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No. I.

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ART. I.—*Remarks on the Studies and Discipline of the Preacher.*

THE habits of a young minister, in respect to mental culture, are very early formed, and hence no one can begin too soon to regulate his closet-practice by maxims derived from the true philosophy of mind, and the experience of successful scholars. Early introduction to active labour, in an extended field, partaking of a missionary and itinerant character, may, amidst much usefulness, spoil a man for life, in all that regards progress of erudition, and productiveness of the reasoning powers. Such a person may accomplish much in the way of direct and proximate good; but his fruit often dies with him, and he does little in stimulating, forming, and enriching the minds of others. On the other hand, a zealous young scholar, captivated with the intellectual or literary side of ministerial work, may addict himself to books in such a manner as to sink the preacher in the man of learning, and spend his days without any real sympathy with the affectionate duties of the working clergy. The due admixture of the contemplative with the active, of learning with labour, of private cultivation with public spirit, is a *juste milieu* which few attain, but which cannot be too earnestly recommended.

far greater part of them, been professors in universities. In those countries, the universities are continually draining the Church of all its most eminent men of letters."* These remarks have an application to the authorship of America, which we are compelled to leave to the reader's own mind.

But this whole subject of authorship is only incidental, and these remarks have trickled from the pen almost beyond our purpose. Even though the Christian pastor should never send a line to the press, he is continually engaged in literary production, and in a most important species of publication. There is no agency in the world which is more operative upon society than the faithful preaching of the gospel; there is none which demands more study, discipline, and wisdom. Hence every man who comprehends the greatness of his vocation will recognize the motives to unwearied exertion in the task of self-control, mental activity, and devoted inquiry after truth.

J. Wilson Anderson.

ART. II.—*The Plan and Purpose of the Patriarchal History.*

ONE of the faults imputed by the modern, and especially the German critics, to the older schools of biblical interpretation, is the habit of neglecting the specific primary design of the several books of Scripture, and the class of readers for whom they were immediately intended, and from whose character and wants their peculiarities of form and structure often flow directly. In avoiding this extreme, the later writers often run into the opposite, by fanciful hypotheses and extravagant refinements; but this does not invalidate the truth of the fact which they allege, or detract from the importance of the general principle which they lay down, to wit, that no book of the Bible can be fully or correctly understood without a due regard to its original and primary design, and to the readers more immediately addressed. The assumption of such primary

* *Wealth of Nations*, book v. chap. i.

design is not at all at variance with the supposition, that all the inspired writings were intended for permanent and universal use; as appears from the canonical reception and perpetuation of epistles addressed in the first instance to single churches, or church officers, or even private members. If in these cases we are authorized and bound to have regard to the primary design of the composition, there is nothing *a priori* to forbid the assumption of such a design in the other parts of Scripture. That such an assumption is not only allowable, but absolutely necessary to a complete and satisfactory interpretation, may be best shown by means of a particular example; and we know of none better suited to this end, or more interesting in itself, than that afforded by the book of Genesis.

This radical or fundamental part of the Old Testament has often been expounded, and perhaps is usually read, as if it were a desultory journal of events recorded at the time of their occurrence, and intended merely to preserve their memory for its own sake, or to satisfy a vague curiosity, without regard to any more specific purpose, or a view to any definite immediate influence on any particular class of readers. To this inert and superficial view of its design and origin may be attributed without injustice not a few of the jejune interpretations to which the book has been subjected, and not a little of the ill-disguised indifference with which a large proportion of its contents is regarded by the great mass even of believing readers.

