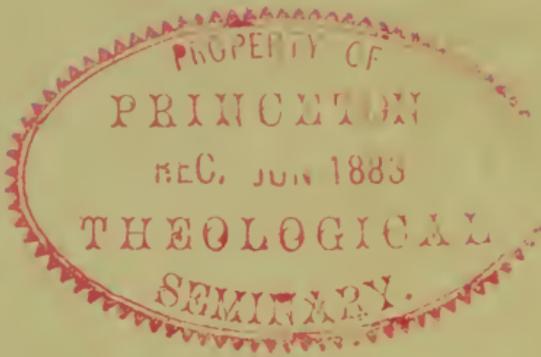




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A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

BY

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INTRODUCTORY.

OF a large proportion of the world, including the most civilized nations of it, Christianity is the publicly recognized religion ; and, furthermore, there exists a collection of sacred books, upon the facts and doctrines contained in which this religion professes to be founded. The volume of these writings goes by various names : it is called the Bible, or “ the Book ” emphatically, from a Greek word¹ signifying the bark of the papyrus, because on it books were originally written. From its two main divisions it is called the Old and New Testaments, or Dispositions, because it contains the covenants, or arrangements, which its Divine Author was pleased to enter into, first with the Jewish people, and then with believers in Christ of all nations. By itself, the term “ Scripture,” or “ Scriptures,”² is applied to its contents, by which is denoted a selection of writings distinguished from all others on the same subjects by certain marked peculiarities ; and by those who believe in its divine authority it is, on this account, frequently called the Word, or the oracles of

¹ Βίβλος ; in Latin, *liber*.

² John, x. 35 ; v. 39.

God. The different aspects under which our sacred books are thus presented to our view, will determine the main topics of which an introduction to the study of them may be expected to consist. •

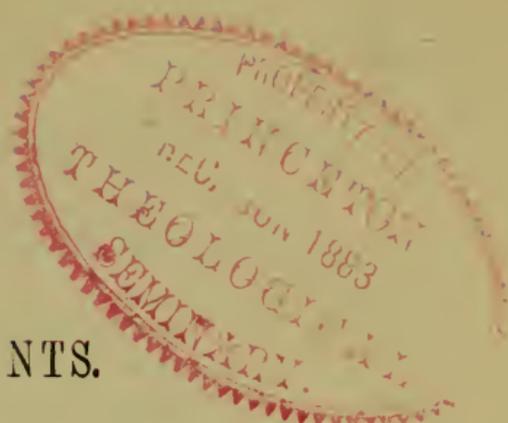
We shall have, then, to consider, in the first place, on what grounds the Scriptures claim to be a genuine and authentic record of the various communications of God to man which are described by the general term, Revelation ; under which head the genuineness of the books, the formation of the canon, its uncorrupted transmission to our times, the history of the text, and kindred questions, will claim consideration. But inasmuch as Christians hold the Bible to be the word of God, and Protestant Christians refer to it as the supreme and only infallible authority in matters of faith, the next point to examine will be how far this belief is well founded ; whether it can be satisfactorily made out that the Bible is from God, and is sufficient to instruct us in the way of life : in other words, the subjects of the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture will naturally form a part of the present work. The way being thus cleared for an examination of the writings themselves, a brief account will be attempted of the contents of the sacred volume, and of the institutions, Jewish and Christian, founded upon the revelation which it contains.

Independently of its divine origin, the Bible, on mere literary grounds, claims our earnest attention. It is, beyond comparison, the oldest book in the world. The Pentateuch was written 600 years before the poems of Homer and Hesiod, and nearly 1000 years before the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, the earliest ex-

isting profane specimens of that species of literature. It contains the history of one of the most remarkable people on the face of the earth. It abounds with the finest models of composition in lyric poetry, in oratory, in narrative, and in the style of sententious apophthegm peculiar to the East. In its pages we have the only record, professing to be authentic, of the great convulsions, physical and social, which have affected the structure of the globe, and the disposition of its inhabitants. Its language, and its ideas, have become inextricably intermingled with those of modern society. To the antiquarian, then, to the philosopher, and to the man of taste, it must ever be an object of interest;—how much more so to the Christian, who has been taught to regard it as containing a revelation from God, in which the wants of our fallen nature are explained and supplied; and who, in proportion as he studies its pages with a sincere desire for instruction, finds it more and more “a lamp to his feet, and a light unto his path,” amidst the uncertain deductions of human reason.

NOTE TO PAGE 147, LINE 18.

It will be obvious to the reader that these remarks are intended of the normal case of Scripture, viz., adult baptism; the only case upon which we possess clear Scriptural data. To what extent they may, or must, be modified in connexion with the exceptional case of infants born within the Christian pale (exceptional as regards Scripture, though ecclesiastically the ordinary one) is matter of discussion, for which this is not the place.



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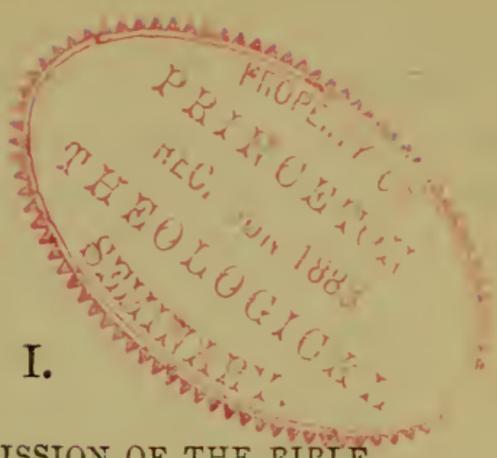
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PART I.

HISTORY OF THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE TO OUR TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

THE AUTHENTICITY AND UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

WHEN we take any ancient composition into our hands, the first questions that arise are—Have we reason to believe that it is the production of the author whose name it bears, or, at least, that it is an authentic document? And then—Is it substantially in the state in which it came from the author's hand? If a writing is proved to be spurious, that is, a forgery of later times, its authenticity, if a history, is very much impaired, if not destroyed;¹ and if, though it be not spurious, it yet comes to us in a corrupt or mutilated condition, our confidence in it as a true representation of the author's mind becomes proportionably weakened. In the case of the Bible, which claims authority over our

¹ Authenticity, in the sense of credibility, is not absolutely incompatible with the admitted spuriousness of a writing. The facts might have been carefully investigated, and faithfully recorded, though not by the professed author, or in his age; still even the credibility would be diminished by that circumstance.

faith, these questions assume a still greater importance. For, however true in point of fact its statements might be, a forged composition could never proceed from inspired men; and if we had reason to suspect that material interpolations or omissions had interfered with the integrity of the original, we could not depend upon it as an authentic revelation of God's will. The genuineness and integrity of the sacred text are, therefore, to us Christians matters of vital moment. We propose, in this chapter, to present a general view of the evidence on which we believe the Bible to be, in all essential points, just as it came from the hands of its inspired authors. This evidence may be divided into external and internal.

SECT. I.—*External Evidence.*

Under this head we place, 1, direct testimony to the authorship and authenticity of the Scriptures; 2, quotations by contemporaneous and subsequent authors; 3, MSS.; 4, versions. On all these points the Bible is attested by evidence incomparably more copious and conclusive than belongs to any other ancient writing or collection of writings.

§ 1. *Direct testimony.*—The direct proof that an author lived at a certain period, and that he wrote certain works, consists, like the proof of all other facts, of credible testimony to that effect. We believe that such a person as Cicero existed, and was the author of certain treatises that bear his name, because this information has been handed down to us by those who possessed good opportunities of knowing the facts. Applying this test to the books of Scripture, we have to observe, that, as regards the Old Testament, by the Jews, to whose custody this portion of the sacred volume was intrusted and who were most deeply interested in its integrity, no doubt was ever entertained as

to the authenticity of the several books of which it was composed. That the Pentateuch is the production of Moses; that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were written by those persons; that Solomon was the author of Proverbs, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes; David, Asaph, and other pious men, of the Psalms; and the prophets, of the prophetic books which bear their names;—on these points Jewish testimony is unanimous. Where, as in the case of the remaining books, it was uncertain who was the author, or the real author's name was lost, still the reception of them as authentic histories was not less unanimous. The Hebrew Scriptures occupy a peculiar position in the national literature. How the canon was fixed will be considered in another place; at present we are only concerned with the *fact*, that long before the Christian era it was so fixed. The following are some of the testimonies on this point:—In the book of Ecclesiasticus, of which we possess only the Septuagint Greek translation, mention is made of three classes of books, to the study of which, as the translator informs us, Jesus the son of Sirach, the author of the original Hebrew work, devoted himself,—“the law, the prophecies, and the rest of the books.” The third century before Christ is usually assigned as the date of the Hebrew original; so that in this, the earliest existing writing after the cessation of prophecy, we have a distinct reference to our canonical books as then extant. Still clearer is the testimony of Josephus, who was contemporary with the Apostles, and who, in a well-known passage,¹ adopting the distribution of the Old Testament usual among the Jews of that age into twenty-two books, assigns five to the law, thirteen to the prophets, and four to sacred hymns and instructions for life,—the very division into the “law, the psalms, and the prophets,” of which the New Testa-

¹ Cont. Apion. i. s. 8.

ment makes mention.¹ "We have not," says the historian, "thousands of books, discordant and contradicting each other; but we have only twenty-two, which comprehend the history of all former ages, and are justly accounted divine." From whom did Josephus, or the son of Sirach, receive this tradition? There is no link in the chain at which we can stop until we ascend to the contemporaries of the writers themselves, from whom, doubtless, the evidence descended in an unbroken line, until it reached the last age of the Jewish Commonwealth. To a certain extent this species of evidence is furnished by the sacred volume itself; in the later writers of which many references are found to the compositions of their predecessors. Thus Micah (c. iv. 1-3) repeats the prophecy of Isaiah (c. ii. 2-4); Jeremiah (c. xxvi. 18) attests the existence and genuineness of Micah's prophecies; Jeremiah's predictions were known to, and read by, Daniel (c. ix. 2); and by our Lord, and the writers of the New Testament, the prophets are repeatedly quoted by name.

In examining the attestations to the New Testament, it will be convenient to adopt an order the reverse of that above, and, commencing with the fourth century, to trace the line of evidence backwards. For after the period just mentioned, the current of testimony becomes so full and so clear that it is unnecessary to descend lower. We are fortunate enough to possess ten catalogues of the Christian Scriptures written during the fourth century, six of which agree exactly with our present collection, while the remaining four, though omitting one or more books, admit no others. The following are the authors of these catalogues with their respective dates:—Augustine, bishop of Hippo (A.D. 394); Jerome (A.D. 392); Rufinus, Presbyter of Aquileia (A.D. 390); forty-four bishops at the third

¹ Luke, xxiv. 44.

Council of Carthage (A.D. 397); Epiphanius (A.D. 370); Athanasius (A.D. 315);—these six specify all our books. Then follow, Gregory of Nazianzen (A.D. 375); the bishops at the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364); and Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 340), who omit the book of Revelation; and Philaster, bishop of Brescia, in Italy (A.D. 380), who omits both the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Revelation. Of these the testimony of Jerome is particularly valuable, inasmuch as his life was devoted to the labours of biblical criticism, and from his extensive learning, his varied travels, and his long residence in Palestine, he was eminently fitted to decide upon such subjects. In his 2d epistle to Paulinus he commences his catalogue with the four Evangelists; passes on to the Acts of the Apostles, which he ascribes to Luke; enumerates seven churches to whom St. Paul wrote, whose titles correspond with those of our extant Epistles, adding as the production of the same author the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon; speaks of James, Peter, John, and Jude, as the authors of the seven Catholic Epistles; mentions the Epistle of the Hebrews with an intimation that many persons did not regard it as the work of St. Paul; and concludes with the remark that the Revelation of St. John has as many mysteries as words. The candour with which he admits the doubts of the Latin Church as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews adds force to his testimony in favour of the other writings. The next important witness that meets us, as we ascend to earlier times, is Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, who lived A.D. 315; a man of vast diligence and research. In the 25th chapter of the third book of his Ecclesiastical History he gives the result of his inquiries respecting the canon of Scripture. “The following,” he says, “are universally admitted as genuine;—the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the fourteen Epistles of

Paul,¹ the first Epistles of John and Peter, and (if it so seem good) the Revelation of John. Those books on which the testimony of antiquity is not unanimous are, the Epistles of James and Jude, the second of Peter, and the second and third of John. Among the list of spurious writings are the Acts of Paul, the Revelation of Peter, and the gospel according to the Hebrews." This passage is valuable on a twofold account ;—first, because the author professes to deliver, not his own private judgment, but ecclesiastical tradition ; and, secondly, because it shows how carefully the early Christians sifted the evidence for the genuineness of the sacred books ; where there was a doubt they took no pains to conceal it. In the works of Origen (A.D. 243), the most learned and laborious writer of the third century, besides commentaries on the whole of Scripture, we find a catalogue, which corresponds exactly with that of Eusebius. Tertullian, in the second century, mentions the four gospels, and most of the books of the New Testament by name ; as does also Irenæus (A.D. 170), with the exception of the Epistle to Philemon, the third of John, and the Epistle of Jude, references to which do not occur in his works ; and of the second Epistle of Peter, the Epistle of James, and that to the Hebrews, of which, though he alludes to them, he does not specify the authors. Finally, Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Asia, a hearer of Polycarp, expressly assigns the gospels of Matthew and Mark to those writers ; and Clemens Romanus, the fellow-labourer of Paul (Phil. iv. 3), refers, as expressly, to the first Epistle to the Corinthians as the work of that Apostle.

On the body of evidence, of which the foregoing is but a specimen, we have two remarks to make ; the first, that it is collected from a large surface, the witnesses not only

¹ Eusebius is of opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews is the work of St. Paul. See Eccl Hist. 1. iii. c. 3.

living at different times, but in countries widely remote from each other, so that collusion is morally impossible. And, secondly, that where one writer fails us, another supplies the deficiency; and thus, though it is but seldom that *all* the books of the Bible are mentioned by the same witness, yet there is no book that, from some quarter or other, does not receive attestation.

This unanimous judgment of the early Church receives remarkable confirmation from the admission of ancient heretics and of avowed adversaries of the Christian faith, whether Jewish or heathen. Could the charge of forgery have been substantiated by either of these parties, we may be sure it would have been; for thus further controversy would have been cut short. But various and contradictory to each other as were the tenets of the many heresiarchs who lived in the first four centuries, none of them ever called in question the authenticity of the Scriptures. They had no scruple in mutilating them when they thought them irreconcilable with their own views; they disputed the orthodox interpretations; but their very mutilations and comments prove that they admitted the genuineness of the books. So that, in the words of Dr. Lardner, summing up this head of evidence, we may say, that "Noetus, Paul of Samosata, Sabellius, Marcellus, Photinus, the Novatians, Donatists, Manichæans, Priscillianists, besides Artemon, the Audians, the Arians, and divers others, all received most, or all, of the same books of the New Testament which the Catholics received, and agreed in the same respect for them, as being written by Apostles, or their disciples and companions." ¹

As regards the opponents of Christianity, the three principal names of those first ages are, Celsus, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian. The first, a heathen philosopher,

¹ Lardner, Works, vol. xii. p. 12. Edit. 1755.

who flourished towards the close of the second century, wrote, under the person of a Jew, a treatise against Christianity, the greatest part of which has been preserved in Origen's reply to it, and which appears to have consisted chiefly of objections against the credibility of the Gospel, drawn from the Christian Scriptures. Celsus professes to refute Christians "from their own writings;" and what writings he means is evident from a number of facts relating to our Lord's birth and life, death and resurrection, which he cites from the four Gospels. He accuses Christians of "altering the Gospel;" that is, of corrupting the original text, which, as Paley observes,¹ proves the antiquity of that text, for various readings and corruptions do not belong to recent productions; but in no instance does he question the genuineness of the books, or found any of his objections to Christianity upon what was delivered in spurious gospels. Celsus was followed by Porphyry in the third century, whose writings have perished. We can gather, however, the line of argument which he adopted. He objects to the contents of our present Gospels, and of the Acts of the Apostles, and to nothing derived from any other source. It was not from disinclination, could the attempt have been attended with any prospect of success, that he abstained from urging the spuriousness of these books; for, in the case of the prophet Daniel, he actually does adopt this objection, pronouncing his prophecies, on various grounds, to be a forgery, written after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Is it possible that so acute an inquirer could have failed to call in question the genuineness of the Christian Scriptures, had there been any plausible ground for doing so? About a century after Porphyry, the Emperor Julian appeared in the lists against Christianity. From the extracts from

¹ Evidences, part 1. c. 9, s. 9.

his works, given by Cyril and Jerome, it appears that the points to which his animadversions were directed, were all drawn from our present gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. He quotes these, and he quotes no other books.

From this reluctant testimony of heretics and adversaries, the following conclusions may be drawn: 1. That our present books existed in their times. 2. That they were considered by Jews and heathens, as well as by Christians, as authentic records of the Christian religion. 3. That no other books enjoyed this authority. 4. That no doubt existed as to the books being the genuine productions of their reputed authors. Stronger evidence than this it is impossible to conceive. The Christian Scriptures were not jealously kept from the public eye as the exclusive property of a priestly caste; they were scattered far and wide; they were publicly read in the churches; they were exposed to hostile criticism; they challenged the scrutiny both of friends and enemies; and they passed through the ordeal triumphantly.

§ 2. *Quotations.*—In the foregoing remarks we have endeavoured to present an outline of what may be called the naked testimony to the authorship and authenticity of the Scriptures; we now proceed to another branch of evidence, if possible still more satisfactory and convincing; viz., the vast body of quotations from our sacred books which are found in Christian writers from the very first. This is, in reality, a far more cogent species of attestation than the last mentioned. If Quintilian had simply informed us that Cicero had left an oration in defence of the poet Archias, there would be a strong probability that the work which we possess under that title in Cicero's remains is the oration in question; that, therefore, it was extant in Quintilian's time, and was esteemed by the rhetorician a genuine work: but when he quotes, as he

does, a sentence from the oration itself, which we also find in our copies, we are not only assured of its existence in that age, and of its reputed authenticity, but, what is equally important, of the uncorrupted preservation of the text, as far as that portion extends. And should we, from various authors, be able thus to recover the whole, or the greater part, of the oration in question, and find that it corresponds with our printed copies, a few unimportant variations of reading excepted, this would remove every doubt as to our possessing the very work which Cicero composed. By the providence of God, we possess, in the case of the Scriptures, evidence of this kind the most copious and incontestable. It was the custom of the early Christian writers, as it is of modern divines, to interlard their discourses with abundant allusions to, and quotations from, the sacred volume; which at once proves the existence of the books, and the estimation in which they were held. Very many of these quotations consist simply of passages, without the name of the writer; others, especially from the Gospels, are introduced with the expression, "The Lord hath said," the primary, instead of the secondary, Author being named. A few specimens from the earlier writers must suffice. In the epistle of Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, the following passage occurs: "Let us, therefore, beware, lest it come upon us as it is written; *There are many called, few chosen;*"¹ a reference to the Gospel of St. Matthew. Clement of Rome, also a companion of Paul, exhorts the Corinthians to whom he writes, to "remember the words of our Lord Jesus; for He said, *Woe to that man; it were good for him that he had never been born, than that he should offend one of my elect; better for him that a millstone were placed around him, and*

¹ C. 4. The genuineness of this epistle is here assumed.

that he should be drowned in the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones." ¹ Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (A.D. 70), in his epistle to the Church of Smyrna, speaks of Christ "as baptized by John, that all righteousness might be fulfilled in Him;" ² and admonishes Polycarp, the bishop of the Church, "to be wise as serpents in all things, and prudent as a dove." ³ In the epistle of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, we read, "Jesus Christ, whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death; on whom," he continues, "though not seeing Him, ye believed; and believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious." ⁴ "Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven you." ⁵ "Neither adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." ⁶ "Every one who confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is Antichrist." ⁷ Though the epistle from which these instances are taken is but a short one, it contains upwards of thirty undoubted allusions of the same kind to the New Testament. In the two Apologies of Justin Martyr (A.D. 140), there occur between twenty and thirty quotations from the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles: can we doubt that he referred to the same books which we possess, when within the compass of half a page we read as follows: ⁸ "And in other words, He says, *Depart from me into outer darkness, which the Father hath prepared for Satan and his angels.*" (Matt. xxv. 41.) "And again He said, in other words, *I give unto you power to tread upon serpents, and scorpions, and venomous beasts, and upon all the power of the enemy.*" (Luke, x. 19.) "And before He was crucified, He said, *The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Scribes and Pharisees, and be crucified,*

¹ 1 Epist. c. 46.

² Ad Smyr. c. 1.

³ Ad Polyc. c. 2.

⁴ Ad Phil. c. 1.

⁵ c. 2.

c. 5.

⁷ c. 7.

⁸ Dial. Par. II. p. 303. Edit. Lond. 1722.

and rise again the third day." (Mark, viii. 31.) The churches of Lyons and Vienne, A.D. 170, in an epistle still extant in Eusebius,¹ addressed to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, describe the sufferings of their martyrs: "showing," they say, "by their example, that *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory about to be revealed to us.*" Of one of these, Vettius Epagathus, they bear witness, that, "though a young man, he deserved the eulogium of Zacharias, *for he had walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*" The testimony of Irenæus to the authorship of the writings of the New Testament has been already alluded to: it is particularly valuable, because in his youth he had been a disciple of Polycarp; had travelled extensively, and had spent much time and pains in this very department of literary labour. He suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Severus about A.D. 202. "Matthew," he writes, "wishing to convey full assurance to the Jews, that Jesus was the Christ, commences his gospel with the genealogy of Christ."² "If any one should reject Luke, as not knowing the truth, he openly rejects the Gospel; for, by means of Luke, we become acquainted with many necessary facts of the Gospel, such as the birth of John (the Baptist), the history of Zacharias, the advent of the angel to Mary, the exclamation of Elizabeth, the visit of the angels to the shepherds, the testimony of Anna and Simeon to Christ, the visit of Christ to Jerusalem at twelve years old," &c.³ In the same part of his works he gives an epitome of the concluding chapters of the book of Acts. Clement of Alexandria, who followed Irenæus at an interval of only sixteen years, quotes almost all the books of the New Testament; his citations would fill a

¹ Eccl. Hist. l. v. c. 1. ² Possini Catena in Matt. (ap. Massuet).

³ Cont. Hær. l. iii. c. 14.

considerable volume. Of Tertullian, his contemporary, it is sufficient to cite Lardner's remark, "that there are more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than there are of all the works of Cicero in writers of all characters for several ages."¹ In the remains of Origen's works, quotations from Scripture are so thickly strewn, that Dr. Mill does not hesitate to say, that "if we had all his works remaining, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible."² It is unnecessary to proceed further. Succeeding writers, to our own times, furnish materials in constantly increasing abundance; but they are chiefly valuable as showing that the Christian Scriptures never lost their character or authority. It has been asserted that, from the ecclesiastical writings of the first six centuries, the whole text of the New Testament might be recovered, even if no MSS. existed. We may add, that no Apocryphal books are referred to in the same manner. Of the existence of such in the first century, no evidence remains; and if, subsequently, some books, such as the Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Preaching of Peter, are mentioned, it is with marks of discredit; and neither are they alleged by different parties as of authority in matters of faith, nor were they subjects of commentaries or expositions.

The quotations from the Old Testament, occurring in early Christian writers, are comparatively few; nor is it to be expected that they should often allude to it. Their general ignorance of Hebrew prevented any critical examination of the originals; and the controversies in which they were engaged lay in other directions. But the defect is abundantly supplied by the Christian Scriptures themselves; and it is on this account that we have, in the first instance, laboured to establish the authenticity and integ-

¹ Vol. ii. p. 287. Edit. 1788.

² Prolog. p. 64.

urity of those Scriptures. Assuming it, then, as an unquestionable fact, that the books of the New Testament, such as we have them, were known and acknowledged from the very first, we have but to open the volume to find in it exactly similar attestations to the Jewish Scriptures. The writers of these books cite from the Old Testament, just as ecclesiastical authors cite from the New, and almost as abundantly. Some of the difficulties connected with this subject will be noticed hereafter;¹ we are now only concerned with the fact. It has been calculated, then, that the references of the New Testament to the Old, including all kinds, direct and indirect, exceed 600: of these the actual quotations amount to 263, while of indirect references there are about 376. The Pentateuch is quoted 90 times; the Psalms, 71; Isaiah, 56; and the minor prophets, about 30. With some variations, arising principally from the use of the Septuagint version instead of the Hebrew, the great bulk of these allusions establishes completely the integrity of our Hebrew copies.

§ 3. *MSS.*—The next branch of evidence to be considered is that furnished by MSS. An autograph MS. of an ancient work, could it be clearly proved to be such, would of course set at rest all doubts respecting the faithfulness of subsequent transcripts. But neither of the ancient classics, nor of the Scriptures, does any such autograph exist. The best established of our classical texts rest on the authority of MSS., generally speaking, not older than from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries; of about the same date are the extant MSS. of the Hebrew Scriptures. M. de Rossi assigned two in his possession to the eighth and ninth centuries; but the great bulk both of his and Dr. Kennicott's collections reaches back no further than to the tenth century. Even this date, however,

¹ Part II. c. 3.

places them on a level with those of the principal classical authors ; while in point of number they possess a vast superiority. The editors of the best known Greek and Latin writers are content to frame their texts on the authority of ten or fifteen MSS. ; of the Hebrew MSS. Dr. Kennicott collected upwards of 600, and M. de Rossi nearly 500 more. Not that each of these contains the whole of the Old Testament ; many of them comprise only the Pentateuch, many more are but fragmentary remains : but what is wanting in one is supplied by another, and collectively they form an authentic record of what the Hebrew text was before the age of printing. It is not from one country, or continent, that this mass of evidence has been derived : Spain, Germany, Italy, and the East, have each contributed their quota. It had long been the desire of biblical scholars to obtain some MSS. from the Jews who were known to have settled in India : at length the late Dr. Buchanan was fortunate enough to procure a MS. roll of the Pentateuch from the black Jews of Malabar, which is now deposited in the University library at Cambridge. A collation of this MS. produced no important variation from our existing copies.

Of much greater antiquity than the Hebrew are the Greek MSS. of the Scriptures, containing the New Testament and the Septuagint translation of the Old. Of these the earliest existing, the Vatican and the Alexandrine, the former preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome, the latter in the British Museum, belong, most probably, to the fifth century. Critics have assigned a still more ancient date to certain MSS. which contain only the Old Testament in Greek ; the Codex Cottonianus, for example, so called from its having been preserved in the Cottonian library at Westminster, a few fragments of which, preserved from a fire which consumed the rest, are deposited

in the British Museum, and which was probably written towards the close of the fourth century. The number of MSS. of the New Testament in existence is prodigious; they abound in every library of Christendom, and are supposed to amount to several thousands. For the gospels there have been actually collated 496; for the Acts and Catholic Epistles, 200; for St. Paul's Epistles, 255; and for the book of Revelation, 91.

What, now, has been the result of these vast and laborious investigations? In no single instance has a various reading been discovered which affects the general sense of Scripture. Variations, of course, are met with; but they almost always relate to unimportant points. Indeed the substantial agreement of the MSS. of Scripture is, the number of transcriptions they have passed through being taken into account, one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of literature, and almost irresistibly suggests the idea of a superintending Providence. Of the whole of the Old Testament about 1314 readings have been noted, as of importance; of the New Testament only ten or twelve. None of these can be said to be of theological moment: they correct dates, they complete the sense, in some instances (in the New Testament) they affect the *number* of proofs for particular doctrines: but this is all. Thus, for example, many MSS. omit Acts, viii. 37, a passage which has been alleged against infant-baptism; on Acts, xx. 28, the authorities are divided between "the Church of God" and the "Church of the Lord;" in 1 Tim. iii. 16, Griesbach reads, for "God manifest," "who was manifest;" and in Jam. ii. 18, fourteen MSS. have for "by thy works," "without thy works." These are some of the most important differences which the discovery of fresh MSS. has brought to light. So trivial indeed, for the most part, are these

differences, that the labours of the learned in this branch of criticism have been depreciated, as having led to no results of consequence; whereas one of the greatest advantages we have derived from them is a knowledge of the agreement of the MS. copies of the Scriptures with each other, and with our Bibles.¹ We conclude this section with the words of a great critic: "The real text of the sacred writer does not now (since the originals have been so long lost) lie in any single manuscript or edition, but is dispersed in them all. It is competently exact indeed, even in the worst manuscript now extant; nor is one single article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them."²

§ 4. *Versions.*—There remains one more source of external evidence, viz., ancient versions from the original Hebrew or Greek, which are of great value in determining what the text was at the time when they were executed.

Under this head we place the Samaritan Pentateuch, though it is rather an independent recension of the sacred text than a version. Though it is referred to by ancient writers, it fell into oblivion, and was thought to have perished, until Archbishop Usher procured six copies from the East: by the aid of which, and other MSS. subsequently available, it was printed first in the Paris, and then in the London Polyglott. As there has been no intercourse between the Jews and the Samaritans since the Babylonish captivity, on account of the latter having established a separate worship on Mount Gerizim, the Samaritan Pentateuch must derive its origin from a very early period, perhaps antecedent to the division of the kingdom. The variations which it presents from our present Jewish copies are so inconsiderable, as to give us

¹ Tomline, *Introd.* part i. c. 1.

² Bentley, *Remarks on Freethinking*, p. 97.

the strongest assurance that we possess the text of this portion of God's word substantially as Moses left it.

Of versions properly so called, the earliest and most important is the Greek one of the Old Testament, commonly called the Septuagint, executed, it is supposed, under Ptolemy Philadelphus, at Alexandria, B.C. 270. It contains the whole of the Old Testament, with the Apocrypha. Next in point of time, are the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases, which were composed for the use of the Jews, to whom, after the captivity, Hebrew had become a dead language: the best executed, those of Onkelos and Jonathan, belong, it is supposed, to our Lord's age. These paraphrases, which are sometimes as literal as versions, comprise all the books of the Old Testament, with the exception of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. About the close of the first century the Syriac version called Peschito, or literal, from its close adherence to the original text, was made directly from the Hebrew of the Old, and the Greek of the New Testament; the only books which it omits are those which were controverted in the Primitive Church,—the 2d Epistle of Peter, the 2d and 3d of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation. In the Western Church, before the labours of Jerome, a Latin version was current, called the Old Italic, a few fragments of which yet remain: it is ascribed to the second century. For our present purpose, which is not to give a critical history of versions, but to point out how they bear upon the authenticity of our Scriptures, it is unnecessary to pursue the subject further; and as much of the argumentative value of this species of evidence depends upon the independence of the versions of each other, those only have been specified to which this quality belongs. The three principal versions above mentioned had no manner of connexion with each other. The Chaldee paraphrases, used by the Hebrews, were for a long time

unknown to the Christian Church ; of the Greek version the Syriac Christians were ignorant, and of the Syriac the Western Church ; the versions were not only of independent origin, but preserved by mutual enemies, Jews and Christians, and rival churches ; yet, with a few insignificant variations, they represent the same text, enumerate the same books, and give us the same contents of each book. The evidence thus furnished is direct and conclusive. There must have been, at the time when these versions were executed, some one original, well known, widely diffused, and acknowledged as authentic.

SECT. II.—*Internal Evidence.*

When we open the volume of Scripture itself, do we find anything at variance with the supposition of the several portions of it having been written at the periods to which they are respectively assigned ? Such is the question now before us.

§ 1. *Writers must have been Jews.*—We have to observe, then, in the first place, that the writers of Scripture profess to have been Jews, by birth and by religion ; and that they must have been so is evident. To insist upon this in the case of the Old Testament is needless, on account of the language ; but the New Testament also betrays everywhere its Jewish origin. Separated as the Jews were by their peculiar institutions from the rest of the world, and regarded with contempt by the polished nations of antiquity, who but natives could have evinced such a minute acquaintance with the national religion, customs, and even traditions, as appears in every page of the Christian Scriptures ? It would have been utterly impossible without a miracle, for either a Greek or a Roman of that, or, indeed, of any age, to become so conversant with every phase of Jewish life, so imbued with Jewish modes of

thinking, so skilled in concealing his acquaintance with any literature beyond the confines of Judæa (with the single exception of St. Paul), as not, in some instances at least, to have let fall marks of his foreign extraction. But nothing of the kind (with the exception just mentioned) appears in the New Testament. It is throughout consistent with its reputed authorship.

§ 2. *Language*.—The *language* in which Scripture is written renders the suspicion of forgery untenable. When a language has ceased to be vernacular, it becomes next to impossible to introduce a successful imposture of this kind. Now the Hebrew demonstrably ceased to be the living language of the Jews soon after the Babylonish captivity; any production, therefore, in pure Hebrew cannot be of much later date than that event; the book of Malachi, for example, the last of the prophets, must have been written several centuries before the Christian era. Supposing it to be so, we are compelled to advance a step further, and to conclude that between this latest portion of Scripture and the earlier books a considerable interval must have elapsed. For in the Hebrew, as in other languages, we can trace growth and progress; from simpler to more complicated, from ruder to more refined forms of speech; from the infancy to the prime, and then to the decline, of the language: the style of Moses is not that of David, nor the latter that of Isaiak, still less of Malachi: their works, therefore, must have been composed at different and distant periods, and this places the Pentateuch at a remote antiquity.

These observations apply, but with increased force, to the language of the New Testament. For its structure is such as to fix its date within very narrow limits. It is written in Greek, but Greek tinged with the Chaldee and Syriac idiom to such an extent that none but persons conversant with both languages could have used it. It is not

the language of Athens, nor is it the language of Philo or Josephus, students of Greek literature; but the dialect of unlearned Jews, who, from frequent intercourse with strangers, had acquired some familiarity with Greek, then the universal language, but who could not write it without largely intermingling Oriental phraseology. At what period of time could such an idiom have appeared? Confessedly the offspring of Judæa, could these compositions, or if so, would they, have been fabricated by any *Jew* of that country in the second century, when the separation between Judaism and Christianity had become complete? But at this time the only Christians who remained in Judæa were the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, who admitted but one Gospel, and that in Hebrew; and who were not likely, therefore, to forge Greek gospels or epistles. We can assign them to but one period, that between our Lord's death and the destruction of Jerusalem; during which the Jewish temple and polity were as yet in existence, and the various coincidences of Jewish origin and Christian faith, of Jewish education and acquired knowledge of the Greek tongue, could meet in the same persons, and produce the results which we actually see.

§ 3. *Circumstantiality*.—A third internal mark of genuineness is the great circumstantiality of the Scripture narrative. It abounds with the names of men and places; with allusions to manners and customs, private and public transactions; it contains long pedigrees of the tribes, and of particular families; a large portion of it consists of biographical accounts of distinguished individuals, which enter minutely into particulars. Compositions of this kind, if spurious, expose themselves to the greatest danger of detection; each particular fact or allusion becomes a test of the writer's veracity. In point of fact, forged accounts carefully avoid this minuteness of

detail, and abound in vague generalities. It is not, however, so much the mere amount of detail, as the intricacy of connexion, the undesigned coincidences, by which the history is knit together into an harmonious whole, that stamps the Bible as authentic. Into this interesting field of inquiry our limits will not permit us to enter: we can but refer our readers to works specially devoted to it, such as Blunt's *Coincidences*, and Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*. An instance or two must here suffice. In Luke, iii. 14, we read that among others to whom the Baptist addressed his admonitions were certain "soldiers," or rather, "soldiers on the march" (στρατευόμενοι). Who these were does not from the history appear; the Roman soldiers then in Judæa were engaged in no war. A Jewish historian, Josephus, supplies the link. He tells us that at that very period Herod was about to invade the territories of Aretas, his father-in-law, with whom he had a quarrel; these "soldiers" then formed part of the army, which in its march from Galilee southwards must of necessity pass through the country where John was baptizing. Would it have occurred to a forger to have inserted so minute a circumstance; or if so, would he not have taken pains to direct attention to his knowledge of the history of those times? Would he have so casually, and without explanation, let drop the fact, and never afterwards referred to it? St. Paul is said, in Acts, xvi. 1, to have found in the parts about Derbe and Lystra, "a certain disciple, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess;" to the same Timothy he writes, "from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures," *i.e.*, the Old Testament (2 Tim. iii. 15), which implies that one at least of his parents must have been of Jewish race. If either the book of Acts or the Epistle had been a fabrication, and the passage relating to Timothy inserted to give colour to

the forgery by conformity to the other writing, would the forger have satisfied himself with so oblique and undesignated a coincidence?

§ 4. *Style*.—In the style of the New Testament there are no traces of imposture. It ministers no nutriment to the imagination; nor is it distinguished by any literary excellence save that of unadorned simplicity. It is the mode of writing which we should expect plain men, intent upon describing what they had seen, to adopt; careless of embellishment, because they were narrating the truth. St. Paul's style, indeed, is different; but it is also what we should expect from his recorded education and natural temperament. Yet, amidst this unpretending simplicity there is a feature which, were it the result of art, would have required the exercise of the highest genius to produce,—the identity of character both of the chief persons who figure in the history, and of the writings ascribed to them. We have four distinct memoirs of Christ; let us conceive, if we can, the difficulty of so fabricating these biographies as that they should be marked each by its own peculiarities, and yet convey substantially the same impression of Him whose history they relate. What we read of St. Peter in the Gospel and in the book of Acts is all in keeping; throughout St. Paul's Epistles, various as are the topics, the same vigorous, discursive mind appears; none could ever confound them with the writings of his brother apostle, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It is rarely that in a single work of fiction individuality of character is thus sustained from beginning to end; for such writers as those of the New Testament manifestly were to do this in a series of works, and through an extended range of personages, unless they were simply describing what they were eye and ear witnesses of, must be pronounced impossible.

Conclusion.—The result of the foregoing remarks may be briefly summed up. St. John, the last survivor of the Apostles, lived to the close of the first century; during his life no spurious gospels could have gained any general footing in the churches of Christendom. About the middle of the second century the series of testimony to the universal reception and authority of our four Gospels commences; it must have been in the brief interval then, if at all,—an interval of about fifty years—that they were forged. But is it credible that every Christian church should have, without question, admitted the imposture; that no suspicion should ever have been expressed as to the genuineness of the works in question? And this at a time, when the means of communication, and therefore collusion, were comparatively difficult, and when we know that so far were the early Christians from at once acquiescing in the claims of books professing to come from Apostles, that, on the contrary, they were slow to accept those the evidence for which, however trustworthy, seemed less clear and full, as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the second Epistle of St. Peter. The same remarks apply, but still more strongly, to St. Paul's epistles. If they are forgeries, the fraud must have been executed between his death (A.D. 66) and the middle of the second century, where, as before, the chain of testimony becomes distinct; during this interval then the various churches to which these epistles are addressed were, on this hypothesis, induced to endorse compositions which they were well aware did not proceed from St. Paul, abounding with circumstantial allusions to his visits to them and to their internal state, all of which they must have known to be false! Scepticism here, as frequently, passes into the weakest credulity. Both orthodox Christians and heretics, Jews and apostates, had the

strongest interest in detecting and exposing this literary fraud, could it have been, with any chance of success, shown to be such; the attempt was never made, because it was felt to be hopeless.

The authenticity of the Christian Scriptures being assumed, that of the Old Testament follows directly. By our Lord and the Apostles our present books are quoted and classified, and no others. Amidst the censures which Christ directed against the Jews of that age, he never charged them with adding to, or corrupting, their scriptures; by their traditions they frequently "made the Word of God of none effect," but the Word itself they left intact. Ancient catalogues, ancient versions, the testimony of Philo and Josephus, the Septuagint translation, prove the existence, in their respective ages, of the very writings which we now read. The Jews, the appointed keepers of their own sacred books, have always held them, and none but them, to be genuine. Internal testimony confirms the external, and points to persons of the age, and in the circumstances in which the reputed authors of Holy Scripture were placed, as the only persons who could have been the authors thereof.

We have reason to believe that the text has come down to us substantially uncorrupted. It is, antecedently, extremely unlikely that any material alteration could have taken place. No proof, or vestige, of such exists. The law was the charter by which the Jews held Canaan; it was to be publicly read at stated times;¹ it was to be kept in the ark;² parents were to teach it to their children;³ nothing, under severe penalties, was to be added to, or taken from, it.⁴ After the separation of the kingdoms, the Jews and the Samaritans acted as mutual checks upon each other, as far as the text of the Pentateuch

¹ Deut. xxxi. 9-13. ² Ibid. 26. ³ Deut. vi. 7. ⁴ Deut. iv. 2.

is concerned. The prophets are unsparing censors of the national sins, but they never accuse the people of tampering with their sacred books. Had any attempt of this kind been made, the mutilators would surely not have spared those passages in which the Jewish people is represented in the most unfavourable light. After the captivity the superstitious reverence of the Jews for the letter of the Scripture is well known, and the rival sects into which they were broken up must have operated as an additional security. Since the establishment of Christianity the mutual jealousy of Jews and Christians has rendered any material alteration impracticable; nor would the former, had they been disposed to omit or to interpolate, have left the prophecies which relate to Christ in undiminished cogency of proof.

Equally improbable is it that the writings of the New Testament should have been corrupted. During the lifetime of their authors this would not be attempted; and before their death copies were dispersed throughout the principal communities of Christians in the Roman empire. If one church, or any section of a church, were to form such a design, would the fraud have been connived at and accepted by all these communities? These writings were publicly read; they were appealed to by all parties as conclusive in matters of controversy; no omission, therefore, or insertion could take place without instant detection on the part of opponents. It must be remembered, too, that the New Testament books have been transcribed far more frequently than those of any other Greek author; how incredible, then, the supposition that *all* these MSS. scattered in various countries, should, by a general combination, have undergone the same corruption, and how incredible, if such a combination ever existed, that the fact should have been passed over in silence by ecclesiastical historians. It is to be observed, too, that

at no time did such a union of sentiment exist amongst Christians as to render such a general attempt feasible.

When to these considerations we add the agreement of MSS., versions, paraphrases, and quotations, which, independently of each other, give, with insignificant variations, the same text—an agreement which belongs equally to the Old and the New Testaments—we have abundant reason to conclude that not only do we possess in our sacred volume the very productions of the first preachers of the Gospel, but that they have been transmitted to us unadulterated; and that when we read, we read, for all essential purposes of doctrine or practice, the very word of God.

We proceed now to consider more in detail, the various topics which in the argumentative sketch above given, it was sufficient to touch upon, but upon which it is desirable that the biblical student should possess fuller information.

CHAPTER II.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.

SECTION 1.—*Old Testament.*

AMONG the nations of the East literature and religion were intimately connected; priests were the earliest historians, and the temples the usual depositories of the national annals. From the East this custom passed to the West, and both Greeks and Romans had their sacred books; which were committed to the custody of a priestly caste, and carefully deposited in buildings set apart to sacred purposes. That the Hebrews, whose literature was

exclusively sacred, and with whose temple all that was peculiar to the national worship was inseparably connected, should form no exception to the general practice of antiquity, is to be expected; and we find, in fact, that of the book of the Law the priests were to be the guardians and interpreters (Deut. xvii. 9-18), and that the volume itself was to be deposited at the side of the Ark in the most holy place (Deut. xxxi. 26). This is the first mention we have of the collection and custody of the sacred books. The same rule seems to have been followed with the additions which from time to time were made: thus Joshua attached the record of the covenant which the people renewed with Jehovah to "the book of the law of God" (Josh. xxiv. 26); and Samuel "wrote the manner of the kingdom in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. x. 25). It was "in the house of the Lord," that in the days of Josiah, the book of the Law was found by Hilkiab (2 Kings, xxii. 8).

That a collection of sacred books, well known and acknowledged, was thus gradually formed, may be inferred from a passage in Isa. xxxiv. 16, in which he refers his readers to the "book of the Lord," including therein his own prophecies; and from the general facts that the later prophets exhibit an intimate acquaintance with the writings of their predecessors, and that in the Old Testament a knowledge of the law, on the part of the people, is everywhere presupposed. We are not, indeed, to suppose that in these early times any formal steps were taken to ascertain the canonical books: as long as a visible manifestation of Jehovah's sovereignty in the most holy place guarded the inspired records from profanation, and especially as long as prophecy continued to authenticate those compositions which had been penned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this task was the less necessary. But when, after the

return of the people from Babylon, the second temple was deprived of the especial symbol of God's presence, the ark of the covenant; when the gift of prophecy was withdrawn; when the inspired writings, of every class, were probably scattered in all parts of the holy land, and in the hands of private persons incurred the danger of falsification; and, lastly, when the Hebrew ceased to be a living language, at least among the people in general;—the importance, and indeed necessity, of an authoritative settlement of the canon became evident. Accordingly it is to this period that we must refer the first attempt to collect the sacred books into a class distinct from all others. In point of fact, we find in the Jewish writers who lived after the time of Ezra, distinct references to such a collection, and, what is of equal importance, intimations that it was then closed. The most ancient book which time has spared us from the interval between Malachi and Christ, the book of the son of Sirach, mentions, as we have seen, three classes of writings, the productions of famous men of old, the law, the prophecies, and moral and lyric compositions; and the prologue of his descendant, the translator of the book into Greek, likewise speaks of three, and three only, divisions, "the law, the prophets, and the rest of the books;" under which last expression is to be understood the class known afterwards by the name of "Hagiographa." If with this we couple the fact that, notwithstanding the high estimation in which the book of the son of Sirach was held among the Jews, it was never placed among the canonical writings, we gain the clearest evidence that the case admits of that some time before this book was written, *i.e.* several centuries before Christ, the Jews regarded the canon as finally closed. The testimony of Josephus is express to the same point. After specifying the books of Scripture which, from the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet,

he divides into twenty-two,—five of the law, thirteen of the prophets, and four of the Hagiographa,—he adds, “from the time of Artaxerxes” (the date of the book of Esther), “to the present day, books of various kinds have appeared; but they are not esteemed of equal authority with the more ancient, because since that time the legitimate succession of prophets has failed.”¹ It seems, then, that in the opinion of Josephus, a *succession* of prophets, the latter attesting the works of the former, was necessary to fix the canon authoritatively; and since the cessation of prophecy no book could claim this inspired testimony.

According to a tradition of the Jews, the substantial truth of which there is no reason to doubt, soon after the return from the captivity, a body of learned men, called the Great Synagogue, undertook the task of restoring the public worship of the temple, and collecting the books of Scripture, which, through the destruction of the first temple, had been scattered abroad. The same tradition makes Nehemiah and Ezra members of this body; and points to the latter as especially intrusted with the settlement of the Canon. From his priestly descent, and intimate acquaintance with the annals and literature of his native land, he was well fitted for this task; and it is probable that he accomplished it in the interval between his first arrival at Jerusalem (Ezra, vii. 6) and the solemn assembly at which he officiated as interpreter of the law (Neh. viii. 10); for, during this period of nearly thirteen years, he disappears entirely from the history. To this authorised collection, Ezra's own writings, together with those of Nehemiah and Malachi, which were written after Ezra's death, were added, and the Canon thus completed. These additions are said to have been made by Simon the Just, the last of the Great Synagogue.

¹ Cent. Apion. i. s. 8.

The threefold division of the Scriptures of the Old Testament seems as ancient as the collection itself. It is alluded to in the book of the son of Sirach, and still more explicitly by Josephus; the latter of whom, however, disposes the books differently from the present arrangement of the Jews; comprehending under the Chetubim, or Hagiographa, only the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. The present, and doubtless the most ancient, arrangement is as follows:—1. The Pentateuch, which always formed a volume by itself, since to its author, Moses, was assigned the first rank amongst the inspired men of Israel; 2. The prophets, comprising the former prophets, viz. the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, the two latter forming, respectively, one book, and the latter prophets, the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and of the twelve minor prophets, which last were regarded as one book; 3. The Chetubim, or Hagiographa, under which head all the remaining books were classed. The distinction between the prophets and the Hagiographa seems to have arisen from that between the prophets, properly so called, who had a public mission to a permanent office, and those inspired persons, who, like David or Solomon, were occasionally moved by the Spirit of God to write, without being officially of the prophetic college.¹ On this ground the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, the authorship of which tradition assigned to prophets by office, were placed in the second class, while the book of Daniel, though prophetic in character, was referred to the Chetubim, because the author had no public prophetic mission. This threefold division is, as we know, referred to by our Lord, under the

¹ The distinction is expressed in Scripture by the two words, prophet and seer; the former denoting the office, the latter a gift.

titles of the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. (Luke, xxiv. 44.)

The Canon thus closed was, with the exception of a few insignificant sects, acknowledged by the Jews throughout the world. Though a number of apocryphal writings, most of them of Alexandrine origin, appeared subsequently to the last of the prophets, and some became incorporated with the Septuagint translation of the Scriptures, it does not appear that even in Egypt they ever obtained canonical authority, and certainly not among the Jews of Palestine. The Samaritans, we know, rejected all but the Pentateuch, but they were a separate people. That the Sadducees questioned the authority of any part of the Canon, has never been satisfactorily proved; the Essenes alone, a semi-heathenish sect, appear to have added certain mystical books of their own to those received by the rest of the nation. It was, therefore, in disregard of the unanimous tradition of the appointed guardians of the Old Testament, as well as of the facts of history, that the Church of Rome, with the view of establishing her dogma of Church authority, pronounced, at the Council of Trent, that all the books contained in the Vulgate, apocryphal and otherwise, should, under pain of an anathema, be counted as sacred and canonical. (Sess. iv. c. 1.)

SECT. 2.—*The New Testament.*

The Greek word *κανών* occurs several times in St. Paul's epistles, but only in the sense, either of the prescribed limits within which his mission was confined (2 Cor. x. 13, 15, 16), or of the doctrine and practice which he preached (Gal. vi. 16; Philip. iii. 16). At a very early period, however, it was used to signify the collection of sacred books generally received by the Church, these books being

the rule or standard by which alleged apostolic teaching was to be examined, and either received or rejected.

It is unnecessary to repeat here what has been already observed¹ respecting the testimony of the early Church to our present books of the New Testament, and to them alone, as being canonical. From the first they are cited as *Scripture*, that is, as books of a peculiar character, possessing an authority which belonged to no others; they were publicly read in Christian assemblies as the Word of God; catalogues were formed of them, of which thirteen before the fifth century are extant, and which, though in some of them certain books are omitted, all agree in containing no other books; the oldest version, the Peschito, contains no other books. Commentaries were written upon them, and they were appealed to by heretics and unbelievers, as well as by Christians, as the authentic records of the Christian religion.

Notwithstanding that the fact is indisputable, that from the first a general agreement existed as to what books were to be accounted canonical, it is impossible to assign the particular time when the present collection was made, or the persons who were engaged in it. There are no traces of this question having been formally discussed and decided in any council; that of Laodicea, A.D. 364, which has been improperly supposed to have first settled the canon, merely giving a catalogue of the books already well known and accepted.² Unlike the books of the Old Testament, which were written for one nation, circumscribed within narrow bounds of territory, those of the New were addressed to churches scattered over the known world: time, therefore, was requisite, both for the dis-

¹ Pp. 9-14.

² The authenticity of this catalogue has been questioned See Westcott, i. p. 500.

semination of the books and for a general recognition of their authority. When to this we add the comparative difficulties of transcription and of communication, and the political disadvantages under which, for several centuries Christianity laboured, preventing the assembling of any general council to determine this and similar questions, we cannot feel surprised that the canon should have only gradually become established. Each church probably enlarged its collection according as the evidence in favour of particular books became satisfactory; and, under the circumstances, it is rather matter of wonder that Christians should so soon have come to a general agreement upon the subject, than that a formal decision should not have been promulgated earlier.

One circumstance that must have retarded the fixing of the canon was the swarm of apocryphal writings which appeared in the ages following the Apostles, and which commonly laid claim to apostolic origin. Some of these will be mentioned in another place. To sift the evidence for these spurious compositions must have been a work of no small difficulty and labour; and it must add to our respect for the diligence and judgment of the ancient Church, that none of them appear in the early catalogues or versions, are quoted as Scripture, were read as such in the public assemblies, or were adduced by different parties as of authority.

The books which Eusebius calls *ὁμολογουμένοι*, that is, universally and without controversy admitted, are the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul, the first Epistle of St. John, and the first of St. Peter. Of the remaining books, the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Revelation, were questioned, he says, by some, though received by the

majority;¹ his own opinion being that the Revelation is the work of St. John. "The fourteen epistles of Paul are clear and publicly known; it need not, however, be concealed that, on account of the doubts of the Roman Church respecting its authenticity, the Epistle to the Hebrews has by some been rejected."² Such, at the commencement of the fourth century, was the state of the canon as attested by one of the most diligent and impartial writers of antiquity. Some books had not as yet succeeded in obtaining an undisputed place therein; they being precisely such as from their nature or contents we might expect to be of tardier admission. For either, like the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, and the Apocalypse, they do not expressly assert their apostolic origin; or, like the second and third of St. John, they were addressed to private persons not to churches, and therefore both their circulation and the proofs of their authenticity laboured under peculiar difficulties. As regards the Apocalypse, we may add that for the same reason that it is omitted in our Calendar of lessons, it was not commonly read in the public assemblies of the early Church; hence, doubtless, its omission in the Peschito and some of the early catalogues.

A fuller account of the disputed books of the New Testament will be given when we come to examine each book particularly; the following general remarks must, for the present, suffice. The Epistle to the Hebrews was known from the earliest times; but while by the Eastern and Syrian Churches both its Pauline origin and its canonicity were admitted, the Western Church entertained doubts upon these points, which do not disappear till after the time of Jerome. The Epistle of St. James stands much in the same position; it is referred to by the earliest fathers, and was received into the canon of the Eastern

¹ Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. c. 25.

² Ibid. c. 3.

and Syrian Churches, but in other places hesitation was expressed respecting its claims. The second Epistle of St. Peter seems to have been very little known in the ancient Church; of all the disputed books its history is the most obscure. Origen first mentions it as disputed, and it does not appear in the Peschito, or Syrian canon. From the time of Jerome, who considered it genuine, it gradually won its way into the canon. The genuineness of the second and third Epistles of St. John rests upon satisfactory testimony; the Syrian Church alone did not receive them. The Epistle of St. Jude is not found in the Peschito, nor is it alluded to by the apostolic Fathers; it forms part, however, of the Muratori Canon, which is supposed to belong to the second century, and is quoted as genuine by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and Jerome. With the exception of the Syrian Peschito, which does not contain it, the Apocalypse can claim the unanimous testimony of the two first centuries in its favour; for the first time in the third century it began, in certain Churches, to be questioned. Such is a simple statement of the facts as they exist. From the time of Jerome, whose critical abilities were especially employed on these subjects, the suspicion which, here and there, attached to the books in question, seems gradually to have disappeared, and in the fourth century our present canon may be said to have been universally acknowledged. It must never be forgotten that this question of evidence is comparative, and that those writings of the New Testament which are the least strongly attested, as, for example, the second Epistle of Peter, rest upon testimony incomparably stronger than can be adduced for any apocryphal writing. Nor must it be forgotten that the very hesitation and reserve with which the disputed books were received add vast weight to the judgment of the early Church where it was unanimous, and convey the

assurance that, if doubts were abandoned, it was because the evidence was found at last to be irresistible; the circumstance proves the care and jealousy with which the canon was watched over, and the freedom too which was claimed and exercised in these discussions. The candidly expressed doubts of the first three centuries respecting portions of our present canon, are of the same assistance to our faith on this point as the incredulity of Thomas is to our conviction of the truth of our Lord's resurrection.

SECT. 3.—*Other Jewish and Christian writings,
Apocrypha, Talmud.*

Some other Jewish and Christian writings remain to be noticed, which, although not inspired, form an interesting portion of ecclesiastical literature, and are, a portion of them at least, of considerable use in the interpretation of Holy Scripture. Among these the first place, both as regards antiquity and importance, is due to the apocryphal books of the Old Testament.

Apocryphal additions to the Old Testament.—The word *apocrypha* is derived either from the words ἀπὸ τῆς κρύπτῃς, because the books designated by it were removed from the crypt, or chest, in which the Canonical Scriptures were preserved; or from the verb ἀποκρύπτω, to hide, because these books were concealed by the Church from the mass of readers. Under the term “apocryphal books,” the Reformed Churches comprise, not merely those which the Church of Rome acknowledges to be such; as the Prayer of Manasseh, the third and fourth books of Esdras, the supplement to Job, and the 151st Psalm; but those also which the Council of Trent pronounces to be part of Canonical Scripture; viz. the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus; the additions to the book of Esther; Baruch the Prophet, with the Epistle of Jeremiah; the Song of the

Three Children; the story of Susanna; that of Bel and the Dragon; and the first and second books of Maccabees. They may be read for "instruction of manners,"¹ but cannot be applied to establish any article of faith. The reasons for their rejection from the canon are briefly as follows:—The internal evidence is against them. None of them is extant in biblical Hebrew, though some of them, as the book of Ecclesiasticus, are said to have been originally written in that language. It can be proved that they appeared subsequently to the cessation of prophecy; nor do the writers profess to be inspired. They contain statements fabulous, or self-contradictory, or inconsistent with the history or the doctrines of Scripture. Of the first description are the story of Bel and the Dragon, and that of Judith; of the second, the statements that Baruch was carried to Babylon (Bar. i. 2), at the time when Jeremiah informs us that he was carried to Egypt (Jer. xliii. 6, 7); that Haman was a Macedonian (Esth. xvi. 10); and that, according to 1 Macc. vi. 4–16, Antiochus Epiphanes died in Babylon, while, according to 2 Macc. ix. 28, he died a strange death among the mountains: of the third, are the sanctioning of prayers *for* the dead (2 Macc. xii. 44); prayers *of* the dead (Bar. iii. 4); justification by works, especially by alms-giving (2 Esd. viii. 33; Tob. xii. 8, 9); suicide excused (2 Macc. xiv. 42); magical incantations sanctioned (Tob. vi. 16, 17).

Still more conclusive is the *external* evidence. They were never received into the canon by the Jews; nor have they the sanction of Christ or His Apostles, who never quote from them. Philo is silent upon their claims, and Josephus expressly excludes them from the canon. The later Jewish writers speak of them disparagingly. They are absent from the catalogues of the sacred books, pub-

¹ Art. 6.

lished during the first four centuries after Christ.¹ The Fathers of the Christian Church during the same period, speaking generally, draw a broad line of distinction between them and the acknowledged books of Scripture. Against this mass of testimony the loose expressions of *individual* writers, such as Origen and Augustine, who sometimes quote the Apocrypha, as if it were canonical Scripture, cannot be allowed to weigh. A succession of witnesses down to the sixteenth century can be adduced on the same side. The Greek Church rejects these books. For the first time, in the history of the Church, the Council of Trent (A.D. 1546) pronounced that "all the books" contained in the old Latin Vulgate, and the Apocryphal books by name, should be received with the same "piety and veneration" as were due to the undisputed writings of the Old Testament.—(Sess. 4).

The estimation in which the Apocryphal books came to be held may easily be accounted for. The productions of Alexandrian Jews, from whom the Septuagint also proceeded, and being for the most part written in Greek, or if not, translated into that language, they naturally became incorporated with the Septuagint version, and received, from the connexion, some portion of the reverence which was paid to the writings of the Old Testament. Along with the diffusion and constant use of the Septuagint version among the Jews, the Apocrypha also became known and read; from the Jews the early Christian Fathers received both, and being, with the exception of Origen, ignorant of Hebrew, incorporated both in their Latin

¹ The Catalogue of the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364), the first that professes to be a complete one of the inspired books, makes mention of Baruch and the epistle of Jeremiah. But grave doubts are entertained respecting the authenticity of that part of the decrees of the Council. See Westcott, Canon, p. 496.

translation, which formed the basis of the Vulgate. Until the time of Jerome no translation was made directly from the Hebrew; and, therefore, the whole collection of books in the old Latin version came to be regarded as of one class, and many of the Fathers quote indiscriminately from the Hebrew Canon and from the Apocrypha. The feeling which had thus grown up in the Church was at the Reformation so far indulged as that the Apocrypha was placed between the Old and the New Testaments, and some lessons for public reading selected from it; but the Reformed Churches, and our own in particular, carefully distinguish between it and the canon, and confine its use to that of moral instruction. It may, indeed, be a question whether, when several important parts of Scripture are never heard in public, it would not have been wiser to banish the Apocrypha altogether from the services of the Church, and in them to make use exclusively of lessons taken from the inspired Word.

Apocryphal books of the New Testament.—Besides the books of the Old Testament which come under this description, there are extant several compositions purporting to have proceeded from Christ, or His Apostles, or the companions of the Apostles, which have received the title of the Apocryphal books of the New Testament. Such are the Epistle of Christ to Agbarus; the Constitutions of the Apostles; the Apostles' Creed; the Gospel according to the Hebrews; the Gospel, Preaching, and Apocalypse of St. Peter; the Gospel of the Infancy of Christ; the Gospel of the Birth of Mary; the Prot-Evangelium of St. James; the Gospel of Nicodemus; the Martyrdom of Thecla, or Acts of St. Paul; the Epistle of St. Paul to the Laodiceans, and others. The same remarks which have been made in reference to the Apocrypha of the Old Testament are applicable to these. They were not acknowledged as authentic by the

early Church; nor were they ever quoted by heretics as records of authority. They appear in no catalogues recognised by the universal Church. It may be proved, in fact, that few, or none, of them were composed before the second century, and many so late as in the third. Internally they bear all the marks of spuriousness. They abound in idle and absurd details, and narrate miracles utterly destitute of dignity or purpose. In many cases it is evidently the design of the writer to introduce unscriptural doctrines and practices under the mask of apostolic sanction. Thus, in the first Gospel of the Infancy the sanctity of relics, and in that of the Birth of Mary, Mariolatry, is not indistinctly taught. Finally, these compilations contain contradictions of authentic history, and their style is entirely unlike that of the writers whose names they bear. A multitude of works of their class, which once were in circulation, but whose titles only remain, have perished: it must be regarded as a providential appointment that a specimen should have survived, as nothing more clearly exhibits the immense interval which separates the inspired writings from every attempted imitation of them.

Talmud, &c.—About the second century after Christ, or, as some think, later, the body of floating Jewish tradition, much of which doubtless reaches up to a period prior to the Saviour's advent, was collected by Jewish doctors into a volume called Mishna, or Repetition. To this were subsequently added, under the name of Gemara, various comments; and the Mishna and Gemara together were called the Talmud, from a Hebrew word signifying, to teach. There are two Talmuds extant; that of Babylon, *i.e.* the Mishna with the Gemara of Babylon, which is most esteemed; and that of Jerusalem, consisting of the same text and another commentary, which is in less repute. Amidst a vast mass of useless matter, the con-

tents of the Talmuds sometimes throw light upon the Scriptures: they exhibit the traditionary interpretations of the Old Testament current among the Jews, and illustrate the manners and customs alluded to in the inspired volume.

