

CHARGES AND ADDRESSES

An address given at the annual Liverpool Diocesan Conference, 1892.

by

the Right Reverend Bishop of Liverpool,

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The Present Crisis.

Reverend and Lay Brethren, I am allowed to meet you once more at our Annual Diocesan Conference, and I trust that our proceedings will not be less interesting or useful than they have been on former occasions. I am not convinced, after the experience of eleven years, that our arrangements admit of much improvement. I read with watchful curiosity the reports of other Conferences, and I venture to think our own will bear comparison with any. An assembly which only meets for two days in a year can ill afford to waste time, and the plan of devoting most of our time to four well-selected subjects rather than to a multitude of somewhat small and unimportant resolutions, is to my mind the wisest and best.

I shall proceed at once, according to my former practice, to say a few things about matters in our own diocese, and in the Church generally, about which you may reasonably expect some information and some expression of opinion from your bishop. I shall touch them both rather briefly, because I want to direct your attention to a subject of far wider importance than the condition of any one diocese, or any one branch of Christ's visible Church. That subject is the so-called Higher Criticism of the Old Testament.'

I. Concerning *matters in our own diocese*, the annual report, as usual, is a chequered one. There are many clouds on our horizon, but there are also not a few bits of blue sky. On the blue side I place first and foremost the gratifying success of the attempt to establish a Sustentation Fund for supplementing annually the very poor incomes of many incumbents in our diocese. The kind response which this tentative movement met with from many generous laymen has cheered me exceedingly, and enabled my Committee to gladden the hearts of not a few underpaid clergy. I am satisfied that the scheme is a move in the right direction, and I trust it will continue to prosper more and more. To all who have assisted me I publicly return my sincere thanks. I believe many more laymen would support the

scheme if they knew of its existence, and I am persuaded that, with a little more exertion, the annual income of every benefice might be easily raised to £250 or £300 a year. I can see no reason why the Sustentation principle should not succeed in Lancashire as well as it does in Scotland, while the possibility of raising a huge capital sum, enough to endow all the poorer livings with the interest from it, appears to me utopian, and farther off than ever, with Disestablishment looming large in the distance. Of other bits of blue sky I could say a good deal if time permitted. The continued and increased support given by the diocese to the Church Missionary Society, the Scripture Readers' Society, and the Mersey Mission to Seamen; the very large number of candidates for confirmation, considering that we have only two hundred churches in the diocese; the steady progress of church and mission-room building, though much remains to be done, as, for instance, in Walton and Kensington Fields; and though last, not least, the continued energy with which the cause of Temperance is kept up, notwithstanding the heavy loss it has sustained by the removal of my own dear friend, its invaluable champion, Mr. Clarke Aspinall—all these are causes for deep thankfulness, and I think it my duty as your bishop to bring them to the front. Few outsiders have the slightest idea of the difficulties by which the infancy of a new diocese like Liverpool is surrounded, and I should be ashamed of myself if I did not publicly thank the clergy and laity, as well as thank God, for all the assistance I have received since I came among you.

On the cloudy side of our diocesan horizon there are some things which it is painful to be mentioning annually, but useless to conceal. I am aware that any bishop is blamed as a pessimist who does not paint everything in rosy colours, and keep back the 'things wanting' in his diocese. My conscience will not let me do so, and I am sure that it is bad policy. In commercial matters it never answers to 'cook the accounts.' In Church matters, to know our defects is one step towards mending them. It is vain to deny that huge masses of our population never attend any worship at all, that not a few of our churches are more than half empty, that some of our church schools in poor districts are in danger of extinction, and require immediate and liberal assistance, that our Diocesan Institutions are most miserably supported and yet blamed for not granting money which they have not received, and that in some parishes the number of confirmees and communicants is far smaller than it ought to be. All these, no doubt, are painful facts, and it is useless to shut our eyes to them. On the contrary, it is our highest wisdom to open our eyes as wide as possible, to look steadily at them, and use every means to improve our condition. After all, I believe that we have no great cause to be ashamed. We know our own weak places in this diocese, and they trouble us. Very likely if we knew the inner status of other dioceses, we should find that they are not much better off than ourselves,

and for a very large proportion of hard-working clergy, I am certain that our district will bear comparison with any in the land.

I heartily thank the two hundred incumbents of my diocese and their curates for all they are doing. I know your immense difficulties—1,200,000 people in the diocese, 6000 to each incumbent, a disproportion not to be found in any other part of the land—I know them, and I feel deeply for you. But remember the words of the 1st chapter of Joshua, ‘Be strong and of good courage.’ Go on, and persevere, and never give way to despondency or ‘weariness in well-doing.’ St. Paul at Ephesus and Corinth was far worse off than you are, and had far less help from man. But he always pressed on, though faint, yet pursuing. Use every kind of aggressive evangelisation. Double and redouble regular, patient house-to-house visitation. Gather together young men, and deal kindly and genially with them. Invite in all matters the aid of your steady, godly laymen, and let them see that you think them as much a part of the Church as yourselves. Lift up the Lord Jesus Christ in your pulpits, in all His offices, as lovingly, plainly, and in as simple Saxon as you possibly can. Keep up a steady fire on all the besetting sins of the day and place where you live. Fire straight and fire low at Sabbath-breaking, intemperance, betting, and gambling, and let them have no rest. Continually urge on your communicants a high standard of practical holiness in daily life. No evidence of Christianity like that! Above all, water all your work with prayer for the blessing of the Holy Ghost, and let your path to the throne of grace be never overgrown with weeds. Give yourselves wholly to these things, my dear clergy, and I am sure that your labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

II. About matters which concern *the Church of England generally*, and of course affect ourselves, I shall not say much. There are two, however, which demand special notice—the new Clergy Discipline Act, and the recent Privy Council Judgment in what is called ‘The Lincoln Case.’* About each of these you will naturally expect to hear my opinion, and I will tell you frankly what I think.