The truth of this suggestion may be easily tested by observing the immediate change effected in the aspect of the book to any reader, even prior to detailed investigation, by a simple recollection of the fact which we shall here assume as true, and which is really among the most notorious in literary history, that the book which, after the example of the Seventy, is commonly called *Genesis*, (or *Generation*,) as containing the *origines* of all authentic history, was composed by Moses, to prepare the chosen people for the complicated system under which they were to live for ages, and more immediately to solve certain questions, which would almost necessarily present themselves, in reference to their condition in the land of Egypt, and the causes by which it was produced. These could only be

explained by exhibiting the history of the chosen race from the beginning of its separate existence; and this exhibition could be rendered intelligible only by carrying it back to the primitive condition of mankind, and indeed to the creation. This view of the first part of the history, as simply introductory to that of the ancient Church, relieves some of the difficulties which arise from the assumption that it was designed to answer scientific or even general historical purposes. The Mosaic Cosmogony is simply introductory to the creation and original condition of man; and this again to the account of the fall; and this to the Protevangelium, or first promise of a Saviour, with its prophetic distinction of the race into two hostile and antagonistic parties, of which Christ and Satan are the heads and representatives. The character and destiny of these two parties forms the subject of all subsequent religious history, beginning with the contrast presented in the family of Adam, between Cain as the despiser, and Abel as the receiver, of the appointed method of salvation, already symbolized by animal oblations. When this experiment, as some have called it, was brought abruptly to an end by letting a corrupted nature work out its effects without control, it was immediately renewed by substituting Seth* for Abel, and then exhibiting the same contrast as before, but on a vastly larger scale, extending through a long series of generations and of ages, until brought to a conclusion, not as in the first case, by brute force, but by a process of moral deterioration, terminating in an actual assimilation and amalgamation of the representative races, and a consequent corruption of the whole earth, which could only be corrected and avenged by a catastrophe like that of the universal deluge, winding up and closing the first great period of human history, and more especially the history of what may, in a wide but not improper sense, be called the "Church before the Flood."

This special reference to the immediate purpose of the book is no less clear in the second great division of the history, or what may be described as the Noachic period, or, viewed in its

* The very name means *substitution*.

relations to the chosen race, the history of the "Church after the Flood." The new world, which emerged, as it were, from the submersion of the old, to be recopied by the sons of Noah; the unique historical position occupied by Noah himself, as a second father of mankind; the new covenant and promise to the race through him; the special promise to the family of Shem; the early interruption of the history by human crimes and errors; the division of the earth; the confusion of tongues; the origin of despotisms, hostile nationalities, and false religions; the declension even of the chosen race from its original integrity, requiring for the execution of the divine purpose a fresh segregation from the body of that race itself;—these, which are the main points of the history in the second scene or period, all derive their value and their title to a place in this brief but most authoritative record, from their bearing on the end for which the whole book was written, from their serving to explain the extraordinary relative position of the Hebrews with respect to other nations, as the obvious result of causes long in operation, determined and controlled by a divine plan, partially disclosed from the beginning.

But all this, comprehended in the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis, is merely introductory to the body of the history, contained in the remainder of the book, and exhibiting, with far more minuteness of detail than was admissible before, the third great phase of human progress, corresponding to the "Church of the Patriarchs," or, to use more general terms, the patriarchal period of primeval history.*

This period extends from the migration of Abram into Canaan, to the migration of Israel into Egypt, or more exactly, to the commencement of the series of events which led to that migration, and which cannot well be separated from it. The period, therefore, may be properly considered as terminating where the history of Joseph begins, and as coextensive with that part of Genesis from the twelfth to the thirty-sixth chapters, both inclusive—a period, in round numbers, of about two centuries. Of this extensive and eventful period the de-

* Some German writers, followed by Fairbairn in his *Typology*, apply the term *Patriarchal* to the whole ante-Mosaic history; but this is a less convenient designation, as well as less familiar to the English reader.

tailed facts are already familiar to our readers, or accessible in Scripture. All that we can here attempt is either the solution of particular difficulties, which present themselves in no small number, or the presentation of such general views as may serve to place the whole in its true light, and the several parts in their mutual relation. As we have only space for one of these points, and scarcely that, we have no hesitation in preferring the latter, for two reasons; first, because it admits of being made more interesting in a brief survey; and secondly, because correct general views afford a key to the solution of particular difficulties, whereas the converse of this proposition is not true. It will appear, we trust, as we proceed, that some familiar cavils in relation to this part of sacred history, are indirectly but effectually silenced by a simple statement of its plan and purpose. To ascertain this plan and purpose is the chief end which we have in view.

