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AND

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

CONDUCTED BY

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ery interpretation, then, is to be rejected, which is based upon any other value of the letters, than that which they have in the Hebrew language. A special reason against the first interpretation is also to be found in the vagueness of the designation—Latin; for, in the number, as must be acknowledged, is intended to be concealed a designation of an individual, as definite as possible.

The second interpretation, Caesar Romae, that is (Caesar being taken as the designation of the imperial rank) emperor of Rome, comes nearer to satisfying this intention. But it presupposes the correctness of the reading, 616; and rejects the usual reading, 666, which Irenaeus found in all the ancient and exact manuscripts. And it rejects this reading as spurious, on almost the same grounds, on which it is received as genuine in the first interpretation; that is, that it originated in the desire to get a round number.

Our own interpretation is as follows. In the number, we have the value of the letters in Hebrew, that form the name of Nero himself, as this is given in the Talmud, and other rabbinical writings: $\text{קסר} = 50 + 200 + 6 + 50$ and $100 + 60 + 200 = 666$. And when we add, that along with the Grecian and Hebrew pronunciation of his name, the shorter Roman pronunciation also existed, Nero Caesar, and that this, in Hebrew, is written $\text{קסר} = 50 + 200 + 6$ and $100 + 6 + 200$, which together make up 616; the ancient various reading is also entirely accounted for.

The correctness of this interpretation has, thus, a double voucher.

ARTICLE IV.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

By Dr. C. A. Harless, Professor of Theology in Erlangen, Bavaria. Translated by Rev. Henry Boynton Smith, West Amesbury, Ma.

[The following dissertation was published, as a University Programm, at Erlangen, in 1842. Its author is principally known by his elaborate Commentary upon the Epistle to the Ephesians, which appeared in 1834. This has been cited, even by German critics, as being the model of a commentary. And it is no less dis-

¹ The fuller form, $\text{קסר} = 50 + 200 + 6 + 50$, is usually found in Jewish writings; e. g. Thalm. Bab. Gittin. Fol. 56 a. But this comes from the same effort to be clear, which makes them, in the same place. $\text{קסר} = 50 + 200 + 6$ for $\text{קסר} = 50 + 200 + 6 + 50$, etc.

tinguished for its orthodox character, than for its logical and philological acumen. In 1842, Dr. Harless also published a system of Christian Ethics, which in four months came to a second edition. He is likewise the editor of an able periodical, devoted to the interests of "Protestantism and the Church."

The essay here translated, is the second of a series. The first is chiefly occupied with a discussion of the famous passage from Papias, so often cited in favor of a supposed Hebrew original to the Gospel of Matthew. The subsequent numbers, not yet published, are to be devoted to an "exposition of the difference between the leading idea of Matthew and that of the other evangelists; and to the arguments which may thence be derived for the general nature and truth of the evangelical history."

The whole question of the authenticity of the canonical gospels is now undergoing the severest scrutiny from German theologians. Most of the recent criticisms move within the sphere of two false hypotheses. The one is, that the evangelists copied from each other. Here the question remains, which is the original gospel? Each one has its advocates. The other hypothesis is, that they have all re-written some original gospel, or gospels, now lost. Either of these theories might explain the coincidences, but neither of them explains the diversities of the evangelical narrations; and both deny the independent validity of the four witnesses.

If now, the coincidences of the Gospels may be sufficiently explained by their having the same subject-matter; and their diversities, by the different leading purpose of each evangelist; and if such a distinct leading idea can be traced through each, so that he shall be thus proved an independent witness; then all tolerable basis, derived from internal evidence, for either of the above theories, will be taken away.

The chief value of the following dissertation, is the attempt to show that the first canonical gospel is constructed according to a legitimate and definite design.—Tr.]

