

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

of fortune; one to the blind influences of the stars, another to a confused jumble of atoms. Pose him about the main points of morality and duty; and he will, in a few words, better inform you than Cicero or Epictetus, than Aristotle or Plutarch, in their large tracts or voluminous discourses."<sup>1</sup>

---

### ARTICLE III.

#### RELIGIOUS BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND PASTORAL SUPERVISION IN COLLEGES.

By C. E. Stowe, D. D., Bowdoin College.

WHO can tell what tender affections, what earnest hopes, what fond anticipations are concentrated on a group of young men such as is found in all our colleges? Could we see the anxious, throbbing, agonizing hearts — the father's earnestness, the mother's solicitude, the sister's love — could we make present to ourselves the pride and joy which are diffused through the family circle by the young student's success and good reputation — or the mortification, distress and bitter disappointment which follow his failure and shame — we should look upon every member of college, of whatever character, as an object of deep and permanent interest.

Whatever he may be in himself, he holds relations to others which invest him with dignity and importance. Let any man watch the yearnings of his own soul towards his own son, and then let him remember that what his son is to him, the sons of other parents are to them, and he never can despise any one who is a father's or a mother's child.

Important as every young man is to his family friends, considered in reference to himself, he is still more important, still more interesting. *There* is an immortal soul, destined to a never ending existence — and what an existence! What capacities of enjoyment — what susceptibilities to suffering! What powers in that one mind to be developed or crushed — to be a source of joy to the possessor, or of misery unutterable — and that forever! And how delicate the mental and moral structure! How liable to injury! In what imminent

---

<sup>1</sup> Barrow's Works, Vol. II. p. 86, Edin. Edition.

peril of falling to ruin! If we were intrusted with the carriage of some fragile and priceless fabric, like the celebrated Portland vase, for example, and the road was rough and rocky — or if we were to transport, through stormy weather over an angry sea, some unique product of a Raphael's pencil, how careful should we be — how anxious lest an untimely jolt, or a wandering drop of water, should forever mar the precious deposit. Yet how infinitely small is the value of all works of human art, however excellent or unique, compared with the worth of the human soul, the product of an all-wise Creator's skill! It seems to me the man is mad who can lightly esteem any human being, when he once considers what a human being is.

Our physical creation, magnificent as it is, would have but little of interest or beauty, were it not for the intelligent souls, in curiously organized bodies, which inhabit it. How infinite the variety of pleasing sounds, and how attractive — how enchanting the power of music! But, what is sound? what is music? Without an ear to catch the vibrations of the air, there would be no such thing as sound; without the organ of hearing, music would have no existence. What is this magnificent arch of the heavens above us, but the combined action of light and vapor upon the eye? And if there were no eyes, there would be no sky. How beautiful is the rainbow, as it rests upon the bosom of the cloud! Yet, the eye is as necessary to give existence to the rainbow, as it is to see it after it is formed. How exquisite the beauties of color, as seen in the flowering plant, or the lustrous insect; but, without eyes to reflect the rays of light, there would be no such thing as color. And what are eyes, or ears, or nerves, without the intelligent soul within, to enjoy the results of their organization and action? In a very important sense, man himself is, passively at least, the creator of the harmony and beauty which we enjoy; and wonderful and beautiful as the works of creation are, man himself is the most wonderful, the most beautiful of all — the last production of creative skill, and the only one which bears the image of the Creator.

In Scripture, the whole visible creation is represented as being formed with reference to man, and as existing for man, in a sense so intimate, that all nature sympathizes with his weal or woe. When man fell, nature herself, the earth and its products, vegetation, animals, all fell under the curse, for his sake; and when the work of redemption shall have been completed, and man restored to his original holiness, by the mediation of the only begotten Son of God, then the creation itself, so long unwillingly subject to vanity, shall be de-

livered from the bondage of corruption, and restored to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. and there shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein the righteous dwell, Rom. 8: 19-22, 2 Pet. 3: 13. For what purpose are all the arrangements of this world? What is the use of anything on this earth? Is it not that the world may be inhabited by comfortable, well-informed, well-behaved human beings? What but this are all the interests of society — all the use of governments, of civilization, of learning, commerce, manufactures, the whole social organization? And as the existence on earth is so transient, and the existence beyond the grave, eternal, what comparatively is worthy of a thought, except the salvation of the undying soul! Was it not for this that the Son of God for a season left the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and dwelt, and labored, and suffered, and died on this earth?

