress that the results of one age should be perfected in another, and if those who can would only take up the work of training themselves and others in the use of more varied methods, the revision of the text of the Old Testament would perhaps quickly pass into a more fully satisfactory stage.

And even though, in spite of the deadlock at which it may be feared that we are arriving, it may be too much to hope that this will be soon adequately done, those who think with me need not be downcast. It may even be well that there should for a time be those who prefer to keep their minds in suspense. Those who hope and believe that the deepest desire of all the best scholars is for progress—progress at whatever cost to cherished personal opinions—can afford to extend a welcome to much critical work which is not altogether to their mind. Their practical policy may be ex-

pressed thus. Let there still be workers who as a rule assume the results of that nineteenth century scholarship to which we all owe so much—workers whose learning and capacity are deserving of all respect. Such scholars may, in matters of textual criticism and philology, be slow to move, but so far as relates to the study of religious ideas and their historical embodiments, there is good reason to believe that they are heartily in favour of it. But, in order to escape from that deadlock of which I spoke with apprehension, and to correct one-sidedness, let there also be scholars of a somewhat different type—scholars who, though ardent lovers of exegesis, yet feel bound to devote some of their best energies first to textual researches, and next to showing from time to time how, in their experience, the Old Testament study in all its departments is deriving benefit from these inquiries.

It is one of the most important departments of Old Testament study to which I would now draw your attention. To the priceless literary monuments of prophecy all the partners in our new venture will certainly in the near future return with fresh interest. In those records some of the highest and most distinctive phenomena of Israelitish religion are presented to us in a historical setting. It is this setting which gives so much reality to the religious phenomena, and to have made it even to a small extent comprehensible is the undeniable merit of nineteenth century criticism.

It is encouraging to notice that the leaders of the Christian community are awakening to the consciousness of their debt. "We are beginning," says one of them, "to feel the warmth and light and reality coming back to the pale and shadowy figures of the Old Testament. Isaiah and Hosea and Jeremiah no longer walk in a *limbus patrum*, but we see them as they were among the forces by which they were actually surrounded. We see what they were as

men; we see what they were as exponents of a message from God; we see the grand and glorious ideas which stirred within them in all their richness and fulness, conditioned, yet not wholly so, by the world of thought and action in which they moved." The judgement is in the main correct, nor could any acknowledgment on the part of the Church be too great for such a service. The result has been chiefly won by the use of the highly polished instruments of literary criticism, which, even in the pre-Assyriological stage, elicited much wonderful truth concerning the prophets, and in the light of the earlier Assyrian discoveries seemed able to assign to most of the prophecies, with varying degrees of probability, the right historical position. It then became possible for educated Christians to attach a permanent importance to prophecy, because revelation no longer meant the mechanical communication to the prophets of a message from without, but the opening of the inner nature of specially prepared men to receive indications of the will of God in their own moral nature and in the world around them. It was an entirely new view of revelation, and though it was in harmony with the progressive religious thought of the time, it could not have been established without a keen literary criticism of the prophetic writings.

It may not be superfluous to add that the critics of whom I speak were well aware of their limitations. How the prophetic conception of God arose, they did not undertake to say; the evidence was too imperfect. But one thing they could affirm—that the conception had inherent vitality, and that when once it had arisen, development continually went on, so that new phases of belief could, for historical purposes, be sufficiently accounted for from previously existing phenomena. It was also considered that the functions of a prophet were complex, and had a social and political as well as a religious aspect, nor did it in those

days appear inconsistent with the character of a theologian to recognize the political, or with that of a historian to recognize and to interpret the religious element in the higher prophecy.

It is, however, one of the new questions now before us whether the more recent Assyriological investigations require us as historical students of the Old Testament (1) to give vastly greater prominence to the political character of the prophets, and (2) to abandon the attempt to trace a purely-internal development of prophetic religion. One or two other important points may also presently be alluded to. I ask your patience. It is indeed in your own interest. These difficulties have to be wrestled with, in order that the Church may be able to possess her soul in peace.

With regard to the first point it is a leader among the younger Assyriologists who declares the significance of the Hebrew prophets to be, from the historical point of view, primarily political. In the days when the history of Israel was entirely in the hands of historical theologians, Amos and Isaiah were regarded as, in a sense which no fair critic will understand, religious geniuses, and received a special place in the history of Israel on this ground. To-day, however, it is seriously maintained that in a thoroughly critical history of Israel the significance even of an Isaiah must be distinctively political, and that Amos went about preaching the re-union of North and South Israel—or, as we might say, took up the pan-Israelitish idea—as the mouthpiece of the policy of King Ahaz. Now, is there any adequate justification for this view?