SOME deny the authenticity of the Gospel according to Matthew, on the ground of external testimony. This error, upon a previous occasion, we have endeavored to refute.¹ But in determining the whole question of authenticity, our decision should be based, not

¹ In a university Programm, published on the day that commemorates the nativity of Jesus Christ, "ubi de fabula agitur, quam secuti Matthaeum librum suum Syro-Chaldaice scripsisse perhibent." Erlangen, 1841.

only upon the testimony of witnesses, but also upon the nature and characteristics of the book itself. The signs of its origin should be seen impressed upon its very face. But that the Gospel called by the name of Matthew, is deficient in these signs, is virtually affirmed by all, who with Schleiermacher, Lachmann and others maintain, "that this book was at first made up of a collection of the sermons of our Lord Jesus Christ, into which other narratives were afterwards interpolated." Such a statement can be grounded only upon one of two positions; either that the narrations in the book do not proceed in a methodical way; or, that the events are described with a marked difference in style and language. And since there are, confessedly, no dissimilarities in style, the only ground left for the inference, that this Gospel is the work of several authors, must be a supposed deficiency in that consecutiveness and arrangement, by which we recognize any work as the composition of one author and the same mind.

But, now, it must needs be confessed, that this same gospel of Matthew is justified and lauded by some theologians, in the very respects in which it is blamed by others. It is not a little remarkable, that a book, which some critics describe as a confused medley, is especially signalized by others for the very reason, that the author goes on in a methodical course, arranges everything well; and, having a definite object in view, accurately recounts, if we may so say, the ebb and flow of the whole history.¹ Now, that a book should be highly eulogized by one for the possession of a given quality, and blamed by another for defect in the same quality, is explicable only on the supposition, that theologians are not agreed as to the meaning of the terms of the inquiry—what is the proper arrangement to which a canonical author should adhere in the narration of events. So far from straining every nerve, to prevent a surreptitious application of any other arrangement, than that which the *author* himself intended, and which the *rationale* of the book demands; it seems to have been thought sufficient, in passing judgment upon the Evangelists, to follow the general norm of

¹ While many agree in giving this praise, they disagree in defining the mode in which the author has accomplished his object. Among the more recent writers, may be compared, Credner, "Einleit. in das N. T. Th. I., S. 60—68;" Schneckenburger, "Ueber den Ursprung des ersten kanon. Evangel. Stuttg. 1834. S. 100;" Kern, "Ueber den Ursprung des Evangel. Matthaei. Tübing. 1834. S. 42;" a little work by Schlichthorst, "Ueber das Verhältniss der drei synopt. Evang. u. s. w. Gött. 1835; and the remarks of Ebrard, in his "Wissenschaftliche Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte u. s. w. Erste Lieferung. Frankf. a. M. 1842. S. 76 fgg."

historical compositions; and, according to this rule, to decide, which one of the canonical authors has best unfolded the whole subject—which one is more copious, and which more chary in handing down and describing events—which has adhered to and which abandoned the chronological order—or, generally speaking, which has discharged his functions as an historian, better or worse, according to the current notion of the proper rule and method. Thus, by putting the apostles and witnesses of Christ, upon the same level with the writers of annals, and measuring the apostolical method by the profane method, the whole subject has been weighed, not by its own, but by a foreign standard.

Assuredly, so long as critical men proceed in such devious ways, so long we must despair of coming to an agreement about the true nature and dignity of the gospels.¹

A proper discussion of the subject demands, that in instituting an investigation respecting the whole evangelical narration, or the individual authors, we should first of all diligently seek for the original conception or leading idea, which the author had in his own mind, and the mode in which, in his writings, he has intended to express this conception. Thus, in the separate parts, peculiar to each author, we may be able to distinguish that special conformation of the members and that distinct arrangement of the lineaments, by which the writer has endeavored to give, as it were, an express image of the idea he had framed in his own mind. For although the Evangelists may not have handed down, what things they saw and heard, according to the rules of art, or the historical method, yet each of them clearly gives the definite reason, which induced him to construct his Gospel in the particular form in which it is given to us.

We proceed now to the investigation of the applicability of these positions to the *Gospel of Matthew*. For if this book is constructed according to a leading idea, it will at least establish the position, that it can have only *one author*.

