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**The Bible and its Interpreters.**



# The Bible and its Interpreters.

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*THE POPULAR THEORY:  
THE ROMAN THEORY:  
THE LITERARY THEORY:  
THE TRUTH.*

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## PREFACE.

THE circumstances in which the present Address originated, though known to many, ought perhaps to be briefly stated, lest the object of its publication should be misapprehended, in any quarter.

Every one has felt of late, that the BIBLE has come to be treated in a tone and spirit inconsistent with that reverence which, in this country, has hitherto been usual. Historical and scientific inaccuracy have been freely imputed, and almost as freely admitted, as distinctive of the Sacred Volume; and people who had been taught to regard it as the one voice of Infallible

Revelation to man, have consequently found themselves bewildered at the prospect, that henceforth the credibility of the Scriptures may gradually diminish. Having long since surrendered the idea, that the Christian Church has any independent reality and truth, and only rests its claims on documentary proof, the failure of Scripture itself leaves such persons with less and less of "Revelation" every day; and no wonder if the announcement of any new discoveries in literature or science fill them, as it does, with dismay.

For few, after all, in the "religious world" are, as yet, able to grasp the idea of a Christianity which needs neither an entirely true Bible, nor a Divinely-gifted Church, to rest on. All the attempts made of late years to reduce Scripture to the level "of other books," and to bring the Church to the condition 'of other Societies,' have failed hitherto to suggest a

definite view to the many, as to what *is to be* the “Theology of the Nineteenth Century.” Perhaps indistinctness in this case may have been inevitable; for no system, and no men, would be intentionally obscure, unless there were—which would be hard to attribute—obliquity of purpose. Since every honest mind prefers to have its meaning understood, it is fair to suppose, that when a theory is unintelligible, it is because its professors cannot help it. There may be such a thing as intellectual twilight, in which men do not plainly see what they are thinking; and very often there seems to be a moonlight criticism of moral subjects, in which the light though interesting, is pale; and the shadows are dark and deep.

The ensuing Address, delivered in Lent of the present year, was intended to deal with the present state of mind among us. Deferring to the request made to me, I laid

these thoughts before about a hundred of my brethren, chiefly clergy, in LONDON; nor could I refuse to give to the public what I had spoken, when the wish that I should do so was generally expressed. Indeed, under the circumstances, it would have looked like faithlessness to my own convictions, and to the Truth itself, to suppress what I had uttered.

I am conscious, that what I have said is likely to give pain to some who are very dear to me: but I have avoided every word that could needlessly irritate. Such, at least, has been my purpose, and I hope that I have attained it. The words "Evangelical," "Broad Church," "Papist," and "Dissenter" have found no place in this Address. Other terms, (inclusive no doubt of these, but perhaps of more than these), have been adopted, not only to avoid offence, but as more truly expressing my own meaning, and bringing out the

idea which was opposed. And there is this advantage in such general expressions: no one need appropriate what is urged, unless it be necessary.

It was said, that the three earlier parts of this Address were more complete than the last; and it was requested by many that "the constructive portion" should be made as clear and conclusive as "the destructive." I am mistaken if this has not now been sufficiently though briefly done; yet the delay thus occasioned, (through the pressure of other and prior duties), is to be regretted. I have not, however, lost a day in acceding to the wishes of my brethren; and I trust that the Address in its present state may prove as useful as so many of them kindly anticipated. If any further enlargement be asked for, it will not be withheld.

Above all things, I earnestly request my fellow Christians of every class who may

read these pages, to do so with patience and fearlessness, as in GOD'S sight—even if the course of thought at first seem to them very trying. For if what is said be all simply and undeniably *true*—then, to be angry with it is but to “fight against GOD.” If there be any who imagine that they can defend their faith in Christianity *at all*, on other grounds than those here set forth—viz., the grounds of the CHURCH,—let them, in GOD'S Holy Name, do it at once, with calmness, and reasonableness, and earnestness of heart. Bitter words, and sneers, and persecutions however refined, will fail. Let the appeal be to facts—to conscience—to reason.

Yet a little while, and we must all give our account to HIM Who is the TRUTH.

## THE BIBLE AND ITS INTERPRETERS.

### *Introduction.*

**N**O thoughtful Christian can affect to be satisfied with the position popularly held, at present, by the Sacred Scriptures. The periodical panics of sincere if not deeply-instructed believers; the jealousy among religious persons, as to "reason and science;" and the want of thoroughness in the method of even professed theologians, are symptoms of a condition of things which cannot really last, and ought not to be prolonged by any honest mind.

There are facts connected with the history, character, and contents of the Sacred Volume, about which there is no doubt, and ought to be no equivocation. To state them is to produce no novelties. Sooner or later all must do something with them. To admit but half, and wrestle against the other half, is in no way creditable, especially when the primary admission may have ceded the

only principle on which an opposite intellectual stand could be taken. The facts of Biblical literature must be faced by all who have to deal with the Christianity of the future: the present brief review ought not, then, to irritate any who are conscious in themselves that truth is dearer to them than custom or prejudice; and who love the Bible because it is *true*.

There is, however, a considerable class of minds capable of receiving and handling facts as if they meant nothing. Their stores are like a museum entirely unarranged, and illustrating no science. They make admissions, and then go on as if they had not made them. Such persons, in a sort of self-defence, can exclaim at much which may now be said,—“why, there is nothing *new* in all this!” They are quite right. The only new thing is, the attempt to make such people *use* the admitted facts.

All Christians believe, that GOD has revealed Himself specially in CHRIST our LORD.—But the idea of a “Revelation” to us implies, that some have *received* that truth which GOD has given. “In sundry portions, and in divers ways, GOD has spoken,”—and “whoso has had ears to hear” has received *Revelation*. So, too, on all hands, the Scrip-

tures are taken among us as "records" of this Revelation. Beyond this, indeed, we cannot assert much uniformity. Such records have of course necessarily been regarded, not only as "containing" but as *imparting* truth: and, as truth may be subjective as well as objective, the widely different results arrived at among Christians practically clash with the supposition of the "all-sufficiency" of the Bible as a *medium* of truth to all classes alike. Hence have arisen certain refinements which are found in most of our systems, as to the moral and spiritual 'qualifications' of the individual, necessary for the "right reception" of Scripture teaching. There is some intellectual inconsistency here, which should not escape examination: meanwhile it is well, all have a feeling that, in some way, the subjective and objective must eventually be found together. In speaking at any time of the "written Word," and of "God's Revelation," and of the connection between them, we should all be more real, and more sincere, if we would constantly remind ourselves that the BOOK and its MEANING cannot be separated. Waterland has said, that "the meaning of Scripture is Scripture;" may we not add, that 'the meaning of Revelation is Revelation?' True, our primary concern, at present, is to be with the objective position of the Bible; but let us not forget

that Revelation and a *reception* of it, — a “deposit” and the “holding” of the deposit, — are correlatives.

There seem to be four views of the supposed relation of the written Word to Divine Revelation, with which we have become familiar. They may be distinguished as the Popular view, the Roman, the Literary, and the Catholic.

The first identifies Scripture with Revelation, making the terms precisely coextensive.

The second subordinates Scripture to the living Church.

The third, ignoring, *à priori*, the idea of “Revelation,” accepts Scripture first “like any other book,” — afterwards estimating the contents as “Revelation,” or not, as the case may be.

The fourth regards Scripture and the Church as co-ordinate in the mission of Revealed Truth to the world. — Let each be compared with the facts.

On the first, or “Popular” view, the Written Word *is* Revelation *absolutè*. On the “Roman” view, it is Revelation *sub conditione*. On the “Literary” view, it may be Revelation *per accidens*. On the last, or “Catholic” view (if the designation may be permitted), the Written Word is Revelation *ἐν περιχώρησει*, — that is, it “contains” necessary

truth, the Church also having "authority in controversy."

Without supposing that this arrangement of our subject is exactly historical or scientific, (for the three former views are, to a great extent, identical in principle, and the last alone is essentially distinguished from the rest), it is enough that practically, in our times, the matter comes thus before us. No doubt our insular theology, for three hundred years, has bravely struggled to secure what it has felt to be a true position for the BIBLE; and the controversy has presented to us, in turn, all these phases. First, in the sixteenth century, with but little criticism of the text of Scripture, or of the Canon, and without defining "inspiration," we upheld the Divine Book as the "authority" against Rome. Then, Rome was obliged to defend herself against the Biblical schools, and part of her defence at once was *literary*; and necessarily so.

The Complutensian Polyglot soon appeared, A. D. 1517. the noble legacy of the dying Ximenes to the Church. It was among the earliest outbursts of that hearty zeal for God, "God's word," God's truth, which then stirred the heart of Christendom. Erasmus had but just preceded Ximenes in his great work; and when the grand old Cardinal heard what Erasmus had done, he exclaimed, almost as with

his last breath, "would God all the LORD's people were prophets!" The appeal to literature was now unequivocal.

Hopes, at first, were high, however, in Rome, that her claims to preside over Scripture would yet be maintained. The reliance of the Reformation divines, on the simplicity and certainty of their Scripture-foundation, was boldly assailed. Free use was made of the difficulties of the sacred text; and at length Bellarmine, Morinus, and others on the side of Rome, threw out critical doubts foreshadowing, it was said, not obscurely, a scepticism which has shown itself openly in later days. Our theologians, thus driven more and more to *literary* ground, had to ascertain the "true text" of both the Hebrew and Greek. Gradually, but surely, it became the business of *critics* to settle this foundation-point; without any suspicion expressed, as to the method itself, to which all parties were being committed.

The matter could not stop where it was now brought. Hitherto the Sacred Book had been commonly regarded as a *whole*; the English Church affirming—and even the Roman, with St. Augustin and St. Jerome, implying—that "the Hebrew verity, and the Greek codices" constituted the real "Scrip-

*S. Aug.,*  
Christ. Doc.  
lib. ii. cap. 2.

*S. Jer.,*  
Prol. ad Pen.

Reformatio  
Leg. 5.

ture." With the exception of a rough exclusion of the "Apocrypha" from authority, criticism hitherto had chiefly limited itself to "various readings," "emendations," "renderings," and "expositions," (which to this day still suffice for a slowly diminishing body of theologians). But a generation had quickly passed; and the "London Polyglot," with its formidable "Appendix" A. D. 1657. appeared. The range of criticism was seen to be indefinitely widening.

Owen, at the head of the Puritans, was indignant beyond all bounds, and openly avowed, that if such countless uncertainties were to be popularly suspected, the Protestant foundations were utterly cast down. He was a clear-minded man; and his was no merely "illiterate" Puritan prejudice, (as Chalmers has called it).—When, in another generation, Dr. Mill's "various readings" were marshalled, 20,000 strong, for the Greek Testament alone—(Mill, like old Ximenes, dying A. D. 1706. a few days after his work was done),—the zeal of our own Dr. Whitby was not less signally provoked. It was not ignorant zeal, though the *vox populi* was with him.—Still more exciting was the issue, when Kennicott's Codices of the Old A. D. 1753. Testament followed; and Julius Bate, and Mr. Cominge, and Dr. Fitzgerald, and "the Religious

Public" believed that everything dear to Christians was openly threatened. Yet a far closer dealing with the whole subject was really inevitable. This mere comparison and correction of texts seemed as nothing, when, beyond this, the authorship, authenticity, and actual contents, and history, of every part of Scripture had to be debated in detail. But this was the natural course of events. From Voltaire's "*Histoire du Bible*" down to Davidson's "*Introduction*," the analysis, as every one is aware, has gone on, with results, it needs scarcely be said, which would have driven to madness the earnest Hutchinsonians of the 18th century; and now shock the milder faith of the Anglo-Saxons of our own day, which, unconsciously, is Hutchinsonian still.

Such is the actual position; nor is it very dignified to complain of it. From the first resistance to "Papal Infallibility," down to the setting up of the "Bible Society," all our history—no one can deny it—converged to this, "the theology of the nineteenth century." The old Chillingworth formula, "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants," had gradually reduced itself to—'the Bible as criticism may ultimately settle it.' Indeed, one by one, the Roman, no less than the Reformed and the Rationalist divines, have descended to the

*literary arena.* Meanwhile, however, the TRUTH has remained the same.—Still we must needs (in one sense) accept the controversial position : let us examine it without any shrinking. They who would shut their eyes, and pretend not to see facts, will none the less come into collision with them.

### §1. *Popular Theory as to the Bible.*

The great majority among us happily still accept the Bible, as the Church gives it, reading it, in fact, in the only rational way, viz., in the light of the Creeds, the Catechism, and the Liturgy, —in a word, of the Christian traditions around us. Theirs is a wise, sure, and edifying faith ; and finds ultimate support in a deep and true philosophy. If a few of us are persuaded, at times, that we “prove” our Scripture for ourselves, and then prove our doctrines by certain “texts,” the *fraus pia* has but a limited sphere. Narrower it could scarcely be in a nation like ours, where every one has something of the Rationalist in him, and is compelled by his own personal self-respect, to think that he has tested what he believes. But the strength of our orthodoxy, after all, never lies in the “Scripture-proofs,” but in the response of our own better nature to the

inherited truths of CHRIST, received from our forefathers. The *theory*, however, prevails in the minds of almost all of us, that we do, in some way, "think for ourselves" in religion, with the "Bible only" as our authority. It is not true; but we like to fancy so; and this imagination is a growing evil. Education of some kind is advancing, and discussion, if crude, is more and more "free;" and the "theologian of the nineteenth century" invites us, with increasing boldness, to "look for ourselves" into the entire teaching and structure of Holy Scripture, as fearlessly as we would look into "any other book." Let this be the vindication of what is now to be said. The Englishman of ordinary education is challenged, on his own principles, to the unwonted task of Biblical examination. "The Pentateuch, and Book of Joshua,"—the "Prophecy of Daniel," and the "Epistles of St. Paul," he is called on to explore thoroughly, and compare with the "results" of modern science, and the ethical system of the age. Does he shrink from the task? Does he say, 'I am content to take the Bible in the Church's sense?' He does not. He proceeds fearlessly to the new work before him; though in truth as a victim.

Frequently beginning with the idea that the Bible, very much in its present state, but in what

he calls "the original tongues," was given by God to man, (that every one may, in every age, use it for himself as well as he can, "in his own way"), the "free enquirer" is troubled at the first step with the question, '*how* was the Bible given?' He has once thought, probably, that every word was written in some way by Divine dictation. He has been very different from most religious persons, if he has not, on occasion, quoted "texts" to establish "his views," and consistently argued from mere words, and even syllables. It is a matter of every day occurrence. But it may be, that this enquirer, after a little experience, has grown more "liberal," granting—(perilous concession,)—that not every *word*, but only "the sense," (*i. e.* apart from the words?) could be originally "inspired." Still he must rely on *some* words. We will say nothing at present of his idea of "inspiring."

Has he then to get "the sense" from the English translation? He has always heard, that it is a very good translation. Why should it not be? On the face of it, it was made "by his Majesty's "special command, and with the former translations "diligently compared and revised" by very learned men. Does he know, has he even thought, as yet, of asking, from what "originals" this translation was made? If he says at once, "those learned

men knew better than I, and I am not likely much to amend their work," his act of faith in King James's translators appears complete; but he is in such case, entirely out of the field as an independent enquirer, and he had done better to say this at once. This, then, being impossible to such a man, he determines to go farther into the matter. He can "read Greek," at all events: and have his own translation.

Comparing his Greek Testament with this translation, he finds that they fairly correspond. That was to be expected; but how is he to test this printed Greek Testament? how trace it back to any ancient manuscript as a standard? He soon ascertains, if he did not already know, that "the text" has been revised by different learned men all along our history. He may mark the "various readings," from the present scholarlike text of Dr. Wordsworth, back to Bishop Lloyd, and Dr. Fell, and Dr. Mill, and Bishop Walton, and the Elzevirs, and the Stephenses, and Erasmus. Some of these variations, perhaps, look serious; but no one can say that, on the whole, they destroy, or even materially alter, the general sense of the record. This is so far satisfactory; as far as the New Testament is concerned.

Arrived, thus, at the Reformation, he asks, "from

what sources the Greek Testaments then printed were derived?" and, from those who give the most favourable accounts of the manuscripts at that time known and used, he learns that none of them were five hundred years old; and he has next to satisfy himself that the Greek Testament so printed from MSS. of the eleventh century, truly represents what was written by Evangelists and Apostles in the first century—that is, a thousand years before.

To speak briefly; he must here commit himself to a great literary investigation, if he is personally to do any thing at all, and not fall back on some "authority." As to all speculation about the meaning of this Sacred Book, that must be far off at present. He has first to settle the external question, "what the book *is*." Most persons who have examined for themselves, even as far as now suggested, will, in fact, here surrender the task, conscious that they would find an ancient manuscript harder to read than a "Greek Testament," and unwilling to trust themselves to judge of the age of papyri, palimpsests, or parchments, uncials or cursives; and hearing, perhaps, that the latest discovery of this kind, made by a fortunate German, has been gravely suspected to be an entirely modern production. Should men of ordinary education pause, then, at this point, and look about for some

concise method of escape from the pending inquiry, it certainly would be hard to blame them; if they would but own it, and honestly say, "it is impossible that all this can be required of us, in order to find God's Revealed will."

The retreat is wise; but *on what* are they to retreat? That is a question which shall not be avoided; but let it be postponed a little, for there will be some who will still determine to go on with the investigation. They will be few; but they should be fairly dealt with: and indeed, it is in their cases that the Popular Theory must really be tried, and the popular method, if so be, exhausted.

The question then appears next to be, what are the *oldest existing* authorities to which any one can now trace the Greek Testament? No actual manuscripts, no original versions, no autographs, of course, of the saints or fathers of the *earliest* generations of Christians, now exist. We may get *printed* copies, of such ancient works, as have survived the ravages of time, in various transcripts which rarely reach within hundreds of years of the originals. In monasteries and libraries, some treasures of the 7th, or even the 6th, century of our era may be met with, by those who are happy enough to explore them; but little critical use has hitherto been made of them. There remains, how-

ever, a vast literature, Greek, Latin, and Oriental, amply printed, and elaborately edited, since the 16th century; very corrupt, but too greatly diversified to admit of universal fabrication, and too widely diffused, to be open to any suspicion of much collusion. From these sources the student may arrive at the *general consent* of all Christians, as to the main features of the New Testament; and if he have patience, he may convince himself that his Greek Testament cannot differ materially from that used, say, by St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, or St. Ephrem.

But there are several centuries to be accounted for, beyond their time, before the Apostolic age is reached. St. Jerome, in the fourth century, marks a kind of Biblical era. He revised the whole of the *Latin Scriptures*, and gave to the West that version which has since been known, in all its revisions, as “the Vulgate.” The cave of Bethlehem seemed, once more, the cradle of Christianity. St. Jerome knew monks who could repeat by heart the whole New Testament—in their own version. His work is full of importance, even as bearing on the *Greek Text*; as he must have had access also to manuscripts far older than any now known to exist; and he departed considerably from the previously existing Latin Versions, of which he declares plainly, *that no two agreed*. He says

that he had heard, that the original of the first of the Evangelists, St. Matthew, *was not Greek at all, but Hebrew.* If so, it has apparently perished and not even a copy has survived. St. Jerome's list of canonical books is the same, however, as ours; except that he hesitates to accept the Epistle to the Hebrews. Other "lists," too, of the names of the accredited books of the New Testament, given in less critical writers of St. Jerome's time, nearly agree with our own. Of the identity and wide diffusion of the Books, there is no doubt.

Eusebius of Cesarea, fifty years earlier, gives us yet more assistance. His own works on the Gospels still survive, in fairly ancient copies. He tells us of the useful labours of Ammonius, and Tatian the Harmonist, and others, (which still in some form remain to us), in days before his own. He does not, however, express himself as sure of the authority of the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, the Second of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, and the Apocalypse. But Eusebius is quite confident that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel *in Hebrew.* Now, to admit this, would seem to place at a hopeless distance the chance of recovering, in a literary sense, the *very words* of the first Gospel teaching. Yet it were hard, here to dispute the authority of Eusebius; for it is startling to per-

ceive, as every one must, how much of all the testimony of other Christian writers of the first 300 years depends on the veracity and care of that one man, living in the fourth age. Eusebius is the very Ezra of the Christian history and law; its chronicler, critic, and defender;—though his orthodoxy has been more than suspected.

If, indeed, the works of Origen had come down to us in a perfect and authentic state, as Pamphilus the Martyr would have had them, we should find in them more of contemporary evidence, as to the received “Scripture” of the generations between him and the Apostles, than in all other writers put together. But the critical condition of Origen himself, almost neutralizes his testimony on every point where exactness is needed. Origen, for instance, commented largely on the New Testament, (as well as the Old, of which we have not yet spoken); but the perpetual “*Ὁρτυνίζει*” of his Latin Editors in the margin discovers the sort of treatment to which he has been subject. And there is a difference, almost unaccountable on merely literary grounds, between what survives of Origen, and what remains of such a writer as Justin Martyr, only fifty years before. Justin does not once quote any Epistle of St. Paul, either in his Apologies, or his Dialogue.—(Bishop Marsh thought that he was unacquainted

with the Gospels as Scripture). Origen is intimate with the Epistles; yet at the beginning of the second century, there is almost total silence in the Church as to the formal existence of "the Gospels."

We arrive then at the Apostolic era. Quotations, or even "lists of names" of Books, or certainty as to the *language* of the first Evangelist, no literary investigation has here discovered. In those copies of the Epistles of St. Paul, which the Church inherits in her own sure and mysterious way, that Apostle, though writing 30 years after the Ascension, and mentioning in his Epistles several "sayings" of our LORD, never once seems aware of the existence (for example) of St. Matthew, or his Gospel. The same may be said of all the Epistolary writers in the Canon, to the close of the first century. The very language in which our Blessed LORD uttered His Divine discourses, no criticism has found out. If HE spoke them in Greek, are we to suppose that the Galilæan multitudes who heard Him, understood Greek? If He spoke them in Hebrew, are the "original words" entirely lost? Or, was that which He spoke to them in Hebrew, "brought to remembrance," 30 years afterwards, in Greek, and written down in Greek by the Evangelists?