Other Jewish writings which critics have employed in the elucidation of Scripture are, the Rabboth, or commentaries on the laws of Moses, with the Megilloth subjoined; the Midrashitic writings, which contain allegorical interpretations of several books of the Old Testament; the books called Siphra, Siphri, and Mechilta, a kind of commentary on Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; and the book called Sohar, a cabbalistic commentary on the Pentateuch.

CHAPTER III.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

SECT. I.—*Old Testament.*

§ 1. *Hebrew language.*—The language of the Old Testament belongs to a family of languages to which, from their having been spoken by a large proportion of the descendants of Shem, the epithet Shemitish is applied. Western Asia (with the exception of Asia Minor) is the birthplace of these tongues. They may be divided, according to geographical position, into three principal dialects:—1. The Aramaean, spoken in the countries north-east of Palestine, from the river Tigris to the Taurus chain, of which there were two subdivisions,—the Eastern Aramaean, the tongue of Babylon and Chaldaea, and possibly Assyria; and the Western Aramaean, which was spoken in Mesopo-

tamia and Syria properly so called; 2. The Arabic, spoken in the countries south of Palestine; and 3. The language of Palestine itself. Of the old Aramæan, which in the time of Isaiah was a living language, and not understood by the Jews (Isa. xxxvi. 11), we have no remains; the nearest approach to it exists in a few inscriptions of a date subsequent to the Christian era found at Palmyra (Tadmor). Our knowledge of the Chaldee, or Babylonish, dialect is derived from those portions of the Old Testament which are written in it, viz., some chapters in the books of Ezra and Daniel, and from the Targums, of which that of Onkelos is the only one of even approximate purity. The Western Aramæan, or Syriac, combined with Chaldee, which the Jews acquired during their residence in Babylon, was the common language of Palestine in our Lord's time. Of all the Shemitish tongues the Arabic is the richest both in forms and words, and alone possesses a literature which may vie with that of the West. About the fifth century, the Coreitic, or dialect of Mecca, obtained the ascendancy over the other varieties, which became extinct; this dialect was still further improved by Mahomet, who composed the Koran in it; and it now forms the vernacular language of a large portion of Asia and Africa. Closely connected with Arabic is the ancient Ethiopic, the basis of which was the old Ante-Coreitic Arabian dialect, transplanted to the opposite shore of the Red Sea by Arabian settlers, and spoken in the district which now forms the modern kingdom of Abyssinia. There still remain fragments of it in a version of part of the Bible, and some other ecclesiastical writings. The language of Phœnicia, immediately contiguous to Palestine on the north-west, seems to have been, as might be expected from its geographical position, a mixture of Western Aramæan and Hebrew; indeed the

Phœnicians gave themselves the name of Canaanites. The Samaritans, from their origin, spoke a dialect compounded of the same elements.

Of these languages, that of Palestine, or the Hebrew, bears marks of being one of the most ancient. Indeed it has been, not without semblance of reason, argued that the Hebrew spoken by Abraham, if not the original language of man, must have been of cognate origin.¹ Without pronouncing positively upon this point, which, in the absence of authentic proof, must be considered doubtful, we may observe that this language must have existed long before the name by which it was afterwards called. The appellation "Hebrew" first occurs in Gen. x. 21, where Shem is called "the father of all the children of Eber;" whence it has been inferred that Eber is a patronymic, and that Hebrew means descended from Shem through Eber. But the expression "children of Eber" is probably a geographical rather than a genealogical one; and signifies those who dwelt on this side of the Euphrates, those who had passed the river, from the root עָבַר to pass over. It is thus that in Gen. xiv. 13, Abraham is called "the Hebrew," *i.e.* the fugitive, who had crossed over the Euphrates to Canaan; the appellation, as we may conclude, being given to the new settlers, not by themselves, but by the inhabitants of the land to which they had emigrated. In the Old Testament itself the language is never called Hebrew; this epithet first occurs in the Prologue of the Book of Wisdom, where, however, it signifies not the old Hebrew, but the Syro-Chaldee of later times, as it also does in the New Testament (John, v. 2). In the

¹ This conclusion is founded upon the fact that the proper names which abound in the early chapters of Genesis, and which of all words are least liable to change, are of Hebrew origin, and significant in meaning. See Hævernich's *Introd. to Old Test.* part i. p. 161.

works of Josephus the expression "Hebrew tongue" always means the old Hebrew. Whatever be the origin of the name, the language denoted by it must have existed previously, for we find Abraham and his descendants able to converse freely with the Canaanites, and no difference in the language used by either race is anywhere intimated. Indeed, all the facts are in favour of the substantial identity of the old Hebrew, and the Phœnician or Canaanitish tongues. Besides the circumstance just mentioned, the Canaanitish names of persons and places, such as Abimelech, Melchizedek, Shechem, are of Hebrew etymology. Jerome testifies that the language of Carthage, a colony of Phœnicia, bore a strong resemblance to the Hebrew; and this is confirmed by coins and inscriptions, and the remains of the Phœnician, or Carthaginian, dialect, which are found in the works of the Greek and Latin classics. On the whole, we may conclude that the Shemitish dialect which Abraham brought with him from his native country was not essentially different from that which the Canaanites spoke, and that, in the lapse of time, both combined to form the Hebrew proper, such as we have it in the Pentateuch.

With the Western Aramæan, or Old Syriac, must not be confounded the New Aramæan, or Ecclesiastical Syriac, of which the Syriac version of the Scriptures, executed about the end of the second century, is the oldest existing specimen. In this language, which was cultivated with much success at Edessa in Mesopotamia, an important Christian literature existed: and it is still the ecclesiastical dialect of the greater part of Eastern Christendom.

§ 2. *History of the Hebrew language.*—The history of the Hebrew language commences with the Pentateuch. Whatever earlier written documents Moses may have

used, and that he did so is probable,¹ it was from him that Hebrew received the form and structure which it was ever afterwards to retain. It is to be observed, too, that the Pentateuch contains specimens of the various kinds of composition,—history, poetry, and moral exhortation,—which afterwards were cultivated separately; so that it was fitted to become a model for subsequent writers, to whatever class they belonged. The language of the Pentateuch has peculiarities which denote its antiquity. These consist of grammatical constructions, and certain words not found in later writers; and of peculiar expressions, for which others are substituted; as, for example, “their shade,” *i.e.* their defence, “is departed from them” (Num. xiv. 9), a poetic figure nowhere else occurring; and the phrase “gathered to his fathers,” for which in the other books the ordinary one is “slept with his fathers.”

From Moses to Isaiah may be considered the golden age of the Hebrew tongue. To this period belong the books of Joshua, Job, Judges, Samuel, and Ruth; the writings of Solomon, the Psalms of David, and the older prophets, Hosea, Jonah, Amos, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Isaiah. Each of these writers is distinguished by peculiarities of style, and some of them by Aramæan forms of speech; but the language of all represents Hebrew in the age of its classical purity.

As we approach the period of the exile, a sensible deterioration of the language becomes evident. This was due to various causes. A whole nation of Aramæan origin was transplanted to the districts formerly occupied by the ten tribes; and by the successive Babylonish invasions, terminating in the seventy years' captivity, the mother

¹ From expressions in the Pentateuch, apparently in the time of Moses obsolete, and to which therefore he appends an explanation. See Gen. xv. 2, 3; xxxix. 29. See Hævernicks, p. 189.

tongue of the remaining part of the nation became corrupted with an admixture of foreign words and idioms. By the extent of the change the age of the books of Scripture written during this period may be ascertained with tolerable accuracy. The prophecy of Zephaniah, the contemporary of Josiah, is the least affected; then come the books of Kings and Jeremiah; Ezekiel and Daniel, who lived during the captivity, and the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, which were composed soon after it, betray still more distinct traces of foreign influence; and at length, by the gradual prevalence of the mixed dialect acquired by the Jews during their residence in Babylon, the Hebrew as a living language expired, and became the study of learned men. To this circumstance it may be owing that the prophets who flourished after the captivity, Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi, exhibit a comparative purity of diction; they wrote, not the language which was spoken around them, but that which they derived from the perusal of the canonical books, as far as the canon had been completed in their time. How long Hebrew continued to be generally understood cannot be accurately determined; but it seems most probable that with the Babylonish captivity it entirely ceased to be vernacular. At the meeting convened by Nehemiah (c. viii.), it was necessary, after the reading of the law by Ezra, to give the interpretation in Chaldee (v. 8). That the latest of the prophets continued to write in the old Hebrew is no proof that it was then spoken; for their writings could be, and doubtless were, like those of their predecessors, interpreted to the people. As the sacred language of the Jews, it was naturally employed in sacred compositions; and for the same reason, it continued to be used for inscriptions on coins, such as those still extant of the time of the Maccabees, and for public forms of prayer.

§ 3. *Characteristics of the Hebrew.*—As a language, the Hebrew is distinguished by a lofty simplicity and strength of expression, which has impressed itself, more or less, on all the translations from the original. As compared with the Arabic, it is less copious in its vocabulary, and possesses less variety of grammatical construction; but it exhibits greater purity of idiom. The tri-literal verbal roots, of which the language chiefly consists, are derived from the more ancient bi-literal, according to rules seldom violated; and instead of the multiplying of words to express different ideas, the same root, in its derivatives, is made to yield a variety of meanings. In synonymes no language is more abundant. Thus it has been observed that it possesses eighteen words for the notion of “breaking in pieces;” eight for that of “darkness;” ten for the act of “seeking;” fourteen for “trust in God;” nine for the “remission of sin;” and twenty-five for “keeping the law.”¹ Another peculiar feature, as might be expected, consists in a number of Theocratical words, which express the nature and attributes of the Deity, and His relations towards man. Such are the various names of God (Jehovah, &c.); the expressions for sin and prayer; and the psychological divisions of man’s nature: forms of speech which, transferred to the New Testament, impart to the latter its peculiar colouring. If in comparison with modern languages, or those of ancient Greece and Rome, the Hebrew should seem liable to the charge of poverty, we must remember, first, that the Old Testament is the only source of our knowledge of it; and, secondly, that from its literature being exclusively of a religious character, it is necessarily confined to a limited circle of thought and expression.

The Hebrew, as long as it existed, suffered but little from foreign admixture. Some Egyptian words occur in

¹ Hævernick, Einleit. part i. p. 173.

the Pentateuch, and some Persian in the later books; but until it was superseded by the Chaldee, it repelled additions from other sources. It is a question whether dialects prevailed in the Holy Land; from the vicinity of the Phœnicians to the northern part of Palestine, and from the recorded circumstance that the Ephraimites pronounced certain letters in a peculiar manner,¹ it is not unlikely that the north was distinguished from the south by certain differences of idiom and pronunciation.

Hebrew poetry differs from prose chiefly in the diction, which in the former is more removed from that of common life, both in particular words and in grammatical construction. The metrical form is extremely simple. It consists merely in a kind of rhythmical prose; the principle of parallelism, one clause of a verse answering to another, and strophe to antistrophe, prevailing throughout, and constituting its chief characteristic.

SECT. II.—*New Testament.*

§ 1. *Reasons of the New Testament being written in Greek.*

—There are obvious reasons why the New Testament should not have been composed in Hebrew. Even when it was a living language the latter was confined to one small country, and at the time of Christ it existed only in the Jewish Scriptures; for the records, therefore, of a religion intended to embrace all men within its pale, it was manifestly unfitted. At the period in question one language, and only one, possessed the necessary cosmopolitan character,—the Greek; which by a combination of natural causes, but under the conduct of Divine Providence, had become of all the most universally known and spoken throughout the Roman empire, and particularly in the Eastern provinces.

¹ Judges, xii. 6.

That the Jews in particular, to whom the Gospel was first to be preached, were well acquainted with Greek, rests on ample historical testimony. For upwards of two centuries before the Christian era the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament had been, wherever Jews resided, in familiar use amongst them; it is from this version that our Lord and the Apostles most frequently quote, as being more familiar to their hearers than even the Hebrew itself. Political circumstances tended to the same result. The Macedonian conquests under Antiochus filled Palestine with Greek cities,¹ which were protected and favoured by Herod the Great; a policy sanctioned by the Romans, with whom, in the administration of Judæa, Greek was the official language: this led to a general diffusion of the knowledge of that tongue. In most of the principal cities of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece Proper, the scenes of St. Paul's travels, Jews of the dispersion, as they were called, had taken up their abode, chiefly for the purposes of commerce; and from their continual intercourse with the natives these settlers must have become familiar with the language, and to some extent the literature, of Greece. All circumstances, in short, combined to render this language, and not Hebrew or even Latin, the most proper vehicle for the latest communication of Divine truth to mankind.

§ 2. *Dialect of the New Testament.*—The character of the New Testament Greek was in former times a subject of debate amongst the learned; some advancing in its behalf extravagant pretensions to purity, while others contended that it is a compound of the idiom and phraseology of several languages. In the present day the question may be considered as settled in favour of the latter opinion.

¹ Such as Scythopolis, Gaza, and, to a great extent, Cæsarea.

The language of the New Testament bears a considerable affinity to that of the Septuagint version: both alike, being the productions of Jews writing Greek, are marked by a strong admixture of the Hebrew idiom. It would be erroneous, however, to call its dialect Alexandrine, which was only one, and a very corrupt form of the Greek prevalent in that age. The true account of the matter is as follows:—The Macedonian conquests were followed by a general breaking up of the Greek system of states, and a consequent fusion of the principal dialects into a degenerate, but widely extended language, called Common, or Hellenistic Greek, which was especially spoken throughout Western Asia and Macedonia. This language was not only a mixture of the several dialects, but contained foreign words from a variety of sources, according as, after the age of Alexander, different nations came in contact with the Macedonians. It is in Hellenistic Greek that the New Testament is written, with the additional tincture of Hebraism which might be expected from the Jewish origin of its authors, and of what may be called the technical phraseology of Christian ideas. This Hebraistic colouring is perceptible rather in phrases and idioms than in particular words. The following are a few examples: “to be called,” and “to be found,” instead of the verb substantive, “to be,” (Matt. v. 9. 1 John, iii. 1. Acts, v. 39. Phil. ii. 8); the use of the word “son,” to signify relation in general, whether of cause and effect, or dependence of one thing upon another, or likeness (Luke, xvi. 8. Eph. v. 8. Eph. ii. 2. John, xvii. 12); the term “name,” to express substance or personality (John, i. 12. Matt. xxviii. 19); “exceeding fair” (Acts, vii. 20) literally “fair to God,” imitated from the Hebrew, which instead of superlatives employs the addition “of God,” or “of the Lord,” *e. g.* the “cedars of God,” for the tallest

cedars (Ps. lxxx. 10); the verb "to know," for "to approve" (Matt. vii. 23); the verb "hear," for "pay attention to" (Acts, iii. 23). Words, however, entirely foreign are found in the New Testament,—Aramæan, Rabbinical, Persian, and Latin. Of Aramæan, or Chaldee, the vernacular tongue of Judæa at the Christian era, the following may be noticed:—"Abba," father (Rom. viii. 15); "Aceldama," the field of blood (Acts, i. 19); "Cephas" a rock (John, i. 43); "Corban," a gift (Mark, vii. 11); "Ephphatha," be opened (Mark, vii. 34); "Raca," fool (Matt. v. 22); "Talitha cumi," Maid, arise (Mark, v. 41); "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani," My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matt. xxvii. 46): and of Latin the following:—*κῆνσος*, *census*, a rate (Matt. xvii. 25); *κολωνία*, *colonia*, a colony (Acts, xvi. 12); *δηνάριος*, *denarius*, the Roman penny (Luke, vii. 41); *φραγέλλιον*, *flagellum*, a scourge (John, ii. 15); *κουστωδία*, *custodia*, a guard of soldiers (Matt. xxvii. 65, 66); *σουδάριον*, *sudarium*, a napkin (Luke, xix. 20); *σπεκουλάτωρ*, *speculator*, one of the body-guard of a general (Mark, vi. 27). The Persian words are comparatively few; such are *ἀγγαρεύσει*, compel to go (Matt. v. 41); *μάγοι*, Magi (Matt. ii. 1.); *γάζης*, treasure (Acts, viii. 27); *μαργαρίτας*, pearls (Matt. vii. 6).

It must not be supposed that the inspired writers, while agreeing in the general cast of their language, exhibit no variety of style. All write in Hebraic-Greek, but each is marked by his own peculiarities. The Hebrew element is more prominent in St. Matthew and St. Mark than in St. Luke and St. John, the former of whom occasionally has passages of classic purity. St. Paul's style, again, is entirely his own; full of Hebraisms, but various and rapid; evolving thought from thought, and quite unlike the sententious parallelism of St. James and St. Jude. It has already been remarked, that both the dialect in

which our Scriptures are composed, and the diversity of style which they exhibit, are among the strongest proofs of the authenticity and genuineness of the several books.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY OF THE SACRED TEXT.

SECT. I.—*Old Testament.*

§ 1. *Writing and writing materials.*—The first discovery of arbitrary written signs for the expression of thought has been claimed for the Egyptians, but, as it should seem, on insufficient grounds. On the contrary, we have every reason to assign this honour to the Phœnicians, from whom the Greeks, as we learn from Herodotus (v. 58), received the alphabet and the art of writing. From the same people this art probably came to the Hebrews, among whom, long before the time of Moses, it seems to have been practised. We infer this from the commercial intercourse which, in the patriarchal times, evidently existed between the Hebrews, Phœnicians, and Canaanites,¹ and which must have speedily led to the adoption, on the part of the former, of so important a discovery; from the fact that Judah, in the history of Tamar (Gen. xviii.), is said, among other things, to have possessed a “signet-ring,” but where the art of graving was known, there could hardly have been ignorance of that of writing; and from the expression translated “taskmasters,” and “officers,” of the Israelites (Exod. v.

¹ See Gen. xxxvii. 28; xliii. 11; xxiv. 22.

6, 15), which properly signifies "writers." In the Mosaic age writing was in common use. The functions of the priests, as defined by Moses, viz. to act as interpreters of the law, and to read it every seven years in the hearing of the people (Deut. xvii. 9 ; xxxi. 10, 11), presuppose the means of multiplying copies from the original autograph. By writing Moses summoned the seventy elders (Num. xi. 26). The curse of the adulteress was to be written in a book (Num. v. 23). By a written bill of divorcement man and wife were to be separated. In the book of Joshua frequent mention occurs of writing ;¹ and in that of Judges it appears, not merely as an art confined to the learned, but as practised by private persons.²

The materials for writing were, in the earliest times, stone (Exod. xxiv. 12) and metal (Ibid. xxviii. 36). These were used chiefly for public monuments. The graving was performed with an iron chisel (Job, xix. 24). But, for ordinary use, other lighter, and more easily managed substances were necessary, such as the skins of animals, which were prepared for the purpose by a peculiar process. In Numbers, v. 23, the priest is commanded to plunge his "book" into the bitter water, in order to blot out the writing ; the ink used, therefore, must have been a mere dye, and the material such as would not be injured by water ; circumstances which belong only to skin-writing. In David's time we find mention of rolls, doubtless of such skins (Ps. xl. 7) ; and, much later, Jeremiah is described as inscribing his prophecy on a similar roll (xxxvi. 23). The stationary character of Eastern customs renders it probable that the lapse of time had brought with it no great changes in the mode of writing ; and that the instruments used by Jeremiah and Ezekiel were those of the earliest ages. They consisted of ink

¹ Josh. viii. 32 ; xv. 15 ; xviii. 4.

² Judges, viii. 14.

(Jer. xxxvi. 18), the "penknife" (v. 23), and the inkhorn (Ezek. ix. 2), carried at the writer's side.

§ 2. *Hebrew letters.*—The present Hebrew letters, twenty-two in number, are of what grammarians call the "square form," to distinguish them from the older, or the Samaritan alphabet, such as it is found on the coins struck under the Asmonæan princes. At what period these square letters superseded the others is matter of doubt; all we can with certainty affirm is, that the change must have taken place before the birth of Christ. The most probable opinion is that of Gesenius, that after the captivity, and from Babylon, the new letters were introduced, and that they were appropriated to sacred use, *i.e.* the transcription of the Scriptures, while the common alphabet was employed for secular purposes. The Talmudists make a distinction between the old and the new mode of writing, and deem the former profane; it was also a rule with them that the canonical books should always be transcribed in the square letter. That the Scriptures, in our Lord's time, were in this character, we know from His allusion to the "one jot" (the letter *yod*, the smallest of the present Hebrew alphabet), and "one tittle" (the angular points of the present letters) "of the law" (Matt. v. 18); and from the description given by Jerome of the Hebrew characters of his day, no doubt can remain of their identity with those of our Bibles.

The antiquity of the present Hebrew vowels and accents was a matter of debate in the seventeenth century; some assigning them a date coeval with Moses, or at least with Ezra, while others held them to be of comparatively modern origin, and to have been introduced first by the school of Tiberias, about the sixth century after Christ. That this latter opinion is the correct one is now generally admitted. It is grounded upon the facts, that the ancient

Shemitish languages, in general, were written without vowels; that such is the case with the Samaritan Pentateuch; that the copies of the Scriptures read by the Jews in their synagogues, which are held peculiarly sacred, are likewise destitute of them, as they are of any distinction of verses, characteristics belonging also to the oldest and best MSS. hitherto collated; and that no mention is found of points, either in the Talmud, or in the most ancient Jewish and Christian writers. Since it is known that in the seventh century after Christ, Syriac and Arabic possessed a vowel system, we may assign the same date to the origin of the Hebrew vowel-points, the system of which was probably perfected about the tenth century. With the vowels, the accents, which point out on what syllable of a word stress is to be laid, or, as some think, were intended to regulate the public recitation of Scripture,¹ are intimately connected; both, indeed, are parts of the same system, and must have been introduced at the same time.

§ 3. *Marks of distinction and divisions.*—The separation of the words of the text by an interval must have speedily followed the introduction of the square character. According to the Talmud the space between each word must, at least, be such as to admit a small letter; enough, however, was usually left for the lengthened final consonants, as they appear in our Hebrew Bibles. The Talmudists also employed a division into verses (*Pesukim*), which they ascribe to Moses, and hold in great reverence: the true origin was no doubt the necessity of pausing to interpret each passage as it was read in the ancient Hebrew; to which we may add that such divisions would be useful, indeed necessary, in the instruction of youth. They were not marked, however, in the written copies of

¹ Stuart, Heb. Gram.

Scripture ; tradition fixed at what words the reader, or learner, was to make a pause. Such was the state of the text in the time of Jerome. The MSS. he used were written in the square character, but without vowel-points, accents, or punctuation ; nor did they contain any division into chapters : only the poetical books were probably written *στιχῶδον*, *i.e.*, in lines, of different length, terminating with the sense, at which a pause was to be made. It was at a later period, though before the age of the Masorites, that two points (:), like our colon, were used to mark the division of periods and verses. The other divisions of the text were, 1. The smaller Paraschioth, or sections, employed for the purposes of citation or private reading : it was not uncommon to designate them after the subjects of which they treated, as, for example, "the bush" (Mark, xii. 26), "he spake in a certain place of the seventh day" (Heb. iv. 4). 2. The larger Paraschioth, and the Haphtaroth, portions to be read on the Sabbath day in the synagogues. The ancient practice of reading the law on these occasions (Acts, xv. 21) compelled the division of the Pentateuch into sections, fifty or fifty-four in number, according as the year was simple or intercalary : one of these formed the first lesson. Afterwards it became the custom to add a lesson from the prophets, which, consequently, were divided likewise into fifty-four sections, called Haphtaroth : it was a section of this kind that our Lord expounded in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke, iv. 16), and that the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading when Philip approached him (Acts, viii. 32).

At what time our present division into chapters came into use is doubtful ; it is attributed to Cardinal Hugo de Sancto Caro, who flourished in the thirteenth century, and was the author of a Concordance to the Latin Vulgate. The convenience of reference caused it to be speedily adopted,

and from the Christians it was borrowed by the Jews, of whom Rabbi Isaac Nathan (A.D. 1440) was the first who adapted it to the Hebrew Scriptures, retaining the Cardinal's division into chapters, but marking every fifth verse with a Hebrew numeral. Finally, Athias, a learned Jew of Amsterdam, in his edition of the Hebrew Bible (A.D. 1661), marked each verse with the common numerals, except those which Nathan had previously distinguished with Hebrew letters; and so our present Hebrew Bibles continue to be printed.

§ 4. *Criticism of the Hebrew text.*—Of the critical treatment of the Hebrew text we have no knowledge before the appearance of the Septuagint version. But as it was one of the functions of inspired men, as long as prophecy continued, to authenticate the works of their predecessors, and as we have evidence, from the references in the later to earlier writers, that these works were diligently studied, we have every reasonable guarantee for a careful preservation of the original text. The Septuagint version first presents us with remarkable deviations from this text; deviations which may partly have arisen from corrupt MSS., but which are, no doubt, to be chiefly ascribed to the ignorance of the translators, or to their love of emendation. As a recension, therefore, this version is of little value, and cannot be placed in the balance against that of the Jews of Palestine, whose scrupulous reverence for the traditionary readings is well known. As proofs of the superior accuracy of the latter the translation of Aquila, the Hexapla of Origen, and the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, all of which exhibit a remarkable agreement with the original MSS., may be adduced.

The labours of the Talmudists, in the second and third centuries, were directed principally to the exact maintenance of the sacred text as it had been handed down to

them. Their critical and grammatical remarks relate, for the most part, to matters of little importance, such as the number of words and letters in each book, the mode of writing words, the middle word or letter of a book, and the number of times a particular word is used in the same book. Whatever emendations they proposed were derived not so much from a critical examination of MSS., as from tradition: from this source came the distinction between *Khetib*, what is written, and *Keri*, what is to be read, the rules called the Rejection of the Scribes, and the Correction of the Scribes; and the extraordinary points placed over one or more letters of a word. The variations *Khetib* and *Keri* arose from the practice of reading for the written word another one, according to Jewish ideas preferable; as for the sacred name Jehovah that of *Elohim*, or *Adonai*; and for words too plain for modern ears those of better sound. The Rejection of the Scribes consisted in the removal of the copula *vau* from five places where it had been improperly read; and the Correction of the Scribes in the proposal of certain various readings which *might* equally well have expressed the writer's meaning. The points which are found over all, or some, of the letters of words, may have arisen from the discovery that these words or letters were omitted in some MSS., which the copyist wished to signify without alteration, or erasure, of the text as he found it; the Talmudists discovered mysteries in them, and matter for allegorical interpretation. To the same use they, and in a still greater degree the later Cabbalistic Jews, applied the letters of unusual size, or position, which occur in the text, and which originally were only intended to mark the middle of a book or section.

To these studies a new impulse was given about the sixth century by the revival of Jewish learning at Tiberias

in Palestine. The doctors of this school undertook the task of extracting from the Talmud the various critical and grammatical remarks which lay scattered throughout it, and which they conceived might contribute toward fixing the text of the sacred volume: these they collected into a book which they called Masora, that is, tradition, and from which they themselves received the title of the Masorites. The Masora contains remarks on the books, words, and letters; conjectural emendations; corrections of grammatical peculiarities; and an immense amount of curious, but unimportant, information on the number of words and letters, the middle verse and word, &c., of each book. These observations, at first contained in separate volumes, were afterwards written on the margin of the MSS. of Scripture: they speedily grew to such a length that abridgements became necessary, which were respectively called the Greater and the Lesser Masora; one or the other of which was inserted at the side of the text, while the parts omitted were transferred to the end, under the title of the Final Masora. Whatever may be the puerilities of the Masorites, their labours must have tended to ascertain and fix the correct reading of the Hebrew MSS.; and the text as corrected by them gradually supplanted the older recensions, and became the standard from which copies were multiplied. It has already been observed that to them we owe the vowel-points and the accents.

The Masora was first printed in Bomberg's Hebrew Bible (A.D. 1518), and more at length in the edition of the same work of 1526, which appeared under the auspices of the learned Jew, Jacob Ben Chajim. In a corrected and amended form, it was given by Buxtorf in his Rabbinical Bible, Basle, 1618-20.

§ 5. *Hebrew MSS.*—The comparatively late date of the existing Hebrew MSS. may be accounted for by the circum-

stance above mentioned, that the Masoritic text superseded that of the older copies, which gradually fell into disuse. The former prevailed almost exclusively in private MSS., while the ancient traditional forms and Talmudical rules were still carefully observed in the preparation of MSS. for the public service of the synagogue. But though our existing MSS. belong only to one family, the Masoritic, it was before long discovered that the Eastern text, as used at Babylon, differed in certain places from the Western, as used at Tiberias. These various readings were found to amount to 220, none of them, however, affecting the sense; and a later and more accurate comparison, in the eleventh century, by two Jewish scholars, Aaron Ben Asher, of Tiberias, and Ben Naphtali, of Babylon, raised the number to upwards of 864, of which by far the greater part relate merely to the vowel-points. The MSS. containing the text of the East and the West, thus ascertained and revised, became respectively the standard exemplars for subsequent copyists, and long enjoyed the highest reputation, under the names of the Babylonian, and the Palestine, Codex; the former followed by the Eastern, the latter by the Western Jews. Other standard MSS. supposed to be of peculiar accuracy, are mentioned by the Rabbinical writers, such as the Codex of Hillel, that of Sinai, and the Pentateuch of Jericho.

Our present Hebrew MSS. may be divided into two principal classes; the synagogue-rolls, which usually contain only the Pentateuch, with the Haphtaroth, and the ordinary MSS. for private use. The former are held in especial reverence; they are written on parchment without points, and by the Talmudists the minutest prescriptions are given as to the manner in which they should be executed. The skin must be that of a clean animal; each skin must contain a certain number of columns, and each

column a certain number of words ; the ink must be pure ; three errors on a page were held to vitiate the whole. The ordinary MSS. called by the Jews profane, are written on various materials, parchment, and paper, both of cotton and commoner materials ; the size is various, the ink black, and the initial words and letters are frequently gilt or illuminated. The prose portions are usually written in columns, the poetic in hemistichs, and not unfrequently a Targum, or paraphrase, is inserted either between the lines of the text, or in the margin. In many MSS. the Masoras are added ; the greater one occupying the top and bottom of the page, while the smaller one is written in the spaces between the columns. The order of the books, especially those of the Hagiographa, occasionally varies. In point of calligraphy the Spanish MSS. are said to bear away the palm ; next come the Italian, and last the German.

These private MSS. contain vowel-points ; and since it was the business of the copyist to write the consonants only, they must have passed through several hands before appearing in their present form. Different persons made it their occupation to write the Masora, and other scholia ; to revive passages that had faded ; and replace words or letters that had become illegible. As far as we know, no Hebrew MSS. have been transcribed by other than Jewish copyists or proselytes.

Most of the MSS. at present known reach back no further than the twelfth century. Some of them have the place and date subscribed, the latter of which is not always to be depended upon ; in the case of others our only criteria are the material, the colour of the ink, the shape of the letters, &c. For a long time no extensive collation of the Hebrew MSS. was attempted ; the various readings given in the Bibles of Münster (Basle, 1534-5), of J. H. Michaelis (1720), and of Houbigant (Paris, 1753),

hardly deserving the name. At length in the year 1760, Dr. Kennicott published proposals for a collation of the Hebrew, similar to that which had been undertaken for the Greek text. A liberal subscription furnished him with the means of prosecuting these researches; and in the year 1780, the Hebrew Bible was, under his superintendence, printed at Oxford, containing the results of an examination of above 600 MSS. and 50 old editions. To this collection M. de Rossi (Parma, 1783-8) added the various readings of 479 MSS. and 288 printed editions. These two works form our printed apparatus for critical purposes.

§ 6. *Printed editions of the Hebrew Bible.*—The earliest printed portion of the Hebrew Scriptures was the book of Psalms, with the commentary of Kimchi, A.D. 1477, probably at Bologna. After the appearance of some other books, the entire Bible was printed at Soncino, 1488: on this edition were based those of Brescia, 1494, of which Luther made use, of Venice, 1518, and of Basle, 1536. Another *editio princeps* is the Complutensian Polyglott, printed at Alcala, or Complutum, in Spain. The third, and last, is the second Bomberg, under the care of Jacob Ben Chajim (Venice, 1525), which most of the subsequent editions have followed. In 1572, the Antwerp Polyglott, and in 1657 the splendid London Polyglott, edited by Walton, appeared, with texts derived from various sources. The edition of which most of our modern texts, Van der Hooght, Hahn, &c. are reprints, is that of Athias, Amsterdam, 1667, which was based upon Ben Chajim's Venice Bible, aided by a further collation of two MSS.

SECT. II.—*New Testament.*

§ 1. *Greek MSS.*—Of the New Testament the autographs were probably written upon the Egyptian papyrus

(see 2 John, 12). No trace of them is found in ancient writers: like the MSS. of modern books, they were probably consigned to oblivion as soon as the labours of the professional transcribers had made them public property. The more durable material of parchment, or vellum, must have been employed at an early period; and at an early period, too, the New Testament writings must have been collected into one or more volumes. Of such volumes we have distinct traces in the second century; the four Gospels formed one, St. Paul's epistles another, while the rest of the books appear to have circulated separately. From the fourth century downwards, it was customary to comprise the whole of the books in one volume, though churches differed as to the number admitted into the canon. It was not until a comparatively late period that paper was invented; cotton paper in the tenth century, and linen in the thirteenth; the latter discovery must have led at once to that of the art of printing.

The oldest Greek MSS. are written on vellum, either natural, or coloured with purple, in what are called *uncial* characters, *i.e.* capitals unconnected with each other. Of a later date, probably the tenth century, is the *cursive* writing, which, like our present, consists of letters, continuous, and often joined, with the initials only in capitals. It is but seldom that a MS. contains the whole of the New Testament; the majority consist only of the four Gospels; many of the Acts and St. Paul's Epistles, or the Acts and the Catholic Epistles; while but a few contain the Apocalypse. The books are not always placed in the same order. It often happened that, from the scarcity and expense of vellum, the original writing of a MS. was partially obliterated, and over it another work transcribed; these are called *Palimpsests*, or *Codices rescripti*; and the labours of the learned have brought to light many remains

of biblical and classical literature which had thus been compelled to make room for monkish legends and other worthless productions.

§ 2. *Marks of division.*—Like the earliest Hebrew MSS., none of which time has spared us, those of the New Testament are written without any division of words or punctuation; without accents, breathings, or iota post-scribed. The first attempt at punctuation was a dot, by which sentences were divided; in the fifth century this had become common. It was followed by the stichometrical arrangement, of which Euthalius (A.D. 458), a deacon of Alexandria, afterwards bishop of Sulca, in Egypt, is said to have been the inventor, or, at least, the first who applied it extensively to Scripture. According to this plan the MS. was written in lines (στίχοι), of different lengths, the pause being regulated by the sense or the convenience of the reader. St. Paul's Epistles, the Acts, and the Catholic Epistles, were published by Euthalius thus divided. The Gospels appear to have been arranged by some other hand, and at an earlier period. At the end of each MS. the number of stichoi it contained was usually specified, which answered the same purpose as the labours of the Talmudists in counting the letters and words of each book of the Old Testament. After prevailing for a few centuries stichometry gradually fell into disuse, and the punctuation of MSS. became general in the tenth century, though no settled system is visible before the invention of printing.

Larger divisions of the sacred text are τίτλοι, in Latin *Breves*, and κεφάλαια, *i.e.* chapters. The former were larger portions, designed probably for public reading, and the name is derived from each division receiving a *title* from the principal subject mentioned in it: thus the fifth τίτλος of St. Matthew is entitled, "Concerning the beatitudes."

Of St. Matthew there were sixty-eight *τίτλοι*, of St. Mark forty-eight, of St. Luke eighty-three, and of St. John eighteen. The *κεφάλαια* were shorter sections, supposed to have been introduced into the four Gospels by Ammonius of Alexandria, in the third century, to serve the purposes of a harmony; from the inventor they are termed the *Ammonian Sections*. Upon these in the following century, Eusebius founded the harmonising tables, called from him the Eusebian Canons. The same Euthalius, who reduced the New Testament into stichoi, published the Acts, St. Paul's Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles, divided into *κεφάλαια*; and these divisions of *τίτλοι* and *κεφάλαια* remained in use in the Greek MSS. until the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.

About two centuries before this the Latin Churches had abandoned the Greek divisions, and adopted the modern chapters, for which we are indebted to Cardinal de S. Caro. These were introduced into the first printed editions of the New Testament; but it was not until 1551 that the text was broken up into our present verses by Robert Stephens, who is said to have accomplished his task during an equestrian journey from Paris to Lyons. The convenience of reference procured for the verse-division a speedy and general acceptance; and most of the editions of the New Testament are still thus printed. It cannot be denied, however, that in many instances, by separating the text from the context, it has operated injuriously; and for private reading the Paragraph Testaments, of which several have been published both in Greek and English, are undoubtedly to be preferred.

§ 3. *Inscriptions*.—By whom the present *Inscriptions* of the various books of the New Testament were framed is unknown; they are probably of early date. Euthalius is said to be the author of the *subscriptions* to the Epistles;

if so, he must have performed his work in a very careless manner, for some of them are manifestly false, *e.g.* those subjoined to the Epistles to the Thessalonians, according to which they were written, not, as was really the case at Corinth, but at Athens. Generally these subscriptions are of no authority.

§ 4. *Lectonaries*.—At an early period portions of the New Testament were set apart for public reading on Sundays and festivals; the Acts and St. Paul's Epistles were in this manner divided by Euthalius. As the use of the Scriptures became more and more confined to the public services of the Church, these lessons were collected into a volume, arranged in the order of the ecclesiastical year, and received the name of *Lectonaries*, which, from their contents, were further designated by the titles of *Evangeliarium*, or *Epistolare*. They seem to have come into use among the Greeks about the eighth century. The MS. containing them continued to be written in uncial characters long after the introduction of cursive writing, probably on account of the greater facility with which the former were read.

§ 5. *Principal MSS.*—The extant Greek MSS. reach to an antiquity much greater than those of the Hebrew Bible. Some contain both the Old and the New Testaments; some the latter only; and the majority, certain books, or fragments of books, of the latter. The following is a brief notice of some of the principal.

1. First in critical value, as in age, is the celebrated Codex Vaticanus, or Vatican MS., so called from its being preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome. Its history, before it came into possession of the popes, is unknown. It probably formed one of the earliest treasures of the Vatican, for it was well known, and alluded to, by scholars in the early part of the sixteenth century. It is written

on thin vellum, in uncial letters, with three columns on a page, void of interpunction, and (originally) without accents or breathings. The latter, as they now appear, were added by a later hand, as were also the large initial letters in the margin. The faded letters of the original have been throughout retouched by some restorer.

This MS. contains the Septuagint version of the Old Testament,—portions of the books of Genesis and Psalms being wanting; and the New Testament, as far as Heb. ix. 14, together with the Catholic Epistles. The Pastoral Epistles are wanting in it; and the remainder of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse have been supplied in recent cursive writing. From its being without the Eusebian Canons, and even the Ammonian sections, which were in general use at the close of the fourth century, and from other palæographical peculiarities, it must be assigned, at latest, to the early part of that century. It has been frequently collated for critical purposes; and recently an edition of the text, in modern Greek characters, has been printed at Rome. But the jealousy of the Papal court has hitherto prevented the publication of any facsimile of this precious MS.

2. With the Vatican MS., the Codex Alexandrinus, preserved in the British Museum, long contested the palm of antiquity, though now the general consent of scholars has assigned to it a later date, viz. the middle of the fifth century. It was presented, in 1628, to the king of England by Cyrillus Lucaris, patriarch of Constantinople, by whom it had been brought from Alexandria, whence its name. Of its previous history little is known; an Arabic subscription affirms it to have been from the pen of Thecla the Martyr. This MS., like the former, is on thin vellum, each page divided into two columns, without punctuation, accents, or breathings. It is now bound in four volumes,

three of which contain the Old Testament from the Septuagint version, and the remaining one all the books of the New (with occasional chasms), and the two epistles of Clement of Rome. From its having the Ammonian sections and Eusebian canons, it cannot be of earlier date than the end of the fourth century. Collations have been made by Young, librarian to Charles I., by Mill, and by Wetstein, which were superseded by the publication, in 1786, of a fac-simile of the MS. by Dr. Woide, assistant-librarian of the British Museum. This is the only MS. of the older class which contains the Apocalypse entire.

3. The Codex Ephremi; a palimpsest so called from some of the Greek works of Ephrem the Syrian having been written over the more ancient character. This ancient writing appears to have consisted of the Septuagint version, and the whole of the New Testament; only portions of either remain. It was formerly the property of Cardinal Ridolfi, of Florence, and from Italy it passed to the Imperial Library at Paris. It was collated imperfectly by Wetstein, and was published at length, though not in the original character, by Tischendorf, in 1842. This MS. is supposed to be of the fifth century; it is one of the most valuable extant, presenting, especially in the Gospels, a very pure text of the Alexandrian recension. It is probably of Egyptian origin.

4. Codex Bezae; a gift of Theodore Beza, in 1581, to the University of Cambridge, where it is deposited in the public library. It was found in a monastery at Lyons in 1562. Nothing is known of its previous history. This MS. contains the gospels, and the book of Acts, in Greek and Latin, stichometrically arranged, without divisions between the words, and without accents or punctuation. It is assigned to the sixth century, and is the oldest MS. which contains the passage, St. John, vii. 53 — viii. 11. A

fac-simile of it was published at Cambridge by Dr. Kipling, in 1793.

The foregoing are some of the most important and complete *uncial* MSS. of the oldest class: there are many others which contain either fragments of the Gospels, or of the other books without the Gospels. Of the *cursive* MSS. the number is immense. "Upwards of 500 MSS. of the Gospels, ranging in date from the tenth to the sixteenth century, have been inspected, more or less cursorily. More than 200 contain the Acts and Catholic Epistles; upwards of 300 the Pauline Epistles; 100 have the Apocalypse."¹ Respecting the majority of these very little is known; and with the exception of a few, they are not of much critical value. The MS. called Codex Montfortianus, now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, deserves notice as being the first which contains the disputed passage 1 St. John, v. 7. In his two first editions of the New Testament Erasmus had omitted this passage, not finding it in the MSS. which he consulted: he promised, however, to insert it, should any MS. containing it be discovered. Before the appearance of his third edition this MS. was found with the clause in it; and Erasmus redeemed his promise, whence the passage has passed into most modern translations of the New Testament. From the circumstances connected with its discovery, and other peculiarities, suspicions have been entertained that, as regards the Epistles at least, it was forged in order to compel Erasmus to insert the text: even the Gospels cannot be of much earlier date than the year 1500.

§ 6. *Critical history of the Greek Testament.*—Before the age of printing we have but few traces of any critical revision of the sacred text. The testimony of Origen and Jerome, the two fathers who principally devoted themselves

¹ Davidson, Bib. Crit. ii. 324.

to these studies, proves that in their day great variations existed in MSS., partly through heretical adulterations, and partly through the carelessness of transcribers. In the lapse of time, however, and particularly after Constantinople became the imperial city of the East, the common text of an earlier age appears to have gradually separated itself into two main divisions, distinguished from each other by characteristic marks and readings, one of which took its rise from Alexandria, the other from Constantinople. The observation of this fact gave rise to the various theories of recensions, or families, of MSS., of which several have been propounded. Bengel arranged MSS. under two classes, the African and the Asiatic, of the former of which the Codex Alexandrinus is the principal representative: to these Griesbach added a third, which he calls the Occidental, or Western. More recently Dr. Scholz has reverted to Bengel's classification, and considers that two only well-defined families of MSS. can be detected, viz., those which follow the text in use in Alexandria and the West of Europe, and those which were written within the limits of the patriarchate of Constantinople, and give the text as it was received there. Recent researches have thrown too much doubt upon all these systems of recension to render it necessary to pursue the subject further.

The first printed edition of the New Testament is due to Erasmus; it appeared at Basle in 1516, and before the editor's death in 1586, five editions of it had been published. Erasmus made use of MSS. of no great antiquity.

The Complutensian New Testament, so called from Complutum, or Alcalá, in Spain, where it was printed under the directions of Cardinal Ximenes, is contained in the fifth volume of the Polyglott of that name. It was printed in 1514, but was not published till the year 1522.

The editors seem to have followed MSS. of modern date, which they had received from the Vatican, and to have supplied what they thought deficiencies from the Latin Vulgate. From this latter source, no doubt, they derived the passage 1 St. John, v. 7, which Erasmus also inserted in his third edition.

These two primary editions are the basis of the text still in common use. They were followed by the editions of Robert Stephens, the fourth of which, printed at Geneva in 1551, is the first that contains the modern division into verses. Stephens' text was conformed to that of the fifth edition of Erasmus; and being reprinted, with some readings from Beza's New Testament which had appeared in the interval, by the Elzevirs, at Leyden, in 1724, it received the title of the *Textus receptus* (from a passage in the preface), and under that title continued in use on the Continent until recent times.

To this country are due the first attempts to collect materials for a critical edition of the New Testament. Walton's Polyglott took the lead, and was followed by Mill's Greek Testament, the labour of thirty years' collation of MSS., versions, and quotations: this great work appeared at Oxford in 1707. Mill contented himself with giving the various readings he had amassed below the text, which is that of Robert Stephens' edition of 1550.

Biblical criticism now began to revive on the Continent. The illustrious Bengel published a valuable edition of the New Testament, with critical apparatus, in 1734; and in 1751-2, that of Wetstein, a treasury of sacred criticism, appeared. Griesbach's editions, the second of which was completed in 1806, may be said to be the first that aimed at presenting a critically revised text; the labours of this scholar have had a lasting effect upon subsequent editions. So much cannot be said for Scholz's investigations, which

of late have fallen into disrepute. A text, formed on peculiar principles, and by some highly esteemed, was given to the world by Lachmann, Berlin, 1831, and again in 1850. Tischendorf's editions, Leipsic, 1849, are well known and in high repute. The promised work of Tregelles, who has devoted many years to these pursuits, has not as yet appeared.

CHAPTER V.

VERSIONS.

SECT. I.—*Ancient versions.*

§ 1. *Of the Old Testament.* 1. *Greek versions.*

1. *Septuagint.*—The most ancient of the versions of the Old Testament, in the Greek language, is the Septuagint, or, as it is sometimes called, the Alexandrian. The history of this celebrated translation is enveloped in the mists of fable. According to a letter purporting to be written by Aristeas, an officer of the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, this monarch, at the suggestion of his librarian, Demetrius Phalereus, sent an embassy to Jerusalem, to request a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, and that seventy-two persons might accompany it, six from each tribe, skilled in Hebrew and Greek, by whose assistance a translation might be made into the latter language. This document was known to Josephus, who has transcribed it in his *Antiquities*; and to Philo, who adds some embellishments of his own, as that the translators were placed in the island of Pharos, each by himself, and produced so many separate

translations, which, by a miracle of inspiration, agreed exactly, word for word, with each other. Justin Martyr relates the same story, with the addition that the interpreters were confined in separate cells until they had completed their work. The letter of Aristeas has long since been adjudged to be spurious, and the tale which it relates to be unworthy of credit. It was no doubt invented, or sanctioned, by the Alexandrian Jews, in order to exalt the reputation of the version in common use among them ; and for the same reason it was adopted by the early Christian fathers, both Greek and Latin, who being, for the most part, ignorant of Hebrew, were dependent upon the Septuagint for their knowledge of the Old Testament. Jerome was the first who ventured to call in question the authenticity of these traditions.

The story, after being winnowed, may contain the following particles of truth : that under Ptolemy Lagus, Demetrius Phalereus suggested the propriety, in a literary point of view, of a translation of the Jewish Scriptures ; that the work was then begun, was carried on at intervals, and was completed in the reign of Lagus's successor, Ptolemy Philadelphus, about the year 285 before the Christian era. Further than this we know not. The theory that this version was executed for the convenience of the Alexandrian Jews, by the command, and under the superintendence, of the Sanhedrim of that city, and particularly with the view of being read publicly in the synagogues, seems hardly supported by historical testimony : at what period synagogues came into existence in Egypt is a matter of doubt.

That the authors of it were natives of Egypt is apparent from the number of Coptic words which they introduce ; and that they belonged to the Alexandrian school may be gathered from the general features of the

version. Its neglect of literal faithfulness ; its attempts to adapt the original to existing circumstances, by alterations of words, phrases, and even whole paragraphs ; its employment of heathen terms for those peculiar to the theocracy,¹ all point to the latitudinarian, and allegorizing, tendencies of Alexandrian Judaism. Equally evident is it, that it was executed at different times and by different translators. There is a great difference of style in the several books. The best rendered is the Pentateuch, which is distinguished both by accuracy and elegance ; the book of Proverbs may be ranked next ; while that of Ecclesiastes holds, perhaps, the lowest place. The Prophets and Psalms, and generally the remaining books of the Bible, are but poor performances ; the translation of Daniel was so incorrect that it was not used by the early Church, that of Theodotion being substituted for it. What MSS. the Septuagint translators made use of it is now impossible to ascertain : if they were such as the dispersed Jews might have carried with them to Egypt, previously to the revision of the text by Ezra, they were, in all probability, more inaccurate than the faultiest of the MSS. now extant.

Notwithstanding its glaring imperfections, the Septuagint, for many centuries, enjoyed the highest authority. Wherever Greek was spoken, this was the version publicly read ; and how well known and esteemed it was, even among the Jews of Palestine, appears from the use made of it by our Lord and the apostles. The early doctors of the Church, who, with the exception of Origen and Jerome, were ignorant of Hebrew, read, and commented on it, exclusively ; and from it all the early versions, except the Syriac, were made. It is the Septuagint which, in the form of the Vulgate, the Church of

¹ As, for example, the word *Thummim*, perfections (Exod. xxviii. 30), they translate ἀληθεια, truth.

Rome still reads ; and it is the version in ordinary use in the Greek, and most of the Oriental churches. To us its chief value consists in the light it throws upon the language and idiom of the New Testament ; being written in nearly the same dialect, it renders valuable aid in interpretation, and is, indeed, indispensable to all who would successfully engage in these studies.

The standard editions of the Septuagint are the Complutensian, 1514 ; the Aldine, 1518 ; the Vatican, 1587 ; and the Alexandrian, edited by Grabe, 1707–20. A splendid edition was printed by the University of Oxford, 1818–27, under the editorial care of Drs. Holmès and Parsons. Several smaller editions have from time to time appeared.¹

2. *Versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus.*—Notwithstanding the reputation in which the Septuagint was held both by Jews and Christians, the former, after the destruction of Jerusalem, pressed by the arguments of their opponents, began to throw doubts upon the authority of this version, and to insist that it did not faithfully represent the original: with the view of superseding it, new translations were, in the second century, undertaken by Aquila and Theodotion. The former, who was an apostate from Christianity to Judaism, aimed at literally rendering word for word, which he carried to such an extent as to make his version frequently unintelligible. It was much approved of by the Jews, and proportionably contemned by the Christians. It is this version, and not the Septuagint, to which reference is made in the Talmud. The translation of Theodotion, nearly contemporary with Aquila, approaches to the freedom of the Septuagint, of which indeed it is said that he intended merely to issue an

¹ Oxford, 6 vols. 8vo. 1817. Valpy, London, 1819. Glasgow, 1822. Leipsic, 1824.

amended edition. By the Christians his rendering of the book of Daniel was preferred to that of the Septuagint; and how highly valued this version in general was by Origen appears from the use he has made of it in the Hexapla.

From the Ebionites, or semi-Christians, about the year 200, and therefore subsequently to the two former, a translation proceeded known under the name of that of Symmachus. It is free and paraphrastic, regarding rather the sense than the words; and was thought to excel in purity of Greek expression. Of the three versions, which from their position in Origen's great work, have been called the fifth, sixth, and seventh, we know but little, save that they must have been later than the work of Symmachus: the authors were probably Ebionites. They appear to have contained, respectively, only a portion of the Old Testament.

3. *Origen's Hexapla*.—From passages of the Septuagint cited by Philo and Justin Martyr, it appears that in the course of time numerous errors, partly through the carelessness of transcribers, and partly from marginal notes becoming incorporated in the text, had crept into the current MSS. of this version. These must have been multiplied when the later Greek translations were made; readings from which would be introduced into the older text, and render it still more unlike the original. With the view of remedying this growing evil, Origen, about the year 231, conceived the idea of issuing a revised text of the Septuagint, and arranging both it and the other Greek versions in parallel columns, the original Hebrew standing first. This great work, which was variously designated by the ancients Hexapla and Octapla according to the number of columns it contained in different places, is said to have occupied its author twenty-eight years, and

to have filled nearly fifty volumes. It was deposited after Origen's death, in the library of Pamphilus the Martyr at Cæsarea; and was probably destroyed on the capture of that city by the Arabs in the seventh century. A few fragments, preserved in MSS. of the Septuagint, and in the works of the Greek fathers, are all that remain of it.

The order which Origen adopted was,—1. The Hebrew text according to the best MSS. he could procure. 2. The same text in Greek letters. 3. The version of Aquila, as being the most literal. 4. That of Symmachus. 5. The Septuagint. 6. The version of Theodotion. Not venturing to alter the text of the Septuagint, Origen contented himself with noting its omissions, or variations, as compared with the Hebrew and the other versions, by certain marks,—asterisks, lemnisci,—&c., which, unhappily, time has obliterated.

Origen's work gave rise to a distinction between the common (*Κοινή*, or Vulgate) text of the Septuagint, such as it existed previously to his collation, and the Hexaplarian. About the year 300, Eusebius, assisted by Pamphilus, published the Hexaplarian text, with Origen's critical notes; and shortly afterwards two other recensions were undertaken, one by Lucius, a presbyter of the Church of Antioch, and the other by Hesychius, an Egyptian bishop. Eusebius' edition was adopted by the churches of Palestine, while in Syria and Egypt those of Lucius and Hesychius were respectively used. From these three principal editions, but intermingled and corrupted, our existing MSS. are derived; which accounts for the comparatively unsatisfactory state of the Septuagint text.

We conclude this account of the ancient Greek versions of the Old Testament with a brief notice of the translation of several books, which is preserved in the library of St.

Mark of Venice. From the written characters it would seem to belong to the fourteenth century ; but, most likely, is a copy from an older original. It is more literal than even the version of Aquila, and presents, in its style, a singular mixture of Attic elegance and barbarism. The Chaldaic section in Daniel is rendered in the Doric dialect. Of this version the Pentateuch was published by Ammon, Erlangen, 1790-1 ; and the remaining books by Villoison, Strasburg, 1784.

2. *Oriental Versions.*

1. *Targums.*—Under this head may be classed the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases, of the Old Testament. In the time of Ezra, as has been mentioned, it was necessary to accompany the reading of the law with a Chaldee interpretation, and a fresh impulse must have been communicated to these studies by the rise of synagogues and public schools of instruction. The office of interpreter became one of importance : the Talmud lays it down as a rule, that as the law was given through a mediator, so through a mediator it must be read and explained. These explanations were at first oral ; but the inconveniences hence arising becoming more and more felt, they were committed to writing, under the name of Targums, a Chaldee word signifying version, or explanation. Of these Targums there have come down to us ten, which collectively contain a paraphrase of the Old Testament, the books of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah excepted. Whether these latter books, from their being partly in Chaldee, were not thought to need a paraphrase, or whether there were Targums also upon them which have perished, is uncertain.

We have reason to believe that at least at the time of Christ, if not earlier, Targums existed. The Talmud

assigns to a Targum on the book of Job a date as early as the middle of the first century, and this could hardly have been the first book of the Bible thus commented on. The earliest that time has spared us are those of Jonathan on the Prophets, and Onkelos on the Pentateuch. Jonathan Ben Uzziel is said to have been one of the most distinguished scholars of Hillel, and consequently must have lived shortly before the birth of our Lord. The Jewish fable that he received his paraphrase from the mouth of the prophets Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, proves at least that it was not merely highly esteemed, but considered the most ancient of these compositions. Onkelos, Gamaliel's friend and scholar, flourished a little later, and is supposed to have been contemporary with Christ. The paraphrases of both are favourably distinguished from those of later times by purity of language, and especially by the absence of legendary tales and cabbalistic interpretations; but the latter more so than the former. The style of Onkelos approximates to the Hebrew-Chaldee of the Bible; it contains no Latin, and but few Greek words. A version rather than a paraphrase, it renders the Hebrew word for word with such exactness that it admitted of being read with the same musical intonation as the original text in the public services of the synagogue. Nearly equal in point of diction to the paraphrase of Onkelos, that of Jonathan is inferior to it in literary accuracy, and abounds more in fabulous legends; which may partly be accounted for by its subject-matter, the prophets more readily admitting of a free mode of interpretation than the law.

The growing corruption of Jewish taste, in the direction of legends and allegorical meaning, gave rise to Targums of a different character from the preceding; the chief aim of the writers being, not to interpret the text, but to embellish it with traditionary tales, sometimes of

the idlest description. Of this description of Targum we possess two on the Pentateuch, that known under the name of Pseudo-Jonathan, and the fragmentary Jerusalem Targum. Later investigations have led to the conclusion that these are not really distinct works, but that the Pseudo-Jonathan Targum is that known to the ancients by the name of the Jerusalem Targum, while the other is but a recension. The style of both is unique, and abounds with barbarisms. From allusions to the Talmud, which was not composed till several centuries after the death of Christ, and from the number of foreign words which occur in these Targums, critics have assigned to them a date not earlier than the latter part of the seventh century.

The remaining Targums are, 1. That on the Hagiographa, ascribed by the Rabbins to Joseph the Blind, who lived in the fourth century, but more probably a compilation of later times. 2. The Targum on the books of Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, Ruth, Lamentations, and Esther, likewise a compilation not earlier than the sixth century. 3. The three Targums on the book of Esther, the first, a short one published in the Antwerp Polyglott; the second and third, much more diffuse, edited by Taylor, London, 1655. These Targums are of late date. 4. A Targum on Chronicles, the existence of which seems to have been unknown even to the Jews, but which was discovered at Erfurt, and published by Beck (1680-3). Another more perfect edition was published by Wilkins (Amsterdam, 1715). This also betrays the lateness of its date.

Most of these Targums are printed in the London Polyglott. Only two of them, those of Jonathan and Onkelos, are of value in a philological point of view; from these, however, considerable assistance is derived in the

interpretation of particular Hebrew words, especially of the prophecies relating to Messiah. The remaining ones are chiefly useful from the light they throw upon the later Jewish customs and modes of thought.

2. *Arabic versions*.—Several *Arabic* versions, either of the whole or of part of the Old Testament, exist in print. The principal is that of Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, a learned Jew of Babylon, who in the tenth century paraphrased the Old Testament in Arabic. Of this version there have been printed the Pentateuch, at Constantinople, in 1546, in Hebrew characters, and afterwards in the Paris and London Polyglotts, in Arabic letters; and Isaiah, by Paulus, Jena, 1790. In the Polyglotts just mentioned, there is an Arabic version of the book of Joshua, and parts of the books of Kings and Nehemiah, supposed to belong to the eleventh century. In the year 1622 Erpenius published at Leyden an Arabic translation of the Pentateuch, the work of an African Jew of the thirteenth century, which adheres very closely to the Masoretic text. The British Museum contains a MS. of the books of Genesis, the Psalms, and Daniel, in Arabic, the work of Saadiah Ben Levi Askenoth, who lived in the sixteenth century.

3. *Samaritan versions*.—The Samaritans possess in their ancient language a version of the Samaritan Pentateuch, the author and age of which are unknown; the most probable opinion is that it was made shortly after the birth of Christ. It betrays the influence of Jewish tradition in paraphrasing the name of the Deity, in avoiding anthropomorphisms, and in the use of euphemisms; but, in other respects, adheres faithfully to the original text.

From the same source¹ is derived an Arabic version

¹ The Samaritan Pentateuch, from which these versions were made, is rather a recension of the Hebrew text than a version. Respecting its age great difference of opinion exists. By some it is

by Abu Said, a Samaritan, who, about the year 1070, for the use of his fellow-religionists in Egypt, translated the Pentateuch. This version is founded upon that of Saadiah, and only deviates from it where the Samaritan text differs from the Jewish. In order to recommend it to the Syrian Samaritans, who continued to use Saadiah's version, it was revised and commented on by Abul Baracat, whence arose two recensions, that of Egypt by Abu Said, and that of Syria by Abul Baracat, which, in the lapse of time, became so confounded that separation is now impossible. Portions of this version have been published by Kühner, Leyden, 1851.

§ 2. *Of the Old and New Testaments.* 1. *Oriental versions.*

1. *Peschito*.—Of versions containing the whole of the Scriptures, one of the most ancient and the most celebrated, is the Syrian, called the *Peschito*, from a Syrian word signifying simple, or literal, on account of its close adherence to the text, without the admixture of allegorical interpretations. The tradition of the Syrians, that part of it was executed in the time of Solomon and Hiram, or, as others affirm, by Asa, a priest of the Samaritans, may be dismissed as unworthy of notice; little more deserving of credit is the account that it is the work of translators sent to Palestine by the Apostle Thaddæus, and Agbarus king of Edessa. From these traditions, however, as well as from

supposed to have existed, from the first, in the separate kingdom of Israel, and so to have become known to the mixed people who took the place of the ten tribes; others make it coeval with the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim. Dr. Davidson assigns it to the reign of Josiah (Horne, *Introd. Edit.* 10, vol. ii. c. 8). Though known to the Fathers it was lost sight of for more than a thousand years, until Abp. Usher procured some copies from the East, by the aid of which it was printed in the Paris and London Polyglotts. It is in the ancient Hebrew character.

the fact that Ephrem the Syrian, the first writer who makes use of this version, is compelled to explain many of its expressions which apparently in his day had become obscure, we may infer its high antiquity, and the most probable opinion is that which fixes its date at the close of the first century, and Edessa as its birth-place.

Internal evidence proves that the Old Testament portion must have been the work of Christians, not of Jews: this appears from the sparing use of the Chaldee Targums, and from the Christian interpretation of the Messianic prophecies. It is also evident that the translation was made directly from the Hebrew, which it follows with scrupulous faithfulness; a circumstance which renders it exceedingly valuable to the Biblical critic. The Peschito contains all the Canonical books of the Old Testament, and, at first, as it should seem, none but these; the Apocryphal writings, however, must have speedily followed, for they are cited by Ephrem, though not as canonical. Of the New Testament it comprises only the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul, including that to the Hebrews, the first Epistle of St. John, the first of St. Peter, and the Epistle of St. James. The Peschito was first printed, very defectively, in the Paris Polyglott (1645), and reprinted, with some additions, in that of London. A more correct edition was published in London (1823), at the expense of the Church Missionary Society, under the care of Dr. Lee, who collated for it three MSS.