So much, I think, must certainly be granted that to the unreceptive multitude, whether nobles or plebeians, Isaiah and Amos must have appeared to be mere ordinary dervishes, mediocre and injudicious politicians. It must also be admitted that even admirers of Isaiah—the hagiologists who speak to us in Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix.—rest his claims to

recognition, not on the depths of his religious thought, but on his power of foreseeing and foretelling the fortunes of the state. The multitude, however, cannot lay down the law to history, nor can we hold that the small number of those who appreciated Isaiah justifies a historian in disregarding the religious significance of that leading prophet. Surely the development of religion is a very important section of Israelitish history. Surely, too, this Assyriologist, if he had had a wider vision, would have perceived that, to quote from a Jewish fellow-student of prophecy belonging to this university, "though the genius of the prophets enabled them to cast a piercing glance into political affairs. . . . the political advice which they gave was suggested and controlled by their religious convictions," and that "we must regard the prophets as they regarded themselves—as religious teachers, as messengers of Yahwè, commissioned to explain to their people the immediate purposes and mandates of their God.<sup>1</sup>

The Assyriologist of whom I have spoken is one who cannot justly be neglected, nor can it be denied that he has thrown a bright if not always a true light on many important points connected with the history of the Israelites. And even if in the present case he has revived a theory which had appeared to us to be obsolete, he helps us individually by putting it upon new grounds derived from a profound study of the fundamental ideas of Babylonian culture. A political agitator in the countries of Nearer Asia was not such a man as we might designate by that name. He had a calling which might fairly be described as religious as well as political, because it was based upon the belief that it was the gods who, in the most realistic sense, directed human affairs, and that the fortunes of men were written upon the starry heavens. And if he was a politician, it was in no narrow sense. To whichever

<sup>1</sup> Montefiore, *Hilbert Lectures* (1892), pp. 150, 153.



party he belonged, it was one that existed in all the countries under Assyrian influence. He was either an imperialist or an anti-imperialist, and was enabled to keep himself in touch with the members of his party everywhere by the identity of culture and consequent facility of intercourse throughout the Nearer East. In fact, the state of the political atmosphere in the other regions of the Nearer East, as well as in Assyria itself, must have been almost as well known in the leading circles of Jerusalem as it was in Nineveh, so that Isaiah, a highly cultivated man, who mixed with all classes, and talked with travellers and ambassadors, had the best material, both Jewish and foreign, upon which to base thoroughly statesmanlike conclusions.

In these sentences I have but interpreted Winckler, and if, even when thus plausibly presented, the theory that the prophets were political agitators is unsatisfactory, we may reasonably hold that the higher view of prophecy, for which the last century critics have done so much, gains additional security.

With regard to the second point, I must once more express the conviction that one of the subjects in which the earlier exegesis was, inevitably, most deficient is that of the relation of the higher religion of the Israelites to the religions of the peoples around them. The two peoples which appear likely to have had most religious influence on the Israelites are the Babylonians and the Persians. The evidence abundantly warrants the assertion that in the later period Babylonian and Persian influence on Jewish religion was very strong. One unites these two names "Babylonian" and "Persian," not merely because first Babylon and then Persia has a claim to be called Israel's teacher, but because it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between Babylonian and Persian influence, since Babylon began to influence

Persia much earlier than used to be supposed. The truth is that the religious or "cultural" atmosphere in which the Jews lived was charged with elements of immediately diverse though often ultimately kindred origin, so that often one is safer in speaking of Oriental influence than of Babylonian or Persian. To understand even the Psalter without bearing these things in mind is impossible. That the Psalms in their present form present some traces both of Babylonian and of Persian influence can hardly be denied. Carefully as the foreign elements have been adapted to Jewish religion, it is hardly possible for a critic to fail to observe them.

It is, however, the development of prophetic religion of which I now speak. It is true that for the later age we cannot separate this from the development of the religion of the Psalter, which is a record of the religion of the later Jewish community, because prophetic literature of this period was the work of men who, though conventionally called prophets, had no very distinctive gifts or unusual degree of insight. But for the earlier and greater age we are of course limited to the writings of these distinctively gifted men, Amos, Isaiah, and their successors. Between the two periods, according to the ordinary view, comes not only the exilic work of the prophet Ezekiel, but that great work now commonly called the "Prophecy of Restoration." Here it is impossible not to recognize the direct or perhaps rather indirect influence of Babylonian religion on the receptive minds of a disinherited people. But how is it with regard to the greater pre-exilic prophets? Take the case of Isaiah. To what extent may we presume the existence of Babylonian elements in the mental furniture of this prophet?