We shall assume it as no longer to be questioned, even by the skeptical interpreter, that Genesis is not a series of detached and independent documents, mechanically strung together by the hand of a compiler,* much less a farrago of heterogeneous fragments accidentally combined—but a bona fide history, most carefully constructed, and with constant reference to a specific purpose. As to this last point, we may cite the strong expressions of a contemporary German writer, among the highest philological authorities of his age and nation, who, though not a believer in the proper inspiration of the book, nor even in the truth of all its historical details, does not scruple to affirm that, of all historical works, ancient or modern, there is not one in which the selection and arrangement of the matter is so constantly and evidently regulated by one dominant idea.† This concession is fatal to the extravagant hypothesis before referred to, and a severe rebuke to the

* This does not exclude the supposition, in behalf of which there is a great deal to be said, that the book contains documents far older than the time of Moses, handed down by oral or written tradition in the patriarchal church, and finally incorporated, by divine authority, in this inspired history; a supposition not to be confounded with the infidel hypothesis of subsequent interpolations.

† Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*. The value of this testimony is enhanced, rather than impaired, by the author's own extravagant hypothesis as to the composition of the Pentateuch.

unworthy views which even some believing writers entertain of the inspired record, as entirely destitute of all scientific or literary merit, when considered as a specimen of historiography. It may also prompt us to inquire, with increased curiosity and interest, what the writer's "dominant idea" is. It is here that the errors, which have been already stated, with respect to the design of the whole book, more particularly show themselves, namely, in application to the history of the patriarchs. It is necessary, therefore, to a just view of the subject, that some false assumptions, which have served to disfigure and obscure the history, should be distinctly set aside. Some of these are so decidedly infidel in origin and spirit, that they might be safely suffered to pass *sub silentio*, but for the fact that they have found their way into English books, and are sometimes unexpectedly encountered even among unlearned readers. It is better therefore to afford the means of refutation or solution than to let them operate unchecked by ignoring their existence.

The first is the idea that the patriarchs were mere nomadic chieftains, like the Bedouin Arabs, and that the germ or essence of their history is just such as might be furnished by the lives of thousands, but embellished and exaggerated into a historical romance, that is to say, an interesting narrative founded on fact, but adorned, to an indefinite extent, by the imagination of the writer. This is the very lowest view of the patriarchal history, consistent with its unity and definite relation to some end or purpose. Besides its infidel rejection of whatever happens to transcend our own experience as of course fictitious, it leads necessarily to an extreme extenuation and belittling of whatever elevation there is either in the characters or the events. On this hypothesis, the scale of everything recorded must be so reduced as to comport with the idea, that we have before us nothing more than the biography of certain wandering shepherds, written in a style of oriental exaggeration. The effects of this extravagant assumption are as bad in point of taste as they are incompatible with our ideas of religious truth, and contradictory to the overwhelming evidence in favour of the whole book, as being not only authentic but inspired of God. It has therefore been held only by a class of

writers as devoid of true taste as of true religion, and is now very commonly abandoned, even among unbelievers. Some, however, who would be ashamed to hold it in its grossest form, attempt to reconcile it with good taste and common sense by a slight modification, which only serves to make it more incredible, without in the least rendering it more attractive. This is the notion, that the lives of the patriarchs are not historical at all, nor even meant to be so regarded, but a poetical description of pastoral life, akin to the *Eclogues* and *Bucolics* of the Greeks and Romans. Without attempting to point out the other obvious absurdities of this hypothesis, it is sufficiently exploded by the fact, that so large a part of the pretended pastoral is occupied with dry details of chronology and genealogy. What would Virgil or Theocritus have thought of such an idyl as the tenth or thirty-sixth of *Genesis*? Under both its forms, the theory in question, which denies to the patriarchal history any higher end than that of entertainment, is now generally laughed at.