The examination grows harder. There are many "Apostolic" Epistles, Acts, and Visions: who shall

select and authenticate them? It has been said, indeed, that it is "no harder, after all, than the task of tracing to earliest antiquity any other works of former days:" which may be very true; but, then, the case is different. Other books (such as Aristotle and Homer) ask no examination from us as conveying a Divine message to us.—We are not to suppose, indeed, that the state of facts now glanced at, has no explanation; but we may conclude, at once, that such facts are out of harmony with the Popular Theory, that God has given this Sacred Volume as His clear Revelation which *all* men may test for themselves, and all must understand. With any such hypothesis, such facts seem utterly irreconcilable: of course they belong to some theory, but we are not at present ascertaining that.

We have advanced but little, however, towards appreciating the whole difficulty of the Popular View. We have not noticed the Old Testament, which is so interwoven with the New that it is not possible to accept the latter, without some view of the former. It is usual, indeed, (and in a certain position quite natural), to say that the quotations from the former Scriptures, made by CHRIST and His Apostles, guarantee the Hebrew Canon. The remark of St. Jerome, and of Origen, that 'CHRIST never upbraided

S. Jerome  
on Isa. Ch.  
vi.

the Jews for corrupting the Hebrew text,' is true, (so far as the present Gospels inform us). Will this, however, assist us at the present stage of the argument? Has the independent enquirer yet placed the Gospels on such a footing as to justify that strict verbal appeal to their contents, which alone would make them avail as evidence for the Hebrew Canon? And even taking the existing Gospels, does it appear that our LORD quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures? Did He not use the Septuagint very frequently? and at times employ a version different from both "the Hebrew verity" and the Septuagint?—We must certainly make some enquiry, then, as to the Hebrew Scriptures themselves, and learn their condition, as well as that of the Greek.—And here, some students may part company with us.

Time may be saved by conceding at once, (what still would be arduous for many to go through in detail), that for the present printed Hebrew text, we may trace a fair literary history back to the middle ages, with some allowance for the 800 Keri and Chetiv, (the read and the written variations). The Jews' own copies correspond with ours. But from the oldest examined manuscript, there are at least a thousand years back to the time of those papyri, or parchments used and known by our

LORD and His apostles ; even if we had no need to think of the earlier history. To follow the course of the Hebrew Bible through that thousand years only, is a much harder task than when the Greek-Testament had to be considered. Versions in other tongues, (most valuable indeed in many respects), will not settle the Hebrew text. The Hebrew, too, is no longer a spoken language, and it has no wide range of literature like Greek ; its meaning being often difficult on that account. The character which is used in the Hebrew Bible is thought by most learned men to be not the character used by Moses or the Prophets : and in its present state, the " Hebrew " of the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi has an uniformity which, on the whole, seems best explained by the supposition that, at some time, all the books had, (as the Jews themselves say), passed under some one revision.

But the character used in writing the " Hebrew " books is ancient no doubt. It reaches back beyond that thousand years which lie between the now known manuscripts and the Christian era. In addition, however, to this character, which is Chaldee, there are certain " points " placed below and about that letters, and without these " points " it would be difficult to read the Old Testament at all, with any certainty. These " Masoretic points," as they

are called, have been part of the Hebrew Bible since their general acceptance by the Jews in the tenth century; but they cannot be traced to a higher antiquity than the seventh century of our era; and they probably arose, out of some previous hints and customs in writing, at that time, from a desire to preserve the old traditional sense of the text, the Masora, ("tradition"), among the Western Jews. They, after the suppression of the office of "Patriarch" among them (A.D. 429) by the Imperial laws, were in danger of departing from the National traditions, still preserved in the East, under the "Prince of the Captivity," whose authority survived at Babylon,

or at Bagdat, till the twelfth century; and is not now wholly extinct. This settlement of the "points" is attributed to a Karaite doctor, and to a Rabbi of Tiberias; and from the seventh century to the tenth, grew into repute, and fixed the Bible as we have it now.—Maimonides says, that the whole sacred volume was transcribed by Ben Asher, in the beginning of the eleventh century; while Ben Naphtali, in the East, was then a much venerated authority for the sacred text.—Walton reports in his *Prolegomena* the declaration of Kimchi, that "he had seen" Rabbi Hillel's own copy of the Divine Law, then

On this controversy see Houbigant's "Racines Hebraïques," and Semler's "Apparatus ad V.T." &c.

nine hundred years old. But that would be unpointed.

It is evident, however, that the utmost religious care and pains were taken among the Jews to preserve their Holy Books, from age to age; and we must *trust the Jews*, not only for the safe custody and purity (*Rom.* iii. 2.) of the Hebrew writings, but also for the meaning, so far as it is embalmed in the "points." Next, of course, we have the numerous "versions" to refer to; and the testimonies of the fathers.

Previous to the sixth century, then, the Hebrew Bible, (we must face the fact), was read traditionally. The Jews believed that, together with the written word divinely imparted to Moses, there were *unwritten* instructions, directing both the continuance and the interpretation of the Sacred Writings: consequently their fathers had no need of written points, in the earlier times of their dispersion; (and the Jew even of the present day who reads his unpointed law in the synagogue, strictly follows the same Masora). It was a living Tradition—a kind of *conscience*. Two hundred years, at least, before the points were invented, St. Jerome (for instance), in his cell at Bethlehem, read the Old Testament, working hard at it with his Jew by his side. His Jew was his "tradition," to help him to read his

unpointed Bible. But St. Jerome, the greatest of early Patristic critics and commentators, gives us no help, any more than the Jews, in settling the letter of the Hebrew text.

Before the time of St. Jerome, the Hebrew Bible was but little used among Christians. They were to be content with versions. We catch a glimpse of it two hundred years earlier indeed, (but only to be disappointed), in the Hexapla of Origen. That marvel of industry had in one of its columns the Hebrew expressed in Greek letters, and compared with the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion; but the principal part of the labour of the great Alexandrian was so little cared for by his contemporaries that it utterly perished. Whether, indeed, some questions, both as to pronunciation and lections, may yet be elucidated by the recovered fragments of Origen's work, (which Mr. Field, of Trinity, is happily editing), remains to be seen. But at present we really have no *literary* guidance worthy of the name, as to the state of the Hebrew text, from the days of St. Jerome back to the time of Josephus and Philo. We know little more than this—that St. Jerome went to Cesaræa to examine Origen's Hexapla; and that in controversy with the Jews it had been generally assumed—as for instance by Justin Martyr with Trypho,—that the

Law and the Prophets appealed to, were substantially admitted by both Christians and Jews; though there were charges of "corrupting the text" freely made on both sides.

How then stands the case, (in an "independent" point of view), in the first century?—Josephus (against Apion) declares that 'no letter of the Law had been changed.' The Talmudists (on *Levit.* xxvii. *fin.*) affirm, indeed, that not even a prophet might change a letter. But as to the history of the *preservation of that letter*, we shall get but little help from them, or Josephus, or Philo. And yet, even could we attain it, looking upon Scripture as a vital message from God to man, no serious person could wish, after following it back to the first century, to rest its purity and certainty there, on the Talmud, or Josephus, or Philo. In addition to which, the Talmud is scarcely historical, and Josephus and Philo would themselves need sifting before their testimony could be at all received; nor would it, when received, prove to be altogether orthodox.—But it is needless to urge more, on a point which will not be contested.

The striking fact, however, which next confronts us is, that in the first century the Greek Translation of the Old Testament was more in use among the *Jews* also, than the Hebrew; and that this had

possibly been the case for generations. It seemed even to be thought by some, that this Greek Version fixed the sense of some passages of the Hebrew. Anyhow, this Version lies in the pathway of the investigation which evidently cannot be avoided, between the first century and the times of the old Prophets ending with Malachi. What is this Greek Version, or "Septuagint," as it is called? Who made it? From what originals was it made? And when? And why? And what is its present state?

It must be owned that we have here come to a somewhat difficult parenthesis—if it may be so termed—in our examination of the Old Testament of the Hebrew Prophets. The story used to be believed, however, that 270 years, or more, before CHRIST, some Seventy Jews were employed by Ptolemy Philadelphus to translate "the Jewish Scripture" into Greek: Josephus says, that it was the Pentateuch. An account of the miraculous agreement of these 70 Translators, working in 70 separate cells, is found in the letter of Aristæus to Philocrates. It has been respectfully referred to by Christian writers of such high name as Tertullian and St. Jerome; (and our esteem for their sagacity cannot thereby be increased). Bellarmine, however, no more rejects it, than did Josephus and

Philo. It has been thought not unworthy of being "done into English," by a Dean of St. Paul's.—But this letter cannot be regarded in the 19th century, (any more than the Talmud was), as "historical." We may pass it.

Dr. Donne.

Strictly speaking, no one knows who made the Septuagint. No one knows from what copies of the originals any parts of that Version were made. It appears to be a growth of at least two generations; and, as might be expected, the style is not the same throughout.—Has it then no authority at all, it may be asked? Was it not used by the Jews themselves, and bequeathed in fact by the Jewish Church to the Christian? Yes. That, such as it is, is the ground of its authority, for all purposes of practical edification. But this does not assist our investigation as to the literary condition of the Hebrew Scriptures at that time; unless we are to assume that the Septuagint corrects the sense of ancient Hebrew manuscripts now lost? Few would think, however, of thus setting aside the present Hebrew text in favour of the Septuagint, in those places where they now differ. The state of the text of the Septuagint itself is far, also, from satisfactory; and if it is to be set up as the principal authority for the Old Testament, the historical continuity of the originally Written Word is given up.

One more suggestion, however, is made at times, to assist the difficulties of the case. At a date a little more distant than that of the Septuagint, and standing midway between the Babylonian Captivity and the time of Christ, we have the Samaritan Pentateuch, which some good scholars have thought very valuable. But it has no clear history of its own, and is of no use for the purposes of our present enquiry,—as to the *true text of the Hebrew Bible*. Of the Prophets and Psalms, of course it tells us nothing. If the character in which it is written be, as some have pleaded, the ancient Hebrew used by Moses and Isaiah, the fact that none of the old Prophets survive in that character, increases the difficulty of ascertaining the genuine Scripture so incalculably, that it must destroy in every rational mind all hope of defending the present verbal inspiration of the Old Testament, on *literary* grounds.

We now pause a moment. We set out from the printed Hebrew Bible acknowledged by Jews and Christians in the sixteenth century, or even earlier. We had to trace it back, step by step, to the Sacred writers; we had to enquire the grounds for believing in the *purity* of the text, and not merely the general proof of the existence of Hebrew Scriptures. We have arrived at the period when the last of the Prophets lived—Malachi. We have looked at the

literary evidence, as we would in the case of “any other book.”—Will any one now congratulate the ordinary student on his prospect, at this point, of obtaining an easy literary foundation for his Religion?—

Let us now proceed, to realise the position of the Sacred Volume anterior to the time of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Another slight hiatus, and we come to Ezra:—again, another historical pause, and we reach the close of the Captivity.—We may here think of the Jews as permitted to return from their exile, and some considerable number of them availing themselves of the permission to settle again in their own land. Where, *at this time*, was their Sacred Book?—and of what did it consist?

The Holy Volume, as we now have it, contains the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and certain historical and moral books—twenty-two (or twenty-four) in number. St. Jerome reckons five Books of Moses, eight Prophets, and nine Hagiographa. Josephus numbers the Sacred Books by the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. There is no question as to what books are received among the Jews as Divine, although they are not all received as equal in authority and character. Nor can it be said (with some) that the Jewish Canon contained “all their national literature,” on the ground of the very

language being sacred. The Book of Tobit, for instance, was not taken into the Canon; yet it appears to have been Hebrew, and, partly at least, may be as old as Hezekiah. Baruch and Judith, again, in their original form, could not have been Greek. And some of the later books have not been received into the Jewish Canon, (the Maccabees, for example), though written first in Hebrew, as St. Jerome and Origen both intimate. Then at the Return from Babylon, the three latest prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, had not begun to prophesy, and must for the present be excepted from the Sacred Collection. How then were these Books then chosen, or ascertained?

There are five sets of books, composing the Sacred Hebrew writings:

- 1, The Pentateuch;
- 2, The Historical Books;
- 3, The Devotional and Ethical;
- 4, The eight Prophets from Hosea to Isaiah, who prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah;
- 5, And the five Prophets of the Captivity, from Jeremiah to Zephaniah.

Of these five groups of writings, we may at once perceive plain indications that they had hitherto been so far unconnected, that they had never yet been

actually brought together, as a whole. The prophets of the Captivity, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Habaccuc, and Zephaniah, of course formed no part of any of the pre-Babylonian Canon. The prophets of Israel, Hosea and Amos, presuppose "the law" of Moses; but do not appear to have been mixed at all with Isaiah, or Micah. If the greater part of the Psalms were written in the days of David and Solomon, yet few scholars, (like Dr. Allix), would now attribute them all to that era; and if not, then the book, (as a Canonical whole), *could not* have been what it now is, much before the Captivity. Of the History, little can be said with literary certainty. When, then, we meet with a dim report among the Jews, that the "great men of the Synagogue" gathered together their Sacred Books after their National Return from Babylon, it is not easy to appreciate the idea. That some effort of the kind would be made would seem so probable, that the report is a very natural one to have arisen. Yet it is noticeable, that there is no real testimony on the subject. Ezra in his recognised book says nothing to assure us that the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Histories, had ever been gathered together as a whole before his time. The author of "Maccabees" (ii. 2, 13) attributes the collection to Nehemiah.

Between the time of Ezra and Moses, again

there is a space of about a thousand years. The History of that time had been written, we are frequently told, by prophets; and the History must be the thread of the whole Religious life of the nation. —Let us see briefly, what the Scriptures tell us, as to that History, from the beginning to the end of the Monarchy.

The History of David was written by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. (1 *Chron.* xxix. 29.)—The History of Solomon, by Nathan, Iddo, and Ahijah. (2 *Chron.* ix. 29.)—The History of Rehoboam, by Shemaiah and Iddo. (2 *Chron.* xii. 15.)—The History of Rehoboam's son, Abijah, also by Iddo. (2 *Chron.* xiii. 22.)—Abijah's son and successor, Asa, was guided by the prophets Azariah, and Hanani, and his History was written in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. (2 *Chron.* xv. 1, 2; xvi. 7, 11.)—The History of the next monarch, Jehoshaphat, was written by Jehu, the son of the previous prophet. (2 *Chron.* xx. 34.)—King Jehoram came next; and a "writing from Elijah the prophet" terminated his brief bad history. (2 *Chron.* xxi. 12.)—Jehoiada the priest, and his son Zechariah brought up the young child of king Jehoram in the temple, during the six troubled years of Athaliah's rebellion, and the priests had direction of affairs till the death of king Joash: the account

was written in the "story of the book of the kings" (2 *Chron.* xxiv. 27).—So also "the acts of Amaziah first and last, in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel" (2 *Chron.* xxv. 26); prophet after prophet being sent to him. (2 *Chron.* xxv. 7, 15.)—King Uzziah came next; and the prophet Isaiah wrote his acts.—(2 *Chron.* xxvi. 22.) Next Jotham (2 *Chron.* xxvii. 7), and then Ahaz (2 *Chron.* xxviii. 26), are chronicled; and no less than eight of the prophets were then living.—Isaiah too is expressly said to have written the acts and character of Hezekiah (2 *Chron.* xxxii. 32); and Chosai the story of Manasseh (xxxiii. 18).—Of king Amon's short career there seems no history to tell.—His son Josiah was, practically, the last of Judah's monarchs; (the kingdom expired with his children). Hilkiah the high priest brought him up, and guided him (2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 3, &c.); and Jeremiah the prophet wrote his elegy (2 *Chron.* xxxv. 25).

The writer of the Book of Chronicles, who lived after the Captivity (2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 23), gives us these statements of the *authorities* referred to, for the history of his people. But he does not say who was authorised to draw up the summaries of the story, which now are called "books of Samuel" and "Kings," or his own "Chronicles."—In fact, the writings of Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, She-

maiah, Iddo, Azariah, Hanani, Jehu, Elijah, and Chosai, and the Chronicles of Isaiah and others (all referred to as the *literary* basis of the national history) have perished, without exception. The outlines which survive are by another hand; and have been drawn with a *design of their own*. Nothing can exceed the plainness with which the sacred author of the "Chronicles" acknowledges that they who seek mere history must look for it elsewhere. He is writing for another purpose,—being guided in a way which he does not pause to explain, or guard against misconception.

The results are simply and undeniably these: that after the Jewish Captivity in Babylon—(within a hundred years of that event)—the *merely* historical, as distinct from the sacred, records of the nation having no doubt been examined, disappear, and the religious books called Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, are found in their present form. The ingenuity of popular theology among both Jews and Christians has attributed to Ezra the task of "editing" the whole work. But there is no proof that he did it; nor is it of the least consequence to us *who* did,—unless we are anxious to rest our faith on some one man.

But we have been speaking of the sacred histories of the Jewish Monarchy. We have not touched on

*the story of the commonwealth under the Judges—and the Elders—and Joshua—and Moses. For these, the Pentateuch, the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth are our authorities. Again, we have not noticed the books of Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, or Canticles. Assuming these to have existed before the Captivity, we should ask, on what theory they are supposed to have been preserved? When the historical books were being transcribed into the uniform Chaldee character, during the hundred years following the Captivity, who had the custody of the eight Prophets of the time of Hezekiah?—and who of the five Prophets of the Captivity?—and how came they, too, to be all written out in the same square letters as the religious outlines of History then drawn up or transcribed?*

Did those who, under the authority of the “great men of the Synagogue,” copied all the Scriptures then recognised, find them in ‘sacred’ Hebrew, and turn them all uniformly into Chaldee letters?—It is very hard to conceive. As a literary hypothesis, it is not less amazing than Tertullian’s assertion, that “the very Hebrew writings are laid up in the temple of Serapis,”—having been there since the Septuagint of Ptolemy was made (*Apol. i. 18*) † or the idea that the Hebrew writings were all imparted by inspiration to Ezra,—having been

previously burnt (4 *Esdras* xiv. 21, 22).—It is certainly more reasonable to think that the collected Sacred Volume had been Divinely cared for all along; even though no literary history of that preservation can be recovered.

In the Sacred Books, as received and authorized among the Jews, (after their return with Zerubbabel their prince in the time of Cyrus), we have intimations, though not very copious ones, of what had been the previous history of the Book of “the Law.”—What may be included in the term “Law,” or “the Book,” we cannot be sure. It may mean the “two Tables written in Horeb,” by the finger of God. It may mean all the *Ritual* of the Pentateuch. It may mean the book of Deuteronomy. It may mean the five books called the Pentateuch. Or finally, it may mean those parts of the five, or four, books which were said to be written by the hand of Moses himself.—We are told, for instance, (*Exod.* xvii. 14) that “Moses wrote in a book” the defeat of Amalek, for the use of Joshua. Again, (*Exod.* xxiv. 7) that “Moses took the Book of the Covenant,” and read it to the people. And (*Deut.* xxxi. 11, 22-26) that he “wrote the Law and put it in the side of the Ark.” The future king was also commanded to copy it. And there are indications in many passages, that Moses wrote them; though

in what *character*, we are not told. There is a passage in Joshua (xxiv. 26) which that great leader of the people is said to have written: and one in Samuel which states that that Prophet wrote a history of the kingdom, and "laid it up before the LORD." There are other passages of a similar, but fragmentary, import. When the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the temple in the reign of Solomon, we are expressly informed that the "two Tables" were in it, and nothing else. (1 *Kings* viii. 9; 2 *Chron.* v. 10.) Where the "Book of the Law" then was, or any other Sacred book, we are not told: nor whether any books were then known and recognized, except the Law. During the 500 years from Moses to Solomon, we have no history of the Law. About 350 years later, (*viz.*, in the close of the Monarchy), Hilkiah the high priest "found the Law and took it to Huldah the Prophetess." It had, in some sense, been lost for some time—probably kept out of sight during the long and wicked reign of Manasseh.

With these facts before us, how can we do, as the popular monobiblic theory would ask us—place ourselves in thought with Moses in the wilderness, and imagine him, or some one at his bidding, preparing for us a "Sacred Document" to stand *per se*, for every man's own private exposition?—

If any one can give a better account of the Chillingworth foundation of the moderns, let it be done. Yet be it observed that nothing now alleged has been stated in a way that even admits of a moment's denial. We have conceded to the popular investigation every advantage. We have kept entirely to the external history of the Sacred Book, and not doubted its meaning, or the enquirer's right and capacity to judge of it. We may further concede any, or all, of the conjectures by which certain "lost books" of prophets are "accounted for." We may concede 'that the very copy of the Pentateuch, written by Moses throughout, with National Hymns, and some of the Psalms, and some pieces of history gradually appended, existed for ages in Israel;' but the Sacred Autograph escapes us at last. Or, if the "book of Jashir," for instance, became the standard copy of "the Scriptures" thus composed,—did it contain a transcript of the Divine Writing once made in Horeb? And was that Divine Writing lost altogether, after the Captivity? Having existed for 500 years, from Moses to Solomon—and 350 more from Solomon to Hilkiab—and then 150 years more to Ezra,—very little noticed in all those ages, so far as the record states,—was it really turned into one uniform shape—Chaldee letters, without the written points—with only the

unwritten "Masora" to fix its meaning? To conceive of this as "Revelation for every man's own verifying faculty to judge of,"—seems to require credulity more amazing than we can describe.