In whatever aspect we view the subject, the moral and religious improvement of the young men gathered in our colleges, assumes the very first place in interest and importance. Everywhere the religious and moral training of the educated young man is important, and in our own country it is more emphatically so, for, here men never do things by halves, but whatever they are, that they are wholly, and nothing else. The French or the German young man, in his university life, may be dissipated within certain limits, not much overleap the boundaries which a worldly prudence prescribes, and in due time, as matter of course, become a staid, sober, dignified citizen. But not so with the American. Let the young man here, in his college years, act the inebriate or the profligate, and there is the end of him; he is never anything else; and early death, and a drunkard's grave, is the best that his friends can expect of him; for if his life is prolonged, it will be only the protraction of shame and woe. Frequent are the falls in our land, but rare, very rare, are the recoveries. How important, then, that there should be direct and earnest endeavors for the religious and moral culture of our college students! How much is depending upon it, both as it respects individual happiness and the well being of society at large! For it is our educated young men who will give tone to society, and control the destiny of the generation in which they live. The usual course of college study, however well chosen and earnestly pursued, cannot meet the object; for mere intellectual training, without careful moral culture, does not correct the evils of the heart; on the contrary, in many cases seems to aggravate them. The ever eloquent Cicero, who had a moral sense delicate and cultivated beyond almost any writer of the Pagan

world, saw this great truth very clearly. In the third book of his work, *De Natura Deorum*, he introduces Cotta arguing in the following strain :

“Sentit domus unius cuiusque, sentit forum, sentit curia, campus, socii, provinciae, ut quemadmodum ratione recte fiat, sic ratione peccetur. Alterumque et a paucis, et raro; alterum et saepe, et a plurimis: ut satius fuerit nullam omnino nobis a Diis immortalibus datum esse rationem, quam tanta cum pernicie datam. Ut vinum aegrotis, quia prodest raro, nocet saepissime, melius est non adhibere omnino, quam spe dubiae salutis in apertam perniciem incurrare; sic haud scio, an melius fuerit, humano generi motum istum celerem cogitationis, acumen, sollertiam, quam rationem vocamus, quoniam pestifera sit multis, admodum paucis salutaris, non dari omnino, quam tam munifice et tam large dari. Quae enim libido, quae avaritia, quod facinus aut scelus suscipitur nisi concilio capto, aut sine animi motu et cogitatione, id est, ratione perficitur? — Utinam igitur, ut illa anus optat,

—— ne in nemore Pelio securibus

*Caesa cecidisset abiegna ad terram trabes,*

sic istam calliditatem hominibus Dii ne dedissent! Qua perpauci bene utuntur; qui tamen ipsi saepe a male utentibus opprimuntur; innumerabiles autem improbe utuntur; ut donum hoc divinum rationis et consilii ad fraudem hominibus, non ad bonitatem impertitum esse videatur.”<sup>1</sup>

The ordinary course of college discipline cannot meet the case; for this is merely negative in its character, directed only to the suppression of disorder, and not intended or adapted to win the confidence, or cultivate the affections. There must be something positive, something to bring forward the right as well as suppress the wrong — something which shall not only prevent the outgushing of bitter waters, but shall sweeten the fountain itself.

To effect this great purpose, the idea of God must be brought in close and continuous contact with the soul. Vice is mean, grovelling, earthly — a degradation of the immortal spirit, and for the soul to see and feel its relationship to God is its great security against the meanness of vice. The whole creation around us should be our temple, and every emotion of the mind an act of worship, if the heart would be secure from the assaults of the tempter. Let the young man learn to regard all that he sees as the workmanship of God; let him learn to admire the wonderful resources of the Divine mind, as developed in the objects of creation, which meet him at every turn; let him become conscious of the continued presence and operation of that Great Power, which

<sup>1</sup> *De Natura Deor.* III. 28-31 or 70-76, *Opera* ed. Orelli IV. ii. 113-115.

“ Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;”

let him become habituated to the great truths taught by Natural Religion ;—let these become a part of the daily aliment of his mind, and grow up into its permanent substance — and can low, earthly, grovelling vice take hold of him? Not that the mere knowledge of nature can remove him from temptation, but the habit of contemplating nature in connection with the God of nature, the habit of communing with God whenever one studies nature—this it is which elevates the soul and raises it above the grosser forms of earthliness. If Natural Religion by itself cannot regenerate and sanctify, as we admit in general it cannot, it would seem that it might at least secure one against intemperance and licentiousness, and low, vulgar, filthy wickedness — and these are the forms of sin which most usually ruin our youth for this world.

Learning without God makes but a distorted mind — a soul for which God's dominions have no appropriate or safe place. Then should not God, and a knowledge of God, have a place, and a recognized, important, well-understood place in every college? To avoid the evil of sectarianism, must we fall into the still greater evil of atheism? To prevent our young men being bigots, shall we allow them to be infidels? To give them *large and liberal minds on religious matters* (?) is it necessary, is it worth the while, will it requite the cost, to let them grow up under the influence of sensual youthful passion, without any of the counteracting influences of religion to restrain and control? *No, a third time No!!*

We have a power altogether above and beyond that of Natural Religion — we have Revealed Religion, that *life and immortality which are brought to light in the gospel* — and this is and must be our great reliance, and here we have a sure and certain hope; and let us not be so foolish as to refuse to avail ourselves of this power.

*Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word. Ps. 119: 9.*

The power of the word of God must be our reliance for controlling the minds of our young men, and guiding them in paths of purity, usefulness and peace. The days of mere human authority are past, forms and modes once venerated have lost their influence, and the requirement to submit to any routine, solely on the ground that it has

been long submitted to, excites ridicule and aversion, rather than reverence and obedience.

We must have the word of God, and that word must commend itself to the unprejudiced mind by its own intrinsic merit; it must have within itself a persuasive power; it must meet the natural yearnings and spontaneities of the soul. Mere objective authority, even though it were the authority of God himself, would scarcely be submitted to in this generation of self-reliance and self-esteem. The *objective* must commend itself to the *subjective*, or there will be continuous revolting. They who are striving to hold men by mere ecclesiastical authority and church tradition, to restrain them by the force of antiquated customs and veneration for the wisdom and virtue of their ancestors, have most painful experience of this truth. They have more than both hands full of work; no sooner do they stop one leak-hole than a dozen others burst forth; the whole fabric is already half dissolved; and they find themselves in the condition of the fifty daughters of Danaus who were condemned to the task of carrying water in sieves.

In this matter of revealed religion, there must be authority, and authority implicitly submitted to, or the benefits of revealed religion cannot be realized. The most important topics of which revelation treats, are topics of which we know absolutely nothing, of which we have no means of knowing anything, except on the authority of the Revealer. The origin and the early history of our race; the origin of sin and evil; the way of redemption; the retributions of eternity; the nature of the spiritual world and the employments of the soul there; the nature, the number, and the condition of the original inhabitants of the spiritual world; these and hundreds of other subjects of a similar kind, and of the deepest interest, are utterly beyond the reach of all our natural means of information; we have not the means of forming even a probable conjecture concerning them, and unless we have a positive, objective revelation, we are wholly in the dark in regard to them. Concerning the condition of the inhabitants of the spiritual world, for example, or even whether there be any such inhabitants, or any such world—how can we know anything except by positive revelation from above? We have never been in the spiritual world to learn anything there of our own knowledge; we have never seen any one who has been there, that we might learn directly from him; and none of the original inhabitants of that world have ever dwelt with us, to tell us what they know of those unseen regions. I know there have been pretended voyages to the spiritual