From this, by a kind of reaction which is constantly recurring in the history of opinion, has arisen a hypothesis no less extravagant, though morally far less objectionable, as it has no necessary tendency to fritter away or pare down all that is grand and striking in the history. This is the opinion that the history of the patriarchs is strictly true, but not in its most obvious and proper sense, as a piece of individual biography, but rather as the history of races and great revolutions, clothed in the disguise of personal adventure and domestic incidents. According to this notion, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not the names of real individual men, but ideal types and representatives of certain classes, principles, or races. The writers who maintain this strange position account for the origin of such a history by supposing that a few vague traditions of the early ages which had reached the time of Moses, were brought by him or others into this shape, for the purpose of filling up a chasm in history, and making the record of the old world similar in form to that of which authentic memorials were extant.

This hypothesis, like the one first mentioned, has been modified, but so as essentially to change its character, by making

the patriarchal history to be not a mere embodying of old traditions in the form of personal biography, but a deliberate invention, founded upon subsequent events, and intended to account for them. The motive or design of the invention is supposed to have been that of glorifying Israel at the expense of other nations, and especially of those most near akin, and therefore rivals. Hence, it is said, the Moabites and Ammonites, as hated neighbours of the Jews, are traced to an incestuous origin; the Edomites, with whom the Israelites were constantly at war, are represented as the offspring of the wicked Cain; the extermination of the Canaanites is justified by making their remote progenitor the object of a special curse. Hence too the rite of circumcision is made the seal of a divine command and covenant; the institution of tithes is recommended by the example of Melchizedek and Abraham; the sanctity of Mount Moriah, where the temple stood, is traced back to the sacrifice of Isaac; and so of many other salient points in the patriarchal or primeval history.

If this doctrine needs to be refuted, it may be effected by two simple arguments. The first is, that the actual structure of the history does not agree with the alleged design. Not only might the book be read a thousand times without suspecting its existence; but a writer who had wit enough to use such an artifice must have had wit enough to make it more effective, by denying the relationship of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, altogether, and by suppressing all that is humiliating to the pride of Israel in the history of his origin and progress as a nation, or in the character and conduct of the patriarchs.

The other reason is, that such a theory may be applied, with equal probability, to every other history in existence, and being demonstrably false in a thousand other cases, is not very likely to hold good in this. It is the common law of logic, that an argument which proves too much proves too little; much more must one that proves everything prove nothing. The detailed proofs under this head we might leave to the memory or reflection of the reader; but it may not be superfluous to give a single illustration, drawn from our own history, and therefore furnishing a surer, or at least a more impressive test of truth and falsehood than if sought at a remoter

distance. Let us suppose then that a future critic of our national history—and if a German, so much the better—should insist upon the strong improbability that such a Revolution should have been occasioned by a cause so trifling as the stamp act or the tax on tea, and should therefore represent these as symbolical myths, suggested by the rivalry of England and America, at a later period, in the tea-trade with China, and by the disputes respecting an international copy-right. These positions, though notoriously false, would admit of being far more plausibly defended than the favourite postulates of Strauss or Baur. Such a writer would of course find it easy to go further, and represent Washington as an unnatural, impossible character, yet highly significant and appropriate as a generic type of republican and patriotic virtues. It is plain that this ingenious child's play might be carried on *ad infinitum*; and this very facility of endless extension and universal application deprives it of all force, as a proof that the imaginary process was a real one, or that the stream of history flows upwards from its estuary to its source. In spite of such sophisticated refinements, the common sense of mankind will still cleave to the lesson taught by all experience and analogy, that primeval history must deal with individualities, and that myths, whether popular or philosophical, can only be obtained from these by generalizing combinations.

From the strained and artificial figments of this theory, or rather whimsey, it is natural to seek relief in the old familiar doctrine, that the patriarchal history was recorded for the moral improvement of mankind, by furnishing examples of virtue and vice, with their appropriate rewards and punishments. Here we may breathe more freely, as we feel that we are passing from infidel to Christian ground. We may also rest assured, at once and *a priori*, that this theory, unlike the bubbles which we have been blowing, contains an element of solid truth. It is none the less certain, however, that considered as an exclusive and exhaustive explanation of the end for which the history was written, it must be rejected as decisively, though not so contemptuously, as the others.

