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this life a hundred-fold. We know it now by faith, and we shall see it with our eyes at no far distant day, when this world's twilight shall have passed away, and we shall see Him as He is.

H. M. GWATKIN.

ON THE MORAL CHARACTER OF PSEUDONYMOUS BOOKS.

II.

ALTHOUGH, from the facts adduced in a previous paper, there would seem to be no external evidence that pseudonymous works were in ancient times composed in perfect good faith, as a recognised kind of literature of the nature of dramatic fictions, not intended to deceive any one, it is possible that a proof of this might be found in the internal character of such writings themselves. They might conceivably bear such marks of truthfulness and high moral earnestness as to make it perfectly certain that they cannot have been intended to deceive, even for such good ends as ancient philosophers thought might justify pious frauds. An instance of this may be found in Pascal's *Provincial Letters*, which breathe such a lofty religious earnestness and pure love of truth as, even were there no other proof, would show that their literary disguise was not intended to be taken as true. If, in many of the ancient writings that are certainly pseudonymous, such an internal character of manifest truthfulness could be traced; we should be obliged to conclude, even in the absence of external evidence, that dramatic personation was a recognised literary practice in the times and circles in which such writings originated. It must be observed however, that this argument, in order to be conclusive, requires that the writings on which it is founded be certainly works claiming a false name and authority; for if that is only doubtful, the explanation of

their high moral character may simply be that they are really the productions of those from whom they profess to come. Further, the internal character that can warrant such a conclusion is not mere general moral goodness, and the earnest recommendation of virtue, since these are sometimes found in what are undoubtedly pious frauds, as the *Clementines*, but that peculiar air and tone of heartfelt sincerity that cannot be logically defined, but is felt by every sympathetic reader. In the absence of this, much sound ethical teaching under a false name may be explained by the view, which certainly did prevail, of the legitimacy of deceit for a good end. Only on these two conditions can an internal argument to the effect above stated be conclusive; and whether it is so must be decided by a careful examination of undoubtedly pseudonymous books from the special point of view of the regard for truth and sincerity which they indicate on the part of their authors.

The question simply is, whether any of these are mere dramatic personations composed with no intent to deceive, like the productions of Pascal, Bentley, Steele, Addison, Tennyson, or Browning in modern times. What moral value is to be assigned to them, and how they are related to the doctrine of inspiration, are separate inquiries, to be considered afterwards. Meanwhile it may be useful to examine some of the undoubtedly pseudonymous works of Jewish or Christian literature in the light of the first question.

One of the best of these is the Wisdom of Solomon, which, as before mentioned, was regarded by many of the Christian Fathers as an inspired production of the Hebrew king. The author does indeed most distinctly describe himself as Solomon, telling in chap. vii. 7–12 how he prayed and sought for wisdom above sceptres, wealth, and other earthly good things, and obtained all these things along with wisdom; and in chap. ix., in the form of a

prayer to God, speaking of himself as appointed to be king of God's people, and commanded to build a temple to Him. But there is no attempt to sustain throughout the character of Solomon, and the greater part of the book consists of general exhortations to wisdom and virtue, which are indeed always earnest and sometimes truly eloquent. It begins with an address to them that judge the earth, calling them to seek righteousness (chap. i.); then in chap. ii. 1–20 the sentiments of the ungodly are reported, who say there is no future life, and resolve to enjoy the present and to persecute the righteous, who provokes them by his reproofs, and calls himself a son of God. The close of this chapter shows the folly of this; and chap. iii. presents in contrast the happy prospects of the righteous and the opposite lot of the ungodly. The theme of chap. iv. is that the life of the righteous, though it be short, is better than the long life of the ungodly, and the proof of this is given in chap. v.; while chap. vi. is a renewed exhortation to kings and rulers to seek wisdom. Then comes, in chap. vii., the account of the author already mentioned, and in the close of that chapter and the next there is a description of wisdom largely pervaded with ideas of the Platonic philosophy. Chap. ix. is a prayer in the person of Solomon, which passes into praise for what wisdom has done for the fathers of the Hebrew race, recounted in chaps. x., xi., and xii. The three following chapters are occupied with an exposure of the folly and sin of idolatry, regarded as the source of all other sin; and the remaining chapters (xvi.–xix.) with a highly rhetorical and somewhat confused account of the plagues of Egypt viewed as a punishment for idolatry and the oppression of Israel. From this analysis of the book, it would seem that the aim of the author was to controvert the Epicurean philosophy and the idolatry that was peculiarly rife in Egypt. The moral tone throughout is earnest, and among the evils denounced is deceit (δόλος, chaps. i. 5,