Received as this version was over a large portion of Christendom, recensions of it, by different parties, in the lapse of time appeared: of these two are known to us, that of the Nestorians, cited in the Scholia of Bar Hebræus, and that called the Karkaphensian, or mountainous, from its supposed birth-place, Mount Sigara, in Mesopotamia.

The latter is of Monophysite origin, and was executed in the tenth century; it differs from the Peschito only in the order of the books, and in the adaptation of proper names to the Greek orthography.

From the Peschito several Arabic versions were derived. Of those printed in the Paris and London Polyglotts, the books of Job, Chronicles, Ruth, Samuel, Kings (partly), and Nehemiah, are traceable to this source. To these may be added some versions of the Psalter yet in MS.

2. *Syriac Gospels*.—The Peschito was for a long time believed to be the most ancient of the Syriac translations; but the researches of Mr. Cureton have lately brought to light fragments of a still older version, differing considerably from any previously known. They are contained in a MS. brought from the Nitrian monasteries, now in the British Museum, and comprise large portions of the four Gospels. In 1848 an edition of this Syriac MS. was printed by Mr. Cureton, but remained unpublished until 1858, when it appeared at London.

3. *The Philoxenian version*.—This version was made at the suggestion of Philoxenus, or Xenaias, bishop of Mabug or Hierapolis, by Polycarp, a Chorepiscopus, or rural bishop of that country, in A.D. 508. It is known to us only through the revision of it by Thomas of Harkel, or Heraclea, who flourished about a century later, and was likewise bishop of Hierapolis. About the same time as this recension was undertaken a Syriac version of the Old Testament was executed from the Hexaplar text of the Septuagint by Paul, bishop of Tella; with whom was associated a deacon, Mar Thoma by name, who, not improbably, may be the same as Thomas of Harkel. This version first became known in Europe in the year 1730. In that year, Dr. Gloucester Ridley received from the East some MSS., two of which contained the Harclean

recension of the New Testament: it was his intention to have published them, but the design fell to the ground, and the version remained in MS. until 1803, when the whole was printed at Oxford. With the exception of the Apocryphal parts, the remaining portions of the Old Testament are also in print.

4. *The Jerusalem Syriac version.*—This is contained in a Lectionary in the Vatican Library, and with the exception of a few extracts published by Adler, still remains in MS. It contains the four Gospels in a Syriac dialect peculiar to itself; and has been assigned by Adler to a period between the fourth and sixth centuries. Its readings, so far as they are known, are of considerable value, confirming as they do those of the most ancient authorities of other kinds.

5. *Æthiopic version.*—With the spread of Christianity in Æthiopia in the fourth century, the translation of the Scriptures into the Gheez, or ancient sacred tongue of the country, seems to have been simultaneous. A tradition, of doubtful authenticity, assigns it to Frumentius, the first bishop of that region. Perfect MSS. of it exist in the libraries of Europe, but only portions of it have appeared in print. The New Testament was printed at Rome in 1549, and again in an amended form, by Mr. Platt, London, 1830, for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Of the Old Testament only fragments had been published, until, recently, Dillmann, in Germany, undertook an entire edition, part of which has already appeared. In the Old Testament this version is founded entirely on the Septuagint, and contains, therefore, not merely the Apocrypha, but many spurious writings, such as the book of Enoch and the fourth book of Ezra.

6. *Egyptian versions.*—Of about the same date, and likewise, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, founded

upon the Septuagint, are these versions, of which three have been discovered, the Coptic, or more properly, Memphitic, the dialect of Lower Egypt; the Sahidic, or Thebaic, in the language of Upper Egypt; and the Bashmuric, a mixture of the other two. When, and where, they were executed, is not known; but critics have assigned to the Thebaic version a date as early as the third century. The Memphitic New Testament was published by Wilkins, Oxford, 1716, and the Pentateuch by the same editor, London, 1731: the Psalms have been often printed. The greater prophets were published by Tattam, Oxford, 1836, and portions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, by other editors. In 1847 a new, and more accurate, edition of the New Testament was published by Schwartze, at Leipsic. Of the Thebaic and Bashmuric, only a few fragments are in print. The former especially is useful for critical purposes.

7. *Armenian versions.*—In the fifth century Miesrob, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, attempted a translation of the Scriptures into Armenian from the Syriac; but this project being abandoned, Eznak and Joseph, two scholars, were sent to Alexandria to acquire a knowledge of Greek, for the purpose of executing a version from the Septuagint. The whole Bible was thus translated from the Greek. In the seventeenth century the Armenians were desirous of having their version printed in Europe; they failed in their object at Rome, but at length got an edition printed at Amsterdam, 1666, under the supervision of Uscan, an Armenian bishop. An improved edition of the New Testament was published by Dr. Zohrab, at Venice, 1789.

8. *Georgian version.*—This version is said to have been made in the sixth century. It is in the Armenian character, and is probably derived from the Armenian

and therefore mediately from the Septuagint. It was printed at Moscow in 1743.

9. *Persian versions*.—The Scriptures seem to have been translated into Persian at an early period. The version, however, to which Chrysostom and Theodoret refer, has perished; those now extant of the Pentateuch, the Gospels, and some other parts of the Old Testament, are of much later date. The Pentateuch version could not have been made before the eighth century, because for Babel the author has substituted Bagdad, which city was not founded till A.D. 762. It professes to be the work of a rabbi, Jacob Ben Joseph, surnamed Tawus, from Tus, a city of Persia. Printed at first in Hebrew characters in the Constantinopolitan Polyglott, in 1546, it was transferred, in Persic letters, to the London Polyglott. Two Persian versions of the Gospel are known; one of them printed in Walton's Polyglott, the other by Wheloc and Pierson, 1652. Walton's MS. was written A.D. 1341. Different translations into Persian have been made from the Vulgate.

10. *Arabic translations*.—The Arabic versions of the Old Testament, from the original Hebrew, from the Septuagint and from the Peschito, have been already described. There are several editions of the New Testament in Arabic, of which that printed at Rome in 1591, containing the four Gospels, is the *Editio princeps*. It was reprinted in the Paris and London Polyglott. The whole of the New Testament was published by Erpenius at Leyden, 1616; and, in Syriac letters, at Rome in 1703. From the Vulgate various translations have been made for the use of the Eastern Christians. The whole Bible was issued from the Propaganda Press at Rome in 1671.

2. *Western Versions.*

1. *The Old Latin.*—Fragments of a version, sometimes, but improperly, called the old Italic, are found in the works of the early Latin fathers, such as Tertullian and Augustine. They belong to an ancient Latin version, the birthplace of which was not Italy, where Greek was the ecclesiastical language, but the Roman province of Northern Africa, in which Latin had become the vernacular tongue. By whom it was made, and at what period, is uncertain; there is evidence, however, of its being in use before the close of the second century. That there was only one current version under this name appears from the characteristic words which are found in all the citations made by the Latin fathers. When Augustine, therefore, speaks of the Latin interpreters as being innumerable,¹ or prefers the *Italic* to all the other translations,² he must be understood to mean different exemplars of the African original. In the Old Testament this was made from the Septuagint.

2. *The Vulgate.*—At the request of Damasus, bishop of Rome, Jerome, then a presbyter from Dalmatia, undertook, about the year 382, a revision of the Old Latin version, which in a few years he completed, the Gospels more accurately than the Epistles. As he proceeded in his task to the Old Testament, the inaccuracy of the Septuagint version, from which the old Latin was derived, struck him so forcibly that he conceived the idea of a new translation from the original Hebrew; a task for which, from his knowledge of Hebrew and his critical abilities, he was well fitted. This version, which occupied its author about twenty-one years, has, since its adoption by the Romish Church, borne the name of the Vulgate.

¹ De Doct. Christ. ii. 11.

² Ibid. c. 15.

Though it surpassed all former attempts of the kind, its first reception was unfavourable; the veneration in which the Septuagint was held rendering the early fathers suspicious of a version which differed from it so considerably. Gradually, however, it triumphed over opposition, and at length received the public sanction of Gregory the Great, from which period it became the authorised text of the Western Church. The Psalter, however, from its liturgical use, and most of the apocryphal books, which by Jerome had been excluded from the canon, remained in the old Latin.

In the lapse of time, from the intermixture of the two versions, the text fell into confusion. The celebrated Alcuin, at the command of Charlemagne, attempted to restore it; but, notwithstanding his labours, and those of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Nicholas, Hugo a Sancto Caro, and others, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it remained, up to the invention of printing, in a very unsatisfactory condition. It appeared thus in the first printed editions, the earliest of which is that of Gumelli, Mayence, 1462. This was followed by the editions of Petrus, Brescia, 1496, of the Complutensian Polyglott, and of Robert Stephens, 1528-46; in all which, however, corrections were admitted from the Hebrew; so that little was effected towards restoring the text to its original condition. The subject was discussed at the Council of Trent, and a commission appointed, who reported that the text was in such a corrupt state that the Pope alone could remedy the evil. Some recommended a new translation from the Hebrew, others a revision of the Latin. The matter ended in the Council's pronouncing the Vulgate to be the authentic rule of faith, but ordering that a new and amended edition should be undertaken. The commission, however, to which this work was e-

trusted, was superseded by Paul III.; an edition, put forth in the meanwhile by the theologians of Louvain, was prohibited by his successor, Paul IV.; and it was promised that the Pope, with the assistance of the cardinals, would forthwith issue an authentic text. After many delays, the promised edition appeared under the auspices of Sixtus V., in the year 1590, with a preface by the Pope himself, in which its accuracy is extolled in the highest terms. It was discovered, however, to be so very incorrect that another speedily followed, differing materially from its predecessor, but also guaranteed by the infallible authority of Gregory XIV. and Clement VIII.; and this again was superseded by a third edition, the work of the latter Pope, which was published in 1593, and contained fresh corrections. This last is the standard edition of the Romish Church; subsequent ones being but transcripts of it. The Vulgate was, for a long time, disregarded as a source of criticism; more recently, that is, since the time of Mill and Bentley, its claims have been admitted as a witness to ancient readings; and, should a critical revision of it ever be accomplished, the gain to biblical literature will be very great.

3. *Slavonic version.* — The Slavonic nations on the Danube are said to have received both the profession of Christianity and a translation of the Scriptures in the ninth century from two brothers, Cyrillus and Methodius, of Thessalonica, who laboured as missionaries in Great Moravia. It is doubtful, however, whether at that period more than the New Testament was rendered into Slavonic. The Old Testament seems to have been, partly at least, taken from the Latin; but at what period is uncertain. The oldest MS. of the entire Bible is of the year 1499. The whole Bible was printed at Ostrog, in Volhynia, in 1581.

4. *Gothic version.*—Towards the close of the fourth century the Visi-Goths received permission from the Emperor Valens to settle in the province of Mœsia, whence they received the name of Mœso-Goths. This was speedily followed by their conversion to Christianity; and their second bishop, Ulphilas, an Arian in creed, presented them with a version of the Scriptures, which was extensively used over a large part of Europe. It was only in the latter part of the sixteenth century that the existence of this version became known in Europe, by a MS., found in the Monastery of Werden, in Westphalia, from which a few portions were printed. In the year 1648, after the capture of Prague by the Swedes, the celebrated Codex Argenteus, a Gothic MS. of the four Gospels on purple vellum with silver letters, was discovered in that city and sent to Sweden, where it is now preserved in the library of the University of Upsal. It was first printed at Dort, in 1665. This MS. belongs probably to the sixth century. The researches of Cardinal Mai have since brought to light the greater part of St. Paul's Epistles and a few portions of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, in the Gothic tongue. In the Old Testament, the Hexaplaric text appears to be followed; the New Testament is taken from the original Greek. The whole of these portions of Ulphilas' version were published at Leipsic, 1843, under the care of Gabelentz and Loebe. As a source of criticism it does not rank very high.

5. *Anglo-Saxon versions.*—These versions are not of a date earlier than the eighth century. Venerable Bede rendered the whole Bible from the Vulgate into Anglo-Saxon; and in the tenth century, Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury, translated several books of the Old Testament into the same language. A portion of Ælfric's version was printed at Oxford, in 1699. Previously to

this, in 1640, a translation of the Psalter, purporting to be the work of King Alfred, had appeared in London. The entire version has not yet been printed. It is of little use, save in determining the readings of the Vulgate.

SECT. II.—*Modern versions.*

These are very numerous; and of late years, as the field of operation of the British and Foreign Bible Society has extended itself, the number has so increased that merely to enumerate them would occupy too much of our space. Some of the more ancient and important deserve notice.

§ 1. *Modern Latin.*—In the sixteenth and two following centuries, several Latin translations, Romish and Protestant, appeared, of various merit. Of the former may be mentioned that of Pagninus (1528), Cajetan (1639), and Houbigant (1753); of the latter, that of Munster (1534), Leo Juda (1543), Castalio (distinguished for its classical elegance, but deficient in simplicity, 1573), Junius and Tremellius (1590), Schmidt (1696), and Dathe (the Old Testament, 1773), highly esteemed both for elegance and fidelity. Erasmus first translated the New Testament into Latin, in which he was followed by Beza (1556), whose version is remarkable for fidelity, and in the present century by Sebastiani (1817), who translated from the Alexandrian MS.

§ 2. *German versions.*—To Germany belongs the honour both of the discovery of the art of printing, and of the first printed translation into the vernacular of any part of the Bible. In the year 1466, a German translation from the Vulgate was printed, the author of which is unknown. The Reformation gave a new impulse to Biblical study. Luther felt that the great work of which he was the human instrument could never rest upon a

sure basis, until the Scriptures were accessible to the people; and about the year 1517, he commenced a new version from the original Hebrew and Greek, which, after revision by Melancthon and other learned men, was first published in 1530. It is one of the first of modern translations for simplicity, strength, and accuracy; and formed an era, not merely in the religious but in the literary history of the German people. It is the basis of several other versions, *e.g.* the Lower Saxon, the Pomeranian, the Danish, and the Icelandic.

The Romish Church was compelled to follow in the wake of the Protestant. Almost contemporaneously with that of Luther, two versions appeared, one by Detemberger, the other by Eckius; and a third one by Caspar Ulenberg, in 1630. The most popular and highly esteemed Romish translation of the New Testament is that of Von Ess, which was published in 1812.

§ 3. *French versions.*—In 1512, James le Fèvre, of Estaples, published St. Paul's Epistles in French; this was followed by the whole Bible in 1530. Le Fèvre's translation, revised by the divines of Louvain, was reprinted in 1550, and is said to have been the basis of all the other French translations, Romish or Protestant. The first Protestant translation was that of Olivetan (1535): it appeared at Geneva, in 1540, with corrections by Calvin, and again, in 1588, after a further revision by the Genevan divines, who so improved it, that thenceforward it went by the name of the Geneva Bible. Other revisions of it were made, the best known of which are those of Martin and Ostervald. A Protestant translation of the New Testament, by Beausobre and L'Enfant (Amsterdam, 1718), enjoys a high reputation.

§ 4. *Flemish and Dutch versions.*—In the sixteenth century a Flemish version of the Scriptures was made from

the Vulgate, and printed at Cologne and Delft (1477). Until the year 1618, when the Synod of Dort took place, the Dutch Protestants had only a translation from Luther's German version; but then a new version from the Hebrew and Greek was undertaken, which was printed at Amsterdam in 1680.

§ 5. *Italian versions.*—Several of these are extant. The earliest is that of Malermi, published at Venice in 1471. All previous versions were, however, superseded by the elegant and faithful one of Diodati, 1607. Towards the end of the last century, another version was executed by Martini, archbishop of Florence, from the Vulgate, accompanied with notes. It received the sanction of Pius VI. and has been frequently reprinted.

§ 6. *Spanish versions.*—Besides some versions of the Old Testament for the use of the Spanish Jews, several are extant in the Spanish language, executed by Christians. The first of these from the original languages is that of Reyna, a Romanist, Basil, 1569, and the second, which is rather a revision of the former, that of Valera, a Protestant, Amsterdam, 1602. The Vulgate was translated into Spanish so early as 1478; and, again, in 1793–4 by Padre Scio, and in 1824 by Amat.

§ 7. *Russian, Turkish, &c. versions.*—The Russians do not as yet possess the whole of the Bible in the vernacular. The New Testament was published in 1823, and some progress made with the Old; but as yet the latter has not appeared. The printing of the entire Turkish Bible was completed in 1828, under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society. To the Baptist missionaries at Serampore, aided by the Bible Society, are due translations into Sanscrit, the learned language of India, and Chinese; the entire Bible in which latter language was completed in 1821. Many versions in the vernacular dialects of

India have since been published; as also translations of the New Testament into modern Arabic and Persian. In fact, the progress of translation is commensurate with that of missions; and in proportion as, by means of the living ministry, a desire for the word of life has been created, the Christian Church, at least the Protestant portion thereof, has acknowledged, and not inadequately fulfilled, the duty of satisfying this desire.

§ 8. *English versions.*—For the English Christian the history of the translations of the Bible into his own language possesses a peculiar interest: we shall here, therefore, enter more into detail.

Of the Anglo-Saxon versions we have already spoken. The oldest English translation extant is that of a priest named Rolle, who died in 1349, containing the Psalms, and several other Canticles, with a commentary; but the first entire version was made by Wiclif, who, about the year 1380, translated the Vulgate into English. The difficulty of transcription, and the opposition of the ecclesiastical authorities, rendered copies of this work extremely rare: the price of a Testament was not less than about 30*l.* of our money. Two editions of Wiclif's New Testament have been published, one by Lewis 1731, the other a reprint of the former, by Baker 1810.

William Tyndale led the van in *printing* any part of the Bible in English. Unable to carry out his design in England, he repaired to Antwerp, where, with the assistance of John Fryth and a friar named Roye, who afterwards received the crown of martyrdom, he completed a translation of the New Testament from the original Greek. It was printed in 1527, and many copies having found their way into England, Tonsal, bishop of London, the more effectually to suppress it, purchased up the impression, and committed it to the flames at St. Paul's Cross

The proceeds of the sale, however, assisted Tyndale in the preparation of new editions, which were extensively circulated in this country, and materially contributed to the progress of the Reformation. Tyndale had also designed to publish a version of the Old Testament from the Hebrew, and had advanced as far as the Pentateuch, when, in 1536, he suffered death for Christ's sake at Villefort, near Brussels.

Coverdale's Bible.—Remonstrances having been addressed by the clergy to Henry VIII. against Tyndale's version, the king gave directions that a new translation should be undertaken, the execution of which was intrusted to Miles Coverdale, afterwards Bishop of Exeter. It was published in 1535, and is the first translation of the entire Bible in our language, and the first sanctioned by royal authority. Being ignorant of the original languages, Coverdale translated from the Latin and the German, five of which versions he states that he used. It was reprinted in 1550 and 1553.

Matthew's Bible.—This is a mere fusion of Tyndale's and Coverdale's translations, issued in 1537 under the fictitious name of Matthew. The real author is supposed to have been John Rogers. Of this Bible 2500 copies, which, by the permission of Francis I., had been printed at Paris for the use of English Christians, were burned in that city by the Inquisition; a portion of the impression, however, was rescued, and being, with the types and printers, conveyed to England, a revised edition was, under the patronage of Cranmer, published in 1539, which bears the name of the Great Bible from its size, and Cranmer's from the archbishop's having prefixed a prologue to it. A splendid copy, in vellum, is preserved in the British Museum.

Geneva Bible.—This was the fruit of the pious labours

of the English Protestants, who, by the Marian persecution, were driven to take refuge in Geneva. The chief persons concerned in it were Coverdale, Gilly, Whittingham, Woodman, Sampson, and Cole. It is partly a new translation, and partly a revision of the former ones. Upwards of thirty editions of it were published between the years 1560 and 1616 ; a remarkable testimony to its excellence. In this Bible the division into verses was first adopted.

Bishops' Bible.—After the accession of Elizabeth, a new edition of the Bible being required for the use of parish churches, Archbishop Parker, by the royal command, allotted to men of learning distinct portions of the Great Bible, for the purpose of revision and correction. From the circumstance that eight of these divines were bishops, the result of their joint labours was called the Bishops' Bible. Their task being completed, the Bible was printed in folio in 1568, embellished with cuts and maps. It was the basis of the last, or Authorized Version, and was used in the public services of the Church, while the Geneva Bible kept its place in private houses.

King James's, or the present Authorized Version.—At the Hampton Court Conference, in 1603, some objections having been made to the Bishops' Bible, the king gave orders for a new version, in which forty-seven of the most learned divines of the kingdom were engaged. They were divided into six classes, which sat at Westminster, and the two Universities ; and to each of them a particular portion of the sacred volume was assigned. The directions given them were, that they should adhere as closely as possible to the Bishops' Bible, retaining the old ecclesiastical terms and proper names, and that no notes should be added except marginal explanations of Hebrew or Greek words, and a few references to parallel passages. The books were

first translated by each individual, and then submitted to the committee to which he belonged ; and, finally, to the revision of the whole body. The translation was commenced in 1607, and completed in 1610 ; and in the next year the Bible was printed in folio. Upon the excellencies of it, it is needless to enlarge. By the unanimous voice of scholars and divines of all denominations, it has been pronounced one of the best versions extant. The translators have seized not only the meaning, but the very spirit, of the original. As might be expected, the progress of scholarship has detected some errors, and time has rendered some expressions obsolete ; there seems no reason why, without altering the general cast of the language, these should not be gradually corrected. King James's translation superseded all the former ones, with the exception of those of the Psalms, and of the Epistles and Gospels, in the Book of Common Prayer ; the former from Cranmer's, the latter from the Bishops' Bible ; which continued to be used until the final revision of the Liturgy in 1661, when the Epistles and Gospels were taken from the present version, the Psalms being suffered to remain in Cranmer's translation.

Anglo-Romish versions.—About the close of the sixteenth century, the Church of Rome in England, no longer able to withstand the demand for the Scriptures in the vernacular, sanctioned the printing of an English New Testament at Rheims, which was followed by the Old Testament at Douay, in 1609–10. Both were made from the Vulgate, and, in several places, favour the peculiarities of the Romish system. This is the version alone used by English Romanists.

§ 9. *Welsh, Irish, &c., versions.*—In 1563 an Act of Parliament directed that the Bible should be translated into Welsh for the use of the inhabitants of the Princi-

pality. The New Testament appeared in 1567, the Old about twenty years later. A corrected version, by Dr. Parry, bishop of St. Asaph, which formed the basis of all the subsequent editions, was printed at London in 1620. Until comparatively recent times, Wales was but poorly supplied with Bibles for private use. It was in the year 1802 that a few pious persons met to concert measures for the supplying of this want, which led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, one of the first of the beneficent labours of which was a large edition of the Bible in the Welsh tongue. Since that time an abundant supply has flowed into the Principality.

The pious Bedell, bishop of Kilmore, in 1629, was the first who formed the design of giving the Irish the Scriptures in their native tongue. He caused a translation to be executed, and was on the point of printing it, when the Rebellion put a temporary stop to the work. In 1685 it was published at the expense of the Hon. Robert Boyle. Several editions, under the auspices of the Protestant societies, have since appeared.

The Manx Bible, first projected by Dr. Wilson, bishop of Sodor and Man, has since been completed, and was printed in 1775 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and, more recently, by the Bible Society. The latter Society has also issued several editions of the Scriptures in the Gaelic tongue, spoken in the Highlands of Scotland.

CHAPTER VI.

CRITICAL RULES.

§ 1. *Sources of various readings.*—Since the mode of the transmission of the sacred books resembles that of ordinary secular compositions, and infallibility was not a prerogative of copyists, it was inevitable that, in the lapse of time, mistakes should occur, which, increasing as copies were multiplied, gave rise to what have been called various readings. The term has sometimes been employed to denote all the variations which occur in MSS.; but properly it signifies those cases only in which *different words* are used in the same passage. The others are rather differences in the mode of spelling the same word, such as occur in English books printed at considerable intervals of time. A very large proportion of the variations in ancient copies are variations of orthography.

Thus in the Greek MSS. the vowel-sounds were frequently interchanged, as $\epsilon\iota$ and ι , $\alpha\iota$ and ϵ . We have ΥMEIN and ΥMIN , $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\nu$ and $\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\nu$, $\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ and $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, $\eta\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\phi\alpha$ for $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\lambda\eta\phi\alpha$, $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ and $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\epsilon$; $\Lambda\text{AMBANETA}\iota$ may be either the 2d pers. pl. active, or the 3d pers. sing. passive, the sense alone determining which it is. In later MSS. the interchange of \omicron and ω is frequent. The Iota postscript, or subscript, gives rise to orthographic differences. Originally it was written after the vowel to which it belonged, as AI , \Omega I ; afterwards it was dropped, and when cursive letters were employed, it once more appears. In general, where no doubt exists as to the word intended, these peculiarities of orthography may be dismissed unnoticed.

Of various readings, properly so called, the causes are various. The first transcript from the author's autograph would probably not be faultless; subsequent transcribers would either perpetuate the mistakes, or attempt to correct them. The corrections would be made according to the ideas of each writer; these corrections would be again corrected; and so the chances of error would go on increasing as the number of copies increased. The early mode of writing, without any break between the words; the abbreviations in common use; the difficulty of correcting the new exemplar, written as it also was without divisions, must have greatly increased the difficulty of accurate transcription. To this we must add, that MSS. were sometimes dictated; and in this case the possibility of mistake was doubled, both the sight and the hearing participating therein. Finally, wilful tampering with the text, for party purposes, may have occurred, though this charge has never been satisfactorily substantiated.

The results of these various sources of error have been arranged by Dr. Tregelles¹ under the three heads of substitutions, insertions, and omissions. *Substitutions* are sometimes of similar letters, which is particularly observable in Hebrew MSS., e.g. for the common reading in Judges, viii. 16, "he taught (יָרָה) the men of Succoth," many MSS., and most of the versions, read, "he tore" (שָׁרַף). Sometimes synonymous words were put one for another, or clauses were transposed. A change of a single letter occasionally produces a different word, as ἐτροποφόρησεν (the common reading) for ἐτροφοφόρησεν, Acts, xiii. 18. In the dictating of MSS., similarity of sound may have given rise to errors; in this way the various reading ἀπηλπικότες ("without hope") for ἀπηλγηκότες ("past feeling"), Eph. iv. 19, is supposed to have arisen.

¹ Horne, *Introd. Edit.* 10, vol. iv. c. 6.

Compound and simple forms are interchanged, and contractions are frequently mistaken. For what the copyist thought a grammatical solecism, is substituted a reading more in accordance with syntax. Of all kinds of substitution, the most pregnant, according to Michaelis, is the altering of parallel passages, so as to make them identical in expression. Thus, in Matt. xvii. 2, for "white as the light," some copies have "white as the snow," from Mark, ix. 3. The gospels, from their containing so many parallel narratives, have suffered most in this way.

Insertions are due, in many instances, to the tendency last mentioned; as, for example, the form of the Lord's Prayer in Luke xi. has been amplified, to make it correspond with that in Matt. vi. 9; the words *σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτιζέιν*, found in St. Paul's account of his conversion, Acts, xxvi. 14, have been introduced into the narrative of the same event in c. 9. Citations from the Old Testament have been altered or expanded, in order to make them correspond exactly with the Septuagint. Perhaps the most prolific source of unauthorised additions was, the tendency of transcribers to introduce into the text marginal notes, or glosses, of which both MSS. and versions afford many remarkable examples. Thus, the clause in Acts, viii. 37, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest," was, no doubt, originally a gloss, or rather a traditionary addition in the margin, whence it gradually found its way into the text. The word Amen after certain doxologies appears to belong to the same category.

Omissions are much less frequent than insertions. Here, also, the aiming at exact parallelism influenced transcribers. They chiefly, however, proceeded from the inadvertence of the copyists, who, when words of similar termination occurred at a short interval in a passage, often

permitted the eye to catch the second word without further examination; in consequence of which all the intermediate words were omitted. Thus, in the Codex Bezae, the concluding words of Matt. v. 19, and the whole of v. 20, are omitted, because the expression, "kingdom of heaven," immediately precedes, and also concludes, the omitted portion. Occasionally omissions seem to have arisen from the practice of passing over, in the public reading of Scripture, certain portions of a narrative, either because they were inserted elsewhere, or were thought not fit for public exposition.¹

§ 2. *Critical rules.*—The object of textual criticism is to reproduce, as far as is possible, amidst the various and conflicting evidence, which, from the causes just mentioned, our extant MSS. furnish, what the author really wrote. To be successfully pursued, it manifestly requires a knowledge, not merely of the original languages, but of the history and peculiarities of ancient MSS.; a tact, almost an instinct, to perceive where a valuable reading is preserved, and where a copyist must have blundered; such as the labours of a life devoted to such subjects alone can form. In the present age the office of the critic and of the expositor should be kept distinct; the labours of either have their own place and their own importance; but when the attempt is made to combine them, the result is usually unsatisfactory.

The following rules, which have been proposed by critics, will give the reader some idea of the manner in which the text is settled.

1. Where all the external authorities agree in a reading, it is to be accounted the genuine one. This is evident, for the art of the critic consists in balancing the claims of

¹ See Tregelles in Horne's *Introd.* iv. p. 61.

conflicting evidence. The great bulk of Scripture is happily thus attested by unanimous testimony.

2. The same may be said of readings which are supported by *nearly* all the authorities ; or by the general concurrence of the *most ancient* MSS., versions, quotations, and parallel passages, as distinguished from later testimony. A recent MS., however, if it be proved to be a copy of a very ancient one, is of greater authority than one whose actual date may be older.

3. Readings found in versions, or the works of the fathers, alone, are entitled to little attention.

4. A few MSS. of different countries, or families, where they agree in a reading, outweigh many MSS. of the same genealogy supporting a different one.

5. In general the more difficult reading is to be preferred to the easier ; unusual forms to usual ; Hebraisms and solecisms, to pure grammatical forms ; and shorter readings to longer.

6. Where the balance of external testimony is equal, internal evidence, such as the style of the writer, the context, the design of the work, may be allowed a place.

7. Under the same circumstances, sometimes an early citation, sometimes a parallel passage, is decisive. Readings, too, from which others may naturally have been derived, are to be preferred.

8. Critical conjecture is rarely to be admitted in the Old Testament, and never in the New. The analogy which might be thought to exist between the formation of the text of Scripture and that of the classical works which time has spared us, is but imaginary. Classical works have, in general, been transmitted by very few MSS. ; occasionally, as in the case of Velleius Paterculus, by means of one ; here,

therefore, there is scope, where manifest corruptions exist, for critical sagacity in attempting to restore what the author really wrote. But the multitude of extant MSS. of Scripture, and of ancient versions, especially of the New Testament, renders critical speculations in this field wholly inapplicable. The materials of external evidence are abundant and various; the office of the critic therefore is, not to suggest what the inspired writers *might*, and in his opinion, *ought* to have written, but from these materials to aim at reproducing what he actually did write. As regards the Old Testament the case is rather different. Our extant MSS. are of comparatively recent date, and belong to but one family; the versions themselves have in many instances suffered; hence it may not be possible, by the aid of external testimony, to correct manifest mistakes, such as occasionally appear in numbers, dates, and genealogies. Yet even here critical conjecture, properly so called, is seldom allowable. Our best resource is the *internal* testimony of Scripture itself, *i.e.* the correcting of one passage, which may seem erroneous, by another which there is reason to believe contains the true reading. In this way many apparent contradictions may be removed.

The above canons refer chiefly to the New Testament, the following rules, especially applicable to the Old, are given by Dr. Davidson in his treatise on Biblical Criticism. (I. pp. 386, 387.)

“1. When the Masoretic text deviates from the other critical documents, and when these documents agree in their testimony quite independently of one another, the reading of the latter is preferable.

“2. If the documents disagree in testimony, the usual reading of the Masoretic text should be preferred, even

though a majority of the Hebrew MSS. collated cannot be quoted in its favour.

“ 3. A reading found in the Masoretic text alone, or in the sources of evidence alone, independently of the Masoretic text, is suspicious.

“ 4. If the MSS. of the original text disagree with one another, number does not give the greater weight; but other things, such as age, country, &c., aided by internal grounds.”

PART II.

AUTHORITY AND INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

THE foregoing observations will have sufficiently explained the circumstances under which the Bible, considered merely as an ancient book, has come down to us : but to Christians this volume is more than a record of interesting events, more than a collection of masterpieces in the several departments of literary composition ; to them it is a communication from God to man, an authoritative revelation of His will ; it is, in short, the Word of God, the inspired standard of faith and practice. We have next, then, to inquire, on what grounds, and to what extent, we attribute this exalted prerogative to the Scriptures? And since, the divine origin of the Bible being supposed, it is above all things important that its meaning be, with the utmost possible exactness, ascertained, some observations will then come to be offered on the principles of Scripture interpretation.

CHAPTER I.

INSPIRATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

§ 1. *The Scriptures inspired.*—The question of the Inspiration of the Scriptures is distinct from that of the Divine origin of the Christian religion.¹ Miracles, and

¹ The distinction has not been always kept in view. Thus in Mr. Horne's valuable Introduction, a large space of vol. i. is devoted to the subject of the "Inspiration of the Scriptures," for which the two

prophecy, form the external credentials of an ambassador from God; they prove that the Creator is about to come forth from the clouds and darkness which surround His throne, for the purpose of declaring His attributes, or counsels; they are, as an eminent writer expresses it, "the great bell of the universe," to call attention to the announcement that is to follow: but when the communications thus made from God to man have to be committed to writing, to form a permanent record for the benefit of future ages, it is obvious that to guard against error, arising from the failure of memory, or the admixture of the human element with the divine, a superintending influence of the Spirit is necessary, beyond the original afflatus, or Divine impulse; and this is properly the gift of inspiration, a term which, contrary to the view advocated by a modern writer (Davidson, in Horne's *Introd.* vol. ii. p. 373), should be applied, not to the men but to the books, or to the men as composers of the books. Prophecies uttered under the impulse of the Spirit were not, perhaps, committed to writing for some time afterwards;—what guarantee would there be that they were correctly recorded, had not the prophets, or other persons, been inspired for that very purpose. The main external arguments adduced are "Miracles" and "Prophecy." But these are proofs of a Divine mission in general, not of a special commission to write a book. Our Lord proved Himself by miracles and prophecy to be "sent from God;" St. Luke, of whom no miracles are recorded, was inspired to write memoirs of Christ, and the history of the early Church. The gifts of miracles and prophecy might be distinct from the gift of correctly handing down the record of their exercise; and these endowments were often, as in St. Luke's case, separated. The former mark the entrance of revelation into the world; the latter ensures that it shall be transmitted pure. Jeremiah prophesying was in one sense inspired; Jeremiah commissioned to record his prophecies for the benefit of future ages, long after they were delivered, needed a further gift of the Spirit to preserve him from error; and this is the gift to which the term inspiration is here confined.

pose; viz. to record correctly what had been uttered? Accordingly we find that many inspired men were not inspired to write books; and, on the other hand, that others, who could not claim to be directly sent by God to communicate His will to man, received a Divine mission to compose, or to select, such written memorials as it seemed good to Divine providence to perpetuate for the use of the Church.

Inspiration, thus understood, may be defined to be, a special influence of the Holy Spirit, whereby the writers of Scripture were, in the act of writing, supernaturally preserved from error, and enabled to transmit, in its integrity, the original revelation as they received it. We call it a *special* influence of the Spirit, to distinguish it from that which all Christians enjoy, ordinary sanctifying and illuminating grace: between the highest measures of this, and the gift of inspiration, there is a specific difference; nor could the former, by natural growth, ever have passed into the latter. We confine it to the writers (or compilers) of Scripture to distinguish it from the spiritual gifts with which men of God, who had received no commission to write, may have been endowed; who, in one sense, were inspired, but were not the agents of the Spirit in placing inspired communications on record.

It is antecedently probable that if the Creator vouchsafed to reveal to man by man any portion of His counsels and will, He would also make provision for the faithful transmission of these communications: otherwise all generations subsequent to that which actually heard the words, and witnessed the acts, of the prophets and apostles, would be reduced to stake their faith, and their highest interests, upon human testimony. If the writers of Scripture were not supernaturally guided, the volume might still indeed claim to be an authentic record of the

doctrine of Christ, just as Plato and Xenophon are deemed authentic expositors of the teaching of Socrates; but in the former case too much depends on the perfect trustworthiness of the record, not to make it most desirable, nay imperative, that all doubts on this head should be removed. Scripture itself leaves no doubt upon the subject.

Commencing with the New Testament, we find Christ promising to those, whom He had appointed His witnesses and ambassadors, that after His departure, another Advocate, or Instructor, the Holy Ghost, should abide with them, who should not merely recall to their remembrance what He had spoken, but supplement His teaching in those points in which "the whole truth" had not as yet been delivered to them.¹ The same Divine assistance had been previously assured to them for a particular case; viz. when they should be called before the magnates of the world to give an account of their doctrines and proceedings.² These promises were, we are assured, fulfilled. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit visibly descended upon the Apostles, who forthwith began to preach "as the Spirit gave them utterance;"³ represent themselves in their regulations, as acting under His guidance;⁴ lay claim to a spiritual wisdom, which is not of man, but was revealed to them of God, and which they express in words, "not of man's teaching, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."⁵ If these claims be not utterly groundless, we must believe that the Apostles, in their statements of doctrine and in their official acts, spoke and acted as special agents of the Holy Ghost, in such a sense as that the Holy Spirit may be said to have spoken and acted through them.

Of the eight writers of the New Testament, five were of the number of these accredited messengers; and surely

¹ John, xiv. 16-26. ² Luke, xii. 11, 12. ³ Acts, ii. 4.

⁴ Acts, xv. 28; 1 Cor. vii. 40.

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 10-13.

we cannot suppose that when they took in hand the task of recording what they had seen and heard, or furnishing instruction for the benefit of future ages, they would be left destitute of this special guidance of the Spirit? Would they be supernaturally preserved from error in preaching to the few, and revert to fallibility when writing for the many? Indeed the promise, that Christ would be with His Apostles for ever,¹ implies such a Divine superintendence of their writings, for since they were not in their proper persons to remain always upon earth, it is only in their writings that they survive; it is only in connexion with their writings that the promise is capable of fulfilment: Matthew, John, and Peter, still speak to us in the Scriptures, and in the Scriptures only; if, therefore, Christ is not with the apostolic writings, in the same sense in which He was with their authors, the perpetuity of the promise has failed.

But it may be said, These promises of our Lord were addressed only to Apostles in the strict sense of the word; but a considerable portion of the New Testament,—*e.g.* the Gospels of St. Luke and St. Mark, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Hebrews (if it was not the composition of St. Paul),—was not written by Apostles, and therefore does not come to us with the same authority as the rest of the volume. But we must bear in mind, in the first place, that we nowhere read that the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were confined to the Apostles; it was to be one of the distinctive features of the Christian dispensation that spiritual gifts, instead of being, as of old, bestowed upon a few individuals, should be common property;² and in fact, they manifested themselves promiscuously in the Christian Church.³ There is, therefore, no antecedent improbability against the supposition that St.

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

² Joel, ii. 28.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 4–11.

Luke and St. Mark, equally with St. Matthew and St. John, possessed the gift of inspiration. In the next place, these apostolical men were only second to the Apostles in those prerogatives which distinguished the latter from ordinary Christians. It was, in the first place, the peculiar privilege of the eleven that they "beheld the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" that from personal intercourse with the Saviour they received an impression of His glory which none others could pretend to, and which in the case of those who, like Paul, were destined to occupy the same position as the Apostles, needed to be supplied by extraordinary revelations.¹ Even apart from the gift of inspiration, this personal fellowship with the Saviour must have qualified the Apostles, beyond all other men, to exhibit in their writings a faithful portraiture of the Divine original. But Mark and Luke, if they were not actual witnesses of the great mystery of godliness, yet consorted habitually with those that had been; received from their lips the very words of Christ; and possessed opportunities which none of their successors could possess, of testing the accuracy of current traditions, and correcting their own impressions by a reference to those who had seen and handled the Word of life. The same providential qualifications which rendered the Apostles fit instruments of the Spirit in transmitting the true doctrine of Christ, existed, if in a secondary, yet only in a secondary degree, in those who were associated with those inspired messengers in the daily labours of their ministry. Another prerogative belonging to the college of the Apostles was, that they were the founders and fathers of the Christian Church; and it was to the exercise of this function that the assistance of the Holy

¹ Acts, ix.

Ghost was specially attached.¹ But if not commissioned directly by Christ Himself, yet the special fellow-helpers of the Apostles were so connected with the latter in their mission that no inconsiderable portion of the prerogative in question belongs to them; they assisted at the formation of Christian societies; they watered where the Apostles had planted; in the absence of the latter, they supplied their place, and exercised their functions.² Where there was a similarity of office, we may believe that when occasion required there would be a similarity of spiritual endowment: so far at least may be affirmed, that if the Holy Spirit, in selecting the subjects of inspiration made use of natural and providential qualifications (and of this there can be no doubt), next to the Apostles themselves none were so fit to be intrusted with the gift as the immediate followers and successors of the Apostles. We receive, therefore, even before we open the volume of their writings, without suspicion, the universal testimony of the Church from the first, that Mark and Luke (and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews) were inspired equally with the Apostles, to compose the books which pass under their names.

It is impossible, however, in a question of this kind to leave out of view the testimony, corroborative or the reverse, of internal evidence. Were there any marked discrepancy, either of style or doctrine, in the books that are not of directly Apostolic origin from those which were written by Apostles, there would be reason, if not for a summary decision against their claims, yet for hesitation and perplexity. But the moment we inspect these writings, we perceive in them the unmistakable traces of a

¹ John, xx. 21-23; Luke, xxiv. 46-49; Acts, xiii. 2.

² 1 Tim. i. 3; Tit. i. 5.

Divine origin. It is not so much the perfect harmony in the leading particulars of Christ's life, or the leading doctrines of the Gospel, subsisting between the two classes of inspired writings that strikes the mind, as the identity of *tone* and manner, which, if we may judge from the spurious attempts of the first two centuries, never could have been successfully counterfeited. There is the same absence of human emotion, or the expression of human feelings; the same dignity and authority of address; the same freedom from puerile details or legendary fables; the same *abstinence* of taste in the selection of materials; the same noble simplicity of language. With the single exception of Clement's first Epistle to the Corinthians, nothing approaching in these points to the Canonical books has ever appeared in the Church, even in the age immediately subsequent to the Apostolic. Writings so peculiar, the compositions of men not remarkable for genius or learning, carry with them their own impress of authority: the Christian instinct discerns in them the plenary mind of the Spirit, and without an effort assigns them to the same category with the writings of John or of Paul.

The inspiration of the Old Testament follows at once from that of the New. We have, indeed, human testimony to the former as to the latter; for as the Church of Christ, "the witness and keeper" of her own Scriptures, has from the first testified to their inspiration, so the Jews, the appointed guardians of the oracles of the Old covenant, have, with equal unanimity, regarded those oracles as written under the immediate influence of the Divine Spirit. We have, too, the express declarations of the prophets that the Word in their mouths is the Word of God. But we have more; we have the witness of Christ Himself, and of the inspired Apostles, to the inspiration of the

Jewish Scriptures. The Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, comprehending, as has been observed in another place, our present Canon of the Old Testament, are repeatedly referred to by Christ as forming a recognised body of writings, which the Jews of His time were accustomed to call "the Scriptures," and to which He affixes the seal of His own ratification. "Search the Scriptures;"¹ and these Scriptures are the "Word of God;"² "God spake unto Moses;"³ "David said, by the Holy Ghost. 'The Lord said unto my Lord,' &c.;"⁴ the Scriptures testify of Christ, and must be fulfilled.⁵ Not less express are the statements of the Apostles. The Old Testament Scriptures, collectively, are "given by inspiration of God;"⁶ "God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake by the prophets;"⁷ "holy men of God spake as they were moved of the Holy Ghost;"⁸ "the prophets searched what the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify;"⁹ passages are quoted from almost every book as of Divine authority. In these testimonies of Christ and the Apostles, it is particularly to be observed that not the writers, but the writings, are most frequently declared to be inspired. The significance of this observation will be perceived if we remember that, as regards several books of the Old Testament, we are unable positively to ascertain the authors of them, and therefore cannot, from the known character of the latter, infer the inspiration of the former; but the statements of Christ and the Apostles are so framed as to leave the authority of the books untouched, whoever may have composed or compiled them. For it is a certain body of writings, perfectly well known and defined, which, under the title

¹ John, v. 39.² Mark, vii. 13.³ Mark, xii. 26.⁴ Mark, xii. 36.⁵ John, v. 39; Matt. xxvi. 24.⁶ 2 Tim. iii. 15.⁷ Heb. i. 1.⁸ 2 Pet. i. 21.⁹ 1 Pet. i. 11.

of Scripture, they pronounce inspired; so that the question of the inspiration of the Old Testament resolves itself into the question of the Old Testament Canon in our Lord's time; once this point is satisfactorily made out, the inspiration of the writings which belong to the Canon follows as a matter of course. We may not know for certain who were the authors of the books of Job and of Judges, but we are certain that in the time of Christ they formed part of the Canon; and forming part of it, received His attestation to their inspiration.

But are we not, in resting the inspiration of Scripture upon the testimony of Scripture itself, guilty of the logical error of *petitio principii*, or begging the question? For we seem to take for granted the fact which we propose to prove. But let it be observed, that the doctrine of inspiration is not necessary to constitute Scripture a trustworthy record of the teaching of Christ and the Apostles: it would remain so even if the result of our investigations should be that it is a mere human composition. Plato and Xenophon, though not inspired, are considered authentic and credible expositors of the doctrines of Socrates; we claim no more for Matthew, Luke, and John. On mere historical grounds, their witness is unexceptionable; and that witness is to the effect that Christ both placed the seal of Divine authority on the Old Testament Scriptures, and promised His Apostles supernatural aid in the discharge of their mission; and not least, assuredly, in that part of it which consisted in fixing the true type of Christian doctrine for all future ages.

There are other collateral or internal grounds for the common faith of the Church, which are of great weight, though here they can but receive a passing notice; *e. g.* the so-called teleological argument, or the argument from

final causes. What was the purpose for which Scripture was given to the Church? And could that purpose have been attained otherwise than by its being so ordered, not merely that the personages whose acts or words it records were messengers from God, but that the record itself should be God's message to man? The marvellous unity of sentiment and design which pervades the whole volume, though the component parts of it are the productions of authors, separated from each other by intervals of many centuries, and by every variety of station, mental culture, and natural disposition. The singular preservation of these records, under circumstances of national apostasy, national dissolution, the fires of persecution, and the corruption of Christian Churches; a preservation which extends, not merely to the substance of the Prophetic and Apostolic teaching, but, as has been previously shown, with inconsiderable exceptions, to the very letter of what they delivered. The innate force of the language of the Bible, which has moulded and enriched every tongue of Christendom, and in every translation, retains its native energy. The inexhaustible fertility of the mine, which the more it is worked gives forth the more; the student ever finding something new and fresh in the sacred page. The calmness and impartiality with which the writers narrate events the most likely to awaken human passion, and tempt to exaggeration. The adaptation of the matter of the Scriptures to the wants of human nature in all ages and countries. When we recollect that the authors were men of one people, secluded by its institutions from the rest of the world, and undistinguished among the nations of antiquity for its literature, its commerce, or its conquests; and men of ordinary education and capacity; on what other supposition but that of a special Divine superintendence can the facts of the case be accounted for?

§ 2. *Nature and extent of inspiration.*—We proceed to make some remarks upon the nature and extent of inspiration. With the mode in which the Divine Spirit operated upon the mind of man we are unacquainted; the result is all that is cognizable by us. Even the subjects of inspiration, though perfectly aware when the Divine power rested on them and when it did not, would probably have been at a loss to explain the theory of its agency. The result which presents itself to us is such a combination of spiritual influence with human agency as renders the Scriptures at once Divine and human.

The older theory of plenary inspiration, which regards the sacred writers as merely amanuenses or passive organs of the Spirit, the theory which in modern times has received the name of mechanical, has not been able to maintain its ground. In all acts of creative power, it is only the first entrance of the Divine agency into the world that is properly independent of natural causes; afterwards the two co-operate and can no longer be distinguished. Thus in the work of regeneration, the first quickening of the soul is an act of grace in which the subject has no part; but in the subsequent stages, man co-operates with God, and by a mixed agency, Divine and human, the “measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” is reached. By analogy we should suppose that, while the primary communication of the inspiring Spirit would be independent of the human instrument, the subsequent process of exposition would be carried on in conjunction with, and by the means of, the natural faculties in each case. This conclusion is confirmed by the confessed differences of style which the inspired volume exhibits. The writings of the several authors are strongly marked by the peculiar colouring which the education, talents, or natural temperament of each were calculated to impart; an Epistle of

Paul could never be mistaken for one of John ; and Peter, in his style, resembles neither of those Apostles. Each has his own peculiar trains of thought, and expresses himself in the language familiar to him: the compositions themselves, for the most part, are the offspring of circumstances, and do not exhibit any preconceived plan. We must conclude, therefore, that the sacred writers, when under the influence of inspiration, were under no constraint in the exercise of their faculties, but spoke and wrote as men to men; that the result, therefore, if it is the word of God, is also the word of man.

On the other hand, however, we must believe that the preternatural influence was so exercised as to exclude the possibility of human error, or inadvertence. The Holy Spirit made use of natural or acquired faculties, acted through and by them; but effectually guarded the result from the admixture of natural infirmity. Less than this would render the whole doctrine of inspiration nugatory. Be it remembered that it is not with the occult process of the Spirit's influence, or with the deposition of revelation in the Apostles' minds, that we have to do; what concerns us is that the deposit should issue from its source pure and unmutilated; it is the written word of God that is to be a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. And, therefore, we must hold that the language used, as well as the thoughts embodied, was the subject of the Holy Spirit's guardianship; and that, whether the words were directly dictated from above, or permitted to be naturally used by the writer, they were equally controlled by the Divine agent. We argue thus, not merely from the express statements of Scripture which assert it;¹ not merely from the instances in which the argument turns upon the use of a word;² but from the necessity of the case. The

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

² Gal iii. 16.

thought or sentiment of another is nothing to us until it is expressed in words : it is they that give it visible form and permanency. If, therefore, inspiration extended merely to the thoughts of the writers, while in the expression of those thoughts they were left to themselves, what guarantee should we have that improper or even erroneous expressions had not been used as the medium of communication ?

Furthermore, we must hold that inspiration extends to *all parts* of the Bible, the history as well as the doctrine or the morality. For if some portions be inspired, and others not, while no oracle has clearly pronounced which we are to regard as Divine and which as human, it is obvious that the whole becomes involved in doubt, and we stand not upon a rock, but upon shifting sand. It must ultimately be each man's private judgment that is to distinguish between the Divine and the human element ; that is, there will be as many Bibles as there are readers of different judgment or capacity. Moreover, was inspiration less needed in the historical than in the other portions of Scripture ? To transcribe, it is urged, the mere annals of the Jewish nation, or to write memoirs of Christ, needed no Divine interposition. It is forgotten that Scripture presents but a *selection* from these sources ; and what mere human power would have been adequate to the task of selection ? Out of the mass of the national records, those portions were to be chosen which should illustrate the dealings of God with man, or bear upon the scheme of redemption, or throw light upon the accomplishment of prophecy ; a work obviously beyond the reach of unassisted reason. The same principle of selection pervades the New Testament. St. John tells us that " if all the things that Jesus did were to be written, the world could not contain

the books that should be written ;"¹ how then were the Apostles enabled to cull from the mass just so much as was necessary to give us a perfect portraiture of their Divine Master? In their epistolary communications to churches they *omit* much that might seem naturally to lie in their way, such as details of church government, or ritual: we see the wisdom of this, but how came they to act herein so differently from others who, in various ages, have occupied an analogous position? Details of the kind mentioned are just those upon which uninspired founders of churches would have been likely to enlarge; what restrained the Apostles from thus transforming Christianity into a new law? The omissions of Scripture are as significant as its contents, and equally prove its Divine origin.

The modern phrase, then, that the Bible is not, but contains the word of God, must be held to be of pernicious import.² Its tendency is, either to confine inspiration to the thoughts of the writers, or to introduce the idea of a partial inspiration; that is, to make human reason, or the so-called moral sense, the ultimate tribunal before which the claims of any given portion of Scripture are to be tried. The Bible only *contains* the word of God; who then is to separate the wheat from the chaff, to trace the stream of inspiration as it meanders through the pages of the volume? To enable any man to do this unerringly would

¹ John, xxi. 25.

² "The men were inspired, the books are the results of that inspiration."—ALFORD, *Gr. Test.* i. p. 21. If by this statement is meant that the Apostles, though as witnesses of Christ, and founders of the Church, they were inspired, were *not inspired to write the books* of Scripture, it is liable to the objections above advanced. If, on the other hand, it also implies the latter, it is not easy to see what additional light the learned author has, by the distinction, thrown upon the subject.

require a power nothing short of inspiration itself. Nor can we admit the hypothesis of degrees, or kinds, of inspiration. What learned men have written respecting the inspiration of "suggestion," of "direction," of "elevation," and of "superintendency," is but a vain attempt to explain what is inexplicable; a figment which finds no support in Scripture, and fails in the practical application. Again, and again, it must be impressed on the reader's mind that, not "the process of the manufacture," but "the result of the commodity,"¹ is what practically concerns us; and we are assured that the result is, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The only distinction that is of any real value is that between the impulse of the Spirit to write, and his superintendency over the act of writing. By the former is meant the inward prompting which led, we may say compelled,² a prophet, or an apostle, to take in hand a certain subject for the benefit of the Church; by the latter, the supervision which was exercised over the process of composition. But, in either case it was the same Spirit, and in the same measure, that operated upon, and by, the human agent.

Objections may, and have, been taken against the above view of inspiration, which, however, do not seem in any way to invalidate it. Objections from the acts or the sentiments recorded in Scripture; as if the inspiration of the historian, or compiler, which enabled him to select, and to represent faithfully, the events he narrates, implied approbation of what is narrated. Objections from alleged historical inaccuracies or inconsistencies; as if plenary inspiration implies that of several narrators all should use the very same words in the very same order: not to mention the possibility that many of the so-called "inaccuracies" may disappear with the progress of knowledge, or

¹ Chalmers, Works, vol. iv. p. 353. ² Jer. xx. 9; 1 Cor. ix. 16.

the discovery of new sources of information.¹ Objections from alleged inaccuracies in matters of natural science, or discrepancies from the conclusions of scientific inquiry ; as if it were the object of Scripture to convey accurate knowledge on these subjects, and it be not a question, as yet undetermined, how far those interpretations which seem to clash with the results of science are the true ones. How shallow some of these objections are may be gathered from a single instance. Scripture, it is said, by its language, favours the exploded notion that the earth is stationary, while the sun, and other heavenly bodies, revolve round it. Does not every astronomer, we reply, use the same language when he describes the phenomena, not as they are in themselves, but as they appear to us ? Does he not speak, and habitually, of the sun's rising and the sun's setting ? Of the fixed stars passing, one after another, a certain meridian line ? Scripture, in like manner, speaks, not of real, but of apparent motion ; and could only thus speak. For all motion, hitherto discovered, is but apparent and relative, not absolute. Thus relatively to the *earth* the sun is at rest, but relatively to the mightier system of which he forms a part, he is in motion ; so that, strictly speaking, until we shall have discovered the point of absolute rest in the universe,² all our language on this subject must be inaccurate, and the most exact expounder of the Newtonian

¹ "Demonstrable inaccuracies," ALFORD, vol. i. p. 19, is a phrase easily used, but not so easily made good. The difficulties of Scripture (and that there are difficulties is unquestionable) are not to be thus summarily dealt with. On the "inaccuracies" alluded to, those in Stephen's speech (Acts, vii. 4, and 15, 16), see Professor Lee's remarks, *Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, Ed. 2. p. 527. Even if it be granted that Stephen spoke inaccurately, what has this to do with the inspiration of St. Luke, who merely records Stephen's speech ?

² See a lecture delivered before the Cheltenham Literary Institution by Rev. H. Highton, M.A., Principal of the College.

system can only describe things as they appear to be, and not as they are.

From an erroneous interpretation of a passage in St. Paul's Epistles (1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25) it has been inferred that the Apostle himself, in this instance, disclaims the prerogative of inspiration, whereas an attentive examination of his argument will prove that he asserts it most strongly. He had no express Divine commandment to allege on the subject of virginity as he had on the indissolubility of the marriage tie: but he, notwithstanding, gives his own judgment, and this judgment, far from being that of uninspired man, proceeds from one who "had the Spirit of God." (v. 40.) Scripture, it has been alleged, abounds with barren or trivial, details of history; can we suppose these portions to have been indited under the immediate guidance of the Spirit? As well might we argue that the apparently fruitless tracts of barren land, or the animalculæ of a drop of water, could not have, equally with the fairest and greatest productions of nature, proceeded from the Creator. On the question, what ought to be the character of an inspired volume? we are as ignorant as we are on the kindred one, what ought to be the physical conformation of the globe? What to us appears trivial may have its necessary use.

One general remark may here be made: difficulties which affect only the substance, or the manner, of an inspired communication, are of no weight, while the *evidence* of its being inspired remains unimpaired. The force of the evidence we can estimate; we are quite incompetent judges of the particular form which the written record should assume; how much it should contain that is obscure, how much that is apparently inconsistent, how much apparently of small moment. "The only question concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it be

a real revelation, not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for ; and concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such a sort, and so promulgated, as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a Divine revelation should. And therefore, neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts ; nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture ; unless the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord had promised that the book containing the Divine revelation should be secure from these things.”¹

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

SCRIPTURE then, we have reason to believe, is of God ; but since the meaning of Scripture is Scripture, it will have failed of the purposes for which it was intended unless we can discover and apply that meaning. We are thus led to the subject of Biblical interpretation, or the rules to be observed in order to arrive at a right understanding of the word of God. The observations to be made upon this head may be conveniently arranged under two divisions :— The qualifications necessary for an interpreter of Scripture ; and the principles of the process itself of interpretation.

SECT. I. *Qualifications.*— It has long been a matter of remark that the will and the understanding mutually influence each other ; and that the perception of moral truth

¹ Butler's Analogy, part ii. c. .

is very much dependent upon the right disposition of the inquirer. Not, indeed, that the will can absolutely control the understanding, so as to create belief or unbelief at its pleasure; but that it can operate indirectly, by indisposing the mind to the exercise of that attention which may be requisite to perceive the force of evidence, or by leading it to confound moral distaste with intellectual difficulties. From wishing a thing to be untrue it is but a short step to believing it to be so, or, more commonly, to a chronic state of hesitation, which neither absolutely denies, nor yet cordially accepts; the will can bribe the understanding either to pervert, or to forego its functions. If this be the case in the investigation of ordinary moral subjects, how much more may it be expected to prevail in the interpretation of Scripture, which at once contains mysteries likely to offend the pride of human reason, and a standard of practice which militates against the most cherished propensities of the natural heart. Certain moral, therefore, as well as intellectual qualifications are necessary to the successful exercise of the function of an interpreter. Among these may be mentioned,

§ 1. *Love of truth.*—An earnest desire to arrive at correct views of Divine truth, a love of truth for truth's sake, is a much rarer quality than is generally imagined. Men too often approach the inquiry with preconceived notions, drawn from human systems, and instead of allowing Scripture to impress itself upon their minds, they seek to impress their views upon Scripture; they come to the word of God, not to be taught, but to be confirmed in a foregone conclusion. They are especially liable to this danger who stand in the fore-front of the ranks of controversy, or, in the various parties which divide Christendom, assume the office of advocates. The temptation is so strong to overstate the force of an argument, or to pass over dif-

faculties as if they did not exist, or to urge particular texts of Scripture beyond what they will fairly bear; in short, to indulge in something like pious frauds; in order to silence an adversary, or gain a supposed advantage to the cause advocated, that few are able to resist it. Thus the Pædo-baptist finds a command to baptize infants in our Lord's injunction "to go teach all nations, baptizing them;" for (he urges) infants are a part of "nations;" forgetting that our Lord is not speaking of the proper *subjects* of baptism, but simply of the duty of gathering in disciples from every part of the world; and that by the same mode of reasoning the Jesuit missionaries, who are reported to have literally baptized nations, might have justified their practice: while the Anti-pædo-baptist leaves out of sight the significant fact, that in the Apostolic administration of baptism to adults the sacrament was not deferred until visible signs of regeneration had been exhibited, but was administered at once, on an expression of desire for it. (See the various instances in the Acts of the Apostles.) The Episcopalian insists that by St. Paul Timothy and Titus were appointed diocesan Bishops of Ephesus and Crete respectively; whereas nothing is plainer than that during the lifetime of the Apostle these ministers of Christ were never permanently established in any one place, but accompanied their master in his travels, and were employed by him, from time to time, in temporary missions: the opponent of Episcopacy refuses to attach any importance to the circumstance that, whether for a longer or a shorter time, the chief government of the Churches of Ephesus and Crete, respectively, was by St. Paul committed to an individual. It is thus that the love of party displaces the love of truth; and while Scripture is appealed to on all sides, it is seldom allowed in reality to decide the questions at issue. The judgment, magnetized

by some theological predilection, receives a bias which insensibly, but certainly, influences its decisions.

Of all predispositions, indeed, it is impossible to discharge the mind; nor is it the plan of Providence that we should come to Scripture with perfectly unformed opinions. Scripture was not designed to teach religion in the first instance; that function belongs to the Church. It is from the Church, that is, from living instructors, such as parents and teachers, that we all imbibe the elements of religious knowledge; we receive the deposit of faith at first, on trust. Afterwards we examine the inspired word to confirm, and if need be, correct, the impressions thus received. That is to say, the interpreter of Scripture must necessarily be of the Church: the utter absence of the common faith of Christendom were a complete disqualification for the office. It is not, therefore, on fundamental points, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, that the quality of singleness of mind in the pursuit of truth finds its proper sphere of exercise; but rather on those subordinate topics, which have ever divided, and will as long as human nature remains what it is continue to divide, the Christian body. And here the importance of cultivating a sincere love of truth, whatever the discovery of it may cost, cannot be overrated.

§ 2. *Docility*.—A second qualification without which the sense of Scripture is sure to be missed is, a willingness to receive what it plainly reveals, however mysterious the doctrine may be. This docility of disposition rests upon the cordial admission of two facts,—the insufficiency of human reason for the discovery or comprehension of spiritual truth, and the plenary inspiration of the Old and New Testaments. If reason be supposed competent, not merely as it is, to decide upon the validity of the evidences,

but to determine what should be the provisions of the Christian scheme ; if the so-called moral sense is to be the arbiter of belief ; while at the same time Scripture is held not to be but to contain the word of God ; the failure of the interpreter becomes almost inevitable. Reason will decide how much of the statements of Scripture is to be received, and how much rejected ; reason will fix the sense in which the acknowledged portions are to be understood ; with what results may easily be anticipated. Hence the failure, even in a literary point of view, of the rationalistic commentaries of modern Germany, and of their imitations amongst ourselves ; the poverty, the shallowness, which amidst much parade of learning they exhibit. They give us the Bible such as men would have it ; dwarfed to the level of human intelligence, and shorn of those unfathomable mysteries which, if it be really the word of God, it must necessarily contain ; the absence of which, in fact, would be sufficient to throw doubt upon the validity of its claims.