There is one circumstance apparent at the first glance, which ought not to be passed by in silence, though it may seem of minor importance. The whole book is distributed into distinct members, of which the *commisures* and joints may be detected in the phrases, where the author, speaking in general terms and wider propositions, either ends or begins the narration of particular events. By a due observance of these, we can distinguish *five*

¹ This point has been well discussed by Ebrard, in the work above cited.

parts in the whole Gospel. The **FIRST PART** ends at the close of the fourth chapter. The author, having previously described the birth, the infancy, the baptism and the public teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, concludes this portion by the words in the twenty-third, twenty-fourth, and fifth verses. Here, in general terms, he certifies to the readers, that Jesus Christ went about all Galilee, great multitudes of people following him, and his fame daily increasing; teaching in the synagogues, announcing the coming of the kingdom of God, and healing all manner of sickness. In like manner, we find the end of the **SECOND PART** indicated in the ninth chapter, in the words from the thirty-fifth verse to the thirty-eighth, where we are told that our Lord, "going about all the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people," saw their wretched condition, and the extreme need of divine assistance to relieve so much misery. For the author, having in these words concisely summed up the state of the case, pauses a while, as it were, that he may incite the mind of the reader to the recollection of what has gone before, as well as to the expectation of what is to follow. In almost the same fashion, the words in the last four verses of the fourteenth chapter denote the end of the **THIRD PART**. The author, having shown at some length, that although Jesus, by his divine works, had approved himself divinely commissioned for his office, he was nevertheless exposed to the wiles and machinations of enemies, here declares, in general terms, with how much love and faith the inhabitants of the land of Gennesaret received him; how they sent into all the country, and brought to him all that were diseased, and that great numbers "who touched but the hem of his garment were made perfectly whole." Not less pertinent are the words in the nineteenth chapter, the first and second verses, where we are told, as if in a summary, how great crowds followed Jesus when he departed from the borders of Galilee; and how many sick he cured in the province of Judea. In these passages, the author, interrupting the series of particular narratives, and comprising much in a few words, pauses, that his readers may see in these words, that one stage of the narrative is closed, and that an introduction to what follows is carefully prepared. Therefore we shall not err in saying, that, in this passage of the nineteenth chapter, the **FOURTH PART** is so concluded that the author may, at the same time, pass over to the last portion of the history. This portion, then, is so arranged, that what our Lord did before his entrance, in solemn pomp,

into Jerusalem, is separated by the words in the twentieth chapter, the seventeenth and following verses, from what he afterwards achieved in words and deeds, in his death and his resurrection. These last things are narrated in the concluding portion of the book, from the twenty-first chapter to the twenty-eighth.

But if we would make a just conclusion from what we have thus far discussed, we must inquire more particularly, whether it was by design or by accident, that those passages were written, from which we have inferred that the book was composed by one author, in a definite method, if we may so say, in distinct members. And this can only be accomplished, by seeing whether these supposed ligaments of the narration cohere most fitly with the whole course of the story, and with the matter and arrangement of the whole book. That this is so, we think can be demonstrated by a more accurate investigation of the features of the gospel.

In ancient times it was correctly acknowledged, that what the author had chiefly in view in the composition of our gospel, was sufficiently evident from the words which stand as an inscription to the book. "*The gospel according to Matthew,*" says Irenaeus, "was written for the Jews; for they desired most earnestly a Christ from the seed of David. Matthew, having this same desire in still greater intensity, strives in every way to lead them to an entire conviction that *the Christ was from the seed of David,*" etc.¹ Now, although the book takes a much wider range, yet its general design may be not inaptly inferred from its inscription; *βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ, υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.* Beyond all controversy, the writer here means to assert, that he could demonstrate, that all things which the Israelites had been divinely taught to hope and expect, God had already made present and manifest in this Jesus, the offspring of David and Abraham. With this in view, beginning with the Davidic extraction of the Lord, he so describes his course of life, as to include the words and deeds, by which he proved his origin and mission to be divine, from his birth, to the moment of time, when being about to leave the world, he declares, in the most solemn manner, that all power is given to him in heaven and in earth. That the more frequent citation of the prophecies of the Old Testament in this Gospel, agrees well with its peculiar characteristics, many writers have seen and excellently said. Fewer seem to have understood, that

¹ See Irenaei fragment. e Possini catena patrum in Matth. cap. 1 et 3. p. 3 et 39. coll. Iren. Opp. ed. Massuet. Paris. 1710 fol. T. 1. p. 347.

it would have been inconsistent with the design of the author in giving a narrative of the deeds of our Lord, to follow out the course of his whole life, or hand down in exact chronological order, the events of every day or year.¹ And, in fine, what is of chief importance, very few seem to have clearly seen, correctly defined or satisfactorily proved, that although the author does not assume the character of a historical narrator, he has nevertheless distributed and arranged his materials according to an appropriate scheme, peculiar to himself.