(1) The Clergy Discipline Act does not excite in my mind any great measure of enthusiasm, because I never thought the old Act was very defective, provided it was properly worked, and sensible and judicious Commissions of *prima facie* inquiry appointed. I speak with some experience of its operation in more than one part of England, and long before I was your bishop. However, if the new Act makes proceedings against clergymen for

* Dr. Edward King appointed Bishop of Lincoln in 1885 was accused of unlawful ritualistic practices by the (Protestant) Church Association, and tried in 1889 by a court of six bishops over which the Archbishop of Canterbury presided. Later on appeal the case went before the Privy Council. The result was ‘substantially a great victory for the ritualists’.

moral offences more simple, more inexpensive, and more expeditious, I shall be extremely thankful. Happily, these cases are very rare. But when they do occur, the harm that they do to the Church of England and the cause of religion is incalculable. It will indeed be a crowning mercy if in future they can be dealt with speedily, not kept long before the eyes of the public, and, as soon as possible, buried in oblivion. The anxiety displayed by many, while the Bill was under debate, to reserve to the bishops the privilege of pronouncing the sentence of deprivation, was an anxiety which, I confess, I never shared, and I do not think it improved the Bill. The gravest defect, to my eyes, is the retention of the episcopal veto, that most ingenious device for obliging a bishop to offend either one party or another in his diocese. However, I know that in this matter I stand very much alone.

(2) The recent Privy Council Judgment in the Lincoln case is a far more important subject than the Clergy Discipline Act, and I must ask your special attention to a few remarks I am going to make about it.

I do not for a moment propose to examine the contents of the Judgment, and discuss it point by point. It would be useless to do so, and scarcely respectful. In common with many others, I cannot admit the soundness of its reasonings and interpretations, and the correctness of its conclusions. Nor am I able to believe that the famous ritual points in dispute have no doctrinal significance, when I know that their principal advocates never admit this for a moment.* However, the Judgment is the decision of the highest Court of the realm, and at present that decision cannot be reversed, though some future Judicial Committee may possibly reverse it. As a law-abiding Englishman and a believer in the Royal supremacy, I submit, though I cannot approve or admire. I shall not therefore trouble you with arguments. I shall simply point out to you what I believe the consequences of the Judgment will be, both present and future. This, after all, is the practical point.

(i) About the *present and immediate consequences* of the Judgment I have no doubt at all. It will not produce peace and unity, as some expect, although it puts an end to ecclesiastical prosecutions. Thoughtless laymen, who probably never read the Thirty-nine Articles, know little about theological controversies, and fancy that our Church differences are only about unmeaning outward trifles, may possibly not understand this. But I do marvel at the innocent simplicity of many good men, who are dreaming that

* The leading article of the *Times* newspaper on the Privy Council Judgment contains the following sentence:—

‘There is a sense of *unreality* in the effort to treat as neutral or colourless acts which we all know to be, in the view of a party in the Church, *technical symbols and unequivocal doctrinal signs*.’

henceforth there will be no more strife, and that we shall be a kind of happy family, everybody in the right, and nobody in the wrong! They forget that while they are sitting still under their own vines and fig-trees, and crying ‘Peace, peace,’ there are others inside our Church who never sit still, and may rudely disturb them one day. My own belief is, that our ‘unhappy divisions’ will be widened, deepened, crystallized, and increased, and that harmonious co-operation between parties within our pale will become more difficult than ever. Peace is a precious thing, but it must be peace with honour, and not peace at any price. Liberty and toleration, no doubt, are fine, fashionable, high-sounding phrases, but they must have some limits. It was under the specious plea of liberty and toleration that King James II put forth his famous Declaration of Indulgence, by which he intended to bring back Popery into the realm, but thereby lost the confidence both of Church and Dissent, as well as his own crown.

I hold very strongly that the Established Church of this free country ought to be as tolerant and comprehensive as possible, and to allow large liberty to its clergy. But whether the very wide toleration of the recent Judgment is likely to bring in a general reign of peace among Churchmen, I take leave to doubt extremely. I ask you to consider calmly the history of the things which the recent Judgment declares to be *not illegal* in future, but permissible, in the administration of the Lord’s Supper. They are things not even mentioned in the Communion Office of our Prayer-book. They are things of no small importance. Most of them had a place in the first Prayer-book* of Edward VI, compiled at a time when the English Reformation was not completed. They were deliberately and purposely left out and omitted when Edward’s second Prayer-book† was brought out, as appearing to favour the Romish Mass. They were not re-admitted in the Prayer-book drawn up and used in Queen Elizabeth’s time, and finally were not re-introduced and brought back, when the Prayerbook was last revised in the days of Charles II. In the face of these facts, I cannot wonder that the recent Judgment offends and pains many Churchmen who are content with the Prayerbook as it is. They consider that it is a step backward behind the Reformation, and that it seems to bring back into our Communion Office things rejected long ago. I cannot therefore help thinking it is more likely to increase division than to promote peace.

The plain truth is, that a Church in which two opposite views of such cardinal subjects as the Lord’s Supper and sacerdotalism—*the very keys of the great Romish controversy*—are formally declared to be not illegal, is not a Church in which the clergy can work very cordially and comfortably

* 1549.