The theological novelties, which from time to time run their brief course and pass out of sight, like comets, owe, for the most part, their origin to an absence of that docility of spirit which springs from the felt incompetency of reason to fathom the things of God. Whatever disagrees with the dictates of reason, or the moral sense, the Rationalist urges, is to be rejected ; an arrogant assumption, even if reason and the moral sense were wholly uninjured, for "the things of God knoweth no man" (fully and exactly) "but the Spirit of God."¹ But how much more arrogant, when, as in this case, reason has been partially blinded, and the moral sense perverted, by the effects of the fall. The usual result of interpretations

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 11.

conducted upon such principles is, not the sense of our present Scriptures, but another Scripture, very different from the original.

§ 3. *Teaching of the Holy Spirit.*— A still more important qualification for the office of interpreter, and indeed one that comprises all others of a moral nature, is that he be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, without whose aid the spiritual sense of Scripture cannot, though the mere words may, be understood. There is nothing unreasonable in this. The works of Plato can only be successfully interpreted by a commentator who, besides being familiar with the philosophy and language, is able to enter into the spirit and peculiar genius, of his author; the commentator must himself be of Platonic mind: in like manner, to understand an author who has been inspired by the Holy Spirit to write, we need ourselves to be under the influence of the same Spirit. And this the more because, unlike human compositions however peculiar, Scripture introduces us into a region of ideas and feelings wholly new and *sui generis*. For a commentator, then, to attempt to expound the expressions of Christian experience while a stranger himself to that experience, would be as vain as for a man born blind to take upon himself to discourse upon the nature of colours, or a man born deaf upon the nature of harmony.

This may be termed the one great prerequisite in the expositor, for it necessarily involves or leads to the favourable dispositions previously mentioned. He who is under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and in proportion as he is so, will cultivate a love of truth for truth's sake, and will prostrate his understanding and his will before the voice of God in His word. But inasmuch as God works by means, a fourth condition of success in the work of interpretation is,—

§ 4. A diligent use of all the *external means* of arriving at the sense of Scripture which are within our reach. Such are, the study of the original languages; the tradition of the Church; the labours of predecessors in the same field; the history, antiquities, &c. of the people with whose affairs Scripture is chiefly occupied. Where leisure permits, and especially in the case of those whose profession it is to expound the word of God, no fruitful result can be anticipated if these helps be neglected; and even the private Christian cannot be excused if he omits to prosecute studies of this kind, as far as his necessary secular engagements permit.

SECT. 2.—*Rules of Interpretation.*

We proceed to consider the rules to be observed in the process itself of Interpretation. They have been variously classified according as divisions into the literal and the figurative, the general and the special, the grammatical and the dogmatical, sense of Scripture have formed the basis of the discussion: we shall adopt the first-mentioned division, under which most of the points to be noticed may conveniently find a place.

§ 1. *Literal Interpretation.*

Words are arbitrary signs of ideas. They are either literal or figurative; that is, they are used either in their natural and proper acceptation, as when we speak of a distinguished statesman, or in a transferred sense, as when we describe the same person as a pillar of the state. The terms spiritual, mystical, and allegorical, belong, not to modes of verbal expression, but to the matter of a passage; as in the parable of the sower the expressions used are literal, but the parable involves a further spiritual meaning. Our present inquiry is, how the sense of the expressions

used by the inspired writers is to be ascertained? The expositor may call to his aid materials drawn from sources either external to the text or contained in the text itself.

I. Sources external to the text are, in the case of a dead language (and throughout it is to the Scriptures in the original that the present remarks principally apply), 1. The testimony of writers to whom the language was vernacular, or of those who, though foreigners, had made themselves acquainted with it; 2. Glossaries, scholiasts, versions, &c.; 3. Etymology; 4. The analogy of languages; 5. Historical circumstances, such as the notions prevalent among the people to whom Scripture was addressed, facts of chronology, natural history, geography, and the manners and customs of the East.

1. *Testimony of writers.*—When the meaning of an expression is not defined or illustrated by the author himself whom we are interpreting, we must have recourse to contemporary writers, or, if none such are extant, to the testimony of those to whom, though not contemporary, the language was vernacular. Hence the use of a good lexicon, which is nothing else but a collection of historical testimony to the meaning of the words it contains; earlier writers explaining the later, and the later reflecting back light upon earlier usages. Just as Herodotus illustrates the diction of Thucydides, or Æschylus that of Sophocles, the writers of the New Testament, who, though distinct, and each marked by his own characteristics of style, all compose in the Hellenistic dialect, afford mutual aid in the matter of interpretation. Thus if we would understand the important word “righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη) as used by St. Paul, we must not only carefully examine the Apostle’s own definitions and examples, but observe the shades of meaning which it bears in the Gospels, and in the Epistles of St. John and St. Peter.

Next in value are the writings of foreigners to whom the language was familiar, especially those whose diction was coloured by the influence of a Jewish education, such as Philo and Josephus. These writers illustrate not merely the sentiments, but the language of the New Testament; though of course we cannot expect from them any explanation of terms embodying peculiarly Christian ideas. The testimony of the Greek Fathers, particularly of professed commentators like Chrysostom, possesses the same claim to attention; they interpret their own vernacular tongue.

2. *Glossaries, &c.*—Assistance in the interpretation of terms may sometimes be derived from glossaries, scholia, and versions. A glossary is a lexicon of those words only which are distinguished by some peculiarity, such as rarity of occurrence, or obscurity of meaning: the principal ancient Greek glossaries are those of Hesychius, Suidas, Phavorinus, Photius, and the *Etymologicum Magnum*. By recent lexicographers, especially Schleusner, much use has been made of the researches of these writers.

Scholia are short notes, sometimes giving the sense, sometimes merely explaining the words, of an ancient author. On most of the classics such scholia exist. On the New Testament collections of grammatical scholia, with which alone we are at present concerned, have been formed; drawn chiefly from the works of Chrysostom. Their value depends upon the care and fidelity with which the selection has been made.

For the history of the principal ancient and modern versions, the reader is referred to a former chapter.¹ The most important, as regards the illustration of the New Testament idiom, is the Septuagint, the influence of which

¹ Part I. c. 5.

on the writers of Scripture is everywhere apparent. Its value for critical purposes, and as a translation, has, perhaps, been exaggerated; but its Hebraistic Greek should be carefully studied by all who would understand the peculiar language of the Christian Scriptures. Thus the double sense of the word *διαθήκη* in Heb. ix. 15-18, where it seems to mean both "testament" and "covenant," may be explained from the usage of the Septuagint, in which it frequently occurs as the translation of the Hebrew word *ברית*, covenant or agreement; while the former is its classical signification. Next in importance is the Peschito, or old Syriac version, which, from its fidelity, and, as regards the Old Testament, affinity in point of language, is peculiarly valuable. The versions of Symmachus and Aquila, and the Latin Vulgate, may also be consulted with benefit. For the Old Testament our chief dependence must be placed upon the Targums, and the Talmud with its comments.

A distinction must be made between the use of ancient versions as a means of ascertaining the *usus loquendi*, or ordinary signification of words, and as presenting a faithful transcript of the original. In the latter point of view they are, generally speaking, far inferior to the best modern translations. The German version of De Wette, for example, though philologically of less importance than the Septuagint or the Syriac, must be ranked, as a translation, above either of them; and the same is, to a certain extent, true of our authorised version.

3. *Etymology*.—Etymology, which traces the meaning of words from the original root, may sometimes be useful, but it is a very uncertain guide. But a few words, comparatively, especially when compounded, retain their original signification. Etymology belongs rather to the history of language than to its actual use. What absurd-

ities, for example, would a commentator fall into, who should attempt from their etymology to explain the words "tragic," and "comic," one of which is derived from the word *τράγος*, a goat, the other from *κώμη*, a village. The word "pagan" has lost all trace of its root, the Latin word "pagus," a village; and so has our word "knave," which, from the German "knabe," originally meant a servant. One of the most remarkable instances in which use came to differ from etymology, is presented by the Hebrew word *רְבִיצָה*, a harlot, which is derived from the verb *רָבַץ*, to be sanctified. The particle "re" in composition, generally signifies repetition; but no trace of this meaning exists in the compounds "reprove," or "recommend." Of the primitive meaning of the word "sycophant," supposed to be derived from the trade of informers against those who exported figs from Attica, no instance occurs.¹ These examples prove how very little dependence is to be placed upon etymology, unless it be confirmed by other kinds of testimony.

4. *The analogy of languages.*—Analogy properly means the similitude of proportion; whence, in popular use, it has come to signify similitude in general. Applied to the illustration of language, it teaches us, in cases of difficulty, to infer the meaning from similar forms or compounds better known, or from roots, or primary meanings, found only in cognate languages. Thus the word *ἑθελοθησκεία*, which occurs only once in the New Testament (Col. ii. 23), and the meaning of which by itself is obscure, receives light from similar compounds, as *ἑθελοδοουλία*, voluntary slavery; *ἑθελόπνονος*, prompt to labour; *ἑθελόσοφος*, one who affects philosophy; from which we gather, that the word in question signifies an affectation of religious zeal. In the philology of the Old Testament, the cognate languages,

¹ See Campbell's Dissert. on Gospels, 4, ss. 15-26.

such as Syriac, Chaldee, and, above all, Arabic, are often of use, by supplying roots, or primitive meanings, or explanations of obscure words and phrases which no longer exist in the Hebrew. The Hebrew Lexicon of Gesenius contains many instances of felicitous interpretation from these sources.

5. *Historical circumstances.*—As it would be impossible fully to understand the Greek and Latin classics without a competent knowledge of the history, the prevalent opinions, the laws, manners and customs, and the geographical peculiarities, of Greece and Italy; a similar knowledge of biblical antiquities is necessary in the interpreter of Scripture. Information upon these subjects must be derived, primarily from the Scripture itself, and then from the writings of Josephus, Philo, and the Talmudists. Coins, medals, and the remains of ancient sculpture, frequently throw light upon the statements of Scripture. And, as the manners of the East, as compared with those of Europe, are of a stationary character, the works of modern travellers, which describe Oriental customs, may be perused with the greatest advantage. In order not to interrupt the present discussion, a sketch of biblical antiquities has been thrown into a separate chapter, at the conclusion of this part of the work.

II. The sources of interpretation contained in the text itself, are,—definitions, or examples, furnished by the author himself; the context; parallel passages; the scope; the particular circumstances under which each book was composed; and the analogy of faith.

1. *The author sometimes his own interpreter.*—Occasionally the author himself furnishes an explanation of the terms he uses. To take the word “faith” in the 11th of Hebrews, the writer of the Epistle first gives a definition, or description of it, viz. “that it is the substance of things hoped for, the

evidence of things not seen," and then adds a series of examples, which still further illustrate his meaning. From which we gather that the term in this passage signifies, not, as it sometimes does, the body of Christian doctrine,¹ nor faithfulness in the sense of veracity,² but confidence in God, or faith in the sense of trust. The word "flesh," in Rom. viii. 8, is explained, a little before, as the "carnal mind" (viii. 7). "Baptism," says St. Peter, "doth also now save us" (1 Pet. iii. 21); but he immediately adds what kind of baptism he has in view, viz., not the mere outward rite, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God;" baptism implying repentance and faith. We might suppose the word "mystery," in Eph. v. 32, to signify the institution of marriage, had not the Apostle explained that he uses the term in the sense which it always bears in the New Testament, viz., to denote, not an ordinance, but a truth hitherto unknown, but now revealed. "I speak concerning Christ and the Church;" that is, the mystery consists in the typical application of the words in Gen. ii. 24, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they too shall be one flesh;" an application which St. Paul affirms had been hitherto unknown. So in a previous chapter of the same Epistle (c. iii. 3), the same word "mystery" is explained to mean the truth, hitherto unsuspected by the Jewish people, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with them, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel." St. Paul speaks of "weak and beggarly elements" to which the Galatians desired again to be in bondage (Gal. iv. 9); from the next verse we learn that he alludes to the ordinances of the Mosaic law, "days, and months, and times, and years," all of which had been abolished in Christ.

¹ Gal. i. 23.² Rom. iii. 3.

2. *Context.*—An examination of the context is indispensable if we would avoid mistakes in determining the meaning of Scripture. Words, especially those in themselves ambiguous, may be made to express anything but what the author intends, if no respect is had to the connexion in which they occur. And the same is true of statements. Thus the expression “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. iv. 1), is sometimes explained to mean “administrators of the sacraments;” contrary, not only to verbal analogy (see above), but to the context, in which the Apostle is speaking, not of ordinances of the gospel, but of the teaching of ministers, who may differ in their gifts, and yet be equally faithful dispensers of the word (see c. 3). “Tell it unto the Church,” (Matt. xviii. 17), *i.e.*, says the Church of Rome, to the clergy; the context, however, shows that by the “church” is meant the particular congregation to which the individual is supposed to belong. The same church founds the practice of extreme unction upon James, v. 14; an examination of the whole passage proves that the anointing spoken of was connected, not with the departure of the soul, but with the restoration of the body to health. “Go and prosper,” said Micaiah to Ahab (1 Kings, xxii. 15), the context determines that the words were spoken ironically. St. Paul’s statement that “it is good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor. vii. 1) might seem to favour the notions of the early Church on the superior sanctity of celibacy; until we peruse the whole chapter, when it becomes evident that the Apostle has in view “the present necessity” (v. 26), *i.e.*, the trials of various kinds which were the common lot of the first Christians, and during the continuance of which it might be advisable for those who possessed “the gift of continency” to abstain from the marriage bond. But it is needless to multiply instances; it is matter of common

observation how often arguments are founded upon isolated texts, torn from the context, and interpreted, therefore, in reality, according to the mind, not of the author, but of the expositor.

In order that we may not err as to what the context really is, particular attention is due to the parentheses which occur in Scripture, and with which St. Paul's writings in particular abound. Thus the words in Rom. ii. 15, "Their thoughts in the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another," are followed by, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men" (v. 16); and, read continuously, these clauses give a grammatical sense; the latter words, however, really belong to verse 12, "As many as have sinned without law shall be judged without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; in the day," &c.; vv. 13-15 being a parenthesis. When the parenthesis extends to a considerable length, it assumes the character of a digression, such as we have in Rom. v. 13-17, and in Eph. iii. 2-21; the Apostle, in the latter passage, "going off," as his wont is, at the word "Gentiles," with which the first verse of the chapter concludes, and resuming the thread of his discourse in chapter iv. 1.

3. *Parallel passages.*—The comparison of parallel passages, passages, that is, in which the same words occur, or the same subjects are discussed, is a particular application of the great Protestant rule, that Scripture is its own sufficient interpreter. The rule rests upon two principles; the first, that when the same writer handles the same subjects, he will usually use words and phrases in the same sense, and what is obscure or imperfect in one passage may be expected to be explained or supplied in another; the second, that since all the writers of Scripture were under the superintending control of one Holy Spirit, the Bible,

though in one sense a collection of separate books, is in another sense a whole—the production of one inspiring Spirit—exhibiting throughout substantial unity of design and teaching; that the writers, therefore, amidst subordinate differences, cannot contradict each other, but, at most, present different sides or aspects of events and doctrines, which combined will give the complete view.

Parallelism is usually divided into verbal and real. In the former, the same words are compared; in the latter, the same subject-matter. Real parallelism has been subdivided into historic, which relates to narratives of the same event, and didactic, which compares similar moral, or doctrinal teaching.

Verbal parallelism is not so useful to the interpreter of Scripture as real, because it is but seldom that the same words are used in describing the same thing, and because the context for the most part determines the sense in which words are to be taken. Still it may occasionally be employed with success. Where the meaning of a word is doubtful or ambiguous, and the context fails to remove the difficulty, the same word, or its synonyme, may be repeated in a similar passage, with explanatory adjuncts; or a conjugate word may be employed in the same connexion. Thus in 1 Pet. ii. 8, Christ is called “a stone of stumbling;” immediately afterwards we find that to stumble at the word is equivalent to being disobedient to it; and thus the former term is explained. “He who hath anointed us is God” (2 Cor. i. 21); “ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things” (1 John, ii. 20); the conjugate *χρίσμα* in the latter passage explains the participle *χρίσας* in the former, which therefore signifies the enlightening teaching of the Holy Ghost. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee” (Luke, i. 35); this is explained by the parallel expression, “that which is conceived in her is of

the Holy Ghost" (Matt. i. 20). "When He had by Himself purged our sins" (Heb. i. 3); the ambiguity of the expression, "by Himself," is removed by the corresponding statement, "he hath appeared to put away sin *by the sacrifice* of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). The word *σεισμός* (Matt. viii. 24) properly signifies an earthquake; but comparing it with the word used by St. Luke, when describing the same occurrence, *λαίλαψ*, a sudden gust of wind, we perceive that, in the former account, the main circumstance is merged in its ordinary accompaniment, earthquakes being usually preceded or followed by a tempest. The parallel structure of Hebrew poetry often enables us to clear up obscurities of diction. To take an instance, the expression "To the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee" (Ps. xxx. 12), receives illustration from the similar expression in Ps. xvi. 9, "My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth," *i.e.* my soul, the natural soul being the glory of man.¹ It also furnishes valuable aid in the interpretation of Hellenistic idioms (*e. g.* *ἐφοβοῦντο* in classic Greek "were terrified," is explained by the synonymes *θαυμάζω* and *θαμβέω*), and of words of rare occurrence.

Real parallelism is, perhaps, of all hermeneutical aids the most important. In many of the historical portions of Scripture, it is absolutely necessary to the gaining a complete view of the transactions recorded. Thus the books of Kings and Chronicles, the four Gospels, the book of Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul, are mutually supplementary, and must be carefully compared, that what is wanting in one may be supplied by the other. No one Evangelist, for example, gives us all the particulars relating to our Lord's resurrection. From the idea of thus combining the Scripture narratives into a consistent whole,

¹ These instances are taken from Stuart's *Ernesti*, p. 65, and Davidson's *Horne*, part ii. c. 5.

arose "Harmonies," as they are called, of which many, both in ancient and modern times, have appeared. The earliest attempt of this kind was the work of Tatian, who flourished in the middle of the second century; it was called "Diatessaron" (τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων), or one Gospel formed from the union of the four. He was followed, in the third century, by Ammonius, of Alexandria, whose work is commended by Eusebius. Both these works have unhappily perished. Modern harmonies of the New Testament are very numerous: the most learned are those of Greswell, and Townsend, but for practical purposes that of Dr. Robinson, reprinted by the Religious Tract Society, is to be preferred. A very complete work of the kind on the Old Testament is, Townsend's "Old Testament arranged in historical, and chronological order," London, 1826.

Didactic parallelism relates to the teaching of the inspired writers, and is closely connected with the rule, so much insisted upon by theologians, of interpreting Scripture according to the analogy of faith. From inattention to it arise misconceptions, or partial views, or perversions, of doctrine; single passages, or statements being unduly urged, to the neglect of others in which the same subject is discussed, and which present counterbalancing or supplementary aspects of Divine truth. Indeed, it is not too much to say that most of the errors that have appeared in the Church have arisen from giving an undue prominence to what in itself is an undoubted truth. Thus Arian tendencies sprang from dwelling too exclusively upon the humanity of Christ; while the opposite error of the Docetæ, which manifested itself under so many forms in the first two centuries, may be traced to a similar exclusiveness of view with respect to His divinity. Sabellianism took its rise from not counterbalancing the declarations of the Old Testament respecting the unity of

God with the equally clear statements of the New respecting the Trinity in Unity. Certain declarations of St. Paul on the subject of justification misunderstood, have led to Antinomianism: certain others of St. James, taken alone, have given rise to a type of sentiment equally erroneous. By taking too exclusive a view of the agency of Divine grace in the work of conversion, Calvin was led to make rash statements on the subject of predestination; by unduly magnifying man's part in that work, anti-Calvinists have verged towards Pelagianism. So important is it to check what appear to be logical deductions from one class of passages by the collation of others which equally have a claim to be heard.

In thus comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is obvious that the comparison should be as extensive as possible; that clearer passages should govern the interpretation of the more obscure, and fuller ones that of the more scanty. The first rule will obviate partial induction; the two latter are demanded by the very nature of the case. Thus the typical appointments of the ceremonial law, in themselves dark, receive light from the explanations of the New Testament: the language of prophecy is interpreted by its accomplishment, and a promise by its fulfilment. Our Lord's promise to Peter, that to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven should be given,¹ is, as it stands, obscure; but the history of the Acts of the Apostles, which records that Peter was the instrument of first introducing both Jews² and Gentiles³ to the privileges of the Gospel, explains it, and proves also that the Papal interpretation of the passage is unnecessary and erroneous. "He hath made Him to be sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21); the verbal analogy of the Hebrew word for "sin," signifying, as it does, also a "sin-offering," might lead us

¹ Matt. xvi. 19.² Acts, ii.³ Ibid. x.

so to interpret the word in this passage ; but, by comparing the teaching of the Apostle on the same subject in other places, we arrive at the conclusion that Christ is here described, not as an offering, but as a substitute, for sinners (see Gal. iii. 13 ; Rom. viii. 3). To gain a complete view of the relation of the Mosaic Law to the Gospel, we must compare those portions of the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians which treat of that subject. To understand the expression "Head of the Church," as applied to Christ, we must mark the comparison, in Rom. v. 12-21, and 1 Cor. xv. 21-57, between the first and the second Adam, and also the passages in which the nature of the union between Christ and His Church is described, such as Eph. iv. 16, Col. ii. 19 ; from which we gather, that it is not the aggregate of local Christian societies of which Christ is properly the Head, for not all the members of those societies derive life and nourishment from Him ; and, moreover, as local societies, they are directly governed, not by Christ, but by their local officers ; but that the "Church" in this connexion means the "invisible Church," the body of true believers, part on earth and part in paradise, in each of whom Christ really lives and rules by His Spirit, and which, by anticipation, is contemplated by the Apostle in its future glorified state, when Christ the Life shall appear, and His members shall appear with Him,—one pure, yet visible, community, "the manifestation of the sons of God" in glory (Rom. viii. 19 ; Col. iii. 4).

We conclude with an illustration of the use of parallelism in the case of the important doctrine of regeneration. The word *παλιγγενεσία*, or regeneration, occurs but twice in the New Testament ; once in connexion with spiritual renewing (Tit. iii. 5), and once to denote the new state of things which the second advent of Christ shall introduce

(Matt. xix. 28),—the “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” (Acts, iii. 19). Hence we gather, generally, that it means a new state or condition; and, as regards the present question, the transfer of an individual from the old state of nature into the new one of grace.

The next question is, Of what description is this change? We have here to observe, that regeneration is described as the necessary entrance into “the kingdom of God” (John, iii. 3), or a state of salvation—a state of being saved; and as that state implies both forgiveness of sin and a new heart, and regeneration confessedly does not mean the former, the latter is the idea primarily involved in the word. The same conclusion follows from an examination of the synonymes “born again” (John, iii. 3); “born of God” (John, i. 13; 1 John, iii. 9); “a new creature” (2 Cor. v. 17); all of which denote a radical transformation of character. It is especially assigned to the Holy Spirit as its Author (John, iii. 5), and His work must be holy. To the new creature, we read, “old things have passed away, and all things” (tempers, habits, &c., as well as ecclesiastical standing) “have become new” (2 Cor. v. 17): still more expressly, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; he cannot sin” (wilfully and habitually) (1 John, iii. 9). Combining these and similar passages together, we infer that regeneration is not a mere outward change of state, nor yet a mere dormant gift or capacity for holiness, but a new state of actual holiness: the “sons of God,” *i.e.* the regenerate, are, according to the Apostle’s teaching (Rom. viii. 14), all “led by the Spirit of God.” It is not, indeed, a state of perfect freedom from sin, but it is one in which grace has the dominion (Rom. vi. 14). Once more, as regards the subordinate instruments. Regeneration is sometimes connected with the Word of God, and sometimes with the sacrament of baptism; the former

more frequently than the latter. (Compare Luke, viii. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 15; Gal. iii. 26; 1 Pet. i. 23; Jam. i. 18; with John, iii. 5; Tit. iii. 5; Eph. v. 26.) Summing up the whole, then, we may say that regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit, in which a double change takes place,—a change of position, for he that is born of God receives the privilege of adoption, and a change of nature, for the same person is made actually holy; and that it is effected, partly by the Word of God, made effectual to produce repentance and faith, and partly by baptism, which individually seals the promises, and visibly certifies to the Church the inward change that has taken place: consequently, that all interpretations of the word which confine it to the mere act of visible initiation into the Church, of which baptism is the sole instrument, or which make the idea of actual holiness separable from it, so that the same person may be practically a child of God and a child of the devil, are so far erroneous or defective.

The poetical parallelism of Scripture is treated of in another place.¹

4. *Scope*.—Should neither the context, nor a comparison of parallel passages, throw light upon the meaning of a disputed passage, recourse may be had to a consideration of the scope or design of the writer, whether special (in which case scope and context are nearly identical) or general. In some instances the general scope is stated by the writer himself: *e.g.* thus the object of the Book of Proverbs is declared to be, “to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion” (c. i. 4): and that of the Book of Ecclesiastes, to describe the vanity of earthly blessings (c. i. 2). St. John’s general intention in writing his Gospel was, that Christians “might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (c. xx. 31); and

¹ See p. 285.

by a reference to it, many of the events and discourses peculiar to his Gospel will be the better understood. The special scope, or that of particular sections or paragraphs, is likewise often mentioned by the writer, and such notices render valuable aid to the interpreter. Thus since the declared design of the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans is to prove that all men, whether Jew or Gentile, are "justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (c. iii. 28, 29), we infer that the term "law" signifies, throughout the section, not the ceremonial, but the moral, law; contained, indeed, in the Decalogue, but also "written in the heart" even of those who did not possess the privilege of the oracles of God (c. ii. 15). St. Paul warns the Colossians against submission to the yoke of "Sabbath-days" (c. ii. 16); whence it has been argued that he regarded the Sabbath, properly so called, as under the Gospel absolutely abolished. But, on examining the scope (or the context), we find that the expression "Sabbath-days" occurs in connexion with Jewish ordinances purely ceremonial and typical, such as the distinction between meats, the feasts of the new moon, and other holy days, which were "a shadow of things to come;" it is against the observance of these, as binding upon Christians, and not against obedience to the moral law, that the Apostle utters a protest. By "Sabbath-days," therefore, we understand, not the Sabbath, but the Jewish days of holy rest which also bore that name; and so the Divine obligation of keeping one day in seven holy, part of the eternal moral law, remains, for anything in this passage to the contrary, unaffected.

5. *Historical circumstances.*—The *occasions* on which writings were composed not unfrequently furnish a key to their meaning. Thus, where the inscriptions of the Psalms are trustworthy, as in Psalm^s xviii. and xxxiv., they illus-

trate the contents of those compositions; and the true interpretation of many of our Lord's parables depends upon marking the circumstances that gave rise to them. The ascertained *time* when a book was written will sometimes refute erroneous theories as to its design; hence it is important to observe the chronological notices furnished by the author himself, as in the Epistle to the Galatians. The same may be said of the place of writing;—local features, whether natural or moral, may clear up passages otherwise obscure. Perhaps, however, the most effectual method of arriving at a just comprehension of the writer is repeated perusal of the book itself; in the course of which light will be thrown upon difficult passages, and the subordinate discussions fall into their proper places, while the central topic emerges into view.

6. *Analogy of faith.*—The expression, analogy of faith, in connexion with hermeneutics, signifies the general harmony of Scripture on the fundamental verities of the Christian faith; and much stress has been laid upon the rule, that no part of Scripture should be interpreted so as to be inconsistent with the analogy of faith. In one sense, this rule is only an extension of that of parallelism; here the *whole* of Scripture is supposed to be the subject of comparison, and with the general result obtained particular sections, or statements, are to be brought into agreement. A further idea, however, seems to be conveyed by the expression, as commonly used, viz. that of dogmatical authority; that is, when we interpret according to the analogy of faith, we inquire not merely what is the historical sense of the passage in question, but what bearing the sense thus ascertained has upon Christian faith; to what extent, and in what manner, it is to regulate, or modify, our views of Divine truth, and contribute to the formation of a system of Christian doctrine. Questions of considerable difficulty

here present themselves; *e.g.* What are the fundamental points of Christian doctrine? how are they ascertained? and in what manner, according to the order of Providence, do we first become acquainted with them? With respect to the last point, it is obvious that, at the first, an analogy of faith existed antecedently to the written word—"the form of sound words" which Timothy was to hold fast,¹ and which doubtless was embodied in the earliest forms of the Creed. And ever since, the analogy of faith has been *taught* previously to its being gathered from the study of Scripture; so that, in point of fact, no member of a Christian church approaches the Word of God to collect, for the first time, the fundamentals of the faith; but he brings with him what he has received, to be confirmed, modified, or rejected, according as it shall be found to agree or disagree with the tenor of the Apostles' teaching. It is this corrective function that, among Christians, Scripture especially discharges; and, as Protestants, we hold that it is sufficient for this purpose, and forms in itself, and interpreted by itself, a perfect touchstone of truth.

There is another sense which the expression, analogy of faith, may bear, more accordant with its meaning in the passage whence it is supposed to be derived, Rom. xii. 6; viz. the measure, or proportion, of religious light vouchsafed under the various dispensations, patriarchal, legal, and evangelical, through which the course of revelation has passed. It is of the utmost importance to a correct apprehension of the meaning of Scripture, to bear in mind that Divine truth has been communicated "in various ways, and sundry partitions" (Heb. i. 1); that we must not expect to find the great doctrines of the Gospel clearly revealed to patriarchs and prophets, or suppose that because we, with the key to the Old Testament in our

¹ 2 Tim. i. 13.

hands, can decipher the symbolism of the ceremonial law, it was as well understood by those who lived under it. Inattention to the fact that revelation has been gradual and progressive has been the prolific source of crude interpretation, especially of the Old Testament.

SECT. II.—*Figurative Interpretation.*

The terms tropical, or figurative, as applied to language, signify the same thing under a slightly different aspect; the former, from the Greek, denoting that a word has been turned from its literal meaning to a new use, the latter, from the Latin, that by being so transferred it presents an image, or figure, to the mind. Thus the word "pillar," when used of a statesman, is employed in a new sense, and, at the same time, suggests an analogical resemblance.

All languages abound in figure; partly from an indisposition needlessly to multiply words, but much more from the natural pleasure which arises from the discovery, and use, of analogical resemblance. Eastern nations, in particular, among whom the imagination predominates over the logical faculty, delight in tropical expression, both in the language of common life, and in composition: hence, as might be expected, the Bible presents illustrations in abundance of every species of this kind of expression. It will be proper, first, to lay down some plain rules for determining whether words are to be understood in their literal, or in a figurative sense.

Sometimes the absurdity that would follow from the literal sense decides the question; when, in logical language, the predicate entirely disagrees with the subject, or the literal conclusion contradicts the evidence of the senses. Thus, when God is termed a rock, or a buckler; when

Judah is called "a lion's whelp;"¹ when our Lord says, "Let the dead bury their dead," or, "I am the vine;" it is self-evident that the words "rock," "buckler," "lion," "dead" (the agent), and "vine," must be taken figuratively. The same observation applies to what grammarians call the figure synecdoche, *i. e.* when the whole is put for a part; *e. g.* "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils;"² the words "cup" and "table" are obviously used by a figure, in the one case, for the contents of the cup, in the other, for the provision on the table. Sometimes, however, the figurative use is not so apparent; and in that case considerations of a more general nature must be taken into account: as whether the literal sense is not inconsistent with the nature of the thing described, or does not involve something at variance with the moral precepts of Scripture, or is not repugnant to the context. Thus, when the possession of human organs, as hands, feet, &c., is ascribed to God, we know that the expressions must be tropical, for the supreme Being is pure spirit, "without body, parts, or passions;" and we draw the same conclusion in reference to such commands as that of our Lord to cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye, for physical mutilation could in no case be a religious duty. Judged by this test, the literal interpretation of the words of sacramental institution, "Take, eat, this is my body," must be pronounced erroneous; for it contradicts reason to suppose that Christ, either before or after He suffered upon the cross, could have given to His disciples, literally, His body broken and His blood shed, or that the disciples conceived they were eating that body which they saw before them endued with all the functions of life. "Whoso eateth my flesh and

¹ Gen. xlix. 9.² 1 Cor. x. 21.

drinketh my blood hath eternal life" (John, vi. 54): not only is it repugnant to reason and moral feeling to understand these words of a carnal manducation of Christ, but the context forbids such an interpretation; for the whole discourse is upon faith, by which Christ is spiritually received into the soul as food into the body: and our Lord Himself warns us against the literal sense, "The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (v. 63). Parallel passages will occasionally clear up a difficulty: "I came not," says our Lord, "to send peace upon earth, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). In the parallel passage of St. Luke (c. xii. 51), the figurative expression "sword" is explained: "Suppose ye that I am come to send peace upon earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division."

It being ascertained that a word is used tropically, the interpretation of it is to be sought by the same methods which apply to the literal sense, and which it is needless to repeat.¹ We proceed to specify some of the most usual forms of figurative expression.

1. *Metonymy*.—The figure synecdoche has been already explained. Another very common trope has received the name of metonymy, from its substituting one appellation for another, as the cause for the effect, or the subject for the adjunct, and *vice versâ*. Thus the Holy Spirit is very frequently put for His operations, whether ordinary or extraordinary, as in the exhortation, "Quench not the Spirit:"² a nation is described by the name of its progenitor, as, "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen;"³ and a book by the name of the writer, as, "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him."⁴ On the other hand, the effect is sometimes put

¹ See the preceding section.

² 1 Thess. v. 19.

³ Isa. xli. 8.

⁴ Acts, xv. 21.

for the cause, as when Christ is said to be "our life,"¹ or "the hope of glory."² The subject frequently stands for the adjunct, as the "world" for the men of the world, and the "flesh" for corrupt nature; and, again, the adjunct for the subject, as "the hoary head" for an old man, or the term "vanities" for idols.

2. *Metaphor*.—The most common of all the figures of rhetoric, both in profane and the sacred writings, is metaphor. The foundation of metaphor is, not likeness, but analogy—a very different thing. Analogy is the resemblance, not of things, but of relations; things which are, in their nature, utterly unlike may be analogous. Thus we speak of a proposition as the foundation of a system, or the metropolis as the heart of the country: there is no similitude between a proposition and a material foundation, or between the human heart and a large city; but there is, in either case, a resemblance of relations, for what the foundation is to a building, or the heart to the body, that the proposition is to the system, and the metropolis to the country. True metaphor is always an analogy; but the analogy may subsist in points either of lesser or of greater moment, and it is only in the latter case that we can reason safely from it. Thus a pleasing analogy may be traced between the successive periods of human life and the growth of states; but were we, from this, to argue that because individuals necessarily become decrepit, states must also decline and perish, we should be drawing a conclusion not warranted by the premises, for the things compared are in different classes of existence, and the analogy is rather fanciful than real. Even when the analogy is solid and real, care must be taken not to extend it further than it really applies. Thus there is a real analogy between the heart of an animal body and the

¹ Col. iii. 3.

² Col. i. 27.

metropolis of a country ; yet it would be rash to contend that, in the latter case as in the former, increased size is a sign and source of danger.¹

This caution is especially needful in the interpretation of that class of scriptural metaphor in which the operations and passions of the human mind are predicated of the Deity. When we speak of the eye, or the hand, of God, every one perceives that the expression is purely analogical, and that there is no resemblance between the things spoken of ; that what we mean is, that God acts as we do when we use those members. But it is not always borne in mind that when the Scripture ascribes anger, jealousy, repentance, revenge, to God, the language is likewise analogical, and likewise signifies merely that He acts as we should do when under the influence of those passions. The same, to a certain extent, is true of the moral qualities of love, mercy, justice, wisdom, and the like ; to a certain extent, for, since man was formed in the image of God, there cannot be an essential difference between his notions on these points and the Divine attributes : but the transcendancy of the Divine perfections renders the love, or the justice, of God of a different species from ours, and so far the language is analogical.

The metaphors of Scripture are culled from a large surface,—the natural world, the arts then known, the ceremonies of religion, and the history of the Jewish people. Hebrew poetry, in particular, abounds in bold and beautiful examples of this figure.

The foregoing figures relate to words merely ; sometimes, however, the tropical signification resides, not in the expression, but in the thought, and we have to interpret,

¹ See Copleston's note " On Analogy," in " Sermons on Predestination," p. 122.

not the words, but the things signified by the words. To this branch of figurative interpretation belong, Allegory, Parable, Symbol, and Type.

(1.) *Allegory*.—An allegory is, as the name imports, a narrative, or history, intended to convey a meaning beyond the immediate; as, *e.g.* the Psalmist, in Ps. lxxx., intending to describe the unhappy condition of the Hebrew commonwealth, as contrasted with its former prosperity, gives a short history of a vine transplanted from Egypt, which for a time flourished, but was now decaying. Allegory is not a continued metaphor, for the words used may be wholly unfigurative; it is the double meaning of the *narrative* that fixes the class to which it belongs. Since it is the object of allegory to convey moral truth, the history may be either real or fictitious, the immediate representation being of no value except as a vehicle. Thus the allegory of the vine above mentioned is fictitious; and so is that of Nathan addressed to David (2 Sam. xii. 1-4); but the history of the two sons of Abraham, which St. Paul allegorises, is a real one (Gal. iv. 22-26).

From this it is obvious that the process of interpretation in the case of allegory is twofold; first, to ascertain the literal meaning of the expressions used, and, secondly, to discover what is the ultimate representation intended. Our present concern is with the latter alone. Sometimes the allegory sufficiently conveys its own meaning, as in the above example of the vine; sometimes an explanation is added, as in Jotham's allegory of the trees (Judg. ix. 7); but our chief reliance must be placed upon the context, or historical connexion, in which the allegory stands. It is thus that we understand the meaning of Nathan's allegory, and, in many instances, of our Lord's parables. Since it is usually a writer's object in using allegory to explain what

is more obscure by what is more obvious, it is seldom, especially in the case of Scripture allegories, that we fail to perceive the meaning.

Allegorising the narratives of Scripture is a very different thing from converting them into allegory. Of the former St. Paul, in the passage above mentioned, furnishes an example; the history of Hagar is not divested of its historical reality, but it is shown that the Holy Spirit intended to convey, under this outward vehicle, a deep spiritual truth: of the latter the attempts of infidelity, both here and on the Continent, to prove that the history of the fall is not that of a real transaction, are an instance. In the former case, the historical truth of the narrative is assumed and maintained; in the latter, history becomes converted into fable. The practice of treating the facts of the Scripture history as allegorical (in the latter sense) is not, however, of modern date; this mode of interpretation was extensively used by the early Fathers, among whom Origen stands conspicuous for his free use of it; in his hands a great part of the Bible lost all objective reality.

(2.) *Parables*.—Parables are a species of allegory; differing, indeed, only in the form. In allegory, distinctively understood, the immediate and the ultimate representation are mingled together, as in Ps. lxxx. 8, the heathen are said to be cast out, that the vine may be planted; in the parable, the story advances without the admixture of the literal and figurative, and the interpretation is appended from without. Thus, in the parable of the sower, no hint is given in the parable itself of its ultimate meaning; this our Lord supplies afterwards, and the two, the vehicle of instruction and the truths taught, are placed side by side. Hence, generally speaking, the interpretation of the parable is more difficult than that of the allegory.

The same rules, however, apply to both. The context

must be examined ; and especially must attention be paid to explanations, or hints, furnished by the speaker himself. For instance, in the parable of the vineyard, Matt. xxi. 33, the key to the whole is contained in our Lord's citation from Ps. cxviii. : "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner,"—itself, be it observed, a figurative expression. In explaining parables, the minute circumstances which form, as it were, the drapery of the narrative must not be anxiously pressed ; many of them merely impart liveliness to the picture, and are of no spiritual significance. On the other hand, however, the minuteness with which our Lord follows out the points of comparison in the parables of the sower, and the tares, proves that apparently insignificant particulars *may* be important, and should not be lightly overlooked as of no bearing upon the general meaning. Sobriety of judgment is here especially needful.

It is a generally admitted rule that parables should not, in the first instance, be made the sources of doctrine. Whatever is essential to the Christian scheme will, we may presume, be found plainly revealed ; parables serve to illustrate what is thus taught, but must themselves be interpreted according to the analogy of faith.

(3.) *Symbol*.—A symbol is a visible representation of a spiritual or moral truth ; an object which, appealing to the eye, tacitly conveys instruction. Thus the water in baptism is a symbol, reminding the baptized person and the bystanders of the inward holiness required of the Christian ; and so is the cross upon the child's brow, designating him a soldier of Christ. Symbolism is the language of nature, especially in the East, where from time immemorial this mode of instruction has been cultivated ; and for minds untutored to reflection, it undoubtedly conveys livelier impressions than the more

abstract and intellectual vehicle of language. Hence, in the Old Testament, which was addressed to a people not emerged from the childhood of religion, symbolism plays an important part: the whole of the ceremonial law was framed upon this principle, and prophecy very frequently made use of it, as when Isaiah walked three years naked and barefoot, as a sign against Egypt,¹ and Jeremiah put yokes and bonds round his neck, as a token of Assyrian bondage.² But on this feature of the Mosaic law some observations are made in another place.³ The symbolical interpretation of the Levitical ritual has received but little attention in this country: it is a rich field, which will amply repay culture.

(4.) *Type*.—A type differs from a mere symbol in embodying a predictive element: it is a prophetic symbol. Thus the ceremonial of the Passover was symbolical, in that it conveyed to the ancient believer present lessons of instruction; but it was predictive also of Christ's atoning work. And since prophecy is the prerogative of Him who sees the end from the beginning, a real type, implying as it does a knowledge of the future antitype, can only proceed from God: a type is a prophecy in action.

It has been a question much debated, whether we are at liberty to extend the typical system of the Old Testament beyond the types explicitly declared to be such by Christ or His apostles, such as the Paschal lamb, the brazen serpent, the water from the rock, the Levitical priesthood, and the ceremonies of the great day of atonement. But if prophecy may be interpreted "either by the Word of God, or by His providence, either by a specific revelation, or by the completion of the prophecy in due time,"⁴ why may not a type similarly be seen to have been

¹ Isa. xx.

² Jer. xxvii.

³ Pp. 227, 228.

⁴ Davison, "Primitive Sacrifice," p. 174.

such by the event? Can we doubt that Joshua was a type of Christ, though Scripture does not affirm it? The significance of the circumstance that, not Moses the law-giver, but Joshua the saviour, led the Israelites into the promised land cannot be mistaken; was it not, then, purposely so ordered? To restrict the types of the Old Testament to those which have been *revealed* to be such would be to deprive the Christian of a large field of devout inquiry. Caution, indeed, is necessary, lest we mistake mere resemblances for types; but caution is necessary in every branch of Scripture-interpretation.

In explaining ascertained types we must beware of pushing the comparison into every minute detail. Thus, as regards the Passover, while the general import of the transaction admits of no doubt, it is not necessary to suppose that the roasting of the lamb with fire was typical of "the dreadful pains that Christ should suffer," or that the time selected, at even, represented Christ's suffering "in the last days," and the miraculous darkness which attended His crucifixion.¹ Such fanciful applications, too common with the early Fathers, tend to bring discredit upon the whole system of typical prophecy, and furnish a handle to the unbeliever. Cautiously applied, the types of the Old Testament furnish most valuable instruction; for they not only, as fulfilled prophecies, confirm our faith in the Divine origin of Christianity, but they *explain* its doctrines: *e.g.* the Christian atonement, in its leading ideas, receives its best illustration from the symbolism of the great day of atonement, as described in Leviticus xvi. It is no wonder, therefore, that modern rationalism especially aims at divesting the Old Testament of its typical character.

¹ See Cruden's Concordance, under the word "Passover," quoted by Dr. Hawkins, "Sermons on Scriptural Types," p. 39.

CHAPTER III.

INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY—QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD
TESTAMENT IN THE NEW—SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

IN this chapter some topics which seem to appertain to the subject of Scripture interpretation, but which could not conveniently find a place elsewhere, will be briefly considered. And first, as regards,

§ 1. *The interpretation of Prophecy.*—On this difficult subject a few hints must suffice. The literal or figurative sense of the prophetic language must, like that of the other books, be determined by a judicious use of the foregoing rules, which equally apply to all parts of Scripture: it possesses, however, peculiarities of its own. It is not only highly figurative, but the figures recur so often in the same sense as to give rise to a species of prophetic vocabulary. The following are instances:—The more glorious objects of nature are figuratively transferred to what is grand and important in the rational world; as the sun, moon, and the stars, the cedars of Lebanon, or lofty mountains (Isa. ii. 13, 14), to signify the leading powers of the world. Ships of Tarshish (Isa. ii. 16) denote the rich traffickers of the earth. In like manner, natural convulsions, such as earthquakes, the sinking of mountains, and the appearing of islands, the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling star, represent changes and disasters, political and religious. For examples, see Isa. xiii., which predicts the destruction of Babylon, and Jer. iv. 23–28, in which the approaching ruin of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar is described. In the combined prophecy of our Lord respecting the de-

struction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and His own second coming, these images are adopted as the recognised representations of impending calamities (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30). Spiritual blessings, especially the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit, are commonly set forth under the images of the dew, the rain, or water from a living spring (Isa. xlv. 3. Hos. xiv. 5); and the New Testament employs the same (John, iv. 10; vii. 38). The marriage-bond represents God's covenant with Israel; and idolatry is spiritual adultery (Hos. ii. 1-5). The temporal enemies of Israel, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and especially Babylon, frequently denote the spiritual foes of Messiah's kingdom; and Babylon, too, in the mystical visions of St. John at Patmos, represents an anti-Christian influence or authority (Rev. xvii.). Since the power of horned animals is exerted by the horn, this word is used to signify power in general: thus Daniel's kingdoms are represented under the ten horns of the beast (Dan. vii.; comp. Rev. xiii. 1), and hence the expressions, "horn of David" (Ps. cxxxii. 17), and "horn of salvation" (Luke, i. 69), denoting respectively, David's throne, and the "great salvation" of the Gospel. It was only natural that the prophets, in speaking of the Gospel dispensation, should borrow much of their imagery from the existing one: thus, Mount Sion, the great Jewish feasts, and the Levitical ritual, furnish numerous images, under which the kingdom of Christ is, in its various aspects, described. (See Isa. ii. 3; Mal. i. 11; Zech. xiv. 16.) The attentive reader of the prophets will soon come to distinguish ordinary figure from what may be called the peculiar and established stock of images which prophecy, as such, employs.

There are other peculiarities of the prophetic style which must be borne in mind. It is very common with the prophets to speak of future things as actually present,

as in the famous passage, Isa. ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;" or, "Jerusalem is a desolation; our holy and beautiful house . . . is burned up with fire" (Isa. lxiv. 10, 11); though the events predicted did not take place till long after Isaiah wrote. In like manner they arrange co-ordinately events separated by long intervals, as a person ignorant of astronomy would place the stars on the surface of a concave vault, all at the same distance from himself. Thus Isaiah frequently mingles deliverance from the Assyrian invasion with the spiritual deliverance of the Messiah (see cc. vii., x., xi., &c.); Zechariah speaks, in parallel lines of prophecy, of the triumphs of the Jews under the Maccabees, and of the glorious reign of Christ; and our Lord connects His coming to visit Jerusalem with His second advent to judge the world, no mention being made of the intervening time. Before the mind of the prophet the visions of the present and the future seem to have presented themselves simultaneously, so that he was unable to adjust the times; and that this was intended we gather from such passages as Dan. xii. 9, where the prophet, desiring to understand "the end" of the things revealed to him, is told that the "words are closed and sealed up," in this point of view, "till the time of the end;" and 1 Pet. i. 11, in which the prophets are declared to have been much, but fruitlessly, occupied in "searching what, and what manner of time, the Spirit did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ." A consideration which may throw some light on St. Paul's language in 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, where he is held by some to have supposed that the day of Christ would arrive in his own lifetime.

This latter feature of prophecy leads us to make some remarks upon what has been called "the double sense," which has been as indiscriminately assailed by some as it

has been unduly extended by others. Properly understood, however, the principle seems free from objection. "What is it?" a judicious writer asks; "not the convenient latitude of two unconnected senses, wide of each other, and giving room to a fallacious ambiguity; but the combination of two related, analogous, and harmonising, though disparate, subjects, each clear and definite in itself, implying a twofold truth in the prescience, and creating an aggravated difficulty, and therefore an accumulated proof, in the completion."¹ The prophecies relating to the kingdom of David furnish a conspicuous example. "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him. Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 12-17). It is obvious that there is here a fulness of meaning which the temporal kingdom of David cannot be supposed to have exhausted. But prophecy, in this instance, was so constructed as to embrace the double subject of the temporal throne of David and the spiritual reign of Him who should spring from David; and the resemblance is neither forced nor ambiguous. The same may be said of the predictions which equally foreshow the restoration of Judah from captivity and the Christian redemption, and those in which the judicial destruction of Jerusalem symbolises the final judgment. If it be asked, What test have we to ascertain when the principle may safely and properly be admitted? we reply, with the writer above quoted, "The test is that each of the subjects ascribed to the prophecy be such as may challenge the right of it in its main import, and meet

¹ Davison on Prophecy, p. 202.

its obvious representation; other reasonable conditions being observed, as to the known general tendency of the whole volume of prophecy. When the divided application asserts itself in this manner, the principle is certain, the reason we have to follow is clear, and the prophecy is doubly authentic. But where it does not, the principle, having no safe ground to rest upon, ought not to be entertained; least of all should it be applied to predictions of which the general import is doubtful, or of less note and prominence in itself."¹

§ 2. *Quotations.*—The quotations from the Old Testament which are found in the New, present to the biblical student a subject of some importance. They are sources of criticism, as regards the Hebrew and Septuagint texts; and they throw light upon the prophetic connexion between the two covenants. The subject, however, is not without difficulties. The first point to be considered is the external form in which these quotations appear; and the next, the manner in which they are applied.

Above 600 allusions, direct or indirect, to the Old Testament have been collected from the New; but the majority of them are merely instances of the transfer of ideas and expressions from the former to the latter, as was natural with writers familiar from their childhood with the Hebrew Scriptures, and therefore can hardly be called formal quotations. Of quotations properly so-called, if we omit the repetitions found in the same or other books, there are about 140: of these, more than one half agree exactly with the Hebrew, and are very commonly expressed in the words of the Septuagint translation, though sometimes the translation is independent; about 30 express the sense of the Hebrew, with some slight variations from the original; in 17 the Septuagint is followed,

¹ Davison, &c. p. 203.

where it differs from the Hebrew; and in 17 more neither the Hebrew nor the Septuagint is strictly adhered to.¹

That the Septuagint should be the ordinary source of the New Testament quotations is only what might be expected when we consider that this version was the one in common use even in Palestine, and much more so among the Jews of the dispersion: where, therefore, it sufficiently expresses the sense of the original, the sacred writers adopt it; but in many instances they have exercised an independent judgment, and where they thought the Septuagint faulty, they had recourse to the original Hebrew, and either translated afresh from that, or introduced such alterations as were needful. In the comparatively few instances in which a difference exists between the original and the citation, the difference consists, for the most part, in verbal alterations which do not substantially affect the sense, but only render it more intelligible to the persons immediately addressed. Thus, to take one instance, the citation in 1 Cor. ii. 9, "As it is written, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him,'" agrees neither with the Greek nor the Hebrew of the passage referred to, viz. Isa. lxiv. 4, of which the literal rendering is, "And from the beginning of the world they heard not, they perceived not by the ear, the eye saw not, a God beside thee, who will do for him that trusteth in Him." The Apostle paraphrases, rather than translates, this somewhat obscure passage, incorporating in it a phrase, "neither came upon the heart," which the same prophet uses in another place and a different connexion (lxv. 17).

In such alterations as these we must remember that it is inspired commentators who make them; and, therefore,

¹ See Fairbairn's Hermeneutical Manual, p. 412.

that their comments or paraphrases are equally the Word of God with the original passages.

Besides these variations in the external form, the *use* made of the passages cited sometimes occasions a difficulty. In the great majority of instances the propriety of the citation is evident; the prophecy is seen clearly to have had a reference to the event. We have only to observe here, that the expression which so commonly introduces the citation of a prophecy, "In order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken," &c., is to be understood, not merely of the fact of a correspondence between the event and the prediction, the so-called *ecbatic* sense of the preposition *ἵνα*, but of an intention that they should correspond, the so-called *telic* force of the same preposition; Divine Providence so ordering the course of human affairs that the prophecy was thereby accomplished. The sacred writers everywhere contemplate the progress of secular events with a predestinarian eye.

There are, however, cases in which a prophecy is applied to what is not its primary and immediate subject; and these have created some embarrassment. To take one or two well-known examples: the simple statement of the prophet Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (xi. 1), which, as the context proves, directly refers to the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, is regarded by St. Matthew as predictive of the recall of the infant Jesus from Egypt (ii. 15). The prophecy of Jeremiah (xxxi. 15) respecting the lamentation of Rachel for her lost children at Ramah, a town of Benjamin, is applied by the same Evangelist (ii. 17, 18) to the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem of Judæa. "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old" (Ps. lxxviii. 2): the psalmist proceeds to give a sketch of the past history of the Israelites, with the view of deriving

from its lessons of moral instruction for his contemporaries and for posterity; by St. Matthew it is said, that Jesus "spake not to the multitude without a parable," in order that the psalmist's words "might be fulfilled" (xiii. 35). At first sight, such a use as this of the Old Testament seems perplexing; and many have taken refuge in a theory of accommodation, according to which the inspired writers of the New Testament made use of passages or events in the Old as mere illustrations of the subjects they were handling.

This, however, is an unsatisfactory solution of the difficulty. It is more consonant to our ideas of the depth and comprehensiveness of Scripture to suppose that, as in the instance of the double sense of prophecy, so here, the Holy Spirit so controlled the utterances of the prophets that they were equally applicable to the proximate and the remote event; and then enabled His inspired organs of the new covenant to discern the hidden typical meaning which those utterances embodied. Our space will not permit us to pursue the subject further: it will be found discussed at greater length by Dr. Davison and Dr. Fairbairn, in the works mentioned below.¹ In any of the later editions of Horne's Introduction, vol. ii., full tables of the quotations, of every kind, which the New Testament contains, are given.

§ 3. *Scripture Difficulties*.—Though the Bible was written by inspiration of God, and therefore it may be assumed that there can be no essential contrariety between one part and another, apparent contradictions, and difficulties, may, no doubt, be found in its pages; and infidel writers have not been slow to avail themselves of this circumstance to impugn the authority of the Scriptures.

¹ Horne's Introd. Edit. 10, vol. ii. Fairbairn's Hermeneutical Manual, part 3.

Even were these seeming inconsistencies incapable of reconciliation, Bishop Butler's important remark would hold good, "Neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts; nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable than they are, could overthrow the authority of Scripture; unless the prophets, apostles, or our Lord, had promised that the book should be secure from these things."¹ In point of fact, however, the progress of knowledge, both sacred and profane, has done away with many of the objections which formerly were the stock-in-trade of the infidel, and the few that remain to exercise our faith and our diligence will, we doubt not, in due time receive a satisfactory solution.

It would indeed be surprising if a collection of books, so numerous, and of such various matter, written at periods widely remote from each other, and under different degrees of religious light; embracing so vast a scope, and occasionally entering into such minute details; in two distinct languages, no longer in living use; alluding to manners and customs long since passed away, and touching profane history at so many points;—if such a collection of writings should not, on the surface, present many difficulties to the student. What department of natural science is not, in this respect, analogous? The works of God in creation, by their mysterious phenomena, incite, and sometimes baffle, investigation; why should not the Word of God exhibit similar characteristics?

Difficulties sometimes arise from a corrupt state of the text, or what appears to be so, as in Gen. xlix. 6, "They digged down a wall," where the margin has it, "They houghed oxen," neither of them probably the true reading: at least no such circumstance appears in the original ac-

¹ Analogy, part ii. c. 3.

count, c. xxxiv. A difference of design, on the part of the inspired writers, will produce what appears like discrepancy; as in the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke, the one intended for Jewish, the other for Gentile converts; or in the fuller narratives of events and miracles in one evangelist as compared with the others. Omissions are not differences, though they are sometimes classed as such: thus, St. Matthew narrates that two blind men were healed at Jericho (xx. 30), while St. Mark and St. Luke mention only one: but, as Matthew Henry quaintly remarks, "Where there were two, there must have been one." The order of time is not always observed by the sacred writers; as when the creation of Eve from the side of Adam is described in Gen. ii., apparently contradicting i. 27. The interchange of names often occasions perplexity; *e. g.* there were two Bethsaidas, two Bethlehems, several Cæsareas; and sometimes the same person or place bore different names at different times, as the father-in-law of Moses is called both Raguel and Jethro; Nahash¹ is the same as Jesse; and Matthew is likewise called Levi. Difficulties arise from the Hebrew system of numeration, in which letters stand for numbers, and many of the letters are so much alike that a transcriber might easily make a mistake, and so change units into tens, or thousands: they arise too from the different modes of reckoning adopted in alluding to the same event; *e. g.* the Israelites are said to have sojourned in Egypt 430 years (Exod. xii. 40), and in another place 400 years (Acts, vii. 6), whereas the real time of their residence in Egypt was only 215 years;² but

¹ 2 Sam. xvii. 25.

² According to the traditionary interpretation of Exod. xii. 40, founded on the Septuagint version, and St. Paul's statement, Gal. iii. 17. In his recent work on the Old Covenant, Kuntz maintains, with some plausibility, that the sojourn of Israel in Egypt was not less than 430 years (vol. ii. p. 135, Clark's translation).

the first period is reckoned from the departure of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, and the second from the birth of Isaac to the Exode, and thus both are correct.

For a fuller account of apparent textual contradictions the reader is referred to Horne's Introduction, vol. ii. c. 7. It is unnecessary to pursue the subject further; for alleged inconsistencies of doctrinal statement must be examined by the rules of interpretation already laid down, and objections to the morality of Scripture belong to the subject of the evidences of Christianity.

CHAPTER IV.

GEOGRAPHY, TOPOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, AND PRODUCTIONS OF THE HOLY LAND—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE JEWS.

SECT. I.—*Geography, &c.*

§ 1. *Physical features.*—Palestine was a country of small extent, but of remarkable natural features. The boundaries as laid down by Moses¹ are as follows:—On the south, commencing from the lower extremity of the Dead Sea, the line was to pass over the “heights of Akrabbim” as far as the “wilderness of Zin,” and thence westward to Kadesh-barnea, and so on to the Mediterranean. The water of this sea washed the whole of the western boundary. The northern frontier was formed by the double range of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and extended to the neighbourhood of Damascus. From this point the eastern boundary, passing southwards, included the fertile valley through which the Jordan flows, to a distance from its eastern bank averaging about thirty miles, until it met the southern border at the south-east corner of the Dead Sea. Palestine proper, as thus defined, must have been about 150 miles in length by 80 in breadth; the

¹ Num. xxxiv.

latter dimension varying somewhat with the irregularity of the eastern frontier. The kingdom of Solomon, however, was of much larger extent; it comprised the whole territory from the river Euphrates to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and to the borders of Egypt, and extended to a considerable distance inland.¹

The aspect of the country is extremely diversified. It is intersected in all parts by mountains, either single, or in ranges. The great northern barrier of Lebanon, formerly renowned for its stately cedars, rises to a height of nearly 10,000 feet: the highest point of the eastern range, or Anti-Libanus, was called Hermon, and being always covered with snow, presents a conspicuous object from the whole neighbourhood of the sea of Tiberias. About ten miles south of Acre, or Ptolemais, the range of Carmel ran nearly north and south, terminating in a bold headland which forms the southern arm of the noble bay on which the town is situated: it was once clothed, from the base to the summit, with rich olive-groves and sloping pastures, and from its fertility became, in Hebrew poetry, the type of natural beauty. From the plain of Esdraelon rises Mount Tabor, a singular insulated hill of conical form, the prospect from which comprises some of the most celebrated scenes in sacred story,—the battle-plain of Deborah and Barak; the mountains of Gilboa, where Saul was slain; Endor, and the village of Nain; and towards the north-east, at a distance of about six miles, the sea of Tiberias; and the snowy height of Hermon at the horizon. A ridge, called the mountains of Israel, or Ephraim, of which the celebrated hills of Ebal and Gerizim formed a part, traverses the centre of the land from north to south; and a similar ridge, “the hill-country” of Judæa, skirts the western shore of the Dead Sea. On the other side of Jordan, the mountains of Gilead intersect a fertile district, the northern

¹ 1 Kings, iv 21.

part of which bore the name of Bashan, noted for its oaks and rich pastures, and the southern that of Abarim, where a rugged range of hills forms the northern frontier of Moab: in this range stood the eminences of Pisgah and Nebo, whence an extensive view of the Holy Land could be obtained.

Fruitful plains and well-watered valleys lay everywhere interspersed among the hills, which themselves formed no interruption to the general aspect of fertility which the country presented, since they were cultivated to their summits, in terraces supported by embankments, where the vine, the olive, and the fig, grew in rich abundance. The minute subdivision of the land, and the permanent interest which each family possessed in its ancestral territory, brought every spot under culture, and the whole resembled a garden. This accounts for the immense population, which, compared with its extent, the country was able to maintain. On the division of Canaan by Joshua, not fewer than 112 walled cities fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah.¹ In the time of David the fighting men amounted, after an imperfect census, to 1,300,000.² At a later period, from the two small provinces of Upper and Lower Galilee, Josephus collected an army of more than 100,000 men.³ The present state of the Holy Land—under the curse, and after the devastations of successive conquerors, Assyrians, Chaldees, Syrians, Romans, Saracens, and, most barbarous of all, the Turks—affords no criterion of what it once was when the smile of Jehovah rested upon it.

Palestine possesses no river of any account save the Jordan. This famous stream takes its rise at Paneas, or Cæsarea Philippi, at the foot of Anti-Libanus, where the water issues from a spacious cavern under a wall of rock, and joins another stream at some distance in the plain.

¹ Josh. xv. 20. ² 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. ³ De Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 20.