. We waive, for the present, the literary examination of the contents, and the internal character of any of the Sacred Books. The mere identification of the "documents," as such, presents such crushing difficulties to the independent enquirer, "freely handling Revelation for himself," that we do not hesitate to say that any reasonable being who would accept the Scriptures at all, *must* take them on some other ground than that which "identifies the written word with God's Revelation." A more hopeless, "carnal," and eventually sceptical position, it is impossible to conceive. Granting the Hebrew Bible a safe transit from the Mediæval schools of Toledo back to the best manuscripts of Bagdat; granting that the Jewish Masoretic points (whenever invented) kept all the traditional sense handed down from Moses; granting that the earliest Jewish records (the best parts of the Mishna, or the Targums) give the scholar ground for supporting a true text, till we reach Josephus and Philo, and the Septuagint; and granting that some parts of the Targums may, though unwritten, have been as old as Ezra; yet if the reproduction of the whole

ancient Scriptures in a new character, interpreted then by an unwritten "Masora," be what we come to in Ezra's time, and the documents of the thousand years before all vanish before investigation, it is on the gigantic gifts and inspiration of the transcribers in Ezra's day, that we are really depending,—gifts and inspiration which yet are a mere hypothesis, of which the possessors tell us no single word! And before Ezra's day, we are thus owning, unmistakably, that the literary history of the Old Testament is lost! Let all those who would identify this with God's entire Revelation, see to what they have brought us.

Let us not, however, omit to notice the very probable evasions of many a man who will pretend that it is mere wantonness thus to attribute to the popular Bible-speculator all this literary task. He takes the Bible, (it may now perhaps be said), on the "*authority of good scholars.*" "He never pretends to judge everything for himself." He chooses his theologians as he would his physicians, taking his chance. He only judges some things, and takes the rest on trust. He accepts the usual results attained by the labour of others. Well. But does he not wish at least to know *what* those results are? And that is all that we have as yet demanded. The scholars to whom he

appeals are not at all unanimous as to the results. If, when scholars differ, the ordinary Christian is bound to no decision either way, it may happen very often that he is bound to nothing at all. And this will very painfully appear, still further, when we come to minuter investigations. For there are critics, and many of them, very highly cultivated men, who reject in turn every part of the "written word" of the Popular faith; and our enquirer does not, it seems, pretend to be qualified to judge between them.

But he rejoins; "He does not mean this. He means that he *has* the Bible. He possesses it, as every one around him possesses it; and that, without relying on any particular scholars or critics, and without the task of choosing between them. The Sacred Book is 'common ground' to all who receive it. The Church owns the Book, and may not urge these difficulties against the popular Puritan use of it. *How* people come to own it, is no enquiry with which to trouble them. They do not *look* at these questions, about the origin of the Bible." That is very intelligible ground; but let us note what it means. Are you prepared to shut your eyes thus to all enquiry, and accept *anything* as a "Bible" which nominal Christian, or Jew, may offer you? Are you willing simply to

the Church of England, or the Church of Rome, or your own sect whatever it be, as to "what is the Bible?" for that is all we are now considering. If you say that you take the Bible from your church, or sect,—is it from the Church itself, as the trusted authority? or is it from the critics employed by the Church? If the former, you are not "thinking for yourself" in Religion—as the pretence has hitherto been. If the latter, it is but the "literary" method again, once removed.

Too probably, it is for the sake of the coveted privilege of satisfying the individual with *his own opinions* and traditions, and propping them with some sort of "authority," that the common run of people would first grasp the Bible *anyhow*. Suppose we grant, then, for the moment, that the monobiblic party "climb up some other way," and get possession of our treasure; we believe, that it must prove as useless to them, in this controversy, as the Ark was to the Philistines,—(that is if they desire *Truth*). It will be found that in the presence of this Sacred Law, the Dagon of mere opinion will fall and dash itself to pieces; and Calvin will pick up a hand, and Luther a foot, and Swedenborg claim the trunk; and the Ark of God will needs have to be put on a new cart and

sent back to its own people,—“the milch kine lowing as they go.” It will be found, (that is) that the Bible is actually unuseable on this “common ground” hypothesis.

Put the case. A man gets the Book—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or English, *anyhow* at first; trusts us, or the critics, or any one: *begins*, at least, blindly without previous free enquiry, abandoning his Protestant self-respect and intellectual liberty. His object then is, to *examine every word* and phrase of this accepted Book, to get its *sense for himself in his own way*. He goes to his trusted lexicons, histories, and commentators; perhaps he prays to God to enlighten him to understand this Book, when he has not dared to ask for the history of the manuscript of any part of it—or even *what* it is. Yet then, he has but placed himself in an *impossible* position. If he would accept any one of its doctrines, he will find that the words of the Scripture demand careful examination; and thus, sooner or later, the internal structure and character of every book will have to be explored; and this will *oblige him* to know something more of the external history of every part, and so he must be brought face to face again with the very questions which he had thought he had got rid of for ever! Then, finding out enough, very soon, to make his

mind uncomfortable, if his theories seem to be at stake, he may try once more to *shut his eyes*—(yes, it is a common case that we see,)—this man of “free and independent conscience,” who wished for nothing so much as an *open Bible* to confront all those “narrow-minded Churchmen,” who are so notoriously “superstitious” and “ignorant!”

There is, however, one more resort of the Popular theorist whose course we are now following to the end. Baffled in the pretence of “free thought,” and detected in the evasions on “common ground,” he has recourse to his *feelings*.—“Say what you will about difficulties,” he now alleges, “I find this blessed Bible to be a sacred guide to me. Am I to doubt that Truth which it conveys and certifies to my soul and conscience?” Again, however, our enquirer is wrong. Who has asked him to dispute such felt truth? Our investigation has been of a different kind, viz., concerning his proving for himself the *correctness of the text* of Scripture. If he does not want to know that, let him say so. His feelings about any truth will not establish the accuracy of any page or line of the Pentateuch, or Isaiah, or Daniel. To say that Revelation is thus made to the individual, is to appeal to the “verifying faculty” without reserve, and give up the Bible. If his consciousness of a

Truth proves to him that a book which contains it is inspired, will he adhere to that view whenever *any* book tells him what he believes to be true? And will he deny the inspiration of any part of a sacred book that he does not thus feel? If he does not (as some do not) feel the deep truth of the Book of Esther, or Canticles, or Ecclesiastes, or Daniel; or the instructiveness of the story of Bel, or Susanna; or the certainty of the angel's descent at the Pool of Bethesda; has he a right to give them up? It is clear enough, indeed, that the popular theology, notwithstanding its pretence to regard the Bible and Revelation as identical and co-extensive, does, by neglect, give up a very considerable part of the Sacred Volume; but it scarcely as yet avows that it does so, on the principle of following its own sense of truth. In any case, the appeal to individual feeling as the test of religious doctrine and practice, is an abandonment, *pro tanto*, of the ground that the Hebrew and Greek Scripture, the "Written Word," is GOD'S infallible voice to mankind, His one and complete Revelation. Such an appeal is a taking refuge in the subjective, and even casting aside the objective.

Would to God that now, thoughtful Christians might, even from this brief review of the external facts as to the Sacred Volume, lay to heart the im-

possibility—not to say mockery—of the whole popular method of approaching and treating it; and learn that if indeed the Bible is to be received *at all* by reasonable men, it must be in some very different way. Too long, by far, have we stood by, and seen the Holy Word misused, in appeals to the ignorance of the many. Even now there will be not a few to deprecate the plain statement of facts here made, as though it might be used in the service of unbelief. They forget that an undevout appeal to the Bible is unbelief. To call on semi-Christian masses all around us, or on heathen populations abroad, to pick out a Religion “from the Bible” in the popular way, is surely a most disheartening and mistaken proceeding, if it be not very much worse.

The Divine Word refuses to be merely explored as human literature; and the hearty believer in it may recognise this, and not be afraid to speak the truth about it. He can be devoutly thankful that the Bible is what it is; and that, not being a human work, it defies those who would treat it as such.

As to the countless *varieties of Meaning* honestly extracted from the Sacred Word, we must not indeed be silent. They belong perhaps to that division of our subject in which the Bible as

“Revelation *per accidens*,” comes under review. We have thus far principally shown how Providence itself defeats the attempt to treat Scripture as what is called a “*Documentary Revelation for every man to judge.*”—First get your “Document,” by any of your independent methods; that is our primary answer. But even were it obtained, and men went and sat before the Oracle, “every man with his idols in his heart,” we doubt not that its own mute but sublime answer would be found to be,—“I will not be enquired of at all by you.”

So unreasonable, however, are too many men, that they will but recoil even from their own convictions, if they fancy that they see before them some conclusion which they dislike. Are we to be led, say they, after all, to think that Scripture is subordinate to the living Church? Is not that the theory of Rome?

How far it is so, is next to be seen.—At the present moment it might well suffice to say, that it may be better to have the Bible even on that ground, than not possess it. And the Popular Theory has not yet arrived at it at all.—But we are by no means shut up to this alternative.

§ 2. *The Roman Theory.*

The facts thus far referred to, as to the text of Scripture, and the external proof of it,\* need not be re-stated, of course, in the examination of the three remaining views. We have principally to enquire how, on each of those views, the admitted truths are dealt with. In examining this, some slight repetition of details may be perhaps unavoidable at times ; but may, it is hoped, be borne with, when a necessity.

There can be no question that the Romanists' position requires us to admit that their Church, the living Church of which the Pope is considered the Head, and "infallible"—has actually the control and settlement of Holy Scripture, and of all questions of salvation connected with it ; and has in fact dealt with it as the Teacher sent for that purpose should claim to do.

Here, as before, we shall look to the external aspect of the case. We postpone the question of "Infallibility," just as before, we postponed the questions of "Inspiration" and "Interpretation," and address ourselves to the facts only.

Take at once the Hebrew, or Greek, text. It seems almost trifling to ask it,—but has any Pope, or Council, or authorized Congregation, ever certified,

or even examined, the *ipsissima verba* of either the Greek or Hebrew? Or to put the matter much more closely, and more justly too, considering that the Church of Rome claims to have *always* had the same authority as she now asserts,—did she, in truth, from the first, prize and preserve in some ark of safety, the autographs of Apostles, or Evangelists, or make diligent search after the authentic manuscripts of the Prophets?—To judge of the importance of this question, let us for a moment suppose any of us *now* to be possessed of the authoritative copy, or the very original of any inspired writer. How beyond all things we should prize it! We know the great anxiety shown for the safety, and for a critical examination, of a manuscript like the Vatican Codex of the sixth century. What, then, we may justly demand, was the Roman treatment of the “Written Word,”—either the Old Testament or the New—in the first ages of Christianity?

Undoubtedly, the Church of Rome expressed *no judgment whatever* at first, as to the authentic Books of the Old Testament. Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian and St. Irenæus, are the three earliest writers to whom we can at all refer on the subject. If they may be taken as expressing the views of the East and West as to the Canon, they

strikingly exhibit, that neither the Roman nor any other Church had critically, or authoritatively in any sense, settled the grave question as to *what* Books should be admitted; or enquired at all, as far as appears, for "authentic copies." Theophilus of Antioch in his Apology addressed to the pagan Autolytus seems to place the Sibyl of the Greeks on a level with the Hebrew prophets. Tertullian and St. Irenæus expressly reject the practice of individual appeal to Scripture as erroneous in theory; and refer to "Apocryphal" Books, such as Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and Bel and the Dragon, as inspired. Indeed even the Septuagint is regarded as of Divine Authority for the Old Testament, by St. Irenæus, St. Clemens Alexandrinus and others; so that the accuracy of "Hebrew verity" is not even enquired for, at that time.

As to the New Testament—if the fragment discovered by Muratori (*Routh*, vol. iv.) be, as the learned Editor believes, as old as the end of the second century, it is probably the earliest testimony in existence as to the Books of the New Testament received among the Latins: and it is melancholy to mark in this the entire absence of all such accurate supervision as the Roman claim implies, if it means anything. If Muratori's Canon recognises the four Gospels, the Acts and the

Pauline Epistles, it omits or misnames the Hebrews, doubts the Apocalypse, and inserts the Book of Wisdom and the Shepherd of Hermas; and, in other ways, is a most painful picture of hesitation and uncertainty.

But will any venture to surmise that the need of a minute investigation had not arisen? Such a supposition will not bear a moment's examination. The Church of the second century had two opposite classes of internal enemies,—the Gnostics first, and afterwards the Montanists. The former supported their theological philosophy by appealing to their own interpretations of the Apostolic Writings; rejecting some of those documents and arbitrarily acknowledging others. Here was the exact occasion required for the exercise of Church authority over “the Written Word:” but instead of using any such power, the Church rejected the heretical method, and relied on her own traditions. The latter, the Montanists, asserted a kind of perpetual inspiration, practically superseding all Scripture. Here again was an opportunity for an authoritative assertion of the Canon on the part of the Church. But we do not meet with it. Even the autographs of Evangelists and Apostles, if still existing, were allowed to pass away without any enquiry after the invaluable treasures; and not a list of their

works was at first guaranteed, or (apparently) as much as thought of, for the hundred years after they were given to the Church. That the course of Montanistic and Gnostic heresy hastened the determination of the Canon between the days of Justin and Origen, we do not question: but this was not by any formal action of the Roman or any other Church. If then any may be thanked for the Canon of the New Testament, it is the Church of Alexandria: but not even in that literary Communion have we any attempt made to preserve or ascertain the originals of the Gospels or Epistles. What was at all done towards exegesis was the work of individual minds.

If at length the uncertain condition of the Sacred text, the growth of heresies, and the decay of the Judaistic element in the Church, forced, as they did, some more exact attention to both the Old Testament and the New, yet the allowing such an effort as Origen's Hexapla to be neglected and lost, is a proof how little the Roman Church recognised the position assigned to her by some in later days, as Arbitress of Scripture.

And what has been the condition of the Sacred Word since the third century—(for all questions as to the correction of the text slept for at least a hundred years after Origen)—? An uncritical

Septuagint, and an uncritical Greek Testament in the Greek Churches; the common Syriac Version of the third century in the Oriental Churches; half a dozen different versions in the various African communions; the Vulgate in the West;—these in some way sufficed the Christian world for many ages. With some of these, the Septuagint, the Peschito, the Syriac, and the Egyptian, the Roman Church had nothing to do. As far as we know, she never thought of examining them. If that was her duty, she was entirely unfaithful to it. If subordinate to any Church, those versions must be answered for by others; not by Rome. Nearly as much may be said of the manuscripts of the Greek Testament. The Vulgate, however,—the Bible of the West—was in the hands of Rome from the fourth century.

St. Jerome's Revision of the Latin Scriptures was a great gift of Providence to the Latin world. Those of his Prologues which exist are valuable indices of what was then known of the state of the text or the Canon. St. Jerome's version was compared to a great extent with Origen's Hexapla, preserved in the library of Cesaræa. How long it there remained we cannot say. Eventually St. Jerome's whole revision was collated with the Hebrew and Greek. But the Church at large was

unwilling to receive the Saint's work, as he bitterly complains; and even St. Augustin was disposed to accord to it qualified praise. No attempt was made on any hand to give Scripture an independent standing on a critical or historical basis of its own, at that time; nor indeed till more than a thousand years afterwards.

The desire to find Synodical authority for the Sacred Books has led to many endeavours to associate lists of the Canonical Scriptures with the proceedings of the early Councils; but the result is anything but satisfactory. No one who cares for the written Word of God would be content to find authority for it, in such recorded evidence as is given for the acts of Nicea, or Laodicea, which are alleged to refer to it.

But if the utmost were conceded to the advocates of those records, nothing would really be obtained but a list of the names of Books. Again it was a time surely for the Church of Rome to have spoken out plainly on the subject; but she did nothing whatever in support of her present claim of authority in respect of either Old Testament or New. Her greatest Saints took different lines. St. Jerome, with the encouragement of Pope Damasus, preferred, to retranslate the whole Bible from even uncriticised Hebrew. St. Augustin adhered to the older Latin

versions. St. Hilary appeared rather to regard the Septuagint as the inspired text. St. Leo and St. Gregory were dogmatic and spiritual expositors only. By degrees, as we reach the ninth century, we find that the Vulgate had crept into general use, unexamined by Church authority. Indeed, as late as Gregory the Great, the old Latin, the *Itala*, was plainly preferred.

From that time, the "Ordinary Gloss" of Strabo Fuldensis, our own Alcuin, and others, exhibits the Latin Scripture received throughout Europe. The Interlineary spiritual Interpretation of the Fathers, supported by extracts from their writings, placed in the margin, tells us how every *word* of that Translation was now relied on. A hundred names, the greatest which Christianity had known, combined to give to this great work the highest Catholic Authority. It displays, as we look at it now, with the very sensible Postils of De Lyra at the foot of each page, the Religion of the first half of this dispensation, more perfectly perhaps than any other Book. But the complete, we may even say sublime, *independence* of the whole is a direct confutation of the notion of any authority in a Church claiming, *à priori*, control over Scripture. The reverent submission of every Father and Commentator, to every word and

phrase of that Latin Bible is the answer of history to the Roman theory. Whatever else may be said, no one worthy of attention can deny, that the "Ordinary Gloss" absolutely glorifies what it takes to be Scripture, as *supreme* in its own sphere. If any should now tell us, that that was a very defective translation, we reply, that at all events it served Wiclif very well, when he made his English Version; and its merits cannot be well weighed until we know what the purity of the Hebrew and Greek texts may be, with which it is to be compared. But further, the Church of our fathers did not think it corrupt. No better version was issued at Rome. It lasted till the Reformation. The schools had used it with religious submission. It gives us in many places, doubtless, very sacred readings and senses, suggested by older manuscripts than we now know. It was the light of ages which we call "dark." Its comment, written with a freedom which we feel to be so elevating, was the work of holy individual minds acting in and with the Church, to keep alive the sacred flame from age to age.—But no Roman council ever criticised this "Ordinary Gloss." We see in it the *Divine Scripture and the Meaning of Scripture*, shining together; and notwithstanding the varieties of opinion which crowd its margin, we learn

unmistakeably how, unbidden by Pope or Council, the whole heart of the Church literally adored the uncriticised Latin Bible, that Bible which penetrated its whole life ;—but which a modern historian of the Reformation represents Luther as “ discovering !”

We pass, then, to the time when the Church of Rome could no longer pursue this passive career. The appeal to Scripture at the Reformation was too urgent to be disregarded. The Council of Trent found itself obliged to repromulgate the Canon ; and in so doing, it simply took the existing facts of the Christian literature of the previous ages—adopting as a whole the ecclesiastical traditions. It was the only reasonable, the only possible, course in her position ; but it practically vacated much of the Roman claim, and left, as the world would say, to hazard, or individual zeal, decisions which should have been made by authority. The Council of Trent ventured so far, however, as to order a carefully revised edition of the Vulgate. If this were sincerely intended, it is to be regretted that it was not more immediately attended to. But the Roman Church could not but see the difficulties of the case ; and she was afraid. Nearly half a century passed away, and the task was again rapidly passing into the hands of private doctors.

And thus the work of Lucas Brugensis had come

to be nearly regarded among Roman Catholics as representing the true Vulgate ordered by the Trentine Council; when Sixtus V. was called to the Papal chair. This pontiff, however, a man of some learning and much resolution, took the matter personally in hand; and set forth an edition of his own. He died in 1590; and that edition (declared by his Bull to be the model of future Bibles) was, four years afterwards, suspended. Clement VIII., in 1605, "corrected," in a fashion, three thousand errors of his predecessor, and a new Vulgate came forth: and Bellarmine had the unpleasant task of writing the Preface, which may be seen in some of the editions of Urban VIII. (1641).

We see by the "Roman Corrections," now at the end of the "Gloss," how far from perfect this work was thought to be. But it was tolerated at first; then faintly praised; and, at length, silently acquiesced in. Repudiated at times in almost humiliating terms, the Vulgate of Clement and Urban has, by time, acquired the reputation of Infallibility; and from it are made all the modern translations accredited in the Roman Communion.

Such then are the facts bearing on the claim of the Church of Rome to rule over Scripture, and subordinate it to herself.—She did *nothing* to the

Canon for 400 years : *nothing*, except by individual, and much neglected and opposed, doctors, for 500 more : *nothing authoritative* till the sixteenth century : *nothing satisfactory to herself* even then : *nothing, to settle by authority either the Hebrew or Greek text, till this hour!*—Any claim on her part to paramount authority over the Written Word is contrary to every fact of history.

We have now looked, *ab extra*, at the Roman view of the relation of Scripture and the Church. Having never been carefully defined, the claim itself appears, on any close examination, to be without meaning. Yet it is not the less practically injurious on that account. So to regard the Divine Word is to misdirect the conscience of the Church, and lead to the neglect of duties towards that Word which a more dutiful and sensitive deference would inevitably teach. The condition of Scripture criticism in the modern Roman Communion is the natural result of their theory. And no one is at all helped by the Roman treatment of Scripture. The claim to rule over the Bible is to the mass of the people *entirely irrelevant*, except so far as it is obstructive. What the people of any Church need is a *reception of the inner, or subjective, truth* of Revelation. Rome does not pretend that men get this from the study of Scripture even as

settled by her own authority. The practical question for all of us is the same, 'how is the individual to become possessed of that *truth* which concerns his duty and salvation?' Whether to set us to discover an infallible Book, or an infallible Pope, will help us, may easily be judged, by any who will make the case their own. An "Infallibility" or an "Inspiration" which we cannot get at, is of no avail to us. Neither the authorized Bible, nor the "Vulgate" of Rome, nor the criticised Bible of the popular theory, is *supposed* to be the *infallible means* of conveying this same truth to all of us. To keep up any such pretence is dishonourable. The inherited forms of truth which each conscience gradually adopts, and the grace of the Sacraments, are all that *any* Church can possibly promise to the multitude. In every Church, and every system, every man's faith is partly authoritative and traditional, and partly literary. But the intellectual perception, and analysis of truth must, in every Church, be left to those who are capable of it. The Roman mode of dealing with Scripture now, sets a limit no doubt to imaginative persons when (for example) the 'settlement of the text' comes in question. But it can only satisfy a love of repose, at the expense of a love of truth; and it can give no intellectual satisfaction to those who need it.