† 1552.

together, and its thinking laymen will gradually separate into two camps. We may sing as loud as we please—

*We are not divided,
All one body we;*

but we cannot make the words a reality. Two pilots in one ship, two drivers in one carriage, two stewards in one household, are obviously incompatible. I see no prospect of perfect peace. On the contrary, I think we have reached a crisis which demands the exercise of the utmost courtesy and forbearance on all sides, if the old machine is to work at all. Never was it more needful to cultivate charity, good temper, consideration, and kindness of language in communication with other schools. May we all try to do so in the Diocese of Liverpool! If men cannot help differing, let them try to differ pleasantly, and avoid those ‘grievous words’ which are sure to give offence. So doing, there may be some lengthening of our tranquillity, and, though it may strain our Church to the uttermost, we may possibly live on.

(ii) About the *future and distant consequences* of the recent Judgment, I shall speak with some hesitation, for two very grave reasons.

For one thing, much will depend on the line of conduct about to be adopted by that active and persevering body of Churchmen who, for many years, have honestly avowed their desire to set back the clock of the Reformation, and to unprotestantize the Church of England. They have now practically obtained legal sanction for some of their cherished views, and it remains to be seen what they are going to do next. If this body is determined to press on, and never rest till it has procured formal sanction for more and more liberty, toleration, and concession—for chasubles, incense, adoration of the elements, prayers for the dead, the confessional, and a close imitation of the mass—then I can soon tell you what the consequences will be. I am no prophet, but I confidently predict there will be troublous times.

For another thing, much will depend on the treatment received by those loyal Churchmen who conscientiously disapprove the recent Judgment, and by the Evangelical body generally. Such men, no doubt, are not required to alter one jot of their doctrine and ritual, or to leave their old paths. More than this, as honest Churchmen, and men thoroughly attached to the principles, Prayer-book, and Articles of our Church, they have a right to expect to be treated with perfect fairness and impartiality. But if, after this Judgment, any foolish attempt is made in any quarter to trample on them as a defeated or silenced minority; if they are continually harassed and irritated by interference with their liberty, and indirectly pressed to give up their favourite Societies; if they are frowned upon because they decline to discontinue evening communions, or adopt the eastward position; if they are always

charged with denying sacramental grace because they hold firmly the doctrine of the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-ninth Articles about the effect of the sacraments; if they are incessantly taunted as Puritans because they prefer Jewel and Hooker to Archbishop Laud; if these things are incessantly pushed to the front, and not dismissed wisely to the rear, as they ought to be—once more, I say, I can soon tell you what the consequences will be. There will be very troublous times.

Remember carefully that I am only speaking of the distant consequences of the Judgment under certain contingencies. I do not know, of course, whether those contingencies will arise. It is quite possible that the advanced and extreme section of Churchmen may think it prudent to lie on their oars and seek no further concessions at present. It is also possible that the dominant majority within our pale may think it wise to adopt a policy of conciliation towards the minority. But these are uncertainties, and it is impossible to say what a few years may bring forth. However, I am quite certain, since the Judgment appeared, that there are breakers ahead, and that our dangers are far greater than most people suppose, and that not the least of these dangers is the gradual approach of Disestablishment. For saying this you may think me an alarmist. But when the Prime Minister of this great country speaks gravely of the 'Disestablishment and Disendowment' of an integral part of the Church of England as possibilities, and myriads of the masses to whom we have given political power swallow greedily all his words, it is high time for the Church to set her house in order, to number her forces, and to prepare for a deadly struggle. Now, I ask, where are we in view of this coming struggle? Are we ready for it? Are we united? Are we prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder, as the 42nd did on the field of Quatre Bras?* I wish I could give satisfactory answers to these questions. But at present I cannot. If the party of progress is allowed to drive on unchecked, and to thrust into our Communion Office one Romish innovation after another, until Church worship becomes a Babel of discordant teachings, it is useless to expect that we shall present a united front to our foes when the fight begins. That solid minority of Churchmen who cling tenaciously to the principles of the Reformation, and are content with the Prayer-book as it is, would stand aloof, I fear, in the day of battle, and cause great gaps in our ranks, which the Church could ill afford. For a Protestant Establishment, I believe, they would fight to the last. For a semi-popish Establishment I doubt if they would strike a blow. I know they are a minority among the clergy, and always have been since the days of the Stuarts. But I am not sure that they are a minority among the laity, and in any case a mi-

* A place of encounter between the armies of Napoleon and Wellington a day before the Battle of Waterloo (1815).

nority contending for great religious principles (like Ulster) is not to be lightly esteemed. Sooner or later, if things go on as they have done in late years, I predict this minority will see little use in defending the Church of England. Then, with a democratic House of Commons, the end will soon come. Weakened by some secessions of impatient men, and by incessant internal dissensions, the Church will not be able to stave off Disestablishment and Disendowment. Then will come disruption, and the grand old ship will be wrecked by the 'unhappy divisions' of her own officers and crew. I only hope that, 'some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship,' you will all get safe to land.

I will not dwell longer on this painful subject. But, as an old man soon likely to go off the stage and join a better Church in a better world, and as one who has carefully watched the progress of ecclesiastical events for fifty years, I think it a plain duty to warn you about the possibilities which are before you and your children. There is no reason for panic and despair. The fate of the Church is in the hands of Churchmen. If they are true to her first principles, I believe she will never fall. We never know what a day may bring forth. There is One in heaven who kept our Church alive in the days of Grosseteste* and Wycliffe, in the reign of Queen Mary Tudor, in the times of Laud and Charles I, and in the blind era of 1662, when two thousand able ministers were foolishly driven out of our pale, and the foundations of English Dissent were laid. He lives and reigns, and orders everything on earth, and can make light arise out of seeming darkness. For the time present let us wait patiently on Him, and ask Him to give wisdom to our rulers, and sanctified common sense to our clergy, and not to deal with our nation according to its sins.