If we see aright, Matthew makes the sum of the whole matter, upon which the progress and process of his narrative depend, to consist in this; he will show his readers, that the very works by which Jesus proved himself a defender of the ancient truth, and fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament, WERE IN DIRECT CONTRAST WITH THAT PERVERSE DISPOSITION, WITH WHICH THE ISRAELITES WERE THEN INFECTED. And hence the same divine majesty in doctrine and deeds which extorted the admiration of some, would arouse the deadly hatred of others; and this would be increased in proportion to the authority and estimation which Jesus might have among the people, and in proportion to his open rebukes of the depraved customs and opinions of the people and their teachers, and to his disclosure of those divine mysteries which were repugnant to them. And this was the reason, that with so much opposition and hatred, they would advance to such a degree of audacity and insanity as to conspire to kill Jesus; and that, having found the opportunity, they would execute this inhuman and flagitious deed. It is our persuasion, that such was the course of thought in the mind of Matthew, which he wished

¹ Admirable are the words of Chemnitz, in describing the general characteristics of the Evangelists. "Since it was the main design of the Evangelists, as John (20: 31) declares, to commit to writing such of the sayings and deeds of Christ, as would best instruct, confirm and propagate the faith of the church — that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that those who believe should have life through his name: 'they have always, in composing the evangelical histories, had a special regard to this end, rather than to strict arrangement and chronological exactitude. And hence it is, that although they preserve the highest and holiest agreement, as to the reality of the sayings and facts, yet in the context and course of the history, each one pursues his own order and peculiar method; conforming to the others, in particulars, only so far as he judged to be congruous with the simplest development of his leading conception.'" Harm. IV. Evangelist. ed. Genev. 1645. T. I. p. i sq. In respect to Matthew, in particular, may be compared, among recent authors, Kern, p. 32 of the book already cited; Olshausen, p. 27 of a programm published in 1835; and, still later, Ebrard, in the passage quoted in a previous note.

to set clearly before his readers. For, as it cannot be denied that all the Israelites would hear and know of these most important and weighty matters, so does this view, in which we say the author wrote, agree best with the structure of his book. To demonstrate this opinion, it will not be necessary to give a recension of each part, but only to refer the reader to the general course of argument, which constitutes the structure of the narrative.

No one can fail to see the importance of considering attentively what is placed, as it were, at the very threshold of the gospel; we mean, the sermon on the mount, by which our Lord is, as it were, inaugurated into his office of public teacher. The difference between Matthew and Luke in handing down this sermon, would seem to be, that the former, embracing the whole circle of the discourse, neglects nothing which would serve to show, how the Lord, in exhorting to "*repent, because the kingdom of Heaven is at hand,*" set himself in direct opposition to the profane teachings which the Israelites were then wont to follow; while Luke seems chiefly to confine himself to reporting those parts in which the apostles are admonished, when persecuted with hatred, to recompense hatred by love. (Comp. Matt. v—vii with Luke vi, 12—49.) This being the case, it cannot be denied, that the evangelist Matthew would thus indicate the nature of the contest, into which our Lord entered with his adversaries, even at the very beginning of his career. The words with which the narration closes have, then, a special significance; "and it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, *and not as the Scribes,*" (7: 28, 29). For these words belong to what we have before called the *second part* of the gospel; in which the author, after having declared in general terms, (4: 23—25) the power and effect of the addresses and miracles of the Lord upon the minds of those that heard him, already begins to announce, that in these very words and deeds, although they were for the good of the people, and were received by them in part with great joy, were inclosed the seeds of the persecutions and enmities by which he was afterwards crushed. Because, by these very things, he made himself an opponent of the lusts and perverse notions of the priests and rulers; so that the rage of his enemies would increase with the increasing favor of the people. That he may describe the very beginnings of this contest, the evangelist immediately reminds the readers of those words, in which Jesus, while giving divine aid, bore testimony against