xiv. 25), though this is only mentioned in a very cursory way, while ungodliness, idolatry, and sensuality are the sins most frequently and strongly condemned. It can hardly be said that the ethical teaching of the book is so deep and spiritual as to be inconsistent with the approval and practice of a pious fraud by the writer; and his undoubted knowledge and following of the Platonic philosophy on many points makes it less improbable that he may have been influenced by it in this. It may be noticed also, that in the account of the patriarchs' history, Jacob is described as a righteous man when he fled from his brother's wrath (chap. x. 10), whereas in Scripture no such praise is ever given him in that connexion, and there is distinct intimation of disapproval of his deceit, which the author of Wisdom does not even hint. Similarly, in chap. x. 15, there is exaggerated praise of Israel, when in the Egyptian bondage, as "a pious nation and a blameless seed"; and in chap. xii. 7 the Canaanites are said to have been expelled in order that the land might receive a worthy colony of God's servants. These things betray a moral standard slightly beneath the very highest; and since the writer is not hindered by Jacob's deceit of his father from calling him, without qualification, a righteous man, he may very probably not have thought it wrong to deceive his readers by assuming the name of Solomon in order to gain acceptance for the moral and religious truths which he so earnestly inculcates.

The book of Baruch professes in its opening sentences (chap. i. 1–9) to be the work of the person of that name who was the friend of Jeremiah, but assumes that he was at Babylon at a time when he could not have been there. It is written from the standpoint of Israel in exile, and consists of exhortations and prayers suited to the circumstances of that time. These breathe throughout an earnest and devout spirit; but they are little more than a mosaic

of passages from the prophetic writings, especially Jeremiah, Daniel, and Isaiah. Since its contents are so largely borrowed and at second hand, it is impossible with confidence to infer from them much about the moral and religious character of the author, except that he was a devout man, who valued the teaching of the Old Testament and desired to enforce its lessons. No interested or unworthy motive for his writing is discoverable; but, on the other hand, there is no evidence that he would be incapable of using the deception of a false name in the service of piety. What the particular motive was is not very evident; but possibly it may have been to inculcate on Jews living under a heathen government the duty of being loyal to it, without failing in obedience to the Divine law as given them by Moses.

The Epistle of Jeremiah, which is generally mentioned along with Baruch by ancient writers, professes to have been written, at God's command, by the prophet whose name it bears, to the Jews who were about to be carried by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. It is entirely occupied with warnings and arguments against idolatry; and these are of a very popular and superficial kind, combating only the grossest and most absurd form of that practice, in which the actual images were believed to be the deities to whom worship was paid. There is hardly any positive teaching in this document, and nothing inconsistent with the supposition that the name of Jeremiah was purposely assumed simply to gain authority and currency for the letter.

The book of Enoch need not, for our present purpose, be examined or described in detail. It shows, indeed, amid its strange and fantastic visions, a spirit of moral earnestness and religious faith, but no very elevated spirituality. The evils denounced are chiefly those of sensuality, arrogance, and oppression; and on the most favourable view of

the writers' state of mind, it was one of morbid enthusiasm, in which the wildest fancies and dreams came to be confused with realities.