III. I turn now to a theological subject of world-wide importance which is exercising the minds and shaking the faith of many professing Christians in the present day. I refer to what is commonly called '*The Higher Criticism of the Old Testament Scriptures*.' This subject just now is forced on our notice continually, in books and pamphlets, in lectures and sermons, in newspapers and periodicals, at Conferences and Congresses. Whether we like it or not we cannot shut it out. Like the frogs in the plague of Egypt, it creeps in everywhere, and its novelty makes it especially attractive to the half-educated and the young.

I propose to make a few plain remarks on this very grave subject. It is filling our horizon with clouds, and as an old watchman I dare not hold my peace. My remarks will be almost all in one direction. About many branches of the controversy I shall say nothing at all. I leave them to others who

* Bishop of Lincoln (died, 1253).

have more leisure than a Lancashire bishop can have. I only wish to dwell on one point, which seems to me to have been somewhat overlooked, and to have received far less attention than it deserves. That point is, the immense *improbability* of all the schemes and theories of ‘Higher Criticism.’

I use that word ‘improbability’ with strong emphasis. All sensible men know that on many subjects probability is our only guide. ‘To us,’ says that mighty reasoner, Bishop Butler, ‘probability is the very guide of life.’* I think the criticism of the Old Testament is a case in point. The whole subject is dark and mysterious, and we cannot draw conclusions about it with absolute certainty. There is a huge gap or chasm which we have no bridge to cross, and must fill up as we can with scanty materials. The manuscripts of the books of the Old Testament have long disappeared. There is no contemporaneous literature supplying information about them. The Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, was never even partially brought out until a hundred years after the completion of the book of Malachi, and at least twelve hundred years after the death of Moses. The book called the Old Testament is now much more than two thousand years old—a vast length of time, which our minds cannot grasp and realise much more than the distance between the fixed stars and the earth. It is a book which was written many centuries before printing was invented, and long before most of the cities of Europe existed. About such a field of inquiry I am content to consider what is *probable*. I leave dogmatic positiveness to others, and I see rather too much of it in the present day. I often think of the words addressed by Oliver Cromwell to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (August 3, 1650): ‘Sirs, I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken.’

I begin by saying that I am one of those old-fashioned Christians who believe implicitly the plenary inspiration of all the books of the Old Testament Scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi. I admit frankly that in the historical books the writers were taught and permitted to incorporate lists of names and pedigrees from existing documents, and to use materials made ready to their hands, under divine direction. I have, of course, no doubt that Moses at the end of Deuteronomy did not write the account of his own death and burial, and that it was added by some unknown inspired penman, in all probability by Joshua or Samuel. I grant that some incorrect readings may have crept in here and there in copying unprinted Hebrew books. But that the *traditional* view of the Old Testament, such as Josephus gives us, about the authorship of the several books, the dates at which they were written, and the reality of the events and persons mentioned in the historical portions, that this view, speaking generally, is the only true and safe one, I

* *The Analogy of Religion* (1756), Introduction.

firmly maintain. I know that it is surrounded by many difficulties. But are there not countless difficulties both in the heavens above us and the earth under our feet? Surely there must needs be many difficulties about the origin and contents of a book given by inspiration of God! The saying of Origen, quoted by Bishop Butler, in the Introduction to the *Analogy*, should never be forgotten: 'He who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature.' I admit that the safe preservation and transmission of the inspired books through many centuries can only be accounted for by the miraculous interposition of God. But I am one of those who believe in miracles, and I regard the Bible as a miraculous book. Great, therefore, as the difficulties of the old traditional view of the Old Testament undoubtedly are, I hold that it is far the most probable and the most safe view, and I advise my brethren not to forsake it lightly. I stand firmly by the old faith of the Church, and refuse to give it up until I can find a better.

On the other hand, I entirely decline to accept the leading principles of the advocates of the 'Higher Criticism' of the Old Testament, about the authorship of its books, the dates at which they were composed, and the historical reality of the persons and events named and mentioned in them. I reject, as utterly incredible, the strange, but painfully common idea that Old Testament history is nothing more than 'a huge halo of legendary matter surrounding a small nucleus of truth.' I believe that one person, and not three or four, wrote and compiled all the first five books of the Bible, and that person was Moses. I believe that all the wonderful events related in these books did actually take place, such as the Fall, the Flood, the dispersion after the building of Babel, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues of Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the subsequent facts and miracles recorded in Exodus. I have no doubt that there were such persons as Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, and Abraham and Lot, and Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs, and that they really lived on earth, and said and did the things attributed to them in Genesis. I entirely repudiate the modern theory that the Pentateuch in its present form was never compiled till the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, and that many of the facts therein recorded, and especially in the first eleven chapters, are mere myths, fables, and legends, imagined or invented, and utterly destitute of solid and divine foundation. And if I am asked why I take up this ground, I answer, that the theories I repudiate appear to me to involve *infinitely greater difficulties than the old traditional views* which I maintain. I will state as briefly as possible what those difficulties are, and will confine my remarks to modern theories about the first five books of the Old Testament.

(1) My first difficulty is this. I want to know how it is that the views of

‘Higher Criticism’ about the authorship, date, and contents of the Pentateuch are of such *entirely modern origin*. It is admitted that they were never heard of before they were propounded by the Swiss physician Astruc, who lived 1684–1766. From the time of Josephus for nearly seventeen hundred years, I can read of no one who ever thought of denying that Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were books written by the hand of Moses and by no other hand, and I can read of no one who ever doubted that the facts recorded in these books were historically true. The early Primitive Churches, the Greek and Latin Fathers, the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages, the Roman and Greek Churches, the Reformers, the Puritans, the old Anglican Churchmen, all, all have been of one mind about this subject. However wide and deep their differences may have been on other points, they have all maintained that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.