both the priests and the people (8: 4 and 10—12). He tells them how early, in the midst of the signs by which he fulfilled the predictions of the Old Testament and proved his divine power, (8: 14—17). He exhorted those who might wish to follow him, to consider what it was to follow one, who had not where to lay his head, and whose first command to his disciples was, to "deny themselves" (8: 18—20). That our Lord was induced to say these things by an anticipation of what was to come, is made clear in the following verses, where we read of the distrust of the disciples (8: 23—27); of the ungrateful feelings of others, especially such as were too tenacious of their possessions, (8: 28—34); of calumnies by which the leaders of the people strove to overwhelm Jesus, the favorite of the people (c. ix). These men were plainly moved to this course only because Jesus had openly announced, that he had come into the world, and worked his miracles to animate their minds by the most joyful tidings, 9: 14, 17; that he could remit sins, and that not the just but sinners were called to partake of the divine compassion (9: 3, 5, 6, 13). By such words and deeds, while the bands of the people were moved to praise God, and spread abroad the fame of Jesus,—(9: 8, the multitudes marvelled and glorified God; vs. 26, the fame hereof went abroad into all that land; vs. 31, but they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country),—the Pharisees were so incensed that they obstinately asserted: He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils (9: 5 compared with vs. 34). But in the very place where this is related, every one will confess that the *second part* of the book, as we have before seen, would most fitly be closed, (in the words 9: 34—38). For it is now manifest what are the nature and characteristics of this contest.

With his forces drawn together, if we may so speak, our Lord enters into this contest. He sends out his disciples. He exhorts them to contend manfully and rightly, nor to fear the fight (c. x). Upon a fitting occasion he testifies that divine truth is displeasing to men (11: 1—24), and that God did wisely in concealing from the wise what he revealed to babes (11: 25—30). While Jesus thus preaches, the Pharisees prepare new snares. Irritated by those deeds which prove the divine commission of the Lord, they take counsel "how they might destroy him," (12: 14). To make their counsels of no effect, Jesus withdrew himself, at the same time doing good to the wretched. The *people* proclaiming that

this Jesus is the Messiah, the *Pharisees again* accuse him falsely, asserting that what Jesus did by his divine power, was done by Beëlzebub," (12: 24). And now Jesus, having solemnly declared the greatness of the crime of which by these words they make themselves liable to be accused, asserts, that it can no longer be hoped, that any miracles he might perform would lead them to repentance and faith, (12: 25—45). Those only are to him as brothers, sisters, and mother, who do the will of his heavenly Father, (12: 46—50). Almost at the same time, he is said to have taught the people and his disciples, in parables, the true nature of the kingdom which he is about to found; that, though it may grow by small increments, and be not everywhere received with like affection, yet in persuasive words he predicts that it will nevertheless fill the whole world (13: 1—52). The people despise the prophet; Jesus soon after acknowledges that the founder of this kingdom would be treated with contempt (13: 53—58). He becomes suspected not only by the people, but by Herod, the destroyer of John the Baptist. While withdrawing himself from his snares, he manifests his divine benevolence and power by new miracles and mighty deeds (c. xiv). And here, after having described the course of so many persecutions, in their gradual progress and increase, the author again pauses. For with the end of this chapter, as we have before seen, the *third portion* of the narrative is concluded, by the mention of the affection with which the inhabitants of Gennesaret received him, against whom so many enemies were conspiring, (14: 34, 35).

But now *the Pharisees made their attack without circumlocution or disguise*. They accuse the Lord, because his disciples "transgress the tradition of the elders" (15: 1 and following). Although he repels this attempt, and departing from that region, gives to Gentiles as well as to Jews, many and most signal evidences of his divine virtue (15: 21—29); yet, upon returning into the coasts of Magdala, he again excites the enmity of the Pharisees who had now made a nefarious alliance with the Sadducees. They strive to tempt the wisdom and constancy of the "master," by their repeated requests for a sign from heaven, (16: 1—4). Jesus, after refusing with increased severity, gravely warns his disciples to beware of the Pharisees and Sadducees, (16: 5—12). Then, by interrogation and instruction, he prepares their minds to *look into the mystery of redemptive grace*; to see who is the Son of Man; how much he must suffer; and what the followers of such a Lord ought to be (16: 13—28). His teach-