The first objection to this popular and favourite opinion, which prevails especially among the pious and believing, but

unlearned and superficial class of readers, is, that the whole structure of the record and the choice of its materials are as really at variance with this supposition as they are with that of a romance or pastoral. The personal narratives are far too few and meager, and the space occupied by genealogy and other unedifying matter far too large, to admit of our regarding this as the exclusive end, or even as the chief end of the composition. That it has this incidental use and purpose, is no more than may be said, in different degrees, of every human history; but the marked peculiarities just mentioned show conclusively that, be the secondary use and purpose what it may, the chief and direct end must be something else. Had the immediate design of Moses been to teach his brethren general principles of morals, or the specific duties of religion, and to illustrate these by the events of patriarchal history, it must be clear to every sensible, unbiassed reader, that the facts would have been differently chosen in the first place, and in the next place differently framed and put together.

But besides the objections to this theory arising from the meagerness of the record, and the unedifying nature of a part of its contents, there is a still more serious objection in the fact, that it has led to great abuses and perversions of the Scripture, in relation to the character and conduct of the patriarchs and those with whom they are contrasted or compared. Supposing these to be recorded as examples of a good and evil character, the reader is naturally tempted to exalt the one and to depreciate the other, without any definite or certain limit. We find accordingly in writers and preachers who adopt this method, a habitual propensity to justify or explain away every appearance of a fault in the conduct of the patriarchs; a process which in many cases is effected only by a forced interpretation of the narrative itself, or by a still more dangerous tampering with the principles of morals. The true solution of the patriarchal sins recorded often without any direct censure, is afforded by the fact, too often overlooked, and tacitly denied by the hypothesis in question, that the great theme, even of the patriarchal history, is not the patriarchs, but God himself, the execution of his purposes, with which they are only, as it were, accidentally connected, and their

lives recorded, not as models, but as instruments, employed in the development and realization of a plan, with which they were themselves but partially acquainted. This will be rendered clearer by a more direct and positive statement, for which the way is now prepared, of the real plan and purpose of the history.

Bearing in mind, then, that the book was written to prepare the ancient Church or chosen people for their covenant relation to Jehovah and the onerous restrictions of the law of Moses, the specific ends included in this general one may be described as follows; and the test of their correctness will be found in their serving or failing to explain why such and such events have been recorded, and a multitude of others, in themselves perhaps no less important, buried in oblivion. The complete explanation is of course not afforded by any one of the designs about to be enumerated, but by all together; that is to say, if the insertion of a fact may be accounted for by any one of these designs, though not referable to any of the others, the historian is thereby freed from the imputation of an arbitrary and unmeaning choice of his materials.

The first and main design of the patriarchal history was to teach the Israelites of the Mosaic age, that the segregation of a single race, to be the trustees or depositaries of an exclusive revelation, was no new thing, but had been going on for ages, not only in purpose but in act, the promise and command becoming constantly more clear and definite, and the lines of demarcation more distinct and closer together.

In the second place, it was designed to show that this designation of a chosen people was not merely theoretical or nominal, but proved to be real by manifest tokens of the divine presence and protection, often granted to them at the expense of others, either for their punishment and extirpation, or to lead them to acknowledge the prerogatives of God's peculiar people. Here we have an example of the way in which correct general views afford a key to perplexing difficulties of detail. Nothing has given rise to greater cavil than the frequent divine interpositions in the patriarchal history, and often under circumstances where to us they might appear superfluous. Now nothing can be less adapted to relieve this

difficulty than the course which some believing writers have adopted, namely, that of extenuating all that seems to be miraculous, or, if possible, explaining it away, as if the admission of anything supernatural were at best a necessary evil. But this apologetic method, and the difficulty which it undertakes to solve, are swept away together by the simple assumption, that one main design of the patriarchal history was to show the presence of Jehovah with his people—not his gracious or his providential presence merely—but his special and extraordinary presence, so that if the history could really be purged of its miraculous or supernatural element, it would lose one of the strongest proofs of its being what it claims to be. And this remark extends, not only to miracle and prophecy, but to the theophanies or divine appearances in human form, and to all those cases of familiar intercourse between God and the patriarchs, which infidels repudiate as incredible, and which some Christian writers labour to get rid of, by explaining them as oriental figures of speech, or as representations suited to the infant stage of human progress.