The ‘Higher Critics’ of the last hundred and fifty years have taken up entirely new ground. They ask us to believe that for seventeen centuries the students of Holy Scripture have lived and died in comparative blindness. During that long period the Old Testament has been constantly perused and prayerfully searched by thousands and myriads of devout and learned men. Living in days when there were few books, and still fewer openings for religious usefulness, they probably spent far more time over the Bible than most Christians do now. Nor can it be said that all the Bible readers for these seventeen hundred years were weak-minded, unlearned, and unable to understand deep questions. It would be simply ridiculous to say so. Look at such men as Jerome, Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine, among the Fathers; as Thomas Aquinas, Peter Lombard, Albertus Magnus, Bonaventura, among Schoolmen; as Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Brentius, Zwingli, Peter Martyr, Bucer, Bullinger, Gualter, Beza, Musculus, Chemnitius, Gerhard, Paraeus, among Continental Protestants; as Cranmer, Tyndale, Ridley, Jewel, Whitgift, among English Reformers; as Hooker, Andrews, Whittaker, Pearson, Hall, Davenant, Willet, Rainolds, Usher, Stillingfleet, Hammond, Bull, Water land, Barrow, Hody, among Anglican divines; as Owen, Goodwin, Baxter, Manton, Charnock, Poole, among Puritans—look at these men, I say, and tell me if they were men of weak and inferior intellect. Surely, I think, any one well-read in theological biography must admit that this list contains the names of men who were just as hard-headed, as deep-thinking, and as capable of forming a sound judgment as any theologians that ever lived. On many questions they differed widely. But on one point they were entirely agreed. Not one of them ever maintained that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, and Moses alone. This is a discovery that was made a hundred and fifty years ago! In short, we are asked to believe that the students of the last century and a half have found out things which were hidden from the intellectual giants of the previous seventeen

hundred years! This is my first difficulty, and I cannot get over it. It seems to me to contain an enormous improbability.

(2) My second difficulty is this. I find no satisfactory proof that the advocates of modern Old Testament criticism have a more thorough *knowledge of the Hebrew language* than the learned men who lived before them. It is needless to say that this is precisely one hinge on which the great controversy of the day turns. We are told continually by the leaders and friends of the new school that minute examination of the words, style, and language of the Pentateuch affords indisputable internal evidence that it could not have been written by the hand of one and the same person, and during one and the same life, and that considerable portions of Genesis and Exodus are nothing better than old myths and legends, of utterly uncertain authorship. If you doubt the truth of these startling assertions, you are told that your doubt arises from your ignorance of the Hebrew language, and that if you were a better Hebraist you would see the wisdom of modern Old Testament criticism. At present you cannot be expected to see it, any more than a babe. You are not competent to have an opinion, and ought to sit still and hold your tongue.

However, a very serious question remains behind, to which at present I see no answer. Let it be granted for a moment, though it is not proved, that there are no first-rate Hebrew scholars in the world except the advocates of 'Higher Criticism,' and that the opinions of other living Hebraists are comparatively of little value. But by what right do the modern critics claim to know more about Hebrew than those who studied that holy dead language more than one hundred and fifty years ago? Such men as Reuchlin, James I's Old Testament translators, Ainsworth, Hugh Broughton, Fagius, Pellican, John Lightfoot, Gataker, Tremellius, Buxtorf, Mercer, Arias Montanus, Pagnini, Vatablus, Houbigant, Walton, all these were notoriously familiar with Hebrew, and deep lifelong students of the language in its minutest words, letters, jots and tittles. Yet none of them ever found out that the Pentateuch was not compiled till the time of Ezra! They all lived and died in the belief that Moses, and Moses alone, was the author of the first five books of the Bible under God's inspiration, and that all the statements of those books are 'the word of God.' Were all these men mistaken? What would they say now? They are dead long ago, and cannot defend themselves. It is cheap and easy work to underrate them in 1892. But most of them left behind them reputations of no mean authority as Hebrew scholars, and made a great mark in their day. I respect the zeal and diligence of modern critics both at home and abroad. But their fundamental theories appear to me to require belief in a huge mass of improbability. Until they can prove that Ainsworth, Broughton, and their companions were comparatively ignorant of Hebrew, and did not understand that holy lan-

guage so well as the professors of Germany, Oxford, and Cambridge in these latter days, I cannot accept their 'Higher Criticism.'

(3) My third difficulty is this. I cannot reconcile the views of modern Old Testament critics with the *use which our Lord Jesus Christ continually made* of the Old Testament Scriptures in the Gospels, and with His mode of speaking about events, persons, and things in the Pentateuch, and specially in the book of Genesis. This, after all, in my opinion, is the crucial test of the whole matter in dispute. What did the Eternal Son of God, when He was 'manifest in the flesh,' say, and apparently think, about the Old Testament? In what light did He regard it? What authority did He attach to it?