world, even in our own time, and every age has been visited by ghosts and apparitions in numbers greater or less; but the character and conduct and doings of these pretended visitants, has, for the most part, been so uniformly and so monotonously silly — so exactly in the same strain and yet so abjectless and jejune, that we are compelled to think, if these are the spirits of the departed from this earth, certainly in dying they must have lost what little of common sense they ever possessed; or on the supposition that they are the original inhabitants of the world of spirits, we must feel towards them, after they have made such exhibitions of themselves, much as the simple-minded Trinculo felt towards the awfully dreaded Caliban, when he heard him begin to talk and found him ready to fall down and worship the drunken sailor Stephano, for giving him intoxicating drink: “By this good light, he is a very shallow monster — I afeard of him! — a very weak monster — a most poor, credulous monster — I could find in my heart to beat him, but that the poor monster’s in drink — I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster — a most scurvy, ridiculous monster.” Examine all the histories of these ghost doings from the middle ages down through Cotton Mather and Justinus Kerner to the spiritual rappings and the ghostly riotings of our times, and they all have the same uniform character of petty annoyance and pertinacious silliness; so that, however formidable they might appear at first, we cannot in the end avoid coming to the same conclusion in regard to them that Trinculo did in regard to Caliban, that they are very shallow, weak, poor, scurvy, puppy-headed, ridiculous monsters. If these are actual specimens of the spiritual world, then the fables of Homer and Virgil are far preferable to the reality; and this world, imperfect and hard as it is, is altogether the most respectable part of God’s dominions. And yet how many, who regard the revelations of the Bible with cold distrust and decided incredulity, receive with almost implicit confidence these ridiculous manifestations! So it often is, they who reject the truth with all evidence in its favor, embrace the grossest impostures with all evidence against them. So the Jews rejected Jesus Christ and received Bar Chochba as their Messiah; and we read in Scripture of those, upon whom, *because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God sent strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* 2 Thess. 2: 10—12.

In the Bible only do we find information respecting the spiritual world, of such kind and given in such a way as to deserve respect and confidence. This is our only guide. On this and all kindred topics,



the Bible is the only chart of a coast otherwise wholly unknown ; and yet a coast along which we must sail during the most interesting, the most critical part of our voyage. We may judge something of an unknown coast by the form and structure of the head-lands, the shape and flow of the waves, the change and run of the tides, etc., yet, from all these and other such sources very little indeed can be known ; and a blind piece of work it certainly would be, arbitrarily, here and there, as caprice and pride might dictate, to throw aside the chart and sail by conjecture. Yet this is the way in which many deal with the Bible, and thus put in jeopardy the eternal interests of their future existence.

The Bible claims to be absolute and final authority on all spiritual matters ; and from the very nature of the case, if it is not this, it is nothing, and worthy of no reliance. If it be not authority absolute and final, we have no means whatever of correcting its mistakes, of separating the true from the false — and having found it to be, in the most important particular, a false witness for itself, we can no longer know from itself what is worthy of belief and what is not. It is like employing a guide in a strange and difficult country, who pretends to know the whole way perfectly ; but we scarcely enter on our journey, before we discover that with some very important parts of the road he is as little acquainted as we are. How much security should we feel with such a guide for the remainder of our travels ?

It would be obviously impossible, in the limits assigned to us here, to go into a full discussion of the doctrine of inspiration. We must confine ourselves to one point, namely, the authority of Christ as a divine teacher, which few at this day seem willing openly to deny. Yet if we admit His authority, in any proper sense of the term, the authority of the Bible as a revelation from God is established beyond all reasonable doubt.

Christ claimed for himself full authority, as a teacher commissioned and qualified by God, to give instruction infallibly true, and of paramount authority on all spiritual matters.

Matt. 11: 29, 30. John 5: 20 — 24, 39 — 43. 8: 42 — 49. 18: 39.

The same authority which he claimed for himself, he ascribes most fully to the prophets and writers of the Old Testament ; and even rests, in a most important sense, the validity of his own claims, on the fact, that in his person the Old Testament scriptures were fulfilled.

Matt. 26: 24 — 31. Luke 22: 39. 24: 25 — 29. 44 — 46. (Compare 1 Cor. 9: 8 — 10. 10: 1 — 11. 2 Tim. 3: 14 — 17. 2 Pet. 1: 19 — 21,

for the estimate in which the apostles held the scriptures of the Old Testament, as they were taught to hold them by the Lord. Luke 24: 32 — 46. Also the whole epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Hebrews.)