None of the apocryphal writings is more interesting or attractive than the Jewish work which forms the central part of the fourth (or, as reckoned in the English Apocrypha, the second) book of Esdras. Written shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, it gives pathetic expression to the feelings of sorrow and dismay which that catastrophe would cause to every patriotic Israelite, and the author is led by those feelings to reflect with pious yet passionate earnestness on the mysterious problem of Divine providence, since, though he knows and acknowledges that his people have by their sins deserved the ruin that has come on them, yet the heathen who triumph over them are more guilty still; and in general he finds it hard to reconcile with the goodness of God that the saved are so few in comparison with the lost. The dialogues on these subjects between Ezra and the archangel Uriel in chaps. iii.–x. are full of poetry and pathos; and in their general character, and the way in which they rise from personal and private sorrow to the universal afflictions of mankind, have struck a modern reader as akin to Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.[1] The vision of the eagle that follows in chaps. x.–xii. is to our taste extremely artificial, and looks like a mere attempt to deceive by a prophecy after the event; yet Ewald[2] has shown that this is not a mere arbitrary invention, but a representation of the Messianic hope that might naturally occur to a Jew surveying the history of the Roman empire in the first century. The whole is put into the mouth of Ezra, who is represented as living about one hundred years earlier than his real date, and his reflections

[1] A. Taylor Innes, in THE EXPOSITOR, third series, vol. vii., p. 212, "A Forgotten Poet."

[2] *History of Israel* (Eng. trans.), vol. vii., pp. 47 foll.

are made to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans. The book is perhaps quoted in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and expressly by Clement of Alexandria, and when used by these and later Christian writers seems to have been believed to be a genuine prophecy by Ezra.

This work has throughout a pure and high moral tone, as well as many noble and sublime passages; and it is far more fresh and original, and less dependent on the Old Testament Scriptures, than the book of Baruch. The author cannot have been a mere vulgar impostor; he is thoroughly in earnest in seeking consolation for himself, and giving it to others. Yet his moral teaching has very marked limitations. Not only is he intensely Jewish in his Messianic hopes, but he has nothing to recommend to his people except the strict observance of God's laws: there is no prayer or promise of renewal of heart; and the triumph of the Messiah is represented as to be achieved by mere Divine power and judgment. He occupies the Pharisaic standpoint; and while he frankly confesses the sins even of the pious, his sense of sin does not appear to be very deep. If we compare his book with that of Habakkuk, which treats of the same subject, we cannot but be sensible of the difference between the prophet of faith and the poet of expiring Judaism. It does not therefore seem at all impossible or unnatural to suppose, that with all his earnestness, this author was not so deeply pervaded with the love of truth as to shrink from personating Ezra by a pious fraud, in order to impress his readers more deeply, and perhaps also avoid danger in his vaticinations of the fall of the Roman empire.

Very similar to this book, and of equal interest, is the more recently recovered one, called the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, which most scholars regard as dating, like Fourth Esdras, from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, though a recent writer has adduced some weighty

considerations in favour of an earlier date, that of Pompey's desecration of the temple in 65 B.C.[1] It is simpler in its imagery than the other, and pervaded by an equally earnest and devout spirit. One is greatly inclined to believe, in regard to both of these books, that the fictitious dress was merely a recognised form of composition; so that the authors could be freed from any moral blame. At the same time it seems clear, that the fact of bearing the names of earlier prophets or men of God did gain for such books greater estimation, and that this was one object in the assumption of these names; and we cannot say that the moral tone of the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, though really earnest, is so lofty and spiritual as to be incompatible with the employment of deception for such an end. In any case we must recognise in the author an extraordinary degree of enthusiasm, leading him to present the results of his own meditations and reveries as Divine oracles and prophecies; and that may quite naturally have made him less sensitive to the claims of veracity than the highest morality would require.

The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which profess to be the dying charges of the sons of Jacob to their children, are well characterized by Westcott[2] as due to a combination of enthusiasm and fraud; but in them the traces of a defective moral sentiment are more apparent. The treacherous conduct of Simeon and Levi to the Shechemites is justified;[3] acts of deceit are described without any compunction;[4] and Issachar is made to say,[5] "guile never entered my heart," though he is represented as taking part, at least by silence, in deceiving his father as to the fate of Joseph. These things betray a moral standard that would not be offended at the use of a pious fraud.