The time has come when the question can be treated to some extent on the basis of facts. We cannot, it is true, admit that a prophet of Isaiah's high tone lay helpless

before the invasion of Babylonian ideas. Heathenism in all its forms was repugnant to him, and we have no proof that the purified esoteric Babylonian religion in which some of the modern experts believe, was known to this prophet. Indeed, so far as the literary evidence goes, Isaiah seems, on the whole, to have avoided even those Hebraized reflections of Babylonian myths which were most probably current.

But one admission at least must ungrudgingly be made. There was a Babylonian influence which Isaiah could not have escaped ; indeed, no member of any of the peoples of Nearer Asia could have escaped it. The discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna cuneiform tablets, and of the tablets of the Tel which has so long covered over the remains of the ancient Taanach in Palestine, prove beyond dispute that Babylonian culture had rooted itself in Palestine many centuries before the time of Isaiah. It is already more than probable that in what we call secular life the Israelites had inherited from their predecessors a culture which was to a large extent Babylonian, and it necessarily follows that their view of superhuman existences must have been considerably affected by the same all-pervading influence.

I do not see how the Church can shut its ears to one extremely probable inference from the facts before us. A comparison of the Creation and Deluge stories of the Hebrews and the Babylonians inevitably suggests that creatorship in a large sense was first ascribed to the God of Israel as a consequence of the adaptation of the Babylonian myths to Israelitish use. The doctrine of the Divine creatorship was Babylonian before it was Jewish. It implies, not indeed necessarily a purified esoteric monotheism, but at least a movement of thought in Babylonia towards monotheism. Even when viewed in its popular aspect, the Babylonian religion was not an unlimited polytheism, and the existence of a qualifying

monarchical element could not help producing in cultivated priestly circles a tendency in a monotheistic direction. Some of the experts now assure us that such a tendency existed as early as the third millennium B.C. If this is right, we may suspect that the esoteric movement spread from Babylonia to some of the priesthoods in Syria, Canaan, and Arabia, and—this is the really important novelty—that the progressive element in prophecy represented by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, may thus to some extent be explained. For it is hardly conceivable that even these specially gifted men could entirely dissociate themselves from the great centres of culture and religion in their land.

But the bearings of this new and plausible conjecture are not to be limited to Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. The history of prophecy itself receives from it a fresh and unexpected light. Far be it from me to assert that the light penetrates into all the dim places. Babylonian influences will not explain everything, just as the phenomena adduced from the religions of more distant peoples do not fully explain the other hard problems of prophecy. It seems plain, however, to those who are at all practised in the comparison of ancient beliefs, that the eschatology of the prophets, as well as the much more distinct eschatology of the apocalyptists and of those influenced by them, developed partly at least—such was the will of the all-controlling Divine Spirit—out of Babylonian germs. To those who acquiesce in the older orthodoxy this result may, I fear, be unpalatable. But dogmatic theology will doubtless be able to assimilate the new facts, and the older orthodoxy cannot pretend to monopolize all religion and all devoutness. Surely one may venture to hope that a time is at hand when a sound historical theory of prophecy will be generally admitted to be favourable and not adverse to a true faith.

And here comes in another question to which at the

outset I only alluded. It is this,—what light, if any, is thrown by a keener textual criticism on the relations of Israel and of Israel's religion to North Arabia?

Some one may perhaps ask, Why Arabia? Surprise, however, is altogether unjustified. Not only were the Israelites, being of a purer Semitic race, more nearly akin to the Arabians than to the Babylonians, but we find them, early in the formative period of their history, sojourning in Arabia, and—if I may make a great statement in few words—it appears most probable that while the Israelites were living with a North Arabian tribe called the Kenites, they learned to worship the supreme deity of the Semitic peoples under a new name—Yahu or Yahwè.

It was not that the Israelites had no supreme God to worship before they became guests of the Kenites. The name under which they had formerly worshipped the supreme God was, according to tradition, El-shaddai. What happened to the Israelites when guests of the Kenites was apparently this, that they rose to a higher conception of the supreme God. This great event is associated with Mount Horeb, where the chief sanctuary of Yahu or Yahwè seems to have been. It is not necessary to suppose that Mount Horeb was in the territory of the Kenites. The worship of the supreme God under the name referred to doubtless extended over a much larger area, within which, however, we are certainly not to place the land of Misrîm (or Misrām).