I answer these questions without hesitation. It appears to me that, throughout the Gospels, the Lord Jesus always regards the Old Testament Scriptures as in every part 'the word of God,' devoid of any defect, error, or imperfection, the only rule of faith for God's Church, the only test of truth. I believe that such sentences as 'Search the Scriptures', 'What is written in the law', 'How readest thou?' were continually heard in our Lord's teaching. (I believe it, though of course I cannot prove it.) It has been well said by an American divine, 'We have no evidence that our Lord Jesus Christ ever read any other book than the Old Testament Scriptures. But of them His teachings are full: He lived in them. There appears with Him throughout the Gospels an unquestioning acceptance of the Jewish canon, of the law, the prophets, and the Psalms.' As to the law He said, 'Not one jot or tittle shall pass away till all things shall be fulfilled.' (Matt. v. 18.) As to the prophets, He began His ministry at Nazareth by reading a passage from the 61st chapter of Isaiah, and saying, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled.' Daniel, whose authority is disputed by many, He endorsed as 'Daniel the prophet.' (Matt. xxiv. 15.) As to the Psalms, He quotes them frequently. A text from the Psalms was the last word which came from His lips on the cross. (Psalm xxxi. 5, Luke xxiii. 46.) And of the noth Psalm, which some modern critics assign to the era of the Maccabees, He says distinctly that David spoke its words 'by the Holy Ghost.' (Mark xii. 36.) Finally, it is a remarkable fact that Deuteronomy, the part of the Old Testament which some tell us was compiled after the Babylonian captivity, is the very book which He quotes three times in resisting the temptation of the devil, and so stamps as a book of peculiar value and authority.

I cannot detect the shadow of a hint that our Lord did not think the whole Pentateuch was written by Moses. Repeatedly He quotes from it, and speaks of Moses as the author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. (Luke xx. 37; Matt. viii. 4; Mark x. 3.) He calls Exodus 'the book of Moses.' (Mark xii. 26.) He says distinctly, 'Moses wrote of Me. If ye

believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?' (John v. 46, 47.) Repeatedly He speaks of events described in Genesis as real historical events, and persons mentioned in Genesis as real historical persons. Any well-taught Sunday scholar can tell us that Jesus Christ speaks of the institution of the Sabbath, marriage, and circumcision, of the Flood, the ark, the destruction of Sodom, of Satan as a 'liar from the beginning,' of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Lot, and Lot's wife. In every case His language is that of one who has before His mind records of indisputable authority, which He handles with unhesitating confidence. He appears to my eyes to see the hand of only one author from the beginning of the Pentateuch to the end, and that author He taught His hearers was Moses. If the theories of modern Old Testament critics are true, there is at any rate a remarkable absence of support for them in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Of course I do not forget that many 'Higher Critics' maintain that our Lord did not really believe in His own mind that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or that the events narrated in Genesis actually took place. They say that, in order to avoid giving offence, He adopted the traditional views of His hearers, and accommodated Himself to their ignorant legends. A more improbable solution of a difficulty I cannot conceive! If ever there was a teacher who was above flattering his hearers or accommodating his language to their prejudices, that teacher was our Lord. 'Ye err,' He says, 'not knowing the Scriptures.' (Matt. xii. 29). Eight times over He says to the scribes and Pharisees in one chapter (Matt. xxiii.), 'Woe unto you, hypocrites.' Once He says, 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' (Matt. xxiii. 33). Once He says, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.' John viii. 44). Will any one tell us that such a Teacher as this was ever likely to accommodate Himself to His hearers, and to speak of things as facts which He knew were not facts, and men and women as real persons who He knew never existed at all, in order to please and satisfy His audience? Let those believe it who can. To my mind, such an attempt to explain our Lord's language requires us to believe the utmost improbabilities.

I do not forget that some other 'Higher Critics' of the Old Testament try to explain the difficulty before us by alleging that our Lord Jesus Christ's knowledge was limited, that He was ignorant on some subjects like other men, and was capable of erring about the authorship of the Pentateuch, and the facts and persons mentioned in Genesis. This is an explanation which I must decline to accept, and which I regard as dangerous in the extreme. I admit that our Lord was really and truly man, and that from His birth He 'increased in wisdom and stature' like other men. (Luke ii. 52). But that His knowledge was imperfect and limited when He came to full age, like the knowledge of any other man who was merely a fallen child of Adam, I

cannot believe for a moment. For we must remember that He was always God as well as man, and that in His marvellous and mysterious Person, 'The Godhead and manhood were joined together, never to be divided.' (Second Article.) To suppose that at any time during the three years of His earthly ministry He could speak ignorantly of *past things*, and teach things that were not really true, appears to my eyes a serious error, and a step in the direction of Socinianism. My soul revolts from the very idea of a fallible Saviour, Redeemer, Priest, and Judge! At this rate our Lord was merely the greatest of human prophets, but nothing more, and not 'God manifest in the flesh.' Once concede that He was fallible in any part of His teaching, and I do not see where you can draw the line. No one could now pronounce positively when He spoke ignorantly and when not; and a mist of uncertainty descends on all His words. That in the mysterious counsels of the eternal Trinity it was *appointed* that the Son, during His earthly ministry, should not know, as a thing to be revealed to the Church, the precise date of His own Second Advent and the end of the world, I can believe, and I think with reverence that I see wisdom in the appointment. (Mark xiii. 32). He says, 'The Father which sent me gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.' (John xii. 49). But that He ever stated anything inaccurate I cannot for a moment believe. If He was, He could not be the infallible Teacher of the Church and the 'Light of the world.' As to the text and language of the Hebrew Scriptures, I can hardly conceive that Christ did not understand it better than any German or English professor that ever lived. At any rate, I think no one would dare to dispute His knowledge after His resurrection. It was after His resurrection we read that, 'Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.' (Luke xxiv. 27). If 'Moses' in that place does not mean the Pentateuch, I do not see what it can mean. After all, if He who was born of the Virgin Mary was the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who appeared to Abraham, as the Angel of the Covenant, the very day before the destruction of Sodom, it appears to me incredible that afterwards, 'in the days of His flesh,' He was ignorant of the events of Abraham's time. To ask me to believe that He did not know events which He had *seen nineteen centuries before*, is to ask me to believe a great improbability.