### § 3. *The Literary Theory.*

We have now seen, that the Popular view of Scripture became literary, per force ; and next, that the Roman attempted to be literary, and has failed ;—and that both views are unreal and insincere, as far as the generality of people are concerned ; because they both really look, not to the “written Word,” but to some *Special Grace*, to convey Religion to the many. In other words, the Popular, and the Roman, treatment of Scripture end in the same way, by demanding the subjective reception of truth by subjective means.

To a great extent, then, the simplest exposition of the facts condemns the idea of handling Scripture in any merely literary way. But the method itself needs to be considered, *per se*, and also in its practical working. A method which leads to wholly contradictory, and therefore irrational, results is to be suspected by rational beings. Let it not be supposed that in deprecating this way of regarding the “written Word” we are deprecating the “use of reason,” or the thorough investigation of truth. No man unconscious of equivocation would be likely to assign that meaning to us, after considering our statement. It is not of Reason that we are suspicious ; we have appealed to it, without hesita-

tion. We cannot conceive of a rational creature rightly determining to be in any thing less than rational. Though it certainly provokes patience, at times, to see some misbelievers, the least logical of human beings, affect to stand boldly for the "rights of the human mind," yet one soon forgives even this. Irreligion seems forced to soothe itself by some delusion; and if conscience declines to be party to it, the miscalled "intellect" is often the self-deceiver's ally.

We are about to urge, then, that while we are as ready as any to admit the investigations of literature, we cannot appeal to them either to certify or interpret God's Revelation to the World. Revelation is one thing, and Literature is another. What has been painfully termed "book-revelation," has been already seen to be not very hopeful in point of fact; it will also be found unreasonable in *principle*.

This "principle" seems only to need to be looked at steadily, in order to be rejected.

We postpone, as before, the more superficial rejoinders of objectors,—(such as naturally rise up to decline an approaching conclusion which the premises make inevitable). It is necessary to deal first with those who are capable of being logical, and will look at realities. The mere creatures of feeling, and victims of prejudice, may be noticed afterwards.

Granting, for the moment, that by a course of successful investigation, the Bible has been reached by some; we still submit, that there are evident fallacies, we will name four, which lie beneath all this literary treatment of Scripture, as GOD'S word to mankind; and vitiate its principle. For hereby,

1st. It is assumed, that GOD'S vital message to conscience is definitely made *in writing*: writing being undeniably an artificial, varying (and in its ancient form most precarious) way of conveying ideas to those only *who have been taught to read*; ninety-nine persons out of every hundred, since the world began, having been unable to read.—Such an idea of “Revelation” probably involves a contradiction in terms.

2ndly. It is assumed, that that “written Word” (as it actually exists among us) is in such wise “a Book like any other book,” that we may treat it by the same literary methods, and may, *in limine*, ignore what has always seemed to many, its *specific* character. Yet if it be only possible, that this Sacred Book stands wonderfully *apart from all besides*, (as many have felt), it is at least *gratuitous* to assume the reverse, and place it at once on the level of common literature.

3rdly. It is assumed that the “written Word” is not only a Divine message to some men, but covers and includes Truth, so as to be abso-

lutely conterminous with all Revelation from God to man: hereby, shutting out from authority, and independent truthfulness, everything beside the "written Word;" and including as of equal certainty and validity all that lies within it. This assumption is suicidal, as it affirms a "Revelation" to conscience, and yet *denies conscience*, at the same time.

4thly. It is assumed, that the capacity to examine, and judge, such a Book as the Bible is thus supposed to be, is adequately possessed by all concerned in its contents. And this is contrary to all experience.

It seems impossible for any one who understands the terms, to deny that these four fallacies are at the *very foundation of the Literary method*; viz., this forgetting the artificiality of writing, as a vehicle of thought,—ignoring the difference between the Bible and other books,—taking Scripture and Revelation to be conterminous,—and assigning literary capacity to all concerned in the Revelation. If the objector denies any of these, he so far agrees with us in repudiating the delusion. And if it be owned that these assumptions belong to the literary principle, it is equally clear that the fallacies exist, and are objections to the *method*, whether the Sacred Book be well authenticated or not. They who would

rightly acknowledge the Scriptures as Divine, must do so in some way which will not depend on any of these fallacies. The only true theory, as to receiving Scriptures which concern us all, must be one which provides for all capacities, and for all just and reasonable contingencies. We fully admit too that while thus impugning the literary method as irrational and impossible, we must not afterwards lean upon it, in some artificial or limited way of our own. "With the same measure that we mete, let it be measured to us again."

But before we advance, and speak of the true and only intelligible way of receiving and using Holy Scripture, let us first do justice to the ordinary *results* of that method of fourfold fallacies which every literary believer accepts. Let us mark, as faithfully and carefully as we can, the best and clearest examples, as well as the commoner cases, of men who, in some way, get the Bible, and read it for themselves with sincerity, painstaking, and ability, and let us see whether the results also do not in *every* case discredit this whole method of proceeding. Let us watch with fairness the various examples of those of our brethren, who, surely with uprightness equal to our own, have thus sought their Religion in the Bible, apart from all tradition (as they suppose) concerning its meaning. How wide the

range is, of this "Literary" Christianity, the instances which we shall adduce will instructively show.

Take, first, the man who with learning and candour and high ability, having well examined the literary history of every part of the Bible, arrives at the conclusion—and he is thought free to do so—that some parts of the volume are altogether "spurious,"—some whole books of "later origin" than they had been usually thought,—some "composite,"—some "secular,"—some "doubtful,"—and some still under examination. He reads these Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek texts, which he has satisfied himself are, in the true parts, authentic. He cherishes as Religion for himself whatever these true and genuine portions of the Bible teach,—so far as those portions appear to him to be good. In this position he is not committed to bad Geology, or Astronomy, or Ethnology, or Arithmetic, or Geography, or Demonology. What the *positive* or permanent element in his Revelation may now be, he is not bound to say. Definition would seem "dogmatic." Can he not believe something in Scripture, without saying what? To call on him to say what, in truth, he *does* find in the Bible, is to ask him to relinquish his whole position. But will he say what he *does not find*? That too

seems doubtful. Is he ready to part with, as "un-essential," what he does *not* discover in the "true parts" of the "authentic" and "criticised" Hebrew and Greek? That would be painful to him if he had been a Churchman.—Perhaps he may conclude that he can hold these things as "tolerable," even if not read in Scripture?

But let us see what some of these things may be. First there are the very sacred terms: "Trinity," "Holy Orders," "Holy Sacrament,"—Prayer-Book but not Bible words,—"The Christian Sabbath," "Infant Baptism," "Daily Worship,"—are these henceforth to be to him no more than "tolerated" phrases, and no "essentials" of the Revelation?—The "Catholic Church," the "Liturgy," the "Creed," "Christian Public Worship," "Articles," "Offices,"—what is to become of all these, to the man whose criticised Bible is his "Revelation," and his own conscience his guide to interpret it, without *any* tradition?

But let him proceed. He finds other terms in use among Churchmen, which he must look at, truthfully, as a "Bible Christian," and honestly use, or honestly give up; and they are terms which have implied no merely objective dogmas, but the subjective life, the whole inner reception of Religion. They are such as these: "Priest," "Atonement,"

“Propitiation,” “Justification;”—need we name more?

(1.) No doubt the Prayer Book speaks of “Priests” in the Church; but the New Testament does not. If we except the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is “anonymous,” and “regarded as a later document, by many,” (and was not relied on by some in the primitive days), the title “priest” is withheld in the New Testament even from our LORD Himself,—CHRIST never openly appropriates the term. None of the Evangelists call Him “Priest,” or “High Priest.” It is a word of much meaning: can it be really unimportant whether it be used or not? Has the word “Priest” been so uninfluential, that it may be acquiesced in as of little consequence? Shall it be given up? Shall the “Bible-Christian” believe that CHRIST was not a “Priest,”—at least till the writer to the Hebrews called Him so? And that His Ministers are not “priests,” because the Apostolic writers do not say so?

(2.) But what is to be said of the word “Atonement?” so mysteriously dear to Christian hearts! He cannot find it in the New Testament except *once*: and then only in the sense of “Reconciliation.” He looks, perhaps, yet again, to see some text, if possible, which shall exhibit the “Atoning Death,” in the form with which he had

long been familiar: But he finds that he has to express the thought, if at all, *in other words*. Can he exactly render it all, by keeping only to Bible words? He tries, perhaps; and then finds that the pure Scripture language admits of other meaning than his,—admits it, it may be, more naturally than his own accustomed meaning! What shall he do? Enlarge his theory of Revelation?—or reject the term “Atonement?”—Which?

(3.) As to “Propitiation,” he is in no less doubt. It is a term not used by CHRIST, nor by the Evangelists: not found in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in St. Paul’s Epistles, except once in a passage of extreme and acknowledged obscurity. True, the Church uses it, in her office for Communion whenever she celebrates; but what is the New Testament sense of the word?—Gradually, the faith of this “literary” Christian is becoming attenuated, more and more;—where is the process to stop?

(4.) Some eager friend reminds him of “Justification by the imputed merits of CHRIST;” and he pauses a moment, perhaps, to be sure of the idea, and finds that the meaning has escaped him: and the *phrase*, at all events, is not in Holy Scripture anywhere; and perhaps not the notion itself! ‘Is it in any Christian writer for hundreds of years after

the Ascension?' He doubts it—unless, indeed, something akin to it belongs to the Church's doctrine of Sacramental Grace: but then he looks "only to Scripture," as the record of Revelation.—

What, then, has this gifted enquirer, whom we have supposed, gained by all his search into Scripture, after all his study, and prayers and care? What is the "Revelation" which rewards him in the end?—Neither any distinct objective truth, nor any internal ideology of the Christian system, has yet been gained; nor even any part of the supposed terminology of hereditary Christianity.

But are there no other Sacred questions on which a Revelation from heaven might throw light?—Perhaps he has gained by his method, some insight into the primary problems of Theology? The *Personality* and Providence of GOD; the nature of *choice* in the All-Perfect FIRST CAUSE; the Possibility of Real *Wills*, subordinate to the SUPREME WILL; the use and efficacy of *Prayer*, in a Universe governed by an absolutely wise Lawgiver:—Dares he to say to himself that these "difficulties" are solved in any of his approved fragments of Authentic Scripture?

Literally, then, he has nothing for all his toil. He is disappointed. He thought at the outset that the Bible might Reveal something to him; but he

ends as he began, in a doubtful outline of *Natural Morality*, which is all that he can mean by "Natural Religion!"

There is indeed an undefined notion of "Mercy" which he preaches to his own conscience; but even of that he cannot be certain. It stands side by side with other theories, in every part of Scripture. He has learned then to despair of finding in "Revelation," dogma, or creed, or even philosophy or theology of a scientific kind. His investigations have failed him at every point. He must fall back upon any "moderate" national customs of Religion, and a Benevolent Morality. That is all. The Bible is not to him even "Revelation, *per accidens*."—Surely the humble, though little learned child of the Church, with most restricted gifts, might afford to compassionate so noble a wreck, as such a "Literary" believer must be, and exclaim; Ah, "would to God that thou wert almost, and altogether, such as I am,—except my bonds!"

Now the well qualified and upright literary Christian, whose career we have thus traced, finding it grow broader and fainter as we went on, is, be it remembered, the choicest example, the most perfect development of the literary method. We have not imagined him impatiently breaking off in

disappointment, from the pursuit of truth, and turning aside to blasphemy, or moral despondency, and its train of woes. No. He has kept heart through all his course. We have supposed him, however improbably, to retain throughout, his love of truth (so long baffled), his habits of prayer, his traditions of Christian faith and hope and love. There could be but few such as he among those who adopted his principles. And if such be the condition of the Leader,—what is to become of the rank and file? What of the multitude who, attempting “the literary” in a smaller way, accepting the Bible, in whole or in part, without at all comprehending the questions at issue, still “interpret” for themselves;—or, for themselves, “make shipwreck of faith?”

Yet let us not fancy that all enquirers, except the highly equipped and sincere critic, are to be looked on as contemptible. Multitudes of Christians there are, of the greatest variety, who rudely accept the Sacred Volume as Divine, and study it as their most bounden duty; and having so done, solemnly rest in their own conclusions, drawn (they believe) from that Book. We are not going to ask, again, how they *obtained* the Book. They *imagine* that they possess it, at all events. If they possess what may be to them a volume of enigmas,—it is theirs to solve them. Let us look, then, at

some of these well meant "solutions." Have we not been at times somewhat hard and uncharitable, in supposing that the conclusions drawn from Scripture by others, were corruptly drawn, because different from our own? Have not the thoughtful, though divergent, interpreters of many systems, a great deal of reason on their side, if we concede the first principles of their method? Have they not often much earnestness as men, and much goodness, and faith, and patience, and exemplariness of life? We do but harm ourselves, hardening our own hearts in self conceit, when we roughly assume that multitudes of enquirers into Scripture are *right in taking to the plan* of individual interpretation, and yet wilfully *wrong in their conclusions*.

The method which prevails among the countless sects of Christians is in truth always to a great extent the same, and quite as subjective as that which the literary critic adopts. The only difference is, that some sects, and some men, adopt it more perfectly than others. "Revelation" is alike assumed to be latent in the Bible. You *may* succeed in getting it for yourself, (say they, in various forms), or you may fail. "Revelation," then, is an *accident* to them. The possessing the Book, on their shelf, or in their hand,

is nothing of course, till they have the *meaning*. The whole sectarian or literary method of necessity thus reduces Revelation to a chance; and the noble and pure hearts and minds which have used this method and failed, sufficiently and most painfully show this. We will mark some examples.

There have been few more able, thoughtful, calm, and devout, among educated men than EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. He found the New Testament as it is, a sufficient foundation for his "*Vera Christiana Religio*." No candid mind can question that Swedenborg makes out a good case. His hearty denunciation of the Nicene decisions, as the greatest misfortune of Christendom, has been lately echoed among ourselves—perhaps by one who did not know Swedenborg to be his predecessor. His system appears to be based on no wilful perversion, at least, and no ignorant glance, but on an intelligent and painstaking perusal of the Bible in the main, as we now have it. From his literary and conscience-taught point of view, it would be difficult to prove that his may not be the honest sense of Scripture. It is useless to be made angry by a fact like this; and that it is a fact, any competent student may judge for himself; without turning Swedenborgian. On purely Popular or Literary Bible-ground it would not be easy to find that any

one has fully answered Swedenborg. The account of his death-bed can leave no doubt that he remained sincere to the last. The "Bible-Revelation" led him to Personal Revelations, *per accidens*.

EDWARD IRVING was one of the noblest and truest of men. He, like Swedenborg, was a student. His system, or that which, historically at least, sprung out of his beginnings, has enlisted multitudes of the warmest Christian hearts, and some of the most intelligent minds. We say, that no one can pretend that it was based on a stupid, or ignorant, or impatient perusal of the Bible. It seemed to him, and still seems to many, the very truth of Divine Revelation. It has led to much beyond the mere letter of Scripture—but it arose out of the honest reading and interpreting of the written word, by individuals. Irving took the whole Bible, as the Sects ordinarily do; he abated nothing—except perhaps the Apocrypha. He had an intelligent right, on his ground, to say to other Bible-Christians, "Answer me—or follow me." His was a Bible-Religion acquired by the literary method, with his own feeling of truth, and earnest prayer to God. To think of it as an irrational fanaticism, as some affect to do, is unfair and dishonourable. Irving died, almost as a martyr

might, a grey and worn out man at forty-five,—exclaiming calmly and submissively, “if I live, I live to the LORD; if I die, I die to the LORD!”

If we go back to the previous generations, still keeping to our own countrymen, we meet with names, had in honour even now among millions, or at least respected by the student. We may mention WESLEY, GILL, and WHISTON, as examples. They were all pure and upright men; and learned men too. They all honestly found their systems in the existing English Bible. One was an Arminian, and a believer in the sinlessness of true Christians. One was a Supra-Lapsarian Calvinist and a Baptist. The third was an Arian. Two of them had commented on the whole Bible. Gill's Commentary is both learned and pious; and Wesley's acute and devout. Whiston took more pains than most men of his day to ascertain “*Primitive Christianity.*” The works of all these three are valuable still. It cannot be said that the differences between such men are even comparatively small. The first would have thought the doctrine of absolute predestination held by the second to be incredibly blasphemous; and he has left that on record. The second would think the first to be utterly a “carnal” and self-deceived man. The third would be regarded by the first

and second, as a denier of the foundations of Christianity. Yet a man of patient and earnest character might at any time persuade himself, on apparent Scripture grounds, to embrace either of these three views of revealed truth—that is, in plain words, be either Freewiller, Fatalist, or Arian,—or Baptist with either of these three peculiarities superadded.

Was the case at all different in the earlier ages of Christianity? Not to refer now to the Gnostics, or Montanists, whose history is more complicated and whose Canon of Scripture was greatly unfixed,—let us look at the earliest developers of individual Scripture systems.

Novatian built on a few clear passages, a doctrine of more than Puritan strictness. He was a good man, and his followers were perhaps better and stricter than the Church people who resisted them. To judge of the “Scripture proof” on their side, let any one read writings put forth in a very earnest spirit among ourselves, in the same apparent direction. The present Bishop of St. Andrews, Dr. Charles Wordsworth, published many years ago a sermon entitled “Evangelical Repentance.” Dr. Pusey at the same time issued “Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism.” No one can read these works, without seeing that the Novatians

may have had good *primâ facie* reason to think Scripture on their side. Of course an obstinate and sordid person may be vexed at this being said, but no true man can doubt it; and the present argument does not pretend of course to address itself to either the insincere or the incompetent.

But take the next honest-looking "heretics," the Donatists. They were Puritans too. Their Episcopal congregations had reason enough and Scripture enough for their schism, to persuade hundreds of Christian bishops for a hundred years.—Or take Pelagius, a distinct heretic, beyond doubt. He thought that the doctrine of Grace which was in his time rising into new prominence, and expressing itself in new terms, was itself new, and not to be proved from clear Scripture. We can easily imagine a righteous and able man, as apparently Pelagius was, to convince himself then of this. If we compare what he taught, with the doctrines of St. Prosper, or our Bradwardine, can we possibly help inclining to think his views, wrong as they were, excusable in a man who at all forecast such consequences of Augustinianism?

It is unnecessary to our argument to follow the sincerities of heresy to the tribunal, the prison, and the stake of later ages; unnecessary to trace the aberrations of the Schools from Damascene to Lom-

bard—from Lombard to Gabriel Biel; or to mark how the noblest intellects were thwarted by the use of wrong methods, and only kept right, when right, by deference to a higher spirit than that of individual enquiry. Enough has been said to illustrate the position, that learned and thoughtful men, men of prayer and faith, interpreting the Sacred Volume for themselves, do not reach the same idea of Revelation.—It might be easy even to show, that what is now popularly thought to be in some respects the true and only meaning of the great doctrines of Christianity, had no existence at all in the earliest days, either as exegetical conclusions or as traditions: but it might lead us too far from the course of thought to which we now are keeping.

The learned men who have denied, on literary grounds, the Trinity, the Doctrine of Grace, the Freedom of Man, the Atonement of CHRIST, and the Possibility of Repentance after Baptism, stand as warnings in history, especially eloquent to men of our own time. But what can be said of those who have used the *same method*, *without* their learning? What fearful prodigies of belief are extracted out of our blessed Bible, by the ignorant masses,—from the fantastic excitements of English “Revivalists,” and American “Jerkers,”—down to that darkest of all creeds, which seethes among

our Anglo-Saxon "dangerous classes,"—viz., that True Religion is a sudden *something to happen to us*, transferring to us at once the Righteousness of the REDEEMER, and practically excusing us from further anxiety!

It may be said, Why upbraid us with results which all sensible men repudiate? We answer—Is it, or is it not, a fact that the Anglo-Saxon fanaticisms do, as a rule, appeal to the Bible as they understand it? The method, we have seen, is fallacious in principle, alike for the most literary and for the least learned believer. And we further say, grant but the *Book method*, and you must take *all its actual consequences*. Say you, 'it is a corrupt use of the method;'—be it so; but that is your affair, not ours. Your method, you think, succeeds, or may succeed, better in your hands than in the hands of the million. Granting it possible, yet in the meantime the million are called on to adopt it; while the method itself needs to be propped, excused, waited for, and helped, by all the expedients of personal toil and personal grace; all the time it is boldly relied on, as sufficient in itself.

It is conceivable indeed, that some Literary believers may rejoice in all these diversities of thought, as ultimately conducting to Truth. Their hope would seem to be, that after the Bible has been well

criticised, and ascertained, some elevated principles may emerge as the *ultimate* meaning of what may remain of the Sacred Volume. They have a suspicion that they can somehow retain the inner life of Scripture, when they have disintegrated the framework; and they are content, till then, to let the populace freely handle the Bible after their own fashion. But such a result, even if attained, is *not Revelation gained from a Divine Book* at all. The result is a composite one, whatever it prove to be at last. It is no consequence of the freely-handled "open Bible"—but something gained from other quarters, varying with every mind.

Thus, then, the whole Literary attempt to get a Religion from our Divine Scriptures, apart from Divine guidance, proves as truly subjective as either of the former methods; it runs up at last into the same self-contradiction. Every effort to build to heaven in men's own way, ends in a heavy judgment, "confusing the Tongues." The Bible, as we commonly have it, cannot in *any* way, at last, help the Chillingworth theories. Tear the Bible from the heart of the Church-system of which it is the very centre, and expect it to animate some new organization, and you will find, too late, that it does not beat to the touch: it is to the Literary 'believer,' as if *dead*.

...But, yet once more : Before we pass to those facts on which the Revelation depends, those grounds of Catholic faith lying beyond the region of intelligent doubt, it seems to be a duty to return and consider, quite apart from all names and parties, some of the Doctrines themselves, usually accepted by millions as if they had proved them or could prove them from Scripture, in a rational way, as they would prove an opinion or truth from any human author that had advanced it. Let us earnestly ask for this review a disimpassioned mind. Let no man be impatient at what is said, but try to deal with it, in truth and integrity. The points to be thus reconsidered shall be what are commonly called the Doctrines of the (1) Trinity ; (2) Atonement ; (3) Original Sin ; (4) the Sabbath ; (5) the Sacraments ; (6) the Inspiration of the Bible ; and (7) Eternal Punishment.