He promised also, in the most explicit manner, to endue his apostles and the writers of the New Testament, with the same authority which he himself possessed.

John 19: 18. 20: 21. Matt. 28: 19. 10: 19, 20. Luke 12: 11, 12. 24: 49. Matt. 16: 19. 18: 18.

He even engaged to reveal to them, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, truths, beyond those which he had ever taught personally.

John 16: 9, 12, 13, 14. 14: 25, 26.

And this authority was understood to extend to their written, as well as their oral instructions, as is demanded of course by the very nature of the case.

Acts 15: 20. 2 Thess. 2: 15. Ephes. 3: 2, 3. 2 Pet. 3: 15, 16.

And he confirmed all these claims by such mighty works as no man could do except God were with him.

John 3: 2. Matt. 11: 2 — 6. John 5: 36. 14: 10, 11. 15: 29.

And those for whom he made these claims, made the same claims for themselves.

1 Cor. 2: 10 — 13. Gal. 1: 11, 12. 15 — 19. 2 Pet. 3: 15, 16.

And they performed the same mighty works in confirmation of their claims.

Mark 16: 15 — 20. Acts 5: 12, 15, 16. 8: 5 — 8. 19: 11, 12.

And forasmuch as their claims might be more liable to be disputed than his, Christ promised to them a still stronger external attestation, even greater works than he himself had performed.

John 14: 12. Acts 5: 15. 19: 12.

This promise of Christ, however, whatever reference it may be supposed to have to the *manner* of performing some miracles (as above cited), undoubtedly refers mainly, perhaps exclusively, to the great spiritual results of the teachings of the apostles, the foundation of the Christian church, the conversion of the Gentiles, etc. — an attestation which continues with unabated, nay with augmenting force, to the present time.

The authority of the whole Bible is thus affirmed by the personal and oft-repeated testimony of Christ: and if it be not authority, Jesus himself is found a false witness, and unworthy of credit on any subject. If we know that in one instance he taught wrong, how can we know, on his own authority, that in any instance he teaches right?

Of course we do not expect that anybody will, in these days, take

anything on trust, at least anything good. Whatever authority is gained for the Bible, we expect to work for it. All we ask, as the basis of our operations, is, a reasonable degree of intelligence and candor. The mind must be trained to see the grounds on which the claim of Scripture rests, to recognize these claims and submit to them. The age is full of scepticism, of evasions, of nullifications of the Divine authority. Doubts are started as to particular texts, as to certain books, the whole Old Testament, a large portion of the New; certain statements and certain doctrines are objected to as unworthy of God; or, to get rid of disagreeable truths, the whole Bible, by means of forced interpretations, is politely bowed out of society; and the last method is frequently resorted to by the most rigid dogmatizers, as well as the loosest libertines in theology. Men are willing that the Bible should give them a lift now and then, but only so far and in such direction as they please. The influence of so great and good a man as Neander, falls in with these corrupt tendencies of the age, encourages and increases them; and his example and his teachings, in this respect, become far more pernicious than they could have been, had he been less excellent, less learned, less sincerely and devotedly a Christian. He himself seemed fully conscious of the danger to be apprehended from this source; and scarcely made a secret of his regret that his Life of Christ was about to be translated and published in America. He seemed to think (and justly, I suppose) that our young men would be rather better off without it than with it; though it might do good in Germany, where men were already so far from the Bible, and have a tendency to bring them back towards it; yet, in America it would be found, he feared, to be beneath the prevailing standard, and would therefore lower the tone of reverence and submission to the Divine authority, rather than elevate it. Such apprehensions are seen everywhere peeping out from his letter prefixed to the American edition of his work. The good man! the corrupt atmosphere in which he had always lived, had touched the conclusions of his understanding more than the feelings of his heart.