(4) My fourth difficulty is this. I cannot reconcile the theories of modern critics of the Old Testament with the *supremacy and sufficiency of Holy Scripture*. If these theories are true, there is an end of the old cardinal principle of Christianity, that the Bible is the rule of faith and practice. It goes without saying that for centuries the volume called the Bible has been regarded by most orthodox Christians as the authorized test of truth and error, and the source of all true religion. To me and many others it is God's

mouthpiece to a dark and fallen world, and the final Court of Appeal in religion which never makes any mistakes. The only question asked about anything which we have been called upon to believe as spiritual truth has been simply this. Is it in the Bible? If it is there, it is worthy of credit, and ought to be received; if it is not there, it has no right to demand our assent. The preacher, the Bible-class teacher, the Sunday-school teacher, throughout the land, all ask you to believe what they say, and accept it, because they find it written in a book which they tell you is 'God's word written, the word of God.' A plain text of Scripture settles everything. Our own Thirty-nine Articles refer to the Bible in this point of view no less than nineteen times.

But what are we to say to all this, if the theories of 'Higher Criticism' are correct? If some parts of Scripture are the uncertain compositions of uninspired men; if Genesis, for instance, is only a patchwork of contributions from four or five different hands; if its historical parts are mere legends, fables, and myths, destitute of any divine authority; the preacher, the lecturer, and the Sunday-school teacher are all deprived of their chief weapon. They will be obliged to say to their hearers, 'The things that we tell you may possibly be true, but we are not certain that they are.' At this rate the chief use of the Bible appears to my eyes to be destroyed. The old book is dethroned from the high position which it held as the pure Word of God, by being mixed up with things which are the mere uninspired words of fallen man. Who shall decide, if we once admit the thin edge of uncertainty, what portions of the Old Testament are the infallible 'oracles of God,' and what are the fallible writings of the erring and corrupt children of Adam? Which of the historical parts of Genesis are real history, and which are mere baseless myths and legends of no authority? These are questions to which I believe no one can supply an answer. I do not know whether the clerical advocates of 'Higher Criticism' ever preach from such parts of Genesis as the story of the Fall, or of the Flood, or of the Tower of Babel. If they do, I should like to know whether they tell their congregations that they are teaching them lessons from the inspired 'Word of God.' If they object to do so, I want to know where they are going to stop, and on what authority they can ask their hearers to believe the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If you reject one part of Genesis, you can be certain about no part at all.

After all, I come back to my first position. I maintain that a book cannot be a rule of faith to a Church if it contains defects, errors, flaws, imperfections, inaccuracies, and untruths. It may contain a large measure of true and interesting matter, but it certainly cannot be called the infallible 'Word of God.' I abhor the idea of a *fallible* Bible almost as much as the idea of a fallible Saviour. If the Bible is anything at all, it is the statute-book of

God's kingdom, the code of laws and regulations by which the subjects of that kingdom are to live, the register-deed of the terms on which they have peace now and shall have glory hereafter. Now, why are we to suppose that such a book will be loosely and imperfectly drawn up, any more than legal deeds are drawn up on earth? Every lawyer can tell us that in legal deeds and statutes every word is of importance, and that property, life, or death may often turn on a *single word*. Think of the confusion that would ensue if wills, and settlements, and conveyances, and partnership-deeds, and leases, and agreements, and Acts of Parliament were not carefully drawn up and carefully interpreted, and every word allowed its due weight. Where would be the use of such documents if particular words went for nothing, and every one had a right to add, or take away, or alter, or deny the validity of words, or erase words at his own discretion? At this rate we might as well lay aside our legal documents altogether! If God's statute-book is not inspired, and every part and jot and tittle of it is not of divine authority, God's subjects are in a very pitiable position! 'Higher Criticism' takes away the old rule of faith, the old test of truth and error, and gives them in its place a volume replete with guesses and conjectures, with doubtful points and uncertainties.

Well and wisely says the Bishop of Colchester, in an able article in *The Contemporary Review* for June 1892: 'The first and most obvious consequence of extreme rationalistic views is that, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, we shall have no Bible left. A collection of books so untrustworthy, so riddled through and through with spuriousness and deception, can no longer be revered as Holy Scripture! They can no longer be regarded as containing a revelation!'

(5) My fifth and last difficulty is this. I cannot understand how a book containing so many flaws, inaccuracies, and imperfections; a book of such doubtful authorship in many parts as the Bible, according to 'Higher Criticism,' is alleged to be—I cannot understand how such an imperfect book can have *done such an enormous work as the Bible certainly has done in the world*. This single volume, translated into all the principal languages on the face of the globe, has been accepted by millions of men and women for many years as true throughout, and has been regarded as an unerring teacher of soul-saving religion, and a sure and trustworthy guide to eternal life. This is the volume which alone, unaided by churches, ministers, sacraments, or schools, kept Christianity alive for twenty years among thousands of converted heathen in Madagascar, when all foreign missionaries and teachers had been forcibly expelled from the country.* This is the book whose doctrinal statements and single texts have been for the last three cen-

* From 1837. Queen Ranavalona was the persecutor.

turies the spiritual food and comfort of myriads of immortal beings. They have lived holy lives under its instruction, and gone down to the grave in peace, resting entirely on its statements, and believing every part of its contents. I think no one will dare to deny this.