The list might be enlarged, but these are enough for the purpose.—(The distinctive Roman doctrines of Infallibility, Invocation, Purgatory, and the like, need not now be referred to, because the Roman Catholic does not base any of his theories on “Scripture only.”)—Now, we are not here questioning for a moment that the seven doctrines enumerated, and held both in the Church and in the Sects outside the Church, are true. There is a

general understanding at least concerning some of them, that they are what is called "orthodox." Is it *true*, then, that an independent examination of Scripture, each man for himself, would conduct him to orthodoxy on these points? We appeal to every fair mind with confidence for the answer.

1. Let any one look at the "Scripture-proofs" alleged for the TRINITY.—The expression "three persons in one God" appears not in Scripture. The text concerning "THREE that bear record in heaven" has been much doubted; and no one could rest *proof* of the TRINITY on a suspected verse not found in ancient manuscripts. It becomes, then, a necessary work of labour to bring together the texts which appear, on the whole, to suggest the "Threefold" nature of the Godhead. During this examination, there arise texts of a contrary kind, at least in appearance: *e. g.*, "No man knoweth of that Day,"—(words of CHRIST, Himself, speaking of the day of Judgment,)—"no *not* the SON, but only the FATHER." Upon this the Arian has asked: Is the SON equal to the FATHER?—Again; If, strictly, HE and the FATHER "*are one*," where is the Sonship?—if, in some sense, "the FATHER is *greater* than the SON," where is the Unity and Equality?—Of

course, there are orthodox explanations of such texts. The Oneness is in the Divinity, or "Substance;" the Distinction lies in the "Persons;" and so on. But these are not *Bible* explanations. On the other hand, too, it is a simple fact, that our LORD's earthly Mother is never said to have treated Him as GOD, so far as the New Testament informs us. He defends for Himself, the title "Son of GOD;" but it is on the ground that some of the inspired servants of GOD are "called Gods" in the Old Testament. He commonly speaks of Himself as "Son of Man."

We have no doubt whatever that the Church's doctrine of the TRINITY is the Doctrine of Holy Scripture; but we say after this, that the Church alone "*proves*" it to be there. Look solemnly at the New Testament, and see whether you might not, if you went purely by your own judgment, arrive at a different doctrine of the TRINITY from ours? Thousands have tried it—from Paul of Samosata down to Wallis and Clarke; and many, with the most thorough intention of being orthodox, have become Tritheists, or Arians, or something new, like Swedenborg. A scientific statement of this truth is very hard; yet the truth is vital. Would St. Hilary's assertion, *e.g.*, of the "Filial

subordination" be intelligible and acceptable to most of us?—Yet the entire system of orthodoxy is dislocated, if any new doctrine of the Trinity be admitted.

2. Next; Let the Christian *try to state*, in clear Scripture propositions, what is the effect of the Death of our LORD; or, as it is termed, the "ATONEMENT."—Whether His death was a Sacrifice, or an Example; and in what sense either? If a Sacrifice, was He Priest as well as Sacrifice? HE does not say it Himself. He says that He "lays down His life for His sheep," like a "good shepherd." But a shepherd faithfully defending his sheep *is not*, as such, an expiatory or atoning sacrifice.—Did our SAVIOUR compare Himself to Aaron? No.—Or His death to that of the sacrificial lamb? St. John Baptist did so; but not CHRIST. The omission is a marvellous one, considering what is involved.—Certainly our Blessed LORD compared His own Crucifixion to the "lifting up," of the brazen serpent; but the brazen serpent was not a sacrifice.—If we look at the accounts given by St. Matthew, St. Mark, or St. Luke, either of the life or death of CHRIST, we cannot derive the idea of sacrifice in any clear way. To the eye of faith, and with the Church's blessed guidance, the Cross is everywhere, and the Atoning Mystery pervades the whole

story of the Incarnate ; but, reading the Gospels “like any other book,” we miss the expected “theory of Atonement.”

Is it easier to discover it in the Epistles? Let any one express the doctrine in the way he may please ; in St. Anselm’s or in Calvin’s ; and try to put together the texts which support it. Nothing more will be needed to convince him of the hopelessness of his task, than any such honest trial. Not to dwell on the obvious fact, that in reading any work we ought fairly to aim at getting the drift of the *whole*, and not to make meanings for a few *phrases* or “texts ;” yet we may safely challenge men to find “Scripture-proofs,” in any way, of the popular orthodoxy on this point.—Taking the conception, for example, that the death of CHRIST was an Atonement in the sense of a “*Substitution*”—(which is essential, perhaps, to the Calvinistic idea),—the nearest that we can approach to it is in passages which speak of HIS death as a “Redemption,” a “Ransom,” a “Price” paid. To accept these expressions literally must lead, however, to such a theory of absolute “substitution,” or even “suretyship” as some call it, that “vicarious Sacrifice” could not be made a stronger doctrine. Hence then the Calvinists urge that *all* for whom such sacrifice was offered,

all *in whose stead* CHRIST so died, are in the position of men whose debt is paid. Hence, too, they believe that the Elect alone are “ransomed” by CHRIST,—the Elect alone are Redeemed—for their sins alone, HE atoned! This result, however, is arrived at by a very intricate and compound process, and not by the force of single texts. For many texts say, or seem to say, that CHRIST “died for all;” and the Universalists conclude from such texts that *all will be saved*. The Arminians, in their way taking a middle course, neutralize this “doctrine of Atonement” by moral and spiritual ideas, Justification, Sanctification, and Grace; amidst which, however, the notions of Sacrifice and Priesthood become, to a great extent, practically extinct.—The Calvinists, in their way, do the same.

There is one of the Epistles in which, no doubt, our LORD’S Sacerdotal character and office are distinctly dwelt on; the Epistle to the Hebrews. But many of the primitive fathers and early writers seem to ignore, or doubt, the authority of that Epistle. Among the moderns, there have been not a few who, (as Dr. Arnold so long did), reject it. But accepting it fully, what is the Doctrine of that Epistle as to the death of CHRIST? Is it the usual doctrine, apparently, of those who are

accounted "orthodox?" Let any one compare its statement throughout, with the current views, and he will be startled at the difference. Instead of security and confidence for the ransomed, as a chosen few, the representation is that "CHRIST tasted death for every man," that this is a boon conferred on us once for all, that it may be accepted, or rejected by us, and that if we sin wilfully "after knowing the truth," there is no hope. (See and compare *Hebrews* ii. 9; v. 7, 8; vi. 4—8; x. 26, and xii. throughout.)

In another Epistle, we find another set of images setting forth our LORD'S work; a parallel is drawn between CHRIST, as the "second Adam" and the first father of mankind. This is nearly confined to St. Paul's writings.

It would be difficult here, as matter of simple interpretation, to evade the narrowest doctrine of the Calvinist, *i.e.* if this were pressed and taken literally. For the doctrine of "Original Sin" universally inherited from Adam, is supposed greatly to rest on this analogy; and if so, might it not be equally urged, that the inheritance of Righteousness from CHRIST extends to all His spiritual posterity? And thus might not the theory of Universalism, or of Calvinism ensue? But it would be very hard to reconcile with either theory,

the doctrine of the "Vicarious Sacrifice," as taught apart from the Church's tradition.

Again, it is far from common for any one to examine, how far the idea of Justification by Faith is compatible, on intellectual grounds alone, with the common idea of Vicarious Sacrifice. It is gratuitously assumed, indeed, that the faith of the *offerer* was essential to the acceptability of Sacrifice; yet were it even so, it would not follow, that the faith of all those *for whom* the Sacrifice was offered was necessary to the efficacy of the Offering. Try to carry out the thought, and the analogy perishes. But add to all these considerations, that this Sacred doctrine, for which no wit of man has found a definition, is held, though crudely, by the millions of our generation to be "the Gospel," "the Revelation," the very essence of the Bible; and the result is much too painful to be expressed.—It is easy to apprehend, however, that if the Church already *has* the True doctrine, as to the Sacrifice of our LORD, she will have no difficulty at all in understanding these and other analogies which abound in the "Written Word."

3. It may seem almost superfluous, after this, to call on the theological enquirer to exhibit the doctrine of "ORIGINAL SIN" in an intelligible way, and refer us to the texts which Divinely reveal it. Can he

inform us, whether it implies a total loss of our moral nature, as Luther consistently held at last? or is the loss partial only? Is the sin transmitted bodily? or only in the soul? If the former, is sin material? If the latter, are all our souls as well as bodies descended from the first man by generation?—No one will say, that the hereditary transmission of moral evil is an unimportant matter. Is it *clearly* stated in any one place of Scripture? Is it part of Divine Revelation surely explained in the written Word? And if so, *where*?

4. Once more. If any opinion has sunk deeply into the popular conscience among us, it is that which affirms the sacredness of the “CHRISTIAN SABBATH;” “Sabbath-breaking” is a felt *sin* among our people universally. The question is, Has it become so, in consequence of statements found in the New Testament? If it had been the Divine Will to lay down for Christianity any such written law, might not some one at least of the New Testament writers have expressed it? Might not some have told us at least of the Duty of Public Worship on that Day in unmistakeable words? But none have done so. Honest Bible-readers have even been known to point to St. Paul’s classing “Sabbaths and new moons” together, as abrogated (Col. ii. 16, 21) and his warnings against touching

and tasting and handling “ordinances,” as not unreasonable palliations for the Quaker and Anti-Sabbatarian repudiation both of Holy days and Holy Rites—even the Sacraments—as ‘not of perpetual obligation.’ If any one says that the orthodox view is absolutely clear as Divine Revelation, in the “Bible only,” he surely is easily satisfied.

5. The great body of Christians all over the world receive certain rites, as “SACRAMENTS.” The number, name, and effects of those Sacred Rites, or the idea of Sacramental influence, can with no certainty be obtained from Scripture only. The Baptist and the Quaker point out that no infants are once named in Scripture as partakers of Baptism; (and others add, that no women are mentioned as admitted to the Lord’s Supper.) The Gospels give no account, *e. g.*, of the Baptism of the Twelve Apostles. The Epistles of St. Paul speak most loftily of Baptism; yet do not so exalt it as to hinder his expressing his satisfaction that he had baptized very few. (1 *Cor.* i. 14.) St. Peter once mentions Baptism in his Epistles, but not the Eucharist; St. John just refers to Absolution; St. James and St. Jude do not distinctly allude to any Sacraments. Is it probable, then, that the actual faith and minute practice of the whole Church as to these Sacred Ordinances, are traceable to the

“written Word” as we now possess it?—The most credulous cannot believe it.

6. And again. We have said enough to convince any who are looking sincerely for opinions in “Scripture only,” that the New Testament is silent as to the theory that IT WAS INSPIRED to be a “written Word” of such and such extent, for the sole guidance of men as to GOD’S Revealed Will. The straining which we see, of a phrase or two, here and there, into an assertion of “INSPIRATION,” for some unenumerated writings of St. Paul, is in itself sufficient to shew to what straits the maintainers of this theory are reduced. It seems superfluous to add that no definition of “Inspiration” is even pretended, which can explain the separate existence *per se* of Divine writings prior to the Living Presence, the “Spirit of Truth” abiding in the Church for ever.

We return then to our first assertion, that the Divine Book, and the Divine *Meaning* of it (or “Orthodoxy”), cannot be parted, *cannot* be held except in conjunction. We may now perhaps go farther, and ask any competent person to consider whether it is even *conceivable* that “the Letter” is inspired, without “the Spirit” at the same time dwelling in the minds of those to whom that “letter” is committed? There may perhaps be one reply to

this enquiry, and that a very practical one. It may be said, that in point of fact, say what we may of this "Literary method," it is conceded that the doctrines commonly understood as "orthodox" doctrines, and "Gospel," are widely held among English and American and other sects, on a Bible basis, apart from Church interpretation and authority. This, like all other alleged "arguments from facts," is to be looked into.

Supposing the so-called orthodoxy to exist, as in some sense it may, beyond the Church's pale, can we at once conclude, that such illogical and varying sects have elaborated this "orthodoxy" from Scripture? *Where* are the sects to be found who hold to any "orthodoxy,"—(as to the Trinity, the Atonement, Grace, and so on),—except in our own atmosphere? Where the Church finally fades, there (in due time) the "orthodox sects," however strong at first, gradually cease to be. When they rise, these sects may justly upbraid indeed the Church's unfaithfulness in practice; but they cannot outlive her. Let them attempt to colonize, and they change: their "Pilgrim fathers" become uncouth and strange in a generation or two at most. Trace the results everywhere, and they are the same. Methodism was really almost orthodox when it began under the shadow of St. Mary's, in Lincoln College, Oxford;

but in Cornwall it soon gave rise to "Ranters;" in Wales (where the Church lamp flickered) it produced "Jumpers;" in Scotland, in our day, it spoke in tongues; in Ireland in hysterics; in America it turned Mormonite at last. It cannot long leave the side of the Church without losing itself in heterodoxy. There are certain latitudes beyond which "orthodox sectarianism" as a species cannot be found. There really are not various *foci* in the Divine creation, nor ever yet, (as Mr. Darwin might suppose), "spontaneous selection" in the spiritual world.

7. In turning to the last of the seven subjects which we proposed to dwell on,—“ETERNAL PUNISHMENT,”—we have to deal with ideas which are felt on all hands to belong not to *Revelation* only. They who call in question this truth, do not rely merely on the assertion, that it is not proved from Scripture; for the author of the remarkable book, “Life in CHRIST,” may be admitted to have made that fairly debateable: but they reason against it, on principles apart from Scripture. The literary believer indeed invariably diverges from his scripture-hypotheses to *à priori* considerations, but no where so consistently as here: for that precarious literary Christianity which many plead for, as tenable if not certain, could only, we think, be

entertained on the supposition, that to be right in Religion does not involve eternal consequences. To deny the "dogma" of Eternal Punishment as it is unfairly termed (—for a "dogma" seems to be an "opinion" only, and disconnected from the necessary facts of moral being, which in this case has not been proved)—to set this aside, then, is to affect very vitally all our interest in Religious matters. Popular Christianity is sensitively alive to this. For the sake of all literary Christians, then, of every class, we give more detailed notice to the opposition made, it is supposed, on principle, to this doctrine. All the other questions raised in our whole Address, depend for their abiding interest on that Future of joy or sorrow, without which Religious speculation is but amusement, and of a very questionable kind, especially when we bear in mind the dark as well as bright side of the world's religious drama. Other Christian truths stand indeed on a real and abiding philosophy, as we have intimated (p. 9); but we have not been discussing such philosophy. In reference however, to this concluding topic, we venture, in consideration of those foundations which are essential to all of us, to take a wider range.

But first, we would explain that when it has

been admitted, that the "Eternity of Punishment" cannot be so proved from Scripture as the many have imagined, we mean that the word "Everlasting" is not of uniform signification in the Sacred Word; and a reference to certain passages will of course show this. (See *Gen.* xvii. 8; xlviii. 4; xlix. 26; *Exod.* xl. 15; *St. Matt.* xxv. 46, &c., &c.)

We know, however, too little of the nature of our coming Eternity to argue much from this negative position. The *idea of a Future world* is, to speak truly, very little explained to us at all in Scripture. Anxious and thoughtful minds always have had the desire for some more definite account of what THAT world is, whether in its light or its darkness, than the Bible literally furnishes. Its locality (if it be "local")—its occupation (if active)—its probationary character (so far as it may anywhere be probationary)—its joys—its sorrows—how little can we realize! Joy and sorrow have so much dependence on individual capacity, as well as on circumstances, that the most divergent views on the subject have often appealed to Scripture. It would be contradicting facts, to say that the written Word has here an unmistakeable teaching for all. As to the "Eternity of the Future" of *all* souls, there has been room for two opinions,

whenever human ingenuity has freely handled the "letter of the Word" for itself.

Turn we then to the Church, lest tempted to err for a moment, for its uniform interpretation. The *latent assumption* of what has been called "orthodox Christianity" has always been, and now is, that the joys and sorrows of the Future may be *Endless*. To know the Christian Church anywhere, is to know that it assumes this,—with more or less of distinctness in special cases perhaps, yet *really* assumes it. And if the literary believer ask of us some literary evidence of this, we confidently point to the *primâ facie* appearance at least of the consent of the *great body* of our teachers from St. Paul to Augustin—to Gregory—to Anselm—to Bernard—to Bishops Bossuet—Andrews—Bull—and Ken. Such consent is enough for us who believe that the Divine Spirit essentially leads His Church aright. And it is at least a formidable difficulty for opponents: for they have to suppose, in this case, that a fundamentally false hypothesis has pervaded the teaching of the Christianity of 1800 years: and that would tempt some to doubt whether anything in human nature could be relied on as true. If they appeal to man's instinctive hope of mercy, as contrary to this pervading teaching of the Church; we point in reply to man's

instinct of Retribution also, to which Conscience certainly refuses limits. The Church's message is to Conscience.

On the other hand, though entirely assured of this *de facto* assumption or interpretation of the Church, and so of the real teaching of Holy Scripture in this matter, we are ready to examine what is alleged by the opponents of "Eternal Punishment," on natural principles. For if there be one characteristic which distinguishes the Literary theory in all its phases, it is this,—it uniformly questions, at last, this foundation Truth; and persons of dim intellect, and tender sensational natures, are more readily misled perhaps on this subject, than on any other. We only premise that such arguments do not touch our own foundation.

The sort of premises for a conclusion of doubt, as to the Future of the wicked, are such as these :

(1.) That no Sin *can* deserve Eternal Punishment.

(2.) That no created being *could* sustain it.

(3.) That all Punishment is intended to be *remedial*.

(4.) That neither the *mercy* of the Moral GOVERNOR could permit, nor His *justice* require, that the punishment of any sin should endure for ever.

(5.) That we would not ourselves (if we had the

power)—inflict endless sufferings on any one; and much less could we imagine that God would do so.

These are, it may be thought, the entire premises from which some persons have been led to question, and others to deny, “Eternal Punishment.” None of the usual grounds are consciously suppressed. And we proceed to show, that these treacherous propositions could not have been entertained, had the previous questions, as to *what Sin is*, and *what Punishment is*, been considered.

The sense of ‘Sin’ implies wherever it exists in us a consciousness of Responsibility: and consciousness of Responsibility implies some choice, WILL, or what is termed ‘Moral Power.’ A condition in which any creature is rightly responsible for the use of moral power is what is commonly termed a ‘state of Probation.’ To think of ‘Sin’ apart from Responsibility, and Will, is but dreaming. To think of the Punishment of Sin as a *formal infliction* only, is to make the judicial supersede the *moral* idea. Take away ‘Will’ and the moral idea included in the term ‘Sin,’ disappears. Actions of violence, and sensual ebullitions, however dangerous and revolting to others, may have a merely animal, or even at times a mechanical, character, if done without choice. Remove from ‘Sin’ the distinctively moral idea, and it is

reduced to an 'inconvenience.' In like manner, to take from the idea of 'Punishment' all essential connexion with the moral nature, is to change the conception altogether. A human polity reserves penalties for certain acts, without, at times, even considering at all their *moral* character. Hence the lawyer is apt to confound right with legal obligation. The political notion of *infliction of penalty* does not however (in some polities) pertain to the higher morality at all.

Now these axiomatic positions are forgotten entirely, in that course of thought which we have described as distinguishing the opponents of the unalterable truth that 'Sin' is an endless misery; in other words, *their* "dogmas" depend on what is strictly speaking, an *immoral* conception of our whole nature, and its duties.

To do justice to these speculators we must mark the *breadth* of their aim. Their objections are not merely as to the fact in any particular case, but as to the *possibility of Eternal Punishment* in any case. If this be not the scope of the objections, there is no meaning in them at all. They have certainly so comprehensive a sweep, that they could not tolerate the eternal ruin of but one soul, even though all others were saved. Judas, the "son of perdition," of whom CHRIST said, "it

were good for that man if he had never been born," or possibly even "the devil and his angels," for whom hell was first "prepared," would appear to be as much included in these speculations of "mercy," as any of the ungodly multitudes who are supposed to be thus protected. For if the possibility of "Eternal Punishment" were allowed in any case, the remaining questions as to the persons who are to be liable to it, would be subject to considerations of various kinds, and would not be affected by the objections which have been alleged.

It being unquestionable, then, that the objections, if valid at all, are levelled against the *possibility* of this endless woe, it is obvious that no doctrine of "Purgatory," such, for example, as the Roman, can be any relief to the theorist: for the Roman Christian does not question that there may be Eternal Punishment for *some*. We have a clear view, then, of the question really raised.

And we conceive that it is *demonstrable*—(if any truth of Theism or ethics can be so)—that this *possibility* of endless ruin for some, is undeniable by a rational believer in GOD, or in any Morality—*i.e.*, any system of right or wrong having relation to "will" or choice. We mean—that the deniers of this doctrine must, in reason and consistency,

deny the possibility of both Virtue and Vice, and overthrow the foundations of all Morals.

Let a man ask himself, whether it was possible for GOD to create a being with a real WILL?—and, has HE seemed to do so?—and, is man such a being? If he replies to himself, “no:” “choice is but a delusion, and for a finite being to have Will, or originate action, is impossible”—we understand him. He destroys all Moral Responsibility—all Conscience—at once. We have no need to occupy him, or ourselves with any further argument. He conceives that there is not, and cannot be, more than One Agent, one Will, in the universe. Reward or punishment, either temporal or eternal, are then unreal terms: they are but inaccurate expressions of certain consequences of action. Whether, indeed, the One Agent, be a Will, or not rather a Necessary Agent, it would be difficult, on this view, to determine. We will only assure such a theorist, that his own Conscience and his neighbours, too, will still treat him personally as a Responsible Being, and award him praise or blame for his doings. If on the ground supposed, he persists in denying Eternal Punishment, we will but remind him that he is but actually affirming *Universal Necessity*.