The land of Misrîm (or Misrām) was, according to tradition, a still earlier abode of the Israelites, who at first received from the inhabitants much kindness and afterwards as much unkindness. It is commonly identified with Egypt, and the identification is an ancient one. But it is doubtful whether this was the earliest view. Strong evidence can be adduced for the theory that it was originally placed to the south of the Negeb, or southern border-land,

and it is probable that the king of Misrīm (or Misrām) was, in the time of David and Solomon, a vassal of the great Minæan kingdom in South Arabia. According to the present results of a keener textual criticism, the Israelites always retained the strongest interest both in the land of Misrīm and in the adjoining South Palestinian or North Arabian borderland, in which the sacred mountain of Horeb lay. When David, who himself started from the south, had taken a firm hold of Palestine, we find his ambitious son Absalom seeking a refuge in his mother's country in the Geshur or Ashhur of North Arabia. Solomon's two great adversaries also came from that region, and it is most probable that Shishak, who made a raid into the land of Judah, was not king of Egypt, but of Misrīm in North Arabia.

If any one objects that all this is a matter of mere antiquarian curiosity, I beg leave to hold a different opinion. As Robertson Smith remarked, in connexion with his own Arabian researches, the matter "has a direct and important bearing on the great problem of the origins of spiritual religion."<sup>1</sup> It can be shown that both in earlier and in later times Arabia exercised a profound religious as well as political influence on Israel. In speaking of Arabian religion, I mean primarily the religion of the North Arabian borderland including the land of Misrīm, but also in the second place that of South Arabia, which, owing to its advanced culture, naturally led the way in matters of religion. What North Arabian religion was, or rather how it impressed the best religious writers of the Israelites, can be discovered to some extent from the Hebrew texts in the light of criticism; what the religion of the dominant South Arabian power was, will only be adequately known when the as yet unpublished inscriptions have been fully studied. But here, as in Palestine, the historical student is prepared to find deep traces of Babylonian influence, and any religious

<sup>1</sup> *Religion of the Semites*, second edition, p. 2.

influence which North or South Arabia may have exercised on Israel was to a large extent a reflexion of the wider influence of Babylonia. The investigation has begun, and, for the sake of far more precious interests, who can wish to check or suppress it?

Meantime the results of a keener textual criticism as regards the connexion of Hebrew prophecy with Arabia are gaining in distinctness. We know already from a tradition which we cannot safely disregard that the stimulus to the higher prophecy was both received and renewed, not in Babylonia, but at Mount Horeb. It has now become not improbable that a large number of the Hebrew prophets were directly or indirectly connected with the North Arabian border-land, and this result throws an unexpected light on dark places in the history of prophecy. But here I must pause. The road which opens before us is, on a first view, not so smooth and easy as that which use and wont have rendered familiar. Nor will I deny that the question of questions before historical theology is not the relation of Arabia, but that of Babylonia, as representing a system of thought and belief, to the people of Israel, and so to Christianity.

Christianity! It were gross timidity to utter this noble word for a still nobler thing only at the close of a sentence. Let me at least offer an answer to my last question, namely, How was it that, while the higher religion of Israel issued in Christianity, that of Babylonia ended in Chaldean superstition? 1. Israel's development was the surer because it was begun later. God's younger son, Israel, profited by the mistakes of his brethren, and the Israel within Israel ripened for the gospel just at the fortunate time. 2. Israel had its prophets, and a parallel to the prophets of Israel—especially the higher prophets—cannot be found in Babylonia. It was perhaps "only the want of the higher spiritual prophecy as a teaching and

purifying agent, and of a longer course of development, which prevented the sacred poetry of Babylonia and Assyria from rivalling that of the Israelites.<sup>1</sup> Granted that the immediate effect of the preaching of the prophets was but small, the few who listened to it kept up the tradition, and out of these came fresh prophets. Afterwards the effect of prophecy was ensured by the ancient editors, faithful representatives and ministers of the church-nation.

3. Israel was in a certain sense eclectic. Teachers without as well as within Israel contributed to its catholic development. One of these was Babylon, but Persia and Hellas must not be forgotten. 4. Israel had a sacred book, which grew larger as time went on, but never became so large as to lose its popularity. Its composite origin ensured a varied and therefore a healthy development of religious thought. Babylon's religion had no such book to offer; decay and decline were inevitable.