[1] See *Books which Influenced our Lord and His Apostles*, pp. 414–422. By John E. H. Thomson, B.D., Stirling. (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1891.)

[2] *On the Canon of the New Testament*, p. 355.

[3] Levi §§ 5, 6. [4] Judah § 7; Joseph § 11. [5] Issachar § 7.

The collection of so called Sibylline oracles that has come down to us is as strange and remarkable in its internal character as in its history. It is an extraordinary conglomerate of various elements, which the utmost skill of modern criticism can hardly discriminate with certainty. Fragments of ancient heathen oracles on various countries and cities; Jewish compositions of widely different dates, founded on the Old Testament prophecies, and clothed in Greek heroic verse; Christian interpolations of a similar nature, expressing the history and doctrines of the gospel; didactic pieces of a moral kind, which have been subjected to repeated editorial manipulation, form a confused mass, in which very little order or method can be discerned. All through these verses the profession is kept up, that they are the utterances of an ancient prophetess, who is sometimes introduced as speaking of herself as a daughter-in-law of Noah, earlier than the Trojan war, and predicting it as well as the poems of Homer. There can be no doubt that this representation was purposely adopted to gain credit for the oracles as real predictions. The form of the metre shows a disregard of the strict rules of the Alexandrian poets, and an affectation of the simplicity of Homer, which must have been due to a deliberate desire to produce an appearance of antiquity. The prophetic form cannot have been a mere literary artifice, like that used by Vergil in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, by Milton in the close of *Paradise Lost*, and by Gray in the *Bard*, which no one ever mistook for real predictions. The moral tone of the Sibylline oracles varies as much as their character in other respects, but nowhere does it seem inconsistent with the admission of a pious fraud. Moral and religious exhortations bear a much less proportion to mere prediction than in the prophetic books of Scripture, and some considerable portions are occupied with mere versifications of history put in a predictive form, but in the most prosaic and

artificial manner, the names of successive Roman emperors being indicated by the numerical value of the letters composing them. These puerilities however occur chiefly in the later portions, which are every way inferior to those of earlier date. In book iii., which contains probably the earliest of these poems, and was for the most part the work of a Jew in Egypt about 160 B.C., there are frequent moral exhortations, but chiefly against outward sins, such as polytheism, idolatry, uncleanness, and oppression. The Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic age are paraphrased with warmth and sympathy, and these may have been seen by Vergil and used as the foundation of his *Pollio*. A didactic poem, that was at one time ascribed to Phocylides, is embodied in book ii.; but though it has Christian additions, its morality is but commonplace. In book v., which was probably by a Jew in the time of Hadrian, the denunciations of judgment against Rome show some real earnestness in condemning religious and moral evils, and may have proceeded from an intense conviction that such vices must bring down Divine wrath. The Christian portions of these oracles consist chiefly of accounts of the incarnation, life, and death of Christ, and of His advent to judgment, and are more theological than religious or moral in tone, giving prominence to doctrine, and in some places containing references to the intercession of the Virgin, and the deliverance of souls from purgatory (ii. 313, 331–339). They contain no less distinct references to the Sibyl as an ancient prophetess than any other parts of the collection, and are sometimes highly artificial in form, especially in the acrostic (viii. 217–250), known to Augustine and Lactantius, in which the initials of the lines form the name and title of the Saviour.