We address the man, then, who thinks himself

capable of deliberate “reason,” and therefore of “choice.” With him, Conscience is a *fact*. And it needs but to be stated, to any one with a Conscience, that if there were *no possible alternative* of action, there could be no choice,—no selection of right *rather* than wrong. *Possibility* of wrong thus being a necessary condition of Moral choice—(and the frequent enquiry about the “origin of Evil” being therefore absurd)—see what follows:—Suppose a Moral Agent to have made an evil choice, and, acting on it, to have become evil; and, after this, to have gone on in evil, to the end of his career—his character morally deteriorating of course during this process, and becoming less and less likely to improve probably at every step—habit forming character, and character generating habit, perpetually; what is his ultimate prospect?—Is it pleaded, that there may be a “new-creating” of his moral strength,—a re-invigoration? (such as Christians say is given by “Grace” in various ways,—or by “Education,” or “Influence,” as philosophy might urge;) this may be granted,—but the man is, in this new condition, still expected to use his re-invigorated power of *choice*;—otherwise he is ceasing to be a Moral Agent, and lapsing into a mechanism,—which is contrary to the supposition. Suppose, then, after any number of

free trials of the Moral Agent, thus strengthened again and again, (some real power of choosing good rather than evil being preserved, till the end) —suppose, we say, that his probation **actually** fails at the last; which must be possible, and is the case of the finally impenitent Christian;—then it is asked by some, whether in some future state of existence, this man may not still pass through some favourable change?

We demand, in reply, is this new state to be a *Moral* one? is he supposed in it to have Will, or choice?—if not, his change will only be an annihilation of his Moral Agency, and it would simplify the statement to own at once what it *means*—viz., that God will annihilate the *wicked moral agent*, and form some good *mechanism* instead! If the Will is not to be got rid of, the Moral State, however deteriorating, is *possibly Eternal*. A state of Probation, *which must end at last in some one way*, is a contradiction. It were childish to say that God's "love" is to interfere with this; for that is only saying, that **HE** must abolish Moral Agency in those cases, and cause "Will" to cease. If that be reckoned on, to happen in some cases, *it alters the nature of Moral Trial in all cases*. The choice of the human Conscience would then ultimately be a

choice not between *Right and Wrong*—but between Obedience to a certain Law, and annihilation, or change into mechanical existence. This ‘Obedience, or Moral Suicide,’ is not a moral option at all. It takes away the *denial of evil* implied in moral choice. To imagine thus, that the Great Moral Governor *changes the nature of the alternative* put before Moral Agents, is equal to saying that the Divine desire to have Voluntary Virtue in a creature formed for that end, had to be changed—*i.e.* that a creature with a WILL ought *not* to have been,—and further, that all Moral Right and wrong, so far as connected with “Will,” must be abandoned, and “Human Responsibility” given up.

A created WILL, as long as it exists, is called on to choose good as such, *rather* than evil as such;—realizing and knowing the choice. Without such choice the highest human “Virtue” is not;—it becomes another thing. And so long as Virtue is voluntary, and “Will” endures,—so long as it remains “good” that GOD should have made man thus, as a moral creature, the final failure of a Will *is* an Everlasting misery. There is, in a word, no argument against the Eternal Misery of Moral Agents, which does not equally hold against the *Creation* of Moral Agents; and there is no argu-

ment against the Creation of Moral Agents, which does not destroy the foundations of Voluntary Virtue, and all the sacred realities recognised by Conscience between man and man.

We place before the believer in God and Conscience, this reply to the one positive article of literary belief, viz., *Universal Restoration* by some future intervention of the CREATOR.

We believe, that the Christian truth as to this solemn subject is taught, however, by no such hard reasonings, though we have thus reasoned for others' sake.—It stands on Conscience, Scripture, and Tradition. Our position is quite independent of all attempts, successful or not, to meet theory by theory: and here we leave the Literary believer: having shown, we trust, that his last appeal, viz., that to reason, is a fallacy.

#### § 4. *The Truth.*

It is time that we turn from the mere exposure of inadequate theories and false and unsatisfactory methods, to some elucidation of the Church's way of accepting as her own the Blessed Gift of her God, the "written Word" and all His Sacred Truth. Only our earnestness still prompts us to ask

any who have followed the subject with us thus far, to look back first, (and from time to time also,) and see what has surely been arrived at, *i. e.* what, in truth we know, and by no guess, but by the humblest array of unquestioned facts. We know that the popular view is "impossible;" the Roman view "contrary to all history and truth;" the literary view *both*; as well as so clearly contradicted by experience as to need to be supplemented by various expedients, to be even *intelligible* (p. 80). If these results have not been now arrived at, let any one look back and see where the proof fails: for we cannot see it. We have a right, then, to deprecate hereafter a return to hypotheses, which are strictly speaking unworthy of analysis.

We have again to deal, of course, with the same subject-matter as in the three previous portions of our argument—the same "records," the same history. Hitherto we have seen them, for the most part, inverted. We have looked from our present standing, backward through the vista of many ages, the objects often becoming more and more minute and indistinct with the growing distance. We shall now have to reverse the telescope, and shall find all the facts come before us, with reality and magnitude unappreciated before. They stand out as SUPERNATURAL.

If in the consideration of this part of our subject we seem to be tedious, it must be remembered that in opposing the deeply-ingrained obstinacy of supposed critics, and the inveterate prejudices of the half-taught multitude, some iteration may be again unavoidable. Admissions made, or conclusions arrived at, or objections fully answered, must be mentioned at times, if only to be dealt with as registered facts; and this is all that will be generally intended in further reference to them.

Let it not be thought, above all, that there has been any exaggeration as to the details of the history of the Written Word. Rather than entertain suspicions of this kind, let all that has been said be yet again considered before another step is taken; for indeed a large part of the difficulty which besets the investigation of this Literature has been barely glanced at. We have, in the main, treated the Old Testament (it will be remembered) only as a whole; and the New Testament also. We have but lightly touched the circumstances, that the Bible really consists of about fifty treatises or tracts, each of which has or had a history of *its own*—an authorship, occasion, date, structure, transmission and difficulties of *its own*, all demanding examination of the Literary believer. We have but *hinted* how the

books of the Hebrew part of Scripture have all, in some way, been reduced to a kind of *uniformity*, considerably veiling the differences of both style and language which must have existed at first—differences, for instance, between the utterances of Noah, Abraham, or Balaam, and those of Solomon or Malachi. To find, for instance, as we do, a dialogue which took place in Paradise, and a canticle written 3000 years afterwards in Jerusalem, both recorded now in those same square Chaldee letters, and pointed now on the same Masoretic system;—to be stopped at a kind of great literary precipice, *e. g.*, like the Babylonian captivity, and told to “investigate,” with the few materials at our disposal;—to have not dissimilar occupation in dealing in detail with the Gospel of St. Matthew, the Epistle to the Hebrews, or the Apocalypse; would open a multitude of difficulties which we have not pressed. The truth does not need it; more than enough has been said, (unless men will insist on more), to show that a Literary faith, under all its modifications, is a most hopeless and unquestionable scepticism.

But in warning all honest minds of such insuperable obstacles, in challenging the rationality of the Literary idea of Revelation, and therefore exposing the sandiness of the foundation of so much

that passes for reasonable Christianity now, our object has been, and will be, to urge all those who would have a solid faith to rely on, to give up unreality, and not wait till another and more educated generation detects the hollowness of the "theology of the 19th century." On the other hand, we do not disguise that it becomes our duty to make very plain our own foundation. We have found the literary method (in all its phases) to be fallacious: Our own must be different. The faults which we point out in others, should be warnings to ourselves.

We began by saying (p. 5) that the Catholic view is that "the written Word," and the "Church," are "*co-ordinate* in the mission of Truth to mankind:" and we shall not evade, or pass lightly, any part of this proposition. We affirmed, in the face of the obstacles before us, that a true view of Revelation *must* be one which was not open to those difficulties. It must (p. 65) "provide for all capacities, and for all just and reasonable contingencies." And this cannot be too much to demand of a professed Revelation. Nothing less could suffice; nor should a SUPERNATURAL Revelation find it too hard to attain.

The Catholic view needs not, *à priori*, any of that kind of "evidence" which we have objected to, *in*

*generæ*. Supposing our Bible, or our Church, truly to claim a Supernatural position, the fact announces itself. Supposing any one to ask, "what is the Bible?"—"what is the Church?"—we do not say that "definition" is *impossible*, but out of place. It would take time and pains to give it; and very few of those concerned in Revelation could test a definition, or even understand it. The multitude who are addressed by Revelation, cannot be expected to wait for previous definitions, or to ascertain half the *history* of the Bible, or of the Church. Whether that history were so clear that "he who runs might read it;" or whether it seemed impenetrably obscure; in either case, it is an independent matter, and belongs as such to those only who have the power to investigate. If it be alleged, as it is, that God has a Message for man *now*, that is a present Fact, and not a literary investigation. If the "Supernatural" needs aid of the kind commonly supposed, it vacates its claim. This can be no irrelevant point; and we therefore dwell on it beforehand.

The distinction between a fact, and its history, and its definition, may be seen in natural things also. The merest child who touches or plays with a magnet, may know, in some respects, whether it is what it is pretended to be; little as

he was able to discover it, or to account for it, or properly to use it. And so we are affirming it to be with Revelation from GOD, to man's conscience. The Bible and the Church (each in its ~~own~~ way) will testify to Revealed truths ; and, long anterior to any definition, in either case, each will make itself *felt*, if it be the reality asserted.

We are not questioning, of course, that there is some history of the Canon, and some history of the Church ; and might not mind conceding that an exhaustive definition of either is conceivable for the minds of a few : but it must be understood that Revelation is not to be confounded, in idea or in reality, with any such definition, or any such history. It is independent, so far as it is Revelation at all, —inscrutable in its beginnings,—inscrutable in its life and power.

And, first, we will simply look at the facts of the case ; as to the Written Word, and as to the Church with her unwritten message ; for each of which such lofty claims are asserted.

The "Written Word" is before us. We approach it at first, of course, in any Version or Translation, or form in which it may confront us, by what means soever we may have been introduced to its pages. Our first business is fairly to acquaint

ourselves with it, so far as we are able. We look at it.

From whence does it immediately come? Some readers do not know at all. Some are soon aware that the former part of it, or "Old Testament," was received in an ancient language from the Jews, one of the most mysterious and ancient people on the earth,—a people scattered now in all lands—a world-wide fact; but not yet teaching us much. The Jews take this book to be a Supernatural Book, divinely transcending all the usual literature of the world. They have certain mutilated Traditions, too, about it; but they are dark.

We may be excused if we pause for a moment to look at this Jewish people (if we have the opportunity); we may learn at least by a passing enquiry their own account of themselves. Their history may, or may not, correspond with this Book. They say they are "God's witnesses" to mankind. By a strange set of events they have for thousands of years mingled with us all, without in the least losing their own distinctness. Ineffaceably stamped with a character that time does not change, they assert for themselves a special, and undeveloped destiny. As we look into their Sacred Book, it greatly corresponds with this.—Can they tell us anything about this book? Literally nothing

more, with any certainty, than the Book itself tells ! Helpless in a literary point of view, we soon hear that these Jews cannot critically defend their Scriptures, even though they keep them ; all this increases the strangeness of the facts to be dealt with.—A Reformer, like their Maimonides, or a Pantheist like Spinoza among them, arises to change or deny their traditions ; but in vain,—the attempt just helps to confuse them—nothing more. The Bible still is engraven on the memory, we may say even the countenance and heart of the Jewish race. They cannot alter it, if they would—(as witness their great Council of Rabbis at Ageda in Hungary 300 years ago.) We turn to the mysterious Volume, then, once more ; and, with such powers as we have, *look at it for ourselves.*

It begins with a book called “Berashith,” and “Genesis.” This sometimes has a title at the head of it—“The first book of Moses :” but the book itself does not say that Moses was the author.—(The Jews affirm this, we may hear, as their tradition).—It treats of times long anterior to Moses. In the earlier chapters of this book we find a great deal is *assumed* at once. The Being and Personality of One God ; and the Responsibility and Conscience of man, are *taken for granted.* We do not find that these are explained ; and we do not quite under-

stand them. But in some degree we *feel* them ; and the assumptions do not shock our nature, or judgment.—We see, too, that the CREATION of heaven and earth by GOD “at the beginning,” is simply announced,—announced in terms morally impressive in a very high degree, and so *felt* at all times, whether by philosophers like Longinus, or by ordinary unsophisticated minds. And yet what is thus said is not (as far as we are aware) reducible to any natural system.—Soon we are told of man’s Sin, his losing Innocence ; and we cannot well understand the description. It tells us something of a loss of a garden of peace, “Paradise,”—a forfeiture of happiness, and to a great extent of Divine favour. The nature of the account here proves to be entirely beyond us. We do not know *what* the state of the “original innocence” in Paradise might be,—the mode of life, the powers, or conditions. We are incapable, therefore, of giving precisely the “literary interpretation” of the details ; but still once more, we *feel* the whole intensely,—(very little more than that),—as, perhaps, a Supernatural account of our Supernatural sorrow. In the fact that the world is thus in conflict with its own conscience, and so is unhappy, alas ! there is nothing doubtful. In the assertion that GOD made this world “good,” innocent and happy at first,

there seems, too, nothing incredible.—We continue. We come to the first great Punishment of the world's sin. It startles us, doubtless, in its gigantic simplicity. We find again that we *cannot reduce this to any very clear literary form*. The Deluge is almost as surprising to us as the Creation.

Then we next observe that the Scripture story, (after these early chapters of the first 1600 years of the world's life), suddenly contracts; and for the following 2000 years, and more, we hear but little of any Revelation from God to this broad earth of ours; but chiefly of His treatment of one family, one race—their rise, their “Exodus,” their Law. We find very obscure “Prophets,” some incomplete Histories, and a variety of Psalms; all more or less Judaistic; and, as we look steadily at these books they prove to be of wonderful individual and local interest; touching the destiny of the rest of the world just at the few points where the Jewish story intersects that of any other people; and yet generally, to a great extent, defying scrutiny when we attempt to explore the *origines*. We are growing to feel still more, that this is a marvellous Book, as truly as that they who hand it to us are a marvellous people.—But do we understand it when we have read it all? or why, if not, should we care to read it?

Here, then, another fact meets us. Over this Book, as with a strange fascination, the world has hung, ever since it was known to be put together—as a whole,—(*i. e.* soon after the days of the latest of its writers, Malachi). The inheritor of the great Empire of the Greek Conqueror of the East insisted on having this Book translated into Greek; that he might know what it was all about. True, it seemed to address itself to Jews; but from Ptolemy's days till now the world has gone on turning this Bible over and over,—*unable to get rid of the feeling* that it has something to do with that Book after all! We pause a moment:

Is that a “Book like any other book?” we begin at once to ask;—or may it be SUPERNATURAL, as some have said?

Yet, whatever it be, we have now discovered that we can satisfy ourselves but little, when we try to put it into shape, in a way of our own. At what time the various parts of this Book were arranged in this present form? At what time each part of it was first written? and *by whom?* and where preserved? and how *edited?*—It almost looks as if some pains had been taken to *hide* these things! So widely known, and yet not known; so royally translated, and yet,—from *what ascertained originals?*—We are thwarted at every point. If we

could get at the clear beginnings of but one of its twenty-two books, it would be something literary to start with: but no. On the other hand, we cannot get rid of it. Neither Jew nor Gentile will let us long forget it.—Why would not Ptolemy let it alone? He could not understand it when he had got it. Why will the Jews keep it so firmly? They evidently, even with their Masora, cannot penetrate it. If we take this “Masora” as we do, we still are *outside* the Tradition, and cannot get its life: while the Jews themselves are as men who have lost the keys to their treasure.—And there it stands—that “HEBREW BIBLE,” (of which even the Hebrew character perhaps is lost!) and it is nevertheless a great FACT, growing as in apocalyptic significance; while we see the obstinate speculate, and the thoughtful continue gazing on it! It seems in some aspects, to span all our human life and hope; and yet our eye swims, as we try to separate its rainbow colours from the dark historic cloud in which it is set!

Yes; and there is felt to be an *Inner Character* of this Book which absorbs our interest as we come to acquaint ourselves with it, still more. Soon, in practice, we *forget*, (if we ever knew), the little which disputers can tell us about the transmission of the letter of this Book. We must needs leave

to Elias Levita, and Bryan Walton, and the  
 torfs, and the rest, the outer history of books written  
 in a language which has been dead 2000 years. To  
 the many—if we will but own it honestly—It is  
 a “Writing on the Wall,” as by some “Hand”  
 coming forth from the obscure; yet to us its mean-  
 ing more and more proves to be, “Mene, Mene,  
 Tekel, Upharsin,”—above all, when *the true Inter-  
 preter stands by!* It “numbers” our earthly destiny;  
 it “weighs us in the balance;” it “divides us,”  
 and interrupts our self-satisfied doings, and dissi-  
 pates for ever earth’s careless revelries.

Let us turn aside and gaze, then, further and yet  
 more steadily at this phenomenon,—this FACT,  
 which we are, at times, so conscious of,—this  
 standing in the presence of what we *feel*, and are  
 influenced by, beyond all that we comprehend.

The first acquaintance which we have made with  
 this Fact justifies us in further enquiry. There is  
 very soon in the Book itself a suggestion beyond  
 itself. As we read on, we meet with so much that  
 has not *yet been proved* to us; and we bring to it  
 so many of the *a priori* impressions of our own  
 mind, and of our own or a former age, that we find  
 it difficult to say how much is derived from the  
 Record itself, and how much *imported into it*

*unconsciously from other sources.* It seems as though some dim finger already pointed to the needed Guide—the Teacher of the Inner sense. And what is now the case with ourselves in this respect, would naturally *and always* have been the case with all intelligent readers of same Scripture: and the less intelligent would of course be still more subject to impressions *ab extra*.

Some examples may illustrate this; and show perhaps that the Bible actually *assumes*, as though EXISTING ON OTHER GROUNDS, the *Foundations* of Religion and Revelation throughout; that not only does it begin at once with GOD, Creation, Good, Duty, Prohibition, Command, Conscience, Sin, Punishment, (all “unproved,” as critics might say), but even with more special and definite Rules and Rites, which human instincts, or sacred Traditions, have recognised *ab initio*.

1. There is SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP taken for granted in the earliest chapters of Genesis.—Whence is this? Was Abel commanded to offer it? And wherein was its obligation?—Was Cain warned, or taught, against wrong ways of Sacrificing? Or was Noah, 1600 years later? The Bible says nothing of it, in those ancient days. It mentions the fact; but of its origin it gives no account.

2. Then, again, it is unquestionable, that “the old fathers looked not for transitory PROMISES.” St. Paul has taught us (*Hebrews xi.*) that the Life of Faith had been known from the first, and that from Abel’s death, and Enoch’s Translation, till now, a Divine Future had been set before man, and had been lived for. Anxious to find this in the letter of Scripture, men have appealed with confidence to what has been called the “First Promise” to our First Parents, that “the Seed of the Woman should bruise the serpent’s head.” But was that prediction really, to man at the time, all that it has been taken to be? We think that the serpent-tempter was the devil; that the “Seed of the Woman” was the future Deliverer from sin, the Messiah; that the “bruising the head of the serpent” was the moral victory of CHRIST over the devil, and that the serpent’s “bruising the heel” of the woman’s Seed was the death of CHRIST. But no one can pretend that all this is in the letter. Scripture gives no sanction to such an interpretation from Genesis to Malachi. The Prophets never once refer to these words as a “Promise.” True, indeed, the Targums — (*e. g.* Jonathan’s, in the generations following the times of Malachi) — say that this “Seed of the Woman” is *Messiah*. But this, as any one can judge, is not in the letter of Scripture.

It first appears to us as Tradition ; it is useless to deny it.

3. Other Divine PROMISES of the Moral and Spiritual Future of man doubtless may have existed, unwritten, from the beginning, to cheer man's prospects. One such we are told of, the "prophecy of Enoch," which lived on in some way, written or unwritten, 4000 years, and was appealed to by St. Jude as well known. But the earlier books of the Old Testament have but little, if any *distinct* reference in the text to a Future Immortality for man. A critic of the Pentateuch has even ventured to argue the "Divine Legation of Moses" from the absence of all reference to a future life, in his writings. We may at least learn from this, how faintly that is to be seen, if at all, in the Text of the Law. If it really existed then, if "Faith" meant anything from Abel to Abraham, from Abraham to the Captivity of Israel ; if the "PROMISES" were known in any degree ; then concurrently with the Letter of Scripture, as it grew, there *must* have been all along a kind of Unwritten Creed, a sacred Tradition of Religion, interpreting and illuminating alike, Rite, Promise, Prophecy, History and Statute.

4. Again, every religious reader of Holy Scripture becomes aware of the fact, that the story of the Old

Testament throughout, and of every personage, and every event, claimed from very early days special significance. Hence, what have been called, after St. Paul, (1 *Corinthians*, x. 11,) the "TYPES" of the Old Testament, have been regarded as practically prophetic. The principle on which this is received is such as reason, and even science, may recognize. It is as much a law of nature as of grace, that later events are developments out of the former. There is not a doing and undoing, as such; not a repenting in the order of things, but an advancing. Not unfrequently the former is the mould in which the latter has grown, till at length it has outgrown the τύπος, and, in its turn, become a new thing. To some extent the former has been a prophecy of what was coming. In this way the former dispensations contained στοιχεῖα, "rudiments," and "elements of this world," as the Apostle calls them. A true "type" is not an arbitrary invention, as an allegory might be. Yet, evidently, the gift which can Interpret these types, or profit by them beforehand, is something very different from the Record itself. Whether this "Gift" would ever be found external to Revelation itself, may well be doubted; but it is not to be identified with a *Document* anywhere. There seems always to have been a special set of men who had discernment beyond

others—a Church, or family of God, or chosen people, with Gifts and Traditions of their own. Outside that Family, there might be some knowledge doubtless of its Scriptures and Customs ; but not any real understanding of its feeling and inner life.