But where are we placed if we accept the assertions of ‘Higher Criticism’? We are asked to believe that large portions of this volume called the Bible are of such uncertain authorship that they cannot be honestly called ‘the Word of God.’ We are asked to believe that large portions of the Pentateuch were not written by Moses, if any part at all, and that David only wrote one Psalm, and that not the 110th. We are asked to believe that Genesis is a compilation of writings from several hands, and that many of its historical statements are mere traditions of uncertain origin, or myths and legends utterly destitute of any solid foundations. As to the books of Daniel and Jonah, we are to regard their contents as nothing better than ingenious inventions of the nature of fables. All this, and much more which I might add, we are asked to believe on very slender and inconclusive evidence, while those who ask us to believe their theories are often divided among themselves.

Now, I appeal to the common sense of all into whose hands this Address may fall. Is it at *all probable* that the book which, however poorly translated, as it sometimes is, has obtained, and still maintains, such an immense influence over the hearts, heads, and lives of millions of mankind in every part of the globe, can be a book containing many imperfections, many doubtful statements, and many positive untruths? Is it likely *and probable* that God would employ such a book as this? That it may be badly translated sometimes, I admit. That the fallen human agents whom He employs to use it should be imperfect I can quite understand. But that the whole volume He puts in their hands as a weapon to work with, should be so imperfect as ‘Higher Criticism’ declares it to be, requires more credulity than I possess to believe it. To my eyes it is a grave improbability.

Of course I have only attempted to touch one side of a very large subject. I frankly admit that the advocates of ‘Higher Criticism’ can ask a hundred questions about the Old Testament, which, in common with other supporters of the old-fashioned traditional view, I am quite unable to answer. But I firmly maintain that the difficulties of their system are far greater than the difficulties of ours, and that the argument from *probability* is decidedly on our side. Nor can I refrain from saying, that the writings of the whole school appear to me to contain a large quantity of wild conjectures, proofless assumptions, illogical assertions, and self-contradicting statements. To all who wish to go more deeply into the subject, I strongly recommend Bishop Christopher Wordsworth’s ‘Introduction to Genesis,’ at the beginning of his *Commentary on the whole Bible*.

It is vain to deny that the whole subject of inspiration has always been, and will always be, a very mysterious one. I greatly admire the wisdom of our own Church of England in abstaining from dogmatism about it. I expect there will be shades of differences among us as long as the world stands. Most truly has Dean Burgon said, ‘You cannot dissect inspiration into substance and form. As for the thoughts being inspired, apart from the words which gave them expression, you might as well talk of a tune without notes, or a sum without figures. No such dream can abide the daylight for a moment. No such theory of inspiration is even intelligible. It is as illogical as it is worthless.’ How and in what precise manner the Holy Spirit worked on the minds of those who wrote the Bible, I for one would never attempt to explain. Minds cannot be anatomized like bodies, or inspected like physical objects with the microscope. I certainly do not believe that inspired writers, like reporters, only wrote down what they had seen with their own eyes, or heard with their own ears, or been told by other people. I hold that, after a miraculous manner, the Holy Ghost suggested matter to be written down by those whom He inspired, and also suggested the words and language in which that matter should be clothed. But in all this the mental process is a deep miracle which I do not pretend to explain, any more than to explain how Lazarus was raised from the dead. I only know that the result is a firm conviction in my soul, that the whole book has something about it utterly unlike any other book in the world, and is rightly called ‘the Word of God.’

I humbly confess that when I sit down to read the Scriptures I always expect to meet ‘some things hard to be understood.’ Sometimes I feel that I do not know who wrote this or that book in the Bible, or when it was written, or why such and such things were written in it, or what they all mean. But then I fall back on the thought, that this is part of a miraculous book given by inspiration. This is God’s word, and what I know not now I shall know hereafter. To use the words of Hooker, ‘The little thereof which we darkly apprehend we admire; the rest, with religious ignorance, we humbly and meekly adore.’ (*Eccles. Polity*, Bk. I. ch. 2. 5) I agree entirely with Augustine when he says: ‘If I meet with anything in the canonical books of Scripture which seems to me at variance with the truth, I do not doubt but that either my copy of that book is faulty, or that the translation of it which I am using has missed the sense, or that I myself have failed to understand the true meaning of the writer.’ (Augustine, *Epistle to Jerome*, 82). It is a wise remark of old Thomas Fuller in his *Commentary on the Book of Ruth*, ‘Even as a man that hath a piece of gold, which he knows to be the right weight, and sees it stamped with the king’s image, careth not to know the name of the man who minted or coined it; so we, seeing the book to have the superscription of Caesar, the stamp of the Holy Ghost, need not to be curious to know who was the penman thereof.’

I conclude all with a striking passage from Gaussen, the Swiss divine: ‘One trembles when, after beholding the Son of Man commanding the elements, stilling the tempests, and despoiling the tomb, and solemnly declaring that He will, on an appointed day, return to judge, by this book, the quick and the dead—one trembles to see a poor accountable mortal, seated in a professor’s chair, and handling the Word of God as he would handle Terence or Thucydides, retrenching, adding, praising, blaming; lopping off whole chapters as containing mistakes, inconclusive arguments, rash assertions, and the like! Yet in a few years the learned professor and his pupils will all be in the tomb, while not a particle of the divine book will have passed away, and when the Son of Man shall descend from heaven, by this book shall they all be judged.’

I will not detain the Conference any longer, and I wish I could have made my address shorter. But we meet in peculiar times, and the burning questions I have tried to handle cannot be dismissed in a few brief sentences. Of course I do not expect you all to agree with me. But I hope you will all believe that I have told you frankly and honestly what I think. We only ‘know in part,’ and I lay no claim to infallibility.