It is not needful to say much about the *Clementine Recognitions* and *Homilies*, which are admittedly fictitious compositions, and examples of the general character of such

works, though they seem to have been regarded by Origen, who quotes, and by Rufinus, who translated the *Recognitions*, as authentic works of Clement. They are a sort of philosophical and religious romance, and were evidently composed with a view to be taken as true, and to exalt the honour of Peter and the claims of the Catholic hierarchy. While much in them is eloquently and impressively written in support of religion and morality, their contents show that the author, or authors, would not have shrunk from employing deception in the cause of Christianity. Not only is the doctrine of reserve in concealing the truth from the unworthy inculcated,[1] but it is represented that Gamaliel was really a Christian, allowed by a dispensation from the apostles to remain among the Jews in order to check their plans and warn the Christians of them;[2] Peter is said to have sent disciples as spies on Simon[3] for a similar purpose, to have assented to known falsehood,[4] made pretence of ignorance,[5] and practised a fraudulent personation.[6]

The various apocryphal gospels, Acts, and Revelations contain even less that is morally good and more that is childish, absurd, and pernicious than the *Clementines*, so that it were vain to search among them for instances of high moral character in pseudonymous books; and I think I have examined a sufficient number of the best of them to show that their moral and spiritual character is not inconsistent with their having been pious frauds, employed in what was supposed to be the service of religion, in an age when deceptions of that kind were common, and allowed by a current system of philosophy.

The fact that many modern critics think that some of the books of Scripture are pseudonymous, raises the question whether this is consistent with their being divinely

[1] *Recog.* ii. 3, 4, iii. 1; *Hom.* "Epistle of Peter to James," Cap. 1.
[2] *Recog.* i. 66. [3] *Hom.* ii. 37. [4] *Hom.* ii. 39.
[5] *Recog.* x, 2, 3, [6] *Recog.* x. 55, 61, 66.

inspired, or whether we ought to exclude from the canon any book that professes to be the work of another than its real author. This question cannot be fairly decided in such a summary and off-hand way as some answer it, who take extreme positions, either in the affirmative or the negative; for there are various considerations to be taken into account before we can have a right view of the matter.

In the first place, inspiration is consistent with any kind or form of literary composition that would be intelligible to the readers. This appears, both from the true conception of what inspiration is, and from the facts presented to us in the actually inspired writings. The statements that the Bible makes about the inspiration of its writers lead us to conceive of it as an influence of the Spirit of God, enabling those who received it to declare to their fellows truly and authoritatively the mind and will of God. The truth was to be conveyed in human language, and that, in order to be intelligible, must be used according to the natural character and habits of the speaker. Whatever idiom or mode of expression he would use in ordinary speech might be employed in speaking as moved by the Holy Spirit. Rhetoric, poetry, drama, allegory, or any other form of serious discourse that would be rightly understood in a mere human production, may equally find place in one divinely inspired. This is fully confirmed by the variety of literary forms in the books of the Old and New Testament. There we find the simplest narratives, the most impassioned eloquence, the most imaginative poetry, with all its figures of speech, parable, allegory, and dramatic composition in Job, Canticles, and some of the psalms. These last mentioned cases require us to admit, as consistent with inspiration, the ascription to historical personages of discourses not literally uttered by them. The recognised custom of antiquity allowed historians great freedom in representing the sentiments of the men about whom they wrote

by imaginary speeches, founded more or less completely on what was actually said. It is not therefore inconsistent with inspiration that a similar liberty be used by those who were moved by the Spirit of God, conveying substantial truth in an intelligible and impressive way. The speeches in Job, the Song of Songs, and some of Jesus' parables are examples of dramatic personation, which is a form of literature recognised in all educated communities; and if an entire book should appear to have been composed for a similar purpose, in order to present vividly the thoughts and feelings of an important person, there would not be in this fact any reason to say that it could not be divinely inspired. In short, whatever form of composition uninspired men employ to convey their ideas to others may be used by those who speak or write under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