Here the great moral battle of the age is to be fought on this question: Has the Scripture any binding authority? Are its teachings of any weight to us, except so far as we can approvingly reproduce the same ideas in our own minds? In other words, is revelation *objective*, or is it merely *subjective*? Does God reveal himself to man, or is man himself the only revealer of God? Most fully and distinctly do we take the ground of the binding authority, of the *objectiveness* of revelation. Most decidedly do we believe that God speaks

in the Bible, and with a clearness of utterance altogether beyond that which we can find in our own consciousness, or in the works of creation around us—and therefore it is the duty of men to hear, to believe, and to obey. The Bible itself is *the revelation*, and not merely *the record of a revelation*.

Now, with these premises to start from, what is the only proper and safe method of dealing with this matter? By the appropriate methods, by strict, laborious, faithful, historical and critical research, we must ascertain what books were recognized by Christ and his apostles as of divine authority; then in like manner must we ascertain the condition of these books as to integrity and incorruptness; and, finally, having thus made ourselves sure of the words, we must learn the meaning of the words just as we learn the meaning of the words of any other book—only, never forgetting that the Holy Ghost, which inspired the writers of the sacred volume, is also needed and promised to aid the readers of it—and *here our responsibility ends*. The meaning being ascertained, all we have to do is, to take the meaning just as it is given, to yield at once unconditional, unquestioning submission to the divine authority, without any reservation or equivocation. Now, here is a resting place, and our only resting place. Here we have a firm foundation which can never be moved; and this is the position, and the only position exactly adapted to the human mind—which fully meets its capacities and emotions, its oft recurring fears, and its conscious weaknesses. A fellow man may tell me what he pleases about what is perfectly plain to his reason, and what he knows by his own consciousness; my reason and my consciousness are as good for me as his are for him (at least, good or bad, they are all that I have, and I must use them for want of better;) but when God speaks to me, then I know, then I can believe, then I can safely submit. In short, the enlightened Christian must put the Bible and its authority, just where the blinded papist puts the church and its authority. The want which drives the papist to the church is a real one, a want inseparable from human nature in its present state; but he goes to the wrong place to find a supply for it. Let the Christian go to the right place.

And it is wonderful how Divine providence, in these days, is opening the resources for ascertaining the integrity and incorruptness of the Bible, beyond what has been done in any former age.

The monumental hieroglyphics of Egypt, keeping pace with the Bible history from the age of Abraham, to the time of the latest Jewish kings; the mysterious arrow-headed characters on the archi-

tectural remains of the ancient Persian empire, involving the Bible narrative from the destruction of the Hebrew monarchy, to the very close of the Old Testament canon — have both been deciphered and read during our own generation, and with the most wonderful and gratifying results. And even now, the long buried monuments of the old Assyrian empire, of which almost nothing had before been known, which, like a restless ghost, has only occasionally appeared on the field of history, and then instantly vanished; but which yet is intimately interwoven with the Bible history, from the very commencement of historic narrative in the tenth chapter of Genesis, quite down to the minor prophet, Nahum, a period of not less than 1500 years, — the chroniclers, I say, of this old monarchy, are now emerging from their 3000 years' burial under ground, talking in their strange old half Hebrew tongue, and telling us important passages of their eventful story, which modern linguistic skill has already begun successfully to interpret.<sup>1</sup> Who can fail to see, that as man becomes sceptical and unbelieving, God too takes care to turn his scepticism and unbelief to shame?

But here we are met with an objection. How are the people to make these learned and laborious investigations? How are they to know what is the word of God, and whether we have it entire and incorrupt?

The people at large are not to make these investigations. It is impossible that they should make them. They have neither the time, nor the opportunity, nor the capacity to do it; and God neither requires nor expects it of them. And therefore he has not given the Word alone — but the Word in connection with the unperishing Church and the living Ministry — that Church which will never cease till Christ again appears to reestablish forever his authority over man, and that Ministry which is to be Christ's Ambassador and Christ's Interpreter on earth, till his great and final advent.

It is the business of the ministry to make these investigations — to ascertain these points — to be the divinely authorized teachers in regard to them — to be the mouth of God to the people. If the people will have a ministry incapable of making these investigations, or unwillingly to attend to them — a ministry incompetent, unfaithful, or dishonest, the responsibility is their own, and they must bear the loss.