5. Still less can PROPHECY be appreciated, when its symbolical and highly artificial structure is left to speak to the natural mind in the “letter” only. Any one may decide this easily for himself by turning to any of the Prophets, such as Zechariah, or Daniel, or Ezekiel. Nor is this a difficulty simply arising from the antiquity of these writings : for we have traces of a recognised line of Scribes, Rabbins, and Doctors seeking to interpret the dark sayings of the Divine Book, from Ezra at least till Philo and the days of the later Talmud, if not until now. The spirit, above the letter of the law, was the object of anxiety ; much as the letter itself was prized. The Jews, though in rugged and artificial ways, ever preserved the truth, that there was a “hidden life” of their whole Nation, (seen in their “Chosidim” most specially), and of its whole Law. The “inner Law” was the Divine reality for which the outer existed. And the whole scheme of Prophecy, no less than of the Types, confirms this.

It has been doubted, and becomes a fair matter

of enquiry, whether there is in all the Hebrew Scripture one such distinct Prediction of the remote Future which concerns us, as the natural mind would ask? As to the carnal, and frequently immoral, idea of mere prognostic, that, at all events, is not the Christian idea.

If we notice, for instance, a few references to the word of Prophecy, met with at the beginning of the New Testament,—what do we see? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and “the prophets” as a body, are all quoted as “fulfilled,” in the Gospel story; but, in each instance, this “fulfilling” is discovered to us by a mysterious method, through a kind of pervading *comment*.—The birth of “Immanuel” of a Virgin Mother, the “Weeping in Rama,” the Flight and “Return from Egypt,” the Deliverer born “in Bethlehem Ephrata,” the “Entry into Jerusalem,” the “Coming suddenly to the Temple,” and the title of “Nazarene,” are not so written of, in these Prophecies, as naturally to convince us. The meaning found is not, in any one of these prominent instances, the meaning which our natural criticism would have supposed. We find that we must “spiritualize” that Mother in Isaiah’s vision, “spiritualize” that lament in Rama, “spiritualize” even the musing of Hosea, as to Egypt, and God’s love to His people

there : and more, we must “spiritualize” the very prophecy of Micah against Assyria as to the Bethlehem-Deliverer ; and Zechariah’s exultation of Triumph, and Malachi’s sudden Epiphany, and take the unwritten testimony of “the prophets” as a whole, as to the Messiah’s connexion with “Nazareth,” of which no now-existing prophet appears to have said one word. Reading these quotations, or any of them, in the mere letter, (to speak plainly), we are disappointed. And these examples are by no means exceptional. Account for it how we may ; together with this whole range of Prophecies, and a hundred more, imbedded in every line of that strange Hebrew Book—(of which we have already found ourselves unable to say “whence it cometh”),—there has been, as all past experience assures us, and as no one pretends to doubt, a Living doctrine, a perpetual Expectation, a quick Interpretation, far more unwritten than written. Some may trace proof of it in the Christology of the Targums,—some in the travestie of the Cabbala— or in the growth of the Talmud, from Ezra to the third century of Christianity. We may follow it among the Jews from Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, down to the philosophic Spanish Jews, to whom it was a stumbling-block. Maimonides, a “second Moses,” could not materially change it. Even the

infidelity of Spinoza is its witness; and the Deism of the "German Reform." Yet it is *not a Literature*; you might as well call conscience a literature. It is a *mode of feeling*; it is an inherited thought; it is a Life in a Nation, 3000 years.

Some have said that it was a "secret of the LORD among them that feared Him," though often corrupted by others. Anyhow, it told *uniformly*, that the law was a "shadow of things to come," alike to Karaite and Sadducee, and to Scribe and Pharisee, to Evangelist and Apostle. It ever repeated "thou shalt see greater things than these," to the ear of every "Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."

Just as the Traditions of the Old World preceded "Genesis," and the Traditions of Circumcision and Sacrifice and Sabbath preceded the rest of the Pentateuch, and the Traditions of Messiah lived on before the Writings of the Prophets, and then lived with them, and penetrated them, and seemed to mould and interpret them; so also we find, in fact, as we advance, that every part of the History of this marvellous Bible appeals to "*lost accounts*," within the ancient Church, as "confirming it."

Is there no philosophy of this? Do we not all know, that while written rules and teachings are

perpetually enlarging or changing their sense, an intangible kind of *animus* will live on? Even the abiding life of certain "Secret Societies" of the middle ages may show us this. But we may take better analogies. Just as Common law is more durable than Statute; or what is called "tone," however undefineable, is real and influential; so Faith, though invisible, may be surer than outward Law: and "*litera scripta manet*" may be found too often but the proverb of a debased and mercenary theology.

Let us now look back, and again mark the position at which we have arrived. The Bible, directly we become acquainted with it, strikes us as a book different from all others. It challenges and fixes attention. We feel it, and can understand it but imperfectly. Something more than itself seems actually needed, and *always to have been had*, for its interpretation. The Bible is a FACT hard to explain, both as to its origin and its contents. The Tradition accompanying the Bible is *no less a FACT*, and we all, in various degrees, use it. It is a life and a light, the possession or enjoyment of which in no way depends on our analysis of it. The light is reflected from a thousand objects all around: it softens off into twilight here, and it brightens there; it is mysterious everywhere; and

the cross-lights may sometimes seem confusing, and the colours many. To ask, however, for a philosophy of it, or an exact history of it, or a record that might be tested, is to ask for a literature in lieu of a vital agency. That this Life and Light are in the Church, is but a further statement of the same Fact.

Nor may we here omit to notice, that all Christians have, or *try* to practise, a way of reading the Sacred Scriptures with *other light* thrown on them. Apostles and Apostolic men, saints, martyrs, doctors, and fathers, accept naturally this method. Barnabas, the two Clements, Origen, Jerome, the Gregories, Augustin, Basil—why continue the list?—we should have to enumerate all, even to the present day. It is everywhere still; not less, though corruptly now, among the Jews of the Synagogue in St. Mary Axe London, than among the students writing “No. 89, Tracts for the Times” in the cloisters of Oxford. It is even painfully copied by the Puritans themselves, when near enough to the church to be so far influenced. *None*, we find at length, are really going on in Religion by the letter of Scripture.

But it may now be asked: is “the letter” to be given up? Is its actual truth unimportant? This

is a fair inquiry lying in the way, at this point. The concession of a Spiritual sense still *leaves* the "Letter" to be dealt with. Granting it to be so,—that the "Meaning" has lived side by side with "the letter," and in this sort of spiritual way; yet this "letter of Scripture," whether we will or no, whether we allegorize it or no, *is also a fact*, and does, it is said, come into collision with other facts, both of history and of science, as men now state them. This is true; and we must look at the allegation very steadily, for we are dealing all along with FACTS.

It is an Episode, but it belongs to our subject.—Ever since the appearance of Humboldt's "Superposition of Rocks," the monobiblicists have been in great anxiety about Genesis. Geology has been through eight or ten transformations since then, and "defenders of the Mosaic Cosmogony" have been plentiful, at every turn. Sir Charles Lyell has lately given us reason to suppose that recent geological theories at present are clashing with some of the geological facts. One thing is clear to us, viz., that the "Bible alone," according to the letter, provides no one "cosmogony," about which its literary interpreters can agree, (whether they be "believers" or not). Honest men on either side would surely seem *obliged* to say

precisely *what fact* of universally, or even generally, acknowledged geology is contravened by any clear statement of the first Chapter of Genesis? Christians must challenge the geologists to this; and on the other hand they may well challenge the Puritan theologian to a literal statement of some Biblical "theory of Creation" such as an honest Bible reader would be bound to. Until this is done, the oppositions of "*science* falsely so called" to the letter of Scripture are, on religious grounds, something less than childish.

Scientific men are generally men of somewhat narrow education, and not gifted, as Sir W. Hamilton hints, with very logical powers. If they accumulate facts, they do not know how to use them. But still they wish, in general, to be thought *rational*. Then let them be exact, before they are supercilious. Nothing but truth will last. Let facts be kept to. On the other hand, let the "Biblical" school of theologians remember, that if they are alarmed by the progress of knowledge, Churchmen are not; being under no apprehension at all, that they shall ever have to surrender Rationality to the Infidel, or Catholicity to Romanists. Let us study the literal text of Scripture by all means, and understand it if we can;—or else wait; as most men needs must, on *all*

subjects. The effort to find the literal meaning of Genesis is considerable; and, meanwhile, St. Basil's Hexaëmeron, or the Patristic "Gloss," seems quite independent of "cosmogonies."

Very near to the difficulty about the CREATION, there is supposed to lie a very painful one about the DELUGE.—It had been positively said, that a "Universal Deluge" was ascertained to be an impossibility. It would almost seem as though some Nemesis compelled these speculations to stultify themselves; for the geologists had appeared to be taking heart, and regarded this, at least, as a point about which they could all agree. True, they had a troublesome task, in accounting for the universal prevalence of the Tradition as to such a Deluge,—a Tradition obstinately worked into every Religion—and indeed every language of mankind; but they would leave all that to be examined by the learned—in a word to be *got rid of*, by others better acquainted than they with the world's literature. To establish on the ground of their own Geological "science" a fact evidently, as they thought, in contradiction of a statement in the 7th Chapter of Genesis, was all-important to some. But suddenly their unanimity has been broken. Eminent Mathematicians in France, and elsewhere, have made another discovery; made it by calcula-

tion ; made it by the same means by which Adams and Le Verrier discovered Neptune or some other stars. Is it possible to doubt that method ? Well then—M. Le Hon, M. Adhémer, and M. Felix Julien have “ proved ” that the real difficulty is not so much the occurrence of the “ Mosaic Deluge,” as the pretence that God sent it ; because the ‘ *Periodical recurrence* of enormous Deluges in sure cycles, is a pure matter of calculation ; and, (nature being what it is), such Floods cannot but come to pass ! ’ Without affecting then to decide between these scientific theorists and their opponents, perhaps theologians may be allowed to be “ neutrals ” for a time. The text of Scripture, with which they are concerned, admits of several interpretations, and “ Science ” has several theories, too, on the same subject.

The Moral and Spiritual uses of the Scripture-record of the Deluge meanwhile *are not interfered with* ; and we may at least accept the Church’s Religious Traditions as quite consistent with the world-wide traditions of all, on the same subject. No argument here lies against the Theologian, unless he be a Literalist who is bound to find for himself a “ rational ” exposition of the text, or abandon it ; which is not exactly the case of Churchmen.

Passing, then, from supposed difficulties of the

Creation, and of the Flood, which cannot touch “the text” of Scripture, until they are shown to be definite, and the textual sense equally definite; we come next to what are termed the “Ethnological” difficulties. Some of these we may evidently leave, at present, in the hands of such students as Mr. Max Müller; and for the rest we may be pardoned for asking, whether they are, as yet, quite in a scientific condition? In any case they *do not touch the question* of the actual truth of the Text of Scripture. Certain passages referred to in these objections, may be such fragments only of the history of the human family as the Sacred Writer had to adduce for the definite purposes of Divine Revelation. They need not be more than this; and the right interpretation will alone decide, that they are exactly what was so needed—neither less nor more.

One more difficulty as to the truthfulness of the Text shall be glanced at, viz., that which is connected with the Numbers and Dates of the Old Testament. If we were quite sure as to the methods and expression of the ancient Oriental Notation, we might better grapple with this subject; but at present, it is not easy to *state the difficulty*. The numbers in the present copies of the Jewish Scripture are expressed *in words*; and probably have

been so, since the time of Malachi. But how those ancient people *counted*, (especially in the higher numbers), and how they first expressed numbers at all, it would be hard to say. At present, we are in this position, as believers in this Book as it stands, being a marvel in so many ways. These mysterious and often unintelligible “numbers” we find to be part of a whole *which has meaning of a Religious kind* which we receive from our fathers. We are not sure that *we know the literal meaning* of these abstractions or “numbers,”—(the higher numbers, we know, are frequently inconceivable, even in science, and express relations principally). But as we do not find our Religion in “the Text” we really have no practical concern, in any such questions. \*They do not belong to us; nor interfere with the rigid truthfulness of our Scripture. They may no doubt be ruinous to the mere Biblicist; but his cause is a ruin already. It has not a shadow to rest on. Let him try, if he please, to “explain” these things. When he succeeds, we may accept the results. When he fails, he may try again.

Our position stands quite apart then from all textual “discrepancies.” They only exist on the hypothesis, that the Bible is a Document for individuals thus to handle for themselves to get a

Religion—an hypothesis which is absurd. If we accepted in all their detail, the obscurities enumerated—which we do not—yet they would be no more to any Churchman, than the lost characters of the old Hebrew, which we do not lament over; no more than the broken type, or faded parchment, or incorrect grammar, of any human copy of the Divine Book, or its Translations. The truth and accuracy of Revelation are known in the *Transmitted Life*, and cannot be gauged, by the perfection of its literary medium.—(What men can *ever* mean by “accuracy” in human *words*, (as representing ideas, whether written, spoken, or thought), it would be worth while for strict Document-Revelationists to consider.)—The word of true Revelation must always be Spiritual. (*St. John* vi.) Strictly speaking, without doubt, “the letter killeth;” for to the mere Biblicist the *least verbal flaw* might be as fatal as the gravest collision with science or fact.

We have sufficiently dealt with this subject and now leave our Episode as to “the Text,” and its Truth.

One portion of the Hebrew Scriptures however, has thus far escaped our attention, while we have spoken of the Law, the Histories and the Prophets,

their letter and their spirit. We have not referred to the PSALMS; and our view of the Bible would indeed be incomplete without this. Assuredly the Psalms will not less vindicate the SUPERNATURAL character of the Word of GOD, than those other portions of it. Less obscure in some respects, this book is far more wonderful in others, and less to be accounted for as literature, and less to be fettered by natural and historical meanings of any kind.

The very fact that 150 Psalms, all of them five or six hundred years older than the time of our LORD, have been the text-book of the devotions of Jews and Christians these thousands of years since, is arresting. For what was the state of the world when these had all been produced? say, in the sixth century, or so, before CHRIST?—At that time the Old Persian Religion was beginning to break up, and the Reformed theology of Zoroaster to take its place. At that time the Brahminism of India was first being shaken by the philosophy of Buddhism. At that time in China the moral system of Confucius disturbed the barbarism, and the philosophy of Laotsea arose. At that time Pythagoras taught in Italy the dim theories, which have become unintelligible to most men, even as theories. At

that time the old Greek Mythology began to be discredited, and philosophers, from Thales onward to Aristotle, led the mind of their countrymen. In a word ; what was there, previous to the Jewish Captivity in Babylon, out of which there could naturally have grown a condensed and chastened series of devotional songs which should touch the heart of untold millions of men, probably to the end of time ?

What can the critics say to us here ? Simply nothing. Of the *origines* of these sublime utterances, they generally, too, can tell nothing. The very titles prefixed to them are subsequent guesses, or traditions. Of the spiritual, human, individual sense, what can they tell us ? Can they *fix* the "occasions" on which they were written ? They cannot : and we may even be thankful. All those words of high devotion—of Hope, or Gratitude, or Prayer, or Denunciation, are alike cut off from the "occasions," (when there were any), on which they were written : and the Christian has been taught how to interweave them with all his creed. He is able at once to sing at the end of every Psalm, words which, to the critic, and Biblicist, must be a pure intrusion, and wholly incongruous ;—as the chorus or epode of each, there is, "Glory be to the FATHER, and to the SON, and to the HOLY GHOST ! As it was

in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen!"

Now the critics may call these Psalms "national lyrics," "highly influential poems," written by "gifted persons," under the influence of the Zoroastrian, or other wise men with whom the Captivity threw them! Can bathos go further? We might at least be told how it was that the wise men who could teach the poor captives of Judah to write words which find their way to human nature wherever they go, left no such Psalms of their own. We also have a right surely to ask our literary friends to subject any other ancient book in the world to half the processes to which the Psalms have been subjected, and then produce to us a parallel result. Put a *careful prose translation, e. g.* of the Hymns of Homer, or the Choruses of Æschylus or Sophocles, before ordinary people anywhere, (or say, the extracts lately much admired, from the Vedas), and we may defy you to interest common readers about one line of them. They are, *to the many*, and always have been, simply unreadable. But the PSALMS! What a MIRACLE is that book,—if a miracle be something different from all common facts lying round about it, and asserting *a power for itself!* How this Book finds its way, ay, in any of the Church's

Translations, to the *heart of man!* Render them even badly, if she can, and still, being made with *an insight*—(and how ‘wooden’ any scholar’s rendering is, if he has not insight!)—they ring through our inner nature everywhere! and joy, and sorrow, and penitence, and hope, and nearness to the Living GOD, *will find thrilling expression in every page!* Fling them broadly on the world, and they are more than “Sibylline leaves,” that the wind will scatter, or the Prophet himself withdraw or destroy. But to see CHRIST in them all,—to hear GOD speaking to us in them all,—to read the mystery of Grace, and to be thrilled by it, in them all: THAT is the Revelation!

While in ancient days, the old Jewish Church had *life*, it could, according to its measure, so use the Psalms. It falters now, and “cannot sing the LORD’S Song;” its gift of interpretation is confused. But the gift might not perish, if Truth and Grace have life.

We pause and ask: have we now or have we not arrived at much, concerning both our Bible and its Meaning? The Hebrew Scriptures speak to us otherwise than the critics think. The Book, and lofty Interpretations, too, have lived, each an insearchable life, side by side; so that the Book is *not trace-*

*able, not useable*, by natural and literary individual methods only. Yet that Book is a great FACT, and the Meaning a great FACT—a POWER that it is useless to deny; for that it has made itself *felt*, wherever it has been. We said that the Revelation was “*SUPERNATURAL* ;”—the Book Supernatural; the Meaning Supernatural. Is there any honest and rational way of avoiding this conclusion? If the Supernatural is always self-asserting—“*Solvitur ambulando*”—is it not so here?

But we have greatly confined ourselves thus far to the Old Testament. Can we equally affirm of the New, that It likewise impresses us as altogether different from all other Books?—not only different in its origin, but different in its character and contents?—We said that the whole “written word” was “*Supernatural*.” The Gospels and Epistles must be looked at, to decide their own pretensions in this respect; looked at, not with mere microscopic minuteness, but broadly and naturally.

As to its origin, we just know that the New Testament must have arisen out of the vortex of Israel’s sorrows, after the Asmonæan period. It stands thus in apparent and immediate connexion with the former Scriptures, at that epoch when the prophecy of Daniel, and the

Book of Enoch, and the living Glosses of the Rabbis were the chief popular literature. After the mysteriously closed Hebrew Canon, (between Malachi and the Baptist), there came a change over the National mind. Certain special beliefs as to the Providence of God, the share of righteous Gentiles in the Divine favour, the Resurrection of the body, and other spiritual truths, gradually came forth, with no new "letter of Scripture" to inculcate them. We know that these glorious things burst in full radiance at length in certain documents, or discourses, which we familiarly speak of as the "Sermon on the Mount," the Sermon at Capernaum, the Sermon of the Upper Chamber. But how came we to possess them? How came they before the world in the first instance?

We have already seen (pp. 14-19), that we cannot trace these facts. What a late sceptical writer has called the "underground beginnings" of our Christianity escape us. All that we can first affirm is, that the Records of the New Testament, including the marvellous words of Christ, are *found* in the Church. The world certainly has nothing like them: the Church possesses them from an early period,—when contemporary religious literature is all comparatively so inferior, that even the illiterate *feel* that "this Scripture" is different

from other books. Why should we fear to own it? The Hand that traced the records of the Word of God Incarnate, and hid them, then, for nearly a hundred years from the Churches, is as invisible to us as the Hand that wrote on the Tables of Horeb; and the very language and sound of that Divine Voice, once heard in Galilee and Jerusalem, is as utterly passed away as are the marks and signs on those stones which Moses brake at the foot of the Mount. Truly, the undiscovered origines of the Pentateuch find a strange parallel in the origines of the Diatessaron.

Need we insist also on the parallel of difficulties throughout?—Will any one say *e.g.* that the Apocalypse of St. John is easier than Ezekiel? Or the Epistle to the Romans a Revelation which all honest minds can readily interpret, in one sense?—But yet how every line and word of Apocalypse, Epistle, History, and Gospel, has been *felt* for 1800 years! And how loftily has the whole Church contemplated it all, as pure Spiritual Truth, with an outward letter to guard and convey it; *exactly as the Jewish Church read Isaiah, or Moses!*

But, above all, we shrink not from affirming, that the simplest collection of the Words of our Blessed MASTER Himself, even previous to all introduction, connexion, explanation, or note,

would stand out as SUPERNATURAL, and smite the human mind and conscience wherever found; so that His Spirit in His Church might enter with the welcome Interpretation.

We have found, then, this our Bible, as a whole, the Old Testament and the New together, in indissoluble combination. Its witness to GOD and to Conscience is *felt* from first to last, enough to arrest us at once. Whatever its origin, whatever its criticism, its testimony has a dim and solemn unity for man's conscience throughout. It sets before us our GOD, and ourselves, as if one voice had dictated its moral teaching, in whatever language, in all the widely-separated ages. It is GOD "in the beginning" Making heaven and earth; GOD commanding human Duty, and visiting human Sin; GOD ordering "the seed-time and harvest, summer and winter" of the outer world,—and directing also the inner life of the individual, and the races of men: GOD in all the human story, as it proceeds, and tells of good or of evil "done in the sight of the Lord;" GOD "doing according to His will," planning a moral future for his earthly family, and bringing His Design of Grace to pass in the fulness of time! It is *not a Treatise*—*not a Code*—*not an Epic of Religion*. It is human life drawn out, and describing itself in

word and act. Its entire story *implies* Revelation—each recorded act proves to be a Type—each word of the record, however simple, a Divine etching, if rightly used at any time. The facts are patent—they ask no proof.