But is it true that Babylon the great has fallen, not to rise again? or that her historical course has issued in the marshy waters of superstition? From one point of view this is the case, but from another and a higher one it is not so. Babylon has indeed fallen, but only as Hellas has fallen, to pass into a higher life. The ineffaceable stamp of Babylon is upon most parts of our modern culture, and it would be strange if there were no traces of her influence on Christian modes of religious representation. I know that the utmost care is needed lest this view should be carried too far. But there is all the difference in the world between affirming on the ground of careful historical research that Christianity, as a historical religion, was likely to admit, and very possibly did admit, into the accounts of its foundation some narratives, the germs of which pre-existed; that it was likely to adopt, and very

<sup>1</sup> *Book of Psalms*, Parchment Library (1884), p. viii. The closing words there are: "of the successors of David."



possibly did adopt, some forms of belief which were equally pre-existent—all this under the moulding operation of a distinctively Christian spirit, and asserting that practically the whole of the gospel narratives are baseless, and that the ideas of the New Testament are mere developments of Babylonian and Persian germs. It is a hard subject to deal with, but a truly absorbing one. And the more we recognize the syncretism of early Christianity, the more, if we have any feeling for religion, shall we be conscious of a distinctively original element which may best be called, in a new sense of the word, holiness, and this consciousness is our safeguard. And if we add to this that essential Christianity, unlike its great rival, Buddhism, has no binding metaphysical system, and can adapt itself to the wants of very various peoples, we are surely entitled to call the gospel the religion of religions—the one pearl of great price.

I turn now to younger students, and ask them to give a full consideration to these things. I have mentioned some of the new problems which come before the student of the Old Testament in the new century. Do you not think them fascinating? Are you not stirred with an anxiety that England, and especially Oxford, should take its full share in their solution? I know that the problems are difficult, but why should young Englishmen draw back from a work because it is hard? I know, too, that a demand will have to be made on your spiritual capacities. The results which already loom before us are such as threaten danger to modes of thought which are often regarded as the only right ones. But if your feet are planted on the impregnable rock of a continually deepening personal experience, and your eyes directed upwards to the source of all light, you will find this new study to have as it were a sacramental virtue. Criticism in the old sense of the word may be dry and tasteless food, and we may permit ourselves

to hope with Jowett that its reign is passing. But criticism in the new sense can fill the mind and enrich the personality, and even its drudgery will be compensated, for it will strengthen our character, and test our devotion to our great object.

I will confess that I myself look forward with hope to the future, not only for the progress of our study, but for the regeneration of the race of students. I know that since I began myself, a number of young men have developed into mature students and teachers. But I do not know that Oxford is doing all that it ought to do. It may be largely the fault of our system; but it may also be in part the fault of the sons of Oxford, both the older and the younger. We do most seriously need a new Oxford movement—a movement among both the teachers and the taught. I am not alone in hoping that such a movement is beginning; but how can one build upon this hope without more evidence that it is not fallacious? It is for you, the younger students of the Bible, to give such evidence. It is for you to become, as Niebuhr, the historian of Rome, once phrased it, wings to your teachers. It is for you, or some of you, to claim your highest privilege, and become fellow-students with your professors, and convert lecture-rooms into workshops, the object of which is to try all methods to push back the bounds of knowledge. For many this doctrine may be too hard. It is doubtless for us and for the directors of this University to make it easier to you. But it is for you to show what is in your mind, the high ideal which animates you. Why should you be outdone by your kinsmen beyond the seas? Courage and hard work are needed on your part. They are needed also on ours.

To the Lord let us commit all our ways. The end and the beginning are from Him; He is the Alpha and the Omega. "He giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding . . . He knoweth what

is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him." But the time which we have upon earth for learning is short. The oldest scholar has to leave behind him half-solved problems. Therefore, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," and since "union is strength," join hands with all those who have kindred ideals, helping them and being helped by them, to whatever school of science, to whatever section of the Christian Church they may belong.

May this appeal to young and old students not be made in vain! May we all unite in simple devotion to our calling, and faithful service to the Church of Christ! And a century hence, may some Oxford scholar, reviewing the academic history, bestow upon us this praise—that in an anxious turning-point of Biblical and religious study, we looked not backward but forward, not inward but upward, out of weakness were made strong, shut the mouths of lions, solved dangerous problems, enlarged the mental horizon, careless of a reputation for consistency, but careful of the smallest grains of God's truth!

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