The united waters flow southwards, through the lake Merom, the Sea of Galilee, and the valley of the Jordan, until they lose themselves in the Dead Sea; the whole course being not less than 200 statute miles. The channel varies in width and depth: at the fords near Basan, recent travellers found the breadth to be 140 feet, with a sluggish current; but at the entrance into the Dead Sea the banks approach each other, and the stream becomes proportionably deep and rapid. Owing to the melting of the snows in spring, the river overflows its banks in the months of April and May (the time of barley-harvest), so that a sunken tract of land, covered with vegetation, extends on either side: after passing over this the traveller comes to the immediate bank, which is so thickly lined with bushes of various kinds, that, except where openings occur, no water is visible. Formerly these thickets were the haunt of wild beasts. Other remarkable streams are,—the Arnon, which descends from the mountains of Moab into the Dead Sea; the Jabbok, one of the tributaries of the Jordan on the east; and the Kishon, a mountain torrent, which, issuing from Carmel, discharges itself into the Mediterranean.

In its course the Jordan, as has been observed, passes through three lakes, or, as they are termed in the Hebrew idiom, seas. The northernmost, called in the Old Testament the waters of Merom,¹ the smallest of the three, is supposed to be about seven miles long by three broad; its modern name is El-Hûleh. Next in size, and surpassing all in interest, is the Lake of Galilee, formerly called the Sea of Chinnereth, on the banks of which were situated the principal scenes of our Lord's ministry; Capernaum, Chorazin, and the two places named Bethsaida. It is a limpid sheet of water, in a deep basin, probably below the level of the Mediterranean, about twelve miles in length

¹ Josh. xi. 5-7.

and six in breadth, and surrounded with barren hills of a tame and rounded form. Its position, embosomed as it is deep in the higher tracts of country, exposes it to violent gusts of wind, which, in winter, blow with the fury of a tempest. It still abounds in fish of excellent quality; but so supine is the government by which the fishing is farmed out, or the fishermen who ply their craft on its waters, that but one boat was found on it by Dr. Robinson;¹ and the fish are usually taken from the shore with hand-nets. The Salt, or Dead Sea, sometimes called the Lake Asphaltite from the bitumen found in it, lies in a vast chasm which formerly formed a part of the plain of the Jordan, many hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Naked cliffs of limestone rock rise from the sides, and the traces of a volcanic origin are visible in the sulphur and nitre found on the banks, and the masses of bitumen continually thrown up from the depths below. Its length is supposed to be about sixty miles, and its general breadth eight. A scene of complete desolation reigns around. The surface is seldom stirred by a ripple, and nothing living has been found in the water. The tales, however, of its exhalations being so noxious that birds are unable to fly over it, are fabulous; they have probably arisen from the absence of aquatic birds, which, finding no food in the waters, do not frequent the place. The water is intensely bitter, and of such specific gravity that the most inexperienced swimmer can float in it with ease.

§ 2. *Climate, productions, &c.*—The climate of Palestine, like that of all hilly countries, varies considerably. On the high lands the air is temperate, even in the heat of summer; but on the more extensive plains, such as that of Esdraelon, or the plain of Jericho, the heat is intense, and, like that of India, sometimes fatal.² The changes of

¹ Researches, vol. iii. p. 252.

² 2 Kings, iv. 19.

temperature are very trying to European constitutions;— a burning day is often succeeded by an extremely cold night, and while in the rainy seasons the atmosphere is surcharged with moisture, no rain at all falls in the summer. The coldest part of the year is from the end of December to the beginning of March, during which period the lofty mountains are covered with snow, the north wind blows with cutting severity, and hail-storms pour down with a violence unknown to more northern climes. The spring, however, advances with great rapidity, and after a short interval of mild weather the summer heats set in, and from the beginning of June to the beginning of October the whole country presents a parched appearance. Agricultural operations depend upon the two rainy seasons, called in Scripture the former and the latter rain. The former rain commences about the close of October, and brings forward the barley and wheat sown in the early part of the month; the latter rain begins to fall in the middle of March, and prepares the corn for the harvest. So essential are these rains to the fertility of the soil, that the withholding of them was equivalent to a plague of famine.¹ The barley-harvest precedes the wheat by about three weeks; the former being ripe in April, the latter in May. Little or no rain falls in the summer, but the absence of it is, to some extent, compensated by the dew, which is so abundant as to wet to the skin the traveller who is exposed to it.

The productions of the Holy Land were very various. Besides the staple commodities of barley and wheat, the return of which, “sixty or a hundredfold,”² must have rivalled the fertility of Egypt, the olive, the vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the palm, flourished freely, furnishing abundant supplies of delicious fruit and wine. Even

¹ Jer. iii. 3. Joel, ii. 23.

² Matt. xiii. 8.

in modern times the luxuriance of the grape attests the truth of the Scripture narrative of the weight of the cluster which the two spies carried away from the valley of Eshcol.¹ The almond-tree, the first to blossom, bore its fruit in the middle of April. Numerous forest-trees, the majestic cedar, the oak, and the sycamore, afforded a grateful shelter from the summer's sun. The plain of Jericho was renowned for the opobalsamum-tree, from which the fragrant balsam known by the name of the Balm of Gilead distilled. The aloe, the lily, the rose, the spikenard, the myrtle, and other aromatic shrubs, imparted a fragrance to the air. Wild honey abounded on the rocks, or in the hollows of trees. It was a land flowing with milk as well as honey, for the plains and valleys, well watered by streams from the hills, afforded abundant pasturage to cattle; and the ox, the sheep, the goat, camels, and asses, formed the ordinary wealth of this pastoral people. Certain districts, such as that of Bashan and Mount Gilead, were noted for their breed of domestic animals.²

Famed, however, as Palestine was in these respects, in others it was less fortunate. It was subject to the visitations under which the neighbouring country of Egypt frequently suffered. Tornadoes were of common occurrence; immense hosts of locusts devastated the fields; and the fatal simoom swept across the deserts, burying whole caravans in the sleep of death. In the summer season, the inhabitants were often compelled to depend upon their wells for a supply of water, which consequently were a fruitful source of contention: while, by filling them up, an enemy could reduce the population to the greatest straits.

§ 3. *Political geography*.—From the nations who from

¹ Num. xiii. 23.

² Useful tables of the plants, minerals, and precious stones of Scripture, will be found in Angus's Handbook, p. 223.

time to time happened to be predominant in it, the Holy Land received various appellations. One of the most common is Canaan, from the youngest son of Ham, of that name. His descendants formed ten nations, which afterwards became reduced to seven, and under the names of the Hittites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites, were devoted to extermination. The Divine command, however, was not fully executed, and the ancient inhabitants that were suffered to remain frequently gathered strength, and rose against their conquerors. It was not until the reigns of David and Solomon that they were finally reduced to subjection.

The Philistines, a tribe descended from Mizraim the second son of Ham, occupied a strip of land on the seashore, to the south-west. Their country was in the time of Joshua divided into five districts, of which the chief towns respectively were Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, Gath, and Ekron; and though small in extent, it produced a race which for a long time contested the empire with the Israelites, and at one period became so considerable as to give their name to the country, which from them was called by the Greeks Palestine—a name which it bears to this day.

In the Old Testament, the most frequent title is, the Land of Israel, which has reference to the covenant between Jehovah and Abraham; and after the Babylonish captivity it received the name of Judæa, from the tribe of Judah (including Benjamin), which alone remained of the twelve who once occupied it.

Around the frontier dwelt several nations, more or less connected with Jewish history: to the south, the Edomites, the descendants of Esau; the Amalekites, whose destruction, commenced by Saul, was accomplished by David; and the Kenites: to the east and south-east, the Moabites and

Ammonites, sprung from the incestuous connexion of Lot with his daughters; and a tribe of the Midianites.

By Joshua the land was divided into twelve portions, by lot, corresponding to the number of the tribes; the posterity of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, being counted as distinct tribes, and the Levites having no separate allotment of land. To the latter, forty-eight cities with their suburbs, dispersed through the twelve tribes, were appropriated for their residence; and out of these, thirteen, all lying in the southern parts of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, belonged to the priests. The other tribes were situated as follows:—In the north, Asher, Naphthali, Zebulon, and Issachar; in the middle, Ephraim, and the half of Manasseh; in the south, Judah, Benjamin, Dan, and Simeon; on the eastern side of Jordan, Reuben, Gad, and the other half of Manasseh. In the reign of Solomon, when the kingdom became greatly extended, the tribal divisions were found inapplicable; and by that monarch a fresh partition was made into twelve provinces, one of which, each month in the year, furnished provisions for the king's household.¹

After Solomon's death, the separation of the ten tribes resulted in the establishment of the independent kingdom of Israel, as distinguished from that of Judah, the latter comprehending the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and certain portions of the territories of Dan and Simeon. The invasion of Shalmaneser and the removal of the ten tribes put an end to the former kingdom; and with a brief interval of national independence under the Maccabees, the remaining portion of the nation fell under the sway of the Syrian kings, and finally of the Romans.

In our Lord's time the Holy Land was divided into five provinces. 1. To the north, Galilee, comprehending an

¹ 1 Kings, iv. 7.

Upper and a Lower province, the principal scene of the Gospel narrative. Here were situated Nazareth, the Sea of Tiberias with its adjacent towns, Nain, Cana, and other places specially honoured with the Saviour's presence. Most of the disciples were Galilæans. It was called Galilee of the Gentiles from its proximity to the idolatrous nations of Syria; and on this account, as well as because of the impurity of its dialect, and its mixed population, it was despised by the Jews of purer blood. 2. Samaria, occupying the middle portion of the country. Its chief town was Shechem, or Sychar, near Mount Gerizim, the seat of the rival worship which raised an impassable barrier between the Jews and the Samaritans. 3. Judæa, nearly coextensive with the ancient kingdom of Judah. 4. Still further to the south, Idumæa, a province added by the Romans after their conquest of Palestine. 5. Peræa, on the eastern side of Jordan, which included the seven cantons of Abilene, Trachonitis, Ituræa, Decapolis, Gaulonitis, Batanæa, and Peræa proper: of these, the four first are mentioned in the New Testament.

§ 4. *Topography of Jerusalem.*—About twenty miles to the west of the northern extremity of the Dead Sea lies Jerusalem, the most celebrated city of the Holy Land, and, in our Lord's time, the metropolis of the country. In the age of Abraham it bore the name of Salem; but at the invasion of Joshua it was in the possession of the Jebusites, who, though compelled to admit the Israelites to a joint-occupation, continued to hold the fortress of Zion until they were finally expelled from it by David. A rocky platform with four eminences, is divided on the east, south, and west, by narrow ravines from still higher hills around it, the north side alone sloping gradually into a level tract of country. On the east the declivity descends abruptly into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, through which

the brook Cedron, or Kidron, runs ; and on the opposite side rises the Mount of Olives, commanding a prospect of the whole city. Another deep ravine, the Valley of Hinnom, separates the southern district, Mount Zion, from the Mount of Offence, where Solomon in his old age is said to have built temples to Moloch ; and on the east, Mount Gihon overlooks the valley of the same name. So true is the Psalmist's description, " As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is around his people."¹ At first, three only of the eminences, which respectively bore the names of Zion, Acra, and Moriah, were built upon ; but subsequently another, called Bezetha, was inclosed within the walls, and at the final siege by Titus the city must have measured about a mile in length by half that distance in breadth. It was in Jerusalem, or its vicinity, that the most sacred scenes of Holy Writ were enacted. A little beyond the brook Kidron, on the first slope of Mount Olivet, a place is shown to which tradition assigns the name of Gethsemane ; and close to it the road passes over the hill to Bethany, distant about fifteen furlongs. The mount itself has three summits, from the middle one of which an extensive view of the Dead Sea, and the adjacent country, may be obtained : some few olive-trees, of great age, are still scattered upon the sides. Just outside the wall, on the west, lies Mount Calvary, separated from the city by the ravine of Goath. With the Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, other ideas are connected. It was in this dell that the horrid rites of Moloch used to be celebrated, in imitation of which the Jews themselves " burned their sons and their daughters in the fire :"² in after times the filth of the city, and the bodies of executed criminals, were here consumed, and the fires, kept constantly burning for these

¹ Ps. cxxv. 2.

² Jer. vii. 31.

purposes, presented a fit emblem of the future state of punishment, which hence received the name of Gehenna.

In the time of the Romans the city was, in parts, surrounded with three walls, and in the book of Nehemiah no less than ten gates are mentioned: at present one massive stone wall, forty feet high and four broad, the work of Sultan Sulyman in 1542, encompasses it; and there are but four gates, one towards each quarter of the horizon. Entering the south gate we approach Mount Zion, on which stood the citadel of David, and on which there is still a fortress, consisting of several buildings surrounded by a deep trench. On this mountain is the Tower of Hippicus, one of the three which Herod the Great erected, and which alone has survived the destruction of ages. Descending from Zion we come to Acra, or the lower city as it is called by Josephus; now the Christian quarter, and remarkable for the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is supposed to be built over the tomb of our Lord. Mount Moriah was the site of the Temple. This edifice, really the work of Herod the Great (for the temple of Zerubbabel had little pretensions to splendour), was one of the most magnificent in the world. A few years before the Christian era, Herod conceived the idea of repairing the second temple, which, in the lapse of five centuries, had become ruinous, and for nine years he employed 18,000 workmen in the task. The pious zeal of the people seconded his efforts, and for upwards of forty-six years¹ additions were made to it, until it was completed in the reign of Nero. As compared with the temple of Solomon it was deficient in those sacred symbols which marked the more immediate presence of Jehovah — the ark of the covenant, the shechinah, the sacred fire upon the

¹ John, ii. 20.

altar, the Urim and Thummim, and the spirit of prophecy; but its glory was greater in that it was favoured with the presence of Christ Himself. It was built of hard white stones of prodigious size, and surrounded by a wall of great height. This wall was pierced by nine gates, one of which, on the eastern side, more costly than the rest, composed of Corinthian brass, received the name of the Beautiful gate.¹ Entering by this gate we find ourselves in the first, or outer court, called the Court of the Gentiles, who were prohibited from advancing further: it contained a market for the cattle, salt, and incense, used in sacrifice, and here the money-changers plied their traffic.² Elevated a few steps in front was the Court of the Israelites, consisting of two partitions, one for the women, the other for the males; in this square the treasury is supposed to have been placed, and here were chambers for the use of the Nazarites and for the purifying of lepers. A low wall, one cubit in height, separated the Court of the Israelites from that of the priests, in which the altar of burnt-offering stood; and twelve steps conducted to the Temple itself, which was entered by a portico adorned with splendid offerings. Like the Tabernacle, the sacred building contained a Holy place, and a Holy of Holies, separated by a veil, the same which at our Lord's death was rent in twain; and the triumphal arch of Titus at Rome still represents the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the trumpets used at the feast of Jubilee, which, at the destruction of the city, were found in the sanctuary.

Emerging from the sacred precincts the traveller would mark, under the eastern wall of Jerusalem, the fountain of Siloam, which issues from a rock, and formerly filled two pools, or reservoirs; and at the north-east corner, near the sheep-market, the pool of Bethesda, with its five porticoes

¹ Acts, iii. 2.

² Matt. xxi. 12, 13.

for the reception of the sick. At the north-west corner was situated the fortress of Antonia, erected or repaired by Herod, and so called by him in honour of Mark Antony. A Roman garrison was always quartered in it, for the purpose of keeping order at the feasts and quelling the insurrectionary tendencies of the people. It was from this fortress that Claudius Lysias and the band of soldiers rushed down to rescue Paul, in the tumult occasioned by his supposed introduction of Trophimus into the Temple (Acts, xxi. 29). By some it is supposed that this was the residence of the Roman procurators when in Jerusalem, and that it is so spoken of under the name of the Prætorium (John, xviii. 28); but others by this term understand Herod's palace, a superb building which that monarch had erected for his own use, and which afterwards was appropriated to the use of the foreign governors. In front of the Prætorium was a raised pavement of mosaic work (Gabbatha), on which the Procurator sat in his judicial capacity; thus obviating the necessity of the Jews entering the building, by which they would be defiled.

The modern population of Jerusalem is supposed to amount to about 20,000. In its present state it furnishes a striking comment upon the word of prophecy.¹ The foundations of the ancient city are buried beneath rubbish fifty feet deep, and nothing can be more desolate than the appearance of the modern town. The streets are badly formed, narrow, and filthy; and most of the houses are out of repair, or half-choked with rubbish. The Jewish quarter especially presents an aspect of extreme filth and wretchedness.

SECT. II.—*Manners and Customs of the Jews.*

Of these, only a few of the principal come within the

¹ Jer. ix. 11.

scope of the present volume ; fuller information must be sought in works specially devoted to the subject.¹

§ 1. *Habitations*.—The fathers of the Jewish people lived in tents, resembling, probably, those of the modern Bedouins. They were sometimes covered with skins, but more frequently with a material of goats' hair, of a black or dusky colour,² such as to this day is used in the East. Like our tents, they were expanded, and kept firm, by cords stretched to pins driven into the ground ; it was with one of these pins that Jael despatched Sisera. Among the Arabs, persons of opulence have several tents ; one for themselves, another for their wives, and a third for their servants : in other cases, the single oblong tent is divided into compartments by curtains. Married persons have always a separate compartment to themselves. In these tents an Arabian family takes up its abode, with nothing underneath but the ground, or, occasionally, a mat. In a sultry climate shelter from the sun is a necessity, and where practicable the tents were pitched under trees ; as Abraham's at Mamre,³ and that of Deborah.⁴ Groves were planted for the same purpose ; the vine and the fig-tree, from their luxuriant foliage, being especially suitable.

When the Israelites became settled in Palestine, they either used the houses of their predecessors, or constructed their own after the model of those which they had seen in Egypt. Those of the poor were commonly of mud, easily, therefore, washed away by a sudden torrent, or invaded by thieves ;⁵ the rich used stone or brick, the latter being composed of clay, mud, and straw, mixed together, and baked in the sun. At first these houses seem to have been only of one story ; but in the time of our Lord the

¹ Horne's *Introd.* vol. iii. Jennings' *Jewish Antiquities*.

² Cant. i. 5. ³ Gen. xviii. 4. ⁴ Judg. iv. 5. ⁵ Matt. vii 26.

palaces of the wealthy might vie with those which adorned Athens or Rome.

Since the customs of the East seldom change, we may gather from the fashion that now prevails there a general notion of the structure of the ancient Jewish houses. The principal point in which they differed from ours is in being built round a square court, which is open to the weather, corresponding to the atrium, or rather the impluvium of the Romans. One side of the building faced the street, and was entered by a porch, leading through a waiting-room into the court, which was paved, sometimes with marble, sometimes with cheaper materials, according to the ability of the owner. On festive occasions the court was covered with mats or carpets; and here the guests assembled. It was probably in an area of this kind that our Lord was teaching when the paralytic was let down before him "into the midst" (*εἰς τὸ μέσον*);¹ and it was in this space that the fire was kindled, and the servants of the high-priest waited, with Peter among them, until our Lord's examination was concluded.² Round the court ran a cloister, and above it a gallery with a balustrade, whence apartments of the same length as the court were entered. On the inner side, opposite the street entrance, which was always guarded by gates and attended by a porter,³ stood the inner porch, leading to the main body of the building. The roof was flat, and surrounded by a parapet; it was composed of earth, rolled hard, so as to be impervious to rain, and the grass was allowed to grow freely upon it. The roof of the house was a favourite place for prayer and meditation;⁴ and here, during the heats of summer, the family slept. The doors moved on

¹ Luke, v. 19.

² Ibid. xxii. 55.

³ John, xviii. 16. Acts, xii. 13.

⁴ Acts, x. 9.

pivots, and were secured by a bar. Glass being unknown, the windows were mere apertures with lattices. Kitchens may be supposed to be alluded to in Ezek. xlvi. 24; but no mention occurs of chimneys: the smoke, therefore, must have escaped by openings in the wall or roof for that purpose. But, as in most hot countries, charcoal was commonly used for domestic purposes.

The furniture of an Eastern house was extremely simple. Pegs were fixed in the wall, on which articles of daily use were hung; and the ground, covered with skins and mats, served for couch and table. A mattress, which could be rolled up and easily carried about,¹ with a coverlet, was laid for sleep. Chairs, however, and tables, were not unknown; and in the houses of the wealthy the guests reclined at meals on couches around the tables,² which, like the triclinium of the Romans, formed three sides of a square.

The domestic utensils consisted of vessels of earthenware, copper, and leather, the latter material being especially used for bottles to contain liquids.³ In every Eastern house the hand-mill was an essential article of furniture; it was commonly worked by women.⁴ The apartments were lighted by lamps fed with olive oil, which the fertile slopes of Palestine furnished in great abundance.

§ 2. *Dress, &c.* — The “coats of skins,”⁵ which formed the clothing of the fathers of the human race, soon gave place to garments of wool or linen: for the manufacture of which latter material Egypt was especially renowned, and hence it must have been in common use among the Jews during their residence in that country. The hair of the camel was sometimes woven into a coarse kind of cloth.⁶

¹ Matt. ix. 6.

² Luke, vii. 37, 38. John, xiii. 23.

³ Josh. ix. 4. Matt. ix. 17. Ps. cxix. 83.

⁴ Matt. xxiv. 41.

⁵ Gen. iii. 21.

⁶ Matt. iii. 4.

The ordinary dress of the Jews consisted of two garments:—the tunic, or coat, which hung down to the knees or the ankles, furnished with sleeves, and a girdle to confine it to the body; and an upper garment, which was simply a piece of cloth, several yards long, wound round the body. A person divested of this upper robe was said, in the language of Scripture, to be naked.¹ The nature of this dress made it necessary that when a journey was to be undertaken, or laborious work engaged in, it should be girt up round the loins, so as not to impede the motions of the body.² The outer fold of the robe formed a lap, or apron, in which matters could be carried, and the robe itself was frequently used as a covering at night.³ The favourite colours were white, blue, and scarlet or purple; and a species of embroidery was not unknown.⁴ By the law of Moses, fringes were to be attached to the upper garment, to serve as remembrancers of the covenant;⁵ in later times, those who affected peculiar sanctity enlarged their fringes, and added phylacteries, or strips of parchment inscribed with sentences from the law, which were supposed to act as charms against evil spirits.⁶

When engaged in their sacred functions, the priests wore linen drawers next the person; a linen tunic, fitting closely to the body; an embroidered girdle; and a kind of bonnet or turban, made of folds of linen twisted round the head. In addition to these the high-priest was distinguished by, first, the coat of the ephod, a robe of blue wool, on the hem of which were seventy-two bells, with artificial pomegranates between each couple. The bells gave notice to the people of the high-priest's entrance into the holy place. Secondly, the ephod itself; a vest of fine linen, wrought with gold and purple, consisting of two parts

¹ John, xxi. 7. ² Exod. xii. 11. ³ 1 Pet. i. 13. ⁴ Deut. xxiv. 13.

⁵ Exod. xxxv. 35. ⁶ Num. xv. 38. ⁷ Matt. xxiii. 5.

fastened at the shoulders, the hinder part reaching to the feet, the fore part to the waist. On each of the shoulder-straps was a precious stone, on which were engraven the names of the twelve tribes. Thirdly, the breastplate, a parallelogram of the same materials as the ephod, on which were twelve precious stones, containing the names of the twelve tribes; and the Urim and Thummim—words signifying “light” and “perfection,” which is all that we know on this subject. Arrayed in this breastplate, the high-priest presented himself to ask counsel of Jehovah, and received answers, as some think by a voice from the most holy place, or as others, by a superior lustre on certain of the letters engraven on the stones. Fourthly, the mitre, on the front of which, fastened by a blue lace or riband, was a plate of gold, with the words engraven on it, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”

The feet were protected by sandals, made of wood or leather, bound to the foot by straps. It was customary on entering a house to remove these, that the feet might be washed; the operation was usually performed by servants.¹ The delivery of a sandal was the formal act by which property passed from a vendor to a purchaser.²

The head was commonly left bare; but sometimes a turban was worn, from which, in the case of females, a veil was suspended.³ Long hair, both in men and women, was esteemed an ornament. The beard was suffered to grow, and was held in great veneration. To shave, pull, or otherwise maltreat it, was a mortal affront.⁴

Various ornaments are alluded to in Scripture as worn by the Jewish females. The signet-ring was common to both sexes: peculiar to the women were the nose-jewels, the earrings, chains round the neck, the perfume-box, the looking-

¹ Matt. iii. 11. John, xiii. 10.

² Ruth, iv. 7.

³ 1 Cor. xi. 13-16.

⁴ 2 Sam. x. 4.

glass (made of polished brass), and rings for the ankles.¹ Like the Eastern ladies of the present day, those of former times tinged their eyelids with the powder of lead ore, which was thought to improve the expression of the eye: thus, Jezebel is said to have "painted," or rather stained, her face, in expectation of Jehu.²

Mourners put on sackcloth, or hair cloth; and to cover the head with the outer robe, or to rend the garments, was the customary expression of deep grief.³

§ 3. *Marriage and education of children.*—The strictness of the primitive institution was, under the Jewish law, so far relaxed that polygamy was tolerated, though never formally sanctioned; prophecy pointing to a time when the bond should be again drawn closer.⁴ Among the patriarchs concubinage was common; the concubine, however, was a wife with conjugal rights, though of an inferior order. The chief, or primary wife, was mistress of the household, and her children inherited the father's property in preference to those of the concubine: thus Isaac was heir to Abraham's substance, while the children of Hagar and Keturah, the patriarch's concubines, were dismissed in his lifetime with gifts.⁵

No marriage ceremony appears to have been in use among the Jews: it was the practice, however, for the parties to be betrothed to each other, sometimes at a very early age; and these espousals were so far binding that a woman who, in the interval, proved unfaithful, was counted an adulteress. The parents expected from their future son-in-law a sum of money, or an equivalent present, which was called the purchase-money of the wife.⁶

The nuptials were celebrated with great rejoicings. At

¹ Isa. iii. 16-24. ² 2 Kings, ix. 30. ³ Gen. xxxvii. 29.

⁴ Mal. ii. 15. ⁵ Gen. xxv. 5, 6. ⁶ Gen. xxxiv. 12. Hos. iii. 2.

the marriage-feast, which was never omitted, the bride appeared crowned with flowers, or a chaplet of gold, and attended by her train of virgins; while the paranymp¹ and his companions rendered their services to the bridegroom. Among the wealthy it was usual for the bridegroom to provide suitable apparel for the guests;² and at the close of the festival he conducted the bride to his home by night, with torches, music, and other demonstrations of joy.³

The law of Moses permitted divorce, but, as our Lord declares, only in accommodation to the low standard of morality of those early times.⁴ This permission the Jews of a later age abused, allowing divorce for trivial causes; which gave occasion to the Christian rule, that adultery alone should be deemed a sufficient cause for dissolving the marriage union. (Matt. v. 32.)

Children, if males, were circumcised on the eighth day after their birth, at which time also the name was given.⁵ The birthday of a son was kept as a festival. Various privileges belonged to the first-born: he inherited a double portion of the estate; and, in the patriarchal times, discharged the functions of priest. Under the law the tribe of Levi was substituted for the first-born, who were redeemed, at a valuation, from serving in the sacerdotal office.⁶ Sons remained under the care of the women until the fifth year, when they were transferred to the father, who took care to have them instructed in the law. Parental authority was maintained by severe sanctions, but a parent could not proceed to extremities without a formal information before the judge.⁷

The inheritance was divided equally among the sons, with the exception of the first-born, who received a double

¹ John, iii. 29.

² Matt. xxii. 11.

³ Matt. xxv. 1-12.

⁴ Matt. xix. 8.

⁵ Luke, i. 59.

⁶ Num. xviii. 15, 16.

⁷ Deut. xxi. 18-21.

portion. The daughters had no portion; but if there were no brothers, or they had all died, the daughters succeeded to the family estate.¹

Adoption was common in the later period of the Jewish commonwealth; it differed, however, from that in use among the Greeks and Romans. If a man died without children, his surviving brother was bound to marry the widow; and the offspring, if any, of such a marriage, was regarded as that of the deceased, and bore his name.² Instances, too, occur of a father's adopting his daughter's children, where he had no sons; ³ and of relations adopting their kindred. Thus Mordecai adopted Esther, his niece.

§ 4. *Meals.*—Eastern nations use less animal diet than the inhabitants of colder climates; and the food of the Jews, especially in early times, seems to have consisted chiefly of bread, milk, fruits, honey, cheese, and vegetables. At the festivals they indulged in more sumptuous banquets. Locusts were a common article of food.⁴ As is the case with the modern Arabs, the bread was baked as it was wanted, and the operation was extremely simple. The flour was kneaded, sometimes leavened and sometimes unleavened, in a trough, and the dough, placed on the hearth or upon the coals, speedily became fit for eating.

The Jews had two principal meals: one about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and the other, the supper, about five in the afternoon. The food was taken with the hand,⁵ whence the custom of washing both before and after meals. The ordinary beverage was water, which was sometimes mixed with wine; the common people drunk an acid mixture of this kind, which, in our English Bible, is called "vinegar."⁶ Medicated wine was used to stupefy criminals about to be executed. In the Old Testament mention

¹ Num. xxvii. 1-8. ² Deut. xxv. 5 ³ 1 Chron. ii. 34.

⁴ Matt. iii. 4. ⁵ Ibid. xxvi. 23. ⁶ Ibid. xxvii. 48.

occurs of "strong drink,"¹ a species of intoxicating liquor, made from corn, dates, or other fruits.

§ 5. *Arts.*—It was not the intention of the Divine Law-giver that the chosen people should distinguish themselves in the pursuits of highly civilised or maritime nations. The main purposes of the Jewish economy would thus have been frustrated. Their knowledge of the arts and their commerce, except during the brief period of Solomon's glory, were limited; their literature almost exclusively religious.

To the breeding of cattle considerable attention appears to have been given. Oxen were used both for draught and tillage; asses and camels for riding; in the East, as in Spain, the ass attains a perfection and a value unknown to us. Of horses, no mention occurs before the time of David; the law of Moses discouraged the use of this animal: no doubt lest the Israelites should be tempted, by the use of cavalry, to extend their conquests beyond Canaan. Goats and sheep formed a main part of the property of the wealthy. The operations of agriculture, the basis of the national fabric, were substantially the same as at present. The plough and the harrow are mentioned in Scripture;² and the use of manure seems to have been known.³ For some reason unknown to us, the Jews were forbidden by the law to plough with an ox and an ass together, or to sow their fields with mingled seed.⁴ Wheat, barley, fitches, and cummin, were the principal tillage crops; the olive furnished oil, and the grape wine. Threshing was performed with the flail; but often by oxen, who trod out the corn.⁵ The grain, separated, by winnowing, from the chaff, was dried either by the sun, or in a furnace; in which state it was sometimes eaten without

¹ Levit. x. 9. ² Jer. iv. 3. Isa. xxviii. 24. ³ 2 Kings, vi. 25.

⁴ Deut. xxii. 10. Levit. xix. 19.

⁵ Deut. xxv. 4.

further preparation,¹ but more commonly was ground in the handmills before described.

How far the arts of *architecture and painting* were cultivated among the Hebrews it is difficult to determine. The skill of Bezaleel and Aholiab cannot be adduced in proof, for we are told that they worked under the special guidance of God.² Solomon was compelled to send to Tyre for artificers in wood and brass. Traces of the art of painting, but probably of a rude character, appear in the writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel: it is not likely, from the spirit of the Mosaic religion, that either this, or the sister art of sculpture, would be in much repute. With *music* the case was different. The national poetry was essentially lyrical; the hymns composed for religious worship, in particular, were all set to music. On festive occasions, of whatever kind, the harp found a place. The Hebrew monarchs appear to have maintained a band of musicians at their court,³ and the temple services were conducted by a skilled choir. Of the nature, however, of the Hebrew music, and of the instruments in use, little is known. The tabret, or tambourine; the cymbal; the dulcimer, a wind instrument of reed; the trumpet; the harp; and the psaltery (a stringed instrument); may be considered as identified: beyond these all is conjecture. The case of Saul proves that the national temperament was peculiarly susceptible of the power of music. By the prophets it was employed to prepare the mind for the access of the Divine inspiration.⁴

§ 6. *Literature*.—The native literature of the Hebrews was of a predominantly religious character. Little attention appears to have been given to literary pursuits before the establishment of the schools of the prophets by Samuel; on which subject the reader is referred to a sub-

¹ Levit. xxiii. 14.

² Exod. xxxv. 30.

³ Eccles. ii. 8.

⁴ 2 Kings, iii. 15.

sequent part of this work.¹ The prophets were commonly the chroniclers of the events of their times; and of this description are the only historical books extant in Hebrew, viz. those of the Canon. Poetry devoted herself to the service of the sanctuary, and the lyric effusions of Moses, David, Asaph, and others, far surpass in sublimity, both of thought and expression, the most boasted productions of Greece and Rome. Moral philosophy took the form of sententious reflections upon life and manners, such as we possess in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the author of which is said to have composed other treatises, now lost, upon natural history.² Of metaphysical speculation there are no traces before the rise of the Alexandrian school, a few centuries before the birth of Christ. Where astrology was forbidden,³ astronomy, its offspring, was not likely to be cultivated: we read of nothing beyond the natural divisions of time, as marked by the sun and the moon.

§ 7. *Commerce*.—Our chief source of information upon this point is the account of Solomon's commercial system, contained in the First Book of Kings. After that bright era of national prosperity, the foreign trade of both kingdoms declined, until it was destroyed by the capture of Elath on the Red Sea by Tiglath-pileser. On their return from the captivity the Jews engaged in traffic, but on a small scale; and even practised piracy. The only staple commodity which continued to be exported was corn, which was sent to Tyre for that purpose: Joppa and Cæsarea, in our Lord's time, are mentioned as commercial ports. Of the size and form of their ships we have no exact information. Without the aid of the compass, navigation must have been restricted within narrow limits;

¹ See Part iii. p. 296.

² 1 Kings, iv. 33.

³ Deut. xviii. 10.

how imperfect the art was, even in St. Paul's time, we learn from the account of his shipwreck, in Acts, xxvii. Commerce was at first carried on by barter; afterwards payments were made by weight, whence the word *shekel* signifies both a weight and a sum of money: coined money dates from the time of Judas Maccabæus, to whom Antiochus Sidetes granted the privilege of issuing it in Judæa. In our Lord's time the Roman coinage was current among the Jews.

§ 8. *Modes of reckoning time.*—Like the Romans, the Jews had a civil and a natural day: the former, from six in the evening to six in the next evening; the latter, from sunrise to sunset. The natural day was divided into twelve hours of unequal length, according to the season.

Before the captivity the night was divided into three watches, the first commencing at nine in the evening and lasting till twelve; the second, from twelve to three; and the third, from three to six in the morning: but afterwards the Jews adopted the Roman division into four watches, the additional one being from six in the evening to nine. The third watch, or from twelve to three, was called the cock-crowing.¹ They reckoned two evenings, the former commencing at three in the afternoon, the latter two hours later: the paschal lamb was to be sacrificed “between the two evenings.”²

By the Jews of Judæa the Hebrew months were dated from the actual appearance of the new moon; and as they were only thirty days at longest, it became necessary to insert intercalary months at intervals. Astronomical cycles afterwards came into use; at first one of eighty-four years, and afterwards that of Meton of nineteen years, twelve of which contain twelve months, and seven thirteen: this cycle the Jews still use.

¹ Mark, xiii. 35.

² Exod. xii. 6, marg.

The ecclesiastical year began with the month Nisan, or Abib, corresponding to part of March and April, because at that time the departure from Egypt took place. From this month the feasts were computed. The first month of the civil year was called Tisri, answering to part of September and October; it regulated civil contracts and the years of jubilee. It was the custom of the Jews to speak of a part of a period as the whole; hence the scriptural statements that after three days Christ should rise, or that His body was in the grave three days, whereas the actual time was one whole day and parts of two others.

§ 9. *Funeral rites.*—From the Egyptians the Jews probably borrowed the practice of embalming the bodies of the dead; but whether their modes of performing this ceremony resembled those practised in Egypt, as described by Herodotus, admits of doubt. Jacob and Joseph, dying in Egypt, were embalmed,¹ no doubt, after the national fashion; but we read that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea wound the body of Jesus in linen clothes, with a large quantity of “myrrh and aloes, as the manner of the Jews is to bury:”² whence it would appear that the Jewish mode of embalming, in ordinary cases, consisted in simply swathing the corpse with linen bandages, enclosing a quantity of these aromatic drugs. That it was not so efficacious as the Egyptian mode may be gathered from Martha’s observation, John, xi. 39. Of the burning of the dead we seldom read.

The body was generally carried to the grave on an open bier,³ the relations and friends accompanying it. Hired mourners, chiefly women, filled the air with plaintive lamentations, and occasionally music was added to heighten the effect: when Jesus entered the house of Jairus he found “the minstrels,” as well as “the people, making a

¹ Gen. i. 2, 26.

² John, xix. 39, 40.

³ Luke, vii. 12.

noise" (Matt. ix. 23). The common burial-ground was always outside the city; but persons of rank had family sepulchres in their own grounds. Thus the body of our Lord was laid in the tomb which Joseph of Arimathea had prepared for his own private use. These sepulchres were usually hollowed out of the rock, either on the side of a perpendicular cliff, or, as seems to have been the case with the tomb of Lazarus,¹ underneath the level ground, like our vaults. In either case a stone closed the entrance, to prevent the attacks of beasts of prey. At a very early period we find instances of a species of sepulchral monument. Thus, Jacob erected a pillar over the grave of Rachel.² In later times it was a point of duty with the survivors to adorn the tombs of their departed friends in a costly manner: the tombs of the prophets were, in our Lord's time, objects of superstitious care to the Pharisees, who in this way hoped to gain a reputation for sanctity. A feast, to which the friends and relations of the deceased were invited, closed the funeral ceremonies.

¹ John, xi. 38.

² Gen. xxxv. 20.



PART III.

CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE.

I. OLD TESTAMENT.—I. PENTATEUCH.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

SECT. I.—*Sketch of the History of the Jews to the Death of Moses.*

THE speculations in which ancient philosophy loved to indulge respecting the origin of the world, and the early history of our race, have been set at rest and superseded by the authentic record of Holy Scripture. From it we learn, that neither by an eternal succession of material causes, nor by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, did the world come into existence; but that “in the beginning, God,” the personal and self-subsistent, “created the heavens and the earth.” In this terrestrial abode, amply, as we read, furnished with everything necessary to his wants and conducive to his happiness, man was placed, the lord of the inferior creation, intellectually and morally, “in the image of God.” But this happy state of innocence was of brief duration. Sin, with its consequences, entered into the world; and here again, by its account of the temptation

and fall of man, Scripture has furnished the solution of two great problems, which painfully engaged the thoughts of reflective heathens — the origin of evil, and the existence of death.

Driven from the blissful retreat which the Divine beneficence had assigned as their abode, but not without a cheering promise of a future restoration to be effected by the Seed of the woman, our first parents soon experienced, in the degeneracy of their descendants, the effects of the primeval sin. Bloodshed and lust inaugurated a period of universal corruption, yet the process of decline appears to have been gradual. Two lines of Adam's posterity, marked by distinguishing peculiarities, appear on the page of the history, and for some time ran side by side without comingling. The descendants of Cain addicted themselves either to arts and manufactures, or to the pursuits of a nomadic life; and impiety and rapine marked their progress. Those of Seth appear to have engaged in the more peaceful labours of agriculture, and are supposed, on account of the superior innocence of their life and their maintenance of the worship of the one true God, to be denoted in Scripture by the appellation of the "Sons of God" (Gen. vi. 2.) Intermarriages, however, gradually assimilated the habits of the Sethites and the Cainites, and the world became universally corrupt. The fearful judgment of the deluge followed, from which Noah and his family emerged, under a covenant of natural mercies (Gen. viii. 21), and became the progenitors of a second race of men. His three sons are supposed to have peopled different parts of the ancient world: Shem and his descendants occupying the plains of Asia; Ham being the progenitor of the Canaanites, Philistines, and some of the African nations; while Japheth and his posterity settled in Europe. As is usual in an unsettled state of society,

individuals remarkable for personal prowess and dexterity took the lead, and became chieftains of tribes;—among these the name of Nimrod stands particularly prominent. He is thought to have been the founder, or the conqueror, of the ancient kingdom of Assyria, with its capital, Nineveh; and to have been the prime mover in the impious design of erecting in the plain of Shinar a tower, whose height should menace heaven, and which should serve as a visible centre to the various races of the world, at that time united by the bond of a common language. The design was frustrated by the confusion of tongues, and the division into nations which immediately succeeded.

The time had now come for the first actual steps of Divine Providence towards the accomplishment of the prophecy delivered in the garden of Eden. Of the early history of Abraham we know little: he was of the race of Shem, and with his father Terah, the head of a pastoral family, dwelt in a district called Ur of the Chaldees, to the north-east of Mesopotamia. We are told (Josh. xxiv. 2) that idolatry prevailed in Terah's household, and probably that early form of it which consists in the worship of the heavenly bodies, to the observation of which the inhabitants of the plains of Chaldæa were, among the nations of antiquity, from time immemorial particularly devoted. But Abraham seems to have escaped the contagion, and whether from tradition, or direct communication from the Deity, to have learned, and maintained, the purer worship of earlier times. While still in his native country, a Divine intimation was conveyed to him that he should migrate, with such of his family as were willing to accompany him, to a region in the west; and after a temporary sojourn in Charran, which lay in his route, he, at length, with Lot his nephew, and Sarai his wife, arrived in the promised land, and first settled in a rich valley between

mounts Ebal and Gerizim, where the town of Shechem afterwards stood. He proceeded on his journey southwards; and after a visit to Egypt, whither a famine had compelled him to bend his steps, took up his abode, in company with Lot, in the northern parts of Judæa. The increasing prosperity both of the uncle and the nephew led to a separation; and while Abraham, in obedience to the Divine command, journeyed through the principal districts of Palestine, Lot chose the rich plain of Jordan, to the south-east, which at that time was occupied with flourishing cities. It was on this occasion that the promise to Abraham, in dependence upon which he had quitted the land of his nativity, was, under its temporal aspect, repeated,—that his seed, though he was then childless, should inherit the land in which he was a sojourner;¹ while, on his leaving his native country, he had been assured that in him, as the progenitor of the promised Saviour, “all families of the earth should be blessed.”² In anticipation of the blessing, the rite of circumcision, the distinguishing sign of the covenant between God and the posterity of Abraham, was instituted; and after a fruitless attempt on the part of the patriarch and his wife to hasten prematurely the fulfilment of the promise, which seemed to linger, at length, to a period of life when all natural hope of offspring had vanished, the prophecy took effect, and Isaac was born. It now became necessary to mark distinctly in what line the covenanted blessing should descend; and after a painful struggle on Abraham’s part, whose affection for his eldest son is natural and touching, Ishmael was sent forth from his father’s house to become the progenitor of that singular race, whose home, to this day, is the desert, and which has never entered into the circle of civilized nations. This was not the only trial which the patriarch had to endure. Lot’s

¹ Gen. xiii. 14–16.

² *Ibid.* xii. 3.

worldly choice speedily bore its evil fruit, and a successful raid of the neighbouring chieftains upon the city of Sodom, his abode, would have consigned him to slavery, had not his uncle generously come to his aid, and by force rescued him from the hands of his enemies. Lot's subsequent history deserves little notice. Notwithstanding the warning he had received, he returned to Sodom; was involved, as far as regards the loss of all his property, his wife, and his relations by marriage, in the destruction of the city; and miserably ended his career with an incestuous connexion, from which the two tribes of Moab and Ammon, afterwards so well known in Jewish history, sprang.

The isolation of the Abrahamic family from the surrounding nations of Canaan, one of the leading purposes of the Jewish polity, was guarded with jealous care by the first patriarchs. The cave of Machpelah was purchased by Abraham, as a separate burial-place for his descendants; and both for Isaac and Jacob wives were sought from the far-distant country in which their kindred dwelt. After a life of singular vicissitudes, and a protracted absence from Canaan, the latter returned thither, the parent of a numerous progeny, and rich in the pastoral wealth of the East. From the twelve sons of Israel the Jewish people were to spring; and it became necessary to select a temporary place of sojourn, where the patriarchal tribe, abandoning the nomadic life to which they had been accustomed, might be kept together, and expand into a nation.

From a period reaching far beyond authentic history, Egypt had enjoyed the advantages of political civilization. That singular country, the gift of the Nile, as an ancient historian expresses it,¹ is the only part of northern Africa through which flows a large and navigable stream, which, in

¹ Herodotus, ii.

its descent to the sea carries with it immense quantities of earthy matter, and by periodically overflowing its banks enriches the surrounding country with its deposit. The industry and skill of the husbandman turned to the best advantage the extraordinary natural resources of the soil. Throughout the whole period of ancient history, Egypt appears as the granary of the world. In the wake of agriculture followed commerce. The vicinity of the land of gold and spices produced a large caravan trade, and travelling merchants periodically traversed the desert, carrying to this common emporium the productions of their respective countries. (Gen. xxxvii. 25.) The political constitution of Egypt seems, in the time of Jacob, to have assumed substantially the same form which it retained in the days of Herodotus. It was founded on the principle of caste; and different writers mention a different number of castes, which, however, may be arranged under the three principal divisions of priests, warriors, and artisans. At the summit of the social pyramid stood the priestly order: to its custody was assigned not merely the rites of religion, but the public annals of the state. The priests were the astronomers and geometricians, the physicians, the natural philosophers, the antiquarians, and the lawyers of the country. Ample revenues and high dignities rewarded their services. Even when, by the skilful policy of Joseph, all the land of Egypt became vested in Pharaoh, an exemption was made in favour of the priests. (Gen. xlvii. 22.) Like the castes of India, those of Egypt never intermixed; and the same occupations, from generation to generation, descended from father to son.

At a very early period in the history of Egypt, an invasion of a wild Arab tribe took place, of which the people of the country ever retained the liveliest and most painful recollections. The intruders succeeded in establishing a dynasty of kings, who by the Egyptians were called

Hyskos, or Shepherd kings; and from this circumstance is supposed to have arisen the contempt and hatred with which, as we know from the Book of Genesis, the occupation of a shepherd was regarded by them. The country soon recovered its independence, and a long line of native monarchs—some of them, like Sesostris, remarkable for their martial achievements, others for the vast structures and public works, the remains of which still excite the wonder of the traveller—adorned the national annals.

The religion of Egypt was idolatry of the most grotesque and degrading character. Besides the well-known heathen divinities which from the banks of the Nile passed into Greece, animal worship prevailed; and the goat, the ram, the bull, and the crocodile, received divine honours. Here, as elsewhere in pagan lands, licentiousness and religion were found in close connexion. With all its progress in civilisation, arts, and manufactures, Egypt was a bye-word, even among the nations of antiquity, for the grovelling character of its superstitions.

It was this country which Divine Providence had assigned as the cradle of the Jewish people: here, for upwards of 200 years, they were to be nursed in temporal abundance indeed, but in fetters of slavery which left indelible impressions on the national mind. Yet their first entrance into Egypt seemed to betoken a different destiny. The high position of Joseph at the court of Pharaoh, and the favour with which, on account of his public services, he was regarded by that monarch, procured a favourable reception for his aged father's household, who, amounting collectively to seventy souls, migrated from Canaan, and settled in the district of Goshen, where the soil was adapted to pastoral occupations. Before long, however, a change took place: "A new king arose which knew not Joseph." The stranger race multiplied so rapidly

as to excite the jealousy of the reigning sovereign, who first attempted to check their progress by employing them in the toilsome and unhealthy labours of the public works, and when this proved ineffectual, by a barbarous project of extermination of all the male children.

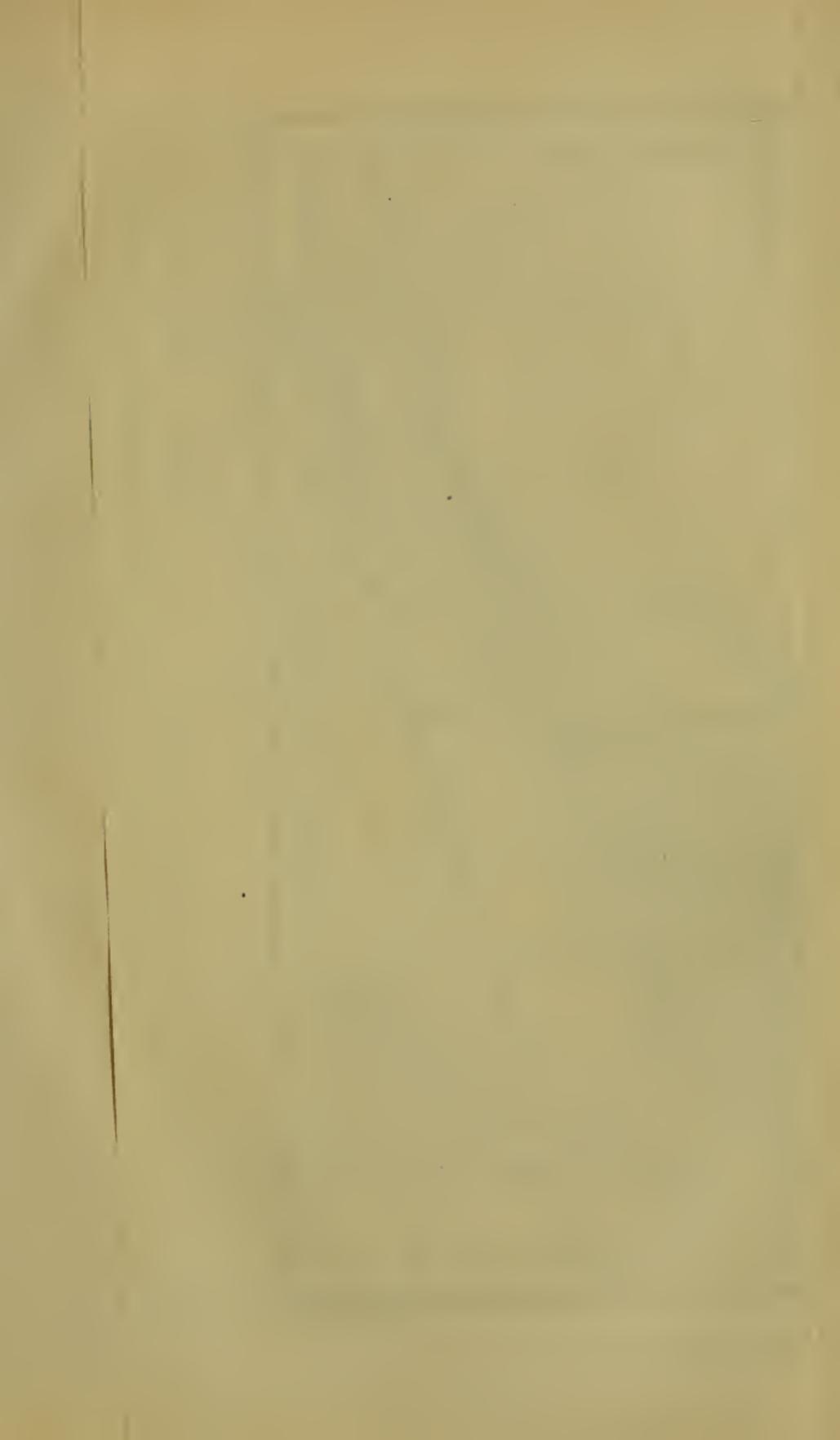
But the period of deliverance was at hand. Among the children exposed, by the king's command, on the banks of the river, one was, by a remarkable interposition of Providence, rescued, and placed in the most advantageous position for acquiring the knowledge and experience necessary for the high destiny that awaited him. Brought up amidst the splendours of Pharaoh's court, and instructed in every branch of Egyptian learning, and with the fairest prospects before him, Moses, had he followed the dictates of worldly prudence, would have renounced all connexion with the despised and oppressed people from which he sprang ; but, probably from some Divine communication, he seems to have early conceived the idea of delivering his countrymen from bondage, and at length, by an act of open violence in behalf of his brethren, placed an impassable barrier between himself and his Egyptian connexions. Compelled to fly the country, he for forty years pursued the humble occupation of a shepherd in the plains of Midian, when, at the advanced age of eighty, he was summoned by the express call of Jehovah, the Unchangeable, to conduct the chosen people from the house of bondage. The reality of the miraculous plagues of Egypt has been questioned ; but that a member of the despised race, a stranger, without physical force at his command, or even the cordial co-operation of those whom he came to deliver ; without the natural endowments of eloquence, or the acquired one of wealth ; should have succeeded in triumphantly leading forth the Helot people, under the eye of a powerful and enraged monarch, and

amidst a hostile population, whom the strongest motives of interest must have led strongly to oppose the migration — this would have been a far more wonderful miracle than any which the Book of Exodus records. On the commonest principles of reasoning we must acquiesce in the lesser of two difficulties, and believe that nothing but the exhibition of Divine credentials, which at length assumed the most awful character, could have overcome the obstinacy of the king and the reluctance of his people. Successively, by the miraculous powers placed at Moses' disposal, the magicians and the priests of Egypt were confounded and humiliated; and at length, on that "night to be much remembered," when a wail of anguish arose from every Egyptian family, for there was not one in which Death had not stricken his victim, a message arrived to the Jews assembled in Goshen, ordering them to evacuate the country with all their substance, and with all possible speed. In anticipation of this command they had celebrated the great feast, which was at once a memorial and a type, with "shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand;" and on the morrow, the terror-stricken inhabitants themselves accelerating their departure, they set forth under the guidance of Moses, 600,000 males in number, which, according to the ordinary calculation, would give a total of about 3,000,000 souls.

By their long residence in Egypt, and social degradation, the Israelites had become deeply tinged with idolatrous tendencies and sensual indifference to higher interests than those of the body. To impress upon them the more deeply the lesson which they had just received, that the Jehovah who, by His servant, had effected their deliverance, was not one of the "gods many of heathenism," but the Almighty Creator; to implant the rudiment of faith in an unseen Power; and, on the lower stage of temporal benefits,

to elicit the feelings of love and gratitude towards a Divine Benefactor ; it was needful that, instead of being at once put in possession of Canaan, they should traverse the barren desert which forms the peninsula of Arabia Petræa, where the utter dearth of human resources might enhance the miraculous interferences in their behalf, and the necessity of perpetual dependence upon their heavenly King prepare them to submit to the polity, somewhat onerous, under which they were to be placed. But first there took place a signal miracle, by which the pursuing host of the Egyptians, with their king, who had soon repented of his facility in permitting so useful a body of slaves to escape, was overwhelmed in the billows of a creek of the Red Sea, while the Israelites passed in safety between the walls of water on either side,—a miracle which, by a figurative baptism,¹ wiped out the traces of their ancient slavery, and at once freed them from fear of further pursuit, and consecrated them to the service of their Almighty Deliverer. Resuming their march in triumph, they struck into the sandy plains which border the eastern side of the sea, and after various journeyings and encampments, during which their unbelief frequently broke out into rebellious murmurings, and as frequently was rebuked by providential supplies in the hour of necessity—"bread from heaven," and water from the rock—they approached the rugged precipices of the mountain range in which the peninsula terminates, variously called, from different portions of it, Horeb and Sinai, where, through the mediation of Moses, they were to receive the law, civil, ceremonial, and moral, which was to be the charter of their national existence. Amidst thunders and lightnings, which struck terror into the souls of the surrounding crowd, Moses ascends the mount ; remains there

¹ 1 Cor. x. 2.



forty days, receiving the Divine communications ; descends only to find the Israelites relapsing into their idolatrous propensities ; breaks, in indignation, the two tables of stone on which the moral law had been inscribed ; sojourns another forty days on Sinai ; and at length, with fresh tables of stone, and a complete code of laws, rejoins the people, who were anxiously expecting his appearance.

In the following section a description of the Jewish polity, civil and religious, will be given ; at present we pursue this sketch of early Jewish history to the time when the nation stood upon the borders of the promised land. More than eleven months had elapsed since the departure from Egypt, when the encampment at Horeb broke up, and the Israelites, who numbered upwards of 600,000 fighting men, proceeded in a north-easterly direction, along the coast, towards Canaan. The order of the march was fixed by Divine appointment : Judah took the lead, and Dan brought up the rear, while the Tabernacle, with the priests and Levites, occupied the centre. Moses secured the services of his brother-in-law, Hobab, as a guide through the difficult country about to be traversed ; and after several adventures at the stations of Taberah, Kibroth-Hattaavah, and Hazeroth, in which the temporal sanctions of the newly-given law were executed with a severity before unknown, Kadesh-Barnea, a spot on the southern border of Palestine, was reached. Here, before advancing further, Moses deemed it advisable to send out a reconnoitring party, who might report upon the character of the country and its inhabitants ; and twelve men, one from each tribe, were despatched on this errand. The visible proofs which they exhibited of the fertility of the land, were counterbalanced by the formidable picture which ten of the twelve drew of its inhabitants, their valour, resources, and gigantic stature ; and, in

spite of the remonstrances of Caleb and Joshua, the people, forgetful of the Divine arm which had already carried them through so many dangers, with one accord refused to advance. A suitable punishment followed: since they would not, they should not, pass the frontier; they should retrace their steps to the barren region they had left, and wander in the wilderness until the whole of that generation, from twenty years old and upwards, with the exception of the two faithful spies, should have been gathered to their fathers.

Scripture contains but scanty notices of this long period of penal wandering: the people, apparently, traversed to and fro the extensive table-land in the middle of the Sinaitic peninsula, called the wilderness of Paran, halting where they found pasture and water for their cattle. Several interesting incidents, however, are recorded. It might be expected that a rude people, tasting for the first time the sweets of liberty, would not submit, without a struggle, to the authority of Moses and the possession of exclusive privileges by the priestly family of Aaron: the Lord's people were all holy, why should not all participate in the civil government, and in the priesthood? The smouldering embers at length burst into a flame; leaders were found to head the malcontents; and open menaces were addressed to Moses and Aaron. The rising of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, was, in reality, an act of rebellion against the Divine King of Israel Himself; and an example was needed to decide the question, once for all, in whose hands the supreme authority was to be considered as lodged. The mutineers perished miserably, some swallowed up in a chasm of the earth which opened beneath their feet, and others struck by fire from heaven; yet so extensively had the contagion spread that the people took up the cause of the deceased leaders, and the

spirit of insubordination was only checked by a plague, which carried off upwards of 14,000 victims. The miraculous budding of Aaron's rod, among the twelve which were laid up in the Tabernacle, completed the visible manifestation of the Divine will in this matter.

At length, thirty-eight years after the former visit to Kadesh-Barnea, the Israelites again appeared at that place, and prepared to invade the southern district of Judæa. It was not permitted either to Moses or Aaron to take part personally in the subjugation of the Canaanitish nations—an act of impatience on the part of these leaders at Meribah was visited with this penalty; and soon afterwards Aaron died, and was buried at Mount Hor, not far from the ancient Petra. It was now necessary to decide upon the line of march, and though the route from Kadesh-Barnea to the southern frontier of Judæa was the direct one, so many obstacles presented themselves to an entrance at this point, that it was resolved to make a circuit round the lower extremity of the Dead Sea, and then passing northwards on the eastern side of the Jordan, to cross the river, and attack the central region of the country. This design was, in the first instance, frustrated by the refusal of the Edomites to grant a passage through the mountainous district of Mount Seir, which lay in the way; but the Israelites advancing southward to the Gulf of Akaba, the eastern arm of the Red Sea, turned the corner of the Edomite mountains, and entered, without opposition, the plains of Moab. About this time occurred the incident of the plague of fiery serpents, which gave occasion to one of the most remarkable types of Christ, in the brazen serpent which Moses was commanded to erect, and which was the means of recovery to as many as in faith looked towards it. The invaders, after defeating in two decisive battles the kings of the Amorites and of Bashan, who had

endeavoured to check their progress, were now masters of the whole eastern bank of Jordan, and might have proceeded to the passage of the river, had they not been diverted by an insidious project of the Midianites, who, despairing of successful resistance in the open field, at the suggestion of their prophet Balaam craftily celebrated the impure and idolatrous rites of their national festival in the immediate vicinity of the Israelitish camp. The snare was successful; the people joined in the idol-worship; and before the crime was expiated, 24,000 of them had fallen by pestilence. The Midianites, however, did not escape unscathed: a chosen band of warriors, consisting of 1000 men from every tribe, made a sudden descent upon them, slew their kings, destroyed their cities, and cut off the whole male population. After this great blow no enemy remained in these regions; and a portion of the Israelites, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, whose pursuits were chiefly pastoral, began to cast a wistful eye upon the rich plains of Bashan and Gilead. They requested that they might be permitted to settle on that side of Jordan; and Moses, after binding them by a solemn compact to assist their brethren in the occupation of the rest of Canaan, portioned out the conquered territory between these two tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.

And now the great lawgiver's mission was accomplished. Another captain was to finish the work which had been begun. Assembling, therefore, the people for the last time, Moses recapitulated the law, in its several branches, and, passing rapidly through the eventful history in which he had played so conspicuous a part, inculcated upon them, with the deepest earnestness, the lessons to be thence derived. The ratification of the covenant, which he could not himself witness, was to be performed, when the promised land should be entered, under circumstances the

most solemn and striking. On two hills, separated by a narrow valley, all Israel was to be assembled, six tribes on one, and six on the other. From Mount Ebal a curse against transgressors, from Mount Gerizim a blessing upon the obedient, was to be promulgated, and each division of the people was to express an audible assent. To the prophetic eye of Moses himself, the result of the great experiment about to be tried was not doubtful. In language, the sublimity of which no merely human composition has ever equalled, and with an accuracy as if he had been the historian of the events, he describes the fearful destiny which awaited the chosen people, and which centuries of suffering have not yet exhausted. And now one only wish remained. If he might not enter the sacred borders, a distant view of them might be permitted. Accordingly, ascending the highest point of Mount Nebo, whence a wide extent of rich country, diversified by mountain-ranges, and intersected from north to south by the silver thread of the Jordan, was visible, Moses feasted his eyes upon the prospect, and then closed them in death. He was buried in the neighbourhood ; but the particular spot was concealed, doubtless lest the Israelites should be tempted to make it a shrine of idolatrous worship.

SECT. II.—*The Mosaic Law.*

The polity which in the wilderness of Sinai the Jews received from the hand of Moses, may be considered under the twofold general division of civil and religious, though, from its peculiar nature, it is difficult to draw an exact line of demarcation. The civil code contains the laws which regulate the national constitution, the rights of individuals, and the intercourse of the nation with other nations; the religious, those which appertain to the worship of Jehovah.