In all this survey, we have done nothing, and attempted nothing, which presupposes anything more than ordinary English education—and the power to read the vernacular translation. Or even to think about it, with average common sense and conscience is enough. We have found the Bible not a natural document: but quite *unlike any other book*. It has a witness to us, though we can ascertain but little of its meaning, without the aid of a concurrent Tradition, which, again, is all a FACT—as undeniable, as unaccountable, as the Bible itself. We have found it absolutely impossible, *in reality*, to separate the written Word from this transmitted Meaning.

In thus approaching the subject, we may no doubt meet the deceitful enquiry—for such it must be—*What is the Church*, which transmits this Meaning together with the letter of Scripture?—We need not turn from it, any more than we declined the question—*What is the Bible?* THE FACT of this transmitted Sense stands certain for all men, apart from the disputes of controversy in

the one case, or of criticism in the other. Let any one, indeed, drop either of these Two Witnesses for God—the Bible, and the Church, and the witness of the other may be mutilated, if not often unintelligible to him. If he tries to fall back upon the *written Word alone*, he is doing that which few can even attempt; and then he is unable by his own skill to assure himself of any one special truth—such as the Trinity or the Atonement. As to any notion of following the Church without the Bible,—this is now almost as suicidal. The Bible presupposes the Church in all her life; and she uses its substance in all her teaching.

In following out the enquiry “What is the BIBLE?” we shewed two things: first, that the multitude cannot satisfy themselves by critical methods, which, at the best, are only within the reach of a few: and, secondly, that the Book still makes itself *felt*, in its own mysterious and various ways, by all to whom it ever comes.

Pursue a similar (and in truth a far easier and briefer) investigation as to the CHURCH, and there is a similar result. The multitude must needs have such answers only to these, and all fundamental enquiries, *as they are capable of*. Let anyone reflect, whether the millions are, or ever have been, *capable* of any other answers to the

primary questions of Theology and Morals, than these :—

1. “What is the Bible?”—the “Books *commonly received*,” as such.

2. “What is the Church?”—the Society “*commonly received*,” as such.

3. “What is the true idea of GOD?”—“that which is manifest in them, for GOD has shewn it to them” (*Rom. i. 19*).

4. “What is Conscience?”—that “inward witness accusing or excusing” (*Rom. ii. 15*).

Such *must* be the common answers. “The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach.” If there be any who still will demand for themselves a *literary* proof of the Bible, or of the Church; of conscience, or of GOD; they must be prepared to take a great deal of time and pains. If there be any who reply, that some other books besides the BIBLE—some other Society as well as the CHURCH—are *felt* in the world, in the same way, let them make sure of *the fact* before they appeal to it. If any other book *can* be to the world, what we have shewn the Bible to be, we will own any such book to be an equal wonder. If any other Society *can* be to mankind, what the Church has been, in highest or lowest estate,—we shall never

wish, nor be able to deny it. Our “non-possumus” will be then as feeble, as now it is mighty. And so, too, if any system of Ethics or Theology *can* anywhere ultimately supplant the existing testimony of the conscience and the heart—we may surrender all to scepticism. Again and again we repeat, that we take our stand on facts alone: these our “ignorance” *can feel*. “HIM whom we ignorantly worship,” the Church “*declares unto us,*” (*Acts*. xvii. 23) by Her Creeds, Her Sacraments, Her Hierarchy,—and in them we *feel* her power so to teach: just as in Holy Scripture we feel that there is a message that concerns us, and which the Church alone has always understood.

When the Church of Rome set people on putting this question to themselves for controversial purposes, “*What is the Church?*” she made Religion, so far, a literary matter for her people, and especially for her converts, who always, therefore, seem unreal. It was an appeal to each man as judge—an appeal known to be impossible, and therefore immoral. It was as fallacious as the sceptical enquiry *What is the Bible*; and it is to be met in the same way. If we cannot treat the Bible as literature, shall we be asked to treat the Church as such? If it were thus *necessary* to “prove the Church” by some little

logic of the natural mind, the whole claim of the supernatural, is vacated. We must repeat in this case, as in that of Scripture; “*Solvitur-ambulando.*” If the world meets the Church, and neither feels nor fears her—her claim is disproved by this alone. If the Philistines are in dread of Samson’s Supernatural Strength, even though they bind him, and put out his eyes, they own his Supernatural claim. They do not shave the locks of Samson’s companions. When it is said, at times, with *naireté*, that the Sects call themselves “Churches,” and often share with us the “One Baptism,” we may generally reply,—their *laity* may be ours; but as for their clergy *no one fears* their claim. When off their guard, they do not seem sure of it themselves. On the other hand, (we say it with no boasting,) the denials and jealousies of others cannot negative our existing life. It is a sad sight, doubtless, when great Baptized Communities deny one another to be “Churches,” either in the East, or the West, or the South. That there are indeed doubtfully baptized communities—and heretical Churches—is unhappily true: but “by their fruits let us know them.” Not that *à posteriori* claims can constitute churches; but deeds of faith are FACTS, find them where we may. As to the appeals to great

moral and spiritual deeds apparently achieved by Sects, every one knows that they can scarcely be tested, in the higher sense. If they meet us in rivalry, like the magicians before Pharaoh, how wonderful soever their doings, we know that they must yield at last; our rod must "swallow up their rods." As for that Community which from the day of Pentecost till now has always been called the Church, *she cannot*, if she would, alter her claims. Look at the Church from the first, if you will: define her, you really cannot—any more than you can define Conscience, or Life, or GOD Himself. Look at her, and she really claims all that her LORD said of her when he declared:—"Ye are not of this world even as I am not of this world." On that day of Pentecost a Body of Men stood up in Jerusalem, found themselves gifted with certain Supernatural Grace, and consequently went forth to "Reveal the things of CHRIST to" mankind. That Company of men made itself *felt*—beyond all the probabilities of their natural position. They included among them "the Twelve" who had the Traditions of their Master's ministry. There had been a hiatus in their body; and they filled it by choosing at once a member of their "Company" (*Acts* iv. 23), familiar from the first with those Traditions. (*Acts* i.)

That Company gradually completed, extended, and modified their Organization. That Company is not alleged by any to have had any other beginning; nor at any time to have broken up their System. It has continued. Their DIVINE FOUNDER had once said to them, "I will build my CHURCH," and so they soon had the name, and have ever since had it, The CHURCH. Other titles come and go, but this abides wherever she abides, even when enemies refuse it. Sometimes faithful, sometimes unfaithful to her sacred mission, this Church of lofty Spiritual claims still abides, and faces the world.

We are not here arguing for this, and saying that this *ought* to have been; but that it actually was, and is. In point of fact, Christianity in no sense first sprang from the documents of the New Testament, but they from it—just as the Law of Moses had been 430 years later than the Religion of Abraham (*Galat.* iii. 17). The Baptising, the Liturgy, the different Orders, the Laying on of Hands in several ways, the Doctrine, the Discipline, the Excommunications, the Lord's Day, the Membership of Infants, Exomologesis, Prayer, the entire Christianity, came into being quite apart from St. Matthew's Gospel, or St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, or the Revelation of St.

John. We say not this, to undervalue those Sacred Documents ; but, quite the reverse, to give them all their value, and rescue them from sceptics and unbelievers. If Christianity was a Revelation at all *at the beginning*, then Revelation means that which the life of the Spirit of God expressed in the main, in that Company of Men who were gathered at the Pentecost.

Consistently with her belief in her own Divine mission as the World's Teacher, mark, then, how this great "Church of CHRIST," known everywhere by this Name, has acted towards that "Written Word." Each part of it, as it rose and commended itself to her heart, was absorbed by the minds of her saints. Every word and phrase was assimilated. Each voice, as it came to her, was the voice of the "SPIRIT," and was welcomed "by the BRIDE" (*Rev.* xxii., 17) as communing with her, consoling her, abiding with her, *understood by her*. Certainly she did not begin with attempting, by means of such writings, "to prove" that the HOLY GHOST had filled her at the Pentecost. She *knew* that : and the world, in its own way, was strangely aware that something which "it knew not," had taken place, which might "turn it upside down." (*Acts* xxvii. 6.) No prophets in the Church (though there were prophets) rose up to prove or

define her. No Evangelic writing was the preliminary of her Mission. She had powers, and *used them*; for the “one Body, partakers of the one Bread,” (1 *Cor.* x. 17) sanctified by Traditional words of Consecration, which we still use, (and which are found in no Gospel precisely as we thus inherit them). She “bound;” she “loosed;” she “remitted;” she “retained;” and all the while the Scripture of the New Covenant was growing.—Not that we find the Church sending from Jerusalem a condensed inspired statement of the efficacious doctrine of the Atonement—or, explaining in a treatise, the vital mystery of the Crucifixion, to convert, *c. g.* Nero’s household, or become a “Revelation” for the Indies—any more than a copy of Genesis had been sent of old time by Moses to the people of China. No: but as written words of God were gradually given to her, she, in her own unmethodical, and indefinite, and Supernatural way, “proved all, and held fast that which was good.”

What the Church has since then accepted as Scripture, that has shewn itself to *be* Scripture. Not that we have first to find out all our Religion from this Scripture, any more than the old Fathers had to prove their immortal hopes from the Penta-

teach. We *have the Truth* already; and then Scripture edifies. The SPIRIT Himself writes an interlineary Gloss for the faithful now, as truly as HE did long centuries since, for Augustin, or Alcuin, or Strabo, or Bernard.

Heresy and novelty began after a time to build on texts of the New Testament. But in vain: the Church was already built. One favorite resort, mentioned by some of the Fathers, as soon beginning to be met with, was in such verses as "where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I." Even the half orthodox Tertullian himself only glances at this with a smile. It was too late. The Church scarcely noticed it. Her Scripture was not meant for that. False teachers, too, very soon found this method unsatisfactory to themselves, (and like Marcion and others), dropped the chief part of the New Testament; as Luther afterwards tried to drop St. James. As to the Canon itself, the very calmness of the Church, from the first, is full of significance and instruction. The Church, knowing the Scripture to be SUPERNATURAL, was sure of course that it was always Divinely safe: the idea of being in the least alarmed about the Bible "not proving true," never occurred to her. Just as now among ourselves, with simple and conscious self-possession, the Church says,

—we take those books which are ‘commonly received;’ so it was then. The old Traditional stories about Ezra being inspired to re-write the Old Testament—or about the Seventy Translators in seventy cells all coming to miraculous agreement—or about the genuine Books of both Testaments finding themselves all of a sudden “on the Table” at a General Council, and the spurious books underneath—fables as they are, express in a literary way the unlettered confidence of the ages of faith, that the Bible was Supernaturally cared for in some way, even “while men slept,” and they “knew not how.” As to “proving the Canon of Scripture” to the outer world, the notion never seems to have occurred to any. Could the heathen have demanded it, the Church might naturally have said, “We are not careful to answer you in this matter.” “Come and see,” and if “God be in us of a truth,” then “fall down and worship.” (*I. Cor.* xiv., 25.) If not, go your way and deny it by all means if you can; and take the consequences.—If the Church herself be true, and has a divine message to men, this is her apostolic answer to the world—“Come, and see!” (*St. John*, i., 46.)—And it is not only with respect to the Bible, that the Church defies the literary appeals of the

secular mind. She refuses equally for herself. Knowing her own Supernatural claims, and that she always has been from the Pentecost downwards, Supernaturally cared for, she ever prefers to trust to the Life of God which is within her. The World, like Nebuchadnezzar, must dream of her, as of a "stone cut out without hands;" and she must "prove" herself, by "*becoming* a mountain and filling the whole earth."

Was she ever forward to Define? Ever eager to make a Creed? If we look back to the "Creeds" of the first three ages, how "indistinct," and "fragmentary" they seem, as the world might say! Yet how marvellously accordant, and really immutable! Council after Council protest, when forced into session, that they will write no more; they even "anathematize," at the outset any one who should add to the Creed of the 318. There were "symbols" in all the Churches, before Nicæa; but their very variety shewed how they were committed as little as possible to technical phraseology. The Church, possessed of the SPIRIT, ever shrank from hardening Truth into letter. The course of false doctrine forced the Church to say a little more, and a little more; but always reluctantly. The greatest saints, such as

Gregory Nyssen, shrank even from Councils at last, in matters of Doctrine; and doubted if they would do good. The fixing the letter of a Creed was ever the SPIRIT'S "strange work." The process by which the result was attained was often beyond scrutiny, and open, as in St. Cyril's history, to all misrepresentation afterwards. Sometimes, as in the case of Athanasius' creed, the process was historically as *unknown* as that by which St. Matthew's Gospel came into being. And yet—when the Church has been *obliged* to define, how consistent, how grand, has been each statement! If the doctrine of the Trinity, or of the Incarnation had been wrought out in one book, at one time, and by One Mind, it could not have been a more perfect Unity than it is as we find it finished, part by part, during a period of 500 years. It could not be otherwise—it could not but come forth at last, chiselled, as a perfect symmetry and purity; for One and the same Spirit *had* been in the Church, from Peter and Paul to Athanasius and Leo. Yet, on other and most vital doctrines, the Church which has so fixed the pure Theology, has steadily abstained from definition. It is not in her nature to wish to materialize truth. Her "Anthropology" is greatly *unfixed* by creeds to this day. Not only the deep questions as to the Will

of man, and the government of God, and the nature of Grace, and the theory of Atonement; but very practical questions, such as that raised by Cardinal Sfondrate, and objected to by Bossuet, and referred to the Pope, as to the condition of the unbaptized, especially infants. Even in the Church of Rome, the hardest and least spiritual among Churches, that definition has been waited for in vain, for some generations; *and will wait*. So also the same may be affirmed as to the Discipline of the Church: it has burst the restraints of the literal Canons again and again, from the first. Our own English Convocation, apparently, is still longing for a Gratian of her own, whose "Decretum" might prove a "Concordia discordantium canonum,"—and, under God's Providence, she yearns for it in vain!

It is time that we now brought our argument to a close. After all that has been said, it will no doubt still be found, that men must be in a certain attitude of mind to receive truths, even though the truths assert themselves all along, in a thousand undeniable results. Just as mathematicians may perhaps mention the doctrine of fluxions, or of limits, as among scientific mysteries needing for their reception previous conditions,

and always disputable by the logician ; so, undoubtedly, something more is required, for a right receiving of Religion, than incontrovertible facts and arguments. The progress of truth is slow ; but in the argument which is now before us, it will be sure. The theory of a self-acting Bible must go its way, like other theories. Could it be realized, it would be a passing portent,—a Frankenstein-creation in the Spiritual world. But it is not conceivable. We cannot really separate now what God has joined. The Bible and the Church must speak in harmony. The pedigree of the Church, and still more of the Bible, may not be traceable by the multitude ; but God's "Witnesses" will still make their presence to be known.

The Popular Biblicist—(we use such a term to avoid the vexation of other names)—is really *responsible* for the modern attacks on the Bible, which so affright the Popular Religion of our day. It comes, too, with bad grace from him to deny (in the interest of private judgment) appeals to man's truthfulness and conscience,—or, as it has been called by the "Literary" believers, the "verifying faculty." On the other hand, nothing can be less Catholic, or less rational, than the Roman jealousy of the Scriptures,—a *very small part of which* is

ever once read by one person in a million. The present and coming investigations of the Sacred Word are the result of the treatment of it by the Popular, the Literary, and the Roman schools.—The position of the humble and faithful churchman is undisturbed.

The Church gives him his Bible ; and he feels it, loves it, *knows* it, in his inmost heart as he hears it. The Church is GOD'S witness to the Bible—and its Meaning. The Bible witnesses to the Church. Each Witness bears the light of heaven on his brow. The Letter and the Spirit have one origin,—and that a Divine one. Neither “establishes” the other ; but, in all Revelation, the Letter has been subsequent to and distinct from, the Spirit. Such is the sum of the whole matter.

In the Old Dispensation, the REVELATION existed 2500 years before Moses wrote a line. Sacrifice like Abel's, Promises of CHRIST, Prophecies like Enoch's, Priesthood like Melchisedec's, even Rites like Circumcision, and Ordinances of Vows, and of Sabbaths, *preceded* the Bible. When a chosen people, or Church, received a written Law, they put into it, of necessity, all those living Traditions which had existed before it.—It is mere straining, now, if we try to get the literal prospect of a Future life out of Moses' law, or every Gospel doctrine from St.

Matthew. The Biblical enthusiasts must answer for all the sceptics made by that means. The literal *Examples*, too, of the Old Testament throughout, are the scourge of those who deny the living Tradition, and so lapse into all crudities—Polygamy, or sensualism, or cruelty.

A sketch of the apparent *coherence* of half a dozen Heresies, traced by the hand of a Möhler, would, from another point of view, soon convince every reasonable man that the whole modern method of treating the Scripture involves a contradiction. But we must not tarry here.

For it is not in reference to the Old Testament alone that all this is now said. The New Testament is all our own; nevertheless our Doctrine, our Liturgies, our Priesthood, our Creeds, all *speak for themselves* as Divine; and afterwards they illuminate the letter of Gospels and Epistles, which we learn to use *entirely in the Church's way*.—"The word is nigh to us" then. "O how precious are THY words unto my mouth, yea, sweeter than honey to my throat!"—"I rejoice in THY work as one that findeth great spoil! "THY Word is the lamp of my feet and the light of my path!"—To possess the autograph of Moses or of Paul could not thrill us so as the Truth itself then does, when, secure from all pos-

sible heresy, the "eyes have been opened to understand the Scriptures," and behold as the Church beholds them, the "things of CHRIST."

Have we not seen that there is indeed *no other way* to Truth? If we take texts to prove even the Atonement by them alone, our range is limited and we have an imperfect and comfortless and illogical doctrine at most, unless we import into our theory *e. g.* something of Anselm and Bernard, and not a little that seemed the efflorescence of monasticism, or hymnology, or art. And are we to do all this for ourselves?

There can be no such task for us as to any parts of our Faith. Little able to define them, we must grow to them, in the Church's atmosphere. Some definitions might change, but the Faith is more immutable than the definitions; as truths of Morals live on in Conscience, notwithstanding all the volumes of casuists and moral philosophers, ever the same.

The Book, and its Vital Meaning, the BIBLE and the CHURCH, speak to us "as man never spake." Yet we own that "we have the treasures in earthly form."—The structure of each Divine Witness is wonderful, yet, O how natural it seems! Super-human, yet human!—History, Legend, Proverb, Idyll, Chronicle, Psalm,—Vision, Dream, Epistle!

We are spoken to, in every conceivable form that the Human Conscience ever knew. And every mode of Human life, and every law of Human-association, has no less been touched, and made Sacramental by the Church.—So Synod, Canon, Rite, and Liturgy, reveal to us in some way, how God is dealing with us still. And though they all marvellously belong to and support each other, and though our very Creeds are proved by “sure warrant of the written Word”—we know this to be so, *because the Church has so told us*. By her we prove all things—for she “has Authority in controversies of the Faith.”

Our task is done.—We undertook to show, that the “Written Word” must, on any just theory, be dealt with, in a way that should meet the requirements of the “wise and the unwise,”—“barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free,” and provide for all contingences and all capacities. We were bound to see, that even the entire absence of the written Word,—(a possible contingency always)—must be reckoned for, in any true theory of Revelation. We have appealed to Reason—we have appealed to *all the facts*.

If we have unequivocally *shown*, that ‘The Spirit was before the Letter,’ and the Letter only an in-

strument of the Spirit; that “the Letter” only is not the “Revelation,” nor, apart from the SPIRIT, a sure guide to dogma; that the SPIRIT was given at the Pentecost and has led the Church into Truth; that the Letter can neither be certainly ascertained, nor uniformly known or understood, as literature only; that the “orthodox” Meaning is a known, intelligible, sure FACT, *per se*,—(though never able to live out of the Church)—just as the Bible is a FACT which the world cannot account for, *on any ground but ours*;—then, we may have saved some erring brethren who may calmly read these pages from the ghastly disappointments of a “Literary” Christianity. We may have strengthened the hands of many who were troubled; and we may be permitted without presumption, as Churchmen, now to say, that it is demonstrable, that the “Written Word,” whenever and wherever it exists in the Church, is “co-ordinate with the Church in the Mission of Truth to Mankind.”

Dark days may be before us, but GOD’S “Two Witnesses” will bear their testimony. Their future is secure. And even though it were our lot, to live to see both HIS Witnesses assailed, and “slain in our streets;” we know, that there awaits them a quick Resurrection, when “the time, and times, and half a time” shall be passed!

Yet while we thus speak, let it not be thought that we may look on all gainsayers of GOD'S Church, or of HIS Word, as alike conscious resisters of HIS Truth. There will be many, to the end, whom we may "count not as enemies," but plead with, as brethren. In earnestly proclaiming the Bible as SUPERNATURAL, and the Church SUPERNATURAL, we may seem at first perhaps to be doing but little to aid the faith of those, to whom all MIRACLE seems in itself incredible; yet is not the SUPERNATURAL alone the object of the Highest *Faith*? To know the INCARNATION,—the presence of EMANUEL,—is to know that "all things are possible." Things that "pass understanding" in the order of nature, may utter mysteries of a higher world; and what is, for the time, unintelligible to sense, be full of Divinest meaning to heaven-taught Faith. There is "no day like unto that in which GOD hearkens to the voice of a MAN," and mysteries are silently revealed! Our Sun "faithful witness in our heaven" "stands still on Gibeon," our "Moon in the valley of Ajalon;"—dumb Creation speaks to the prophet's ear "with man's voice;" and the great deep of ocean is moved with the Types of the "SON OF MAN." Among these grand "difficulties" of the Divine Presence, in HIS Word, and in HIS

Church, the Child of God will hear heaven's most solemn messages as he silently listens; yet he has ever a joyous fearlessness, a sense of sacred security, among the rocks where unguided spirits are making shipwreck,—as knowing “HIM, Who sitteth on the water-flood and abideth a KING for ever.”

*For the completion of the Argument on Prophecy referred to p. 125, &c.,—and for a discussion of the Miracles of the Old Testament,—originally intended to appear as Appendices to this Work, but proving to be too large to appear in that form, the Reader is referred to the New Volume just published, entitled,*

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