The two features which have been described as characteristic of the patriarchal history, would naturally operate on human weakness and corruption as a source of pride. To counteract this tendency, the history is so framed, in the third place, as to hold up in the clearest and the strongest light the absolute sovereignty of the divine choice, and its entire independence of all meritorious claim, not only in the original object, but in any or in all of his successors. To this end it was absolutely necessary that the intrinsic weakness and corruption of the chosen vessels should be clearly seen, and that the providential process which controlled them should plainly appear to have been independent of their own choice, and often in direct opposition to their cherished wishes. In illustration of this last point, we can only make a reference in passing to the singular and otherwise mysterious fact, that the hopes of Abraham respecting Ishmael, the hopes of Isaac with respect to Esau, and the hopes of Jacob with respect to Joseph, were all entirely disappointed, so far as the spiritual birthright and prophetic pre-eminence were concerned. Here, again, the very statement of the general design sweeps away, on one side, all objec-

tions founded on the moral unworthiness of those so highly favoured, and, on the other, shows the inexpediency of trying to explain away or palliate unduly that unworthiness, because such efforts, if successful, would defeat one great end of the history, and of the series of events which it records. At the same time, it is so constructed as to guard against the evil, that extraordinary favour shown to objects so unworthy, is a virtual connivance at their sins, by visibly connecting those sins with retributive judgments, so that the worst trials of the patriarchs and those allied to them, may be distinctly traced to those very errors, which proved them to be in themselves unworthy of the honours that distinguished them. This may be represented as a third design, distinctly kept in view throughout the history, to wit, that of showing that the patriarchs were favoured, not because of their transgressions, but in spite of them, and not for their own sakes, but for a far higher purpose.

But notwithstanding these correctives, there was still a danger that the chosen people, although well aware that they had no claims upon God, might learn to look upon themselves as intrinsically better than the other nations, from whom they had been set apart, and as therefore entitled to a permanent precedence and superiority. The possibility of such an error is evinced not only by the later history of ancient Israel, but by its actual existence, at this moment, in the minds of all unconverted, and of some professedly converted Jews. Now, one of the highest, and, as it seems to us, most obvious designs of the whole history, is to stifle this absurd and odious presumption, and to keep the people constantly in mind that their separation was not only independent of all merit in themselves, but meant to serve a temporary purpose, and not only reconcilable with the salvation of the Gentiles, but designed expressly to promote it and prepare the way for it; in other words, that the direct revelation of the truth was taken from the nations only to be given back to them in greater fulness and with happier results than if they had not lost it.

Here again a just view of the purpose of the history, even when stated in its vaguest form, disposes of a whole class of objections, not so common among us as among foreign skept-

tics, yet now and then imbibed and reproduced by their American and English copyists; to wit, those founded on the seeming inconsistency between the wideness of the patriarchal promises, and the exclusive institutions of the law. This is even made an argument by some to disprove the Mosaic origin of Genesis, because the author of a system so exclusive could not have recorded prophecies and promises so free and ecumenical. But if it should appear that the restrictions were intended to continue only for a time, and as necessary means for the fulfilment of those earlier predictions; and if the later history of Israel demonstrates their inveterate propensity to lose sight of the end for which they existed as a nation; and if it is reasonable to suppose that this abuse would in some way be provided for in revelation; then the seeming inconsistency in question is a real, though an incidental proof of authenticity.