ings are not received with befitting attention by his disciples; and in many ways he is harassed by their distrust, their ambition, their sluggish and obtuse dispositions. Nevertheless, bearing all these patiently, he strives in every way by deed and by word, to enlighten their understandings. (Compare 16: 22, 23, with chh. xvii and xviii.) *Now the last evils to be suffered by our Lord are approaching.* This point of time the author announces in those words (19: 1, 2), which we have above defined as the transition from the *fourth* to the *fifth part* of the book.

In arranging the rest of the narrative, we find that the author pursues the same method which we have described as the peculiarity of the whole gospel. Jesus, while in Judea, *being circumvented by the wiles and machinations of the Pharisees*, thence takes occasion to prepare his disciples for the more full comprehension of the nature of his kingdom. He ceases not, in manifold ways, to impress upon their minds, what the Founder of such a kingdom would demand of its citizens; of what men it should be composed; what obstacles impede the entrance into it; how great were the promises centering therein; and how great care should be taken, that those who were called to a participation in this kingdom, should not lose so great a benefit (compare from 19: 11 and following with 20: 16). And yet the disciples give little heed to the plainest predictions of the death of the Lord, and cannot lay aside their ambitious expectations (20: 17—28).

Having entered into Jerusalem, our Lord assumes another aspect in his official character. For, while the Pharisees and Sadducees are prevented only by fear of the people from perpetrating their premeditated crime, and are striving to tempt Jesus by crafty questions (21: 45, 46. 22: 15—46), all that he does and says is full of lofty denunciation. The herald announces himself as the Judge of the coming judgment (comp. c. xxi. and 22: 1—14, the purging of the temple, the withering of the fig-tree, the parables in which sentence is spoken against the Israelites). *Wo*, he says, to the Pharisees, *wo* to Jerusalem, *wo* to all who have not learned to shun the condemnation of the Judge most holy and most just (23: 1—36, the perverse teachings and acts of the Pharisees; vs. 37—39, the terrible fate of Jerusalem; c. xxiv, the destruction of the city, and the return of Jesus to judgment; c. xxv, the process of the last judgment, and the vigilance to be observed by those over whom it is impending). Such are the most weighty and solemn words, with which Jesus, in Matthew's narration, finishes his public career. In the remainder of the book

Matthew shows his readers, how by the very punishment which the enemies of God inflicted upon Christ, the divine prophecies were fulfilled, and he was restored to his pristine majesty.

Whoever accurately weighs these discussions, and agrees with us in opinion that the whole narrative of this Gospel is constructed by a fixed rule in successively ascending gradations, will also, we think, be persuaded, that this book is the work of *one author*; and will not be able to hold the opinion of such as assert, that it was "at first made up of a collection of the sermons of Jesus Christ, into which other narrations were afterwards interpolated."

ARTICLE V.

THE IMPRECATIONS IN THE SCRIPTURES.

By B. B. Edwards, Professor in the Theol. Seminary, Andover.

THERE is a class of objections against the divine authority of the Bible which relate simply to matters of taste, conventional usage, national custom, or oriental modes of feeling. A sufficient answer to objections of this nature is, that if the Scriptures had been conformed to modern and European modes and tastes, they would, in the same degree, lose one of the principal evidences of their genuineness. The local coloring about them, their Asiatic dress, the figures of speech which the writers employ, assure us that they are the men whom they profess to be, and that they lived at the time, and in the countries, in which they assume to have lived. The seal of honesty is thus affixed to them. We feel certain that they are men of truth. This species of evidence, though incidental and undesigned, is, in fact, one of the most important, and one least liable to be counterfeited. Besides, if the writers had undertaken to conform to what we understand by correct taste and propriety in forms of speech, they would have undertaken an impracticable task. The standard of taste, on many points, is perpetually changing. In respect to certain matters, there is a degree of fastidiousness in this country which does not exist in the higher circles in Europe. What passes current there, at the present moment, may not pass so one hundred years hence.

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