There have always, from the beginning to the present time, been teachers incompetent and false; men in all ages have been misled and

---

<sup>1</sup> How much is to come of this, time only can show.

ruined by them; the prophecies, the gospels, the epistles abound with warnings against them. Still, the living, teaching ministry is an essential, integral part of the Divine economy, an indisputable link in the chain of salvation; and the Bible for the people, without the ministry, is quite as far from God's plan, as the ministry without the Bible for the people — which last is the pernicious, corrupting, mischief-making error of the Romish church. The ministry must teach, and teach, too, with authority; and the people must be taught. The people, in order to be taught, must be teachable; and the minister, in order to teach, must first himself learn; and then, according to the apostolic injunction, he must *let no man despise him*.

A good man, pleading a good cause, has an influence which no bad man can have; his words have an authority which the words of no bad man ever can have. People who have neither learning nor acuteness enough to detect a false statement or sophistical argument, yet, if their hearts are in sympathy with the good and true, are very quick to *feel* the difference between a false teacher and a true one — and these, if I may so call them, *moral instincts* of the regenerate, are often appealed to by the sacred writers in reference to this very point of distinguishing the true teacher from the false.

There is something in divine truth, worthily exhibited, which awakens a response in every human heart, not utterly given over to earthliness and degradation. Independently of all argument, independently of all views of utility, of all reachings forth for happiness, a divine truth fitly presented will force a throb in the soul as surely as a pulsation in the atmosphere will produce a sound in the air.

There is no need of argument — the thing comes of itself — and our strongest, most abiding, most useful convictions, are often those which spring directly from the heart, without any conscious exertion of the discursive faculty. Says an eccentric but brilliant writer: "He who denies the existence of God is certainly a fool. He who thinks it always necessary to demonstrate his existence by argument, is a still greater fool." In the same strain writes Matthias Claudius: "No one can with truth reproach me for being a philosopher; yet I never go through the woods without having it whispered within me, Who made these trees grow so beautifully? and then softly and as if from a great distance, comes to me, as it were the voice of a great Unknown. I'll bet you, I am then thinking of God, with such joyous reverence do I tremble while I am thinking."

There is, at the present time, peculiar need of thorough Biblical instruction in all our colleges. The wants of the age on this subject

are imperative ; the evil to be counteracted is wide-spread, insidious and most destructive. There are many who receive the Bible, on the whole, as a divine revelation, who regard Jesus Christ, especially, as a teacher sent from God, who would be shocked to be spoken of as infidels, and most of all, to be regarded as the enemies or the rejecters of Christ — who yet, practically, give to the Bible very little authority, consider much of it as antiquated and even obsolete, and doubt whether the writers of it had an inspiration different in kind from that which other men have had, though perhaps in some respects higher in degree. This is an error particularly pervading the educated and active young men of the present generation throughout the world ; and is one of the offshoots of a pernicious philosophy, which does not recognize the existence of a personal, self-conscious Deity, but regards the human mind as the only representative of the divine, and the creation of the human soul as the only act by which the Creator can become conscious to himself of his own existence. Of course, individual immortality is also denied, and the whole history of intellectual existence is nothing but an eternal emanation from and re-absorption into the in itself unconscious divine essence. This philosophy, like a miasmatic atmosphere, corrupts many who do not know of its existence, and undermines the whole authority of revelation with not a few who imagine themselves firm believers in revealed religion. Nowhere is this philosophy of negation and destruction working more mischief than among the young men of our colleges ; and if prompt, efficient and appropriate measures are not speedily taken to counteract it, we shall soon have all our learned professions, not excepting even the clerical, controlled by subtle pantheists, who will insidiously profess all reverence for the Bible, pay the tribute of a simulated respect to piety, and perpetually use with all seriousness and gravity the technical phrases of the most orthodox theology, entirely emptied of their original meaning, and made simply the hieroglyphics of an atheistic mystery.

From such a consummation, already realized in some portions of the old world, may the good Lord forever deliver this land of the Puritans !

In some subsequent number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* we shall show what this philosophy has already done and is now doing with the most sacred portions of the Christian revelation.