A second consideration is, that an inspired book may come to be ascribed to an author to whom it does not belong, and to whose authorship it makes no claim. For this evidently pertains to the later history of the book, and has no bearing on its original composition, unless it could be maintained that Divine inspiration requires that in all cases the authorship of its productions should be so plainly ndicated that no mistake on this point could be made. But this is evidently not the case. Sometimes the inspired writers are at pains to identify themselves: and when they do so, we may presume that the authorship of these pieces is a matter of importance; but many books of the Old, and a few of the New Testament are anonymous, and in regard to these it must be assumed that the authorship is of no importance for their practical value and use, and their inspiration affords no security against mistakes about their authors. Even if a certain view of their origin and character led to them being regarded with reverence and received as holy Scripture, it does not follow that they cannot have been really inspired, should that view of their origin be

proved to be erroneous. There may be sufficient reasons of a more legitimate kind for believing them to be inspired; and it is no part of God's guidance of His people to secure that true conclusions shall never be supported by false reasons. Thus the doubts about the canonicity of the Epistle to the Hebrews were overcome largely by the belief that it was from the pen of Paul; but as it contains no such claim for itself, we may recognise it as bearing clear marks of inspiration, though we cannot believe it to be the work of the apostle of the Gentiles. So too the Song of Songs may owe its position in the ecclesiastical canon to the belief that it is an allegorical poem by king Solomon, and yet need not be rejected as uninspired or worthless by those who see in it rather a divinely prompted protest against the polygamy of the Jewish monarch.

Nay, if inspiration is compatible with inaccuracies in minor and unimportant points, it would not seem to be impossible that an erroneous view of the authorship of an inspired book might be given by a later writer, also inspired. If, for instance, it be a fact, as many not extreme critics hold, that the song in Deuteronomy xxxii. 1–43 is not really by Moses, but by some inspired writer of a later time, the editor of Deuteronomy can only be said to have fallen into a mistake as to its authorship; and if, as may fairly be said, the teaching and value of the song are quite the same, whether it was composed by Moses or by a later prophet, it cannot be laid down dogmatically that inspiration must have prevented such a trivial error on the part of the editor. So when the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews ascribes the 95th Psalm to David, his inspiration is not rendered doubtful, though that be merely a popular mistake. The theory of inspiration, that would make all such inaccuracies impossible, cannot be maintained without such a forced and unnatural exegesis as dishonours Scripture more than the frank admission of immaterial errors.

But there is a third consideration that must on no account be overlooked, since it is a fundamental principle of revealed religion that the Spirit that moved the writers of Scripture is the Holy Spirit, and that His influence is seen in nothing more unmistakably than in the moral purity and elevation of their tone and teaching. The great purpose of revelation is to deliver men from sin and its consequences, and bring them into fellowship with that God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil. We cannot therefore believe that the revealing Spirit is the author of anything unholy or immoral. Intentional falsehood or deceit must certainly be held to be immoral; and the detection of these in any composition, designed to promote selfish or sectarian ends, is inconsistent with its being divinely inspired. Yet even in regard to this, we must recognise the human factor in revelation, and the gradual way in which God educated men in morality. The full exposition of the moral law, as spiritual and requiring universal love and forgiveness of enemies, which Jesus gave, could not have been received by men in a lower and ruder state, when more elementary duties needed to be enforced by stern and terrible means; and Jesus Himself taught that the spirit which was to animate His disciples was not that fiery zeal that filled Elijah of old. The prayers for Divine judgment on the wicked contained in many of the psalms indicate an imperfect morality, when tried by the standard of New Testament teaching. Yet we do not need to regard these as uninspired; indeed we cannot do so, because in other respects these psalms breathe a pure and holy spirit, and are immeasurably superior to any other productions of the same age or stage of culture. The zeal against evil expressed in prayers for God's judgment was a holy and righteous zeal, which is always proper; but it could be expressed then only in a form that we now see to be defective, since Jesus has taught us a more excellent way, and

shown, by His atoning death, that the fullest vengeance against sin is compatible with forgiveness and love to all sinners.