§ 1. *Civil polity.*—The fundamental peculiarity of the

civil constitution of the Hebrews is, that it was a pure theocracy, the only instance of such a polity which the history of the world presents. When God took the people into covenant with Himself, He became their God, not only in a religious but in a national sense; He became not only the object of their worship, but their king. The same lawgiver framed both the civil and religious code of the nation; the same volume of inspiration which instructed the Jew in his duty towards his Maker, contained also the charter of his national privileges. Moreover, Jehovah not only delivered to the nation the law by which it was to be governed, but charged Himself with the administration of that law; executing its sanctions of reward and of punishment by an immediate exercise of Almighty power. The religion, therefore, of the pious Jew was not only a religious but a national sentiment; it was loyalty as well as religion. To worship other gods besides Jehovah was not only a sin but a crime—the crime of treason, and, as such, punishable with death. The ideas expressed by the terms sin and crime, between which human legislators know so well how to distinguish, were, under the Jewish law, perfectly interchangeable.

If the question be put, why this peculiar polity was adopted, we have but to remember the ends which Divine Providence had in view in the selection of the Hebrew nation. The first and principal was, to preserve the doctrines of the unity, spirituality, and personality of the Deity, amidst the universal tendency of the world, either, on the part of philosophers, to speculative pantheism, or, on the part of the people, to polytheism with its attendant evils, moral and physical. The visible outbreaks of idolatry, at least, must be repressed, and an external barrier erected against the encroachments of heathen pollution, behind the shelter of which the blossoms of true religion might

flourish and expand. But such a barrier could only be supplied by the sovereign power of a nation, as distinguished from inferior forms of social union, and of a nation founded upon the theocratical principle. Idolatry, in itself beyond the cognizance of human laws, must be made punishable with temporal penalties: that is, God must be the supreme magistrate as well as the object of worship, and to worship other gods besides Him must be a crime against the fundamental law of the state, and not merely a sin; otherwise the rights of conscience would have been violated, and a precedent afforded to Christian states to extirpate by force what they conceive to be religious error. Another main object was, to preserve and transmit those divine oracles of Holy Writ, which, extending from the fall to the coming of Christ, unfolded to the eye of faith, with continually increasing distinctness, the glorious prospects which God had in store for His people. Now it is obvious, that in no way so effectually could this be secured as by incorporating the successive revelations in the public monuments of a state. Had they been scattered communications, given one here and another there, they would speedily have been lost or corrupted; confined to a particular nation, and enshrined in a political framework, they were kept together, and being combined, furnished mutual illustration. In the volume of the law, civil and ceremonial, no inconsiderable portion of these prophetic intimations is imbedded, and, under the form of types, cannot be separated from it; hence the national pride of the Jews became interested in maintaining them intact: with those in the Pentateuch, at least, they could not tamper, without mutilating the charter of their national existence.

Resulting from the theocratical constitution, and a special feature of it, is the incorporation of the moral law,

enjoining the love of God, and forbidding sins of the heart, in the national code. In ordinary legislation the insertion of the moral law is obviously out of place, and is never attempted; but Jehovah, in becoming the chief magistrate of the Jewish people, could not cease to be what He is,—the creator, the discerner of hearts, demanding the homage and service of His reasonable creatures, and requiring truth in the inward parts. And so the moral law, the great instrument of producing conviction of sin, and so preparing the way for the Saviour, naturally took its place among the enactments of the Jewish constitution.

It was only in accordance with these purposes that no projects of foreign conquests, of commercial enterprise, of national aggrandizement, seem to be entertained by the Jewish lawgiver: on the contrary, isolation is his declared aim; the people were to dwell alone, neither marrying with the surrounding nations, nor incorporating foreign customs with their own. Many of the laws were such as to prevent any considerable expansion of the Hebrew polity beyond the confines of Palestine; as for example, the rite of circumcision, the command to celebrate the three great feasts at Jerusalem, and the ordinances of the Sabbatical year and of the year of Jubilee. To compensate for any disadvantages that might be apprehended from these regulations, temporal blessings, the plenty of the barn and the store, were promised as the reward of obedience; and this not merely to individuals, but to the nation as such. Another peculiarity this of the theocracy, for human legislation deals only with individuals; national visitations obviously require, and imply, a power superior to the nation. But an essential feature of the theocracy consisted in that extraordinary providence by which, and by which alone, such sanctions as these could be carried into effect.

Of the Mosaic law the expressed sanctions were exclusively temporal; neither the doctrine nor the rewards of eternal life are in that law explicitly promulgated. This circumstance, which has been made use of to throw doubts upon the Divine origin of the Mosaic institutes, is only what might have been expected, what alone would have been suitable, in such an economy. If a visible theocracy was to be established, temporal sanctions, the proper sanctions of civil legislation, must be adopted; and in the case of nations, which as such have no existence beyond this life, none but temporal could be admitted. To have inserted in the public code of the state eternal sanctions would have been virtually to dissolve it as an earthly polity, and reduce it to a collection of individuals, or at best a church, in the Christian sense of the word—that is, a purely religious society, which, as such, would have been unable to exercise the stringent powers necessary to repress the visible excesses of idolatry and superstition. Nor must the absence of explicit eternal sanctions in the law be supposed to imply that the individual transgressor had nothing to fear beyond this life. Promises and threatenings of a general character are interspersed throughout, which might well suggest hopes and fears of future retribution. “The law,” it has been observed, “in its sanction, is only positive, that God will do so much; not exclusive, that He will do no more!”¹

From this general view of the structure of the Mosaic polity we proceed to some of its particular provisions. Since the Hebrews had no independent right to the country which they had conquered, but held it merely as a fief from the supreme Sovereign, they were not permitted to acquire any permanent property in it. The tenure of the nation, as such, depended upon obedience to the law; and no private alienation of property for a period longer than

¹ Davison on Prophecy, p. 131.

fifty years could take place. In the year of Jubilee, as it was called, all estates reverted to their original owners, all burdens ceased, and matters stood as they did at the original partition. By this regulation, excessive wealth and excessive poverty were equally obviated; no large accumulations of property could centre in one family; and the greatest amount of general temporal prosperity was secured. A kindred appointment was that of the Sabbatical year. Every seventh year the land was to lie fallow, debts were not to be collected, and Israelites in bondage were to be released. To provide against the danger of famine, the harvest of the sixth year was to be preternaturally abundant.

The twelve tribes formed a federal republic, but the sovereign legislative authority resided in Jehovah. All the officers of the state, civil and religious, were but His vicegerents. Hence we read nothing, until later times, when the theocracy began to wane, of any permanent national senate or council. To interpret, not to add to the law, was the function of the Levites; and the executive was entrusted to each component part of the body politic, and afterwards to the king, as the special representative of Jehovah. The primitive patriarchal constitution was permitted to remain, as far as was consistent with the expansion of a family into a nation. Each tribe had its heads of families, its judges, its scribes, and its prince or chieftain. These formed the provincial council; and when, on extraordinary occasions, a national assembly was convened, it must have consisted of delegates from the provincial ones: but this latter seems to have been a thing of rare occurrence. It is obvious that a state, composed of materials so loosely connected, must have been in perpetual danger of falling in pieces, had it not been for the admirable regulation that, three times in the year, the

males from every part of the kingdom should repair to Jerusalem, to celebrate the great feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, commemorative of signal events in the history of the nation. By this means, the feeling of union among the separate tribes, and of their common relation to the central shrine of the religion, was effectually maintained.

It is one of the most remarkable features of the Hebrew polity, and, on the supposition of its human origin, inexplicable, that in it the baneful principle of caste finds no place. Emerging from Egypt, where society was throughout constructed on this principle, it would have been natural for the Israelites to adopt it; but the very opposite is the character of the Mosaic legislation, which establishes among all classes of the community perfect civil and religious equality. It is true that one tribe, that of Levi, was set apart for the service of the Tabernacle, and from it one family, that of Aaron, for sacerdotal functions—the preparatory and symbolical nature of Judaism required the appointment of a human priesthood. But the sacerdotal tribe was not the depositary of any system of esoteric doctrine, the knowledge of which was to be withheld from the people; nor was the distinction between the priests and the rest of the community absolute, but relative: for all Israel was a kingdom of priests; all had access to the same sources of information, and upon all the same law was binding. The temporal provision for the ministers of religion was liberal, but not excessive; nor was it left to the voluntary zeal of the people. Jehovah, as lord of the soil, claimed a tenth of all the produce; and this, with forty-eight cities, and a small tract of land attached to each, formed the possessions of the Levites. The priests received, in addition, a portion of the sacrifices, the redemption of the first-born, and the first-fruits.

Exempt from the labours of agriculture, and scattered over the country, the Levites, though not strictly speaking religious teachers, would naturally exercise the functions of a learned class; they would be the conservators and expositors of the law, and the annalists of the community. The nation was thus preserved from the inroads of gross ignorance, though it was not the design of Moses to promote the formation of a secular national literature.

The penal laws of the Pentateuch present a mixture of severity and leniency. As might be expected, idolatry, the breach of the national compact, was to be punished with unrelenting rigour. An individual convicted of it was to be put to death by stoning, and a city, under the same circumstances, was to be razed to the ground, and all the inhabitants put to the sword: by a wise enactment, to prevent ungrounded accusations from interested motives, the spoil was to be entirely consumed. Under idolatry was comprised, not merely image-worship, but the associating of other gods with Jehovah, whether the host of heaven or the impure deities of the Canaanitish nations. All approximation to the religious usages of these nations—such as the horrible practice of human sacrifices, or the arts of the necromancer and the wizard—were forbidden, under penalties equally severe; and in order to raise an effectual barrier against the admixture of heathen rites, everything connected with Divine worship—the place, the officiating ministers, the animals to be offered, and the ceremonies to be observed—were strictly defined by law.

In the existing state of society, it would not have been wise absolutely to prohibit polygamy or concubinage; it was therefore permitted: but, since each wife was to have her full share of conjugal rights, in practice the number must have been limited. The chastity of females, whether married or betrothed, was guarded by fearful sanctions.

If convicted of adultery, both parties were to be stoned ; and the same penalty awaited incontinence on the part of the female before marriage. Where suspicion existed, but conviction was difficult, the theocracy interfered directly. The woman was, in the most solemn manner, to imprecate upon herself the vengeance of the Almighty if she should be guilty, and the curse was instantly to take effect in the infliction of a horrid disease. To prevent incestuous connexion, however remote, the degrees of relationship in which marriage was forbidden were defined with the utmost exactness.

The sanctity of life was jealously protected. The law demanded blood for blood. But there was a merciful provision for cases of accidental homicide, in which the passions of private revenge were likely to make no distinction. Six cities were appointed, three on each side of Jordan, in which the manslayer might take refuge until the case was investigated. If it were proved that he had acted of *malice prepense*, he was delivered up to the *goel*, or avenger of blood, who was commonly the nearest relation of the deceased ; if it turned out to be a case of accidental homicide, the extreme penalty was remitted, but he was compelled, at his peril, to reside for a period, measured by the life of the existing high-priest, in the sanctuary which he had chosen. From whatever cause the circumstance may have arisen, the crime of theft was treated with comparative leniency. The thief was to restore two or more fold, according to circumstances, and if he had no property, he might be sold to make restitution.

The laws relating to war and slavery were as mild as the spirit of the age permitted. The Canaanites, indeed, were to be exterminated without mercy, but in other cases war was to be proclaimed in form, and conditions of peace offered ; if they were accepted, no blood was to be shed,

but the city made tributary. If conquered after resistance, the males were to be put to death ; the women, children, and cattle, spared. No wanton ravages of the country were permitted. The captive females became slaves indeed, but their condition was mitigated by humane provisions. They shared in the rest of the Sabbath, and partook of the banquets at the three great festivals. A month was allowed for decent sorrow, before a slave was taken to the bed of the conqueror ; and if she was afterwards dismissed, she received her liberty in recompense. Among the Hebrews themselves, slavery assumed a much milder form. A Jew might either sell himself, or be sold, for his debts, but in no case for longer than seven years ; if, at the expiration of that period, he wished to continue a slave, a public declaration to that effect must be made before the magistrate, and even then the year of Jubilee set him free. At any time, an Israelite sold to a stranger could be redeemed by the payment of a sum of money equivalent to the value of his remaining period of service. Harsh treatment was discouraged. Mutilation procured freedom ; and if death ensued within two days, the master was amenable to civil penalties.

Several of the minor laws remain to be noticed. The power of life and death, which some ancient states committed to parents over their children, was restrained by Moses within reasonable limits, while the parental authority was upheld in salutary rigour. To strike or curse a parent was a capital offence. In extreme cases the incorrigible son might be denounced to the elders of the city, and if convicted, suffer death ; but this severe law was guarded by the necessary concurrence of both parents in the accusation, and the enforcement of it might safely be trusted to natural affection. In the states of the ancient world, nothing so frequently produced political

convulsions as the almost unlimited rate of usury permitted by law; Moses encountered the evil at its source, by absolutely prohibiting interest on money lent to an Israelite: only in the case of foreigners might this kind of profit be derived. The sanitary laws of the Pentateuch are remarkable, and as they all had a symbolical meaning, can only be understood by bearing in mind the religious ends of the Jewish polity. They had also, however, social benefits in view. In warm climates cleanliness is indispensable to health; and the frequent ablutions prescribed by the law must have tended to promote longevity. With the same view the diet of the people received the lawgiver's attention, and both the flesh of those animals which, like that of the swine, was likely to produce cutaneous disorders, and the use of blood as an article of food, were prohibited.

As long as the federal republic lasted, no national revenue, save for the maintenance of religion, was needed. The land was held by military tenure; and each Israelite was bound, when duly summoned, to appear in arms against the enemies of his country. The financial enactments of the law are therefore extremely simple. Agricultural produce was made subject to the payment of two tenths; one of which was appropriated to the tribe of Levi, instead of a share in the land, and the other, called the tithe of feasts, furnished every year a public entertainment to all ranks and classes of the poorer inhabitants. The service of the Tabernacle was supported by a portion of the spoils taken in war; by the first-fruits, which, though voluntary in amount, it was incumbent upon each Israelite to present; and by the first-born of men and animals, the former of which were always, and the latter in most cases might be, redeemed at a fixed valuation of money. From these various sources, from a tenth of the Levitical tithes,

and from a large proportion of the animals offered in sacrifice, the priests were maintained, if not in excessive affluence, yet with a liberality befitting the important functions which they discharged in the republic.

On the whole, the spirit of the Mosaic law was mild and beneficent. The poor were declared to be the objects of Jehovah's special care, and oppression was denounced as a crime. The field was not to be gone over twice; the gleanings of the harvest were the property of the widow and the fatherless; and the poor man's garment, if taken as a pledge, must be restored before night. Nor was any sanction given to that narrow jealousy of strangers which, in later times, became a prominent feature of the national character. Foreigners, if not Canaanites, might settle in the land, and, as long as they conformed to the fundamental law of the state, were to be treated with humanity, and admitted to a share in the privileges of the theocracy.

2. *Religious polity.*—Before entering into details on this subject, we propose to make some general observations on the nature and ends of the Levitical ritual. The first thing that strikes us is its exceedingly complicated and minute character. A greater contrast cannot be imagined than that which it presents to the New Testament, in which the regulations respecting the ceremonies of religion are few, and couched in the most general terms. The Mosaic law, on the contrary, leaves nothing to the discretion of the worshipper. If a tabernacle is to be erected, it must be of a certain size, of certain materials, of certain furniture; if there must be priests to minister in it, their tribe and family, their ritual of consecration, their very garments, must all be accurately prescribed; if the worshipper would offer sacrifice, a number of minute ceremonies must be observed. Even on the diseases incident to the climate, the natural infirmities of the body, and the last great

change which in this life that body undergoes, a structure of legal prescriptions is raised which must have required for their fulfilment no small measure of time and attention. "Touch not, taste not, handle not;" this was the spirit of the Mosaic religion, and by reason of the theocratical form of government, all the regulations of the law, political and domestic, as well as those appertaining to the worship of God, partook of a religious character; so that it is not too much to say that the religion of the Jew hemmed him in on every side, and by its incessant and importunate demands placed him under a yoke of bondage, which he confessed it difficult to bear.¹

This peculiarity of the Jewish religion, which has furnished matter of scoffing to the unbeliever, is capable of an explanation perfectly satisfactory. We have only to recollect the terms in which St. Paul speaks of the law, "as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ,"² or as containing the "mere elements" of piety; and of the Jewish people, as being, especially when the law was given, "children, in bondage under these carnal elements;"³ to perceive that no other system would have been suitable. The theocracy, in fact, in this point of view, was an educational institution, a school of discipline, working from without inwards, just as in the case of children we fence them in with rules and restraints, which are gradually laid aside as the pupil advances in moral and intellectual discernment. At the period of their history in question, it must be remembered that the Israelites were a people of extremely rude religious conceptions. Their notions of the Divine nature and attributes had, during their residence in Egypt, become, to the last degree, childish and corrupt; and so deeply had the taint of idolatry affected their minds that it required centuries of discipline, and the temporary dissolution of the

¹ Acts, xv. 10.

² Gal. iii. 24.

³ Ibid. iv. 3.

whole polity, to purge it out. Moreover, in the measure of revelation vouchsafed at the time of the promulgation of the law the materials of a more spiritual economy did not exist. The gracious designs of God for the redemption of our race, lay imbedded and concealed in the obscure intimation that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and in the promises to Abraham. Nor was this defect perfectly remedied throughout the whole course of the dispensation. To the last the Jew walked in comparative darkness; and though of the old dispensation, none had arisen greater than John the Baptist, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven—the Gospel dispensation—is in point of knowledge greater than he.¹

A mode of training, then, suitable to the low capacities of the subject, must be adopted. The less the power of self-direction, of being "a law to himself," supposed to be present, the more must the pupil be confined by external enactments, and as little as possible left to his own discretion. The appointments, under such circumstances, will naturally wear an arbitrary and artificial aspect; the reason of them will not be apparent, and the less the import is understood the more strictly must the letter be observed. Material and immediate rewards and punishments will be the natural sanctions of such a system; those which are of a spiritual nature have little or no effect on children in the early stages, at least, of education. In all these respects the Mosaic religion is such as we should have expected. External aids, that is, ceremonies embodying just and true ideas, were multiplied to compensate for the lack of spiritual power and spiritual discernment within. Sensible temporal benefits engaged the affections of the Israelite towards his heavenly King. These outward appliances gradually fell off, and were

¹ Matt. xi. 11.

superseded by the advancing clearness of revelation ; but in the early stages of that dispensation, they were indispensable, not merely as raising a fence against heathenism, but as disciplining the Jewish mind, in its then immaturity, into the dispositions and ideas, which were afterwards to be realized, in spirit and in truth, in Christianity.

In the next place, the Mosaic system was a *symbolical* one, that is, it taught by visible representations, its teaching was addressed to the eye rather than the ear. It is a low view to take of this economy to suppose that the Jew was condemned to a mere mechanical performance of a dumb ceremonial, which conveyed no instruction to him, and which served only for typical purposes. We cannot doubt that every part of the Levitical ritual was to the serious and devout inquirer instinct with its own lessons. The ideas of man's sinfulness, of God's holiness, of propitiation through the shedding of blood, of the necessity of purification, pressed themselves, wherever he looked, upon his attention. But these lessons came to him, not as they do to us, by the Word of God, but by a scenic representation, a system of symbolism, in which they were acted, and by being acted, taught. This was quite in harmony with the whole spirit of the economy. The same immaturity of religion which rendered the law necessary as an external discipline, rendered this mode of instruction the only one suitable; we teach children by pictures, men by words. Hence there was no stated verbal ministry attached to the Jewish temple services, as to ours; nor, indeed, could there have been, for the great truths, to be afterwards brought to light, were then under a veil; there was no completed redemption to announce. But the *ideas* which the facts of the Christian revelation embody could be set forth; and to the infantile capacity of the subject in no way so effectually as by a ceremonial of symbols which appealed

to the outward sense of sight. We must not measure the effect of such representations in ancient times and among Eastern nations by our more abstract and intellectual modes of communication. To us the language of symbolism is, except so far as nature prompts it, a strange one; to Eastern antiquity nothing was more familiar. The ear of the slave who refused his freedom was bored, in token of perpetual servitude;¹ the elders, at the expiation of an uncertain murder, washed their hands, to signify that they had had no participation in it.² If the pious Jew found profit in meditating in the law day and night,³ it must have been because he discerned, beneath the outward ceremonial, the spiritual truths of which it was the vehicle.

The Levitical ritual, once more, was *typical*. This is its third great feature. A symbol is not necessarily a type; there may be symbols of past events. A type is a *prophetic* symbol,—a symbol constructed to prefigure or illustrate a future event. And such, we are assured by inspired authority, was one leading feature of the Law. It was “a shadow of good things to come;” its appointments were constructed by that Divine Wisdom to which all things are foreknown, with a special view to the future dispensation of the Gospel. Comparing the two, the Jew, had not his mind been blinded, might have seen that Christianity lay imbedded in the Law, and that in acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah, he was only exchanging the shadow for the substance,—the earthly figure for the spiritual reality. How far the pious worshipper of old perceived Christ in the Levitical ritual, is a matter of doubt; probably his insight was less perfect than we are apt to suppose. But to us the key of the Old Testament is given in the New; and it is most interesting, as well as instructive, to mark how all the principal ordinances of

¹ Exod. xxi. 6.

² Deut. xxi. 6.

³ Ps. i. 2.

the Law seem to illustrate, in some point or other, the work and the offices of the Redeemer.

Of the legal appointments, the following is a general sketch. Since the presence of Deity was, under that economy, to be localised, or by a visible symbol attached to a certain spot, the first thing necessary was to mark the spot by a material structure. Accordingly Moses received in the mount a pattern after which he was to frame the Tabernacle, a moveable structure which accompanied the people in their journeys, and which, when the kingdom was established, gave place to the permanent Temple at Jerusalem. The Tabernacle,—*i. e.* the house or palace where Jehovah held His court, sometimes called the Tabernacle of Testimony, because there the two tables of the Law were deposited ; sometimes of Meeting, because there God admitted His people to His presence,—was a tent of an oblong shape, thirty cubits by ten, three sides of which weré formed of pillars of shittim or acacia wood, crossed by planks lengthways, while the entrance, a curtain of fine linen, occupied the fourth. The roof consisted of four coverings of various materials ; the innermost, of fine white linen, forming the interior drapery of the walls, while the others, of the skins of animals, protected the furniture and officiating priests from the weather. Around the Tabernacle ran a court, corresponding in shape to the structure which it enclosed, and surrounded by curtains suspended from silver rods, which rested upon pillars of acacia. The tent itself was divided into two compartments of unequal length ; the first, or holy place, being twenty cubits long, the second, or most holy, ten cubits. A linen vail, richly embroidered, hung between the two. To the court of the Tabernacle free access was permitted to all Israelites ; into the holy place the ordinary priests entered to discharge their official duties ; and into the most holy,

the high-priest alone, once a-year, on the great day of atonement.

Each division of the sacred precincts had its special furniture. The first object that met the worshipper's eye as he entered the court, was the altar of burnt-offerings,—a hollow vessel of wood, with a brazen grate at the top for the fire, and four projections at the corners, called in Scripture the “horns” of the altar. It was here that the sacrifices were offered. Between this altar and the Tabernacle stood the brazen laver, in which the priests about to officiate washed their hands and their feet. The holy place contained, on the north side, the table of shew-bread, with its twelve loaves, renewed every Sabbath; on the south, the golden candlestick with its seven lights; and between the two, in front of the vail, the altar of incense, on which, morning and evening, the priests burned a compound of odoriferous spices. In the most holy place a solemn gloom perpetually prevailed. Here was deposited the ark of the covenant, a chest of acacia-wood, plated within and without with pure gold, the special symbol of the Divine presence. It was covered on the top with the mercy-seat, or propitiatory, over which two cherubim, one at either end, bent with expanded wings. In the ark were placed the two tables of the Law, and beside or near it stood the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and the books of the old covenant.

It would be inconsistent with the limits of the present work to discuss at length the symbolical meaning of these various arrangements. Suffice it to observe, that the Tabernacle in general represented the presence and intercourse of Jehovah with His people, while, in particular, the solitude of the most holy place set forth the Divine majesty, unapproachable, save through a mediator; the altar of incense was symbolical of prayer; that of burnt-

offering, of reconciliation with God; the laver, of inward purity; and the candlestick, either of the grace of the Holy Spirit, or of the fruits which that grace enables believers to bring forth. Of the typical application we can speak with more certainty. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us,¹ that by the Tabernacle the person of Christ, in whom dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," was foreshadowed; while the mercy-seat over the ark pointed to that perfect atonement by which sin, the transgression of the Divine law, was to be covered.

In the time of Joshua the ark was placed at Shiloh, where it remained during the period of the Judges. After the great victory of the Philistines in the time of Eli, it was removed to Nob; and after the destruction of that town by Doeg (1 Sam. xxii.), we find it, in the time of David, at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi. 39). Solomon conveyed it, and all its utensils, to Jerusalem, where it was deposited in the Temple. From this time it disappears from the sacred records.

Three classes of ministers were attached to the services of the Tabernacle. The lowest offices, such as those of carrying the several parts of the sacred edifice, of setting it up when an encampment was formed, and, generally, of rendering assistance to the priests in the execution of their duties, were assigned to the males of the tribe of Levi, whose period of service, at least of the more laborious part of it, extended from the age of thirty to that of fifty years. From this tribe the family of Aaron was selected for the priesthood, whose special privilege it was to act as mediators between Jehovah and His people. The proper functions of the priests, which none else could perform, were not, as is sometimes supposed, the slaying and dividing of the victim (except in certain special cases), but, first, the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar of burnt-offering, by

¹ Cc. ix. x.

which act propitiation was made; and, secondly, the burning of the incense in the holy place. The special cases of exception are those in which sin-offerings for the priests themselves were enjoined, in which the high-priest officiated as sacrificer (Lev. xvi.). At the head of the sacerdotal body was placed the high-priest, whose office was one of great dignity and importance. It descended, according to primogeniture, from Aaron to his posterity; but was liable, as in the case of the sons of Eli, to forfeiture for misconduct. In the great annual propitiation for the sins of the people, when the blood of the victim was carried within the veil, the high-priest alone officiated.

The Levitical priesthood was intended as a temporary satisfaction of the craving from which, in every religion, the idea of priesthood has sprung. Conscious of the infinite distance between himself and God, man desires to fill up the chasm with an intermediate order, which, connected on the one hand with the worshipper, and on the other hand with the Being worshipped, may serve as a means of communication between them: to persons thus invested with an official sanctity it was felt a relief to delegate those acts of religious homage which the worshipper himself shrank from performing. That carnal descent, not natural qualifications, should determine the priestly order; that holy garments, and sacred oil, should form the rites of consecration; that freedom from bodily defect should be a necessary requirement; these, and similar regulations, are what might be expected in a symbolical and preparatory institution. They have given place to that which they were intended to typify; they are fulfilled, and abolished, in the Christian dispensation. In and through Christ, the one great High Priest of His Church, all Christians have immediate access to God; Christ alone represents them, as the Jewish high-priest bore the names of the twelve tribes on the mystic breastplate when

he entered the Tabernacle. No human mediators may be interposed between the believer and the throne of grace, for "through Him" (*i. e.* Christ) "we both," both Jew and Gentile, "have access by one Spirit unto the Father."¹

Priests must have sacrifices to offer; and, accordingly, the main part of the temple-worship consisted in the various sacrifices enjoined by the law. The idea of this rite, as we find it in the Old Testament, may be thus expressed,—the priestly nation enjoyed, through its formal priesthood, a covenanted privilege of access to God; but sin, cleaving to the worshipper, renders him unclean, and thereby unfit for the Divine presence: by sacrifice the disqualification is removed. The effect of it is usually described by the word "atonement," literally the covering of sin from the eye of Jehovah. Both for the nation collectively, and for individuals belonging to it, this cleansing process was necessary. At the original dedication of the covenant, the whole people were sprinkled with blood,² by which ceremony they were symbolically purged from pollution, and fitted for intercourse with their heavenly King: but since, from the weakness of the instrument, this was but a temporary purification, and the nation, in the lapse of time contracted fresh uncleanness, an annual day of general expiation was instituted, on which, by solemn sacrifices, the covenant was renewed, and the people consecrated afresh to the service of Jehovah. The same idea pervades all the offerings commanded, or permitted by the law, in the case of individuals. These were of four principal kinds. The burnt-offering, the most ancient, and extensive in its import of all, consumed wholly upon the altar, represented, on the part of the true Israelite, a general conviction of demerit, and the felt duty of a complete surrender of all the powers and faculties to God. The sin and the trespass-offering had reference

¹ Eph. ii. 18.

² Exod. xxiv. 8.

to particular sins, by which, though committed inadvertently, fellowship with God had been interrupted, and by sacrificial cleansing must be restored. In the peace, or thank-offering, the sense of sin was expressed in connexion with particular mercies, vouchsafed by, or expected from God: in this species of sacrifice, after atonement made, man is seen in the enjoyment of perfect fellowship with God; he sits at God's table, he is placed, for the time being, on a level with the priests, and with them partakes of the Divine bounty.¹ The unbloody offerings of the Law can hardly be said to form a distinct class; for they were either a substitution for, or an adjunct of, the animal sacrifices.

In whatever minor points the various offerings of the law may have differed from each other, one great idea pervades them, that of vicarious atonement. There were two ceremonies common to all, the imposition of hands by the offerer, and the sprinkling of the blood upon, or around, the altar: in the former the transgressor symbolically transferred his sin to the victim, which then became liable to death; in the latter, after the infliction of death, the sin was symbolically covered, or removed, by the blood. Substitution was plainly the import of the whole transaction. The symbolism of the great day of atonement places this in the clearest light. What is implied in the other sacrifices is expressed in this; and when Aaron placed his hands upon the head of the live goat, the significance of the act is declared to be that he thereby "put the transgressions" of Israel "upon the head of the goat," which then bore them away into the wilderness, out of sight.² The lessons, then, impressed upon the worshipper by this ritual of sacrifice, were those of a broken law, of consequent guilt, of liability to punishment, and of forgiveness through vicarious suffering; and no doubt the ceremonial law, especially in combination with the moral, must have

¹ Lev. vii. 15, 16.

² Ibid. xvi. 21.

directly tended to produce that sense of personal demerit which is the best preparation for the reception of the gospel. The antitype having come, these types have vanished. As there is now no human priesthood in the Church of Christ, so there is no visible sacrifice; for by the one sacrifice of Himself, once offered, and never to be repeated, Christ has expiated fully the sin of the world.¹ Yet, even to us the rudiments of the earlier dispensation are on this point full of instruction. The ideas which underlie the biblical theory of sacrifice are in the Old Testament, even more plainly, and so to speak visibly, set forth than in the New. If Christ and the Apostles do not enlarge, so fully as we might expect, upon the vicarious import of His death, it is because they take for granted an acquaintance with the Mosaic law, and an acknowledgment of its Divine origin; the divinely intended connexion of the two dispensations being admitted, there was no need, in the later revelation, of explaining at length things which might be learned from the earlier. The law still discharges its office of a schoolmaster to conduct to Christ; and a devout study of the Book of Leviticus is, to those who would understand the truths connected with the Christian atonement, not less necessary than interesting.

Besides the principal rite of sacrifice, the law contained prescriptions of purification, in which, though the symbolism was different, the lessons inculcated were the same. Not only did transgression, whether inadvertent or wilful, exclude from the theocratical commonwealth, but even contact with the physical effects of sin,—disease and death,—produced ceremonial defilement. Of all diseases leprosy was the most terrible; it was emphatically a living death: both the leper himself, therefore, and those who came in contact with leprosy, even in a house (Lev. xiv. 46), were to be

¹ Heb. ix. 26, 28.

accounted unclean. The touch of a dead body brought with it the same disqualification; and so did some unavoidable natural infirmities. In many cases the uncleanness was removed by washing the body, or the clothes, at even; but where it was of a graver nature, extraordinary means were employed. The water of separation, as it is called (Num. xix.), consisted of a mixture of water and the ashes of a red heifer burnt without the camp; a supply of it was to be always at hand, and where a corpse, or even the bone of a dead man, had been handled, it was with this mixture, applied with a bunch of hyssop, that the cleansing took place. The whole of these regulations were intended to express the truth, that the natural man is "dead in trespasses and sin;" that in that condition he is unfit for communion with God; and that to qualify him for such communion a purging process is necessary, viz. the application by faith of Christ's atoning work, whereby the conscience is released from "dead works, to serve the living God."¹ In the cleansing of the leper, *i.e.* restoring him, after a cure had taken place, to the privileges of the congregation, the typical rites were peculiarly significant. The blood of a slain bird, mixed with water, was sprinkled upon the leper; a living bird, after being dipped in the same mixture, was set free; the single idea, as in the ritual of the day of atonement, being represented under a double type: and eight days afterwards, by a particular act of consecration on the part of the priest, and after certain specified offerings, he was reinstated in his former position.

The Jewish religion, though burdensome in its ritual, contained no element of asceticism. The Israelite was permitted and exhorted to enjoy with thankful heart the temporal blessings of a land flowing with milk and honey. Frequent festivals of a joyous character interrupted and

¹ Heb. ix. 14.

enlivened the labours of the husbandman. Besides the three great feasts already mentioned, which were religious as well as political in character, every Sabbath was distinguished by a cessation from secular toil, in which the stranger, the slave, and the cattle, shared. This ordinance rested on the double sanction of the rest of the Creator from His works, and the rest of the chosen nation from the bondage of Egypt; and was intended to typify that future release from the bondage of sin which awaits the Church in the heavenly Canaan. The Mosaic regulations, though strict, present no trace of the vicious scrupulosity with which in later times the Pharisees made void the real intention of the Sabbatical rest. The first day of each lunar month, though not a day of rest, was a day of festivity; and the new moon of the seventh month, the first day of the civil year, called the Feast of Trumpets, was kept in the same manner as the Sabbath. In the spring, the whole nation assembled at Jerusalem to celebrate for a period of seven days the memorable era of their deliverance from Egypt; fifty days after the Passover, another national thanksgiving took place for the ingathering of the harvest; and again, in the autumn, when the vintage was completed, the land was covered with temporary booths, formed of the boughs of trees, in which for eight days universal rejoicings were kept up, tempered with the religious significance of the festival, which recalled to memory the sojourn of the ancestors of the nation in the wilderness. To all of these there are corresponding facts in the Christian scheme; to the Passover, redemption by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; to the Pentecostal harvest-home, the outpouring upon the Church of the gifts of grace purchased by the Saviour's cross and passion; and to the Feast of Tabernacles, the final blessedness of the saints, when the

Church shall look back upon her passage through this world, and celebrate the praises of her Almighty Deliverer and King. One only season of national humiliation was appointed by Moses, the annual day of Atonement, which took place five days before the Feast of Tabernacles. It was to be a day of rest, and of penitence; and the impressive ceremony specially connected with it, the entrance of the high-priest into the most holy place with the blood of the sin-offering, concentrating, as it did, in itself all the great ideas of atonement and intercession, furnish to the sacred writers the aptest illustration of Christ's atoning and priestly functions.

Such were the principal features of this remarkable politico-religious institution.¹ We may ask, in the words of a judicious writer, "When did a migration through a desert ever besides produce a new and complicated polity, exempted in its principles from the impieties of a surrounding dominant superstition, and framed on the reverse model, and opposed to an assimilation with them; fully digested in the detail, and wrought into the choice of the migratory people? A desert does not supply the matter upon which a great part of such a system could attach, and which usually serves to mould the frame of it; in fact, well-ordered polities, in the common experience of the world, grow up out of their first essays of administration, and do not precede it."² If we suppose the Mosaic religion to be of Divine origin, the facts are easily accounted for; to infidelity they must ever remain inexplicable.

¹ For a more extended view of the nature and object of the Mosaic dispensation the reader is referred to the author's Bampton Lectures.

² Davison on Prophecy, p. 121.

• CHAPTER II.

OBSERVATIONS ON EACH OF THE BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH.

SECT. I.—*On the Pentateuch in general.*

The word Pentateuch, by which the first five books of the Bible are commonly designated, is of Alexandrian origin, and was probably first used by the Septuagint translators: it signifies five volumes. By the Jews this portion of Scripture is called "the Law," or "the five-fifths of the Law," each book being a single "fifth." In the Hebrew MSS. it always forms one roll or volume, and is generally written continuously, without division, save into larger and smaller sections.

The unanimous tradition of the Jews ascribes the composition of the Pentateuch to Moses; nor among Christians was the Mosaic authorship called into question until a comparatively late period. To modern Germany various theories on this subject owe their origin, which, however, as they have not succeeded in establishing themselves, it is needless to particularise. At what period could the fabrication of the Pentateuch have been successfully attempted? We have irrefragable evidence that the Jews have acknowledged its authority from the present time to the era of their return from the Babylonish captivity: could it have been at that era compiled from traditionary sources? Seventy years was too short a time to have obliterated all memory of public records. Individuals, doubtless, returned to their native land who could have at once exposed such a gross imposition as the compiling of a public code of laws and religion never before heard of, had such been attempted.

Would the Samaritans, the bitter enemies of the Jews, have received and acknowledged such a compilation? From the captivity to the revolt of the ten tribes is a period of about 377 years. Had the Pentateuch been fabricated during that period, would not the kings of Israel, whose interest it was, contrary to the injunctions of this code, to perpetuate the severance of the two kingdoms and establish a rival worship of their own, have exposed a fraud, the detection of which would have so materially promoted their policy? Would the monarchs of either kingdom have permitted the promulgation of a forged document, which speaks of regal government as an unhallowed innovation, and lays the future king under irksome restraints?¹ From the separation of the kingdoms to the promulgation of the law is about 400 years. Would the whole nation have submitted to an extremely onerous system of legislation, if suspicion had at any time existed as to its Mosaic origin?

But the evidence of the genuineness of the Pentateuch rests on direct testimony. It is referred to, its regulations and authority are presupposed, by the whole series of the sacred writers. It has been well observed that, even if it had perished, most of its ordinances could be recovered from the later books of the Bible. The testimony of Christ and the Apostles completes the chain; the well-known volume of the law is uniformly ascribed by them to Moses, and without any hint of his having been only the principal compiler of it.

Internal evidence is confirmatory of the external. The Mosaic laws of property are such that their introduction at any time subsequent to the entrance into Canaan would have been resisted. The facts which the history records are of so public and important a character

¹ Deut. xvii. 16.

that their general reception by the Jewish people is, on the hypothesis of a fraud, absolutely incredible. The simplicity and artlessness of the style; the details, which in a literary point of view, mar the beauty of the work; the frequent genealogies in which error could be at once detected; the impartiality with which the writer deals with his own shortcomings and those of his nation; the absence of legendary embellishment in the account of his early life in Egypt; the unity of design which runs through the whole; all these conspire to produce the impression that it is a real narrative which we peruse, and that it is the production of a single mind.

It must be admitted, indeed, that to the original narrative additions were here and there made by a later hand. But they are very few and unimportant. The following are the principal:—In Deut. xxxiv. the death and burial of Moses are recorded; this must, of course, have been added either by Joshua, or some other writer. In some instances, the later name of a place has been substituted for the earlier one; as in Gen. xiv. 14, Dan for Laish. In Exod. xvi. 35, 36, the children of Israel are said to have eaten manna forty years, “until they came to the borders of the land of Canaan;” and an omer is explained as the “tenth part of an ephah,” the earlier measure by the later: it is obvious that Moses could not have written thus, and the passage has evidently been interpolated. Deut. iii. 14, we read that “Jair, the son of Manasseh,” called certain places “after his own name, unto this day;” the latter clause implying that some time had elapsed since the settlement in Canaan. This, also, is an interpolation. “The insertion of such notes rather confirms than impeaches the antiquity and genuineness of the original narrative. If this were a compilation long subsequent to the events it records, such additions would not

have been plainly distinguishable, as they now are, from the main substance of the original; since the entire history would have been composed with the same ideas and views as these additions were; and such explanatory insertions would not have been made, if length of time had not rendered them necessary.”¹

The authenticity of the inspired history of Moses is confirmed by the traditions current in other nations of antiquity. The division of time into weeks is found in countries the most remote from each other: the period of man's innocence; the fall, with its consequences; the deluge; the re-peopling of the earth from a common origin; all form part of the unwritten deposit of history in the ancient world. The successive discoveries of ancient monuments in Assyria and Egypt have uniformly tended to establish the accuracy of the Mosaic narrative. Geology itself, so long supposed to be adverse to revelation, contributes its testimony; for one of the best established of its conclusions is, the comparatively recent formation of the present surface of the globe.

The question, whence Moses derived the materials for the history contained in the Book of Genesis, cannot be answered with certainty. The longevity of human life in the first ages of the world would render but few links necessary to hand down an authentic tradition of the events; or registers and records may have been kept in the patriarchal families. What was wanting, inspiration doubtless supplied. And since the books, as they now exist, have received the stamp of Divine authority, it is of little consequence from what sources they were compiled.

The Pentateuch comprises a period, according to the common computation, of 2515 years; and, according to Dr. Hales's system of chronology, of 3765 years.

¹ Graves on Pentateuch, Appendix, § 1.

Besides the Pentateuch, certain of the Psalms, from the 90th to the 99th inclusive, are by the Jews ascribed to Moses; but on insufficient grounds. The title of the 90th Psalm, indeed, professes that it was composed by the Jewish lawgiver; but the titles of the Psalms, in general, cannot be regarded as authentic, being, most of them, of not very ancient date.

SECT. II.—*Book of Genesis.*

Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch, is so called from its giving an account of the generation or production of all things. By the Jews, the books of the Old Testament are often designated from their initial word; hence with them the Book of Genesis bears the title of the Hebrew word signifying, In the beginning; for thus the book commences. They divide it into twelve paraschioth, or larger sections, and forty-three siderim, or smaller ones. This book comprises the history of 2369 years, according to the common computation, and of 3619 according to that of Dr. Hales.

Respecting the time of its composition nothing certain is known. By some it is supposed that Moses wrote it while keeping the flocks of Jethro in Midian; by others that it was written after the giving of the law. Conjectures on such a subject are equally easy and valueless.

The scope of the book appears to be twofold; first, to set at rest those great problems respecting the creation of the world, and the introduction of evil, which have ever employed the minds of the more thoughtful among the heathen. Pantheism, and the Manichean theory of the existence of two opposite and independent principles of good and evil, are alike, by the history of the creation and of the fall, refuted. Secondly, to give some account of the

patriarchal church as the depository of prophecy, and as exhibiting the line of descent of the predicted Saviour.

The following are the main subdivisions: 1. The creation (cc. i. ii.). 2. The history of the antediluvian world, containing an account of the fall of man, of his expulsion from Paradise, of Adam's descendants down to Noah, of the increasing wickedness of the world, and of the deluge (cc. iii.—vii.). 3. The history of the post-diluvian world; containing the abatement of the waters, and the covenant of natural mercies; the peopling of the world by Noah's descendants; the confusion of tongues, and dispersion of mankind. 4. The patriarchal church; including the call and history of Abraham, with the birth of Isaac; the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; the settlement of Israel in Egypt; the death of Jacob, and that of Joseph.

Various prophecies of Christ are contained in Genesis. See c. iii. 15; xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14; and xlix. 10. Types of the Messiah are, Adam (by contrast; both being federal heads, the latter of sin and death, the former of righteousness and life), 1 Cor. xv. 45; Melchisedek, Heb. vi. 20; and Isaac, Heb. xi. 18, 19.

SECT. III.—*Book of Exodus.*

From the Septuagint version the second book of the Pentateuch has received the name of Exodus, which is significant of the principal event which it relates—the going forth of the Israelites from Egypt. By the Jews it is called, from its initial words, *VeALEH SHEMOTH*, “These are the names;” and is divided into eleven parashioth, and twenty-nine siderim. It comprises a period of 145 years.

The scope of the book is to exhibit the accomplishment of the promises to Abraham; that from him a nation

should spring, which, after a sojourn of several centuries in a state of degradation in a foreign land, should triumphantly be brought forth, and established in the country destined for its permanent occupation (Gen. xv. 5, 13). The whole history, too, presents a vivid adumbration of the church militant, in her redemption from spiritual bondage, and her passage through the wilderness of this world. "His spiritual perceptions, one would think, must be dull who does not perceive, under these earthly figures; the history both of the Church collectively, and of each Christian's experience in particular, portrayed in striking colours; who, on looking back upon past trials and past mercies, cannot enter into the spirit of the words addressed to Israel of old, 'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee.' This is no fanciful spirit of accommodation: we have inspired authority for thus reading the Old Testament Scriptures. The use which our Lord makes of the elevation of the brazen serpent,¹ and of the manna in the wilderness,² and St. Paul of another interesting occurrence, the water from the rock at Horeb,³ is familiar to all; and that these are but specimens from the quarry we may gather from the general declaration of the Apostle, that 'these things happened' unto the Jews 'for ensamples,' rather types, or models (*τύποι*), 'and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.'⁴ Studied with this light thrown upon it, the early history of the Israelites becomes an inexhaustible source of instruction, warning, and consolation; and the conviction arises in the mind of the believer, that so apt a reflection of the Christian life, in its various aspects, cannot be a casual coincidence; in other words, that the

¹ John, iii. 14.

Ibid. vi. 49, 50.

1 Cor. x. 4.

1 Cor. x. 11.

Divine Wisdom shaped the history of the chosen people, as well as the appointments of the law, with a special reference to the future dispensation of Christ."¹

The contents may be thus arranged:—1. The condition of the Israelites after Joseph's death; the birth, and calling, of Moses; his embassy to Pharaoh; the ten plagues, and the exodus of the people (cc. i.—xii.); 2. The pursuit led by Pharaoh, and the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites; their journey to Sinai (cc. xiv.—xix.); 3. The delivery of the law, moral and civil, and the construction of the Tabernacle (cc. xx.—xxxi.); 4. The idolatry of the people, and renewal of the covenant (cc. xxxii.—xl.).

The special types of Christ are the Paschal lamb (John, xix. 36; 1 Cor. v. 7–8); the Levitical priesthood (Heb. cc. vii., viii.); the manna (John, vi. 32); the Rock at Horeb (1 Cor. x. 4). But the whole of the Tabernacle arrangements were either symbolical or typical, or both combined.

Much has been written respecting the Egyptian plagues; and the attempt has been made to prove that each was aimed at some particular superstition of that land, so fruitful in grotesque forms of idolatry. This may have been the case; but the conclusions seem occasionally to have been drawn from insufficient premises.

SECT. IV.—*Book of Leviticus.*

This book, called by the Jews Va-Yikra, "And he said," from its first words, has received the name of Leviticus, from its containing a detailed account of the ceremonial law, of which Aaron and the priests, of the tribe of Levi, were the appointed guardians and ministers. The time comprised in it is one month; from the commencement of the second year after the exodus to the

¹ Author's Bampton Lectures, p. 66.

commencement of the second month of the same year. By the Jews it is divided into nine paraschioth.

The Book of Leviticus is of inestimable value as exhibiting, under an elaborate system of symbolism, the fundamental ideas on which the atoning work of Christ rests. The best commentary upon it is an inspired one, viz. the Epistle to the Hebrews, from which we learn that this part of the law "was a shadow of good things to come;" and especially that the ceremonies of the great day of atonement were, all of them, prefigurative of corresponding realities under the Gospel. For information on the nature of the Mosaic ritual, and the various kinds of sacrifices and purifications prescribed by it, the reader is referred to the remarks contained in a previous section.¹ The book contains, 1. The various rules to be observed in offering sacrifice, and the various species of sacrifice, bloody and unbloody; and the modifications of the ritual, according to the theocratical standing of the offerer, whether one of the people, a ruler, or a priest (cc. i.—vii.). 2. The consecration of Aaron, and his sons, to the priesthood, with the death of Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire (cc. vii.—x.). 3. The laws respecting clean and unclean beasts (c. xi.). 4. Those relating to purifications, especially from the legal uncleanness of leprosy (cc. xii.—xv.). 5. The ritual of the great day of atonement (c. xvi.). 6. A repetition of sundry laws, and enactment of others, the particular object of which was to raise a barrier between the Israelites and the idolatrous nations of Canaan (cc. xvii.—xxii.). 7. Regulations respecting the feasts, vows, things devoted, and tithes (cc. xxiii.—xxvii.).

SECT. V.—*Book of Numbers.*

The fourth book of Moses, which among the Jews

¹ Part III. c. i. § 2, 2.

bears the name of Va-YeDaBeR, "And he spake," with which words it commences, was called by the Septuagint translators Ἀριθμοί, or Numbers, because it contains an account of the numbering of the people, cc. i.-iii., and, again, c. xxvi. A period of about thirty-eight years is comprehended in it; but the events occurred chiefly in the second and last of those years. According to the Jewish division it consists of ten paraschioth.

The wanderings of the Israelites, with which a considerable portion of the book is occupied, illustrate the providential care of God over His people, and His hatred of sin. No doubt they had also, as has been previously remarked,¹ a typical aspect, and were figures of the passage of the spiritual Church to the heavenly Canaan.

Besides the water from the rock (c. xx. 11), the brazen serpent (c. xxi.) was a remarkable type of Christ, the application of which is fixed by our Lord Himself (John, iii. 14). The book contains one prediction,—the famous one of Balaam (c. xxiv. 17). The reference of this passage to the Messiah has been contested: the following remarks of an eminent writer seem to place the subject in a just point of view: "Every candid interpreter of prophecy will confess that this prediction could not be understood at the first, as afterwards, when the accomplishment of it in the mission of Christ supplied its interpretation; nor could it direct men's ideas, either as to the character of the person whom it foretold, or the nature of his mission, so strongly, when it stood by itself, as when supported by other predictions relating, or seeming to relate, to the same general subject. But yet it was a vivid prophecy, and adapted to keep men's minds and hopes intent, and prepare them for something beyond the law, and that of no small importance, since it was to be ushered in by a person of a remote advent,

¹ See p. 245.

whose symbols, a star and a sceptre, imported most naturally the display of some new revelation, and a dominion combined with it.”¹

Chapters i. ii. contain the census of the Israelites, and the order of the tribes in the camp, under their respective captains and standards. Next follows (cc. iii. iv.) a similar census of the Levites, and a description of their offices in connexion with the Tabernacle. In cc. v.—x. various laws and ceremonies—such as the trial of jealousy, the law of Nazarites, the oblations of the princes for the service of the Tabernacle, the consecration of the Levites, the celebration of the Passover—are instituted. The journeys of the Israelites, with their various murmurings, occupy cc. xi.—xxi., in the midst of which the ordinance of the water of separation, the typical reference of which is established by Heb. ix. 13, 14, occurs. The rest of the book contains the transactions in the plains of Moab; viz. the history of Balaam, a second numbering of the people, regulations respecting sacrifice and other points of the law, the boundaries and partition of the promised land, the appropriation of forty-eight cities to the Levites, and the appointment of the six cities of refuge (cc. xxii.—xxxvi.).

The following list of the stations of the Israelites in the wilderness, as described in the Books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, is taken from Davidson's *Horne*, vol. ii. p. 586 :—

1. Rameses (Num. xxxiii. 3)
2. Succoth (5)
3. Etham (6)
4. Pi-hahiroth (7)
5. Etham, three days' march (8)
6. Marah (8)
7. Elim (9)

¹ Davison on Prophecy, p. 152.

8. Encampment by the Red Sea (10)
9. Desert of Sin (11)
10. Dophkah (12)
11. Alush (13)
12. Rephidim (14)
13. Wilderness of Sinai (15)
14. Taberah (Num. xi. 3)
15. Kibroth-Hattaavah (xxxiii. 16)
16. Hazeroth (17)
17. Rithmah (18)
18. Rimmon-parez (19)
19. Libnah (20)
20. Rissah (21)
21. Kehelathah (22)
22. Mount Shapher (23)
23. Haradah (24)
24. Makheloth (25)
25. Tahath (26)
26. Tarah (27)
27. Mithcah (28)
28. Hashmonah (29)
29. Moseroth (30)
30. Bene-jaakan (31)
31. Hor-hagidgad (32)
32. Jotbathah (33)
33. Ebronah (34)
34. Ezion-gaber (35)
35. Kadesh (36)
36. Beeroth Bene-jaakan (Deut. x. 6)
37. Mount Hor (Num. xxxiii. 37)
38. Gudgodah (Deut. x. 7)
39. Jotbath (Deut. x. 7)
40. Way of the Red Sea (Num. xxi. 4)
41. Zalmonah (Num. xxxiii. 41)

42. Punon (42)
43. Oboth (43)
44. Ije-abarim or Jim (44, 45)
45. Brook Zered (Num. xxi. 12)
46. Arnon (13)
47. Dibon-gad (Num. xxxiii. 45)
48. Almon-diblathaim (46)
49. Beer in the Desert (Num. xxi. 16)
50. Mattanah (18)
51. Nahaliel (19)
52. Bamoth (19)
53. Pisgah, or Mountains of Abarim (Num. xxxiii. 47)
54. Plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho (48).

SECT. VI.—*Book of Deuteronomy.*

The Book of Deuteronomy, which, as its name imports, contains a repetition of the law, is called by the Jews ALeH HaDeBaRiM, "These are the words," with which words it commences. By them it is divided into ten paraschioth. The time comprised is about five weeks. It appears to have been written in the plains of Moab, shortly before the death of Moses.

The book was intended to instruct the new generation, which had arisen during the wanderings in the wilderness, in the principles of the law delivered to their fathers. It differs from the earlier promulgation at Sinai in its hortatory strain, and its exposition of the inner spirit of the Mosaic code. It contains one prophecy relating to the Messiah, c. xviii. 18, which is expressly so applied in Acts, iii. 22; and a strain of prediction relating to the Jewish people, its sufferings and dispersion, the fulfilment of which is visibly before us (c. xxviii.).

Its contents are, 1. A summary of the history of the

Israelites, and exhortations to obedience (cc. i.–iv.). 2. A recapitulation of the law, moral, civil, and ceremonial (cc. v.–xxvi.). 3. Directions as to what should be done after passing Jordan; and a recitation of blessings and curses (cc. xxvii.–xxx.). 4. The subsequent history of Moses, including his appointment of Joshua as his successor; his command that the law should be publicly read every seventh year; his prophetic ode, and blessing of the twelve tribes; his death and burial.

It has already been remarked that the thirty-fourth chapter, which contains an account of the death of Moses, must be the production of a later writer. It was evidently intended to form a connecting link between the Books of Deuteronomy and Joshua.

II. HISTORICAL BOOKS.

CHAPTER I.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS TO THE RETURN FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

AFTER a month's mourning for their great lawgiver, the Israelites prepared to carry out his dying instructions. Jericho, a fortified city on the other side of Jordan, the key of the whole country, lay in their front; it was resolved to attempt its reduction. As a precautionary measure Joshua despatched two spies to examine the place; and their report of the consternation of the Canaanites at the approach of the invading army seeming to warrant a bold step, he at once gave orders to cross the

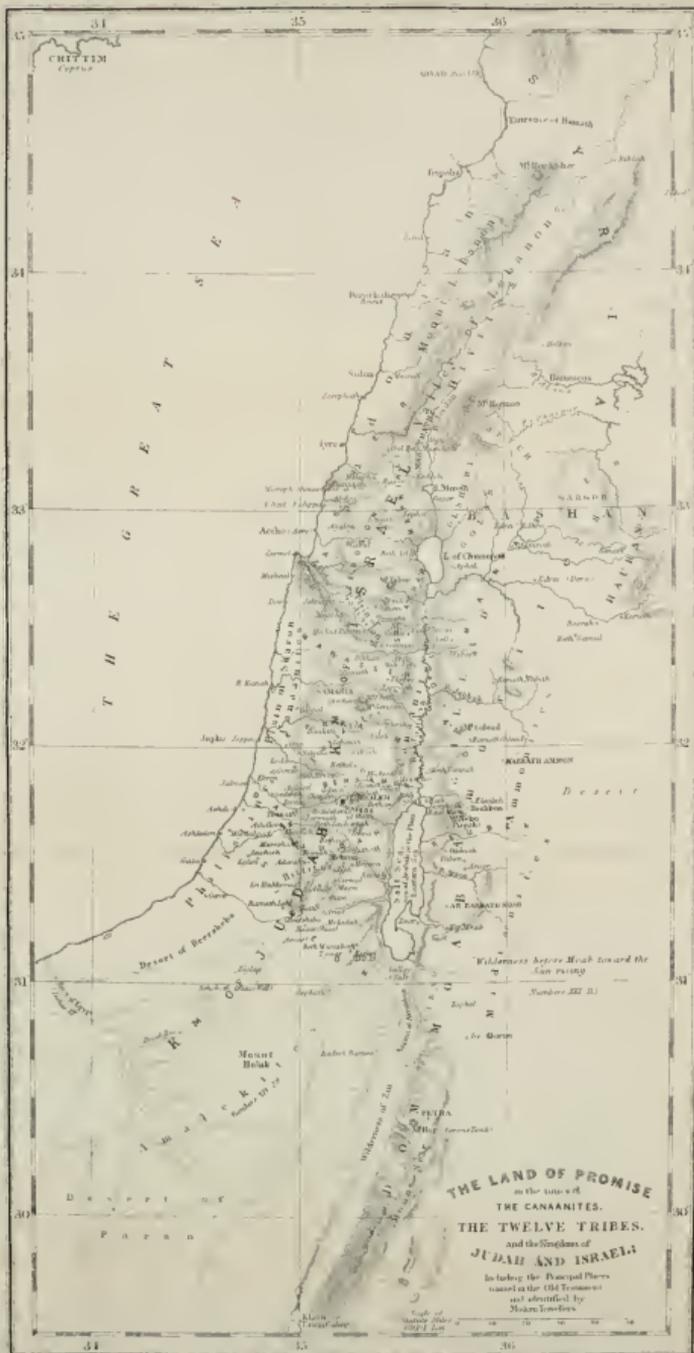


Wilderness before Moab toward the Sun rising

Numbers XII. II.

31

31



river. The Jordan, swollen with the spring-floods, was overflowing its second channel;¹ but no sooner did the ark, borne by the priests, enter the river than the miracle of the Red Sea was repeated on a smaller scale; the waters stood apart, and the whole army passed in safety to the western bank. Twelve stones, taken from the bed of the river, formed a monument to commemorate this great event. Before he advanced further, Joshua caused the Israelites to be circumcised, for during their sojourn in the wilderness this rite had been intermitted; and at the same time the miraculous supply of manna failed.

Six days did the ark encompass the devoted city, and on the seventh, amidst the shouts of the people and the blast of trumpets, the walls fell, and all the inhabitants, save Rahab and her family, were put to the sword. Freed from the danger of an enemy's fortress in their rear, the Israelites advanced to Ai, and, after a temporary check before that city, occasioned by the sin of Achan, they captured it by stratagem, and reduced it to ruins. It was after this expedition that the Gibeonites, the inhabitants of a neighbouring town, presented themselves to Joshua, with all the appearance of way-worn travellers who had come from a distance;—incautiously a league was made with them, and though the deceit was speedily discovered, the oath pledged was held sacred; their lives were spared, but they were made hewers of wood and drawers of water for the use of the priests, in which servile condition we find their descendants, the Nethinims, at a late period of Jewish history. The submission of the Gibeonites gave occasion to the most alarming danger which had as yet threatened the invaders. Five kings of Amoritish origin, headed by Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, resolved to punish this desertion of the common cause; they attacked

¹ See p. 174.

the Gibeonites, who were compelled to apply to Joshua for succour. By a forced night-march the Israelites came up with the Canaanites unexpectedly, and defeated them with immense slaughter, while a violent hail-storm increased the panic. Night approaching while the enemy was still flying, a stupendous miracle was wrought at Joshua's prayer; the sun's course was arrested in the heavens until the work of destruction was complete, and the people had fully avenged themselves upon their enemies. The five kings were taken in a cave at Makkedah, and hanged. The subjugation of the whole country south of Gibeon followed this decisive victory.

One more stand was made by the Canaanite nations in the extreme north, under Jabin, the king of Hazor. At the lake Merom were assembled the heads of all the tribes which had not yet been subdued; their collective contingents amounted to a vast host, "even as the sand upon the sea-shore." And they were particularly strong in chariots and cavalry. The intrepid leader of the Israelites fell upon them, and one decisive victory made him master of the whole region. Hazor, the chief seat of the confederacy, was destroyed. Thus, in about seven years, the whole of the country west of Jordan, from Mount Seir to Lebanon, had been subdued, and no less than thirty-one kings had fallen by the sword. Unfortunately, however, for the future peace of Israel, a pause now took place; the war was suspended, and many of the ancient inhabitants remained in the land — both from their turbulent disposition, and from the seductive example of their idolatrous rites — a perpetual source of danger to their conquerors.

Joshua now turned his attention to civil affairs. The solemn ceremony enjoined by Moses took place on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim; the Tabernacle was removed from

Gilgal to Shiloh; the land was partitioned among the nine tribes and a half which were to occupy the west of Jordan; and, after a final exhortation to the people to remain faithful to the covenant, Joshua died, at the age of 110 years.

Joshua nominated no successor to himself; and for about 400 years the Hebrew commonwealth subsisted as a number of independent republics, often in a state of discord among themselves, and more often at war with their neighbours. This period, that of the Judges, has been called the heroic age of Hebrew history:¹ feats of individual prowess and adventure adorn its annals, but it was marked by a spirit of anarchy, a great corruption of morals, frequent interruptions of the prescribed forms of religion, and guilty lapses into the various forms of idolatry practised by the subject peoples. It was not long before the backwardness of Joshua's warriors to prosecute their enterprise to a conclusion began to bear its fruits. After his death, indeed, some additional conquests were made: Judah, assisted by Simeon, defeated Adoni-bezek, king of Jerusalem, and seized a portion of his territory, including Jerusalem; and Ephraim made a successful expedition against Beth-el. The dissensions, however, of the tribes, whose chief bond of union, that of a common religion, was now greatly weakened, and especially the indifference of the northern maritime members of the confederacy, encouraged frequent revolts, and frequent invasions, on the part of their enemies. Reduced often to the last extremity, the unhappy Israelites seemed on the point of national extinction, but as often were rescued by the instrumentality of the military dictators who were raised up for this purpose. The first of these dictators, or judges, Othniel, of Judah, freed his countrymen from the yoke of

¹ Milman, *History of the Jews*, vol. i. book 6.

Chushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, who for eight years had oppressed them. Ehud, famous for his daring assassination of Eglon, king of Moab, and Shamgar for the slaughter of 600 Philistines with an ox-goad, procured a long peace of eighty years; and then came the great battle in the plain of Esdraelon, where Barak encountered the hosts of Sisera, and broke the power of the northern Canaanites. After an interval of forty years, a peculiarly distressing visitation befell the people; for seven years bands of Midianites, Amalekites, and other nomad tribes, regularly invaded the country at the time of harvest, and after living upon the produce, and carrying off what they could not consume, retired, at the approach of winter, to their fastnesses in the mountains. Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, was the chosen deliverer. First destroying the instruments of idolatry in his father's house, he summoned the tribes adjacent to the plain of Esdraelon, where the Midianites were encamped, to take arms, and with a force reduced, by Divine command, to 300 men, attacked the enemy at night. A panic ensued; the Midianites turned their arms against each other, and 120,000 men fell by the sword. Gideon refused the crown which the gratitude of his countrymen offered him; but the fickle Israelites acquiesced in the usurpation of one of his sons, Abimelech, who, after the Oriental fashion, put all his brethren, amounting to seventy persons, to death, and reigned for a time at Shechem.

After a period of comparative tranquillity under Tola and Jair, two undistinguished names, a new apostasy produced a new invasion. The Philistines attacked the southern border, while the Ammonites, after subduing the tribes beyond Jordan, penetrated into the territory of Judah. The fame of Jephthah, a Gileadite, leader of a band of freebooters, attracted the notice of his countrymen:

they offered him the command, and, after a fruitless attempt at negotiation, he marched against the enemy, and gained a complete victory. His memorable vow, and its tragic fulfilment, are well known. This success was sullied by a fatal civil war between Ephraim and the Gileadites under Jephthah's command, arising from the overbearing conduct of the former tribe: 42,000 Ephraimites fell by the hand of their brethren.

Jephthah's rule lasted but a short time, but his military achievements procured for the Israelites a respite of twenty-five years. This was followed by a long subjugation of forty years to the most formidable of their enemies. The Philistines, who in Jephthah's time had taken up arms, now pushed their conquests with such success, as almost to annihilate the tribe of Simeon, and bring the whole country under their dominion. No surer proof of the state of vassalage into which the Israelites had fallen could be given, than the remark of the historian, that "no smith was found throughout all the land of Israel,"¹ lest weapons of war should be forged. During this period, however, two of the most distinguished judges flourished; Samson, renowned for his feats of personal strength, his romantic adventures, and tragical end, and Samuel, who may be called the second founder of the Hebrew commonwealth. At Samson's death, Eli, the high-priest, seems to have assumed the reins of government, which he held for forty years, but latterly with so feeble a hand that his own sons abused their priestly privileges to convert the Tabernacle into a brothel. Under such an administration it was not likely that any effectual resistance would be made to the Philistines, who, relieved from the dread of Samson, resumed their hostile operations. A battle was fought at Aphek, in which the Israelites were defeated.

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 19.

As a last resource, the ark was brought from Shiloh, and, in the expectation that Jehovah would protect the sacred symbol, the Israelites again engaged, but with still more disastrous results, 30,000 being slain, among whom were Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, while the ark itself was captured. At this point, however, the tide turned. After the lapse of a few months, the ark was restored by the Philistines, who had suffered severely from Divine visitations during its presence among them; and though they held sway for about twenty years longer, their power began to decline. At length Samuel, now grown to manhood, summoned a general assembly of the people at Mizpeh, to observe a day of national humiliation, and to concert measures against the common enemy. The Philistines took alarm, and collected their forces; a battle ensued, in which the elements fought on the side of Israel; and so complete was the victory of the latter, that their inveterate enemy evacuated the country, and gave them no further trouble during the administration of Samuel.

For many years Samuel conducted the affairs of his country with equal integrity and success, the whole of the southern tribes acknowledging his authority. As age, however, crept on, and his sons, whom he had installed as judges, proved of a different character from their father, a desire sprung up in the minds of the people for a change in the form of government,—a change which it was predicted by Moses should in due time take place.¹ A monarchy would ensure the more certain administration of justice, and by uniting the tribes under a common head, direct the military power of the country to better advantage. Samuel reproved the people for their unbelief, and pointed out the evils of despotic rule; but, in the end, finding that his remonstrances were of no avail, he yielded to the

¹ Deut. xvii. 14.

national will, and, by Divine appointment, privately anointed Saul, a Benjamite, to the royal office. The selection was confirmed by lot, and by the almost unanimous voice of the people, at Mizpeh. It was not long before the young king gave proof of his prowess. The Ammonites, under Nahash, had invaded Gilead; Saul summoned the tribes to battle, encountered the enemy, and defeated them with immense slaughter. Seizing the favourable opportunity, while the splendour of this victory silenced opposition, Samuel again convened the people at Gilgal, and after a solemn appeal to them for the integrity of his administration, he procured a fresh ratification of Saul's authority, and then resigned his own office.

Whatever expectations the aged prophet might have entertained of an auspicious career for the first king of Israel, the impetuous character of the latter soon dissipated them. Saul's wars were, indeed, successful: at Michmash, not far from Jerusalem, assisted by his brave son Jonathan, he inflicted a severe blow upon the Philistines; the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, were successively defeated; and the Amalekites, ancient enemies of Israel, were almost annihilated. But the spirit of self-will which he displayed on two signal occasions,—the first when, at Gilgal, he took upon himself, without waiting for Samuel, to offer sacrifice; and the second when, disobeying the Divine command, he spared Agag, king of the Amalekites, and the best of the spoil which he had captured; provoked the displeasure of Jehovah, and Samuel was commissioned to announce to him the transfer of the kingdom to another, of more compliant disposition. Accordingly, about fourteen years afterwards, David, the youngest son of Jesse, an inhabitant of Bethlehem, was designated to the throne; and from that time figures conspicuously in the inspired history. The unhappy Saul, deserted by Samuel, became

subject to fits of despairing melancholy; and David's exquisite skill on the harp was called in to allay the paroxysms of the malady. For a time he was in high favour; but the monarch's jealous spirit was aroused by the acclamations which greeted the youthful hero, as he returned from the slaughter of the renowned champion of Gath; and thenceforward, until he came to the throne, David's life was one of perpetual alarms. Twice, as by a miracle, he escaped the javelin of Saul; a stratagem of his wife saved him from another great danger; and but for the devoted friendship of Jonathan, he must at length have fallen a sacrifice to the enmity of his former patron. That faithful friend counselled immediate flight; and David first took refuge in Nob, a sacerdotal city of Benjamin, where the kindness shown him by the priests was fearfully visited upon them by Saul. Thence he fled to Gath; but mistrusting the hospitality of the Philistine, he retired to a wild part of the country, whither a band of lawless adventurers flocked to his standard, and he found himself at the head of 400 desperate men. It was in vain that, by twice sparing Saul's life when it was in his power to have taken it, David attempted to awaken his more generous feelings; for a time the unhappy monarch seemed to relent, but the evil passions to which he had become a prey ever returned with increased violence. At length the fugitive found himself compelled to seek safety among the Philistines, who, believing him to be irreconcilably alienated from his countrymen, received him favourably, and assigned him the town of Ziklag as his residence. From this place he engaged in marauding expeditions, professedly against the towns of Israel, but in reality against the Philistines: while Achish, the king of Gath, flattered himself that he had gained a valuable ally. But now this romantic drama was drawing to a close. Saul, after

filling up the measure of his iniquity by consulting a female necromancer, perished with Jonathan and his other sons in the battle of Gilboa; and the way was at length open for David to accomplish his high destiny.

By Divine direction, he repaired to Hebron, where the tribe of Judah immediately saluted him king. By Abner, however, the general of Saul's army, a rival was set up in the person of Ish-bosheth, the only remaining son of Saul, who wielded a precarious authority over the northern tribes, until the defection of Abner to David terminated the contest. Ish-bosheth himself was soon afterwards assassinated, and David became undisputed sovereign of the whole country. His first act was to capture the stronghold of Mount Zion, which he made his own residence, and the seat of government. He then turned his arms against the surrounding nations. He drove the Philistines out of Gath; conquered the Edomites; made Moab tributary; defeated the Syrians in two great battles; and in a short time had extended the eastern boundary of his kingdom to the Euphrates. Religious and civil affairs now claimed his attention. The ark, which after its restoration by the Philistines had remained at Kirjath-jearim for twenty years, was transferred with great solemnity to Jerusalem; but the king's design of building a permanent structure for its reception was not permitted to be fulfilled, that honour being reserved for his son. By the assistance of Hiram, king of Tyre, who sent him skilled artisans, he built his own palace in a style of great magnificence. Thus far his reign was marked by unexampled prosperity; the remaining portion was clouded by disaster. A war with the Ammonites had broken out, and Rabbah, their capital, was besieged by Joab, when, in an unguarded moment, the "man after God's own heart" committed the crimes which give so melancholy an interest to his later

history. The Ammonites were subdued; but the predicted retribution speedily followed. The death of the child of guilt; the incest of Amnon, and his assassination by Absalom; the rebellion and death of that favourite son; the plague which cut off 70,000 of the people; and the attempt of Adonijah, aided by Joab and the priest Abiathar, to seize the throne before his father's death; all contributed to embitter the declining years of the monarch. Before his death, however, he had the satisfaction of seeing Solomon, for whom the throne had long been destined, recognised as his successor by the leading men of the state.

At the age of twenty Solomon commenced his splendid reign. The imprudence of his enemies, Adonijah, Abiathar, and Joab, soon afforded him the opportunity which his father's dying injunctions had recommended him not to miss, of ridding himself of them; and, free from internal dangers, he was enabled to devote his whole attention to the pursuits of legislation and commerce. His extensive dominions were parcelled out into twelve districts, with local governors, whose business it was to provide for the enormous consumption of the royal household. By marriage he connected himself with Egypt, the inland trade of which in horses and linen-yarn was exclusively carried on by Jews; while his treaty with Hiram of Tyre supplied him with ships and mariners, by the aid of which he engaged in a very extensive foreign commerce. His ships traded to Tarshish, in the south of Spain, and, by the route of the Red Sea, to Ophir, on the east coast of Africa, and the shores of the Arabian peninsula. Another line of traffic traversed the countries inland from the interior of Asia to Tyre; to facilitate which Solomon built two cities, Tadmon and Baalath, between the Euphrates and the coast. The wealth which poured into the treasury from

these various sources was expended partly upon the luxuries of a magnificent court, and partly upon costly buildings, among which the Temple was conspicuous. This celebrated edifice occupied more than seven years in building, and was justly esteemed the glory of Solomon's reign. A full description of it must be sought elsewhere ;¹ it is sufficient here to observe, that all the resources of ancient art, and the most lavish expenditure, were taxed to render it worthy of its sacred destination. The utensils were all of solid gold, and gold met the eye of the spectator in whatever direction he looked. In its general arrangements the Temple resembled the Tabernacle. For its dedication an extraordinary festival was appointed, which lasted for two weeks, and during which 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep were sacrificed. The whole tribe of Levi, including the priests, were in attendance ; the ark was conveyed into the most holy place amidst the chantings of the choir ; Solomon, in a solemn prayer, invoked the Divine blessing ; fire descended from heaven upon the altar ; and the shecinah, or bright cloud, filled the building, and Jehovah visibly took possession of His new abode.

The vast expenses of Solomon's court could not be maintained without the imposition of a heavy burden of taxation ; but the reputation of their famous sovereign, whose magnificence and whose wisdom were the admiration of foreign potentates, reconciled the people to the excessive exactions from which, in the latter part of his reign, they suffered. Discontent, however, was rife ; and the lamentable declension of the king, who, in his old age, suffered himself to be seduced by his foreign connexions into idolatry, and even established on a hill to the south of Jerusalem, afterwards called the Mount of Offence, the

¹ See Horne's *Introd.* vol. iii. part 3, s. 2.

worship of false gods, increased the dangers that threatened his kingdom. After his death the storm burst. His son and successor, Rehoboam, without the pretensions, attempted to imitate the arbitrary policy, of his father, and at once ten of the tribes renounced their allegiance, and formed themselves into a separate kingdom under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who, even in Solomon's lifetime, had been the leader of an abortive rebellion. Thus, after a brief period of splendour, the Jewish empire came to an end, and the national union was never afterwards restored.

It would be a wearisome task to describe in detail the vicissitudes which befell the rival kingdoms. The history presents little but a series of crimes, wars, and national apostasies; relieved in the kingdom of Judah by occasional reigns of a brighter character. In the war that followed the separation of the kingdoms, Jeroboam was defeated by Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, with enormous loss; but no permanent result ensued. On the contrary, the usurper proceeded to render the breach irreparable by establishing an idolatrous worship at Beth-el and Dan, the extremities of his dominions, and creating priests from the lowest of the people. For this his race was condemned to extermination; and accordingly his son Nadab was, after a short reign of less than two years, assassinated by Baasha, one of his generals; and Baasha's son in turn by Zimri, who speedily gave place to Omri, founder of the new metropolis, Samaria, between Ebal and Gerizim. In the reign of Omri's successor, Ahab, who had married Jezebel, daughter of the king of Zidon, the wickedness of Israel culminated. The prophets of Jehovah were slain or banished, and the priests of Baal installed in their place. A temporary reformation followed the noble stand made by Elijah; but the influence of Jezebel prevailed, and the

prophet was compelled to fly. Foreign wars were now added to domestic disorders: for a long time a confederacy of the Syrian kings, headed by Ben-hadad of Damascus, threatened imminent ruin to the kingdom. In one of the encounters with the Syrians Ahab was slain; and the brief reigns of his two sons, Ahaziah and Jehoram, which were illustrated by the miracles and ministry of the prophet Elisha, closed with the assassination of Jehoram by Jehu, the appointed instrument of destroying the sanguinary race of Ahab.

The dynasty of Jehu lasted about 114 years,—longer than any of the foregoing. Under the rule of his descendants, Israel recovered in some degree from its depression. Jehoash, his grandson, successfully opposed the inroads of the Syrians, and inflicted a severe blow upon Judah at Beth-shemesh; on this occasion Jerusalem was pillaged, and much of the treasure of the Temple carried away to Samaria. Jeroboam II., who reigned for forty-one years, followed up his father's successes, and re-established the ancient frontier of the country; but at his death an interregnum of eleven years of anarchy followed. At length his son Zachariah, the last of the house of Jehu, obtained the sceptre; but only to hold it for a few months. He was assassinated by Shallum, and Shallum by Menahem, who succeeded in keeping possession of the throne for ten years, but only by the aid of Pul, king of Assyria, that mighty empire which was beginning to assume a threatening aspect towards Israel. Pekah, an able usurper, whose reign lasted for nearly thirty years, delayed for a time the impending ruin: but under his successor, the feeble Hoshea, it was consummated. The country was invaded by Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king, who at first contented himself with laying it under tribute; but, having detected Hoshea in a secret correspondence with the king of Egypt,

he marched against Samaria, took it after a siege of three years, and transplanted to the interior of his empire the greater part of the ten tribes, who thenceforward disappear from the page of history. Their place was supplied by a race from Assyria called Cuthœans, who partly retained their old superstitions, and partly adopted the worship of Jehovah; whence in after times arose the mixed people known by the name of the Samaritans. The separate kingdom of Israel, from its commencement to its close, lasted 254 years.

The eye of the historian rests with greater pleasure upon the sister kingdom of Judah. Intervals of peace and prosperity, under the rule of monarchs distinguished for their piety, grace its annals. The chief source of danger was connexion with the impious kings of Israel, either in the way of alliances or hostility. Asa and Jehoshaphat, the immediate successors of Abijam, son of Rehoboam, both reigned in the fear of God, until, in an evil hour, the latter married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab. The fruits of this connexion were speedily visible. Bloodshed, idolatry, and political disaster marked Jehoram's career. The Edomites recovered their freedom, and seized upon Elath, the only port on the Red Sea remaining to Judah; and the Philistines and Arabians invaded the country. A loathsome disease terminated Jehoram's life, and Ahaziah his son was slain by order of Jehu. Athaliah, the queen-mother, then showed herself a worthy descendant of Ahab: she massacred all the seed-royal save one child, Joash, who was secreted by his aunt, and for six years maintained herself in power; in the seventh, a conspiracy, headed by the high-priest, broke out, Athaliah was slain, and the rightful heir restored. But Joash's reign belied the expectations which had been formed from its commencement: after the death

of Jehoiada, the high-priest, idolatry again began to prevail; the faithful warnings of Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, were requited by a cruel death; and at length, after sustaining several defeats from the Syrians, the king was murdered by his own officers. The same fate befell his son Amaziah. The long and tranquil reign of Uzziah, or Azariah, restored the country to some degree of its ancient prosperity; the Philistines were subdued, and Elath recovered: but a relapse took place under Ahaz, one of the most ungodly kings that ever filled the throne. Defeated by the Israelites in a great battle, in which he lost 120,000 men, and harassed by the attacks of the Edomites and Philistines, he had recourse to the dangerous expedient of requesting the protection of Tiglath-pileser, the Assyrian monarch, who levied a heavy tribute upon his ally, while he afforded no effectual assistance. Judah seemed on the point of sharing the fate of Samaria, when Hezekiah's reformation changed the aspect of things, and the haughty Sennacherib was compelled, by the miraculous destruction of his army, to retire from the walls of Jerusalem. It was, however, but a passing gleam: Manasseh's wicked and disastrous administration succeeded; and when Josiah, the last hope of the nation, was killed in battle, it became evident that the dissolution of the kingdom was at hand. Jerusalem was first taken by Necho, king of Egypt, and then by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 601), who carried Jehoiakim the king a prisoner to Babylon. Reinstated on the throne, Jehoiakim attempted to throw off the Assyrian yoke, but, being slain in a skirmish, transmitted his sceptre, and the war, to his son Jehoiachim. Nebuchadnezzar a second time captured Jerusalem, plundered the Temple, and sent the king and the royal family, with the useful part of the population, to Babylon. Over the depopulated province he placed Zedekiah, who for some

years reigned in a state of vassalage ; but, on his revolt, for the third and last time the Assyrian conqueror appeared before the city ; reduced it, after some resistance, by famine ; carried Zedekiah, after having put his eyes out, to Babylon ; razed the Temple and chief buildings to the ground ; and seized all that remained of the treasures. The greater part of the people was transported to Babylon, a few of the poorer class being left under the command of Gedaliah, to cultivate the land. Thus ended the monarchy of Judah, and, as it might have seemed to human eye, the existence of the Jews as a distinct nation. But they were safe in the custody of prophecy ; and after seventy years of captivity, they commenced a new career in their native land, to terminate in a more terrible and lasting catastrophe.

The territory of Judah, after the removal of the Jews to Babylon, was not peopled, like that of Israel, with colonists from Assyria, but remained during the captivity in possession of a remnant of the poorer natives, under a Babylonish governor, Gedaliah. A conspiracy, headed by Ishmael, a man of royal blood, resulted in the assassination of Gedaliah ; but the assassin failing in his ambitious projects, was compelled to fly, and a large body of the Jews, carrying with them the prophet Jeremiah, took refuge in Egypt from the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar. Egypt itself, however, about eighteen years afterwards, was invaded and conquered by the Assyrian monarch.

The situation of the Jews as captives was better than they had reason to expect. They seem to have been permitted to settle as independent communities in various parts of the empire, and to have maintained without molestation the distinctive features of their religious worship, so far as was practicable, in a heathen land : on the river Chebar, in particular, north of Babylon, a large

body was established, among whom Ezekiel lived and prophesied. Daniel, the contemporary of that prophet, one of the captives of distinction who had been carried away as hostages at the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, rose by a series of providential circumstances to a post of dignity at the Babylonish court, and continued to fill the highest offices under the reigns both of Darius, who, by the defeat of Belshazzar, put an end to the Chaldæan empire, and of Cyrus, who succeeded to the undisputed throne of the three combined nations, the Babylonians, the Medes, and the Persians. Soon after the accession of Cyrus, Daniel, consulting the prophecies of Jeremiah, perceived that the predicted termination of the captivity was at hand; and through his influence, no doubt, the welcome edict was promulgated, permitting the Jews to return to their native land.

Many preferred remaining in Babylonia, where they had formed connexions and acquired property, and the first detachment under Zerubbabel, or Shesh-bazzar, the lineal descendant of their kings, numbered less than 50,000. Out of the twenty-four courses of the priests four joined the returning exiles. Arrived in Jerusalem, their first care was to re-establish the temple-worship; and amidst the acclamations of the younger, and the tears of the elder, part of the assembly, the latter of whom contrasted the magnificence of Solomon's Temple with the comparative poverty of the new building, the foundations of the second temple were laid, and the sacrifices resumed. At this point, however, difficulties occurred which suspended the operations for several years. The Samaritans, descendants of the Cuthæan colonists who peopled the land of Israel, claimed, on account of their mixed blood, a share in the restoration of the national fabric; the claim was contemptuously rejected, and from that time an implacable

animosity existed between the two nations. In revenge for the affront, the Samaritans directed all their efforts to thwart the projects of the Jews; and by their influence at the Persian court, during the rest of the reign of Cyrus, and that of Cambyses and Smerdis, they succeeded in arresting the progress of the building.

The accession of Darius Hystaspes (B.C. 521) changed the aspect of things. The edict of Cyrus was confirmed by Darius, who even compelled the Samaritans to contribute to the completion of the temple; and accordingly, in the sixth year of that monarch's reign, it rose from its ruins, and was dedicated afresh with great solemnity. The reign of his successor Ahasuerus, commonly supposed to be Xerxes, was marked by the imminent danger and signal deliverance of the Babylonish Jews, in memory of which the feast of Purim was instituted. The mission of Ezra to set in order the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of Judæa, and that of Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, took place in the following reign: these eminent men, assisted by the prophet Malachi, whose writings close the volume of inspiration, successfully accomplished their respective tasks, the former devoting himself particularly to the establishment of the Old Testament canon. About this time, the rival worship on Mount Gerizim was established by Sanballat, the Horonite; in revenge, it is said, for the expulsion of his son-in-law Manasseh by Nehemiah. Manasseh was installed high-priest of the new temple; and thus the schism between the Jews and the Samaritans was consummated.

CHAPTER II.

OBSERVATIONS ON EACH OF THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

SECT. I. *Introductory.*

The twelve following books of Scripture, from Joshua to Nehemiah inclusive, have been called "the historical books"; though the name does not seem very appropriate, since a great portion of the Pentateuch and some parts of the prophets contain historical matter. The first seven are by the Jews called the "former prophets," because they are supposed to have been written by men endowed with the prophetic gift. According to the Jewish division of the canon of Scripture, the twelve form but six books; Ruth being classed with Judges, Nehemiah with Ezra, and the two Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, being respectively counted as one. The period over which they extend is about 1000 years, commencing with the death of Moses, and terminating with the restoration of religion by Nehemiah, after the return from the Babylonish captivity.

Since it is impossible to determine, with any certainty, who the authors of these books were, it is an interesting question, on what grounds they are to be considered as authentic. The direct reply is, of course, that they were written by inspiration of God, inspiration revealing, if necessary, as well as superintending: but it must likewise be remembered, that among no people more carefully than among the Israelites were records of the national annals preserved, and that from the first. The great principle of the agrarian law of Moses, that lands should not be

permanently alienable from tribes and families, rendered it necessary that accurate genealogies should be kept; and it was an ordinary part of the prophetic office to draw up authentic memorials of public events as they occurred. Thus we read of the Books of Gad and Nathan,¹ Iddo and Ahijah;² and frequently of the Book of Jasher.³ There were, therefore, no doubt, ample materials in the national archives from which the selection contained in the canonical Scriptures could be made; and in this instance Inspiration may be conceived of as merely suggesting the selection, and ensuring accuracy of statement.

The uses of the historical Scriptures are manifold. They furnish the most impressive lessons of the corruption and weakness of human nature; of the goodness of God; of His controlling providence, over both the chosen people and the heathen; of His faithfulness to His promises.⁴ Their peculiarities arise from their strictly religious scope. What secular historians would have enlarged upon, the mighty actions of illustrious men, or the revolutions of empires, are passed over in silence, or briefly noticed: what concerns the church, or the progress of religion, is detailed at length. Hence the large space devoted to biographical memoirs. The history of an important reign is given in a few sentences; the history of a poor widow occupies a chapter.⁵ The reference, more or less direct, to the Messiah gives unity and significance to the whole.

SECT. II. *Book of Joshua.*

The Book of Joshua is so called rather from its con-

¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 29. ² 2 Chron. ix. 29. ³ Josh. x. 13.

⁴ See "Sermons on the Historical Scriptures," by Dr. Hawkins, Provost of Oriel.

⁵ 1 Kings, xvii.; 2 Kings, iv.

taining an account of that warrior's achievements than from his having been the author of it. That Joshua himself left memorials of his wars, and of the portioning of the land of Canaan, is very probable; that if not he, some contemporary, did so, may be considered certain: but the book, in its present form, could hardly have been written in the time of the Jewish leader. Historical notices which it contains prove that it was not coeval with the transactions it records. In c. xv. 63, the Jebusites are spoken of as dwelling with the Israelites at Jerusalem; which did not take place till after Joshua's death.¹ In several passages memorials are said to exist "unto this day;"² a phrase which betrays a later hand. The account of Joshua's death, c. xxiv., must, of course, be a supplement. Yet the passage relating to the Jebusites shows that it must have been written before the age of David, for that monarch expelled the Jebusites from Jerusalem. More than this cannot be affirmed. The true authorship is unknown. That it must, however, have been compiled from authentic documents is evident, both from the accuracy with which matters of the greatest public importance are narrated, such as the division of the land among the tribes, which evidently was copied from some coeval record the authority of which did not admit of dispute; and from the discourses with which it abounds, which, apparently, are given just as they were spoken.

This book comprises the history of about seventeen years; and its special object is to exhibit the faithfulness of Jehovah in the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham.

The Samaritans have two books called Joshua, written in Arabic with Samaritan letters. They consist chiefly of fabulous tales.

¹ Judges, i. 21.

² Josh. iv. 9; xvi. 10; xix. 47.

Though Joshua is not expressly said to be a type of Christ, we cannot overlook the significance of the fact that, not Moses the lawgiver, but Joshua, *i. e.* Jesus, or saviour, conducted the chosen people into the promised land.

The book contains, 1. An account of the conquests of the Israelites under Joshua, including the miraculous passage of Jordan ; the capture of Jericho, and of Ai ; the war with the Canaanitish kings, and the miracle of the sun's standing still ; and the defeat of Jabin and his confederates at the waters of Merom (cc. i.—xiii.). 2. The division of the conquered land, with the appointment of the cities of the Levites, and the cities of refuge, according to the injunctions of Moses (cc. xiv.—xxii.). 3. The last counsels, death, and burial of Joshua (cc. xxiii. xxiv.).

SECT. III.—*Book of Judges.*

The remarks which have been made on the Book of Joshua are, to a great extent, applicable to that of Judges. The authorship of it is unknown, though the Jews assign it to Samuel. It derives its name from its containing the history of the Hebrew commonwealth under a certain number of judges, or special deliverers, raised up, from time to time, to rescue the Israelites from the oppression of their enemies, and to reform corruptions in religion. From c. xix. 1, we gather that it was written after the commencement of the monarchy, and from c. i. 21, that it was written before the accession of David : consequently its probable date is the reign of Saul. Some critics contend that the first sixteen chapters were composed by an earlier, and the remainder by a later, writer. It comprises a period of about 300 years.

The author himself states the object he had in view, *viz.* to prove that the calamities which the people suffered were the consequence of their unfaithfulness to the

covenant (c. ii. 11-23), and to set forth the goodness of God, so strikingly manifested in His readiness to accept their repentance, and grant deliverance. The book presents a lively picture of a turbulent and ill-cemented confederacy: the public roads insecure, the defenceless villages liable to the raids of marauders, the administration of justice irregular. The Israelites, after Joshua's death, underwent a change of character for the worse; they exchanged the pursuits of war for those of agriculture, and permitted their inveterate enemies to regain their strength and courage. The consequence was, that they became involved in perpetual wars, from which they generally came forth with little credit. Their intercourse with the heathen nations led to idolatry, and this to national degradation and calamity.

The Book of Judges may be arranged under these main divisions:—The first describes the national declension that took place (cc. i. ii.); the second contains the exploits and administration of thirteen judges, commencing with Othniel and ending with Samson (cc. iii.—xvi.); the third, which is of the nature of an appendix, contains: 1. The history of Micah, and the setting up of idolatry by the tribe of Dan at Laish. 2. The account of a detestable crime, which issued in the almost total destruction of the tribe of Benjamin (cc. xvii.—xxi.).

The following is a table of the judges:—

Othniel	King of Mesopotamia.
Ehud	Moabites.
Shamgar	Philistines.
Deborah	Jabin, king of Canaan.
Gideon	Midianites.
Abimelech.	
Tola.	

Jair.

Jephthah Ammonites.

Ibzan.

Elon.

Abdon.

Samson Philistines.

SECT. IV.—*Book of Ruth.*

The Book of Ruth may be regarded as a sequel to that of Judges, and an introduction to the Books of Samuel. The date and authorship are unknown, but Jewish tradition ascribes it to Samuel. The transactions it records happened in the time of the judges, probably during the administration of Gideon. A Jewish family, of which Elimelech was the head, is compelled, by a famine, to migrate to Moab, where his two sons married Moabitish women, Orpah and Ruth. On the death of the sons, Naomi, the widowed parent, resolves to return to her own country, and Ruth accompanies her. They discover Boaz, a wealthy kinsman, who receives them kindly, and marries Ruth. From this union David sprang, the progenitor of the Messiah. The object of the book is, plainly, to establish the fact of David's descent, and, perhaps, by the adoption of Ruth into the Jewish Church, to intimate the future ingathering of the Gentiles.

The book contains,—1. The bereavement of Naomi, and of Ruth, and their return to Bethlehem (c. i.). 2. Their interview with Boaz, and his marriage (cc. ii.–iv.). 3. The birth of Obed, the grandfather of David, and the genealogy of David (c. iv. 13–22).

SECT. V.—*Two Books of Samuel.*

The two Books of Samuel made but one in the Jewish Canon, and from their structure it is apparent that they form but one treatise. The question of the authorship is

attended with difficulty; but the more prevalent opinion is, that the first twenty-four chapters were written by Samuel himself, and the rest by the prophets Nathan and Gad, the contemporaries of David. The books contain the history of the two last judges, Eli and Samuel, and of the two first kings of Israel, Saul and David; the former extending over a period of about eighty years, the latter over one of nearly forty.

In the First Book of Samuel we have to observe,—

1. The magistracy of Eli, including the birth of Samuel, with the song of his mother, Hannah; the iniquity of Hophni and Phinehas, and the weakness of their father, Eli; the call of Samuel, and denunciations against the house of Eli; prophecy revived in the person of Samuel; the capture of the ark, and death of Eli (cc. i.—iv.).
2. The administration of Samuel. The ark is restored by the Philistines. National repentance at Mizpeh, and defeat of the Philistines. Peace during the rest of Samuel's administration (cc. v.—vii.).
3. The people desire a king. History of Saul: his election, successes against the Philistines, and rejection for disobedience. Early part of David's life: his anointing by Samuel; his combat with Goliath; call to court; persecutions by Saul; flight and wanderings (cc. viii.—xxvii.).
4. The concluding portion of Saul's life: his consultation with the witch of Endor; battle with the Philistines at Gilboa, and death (cc. xxviii.—xxx.).

The Second Book of Samuel describes the transfer of the kingdom from the tribe of Benjamin to that of Judah (Gen. xlix. 10). It contains,—

1. The prosperous part of David's reign; his triumph over Saul's party, and crowning at Hebron; victories over the Jebusites, Philistines, Moabites, and Ammonites (cc. i.—x.).
2. The disasters occasioned by his sin in the matter of Uriah. Domestic

troubles from the incest of Amnon. Rebellion and death of Absalom. Return of David to Jerusalem, and insurrection of Sheba. Punishment of the sons of Saul. David's second sin, in numbering the people. Pestilence, and the king's sacrifice and intercession (cc. xi.—xxiv.).

SECT. VI.—*Books of Kings.*

These two books, like the former, form but one in the Jewish Canon. Respecting the authorship nothing certain is known; but it is evident that they must have been compiled at a late period, since the second book concludes with the liberation of Jehoiachim, king of Judah, from captivity in Babylon, an event which took place about twenty-eight years after the destruction of Jerusalem. The uniformity of style and of idiom throughout prove them to be the production of one writer. Opinion has been divided between Jeremiah and Ezra, as the author: Jewish tradition is in favour of the former; and undoubtedly there is a strong resemblance of style between the prophecies of Jeremiah and the Books of Kings. Whoever the writer was, he must have compiled his work from ancient documents, the annals, probably, of contemporaneous prophets or historians. The Books of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah, so often referred to by the inspired writer, were memorials of this kind; and so, no doubt, were the books of the acts of Solomon,¹ of the prophet Jehu,² and of the acts of Uzziah by the prophet Isaiah.³ From these copious materials the inspired writer gives a selection, suited to the purpose which he had in view. This purpose seems to have been, to present a vivid picture of the theocratical government: hence he enlarges upon the Temple, as the visible court of Jehovah; upon the piety or wickedness of kings, as Jehovah's vice-gerents;

¹ 1 Kings, xi. 41.

² 2 Chron. xx. 34.

³ 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

and especially upon the function and influence of the prophets, who occupy a very prominent position during this period. This, indeed, may be called the principal age of prophecy. The period comprised in both books is about 426 years.

The First Book of Kings consists of two main divisions,—1. The history of the undivided kingdom under Solomon. 2. The commencement of the history of the divided kingdom.

Under the former head we have,—1. The association of Solomon in the kingdom during the latter days of David. His accession to the sole rule. The extent and splendour of his kingdom. Building and dedication of the Temple. His foreign commerce. His lapse into idolatry, and the troubles consequent thereupon (cc. i.—xi.). Under the latter :—The accession of Rehoboam, and revolt of the ten tribes, under Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Policy of Jeroboam to prevent the ten tribes from repairing to Jerusalem to worship. The reigns of Abijam and Asa, kings of Judah, and the contemporary reigns of Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and Ahab, contemporaries. Elijah prophesies (cc. xii.—xxii.). The Second Book of Kings likewise forms two principal divisions:—1. The history of both monarchies, until the termination of the kingdom of Israel. 2. That of the kingdom of Judah, until the Babylonish captivity.

The joint history presents us with a long succession of reigns; those of Israel uniformly wicked, those of Judah of a mixed character. The principal historical personages are, Elisha the prophet, successor of Elijah; Jehu, the destroyer of Ahab's dynasty; Athaliah, the female usurper of the throne of Judah; and Jehoash, the rightful heir thereto. In the reign of Hoshea, the last king of Israel, Samaria, the capital of the kingdom, was taken by Shalmaneser, and the ten tribes transplanted to Assyria (cc. i.—xvii.).

The history of Judah contains,—the pious reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, between which those of Manasseh and Amon, of an opposite character, intervene; and the capture of Jerusalem, under Zedekiah, the last king, who was carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (cc. xviii.—xxv.).

SECT. VII.—*Books of Chronicles.*

The Books of Chronicles received their present title from Jerome. By the Jews they are called, the Words of Days, *i. e.* Diaries, or Annals; and by the Septuagint translators, *Παραλειπόμενα*, or things omitted, because they supply omissions in the other historical books. Though they go over much of the same ground as the Books of Kings, they possess a distinct character of their own. After a short epitome of the Jewish history from Adam, the writer devotes his chief attention to the fortunes of the kingdom of Judah, the affairs of that of Israel being comparatively passed over in silence. As compared with the Books of Kings those of Chronicles are more didactic, and are more occupied with ecclesiastical changes and appointments. They were evidently compiled from the same sources; but, from the circumstance just mentioned, it has been conjectured that the writer made use chiefly, if not exclusively, of the annals of Judah.

Concerning the author we have no certain knowledge. From 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, it appears that the books were written after the time of Jeremiah; and the history is carried down to the restoration of Cyrus (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22). The Jews ascribe the authorship to Ezra; and there is, no doubt, a resemblance between the language of these books and that of the Book of Ezra: but against this supposition the fact of Zerubbabel's genealogy being continued to the time of Alexander (c. iii. 19–24), when

Ezra was no longer living, may seem to militate. If Ezra was the author, this genealogy must have been added by a later hand.

The design of the writer seems to be threefold :—First, to fix the genealogies of the Hebrews returning from captivity, in order that the line of descent of the Messiah might not be involved in confusion. Secondly, to describe the original distribution of lands among the tribes and families, in order that to each their ancient inheritance might return. Thirdly, to facilitate the re-establishment of religious worship, by detailing the genealogies of the priests and Levites, and the ritual arrangements and reformations of David, and other pious kings. The whole period embraced is not less than 3468 years.

From c. i. to c. ix., the First Book of Chronicles is occupied by genealogies, which are, however, not always perfect. The rest of the book, and the second book, relate the same history as the Books of Samuel and Kings : it is not, therefore, necessary to recapitulate it. Some of the particulars omitted in the former books, and supplied by Chronicles, are ;—The regulations of David for the service of the Temple (1 Chron. xxiii.—xxvi.); the defeat of Jeroboam by Abijah, king of Judah, which crippled the resources of Israel for a long time (2 Chron. xiii.); the successful campaign of Asa against the Ethiopians (2 Chron. xiv.); the prosperous reign of Jehoshaphat, including the reforms, civil and religious, which he introduced, and his decisive defeat of the Moabites who had invaded Judah (2 Chron. xvii.—xx.); Jehoram's idolatry (2 Chron. xxi. 11); the stoning of Zechariah the priest by Joash (Ibid. xxiv. 21); Amaziah's army, and idolatry (Ibid. xxv. 6, 14); Jotham's war (Ibid. xxvii. 5); Hezekiah's cleansing of the Temple (Ibid. xxix. 3, 21, 31); Manasseh's repentance and restoration (Ibid. xxxiii. 12–20).

SECT. VIII.—*Book of Ezra.*

This and the following Book of Nehemiah were by the Jews united in one volume, under the title of the first and second books of Ezra. Two other apocryphal books, bearing the name of Esdras, are extant. Ezra has always been considered the author; though some have found a difficulty in the writer's speaking of himself as present at Jerusalem in the reign of Darius Hystaspes (c. v. 4), whereas Ezra did not go thither until nearly sixty years later. Hence the first six chapters have been ascribed to a different hand. But nothing is more probable than that Ezra, on his arrival at Jerusalem (c. vii. 1), found a record of what had taken place previously, and transferred it verbatim to his own work. From the seventh chapter Ezra speaks of himself as being present. Part of the book (c. iv. 8—vi. 18; and vii. 12—46), consisting chiefly of decrees and conversations, is in Chaldee. The history extends from B.C. 536 to B.C. 457, about 79 years.

Ezra was a scribe and priest, a lineal descendant of Phineas, the son of Aaron. He led the second expedition of the Jews from exile. He seems to have remained at Jerusalem; where, according to Jewish tradition, he died at the age of a hundred and twenty years. His name has always been held by his countrymen in the highest veneration.

The book consists of two divisions:—1. The edict of Cyrus, permitting the Jews to return to their own land. The first expedition under Zerubbabel, or Shesh-bazaar. Commencement of the rebuilding of the Temple, and opposition of the Samaritans. Decree of Darius Hystaspes, and completion of the Temple (cc. i.—vi.). 2. Arrival of Ezra at Jerusalem with a commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus. Reformation effected by him.

SECT. IX.—*Book of Nehemiah.*

Nehemiah, the author of this book, was cupbearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus, from whom he obtained permission to visit Jerusalem in the capacity of governor, for the purpose of placing the defences of the city in a proper condition. He is supposed to have been of the tribe of Judah, and house of David. After his first visit, which lasted for twelve years, he returned to Persia, and again was permitted to go to Jerusalem, where, it is said, he ended his days. Part of the book is a compilation from ancient registers (cc. vii. 6-73—xii. 1-26). It was probably written towards the close of Nehemiah's administration, which lasted about thirty-six years.

The book contains,—1. The commission and departure of Nehemiah (cc. i. 1—ii. 1-11.) 2. The repairing of the walls of Jerusalem, and opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah (cc. ii. 11-iv.). 3. Reformation of the abuses of usury (c. v.). 4. Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, and public reading of the law (c. viii.). 5. Solemn fast and humiliation, and national covenant to serve God (cc. ix. x.). 6. Second reformation of Nehemiah on his return to Jerusalem (c. xiii.).

SECT. X.—*Book of Esther.*

This book derives its name, not from its author, but from the history of the person who chiefly figures in it. It is held in the highest veneration by the Jews. Various opinions have been held respecting its authorship. Some have ascribed it to Ezra, others to Mordecai, while a third supposition is that it is a translation by a Persian Jew from the records of the reign of Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes Longimanus. Hence, it is suggested, the absence of the name of God, the use of the Persian word Purim, the

minute acquaintance with the details of the Persian empire, and the designation of Esther as "the queen," and Mordecai as "the Jew." Its canonicity has never been doubted. The institution of the festival of Purim, which is observed to the present time, is an evidence of the reality of the transactions recorded.

The book relates,— 1. The elevation of Esther to the throne (cc. i. ii.). 2. The advancement of Haman, and his plot to destroy the Jews (c. iii.). 3. The measures of Mordecai to avert the calamity. Defeat of Haman's plot against Mordecai and against the Jews. His execution (cc. iv.—vii.). 4. The triumph and joy of the Jews. Feast of Purim (cc. viii.—x.). The history may be placed between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra.

CHAPTER III.

THE POETICAL BOOKS.

SECT. I.—*On Hebrew Poetry in general.*

The five following books of Scripture, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, are, from the form of their composition, called "the poetical books." Though some of them are anterior in date to the historical books, they are, in our Bibles, placed after the latter, and together. In the Jewish Canon they form part of the Hagiographa.

A few remarks may here be fitly introduced on the nature of Hebrew poetry in general. As regards the Hebrew versification, several opinions have been advanced. It has been maintained that something analogous to the Greek and Roman metres may be discovered in it: of

this theory the principal defenders are among the ancients, Philo and Josephus, who discover in the lyrical effusions of the Pentateuch, and in the Psalms of David, trimeters and hexameters, and Jerome, who thought he perceived in the Psalms iambic, alcaic, and sapphic metres; among the moderns, Gomar, Sir W. Jones, Michaelis. Others, like Lowth,¹ while assenting to the metrical theory, hold that the ancient pronunciation of the Hebrew being lost it is impossible to discover what the metres were. A few have even maintained the existence of rhyme, or something like it, in Hebrew poetry. The opinion best supported by the facts of the case, and by the authority of the learned among the Jews, is, that metre, properly so called, never formed an element of Hebrew versification. Nor can we distinguish poetical from prose compositions by alphabetical commencement of lines, foreign words, or sublime expressions :² for, as regards the first, this arrangement occurs but in twelve poems of the Old Testament; and as regards the two latter, foreign words and sublime expressions are found in the prose as well as the poetical books. The true characteristic of Hebrew poetry is what has been called parallelism, or a rhythmical correspondence between the members of each period, so that the same thought is twice expressed in different words. The following, from Job, vii. 1, 2, is a good specimen :—

“ Is there not a struggle to man upon the earth ?
 Are not his days like those of an hireling ?
 Like a servant, he gapeth after the shadow :
 Like a hireling, he looketh for his reward.”

The poetical parts of the Old Testament are all constructed, more or less clearly, on this principle. Critics³ have enumerated several kinds of parallelism, such as,—

¹ Prælect. iii.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

synonymous, when the members express the same thought, as in the instance from Job above; antithetic, in which the two members correspond by opposition, as Prov. x. 17, "The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot;" and synthetic, which consists merely in a general correspondence in the form and construction of the sentences, as in Ps. xix. 10, "More to be desired than gold, and much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the dropping of honeycombs." The last class includes several subordinate varieties, such as double synonyme (Isa. i. 3), and double antithetic (Hab. iii. 17). This last is very common in the prophets.

Parallelism has been discovered in the New Testament. Bishop Jebb was the first to point out this peculiarity. Certain parts, such as the hymns of praise in St. Luke, clearly bear out the learned prelate's theory; but it may be questioned whether he has not, with the zeal of a discoverer, pushed it beyond the limits of sobriety. It is a remarkable property of the Hebrew poetry, arising from the simplicity of its rhythm, that it admits of being translated, without suffering much in the process. We know how impossible it is adequately to represent Homer or Virgil in a modern dress: but our English translation of the Bible, for example, conveys not only the spirit but the parallel cadences of the original with wonderful accuracy.

Hebrew poetry is of various nature:—lyric, as the Psalms; didactic, as the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; dramatic, as Job and Canticles; rhetorical, as the prophets. From its consecration to the service of the sanctuary, it soars to a height which that of no other nation has been able to attain.

SECT. II.—*Book of Job.*

A large volume might be filled with the discussions to

which this book has given rise. The author, the age, and the design, have all been disputed. With respect to the first, total uncertainty prevails. The book has been assigned to Elihu, Solomon, Isaiah, Moses, Job himself; but on grounds entirely conjectural. The favourite hypothesis is, that Moses composed it; but to this there are insuperable objections, such as the total absence of allusion to the Mosaic ordinances, and the difference of style from that of the Pentateuch. The authorship is concealed in impenetrable obscurity. We have some data for fixing the age, within certain limits, though the range is very extended. The book was known to Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the Psalmist, as appears from the imitations of it that occur in those prophets; it must, therefore, have been in existence towards the close of the eighth century before Christ. More than this cannot be ascertained; but a high antiquity has reasonably been assigned to it from its silence on the Mosaic law, and on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; from the only form of idolatry mentioned being that of the sun and moon, confessedly the most ancient; from the length of Job's life; and from the manners and customs recorded, which are those of the earliest times.

The very existence of Job as a real person has been questioned, but without reason. He is classed in the Old Testament with Noah and Daniel;¹ and alluded to in the New in terms which forbid the supposition of the history's being mythical.² We have no reason to doubt that, in the main, the narrative is one of facts. Uz, the scene of the poem, is supposed to have been in Idumæa.

The question discussed by Job and his friends, with an acuteness and sublimity that have never been surpassed, is a branch of the great problem which has exercised thinking

¹ Ezek. xiv. 14.

² Jam. v. 11.

minds in all ages — the existence of evil. Job, a righteous man, is overtaken by calamities of the severest kind ; how is the fact to be accounted for ? His three friends attribute it to sins open or concealed, of which he has been guilty : he defends his innocence. Elihu gives the true solution, as far as was consistent with the existing state of revelation ; he shows that affliction is a blessing in disguise, and, when sanctified, conducts to a happy issue.

The book consists of,—1. The historical introduction, containing the narrative of Job's wealth, and of his sudden reverses (cc. i. ii.). 2. The discussions between Job and his friends. First discussion,—Eliphaz the Temanite (cc. iii.—vii.); Bildad the Shuhite (cc. viii.—x.); and Zophar the Naamathite (cc. xi.—xiv.). The controversy resumed by the three friends (cc. xv.—xxi.); and again (cc. xxii.—xxxii.). The substance of these discussions is the same in all, viz. the assumed necessary connexion between affliction and sin, and Job's protestations of innocence. 3. The appearance of Elihu on the scene. The disputants all censured, as reasoning partially (cc. xxxii.—xxxvii.). 4. Address of Jehovah ; termination of the controversy ; and restoration of Job to more than his former prosperity (cc. xxxviii.—xli.).

SECT. III.—*Book of Psalms.*

The Book of Psalms is a collection of lyric odes, intended to be sung to instruments of music. The word Psalter, sometimes applied to the collection, properly signifies a musical instrument. They were composed at different times, through a period ranging from Moses to after the Babylonish captivity. By the Jews the volume is called "The Book of Praises," from the larger part of its contents. The age of David was the golden period of Hebrew lyric poetry. He was not only himself the chief

composer of these odes, but placed the musical arrangements of the Temple services on a new and enlarged footing.¹ The canonicity of this book rests upon most convincing evidence. By our Lord and His apostles it is referred to at least seventy times.

According to the titles prefixed to the Psalms, David was the author of seventy-four of them ; Asaph, of twelve ; the sons of Korah, of eleven ; Solomon, of two ; and Moses, Heman, and Ethan, of one, respectively. These titles are not of inspired authority ; they are not, however, to be rejected, unless internal evidence is decisive against them. Upwards of thirty Psalms have no inscription whatever. Of these, however, two, the second and the ninety-fifth, are, in the New Testament, ascribed to David.² The anonymous Psalms are by the Jews assigned to various authors, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah ; but probably only on conjecture.

By whom the present collection was made we cannot determine. Most probably it was formed gradually, at different times, and by different persons. In the Hebrew MSS. it is divided into five books, each of which ends with a doxology. This division must be of ancient date, since it is found in the Septuagint. The Septuagint adds a Psalm to the canonical 150, descriptive of the combat of David with Goliath ; but both by Jews and Christians it has been uniformly rejected. Seven of the Psalms (xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv.) are constructed on the alphabetical principle.

No very accurate classification of the Psalms can be given. The following is from De Wette's *Introduction*:—

1. Hymns of praise to Jehovah. Pss. viii., xix., xxxiii., xlvii., civ.

¹ 1 Chron. xvi. 4.

² Acts, iv. 25. Heb. iv. 7.

2. Historical Psalms. Pss. lxxviii., cv., cvi., cxiv.
 3. Temple Psalms. Pss. xv., lxviii., lxxxvii., cxxxv.
 4. Royal Psalms. Pss. ii., xx., xlv., lxxii., cx.
 5. Penitential and supplicatory. Comprising more than a third of the whole collection.
 6. Didactic. Pss. xxiii., xliii., l., xc., cxxxiii.
- To these we may add :—

7. The prophetic Psalms. Pss. ii., xvi., xxii., xl., xlv., lxviii., lxxii., lxxxvii., cx., cxviii.

On the meaning of the terms prefixed to many of the Psalms opinion is divided. The following is a table of them, with the most probable interpretation :—

Aijeleth Shahar—Hind of the morning, Ps. xxii. Supposed to signify the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung.

Al-Taschith—Destroy not. Another melody.

Gittith, Pss. viii., lxxxii., lxxxiv. Probably a musical instrument.

Jonath-elem-rechokim, Ps. lvi. The mute dove among strangers. Either David, the subject of the Psalm, or a melody so called.

Jeduthun, Ps. xxxix. One of David's chief musicians (1 Chron. xvi. 41).

Mahalath, Ps. liii. A musical instrument.

Michtam, Pss. xvi., lvi., lvii., lviii., lix., lx. Either a golden Psalm, *i.e.* one of peculiar excellence, or a writing.

Maschil, Pss. xxxii., xlii., xlv., xlv., &c. A didactic poem, or a figurative composition.

Neginoth, Pss. vi., liv., lv., lxxvi. Probably a general name for stringed instruments.

Nehiloth, Ps. v. Flutes, or wind-instruments.

Selah. This expression occurs seventy-one times in the Psalms. Many interpretations have been given of it.

The two most probable are, that it indicates where the voice was to be raised to a higher key, or where a pause was to be made.

Alamoth, Ps. xlvi. Probably virgins—to be sung by them.

Shiggaion, Ps. vii. Either a hymn, or a song of sorrow.

Song of degrees, Pss. cxx.—cxxxiv. Some have supposed this expression to signify the song of pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem; others, an elevation of the voice. More probably, it means an ascension from clause to clause in the thought.

Sheminith, Pss. vi., xii. Either an instrument with eight strings, or an octave, viz. the bass.

Shushan, a lily. Shoshannim, Pss. xlv., lxix., lxxx. Probably an instrument resembling a lily in shape. Shushaneduth, Ps. lx., lily of testimony, *i.e.* an excellent subject. Or a tune, or instrument.

SECT. IV.—*Book of Proverbs.*

That Solomon was the author of the principal part of this book has never been doubted; it is, no doubt, a selection from the 3000 proverbs which he is said to have spoken (1 Kings, iv. 32). It did not, however, as it stands, proceed from him; from c. xxv. to c. xxix. inclusive, they are said to have been arranged by order of King Hezekiah.¹ Chapter xxx. contains the instructions of Agur to his friends, Ithiel and Ucal; and c. xxxi. those of King Lemuel's mother to her son.

Proverbs have always been, in the East, a favourite vehicle of moral instruction. A proverb may be defined to be a pointed, antithetical sentence, conveying, in the fewest possible words, some moral truth. The Hebrew

¹ C. xxv. 1.

language, from its terseness, is admirably adapted for this purpose.

The Divine authority of the book is sufficiently proved by the quotations from it in the New Testament (Rom. xii. 20. Heb. xii. 5, 6. 1 Pet. iv. 8. 1 Thess. v. 15).

Its contents naturally fall into five divisions. 1. An exhortation to wisdom, conceived in the highest style of Hebrew poetry (cc. i.—ix.). 2. Disconnected moral maxims on various subjects (cc. x.—xxii. 17). 3. Observations on wisdom, similar to the exordium, though inferior in sublimity (cc. xxii. 17—xxiv.). 4. Separate maxims, as before (cc. xxv.—xxix.). 5. The supplement, consisting of the instructions of Agur, and King Lemuel's mother (cc. xxx. xxxi.). Who these persons were is not known.

SECT. V.—*Book of Ecclesiastes.*

This book received the name it bears in our Bibles from the Septuagint translators. In the Hebrew it is called Koheleth, from its initial word, *i.e.* assembler, or teacher. From the circumstance that Solomon is introduced in it as speaking, it has generally been ascribed to that prince; but many are of opinion that it was composed during the period of the second temple. It cannot be placed later than the time of Ezra, by whom the Canon was completed.

If it is the production of Solomon, it presents an interesting and instructive picture of that monarch's return to a better mind, when, at the close of life, he took a retrospect of his past career. The general design of the author is to set forth the nothingness of earthly pursuits and enjoyments, and to recommend the acquisition of heavenly wisdom. From the commencement to c. vi. 9, the former theme is enlarged upon, the writer reviewing the various conditions and objects of human life, and

showing that "all is vanity." From c. vi. 10 to the end, the excellence of wisdom is exhibited, the sum and crowning lesson of the whole being, "Fear God, and keep His commandments" (c. xii. 13).

SECT. VI.—*Song of Solomon.*

To Solomon this book is ascribed by the unanimous voice of antiquity. He is said to have written 1005 songs (1 Kings, iv. 32), of which this is supposed to have been one. In the Hebrew it is called the Song of Songs, *i.e.* the most excellent song.

Of no book is the canonicity better attested by external evidence. It was translated by the Alexandrian interpreters, forms part of Josephus's catalogue, and has been always received by the Christian Church. Those who have doubted or denied its right to be included in the Canon, have been led to their conclusion by what has appeared to them internal evidence; and this, again, rests upon their interpretation of the book.

Great diversity of opinion prevails respecting the nature of this poem. By some, as by Origen, it is considered a marriage-song, composed for the nuptials of Solomon with a fair damsel of Sharon (Cant. ii. 1); by others, that it is a pastoral drama (Lowth), or a series of sacred idyls; while others, again, contend that it describes the chaste loves of unmarried persons. The characters are Solomon and his bride, who speak both in dialogue and soliloquy, a chorus of virgins, and a company of young men; and the poem describes various scenes, a rural landscape (c. ii.); a nuptial procession (c. iii. 6); a night-scene (c. v.); a garden scene (c. vi.); concluding with a colloquy between Solomon, the bride, and her brothers (c. viii.).

From the earliest times this book has been regarded as

a Divine allegory, representing, under the earthly figures of wedded love, the covenant between Jehovah and the Jewish people; with a further and deeper reference to the union between Christ and His Church, which, in the New Testament, is likewise expressed in terms derived from the conjugal relation.¹ Apart from the allegorical interpretation, the book loses all its significance; and it is no wonder that they who look no further than the letter experience a difficulty in accounting for its admission into the Canon. Among the Jews the perusal of it was forbidden until the fervour of youth had given place to maturer sentiments.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

SECT. I.—*Introductory.*

Prophecy occupied a very important position in the Hebrew commonwealth. The teaching of the Law was typical, or by mute symbol: prophecy instructed orally, and thus formed the nearest approach which we find in the ancient economy to that great ordinance of the Gospel, the ministry of God's Word. The prophetic function, too, was a safeguard, as far as any institution could be, against the dangers to be apprehended from a corrupt government or priesthood. Its corrective influence, in relation to these orders of the state, must have been very great. An ungodly king might attempt to draw away his people from the worship of Jehovah, or an ambitious hierarchy might devise schemes for its own aggrandisement; but neither could feel secure from the unwelcome intrusion of

¹ Eph. v. 23-32.

some inspired messenger from God, taken indiscriminately from any tribe, who, with the utmost intrepidity and faithfulness, dealt rebuke on all sides, and denounced the judgments of God against a guilty land.

It would be a narrow conception of Hebrew prophecy to limit its use to the prediction of future events. It abounds as much in moral and didactic as in predictive matter; even more so. The prophets enlarge upon the nature and attributes of God, His universal providence, the evil and danger of sin, and the happiness and safety of pious obedience: they comfort the afflicted believer, as well as admonish the careless and the profane. They enlarge especially upon the requirements of the moral law, as distinguished from a mere ritual religion; and, in proportion as they thus awaken a sense of sin, they unfold the great doctrines of the Gospel, and lead the mind onwards to a time when, in Christ, every spiritual want should be satisfied.

Prophecy is almost coeval with creation. Enoch prophesied of the second coming of Christ;¹ Noah was a preacher of righteousness; Jacob possessed the prophetic gift. Even ungodly men, as Balaam, were sometimes employed as instruments in communicating the Divine counsels. But the chief of the prophets was Moses, who enjoyed the special privilege, conferred on none subsequently, of speaking with God "face to face."² From Moses to Samuel an interval occurs, during which, as far as we read, there was, if not an intermission,³ yet a comparative scarcity of the prophetic gift; and certainly the

¹ Jude, 14.

² Deut. xxxiv. 10.

³ That there was not an absolute suspension of the gift appears from Judges, vi. 8; from 1 Sam. ii. 27; and from the instances of Deborah and Hannah. The prophetic revelation made no great progress during the period in question.

predictive matter received no accessions during that period. With Samuel prophecy recommenced, and thenceforward proceeded, without any material chasm, to the days of Malachi, when the gift was finally withdrawn from the ancient Church.

It is at the commencement of this, the principal age of prophecy, that we find the first mention of institutions for the regular training of persons for the prophetic function. The schools of the prophets, as they were called, were communities somewhat resembling the monastic institutions of the middle ages, but without compulsory rules of seclusion from the world, or celibacy. The members of these associations, called in Scripture "the sons of the prophets,"¹ lived together under the rule and instruction of a superior, generally an elder prophet, by whom they were prepared for their public duties. Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, are mentioned as directors of such colleges. Their time appears to have been divided between the acquisition of knowledge (including especially the study of the law, and of music), prayer, and the labours of husbandry. They erected their own dwellings, and subsisted upon the produce of their own industry. It was commonly from these schools that from time to time the inspired messengers of Jehovah were selected to communicate His will to the people; though sometimes persons were chosen to this office who had received no previous training. Thus Elisha was called from following the plough, and Amos tells us that he was no prophet's son, but a herdsman and gatherer of sycamore fruit.²

A frugal and austere life was considered a necessary accompaniment of the prophetic office. Elijah was clothed in skins;³ Isaiah wore sackcloth;⁴ bread and water, or the

¹ 1 Kings, xx. 35.

² Amos, vii. 14.

³ 2 Kings, i. 8.

⁴ Isa. xx. 2.

fruits of the earth, sufficed for their sustenance.¹ A bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick, was all that even the pious Shunammite thought needful for Elisha.² These holy men displayed a noble contempt for the rewards which the veneration or gratitude of those whom they had benefited placed at their disposal.³ They were, therefore, highly esteemed by kings and nobles as well as people: the prophets were often persecuted, but they were never despised.

The mind of God was conveyed to the prophets in various ways. In dreams, in visions, or by an influence upon the mind of which the subjects were conscious, they received the Divine inspiration; and by a strong internal impulse were constrained to deliver their message.⁴ Many of the symbolical acts which the prophets are represented as performing, such as Jeremiah's hiding the girdle near the river Euphrates⁵ (a distance from Jerusalem of about twenty days), are reasonably supposed to have passed before their minds in vision: this must have been the case with those manifestations of the Divine presence which are more than once recorded.⁶

The signs of a prophet were either miracles, or a proximate prediction, the accomplishment of which afforded to the contemporaries of the prophet a guarantee of his Divine mission. Hence these proximate events are often predicted with as much care and minuteness as the remoter ones of greater importance. Thus Isaiah, to encourage Ahaz, king of Judah, who was besieged by the kings of Damascus and Israel, assures him, from the Lord, that before a child, who should be born in about ten months, should be able to say, "My father and my mother," both Damascus and Samaria should be spoiled by the king of

¹ 1 Kings, xviii. 4.

² 2 Kings, v. 16.

³ Ibid. xiii. 1-9.

² 2 Kings, iv. 10.

⁴ Jer. xx. 9.

⁶ 1 Kings, xxii. 17-19. Isaiv. . 1.

Assyria;¹ which actually took place within three years. The fulfilment of this prophecy would secure attention and credence to the infinitely more important announcement, connected with this part of Ahaz's history, that a virgin should conceive, and bear a son, whose name should be Immanuel.²

The prophetic books are usually divided into those of the greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and those of the minor, which comprehend all the rest. The distinction relates only to the relative size of the books, not to their authority. We shall adopt a chronological arrangement, according as prophets lived before, during, or after, the Babylonish captivity.

SECT. II.—*Prophets before the Captivity.*

§ 1. *Book of Jonah*, B.C. 840–795.

There can be little doubt that Jonah is the same person who is mentioned in 2 Kings, xiv. 25, as having foretold the prosperous but brief reign of Jeroboam II.; in whose time, therefore, or about B.C. 840, the prophet must be supposed to have lived. He is called the son of Amittai, and was a native of Gath-hepher, in the tribe of Zabulon. The Book of Jonah contains an account of the prophet's mission to denounce the judgments of God against Nineveh. With the exception of the hymn in c. ii., it is a plain historical narrative, bearing all the marks of reality, and is referred to as such by our Lord.³ The recent theories of German critics, that it is a vision which Jonah had while in the ship, or the work of a later writer, embellishing an ancient historical circumstance, must therefore be dismissed as untenable. In his miraculous preservation Jonah furnished one of the most illustrious of the Old Testament types of our Lord's resurrection.

¹ Isa. viii. 4. ² Ibid. vii. 14. ³ Matt. xii. 39–41. Luke, xi. 29, 30.

The book consists of two parts,—1. The prophet's mission to Nineveh, his flight, shipwreck, and preservation (cc. i. ii.). 2. His preaching at Nineveh, and the repentance of that great city, with the discontent of the prophet (cc. iii. iv.).

§ 2. *Book of Joel*, B.C. 810–780.

Respecting this prophet little more is known than what the title to his predictions contains, that he was the son of Pethuel. He is supposed to have lived in Judah ; and, from his making no mention of the Assyrians among the enemies of his country, in the reign of Uzziah, which would make him contemporary with Amos and Hosea in Israel.