The way in which this object is provided for, is by continually spreading out before the reader the great map of human history, tracing all nations to a common origin, and showing how the lines of their descent are ever crossing one another. In this way, two great objects are constantly presented; first, the littleness of Israel among the nations, and the consequent greatness of the divine favour which had so distinguished them; and secondly, the bonds which still connected them with other races, and especially with those whose contiguity to Palestine was likely to engender special jealousy, and lead to frequent actual collisions. Here, again, a whole class of objections disappears at once, to wit, those founded on the minute genealogies, not only of the chosen race itself, which might have been accounted for by reference to the expected birth of the Messiah, but of those from which it had been violently severed. Thus viewed, the recorded genealogies of these excised branches are exponents of a very different feeling from that of national antipathy; for they ought to have reminded the more favoured race, that after all, Moab and Ammon were the sons of Lot, Ishmael of Abraham, and Esau of Isaac.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that this view of the subject does not at all forbid the supposition that the genealogies, as well as other features of the patriarchal history, were intended to promote collateral and minor ends; a supposition

which in fact confirms the historical character of the relation, by stamping it more distinctly with the clearest indications of design.

Besides the great moral and religious uses which may thus be traced throughout the patriarchal history, there are others which are not so obvious, and may seem intrinsically less important, but are no less real, and connect it no less closely with the other books. Such is the seeming intention of the writer to prepare the people for the onerous restrictions of the law, by showing that some of them belonged, at least in their principle and germ, to the religion of an earlier age. Such too is the still more obvious intention to familiarize their minds with certain definite localities, to which a more religious interest was afterwards to be attached. The specification of collateral and secondary purposes might easily be multiplied, but with the hazard of obscuring and confusing those predominant designs which have been already stated.

With respect to these, it will not be denied that, if they really exist, they tend not only to establish the unity of the history, and thereby to corroborate the other proofs of authenticity, but also to dispose of many cavils and objections, not by empirical excision of the branches, but by total extirpation of the root. The only question is, what right or reason have we to assume the existence of these several designs, any more than that of others, which have been rejected as supposititious? The answer is, because the latter are paradoxical assumptions *a priori*, contradicting all analogy, and making the confusion often charged upon the record worse confounded; while the former are obtained by an analytical induction from the history itself, and tend confessedly to bring its parts into mutual agreement, and to harmonize the whole with what precedes and follows. Assume that the writer merely wrote for the amusement or amazement of his readers—or that he changed a mass of vague traditions into a concrete and circumstantial history—or that he fabricated persons and occurrences, to suit the course of subsequent events—or even that he simply aimed at moral or religious edification, and you are met at every step by difficulties not to be surmounted—or by facts irreconcilable with the supposed design. But only take for granted—what

is certainly no less intrinsically credible—that Moses wrote this book, by divine direction, to prepare the people for his legislation, and to guard against the errors into which they were perpetually falling afterwards—and all is clear; the parts succeed each other in a natural, intelligible order; the selection of materials explains itself; and the reader becomes conscious of that undefinable but not unreal sense of intellectual ease, which ever accompanies a clear perception of an author's general drift, as well as of his meaning in particular expressions.

Nidor Loversal

ART. III.—*Exegesis of Heb. vi. 4-8.*

THE exegetical importance and interest of this passage are not so great as the historical and doctrinal. It is this passage, a rigid interpretation of which is said to have induced the Montanists, the Novatians, and afterwards the Donatists, to refuse admission to the church to the *lapsed*, that is, to those who had in any way become guilty of idolatry, adultery, or murder. Since Spanheim and Wetstein, and latterly mainly through the influence of Hug, the opinion has gained currency that the Latin Church, whose treatment of the *lapsed* was a more lenient one, as the opposing schismatics quoted this to them irrefragable scriptural authority in support of their own manner of proceeding, was led by this interpretation, which was so much at variance with the other teachings of Paul, to deny first the Pauline authorship, then the apostolicity, and consequently the canonicity of this Epistle, whilst (say the advocates of this opinion) the Greek Church not being involved in the controversy of this practical question, and hence more moderate, because not blinded by the heat of the contest, adopted a different exegesis of the passage from that current in the West. When the Latin Church receded afterwards from this strict interpretation, which made the passage refer to true Christians, they also received this Epistle as canonical. This theory, however, confessedly got up to account for the