Now the question arises, may there not have been a similar imperfection of moral ideas in regard to truthfulness in the earlier stages of revelation? It is an undoubted fact that the supreme and absolute claim of truth is one of the moral lessons that the world owes to Christianity, and that distinguish it, when preserved in its original purity, from heathen ethics. A tendency to use deceit for what were reckoned good or holy purposes is plainly seen in the history even of the most godly in the Old Testament, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David. The sacred historians have indeed generally shown, by the way in which they narrate such conduct and its consequences, that they disapprove of it, though in some cases apparently unqualified praise is given to actions good in the main, but involving falsehood. The song of Deborah certainly betrays imperfect morality in this respect; but it need not be regarded as in the proper sense inspired. There are also throughout the Bible frequent and most emphatic precepts and warnings against all lying and deceit, and in the New Testament these are so solemn and searching, that it is quite impossible to suppose that, after Christ's coming and ministry, the guidance of His Spirit could permit an inspired writer to use such pious frauds as were sanctioned by Gentile philosophy. The question is perhaps somewhat more difficult in regard to the Old Testament, by reason of the progressive nature of the moral standard in early ages; but when we consider the special guilt attached to speaking falsely in the name of the Lord, even in times when deceit in less sacred matters was not absolutely condemned, we are led to the conclusion that Divine inspiration, though compatible with any recognised literary form, and possibly with involuntary errors of an insignificant

kind, never did or could suggest or sanction wilful deceit, though it were for a good and holy end. The test would be, as Mr. Gore[1] suggests, whether the writer could have afforded to disclose the method and circumstances of his production. If not, it would be proved to be a forgery, such as we must hold to be inconsistent with inspiration.

The conclusion therefore would seem to be that books in which a false authorship is claimed, merely in order to gain the more acceptance for their contents, cannot be divinely inspired, or any part of the canon of Scripture. If any book is certainly proved by criticism to be of that nature, the necessary consequence should be that it be excluded from the canon; and, on the other hand, if any book possesses indubitable evidence of inspiration, and seriously professes to be by a particular author, that claim must be accepted as true. The two kinds of evidence are indeed quite independent; and it is therefore conceivable that they might conflict in some cases. If in such a conflict there were absolute certainty on both sides, on the one hand literary and critical evidence making it impossible that the work could be anything but a pious fraud, and on the other side every possible evidence of its being divinely inspired, the only conclusion would be that the doctrine of inspiration must be abandoned, or at least greatly modified. But this would only follow if the proof on both sides were such as to exclude all rational doubt. Such certainty is possible on either side, though it is not found in opposition in any case; and in most cases the evidence does not rise beyond a high degree of probability. In all cases in which the literary evidence points to the recognition of a pious fraud, while the spiritual character of the book and its use by our Lord as authoritative point to its being divinely inspired, it will be found that the evidence on one side or other is not absolutely conclusive, and there

[1] *Lux Mundi*. Preface to the tenth edition, p. xxx.

is only a balance of probabilities. In such cases the inquiry on each point should be carefully kept to its proper subject matter, and the critical question of authorship not influenced by theological considerations, nor the religious question of inspiration by mere literary conclusions; but after each has been fairly examined by its own evidence, an effort must be made to compare their relative degrees of probability, though the result may be that judgment must be suspended and fuller light waited for.

JAS. S. CANDLISH.

THE PURE WORD IN THE FOUL PLOT.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for man's wrath worketh not God's righteousness. Wherefore, clearing off all foulness and rankness of evil, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."—JAMES i. 19–21.

THE synagogue, not the temple, of the Jews was the model on which the primitive Churches were constructed. And in the synagogue the function of teaching was not confined to any one order or caste. Any intelligent and devout man might be called upon, by the ruler of the synagogue, to address an exhortation to the people. And in the primitive Churches any member who had "a gift" might exercise his gift, whether it were native to him or "miraculous," for the benefit of the congregation. There were teachers who were set apart for the work of the ministry, and no doubt there was an order of service; but this order was very elastic, and lent itself easily to any changes that were deemed beneficial. Teaching was not *limited* to those who were recognised as ministers of the Word. "When ye come together" for worship, says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "*every one* of you hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation," and proceeds to bid them speak in turn, that there may be