The prophet opens his prophecy with announcing an extraordinary plague of locusts, with extreme drought (c. i. 2–12). This part of the book has been differently interpreted, some understanding it literally, others figuratively, as signifying the various invasions of the Chaldæans, Greeks, and Romans. He then exhorts to a general fast and repentance, assuring his countrymen of the Divine placability (cc. i. 13–ii. 27). A remarkable prediction of the outpouring of the Spirit, to take place under the Gospel dispensation, follows ; to which St. Peter alludes in Acts, ii. 16. The book concludes with predictions of the destruction of the enemies of Jerusalem, and the glorious state of the Church under the reign of Messiah (c. iii.).

§ 3. *Book of Amos*, B.C. 790.

Amos, as we learn from the title to his prophecies (c. i. 1), lived in the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II., and, consequently, was contemporary with Hosea, and probably Joel. He is supposed to have been a native of Tekoa, a town south of Jerusalem ; thither certainly he was driven

by Amaziah, the high-priest of Beth-el, on account of his prophecies against Israel (c. vii. 12). He himself informs us what his original occupation was, viz. that of a herdsman and dresser of sycamore-trees (c. vii. 14). Notwithstanding this, his style is full of fire and force, and some of his pastoral images are of great beauty.

When Amos received his commission, the kingdom of Israel had been restored to its ancient limits and splendour by Jeroboam II.; but the revival of national prosperity had been followed by great corruption of manners. Amos was the herald of impending retribution. The book commences with a denunciation of God's judgments against the surrounding nations, Syria, the Philistines, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab (cc. i.-iii.). Judah is briefly warned (c. ii. 4, 5); and then the burden of the prophecy is directed against Israel (c. ii. 6). Symbolical visions, significant of future calamities, follow (cc. vii.-ix. 10). Towards the close, the scene brightens, and the advent of the Messiah is portrayed under images drawn from rural life (c. ix. 11-15). This book is twice alluded to in the New Testament; by Stephen (Acts, vii. 42), and by the Apostle James (Ibid. xv. 16.)

§ 4. *Book of Hosea*, B.C. 800-740.

The prophetic life of Hosea must have extended over a period of about sixty years, from the reign of Uzziah and his contemporary, Jeroboam II., through those of Jotham, Ahaz, and to the commencement of that of Hezekiah. He was the son of Beerī, who has been confounded with Beerah, a prince of the Reubenites (1 Chron. v. 6), and was probably an Israelite. His prophecies are almost exclusively occupied with the sins and impending fate of the kingdom of Israel: Judah, however, is occasionally introduced and warned.

The state of Israel at that time was deplorable. The idolatry of Jeroboam I. had continued now for 150 years, and the groves were polluted with the licentious rites of heathen deities. To this spiritual adultery, as the prophet describes it (c. ii.), were added civil anarchy and open violations of the law. Alliances were formed with heathen states, which resulted in an imitation of their idolatrous worship. During the long space of sixty years Hosea addressed his warnings to the doomed people, but in vain.

The book opens with what has generally been supposed to be an allegorical representation of the infidelity of the prophet's wife; who bears him three children, with symbolical names, significant of God's judgments upon the house of Jehu and the kingdom of Israel. The whole represents the spiritual unfaithfulness of Israel to the covenant (cc. i. ii.). The rest of the book contains severe rebukes, interspersed with affecting invitations to repentance. The Christian subject is not prominent in Hosea: he alludes, however, to the calling of Christ from Egypt (c. xi. 1); and celebrates, in sublime strains, the triumph of the Redeemer and His people over the grave (c. xiii. 14. Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 55).

The language of Hosea is peculiarly difficult; his style abrupt and concise. Frequent references to this prophet occur in the New Testament (see Matt. ii. 15; ix. 13; Rom. ix. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 10).

§ 5. *Book of Isaiah*, B.C. 763-713.

Of Isaiah little is known beyond what he himself tells us, that he was the son of Amoz (sometimes confounded with the prophet Amos), and that he prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. But the whole of these reigns to Hezekiah would give a period of

not less than 112 years : we must suppose, therefore, that his prophetic ministry began shortly before Uzziah's death, or about B.C. 763 ; and, since we know that he was alive in the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, it must have lasted about fifty years. The Jewish tradition, that he lived till the time of Manasseh, and was put to death by that monarch, by being sawn asunder, is unworthy of credit ; it is most likely that he died before Hezekiah. His wife is called a prophetess, and two of his sons are mentioned, who bore symbolical names.¹ His residence was Jerusalem, near the Temple. Besides the prophecies preserved to us, Isaiah wrote, at least, two historical works,— a biography of king Uzziah,² and a work called “ the Vision of Isaiah,”³ containing an account of Hezekiah's reign.

Until comparatively recent times, no doubt was entertained of Isaiah's having been the author of the whole book as it stands. It has been the fashion, however, abroad to question the genuineness of the last twenty-six chapters, chiefly on the ground of alleged difference of style, and other peculiarities ; but these objections have been satisfactorily refuted. The testimony of antiquity, and of the New Testament,⁴ is express to the effect that the whole volume proceeded from one and the same author.

Both from the extent and the importance of his remains, Isaiah may be considered as the chief of the Hebrew prophets. He excels in every department of composition. “ He is at once elegant and sublime, forcible and ornamented ; he unites energy with copiousness, and dignity with variety. In his sentiments there is uncommon elevation and majesty ; in his imagery the utmost propriety, elegance, dignity, and diversity ; in his language uncom-

¹ C. vii. 3 ; viii. 3.

² 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

³ Ibid. xxxii. 32.

⁴ Matt. iii. 3. Luke, iv. 17, 18.

mon beauty and energy ; and, notwithstanding the obscurity of his subjects, a surprising degree of clearness and simplicity.”¹

The book consists of two principal parts. From c. i. to c. xxxix. inclusive, we have a series of prophecies against foreign nations, with a short historical episode relating to Hezekiah. The opening cc. i.—v. contain reproofs, warnings, and promises, addressed to the Jews : this portion of the book was probably written before the death of Uzziah, which is recorded in c. vi. From c. vi. to c. x. belongs to the reign of Ahaz ; and from c. x. to c. xxxix. to that of Hezekiah, whose miraculous deliverance from the Assyrians, sickness, and recovery, bring this part of the book to a close. The second portion, from c. xl. to the end, relates chiefly to the Messiah, whose person, sufferings, and death, are described with an accuracy which has gained for the author the title of “the Evangelical prophet.” As in many parts of the prophetic volume, so here, the double sense of prophecy is to be remarked : the proximate object is often deliverance from the Babylonish captivity ; but this is described in terms which must have led the mind of the pious inquirer onwards to the greater redemption to be accomplished by Christ. Among the most striking predictions is that relating to Cyrus, who, 200 years before his birth, is described as the conqueror of Babylon, and the restorer of the Jews to their native land. According to Josephus, these prophecies relating to himself made a deep impression on Cyrus, and induced him to set the Jews at liberty.

§ 6. *Book of Micah*, B.C. 759–699.

Micah, of Moresheth, a town near Gath, prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah ;

¹ Lowth.

and, consequently, was contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah : nothing further is known of him.

His prophecy consists of two parts, the former of which terminates with c. v. After expatiating upon the sins of Judah and Israel, the prophet predicts the overthrow of both kingdoms (cc. i.—iii.); and then passes on to celebrate the return of Judah, the restoration of the Temple, and the glories of Messiah's reign (cc. iv. v.). The latter part consists of an animated dialogue, or controversy, between Jehovah and His people; in which the backsliding of the latter is reprov'd, and judgment threatened, but which ends with a promise of brighter days (cc. vi. vii.).

One of the most remarkable Messianic prophecies in Scripture occurs in this book (c. v. 2-4). It describes the eternal generation, the universal dominion, and the human birth-place of Christ. It was this prophecy which enabled the Jewish doctors to answer Herod's question, "Where Christ should be born."¹ The style of Micah is sublime and vehement; he abounds in rapid transitions and beautiful tropes. In Jer. xxvi. 18, his prophecies are referred to as well known.

§ 7. *Book of Nahum*, B.C. 720-698.

Of Nahum nothing is known, save that from the superscription of his prophecy he is supposed to have been a native of Elkosh, a village of Galilee. He prophesied, most probably, between the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities, when the recent subversion of the kingdom of Israel was calculated to inspire gloomy anticipations in the pious of the sister kingdom. To encourage them, he foretells the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and especially of its capital, Nineveh, in the most glowing

¹ Matt. ii. 4-6.

colours, and with wonderful minuteness; while he assures Judah of the Divine love and faithfulness.

This book consists of one entire poem, and is coherent throughout. It opens with a sublime description of the attributes of Jehovah (c. i. 2-8), and passes on to announce the overthrow of Sennacherib, and deliverance of Hezekiah (c. i. 9-15). The rest of the poem depicts the siege and capture of Nineveh (cc. ii. iii.). Nahum is surpassed by none of the prophets in sublimity. His style is pure; the rhythm regular and lively. His descriptions are couched in the highest style of sacred oratory.

§ 8. *Book of Zephaniah*, B.C. 642-611.

The superscription of this book traces the ancestors of Zephaniah back for four generations, yet of what tribe or family he was is uncertain. By some he is supposed to have been of the tribe of Simeon. He prophesied in the reign of Josiah, and probably the earlier part of it, before the sweeping religious reformation of that prince, which was completed in the eighteenth year of his reign. He must therefore have been, for some time, a contemporary of Jeremiah. Since Nineveh fell B.C. 625, that portion of his prophecy which relates to the subversion of the Assyrian empire must have been delivered before that date.

The book consists of three chapters, which treat of three distinct subjects. In the first, the sins of Judah are severely rebuked, and repentance recommended (cc. i. ii. 3). In the second, the heathen states in the neighbourhood of Judæa—the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Ethiopians, and especially Nineveh—are doomed to destruction. In the third, while the prophet returns to the sins of Jerusalem, promises are given of her restoration from

captivity, and an ultimate enjoyment of glorious theocratical privileges.

SECT. III.—*Prophets during the Captivity.*

§ 1. *Book of Jeremiah*, B.C. 628–585.

Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, was of priestly descent, and a native of Anathoth, in the tribe of Benjamin. He was called to the prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah (B.C. 629), and, as it should seem, at a very early age. After residing some time at Anathoth, the ill-treatment which he experienced from his fellow-citizens induced him to retire to Jerusalem, where, for the long period of nearly forty years, he exercised his prophetic functions. During the reign of Josiah, he would naturally be courted and protected by that monarch as a valuable ally in his plans of reformation; but, when that influence was withdrawn, he became an object of attack, both to the leading men of the state and to the populace. During the short reign of Jehoahaz, he seems to have been unmolested; but when his successor, Jehoiakim, came to the throne, the priests and false prophets, irritated by his predictions against Jerusalem, brought him before the authorities, demanding that he should be put to death (c. xxvi. 8). Unwilling to proceed to this extremity, they, however, committed the prophet to prison, or placed him under restraint; for in the fourth year of Jehoiakim he was compelled to employ Baruch to write his predictions, and read them publicly in the Temple (c. xxxvi. 5). Considerable excitement ensued. The princes who were friendly to Jeremiah recommended concealment, while they endeavoured to influence the mind of the king; but this reckless monarch, when he heard the prophecy read, cut the roll in pieces, and cast it into the fire, giving orders

for the apprehension of Jeremiah and Baruch. By Divine interposition they were preserved, and the prophecies were re-written, with additions.

The short reign of Jehoiachin, or Coniah, exhibited no improvement, and in that of his successor, Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar commenced the siege of Jerusalem. A diversion for a time was occasioned by the approach of succours from Egypt; but Jeremiah was commissioned to warn the king that the Chaldæans would return and destroy the city. Accused of a secret correspondence with the enemy, he was again confined in prison; but the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar, who knew how to value his faithfulness and integrity, freed him from captivity, and he was given in special charge to Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard (c. xxxix. 11). The choice being allowed him of either accompanying the conqueror to Babylon, or remaining in Judæa, he determined to abide with the remnant of the people, and accordingly repaired to Gedaliah, who had been appointed governor. After the assassination of Gedaliah by Ishmael, Jeremiah in vain endeavoured to prevent the migration of his countrymen to Egypt, assuring them that if they took that step calamity would befall them: they gave no heed to his admonitions, but carried him and Baruch with them to Tahpanhes, where the tradition runs that he was stoned by the people.

Jeremiah was contemporary with Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Daniel. It is difficult to arrange his prophecies chronologically; as they stand in our Bibles they are evidently transposed and intermixed. They consist, however, of two main divisions: cc. i.-xlv. relate to the Jews, cc. xlvi.-li. to the Gentile nations. The former portion is occupied with denunciations against Judah, mingled with promises of pardon on repentance; and with the various historical narratives from which the above

account of Jeremiah's ministry has been derived. The latter takes up, successively, the destinies of Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom; and predicts the total overthrow of Babylon. Chapter lii. must have been added by a later writer, probably Ezra. Several Messianic prophecies occur in Jeremiah's writings; *e. g.* the person and office of Christ ("the Lord our righteousness") c. xxiii. 5, 6, and the better covenant (c. xxxi. 31-34. Comp. Heb. viii. 7). His style, though inferior to that of Isaiah in power and sublimity, is marked by pathos and tenderness, in accordance with what seems to have been the cast of his mind. He excels in expressing and awakening the softer emotions. The prophecies of Jeremiah were known to, and examined by, Daniel in Babylon (Dan. ix. 2).

§ 2. *Lamentations.*

This book may be regarded as a sequel to the preceding prophecies. That Jeremiah was the author is established by a chain of uninterrupted testimony. It depicts, in a strain of the deepest pathos, the calamities which befell Judah from the Babylonish invasion. The poem consists of five distinct elegies, contained in so many chapters; the four first of which are distinguished by an alphabetical arrangement, each elegy consisting of twenty-two periods, the periods commencing severally with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The last elegy is on a different plan, and is a kind of epilogue to the preceding. In some versions it is styled the Prayer of Jeremiah, but for this there is no authority in the Hebrew MSS. or in the Septuagint translation.

§ 3. *Book of Habakkuk, B.C. 610-598.*

Of the birth-place or life of Habakkuk nothing trustworthy is known. The date of his prophecies must be

determined from the portion that has come down to us; from which it appears that he prophesied shortly before the Chaldæan invasion, for he speaks of it as a future thing (c. i. 6), and yet as at hand (c. ii. 3); that is, during the reign of Jehoiakim. He must, therefore, have been contemporary with Jeremiah. The design of the book is to pourtray the coming destruction of Judah by the Chaldæans, and the retribution which should befall the latter (cc. i. ii.). It concludes with an ode, which presents one of the most perfect specimens of Hebrew lyrical poetry; indeed, generally, in point of style, Habakkuk may rank with the most eminent prophets. References to this book occur in Heb. x. 37; Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Acts, xiii. 41.

§ 4. *Book of Daniel*, B.C. 606–534.

Daniel, if not of royal descent, was connected with one of the noblest families in Judah (c. i. 3). In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, he, with three other youths of noble birth, was carried captive to Babylon, where he was instructed in the literature and science of the Chaldæans. He was contemporary with Ezekiel, whom he preceded by a few years, and was remarkable among his own countrymen, as well as the Chaldæans, for his wisdom and piety (Ezek. xiv. 20). Entering the service of the king, he received, according to the usage of Eastern countries, the new name of Belshazzar, or Belteshazzar (c. i. 7). The first circumstance that brought him into notice was his interpretation of a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, which had baffled the skill of the Chaldæan magicians; by which means, as Joseph of old in Egypt, he rose into favour at court, and was appointed governor over the province of Babylon (c. ii.). This must have occurred in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's universal monarchy,

or B.C. 603. After this we lose sight of Daniel for thirty-three years, when we find him interpreting another dream of the king's, to the effect that, as a chastisement of his pride, he should, for a time, lose his reason, but be restored to it when the visitation had wrought its intended effect. Another long interval occurs, during which the prophet appears to have languished in neglect; but in the reign of Belshazzar, supposed to have been the last king of Babylon, he reappears, in the midst of the splendid banquet given by that prince, interpreting the mystic characters which announced the downfall of the existing dynasty. Under the reign of Darius, or Cyaxares II., Daniel occupied a post of the highest dignity; and a conspiracy formed against him by the native nobles, jealous of the advancement of a stranger, only issued in his further exaltation, the special providence of God exhibiting itself in the most striking manner, in his deliverance from the cruel death to which he had been destined. His influence at the Persian court must have been of great advantage to the Jewish exiles, and he lived to see the long-wished-for decree issued which permitted their return, though his own advanced age prevented him from accompanying them. He probably died at Susa.

The Book of Daniel consists of two main divisions; the first, historical; the second, prophetic. Under the former head we have the expatriation, and the education, of Daniel and his three companions (c. i.); the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream (c. ii.); the history of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (c. iii.); the interpretation and accomplishment of Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (c. iv.); Belshazzar's banquet and death (c. v.); the conspiracy against Daniel, and his miraculous deliverance (c. vi.). In the latter portion of the book, prophecy takes a range commensurate only with the end of time.

To enter minutely into the import of this part of Holy Scripture would be incompatible with our limits; suffice it to say, that the four great monarchies of the ancient world, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream under the symbol of an image composed of gold, silver, brass, and iron mixed with clay; and, in Daniel's own visions, under that of four beasts with significant emblems; pass successively before us, the last of the series to be split up into ten lesser kingdoms, and the whole to give place "to the stone cut out without hands" (c. ii. 34), or the spiritual reign of Messiah. In the visions that follow (cc. viii.-xii.), various particulars respecting these empires, their nature and duration, are added; and the prophetic glance extends onwards to the temporary restoration of the Jews, the trials of the Maccabæan period, the death of Messiah, the dispersion and sufferings of the Jewish people, the ingathering of the Gentiles, the general resurrection, and the inauguration of the millennium. So accurately did the former part of these prophecies correspond with the facts of history, that Porphyry, one of the chief opponents of the Christian faith in the third century, was driven, in his attempts to invalidate the evidence for the truth of Christianity thence arising, to assert, that the predictions were framed after the events occurred, and to suit them.

No book of the Old Testament has, in recent times, had its authenticity so severely assailed as the one before us. It is needless to specify objections which have been abundantly refuted. It is sufficient to observe, that by our Lord and the Apostles its authority is explicitly acknowledged. (See Matt. xxiv. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 3; Heb. xi. 33.)

The style of Daniel is not so poetical as that of the other prophets, partaking, as it does, more of the nature

of historical narrative. From c. ii. 4, to c. vii., inclusive, the Chaldee language is used.

§ 5. *Book of Ezekiel*, B.C. 595-574.

Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, was, like Jeremiah, of priestly descent. Of his birthplace and early history we have no authentic information. He was carried captive to Babylon with Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and placed, with a Jewish colony, on the banks of the river Chebar, which flows into the Euphrates near Circesium, about 200 miles north of Babylon. This was the scene of his predictions, which extend from the fifth year of Jehoiakim's captivity, or B.C. 595, to B.C. 574, a period of twenty-one years. He was, therefore, contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel. His character is strongly marked in his writings. Bold, and somewhat severe in temperament, he presents a strong contrast to the tender and plaintive spirit of Jeremiah; human feeling seems lost in a sense of the Divine majesty; the man is absorbed in the prophet: and hence Ezekiel gives us few or no particulars of his personal history. From his energy and decision he was admirably adapted to confront the proud and rebellious people to whom he was sent. He passed his life in exile, and is said to have been put to death at Babylon by the leader of the Jews, whom he was reproving for his idolatry.

The Book of Ezekiel consists of predictions relating, 1. To the destruction of Jerusalem; 2. To heathen nations; 3. To the restoration of the Jews. In the first division we have, Ezekiel's call to the prophetic office (cc. i.-iii.); various symbolical representations, predictive of the siege and capture of Jerusalem (cc. iv.-vii.); a vision of Ezekiel at Jerusalem, exhibiting the idolatry of the people (cc. viii.-xi.); a series of reproofs and warnings addressed to the prophet's contemporaries

(cc. xii.-xix.); another series of the same kind, giving warning of the approaching calamity (cc. xx.-xxiii.); and a prophecy, announcing the commencement of the siege by the king of Babylon (c. xxiv.). The second division contains predictions against the Ammonites, Edomites, and Philistines, especially Tyre—the total destruction of which by Nebuchadnezzar is foretold—and Egypt, which, by the same monarch, was to be shorn of its crown of pride (cc. xxv.-xxxii.). The closing section describes the spiritual resurrection of Israel from its low condition, and concludes with mystical representations of the glory and perfection of Messiah's kingdom (cc. xxxiii.-xlviii.)

Ezekiel lived at a period when the Hebrew language was in a state of decline; it is not, therefore, on the graces of his style so much as on the weightiness of his matter that his claims to eminence rest. In vehemence, grandeur, and solemnity, he has no superior among the sacred writers.

§ 6. *Book of Obadiah*, B.C. 588-583.

Nothing certain is known of this prophet or his history. The very date of his ministry is matter of doubt; but it may most probably be placed between the taking of Jerusalem, B.C. 588, and the conquest of Edom by Nebuchadnezzar, which took place a few years afterwards. He would thus be contemporary with Jeremiah. Traces of resemblance have been discovered between the two prophets, which render it probable that one had the writings of the other before him. The main subject of the book is the impending destruction of the Edomites, whom the prophet severely reproves for their unkind treatment of the Jews in the calamity of the latter. They fancied themselves secure in the impregnable fastnesses of their rocks (v. 3), but the spoiler should utterly destroy them (vv.

4-16); while the chastisement inflicted upon the Jews should be but temporary, and after their return from captivity they should possess, not only their own country, but Edom and Philistia, and at length rejoice in the glorious reign of Messiah (vv. 17-21).

SECT. IV.—*Prophets after the Captivity.*

§ 1. *Book of Haggai*, B.C. 520-518.

Haggai, the first of the three prophets who flourished in Judæa after the captivity, is supposed to have been born in Babylon, and to have accompanied Zerubbabel's expedition; but of his personal history we have no authentic accounts. The date of his prophecies is clearly marked. The rebuilding of the Temple had been commenced, B.C. 535, but, owing to the opposition of the Samaritans, who procured an edict forbidding the progress of the work, it was suspended for fourteen years. But now, when these impediments were removed, the worldly-minded Jews showed no disposition to resume operations; and, as if the time predicted by Jeremiah had not yet arrived, they devoted their attention to building splendid houses for themselves. In the second year of Darius Hystaspes, or B.C. 520, Haggai was commissioned to stir up the flagging zeal of the people, informing them that the unproductive seasons which they had experienced were the punishment of their negligence, and assuring them that the second Temple, far from being inferior to that of Solomon, should exceed it in glory.

This book contains, 1. The prophet's expostulation with his countrymen, and exhortation to recommence the work of building; and the people's obedience to the call (c. i.). 2. A consolatory assurance to the builders, who probably had abated in their zeal, that the glory of this house should

be greater than that of the former (c. ii. 1-9). 3. Another message, promising a blessing from the time that the house should be finished (c. ii. 10-19). 4. A prophecy, addressed to Zerubbabel alone, of the establishment of Messiah's kingdom amidst the overthrow of the kingdoms of the world (c. ii. 20-23). Haggai is referred to in Heb. xii. 26.

§ 2. *Book of Zechariah*, B.C. 520-518.

Zechariah opened his prophetic mission very shortly after Haggai, in the eighth month of the second year of Darius Hystaspes. It appears to have continued two years (c. vii. 1). Though his father, Barachiah, and his grandfather, Iddo, are mentioned by name (c. i. 1), it is not known of what tribe or family he was. He appears, at an early age, to have accompanied Zerubbabel to Jerusalem.

Like those of Haggai, the special design of Zechariah's prophecies was to encourage the exiles, on their return, to prosecute the work of rebuilding the Temple, and to seek for a revival of the ancient theocratic spirit. Next to Isaiah, he abounds most in evangelical predictions, and is very frequently referred to in the New Testament. Comp. Zech. iii. 8 ; ix. 9 ; xi. 12 ; xii. 10 ; xiii. 7 ; with Luke, i. 78 ; Matt. xxi. 4, 5 ; Matt. xxvii. 9 ; John, xix. 37 ; Matt. xxvi. 31. The greater part of his prophecies is couched in symbolical imagery. They consist of three general divisions. Of these, the first, relating to events then taking place, contains nine visions:—1. A rider on a red horse, among the myrtle-trees, symbolising a general peace over the earth, and the cessation of opposition to the building of the Temple (c. i. 7-17). 2. Four horns, symbols of the enemies by which the Jews had been oppressed, and four carpenters, by whom the horns are to

be broken (c. i. 18-21). 3. A man with a measuring-line, describing an enlarged boundary for Jerusalem, signifying her increase, and the reception of the Gentiles (c. ii. 1-9). 4. Joshua, the high-priest, arrayed in filthy garments, which are exchanged for new and glorious attire, signifying the restoration of Judah from a state of degradation, and, more remotely, the advent of the Branch (c. iii.). 5. A golden lamp, supplied by two olive-trees, symbolising the success of Zerubbabel in rebuilding the Temple, and the future glory of the Church, under the dispensation of the Spirit (c. iv.). 6. A flying roll, significative of Divine judgments against the ungodly (c. v. 1-4). 7. A woman in an ephah, pressed down into it by a weight of lead, and borne to the East, denoting the repression and banishment of idolatry (c. v. 5-11). 8. Four chariots, issuing from two mountains of brass, indicating the course of Divine providence (c. vi. 1-8). 9. The crowning of Joshua, the high-priest, emblematic of the union of the regal and sacerdotal dignity in the Branch (c. vi. 9-15).

The second series of oracles takes its rise from an inquiry, on the part of the exiles in Babylon, whether they should still keep the fasts that had been instituted at the time of the overthrow of the sacred city. The prophet replies, that these fasts should be discontinued, enlarging, at the same time, upon the nature of a true fast (c. vii.).

In the remaining portion, the destinies of the Jewish people, and of the Church, to the end of time, are unfolded. Amidst the victorious career of Alexander Judah should dwell in safety (c. ix. 1-7), and under the reigns of the Maccabees subdue her enemies (vv. 12-17). A reverse, however, takes place; the rejection of Messiah is to be followed by the rejection of the people, and a second destruction of Jerusalem (cc. xi., xii. 1, 2). Yet a day of grace is in store for the cast-off people of God, in which

they shall repent, and look unto Him whom their forefathers pierced (c. xii. 3-14); idolatry shall cease, and a remnant shall be saved. The last great conflict takes place before Jerusalem; the Lord appears in behalf of the saints; their enemies are destroyed; and an era of theocratic glory succeeds (c. xiv.).

The style of this prophet betrays the influence of Chaldaism, and is deficient in rhythm and grace. From the diversity in style of the last six chapters, some critics have argued against their genuineness, but on insufficient ground.

§ 3. *Book of Malachi*, B.C. 436-397.

It has been doubted whether the word Malachi, which signifies "my messenger," is a proper name, or merely a general term, descriptive of an inspired person; and it has been supposed that Ezra was the writer of this book. But authority is decidedly in favour of the former supposition. We have no certain information when this, the last of the prophets, flourished; but internal evidence points to the administration of Nehemiah as the period. The Levitical ritual appears restored (c. i. 7), which indicates the completion of the second Temple; and the same offences which Nehemiah reproveth, intermarriages with idolaters, and the withholding of offerings due to the Lord, are condemned by Malachi (cc. i. 12, 13; iii. 8, 9). It appears that, after the death of Ezra, and during Nehemiah's absence in Persia, the Jews, and especially the priests, had become extremely negligent and corrupt. Malachi's mission was to reform these abuses, and to invite to repentance, by promises of future Gospel blessings.

The book commences with a mention of the peculiar favour shown to Israel, as compared with Edom, and a reproof of the Jews for their ingratitude (c. i. 1-5). The

priests are severely censured for their profane and mercenary conduct (cc. i. 6-14; ii. 1-10), and the people for their divorces and forbidden intermarriages (c. ii. 11-17). The latter part announces the advent of the Lord to purify the sons of Levi, and inaugurate a period of pure spiritual worship, when the righteous few should be remembered and rewarded, and the doom of the wicked finally sealed (c. iii.). The book concludes with a consolatory assurance that "the Sun of Righteousness" should "arise, with healing in His wings," and an admonition to adhere closely to the Mosaic law, inasmuch as no further prophet was to be expected until the forerunner of the Messiah, Elijah, or John the Baptist, should commence his ministry. Thus the prophetic volume closes with a description of the personage who was to usher in the brighter era of the Gospel. "Resigning its charge to the personal precursor of Christ, it expired with the Gospel upon its tongue."¹

II. NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY THE ROMANS.

FROM the administration of Nehemiah to the time of Alexander the Great, Judæa, as a portion of the Persian empire, enjoyed a period of tranquil prosperity, unmarked by any important event. The government practically fell into the hands of the high-priest for the time being, who acted as the delegate of the Persian satrap. At this time took place the singular alteration in the national character

¹ Davison on Prophecy, p. 354.



which writers have often noticed. Prone, before the captivity, to adopt the idolatrous practices of every adjacent nation, the Jews now began to display an intense attachment to the principles of their law, and that jealous exclusiveness which led the heathen to regard them as enemies to mankind. The sufferings they had undergone had effectually purged out the old taint, but it was succeeded by dispositions of another kind, not more commendable,—a spiritual pride which led them to regard themselves as the exclusive favourites of Heaven, and a zeal for proselytism which was consistent with gross violations of the moral law. The expectation of a Messiah became a living principle in the national mind, but it was associated with ideas of deliverance from their subject condition, and the restoration of the kingdom to its ancient splendour. A fanatical and rancorous temper, which awakened the curiosity and dislike of other nations, henceforward marked their history; and proved so embarrassing to the Romans, that even that tolerant people departed, in this case, from their usual policy, and pushed the right of conquest to the last extremity.

The victory of Alexander over Darius (B.C. 330) transferred Judæa to the Macedonian empire. The conqueror treated the Jews with leniency; they retained their national laws and their religion; and to those who might be disposed to migrate to the new colony in Egypt many privileges were granted. Alexandria thus became, next to Jerusalem, the most important Jewish settlement. On the death of Alexander, the Jews found themselves in an embarrassing position between the two monarchies of Egypt and Syria, which were rivals, and continually at war with each other. Ptolemy Lagi at length, by the decisive defeat of Antigonus at Ipsus, became master of Judæa, and, under him and his successors on the throne of Egypt,

the Jews for nearly a century enjoyed comparative tranquillity. At the end of that time, Antiochus the Great succeeded in once more annexing Palestine to Syria, and with this change of masters came a change in the fortunes of the subject people. Dissensions having arisen between rival aspirants to the high-priesthood, Antiochus Epiphanes, a name justly execrated by the Jews, took occasion, from the defeat of his candidate, to wreak his vengeance upon Jerusalem. After a short siege, he took the city, put 40,000 of the inhabitants to death, pillaged the Temple and treasury, and crowned his exploits by offering a swine upon the altar of burnt-offering, and sprinkling the liquor in which the flesh had been boiled over every part of the sacred edifice. The worship of Jehovah was prohibited throughout Palestine, and that of the Greek deities established in its place. The Temple at Jerusalem was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, that on Mount Gerizim to Jupiter Xenius, and the reluctant Jews were forced to substitute the licentious orgies of the Bacchanalians for the Feast of Tabernacles.

In this, one of the most critical periods of their history, Providence interfered in behalf of the chosen people. In a town called Modin lived a man of priestly descent, of the family of the Asmonæans, named Mattathias, the father of five sons, who were in the prime of life. Mattathias viewed with indignation the tyranny of Antiochus, and the unworthy compliances into which many of the Jews were led, and organised a successful revolt. Collecting a body of adherents, he occupied the mountain-fastnesses, whence he made descents upon the towns, destroying the heathen altars, and punishing his apostate countrymen. His advanced age was unequal to the toils of this mode of life, but he bequeathed the war to the most valiant and enterprising of his sons, Judas, afterwards called Maccabæus.

The origin of this latter name is uncertain; some deriving it from the initial letters of the Hebrew words in Exod. xv. 11, signifying, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord?" others regarding it as a personal appellation of Judas, from a word signifying a hammer, or mallet. A succession of brilliant victories over the generals of Antiochus at length put Judas in possession of Jerusalem, where a solemn feast (that of the Dedication, John, x. 22) was held for eight days, during which Divine worship was restored, and the Temple purified from the profanation of the heathen. Shortly afterwards Antiochus died, in great agonies of mind for the cruelties he had committed; and was succeeded by his nephew Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, who had hitherto lived as a hostage at Rome. Demetrius imitated the policy, if not the barbarities, of Antiochus: his generals invaded Judæa; but victory, as usual, followed the Maccabæan standard, until the Jewish leader, unfortunately for his country, fell in battle, B.C. 161.

Jonathan, the brother of Judas, now assumed the command, and by skilfully availing himself of the difficulties in which Demetrius was involved by the claim of a rival to the throne of Syria, he extorted from that prince many political privileges, and a confirmation of the dignity of the high-priesthood, which he had assumed. With Jonathan commenced the reign of the Asmonæan princes. After a short but prosperous career, he was treacherously slain by Tryphon, an adherent of the party opposed to Demetrius; and left to his elder brother Simon the task of consolidating the newly-acquired power of his family. So important were the services which Simon was enabled to render to the tottering throne of Demetrius, that his demand to be recognised as an independent prince could not be resisted; and thenceforward Judæa was free from the Syrian yoke. Simon, in turn, perished by the hand of

an assassin; but the vigour of his race descended to his son John Hyrcanus, who extended his territory by the conquest of Samaria and Idumæa, and, what was, in the eyes of his countrymen, his greatest exploit, razed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim to the ground. Under the vigorous administration of Hyrcanus, who reigned for twenty-nine years, the country recovered most of its prosperity; but his death was followed by a period of crime and internal dissension, which destroyed its resources, and left it a prey to the first conqueror. Aristobulus, the son of Hyrcanus, after putting his mother and brother to death, expired in a fit of remorse for his crimes, and was succeeded by Alexander Jannæus, an enterprising prince, but whose perpetual wars brought no strength to his kingdom; and whose reign, if the accounts are to be credited, was stained by acts of savage cruelty. On one occasion, he is said to have crucified 800 Jews in the sacred city. He left his throne to his widow Alexandra, and two young sons; and again for nine years, under a female sceptre, the land had a breathing-time. Her death was the signal for violent disputes between her two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, concerning the succession; the powerful party of the Pharisees espousing the cause of the former, while the latter possessed the affections of the army. Aretas, king of the Arabians, and Antipater, an Idumæan, father of Herod the Great, sided with Hyrcanus, and Aristobulus was closely besieged in Jerusalem.

At this juncture, that great power, which had been steadily making advances to universal dominion, gained the opportunity, long desired, of effectually interfering in the affairs of Judæa. Already Judas Maccabæus had courted the friendship of the Romans, and now Hyrcanus and Aristobulus both appealed to Pompey, returning from his eastern triumphs. The Roman general at first supported

Aristobulus, but afterwards changing sides, placed his legions at the disposal of Hyrcanus, and, after a vigorous resistance, took the city of Jerusalem. He destroyed the fortifications, but respected the treasures of the Temple; which the rapacious Crassus, a few years later, pillaged without remorse.

Hyrcanus, or rather Antipater, was thus left in possession of the supreme power. The crafty Idumæan, in the great civil war of Rome, embraced the party of Cæsar, and for his reward was made procurator of Judæa, while Hyrcanus retained the high-priesthood. After the death of Cæsar, and the battle of Philippi, Antipater's sons, Phasael and Herod, who had hastened to render allegiance to Mark Antony, were appointed tetrarchs of the province; and Phasael being slain by Antigonus, the last of the Asmonæan race, Herod became sole ruler of the country, with the title of king.

Herod, surnamed the Great, was the last independent sovereign of Palestine. His relentless cruelties, both domestic and political, were ill compensated by the dexterity and vigour of his administration, and the splendour with which he rebuilt the decayed temple of Zerubbabel. Owing all to the favour of the Roman emperor, his adulation of that potentate knew no bounds; and Augustus, in return, treated him, while living, with the greatest consideration, and ratified his will, by which his son Archelaus inherited the sovereignty of Judæa, Herod Antipas that of Galilee and Peræa, and Philip the tetrarchy of Trachonitis. After reigning nine years, Archelaus, having been convicted at Rome of cruelty and injustice in his government, was banished to Vienne in Gaul, and Judæa was reduced to a Roman province. Thus, in accordance with prophecy (Gen. xlix. 10), the sceptre finally departed from Judah.

As part of the prefecture of Syria, the affairs of Judæa were administered by a Roman procurator: there was a rapid succession of these governors, among whom the names of Pontius Pilate (A.D. 27), Felix, and Porcius Festus, are familiar to the readers of the sacred volume. With the exception of a temporary proscription at Rome, the Jews, under Tiberius, continued to enjoy, without molestation, the exercise of their religion; but on the accession of Caligula, the storm which was to overwhelm them began to lower around. It is a singular circumstance, that before it reached Palestine partial outbursts were felt, successively, in the remote settlements of the nation: both in Alexandria and Babylonia terrible calamities befell the Jewish population, a large proportion of which fell by the sword. The insane act of Caligula, in ordering that his statue should be placed in the Holy of Holies, may be regarded as the commencement of hostilities in Jerusalem itself: through the forbearance of Petronius, the Roman prefect of Syria, and the influence of King Agrippa, the edict was revoked; but the insult rankled deep in the mind of the nation, and the wound was kept open by the increasing animosity of the Roman soldiery of Antonia towards the inhabitants of the town, and the rapacity and cruelties of such governors as Felix, Albinus, and Gessius Florus. The flame at length broke out at Cæsarea. That city, founded by Herod the Great, in honour of his patron Augustus, had rapidly increased in population and magnificence, and formed the usual residence of the Roman governor. It was inhabited by two races, the Syrian Greeks and the Jews, who contended violently for the mastery. A decree of Nero assigned the government of the city to the Greeks, who used their power to insult and persecute their fellow-citizens, until at length a violent tumult took place, and the Jews were ex-

pelled. They appealed to Florus, but in vain; instead of attempting to reconcile the two parties, the rapacious Roman secretly fomented the disorder, which promised an opportunity of plunder. The Jews of Jerusalem took part with their countrymen, broke out into open insurrection against the Roman authorities, and under the conduct of Eleazar, son of the high-priest Ananias, stormed the citadel of Antonia, and forced the Romans to evacuate the towers built by Herod. An act of the vilest treachery precipitated the doom of the city. Metilius, the Roman commander, had stipulated to surrender on condition of the garrison's lives being spared; but as, on the faith of this agreement, he was leading his soldiers out, Eleazar and his followers fell upon them, and slew all with the exception of Metilius. On the same day, as if by Divine retribution, the Greeks at Cæsarea rose against the Jews, and massacred them almost to a man. Maddened by this, the whole nation took arms, and attacked the surrounding cities, which made fearful reprisals. A signal reverse which Cestius Gallus, the prefect of Syria, sustained before Jerusalem, where the undisciplined multitude repulsed a Roman army, with the loss of 5300 men and all their baggage and military engines, filled the cup of the popular intoxication, and the whole province appeared in open rebellion against Rome.

Vespasian, the ablest general of the empire, was charged with the conduct of the war. He levied a large force in Alexandria and Syria, and, in the early spring of A.D. 67, invaded the northern province of Galilee. It was in vain that the Jews, led by Josephus, the celebrated historian, made a gallant stand; the city of Jotapata, in particular, holding out for forty-seven days against the whole Roman force: numbers and discipline at length prevailed, and town after town submitted to the conqueror,

who made terrible examples. As if to extinguish all hope of successful resistance, Jerusalem at this time, instead of being united against the common enemy, was torn by furious internal dissensions; and the politic Roman, instead of marching at once upon the capital, permitted the unhappy inhabitants to spend their strength in these intestine feuds, while he overran the rest of the country. Peræa, Antipatris, Emmaus, and the frontier towns of Idumæa, were successively reduced; and at length the invading army appeared before Jericho, almost at the gates of Jerusalem. The destruction of the capital seemed imminent; but the events at Rome, which ended in his elevation to the imperial purple, suspended Vespasian's operations, and gave a respite of nearly two years to the devoted city.

No sooner, however, was the emperor firmly seated on the throne, than his thoughts reverted to Judæa, and Titus, his son, was sent to complete the subjugation of the province. Having completed his preparations, that general advanced with a large force from Cæsarea, and at once commenced the siege. Three factions, headed respectively by Eleazar, John of Ghischala, and Simon the son of Gioras, divided the military part of the population and the fortifications between them; and it was only the sight of the Roman army encamped under the walls that led to a cessation of mutual hostilities. The leaders united their forces, and fanaticism and despair lent an audacity to the Jewish combatants, which baffled even the disciplined valour of the Roman legions. The siege was changed into a blockade, and the inhabitants, cooped up in the town, in the heat of summer, began to suffer dreadfully from pestilence and famine. Besides the ordinary population, the city was crowded with multitudes who had assembled to celebrate the Passover, and who were prevented, by the

rapid measures of the Romans, from retiring to their respective homes. Frightful scenes ensued: robbers in quest of food broke into the houses, and forced the famished inmates to surrender their last morsel: the story of the woman who cooked her infant, and when these wretches, attracted by the smell of food, demanded that she should produce her stores, set the remains before them, is well known. The terrible drama, which lasted for nearly five months, at last came to a close. The suburb of Bezetha, the citadel of Antonia, the Temple, the towers of Herod, in which the leaders of the factions had fortified themselves, successively fell into the hands of the enemy, who, exasperated by the obstinate defence, gave unbridled license to the work of devastation. The Temple was consumed, and the town razed to the ground; the three towers of Herod alone were suffered to remain, as monuments of the victory. It is computed that upwards of 1,000,000 persons perished during the siege. The golden table, the seven-branched candlestick, and the book of the law, rescued from the Temple, graced the triumph of the conqueror; and on the Arch of Titus at Rome these spoils still appear in mouldering relief. Thus fell Jerusalem, fulfilling in her doom, to the very letter, the predictions of Moses,¹ and of the second, and greater Lawgiver, of whom Moses spake.²

CHAPTER II.

SYNAGOGUES — JEWISH SECTS.

The change which the Babylonish exile wrought in the national character of the Jews has been already noticed: from the same period, or soon after it, may be dated other

¹ Deut. xxviii. 49-57.

² Luke, xix. 41-44.

characteristic features of their religious life, which had an important bearing upon the establishment and progress of Christianity. Among these, the most remarkable are, the institution of the synagogue-worship and the rise of sects.

§ 1. *Synagogues*.—To what extent any system of regular religious instruction prevailed in the earlier ages of the Jewish commonwealth cannot be exactly determined. We know that Moses enjoined that the law should be read in the hearing of the people every seventh year, at the Feast of Tabernacles; that it was the office of the priests and Levites to expound its meaning in doubtful cases; and that the Levites were dispersed throughout the land for the purpose, no doubt, of forming centres of knowledge to the rest of the people. It has already been observed that the schools of the prophets must have tended to promote the study of the word of God. But it seems probable, that in the disordered state of public affairs under the judges, and many of the kings, these provisions for public instruction were suffered to fall into disuse: that gross ignorance sometimes prevailed may be gathered from the surprise of Hilkiah the high-priest at the discovery of the book of the law, and the consternation of Josiah at hearing its contents.¹ Such a state of things is obviously incompatible with the supposition of its having been, at that time, the practice to form assemblies for the purpose of hearing the law read and expounded. To the synagogues, therefore, properly so called, we cannot assign a higher antiquity than some period subsequent to the Babylonish captivity: and this event sufficiently accounts for the rise of the institution. The exiles “by the waters of Babylon,” deprived of the temple services, endeavoured to supply the omission by such religious exercises as still

¹ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14-19.

remained to them. They prayed with their face towards Jerusalem ;¹ they came together, when opportunity offered, to hear at the mouth of a prophet words of consolation and instruction. More than once in the Book of Ezekiel we find mention of such assemblies, presided over by the prophet himself, and consisting sometimes of the elders, and sometimes of elders and people together.² Restored to their native land, the Jews continued these weekly assemblies, the homiletic services of which would be the more valued when the gift of prophecy was withdrawn. In the Book of Nehemiah we have an account of a religious service which bore a close resemblance to what afterwards became the stated worship of the synagogue. Ezra the scribe ascended a pulpit of wood, read portions of scripture, which (since the ancient Hebrew was no longer understood by the people) were interpreted by persons appointed for that purpose, and the whole concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.³ From this beginning synagogues so multiplied, that in Jerusalem alone, in our Lord's time, there are said to have been 480 of these structures.

The remarkable dispersion of the Jews which took place after the captivity, produced a corresponding diffusion of the new mode of worship. At the feast of Pentecost, which witnessed the descent of the Holy Ghost, there were found at Jerusalem "Jews, from every nation under heaven ;" who, by their stated attendances at the principal festivals, maintained their connexion with the Temple, the centre of the national polity and worship ; while in the particular localities in which they resided they were fain to content themselves with the simpler devotions of the synagogue. And thus, in every considerable city of the Roman empire, Jews, and Jewish synagogues, were, at the time of Christ, found established.

¹ Dan. vi. 10.

² Ezek. xiv. 1 ; xx. 1.

³ Neh. viii. 1-8.

From what has been said, the nature of the synagogical worship may be gathered. With the Temple, or the Levitical worship, it had no connexion. The services were, not sacrificial and typical, but verbal and homiletic: a priest, as such, had in the synagogue no functions to discharge. With respect to those who might teach and expound a considerable degree of liberty prevailed. While this office properly belonged to the rulers of the synagogue, and could not be exercised without their permission, it was commonly delegated by them to any properly qualified member of the assembly who might intimate his wish to discharge it. Hence it excited no surprise when our Lord, in the synagogue of Nazareth, "stood up to read;" the book was delivered to Him, in the character of Rabbi and Teacher, as a matter of course; and we read that thus, without hindrance, "He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee."¹ So it was with the Apostles. When Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue in Pisidia, and took their seats upon the doctors' bench, the rulers sent a permissive message to them, who in all probability were perfect strangers, that "if they had any word of exhortation for the people," to "say on."²

The form of government which prevailed in the synagogue was not everywhere the same. In the more populous cities it was framed on the Presbyterian model; a college, or senate of presbyters, being invested with the chief authority; while in the smaller villages, where there were not learned men in sufficient number to form such a senate, the synagogue was placed under the presidency of a single doctor of the law, who bore the title of Master, or Teacher. Hence may be reconciled the varying statements of the New Testament, which sometimes speaks of the "rulers," and sometimes of the "ruler" of the syna-

¹ Mark, i. 39.

² Acts, xiii. 14, 15.

gogue : in the one case, a corporate governing body ; in the other, an individual holding the same office. The proper Jewish appellation of the members of the presiding council was "elders ;" and the duties appertaining to their office were to teach and to rule : the latter comprehending the regulation of all matters connected with public worship, the care of the poor, and the administration of discipline. Besides its governing college of elders, the synagogue had its inferior ministers, upon whom devolved the care of the sacred books, and other subordinate offices : of this order was the "minister" to whom our Lord, on the occasion already referred to, returned the book or roll of Isaiah, from which He had been reading, to be restored to its place.¹

The synagogues were used, not only as places of worship, but as courts of judicature for smaller offences ; and frequent references occur in the New Testament to the punishments of scourging and of excommunication,² which it was in their power to inflict. In the synagogues, too, it was not unusual for the doctors of the Jewish law to give instruction : seated on an elevated chair, or platform, they were surrounded by their disciples, who stood beneath ; to which circumstance St. Paul alludes when, in his address to the Jews, he declares that he was "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel."³

Such was the synagogue ; an institution which, evidently under a superintending Providence, had gradually established itself wherever there were Jews—that is, everywhere ; and the design of which was at once to facilitate the introduction of the Gospel in each important city, and to furnish the groundwork of the polity of the Christian Church. If the Jews had not, in their dispersed

¹ Luke, iv. 20. ² Matt. x. 17. Luke, xii. 11. John, ix. 22.

³ Acts, xxii. 3.

state after the captivity, formed themselves into synagogues, there would not have existed any religious centres to which the promulgation of the Gospel could have attached itself as the Apostles, in the exercise of their mission, traversed the world. For the Temple, and the Temple services, were, we know, incapable of multiplication; they were, by Divine appointment, fixed to one spot, and no Jew, rightly instructed in the principles of his religion, ever could, or did, think of erecting in a foreign land a counterpart of the sacred structure. But in the synagogue, exactly what was wanting was supplied. These places of worship could be multiplied indefinitely, without affecting the unity of the Temple, or the connexion of the worshippers therewith: by them the knowledge of the law and the prophets was maintained amidst the corrupting influences of heathenism; by them the Jewish mind became habituated to the offerings of prayer and praise instead of the bloody sacrifices of the law, and to the ministry of the word instead of a ministry of types. Thus, on their arrival at any new scene of labour, the missionaries of Christ, themselves Jews, had but to repair to the synagogue, and, as far as regards external facilities, they found everything prepared for a successful promulgation of the Gospel.

§ 2. *Jewish Sects.*—Later than the establishment of synagogues must be placed the rise of the Jewish sects, no vestiges of which appear before the age of the Maccabees. Of these sects the three principal were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes; the two former of which are frequently mentioned in the New Testament.

Pharisees.—The origin of this sect is obscure. The name is derived from a Hebrew word signifying to separate, since they affected a degree of holiness beyond the common. Josephus mentions both the Pharisees and

the Sadducees as distinct sects in the time of the high-priest Jonathan (B. C. 145); their rise, therefore, must be referred to an earlier date, and probably the Pharisaic tendency exhibited itself soon after the return from the captivity. Their reputation for sanctity and knowledge gave them great weight with the people, and by that means, in the administration of public affairs: under the later Maccabæan princes they directed the government as they pleased. Their political bias was democratic. In the time of Christ they were divided into two principal schools, those of Hillel and Shammai, the former representing the more moderate, the latter the stricter, form of Pharisaism: it was to the latter that St. Paul, brought up "in the strictest sect" of his religion,¹ belonged.

The tenets of the Pharisees were as follows:—Besides the written law of Moses they admitted oral tradition, comprehending various details of practice, which they pretended had been handed down from Moses, and which they placed on a level with the precepts of the inspired word.² Of the law itself they were diligent students, and were looked up to as the authentic expositors of it; but laying stress upon the letter, to the neglect of the spirit, they presented a loathsome combination of punctilious obedience in matters of ritual and ceremony with great laxity of morals. A corrupt casuistry was at their command, whereby the plainest precepts of the moral code were evaded; while the exalted ideas which they entertained of their own sanctity placed a bar to the entrance of juster notions respecting their state in the sight of God. Notwithstanding these grave defects, they were the representatives of orthodox Judaism; they "sat in Moses' seat:" many of them, too, were men of sincere piety: hence it was from this sect that Christianity received the greater number of its

¹ Acts, xxvi. 5. ² Matt. xv. 2. Mark, vii. 4. Matt. xxiii. 5.

first converts. Doctrinally, Pharisaism inclined to the predestinarian theory; without, however, denying the power of man to co-operate with the Divine will. The Pharisees held the existence of angels and spirits, and the immortality of the soul, together with a state of future retribution. Their doctrine of the resurrection appears to have been, that the souls of the righteous, after an interval of bliss, were to be reunited to pure bodies, and return to earth; while the souls of the wicked remained in Hades, suffering the pains of eternal punishment. Not, indeed, the Christian doctrine of the resurrection; but, on the other hand, differing materially from the Pythagorean transmigration of souls, with which it has been sometimes confounded.

Sadducees.—Of the origin of this sect we know no more than we do of that of the Pharisees. Jewish tradition refers it to a certain Zadok, a disciple of Antigonus Sachæus, who flourished in the middle of the third century before Christ; and who, from the doctrine of his master, that virtue should be sought for its own sake, and not for reward, drew the further inference that there is no future state of retribution: but this account seems unworthy of credit. It was natural, that when the Pharisaic tendency began to display itself, an opposite mode of thought should appear, and gradually assume the form of a distinct school: this is all that can be affirmed, with probability, of this sect. Of the doctrines of the Sadducees we have more certain information. In opposition to the Pharisees, they rejected all traditionary additions to Scripture, and all allegorical interpretations. Some have conjectured that they admitted as canonical only the five books of Moses: but for this opinion there is no ground. Josephus, himself a Pharisee, is silent upon such a charge; nor can we suppose that, had it been true, Sadducees would have been admitted, as they were, not merely to the

Sanhedrim, but to the high-priesthood. They held that the soul perishes with the body, and consequently that there is no resurrection of the latter: from the same principles they argued that there is "neither angel nor spirit."¹ To man they attributed absolute freedom of will and action, excluding Divine interposition in the affairs of the world. In their habits and intercourse they affected austerity, and were noted for the rigour of their judicial decisions. As compared with the Pharisees, the Sadducees were few in number, and exercised but little popular influence; on the other hand, their adherents were usually men of wealth and distinction.

Essenes.—Of this sect no express mention occurs in the sacred books, yet it was one of the most considerable among the Jews. It is supposed to have arisen a little before the time of the Maccabees, when persecution drove the faithful followers of Jehovah into caves and deserts, where they became so habituated to a retired life that they were unwilling, on the restoration of peace, to return to the world. The Essenes were dispersed in different countries, but Egypt and Palestine were their chief seats. They were divided into the *Practical*, who, without renouncing society, employed themselves in husbandry, and the other mechanic arts, those relating to war excepted; and the *Contemplative*, or *Therapeutæ* (Soul-physicians), who were wholly devoted to meditation, and practised great austerities. They are said to have admitted the immortality of the soul, but denied the resurrection of the body; and, like the Pharisees, to have referred all things to a controlling Providence.

Herodians, Scribes, &c.—A few other names, denoting rather political parties, or classes of men, than sects, occur in Holy Scripture, and demand a short notice. The *Hero-*

¹ Matt. xxii. 23. Acts, xxiii. 8.

dians were so called from their attachment to the family of Herod, whom they supported in his policy of subjugating Judæa to the Roman empire. Their political affected their religious tendencies; and they were suspected of a leaning to indifferentism on the subject of the heathen customs which their patron had attempted to introduce. As might be supposed, they were in direct antagonism to the Pharisees. The *Scribes*, so frequently mentioned in the New Testament, otherwise called "the lawyers," were a class of men specially devoted to the employment of transcribing and expounding the law: though generally Pharisees, they were not confined to that sect. The Sadducees also had their scribes.¹

The *Nazarites* were a species of consecrated persons, who were bound, or who had bound themselves, by certain vows. They were of two kinds: those who, by their parents, were devoted to God from their infancy, or even before their birth, as Samson (Judg. xiii. 5), Samuel (1 Sam. i. 11), and John the Baptist (Luke, i. 15), and those who bound themselves to the Nazareate for a limited time. The vows of the Nazarites comprised,—1. Abstinence from wine and strong liquors; 2. The suffering the hair of the head to grow, without cutting, during the period of their vow; 3. The taking special care not to defile themselves by the vicinity of a dead body, during the same period. At the expiration of his vow the Nazarite cut off his hair at the door of the Tabernacle, and offered sacrifices. See Num. vi., where the laws of this institute are given in detail.

With the vows of the Nazareate must not be confounded those which pious persons took upon themselves on deliverance from sickness, or any imminent danger; though in this latter case, too, the hair was suffered to grow, and

¹ Acts, xxiii. 9.

abstinence from strong liquors practised. Such a vow was that which St. Paul had voluntarily incurred (Acts, xviii. 18). At the expiration of it he shaved his head in Cenchrea; but it was only at Jerusalem that the sacrifices and purifications necessary to perfect the vow could be offered; hence he hasted from Ephesus, and presented himself, with the four men similarly bound, in the Temple, for the purpose of undergoing these ceremonies (Acts, xxi. 26).

CHAPTER III.

SKETCH OF OUR LORD'S LIFE AND MINISTRY: WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST PROMULGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

The most transient view of the state of the world at the birth of our Lord exhibits a marvellous concurrence of circumstances preparing the way for the promulgation of the Gospel. Some of the providential changes which befell the Jewish nation; such as the final eradication of idolatrous tendencies; their dispersion over the Roman empire, and the accompanying institution of synagogues; have been already mentioned: to these may be added the existence and general use of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, and the spread of the Greek language over the civilized world, which must have led to a general acquaintance with the prophetic Scriptures. The political aspect of affairs was equally favourable. The nations of the earth were united under the sceptre of Augustus, and a profound peace everywhere prevailed. The means of intercourse between the various portions of the empire were multiplied, and the well-known principles of religious toleration by which the Roman government was distin-

guished, proved a protection to the early Church from the animosity of its inveterate enemies, the unbelieving Jews. The popular systems of idolatry had become effete; they were a mere husk, from which the living power which once had given them influence over the minds of men had vanished; while every school of philosophy, and every mythical system, had, in turn, confessed its insufficiency to meet the spiritual wants of human nature. "The fulness of the times" had come when the primeval promise¹ was fulfilled, and the Saviour appeared in our flesh.

This great event took place in the year of Rome 749, or about four years before the common era. The circumstances of it were in exact accordance with prophecy. A virgin "conceived, and bare a son;"² and though his mother, and reputed father, resided in Galilee, yet it was at Bethlehem³ that the event occurred, whither Joseph and Mary, who both were of the lineage of David, had repaired for the purpose of being taxed or enrolled in their own city. Unnoticed by the powers of this world, the birth of the Saviour was marked by several striking occurrences: it was communicated by angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem; it was celebrated by Simeon and Anna in strains of prophetic thanksgiving; and the representatives of the Gentiles were summoned from the East, by an extraordinary appearance in the heavens, to present their devotions and their gifts to the infant Jesus. The previous inquiries of these Eastern magi respecting the predicted king of the Jews had aroused the jealousy of Herod; who, frustrated in his attempt to discover the new-born babe, wreaked his vengeance upon the infants of the whole neighbourhood,—a massacre as useless as it was diabolical, for the holy family had previously taken refuge in Egypt, where they remained till the death of the tyrant. They then

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

² Isa. vii. 14.

³ Mic. v. 2.

returned and took up their abode at Nazareth, where thirty years of our Lord's life passed in obscurity; the only incidents of it recorded being His visit to the Temple, where, at twelve years of age, He was found by His parents among the Jewish doctors, "hearing them and asking them questions."¹

The public ministry of Christ was preceded by that of John the Baptist. Austere in life, and intrepid in character, the son of Zacharias was personally well fitted for the office assigned him,—of preparing the way for the Gospel by recalling men's minds to the spiritual nature of the Divine law, and awakening the conscience to a sense of transgression. Multitudes flocked to him, to receive his baptism; and at length Jesus Himself, that He "might fulfil all righteousness," submitted to this preparatory rite, and at the same time received the solemn consecration of the Holy Ghost, and the attestation of the Father to His Divine mission.² And as the spiritual history of the first Adam began with temptation, issuing in defeat, and sin, and death; so the second Adam, immediately after His anointing with the Holy Spirit, engaged in the wilderness in that victorious contest with the powers of evil which proved His Divine power, and gave the promise of a future and complete extinction of the dominion of Satan.

Before our Lord departed from Judæa to Galilee, which was to be the principal scene of His ministry, He attached to His person the four disciples, Andrew, John, Peter, and Philip; and after His arrival in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, the number was increased by the addition of Nathanael, Philip's brother, and James the brother of John, who, with his brother, was by profession a fisherman. It was while He was at Cana in Galilee that His first miracle, specially intended to confirm the faith of these

¹ Luke, ii. 46.

² Matt. iii. 17.

disciples, was performed, in the change of water into wine at a marriage-feast.¹

At the first Passover which He attended after His baptism, Jesus purged the Temple from the profanations of the money-changers, and of those who sold animals for sacrifice; and uttered the remarkable prophecy of the resurrection of the Temple of His body.² It was on this occasion, too, that the interview with Nicodemus took place, when this wavering disciple was instructed in the mystery of the new birth, and attached permanently to the cause of Christ. The attention which our Lord's discourses and miracles excited at last awakened the jealousy of the Pharisees, which was increased when His disciples, after the example of John, began to baptize; and He deemed it prudent to retire to Galilee. Soon after the departure of Jesus from Judæa the Baptist's ministry came to a close; he was incarcerated by Herod Antipas in the fortress of Machærus, where he remained until, by the same monarch, at the instigation of Herodias, he was put to death.

This journey of our Lord to Galilee was memorable for His discourse with the woman of Samaria, near Sychem, and for the favourable reception which He met with from the inhabitants of that district. He repaired first to Cana, the scene of His former miracle, where He again exhibited His Divine power in healing a nobleman's son who lay at the point of death; and after a fruitless attempt to gain a hearing in His own city, Nazareth, He proceeded to Capernaum, on the shores of the lake of Tiberias, and there took up His abode.

The next few months were spent in Galilee, which, according to the prophet's prediction,³ was singularly favoured with Christ's presence and miracles. To this period

¹ John, ii. 1-11.

² Ibid. v. 19.

³ Isa. ix. 2.

belongs the miraculous draught of fishes, when Peter and Andrew, James and John, were finally separated from their secular calling to a more constant attendance upon their Master; the casting out of the unclean spirit in the synagogue of Capernaum; the cure of Peter's mother, and others; the healing of the leper, and of the paralytic let down through the roof; and the calling of Matthew the publican.

A Jewish feast,¹ probably the second Passover, finds our Lord again at Jerusalem. It was on this occasion that the healing of a cripple at the pool of Bethesda gave rise to one of the various discourses which He held with the Jews respecting the proper observance of the Sabbath,—a question which, after His return to Galilee, was again raised by the disciples plucking the ears of corn, and the healing of the man with a withered hand, on the Sabbath-day. Jesus now selected twelve from among His disciples, to whom, from their office, He gave the name of Apostles, and who, from their constant attendance upon Him, might be enabled afterwards to testify with greater authority what they had seen and heard. During this sojourn in Galilee, the sermon on the mount, and that remarkable series of parables recorded by St. Matthew,² were delivered; and as, in company with the twelve, He made various circuits through the surrounding country, His path was marked by acts of mercy and beneficence;—such as the raising of the widow's son at Nain; the healing of the two demoniacs of Gadara; the raising of Jairus' daughter; the healing of the woman with an issue of blood, and of two blind men; and the feeding of five thousand at Bethsaida (Julias). To this period may be referred the temporary mission of the twelve, their return to Jesus, and the night-scene on the sea of Galilee.

¹ John, v. 1.

² Matt. xiii.

The third Passover does not seem to have been celebrated by Christ at Jerusalem: he probably found that it would be unsafe to venture to the capital, and therefore continued in Galilee until the following Feast of Tabernacles. During this interval, the daughter of the Syrophenician woman was healed—a pledge of blessings in store for the Gentiles; the miracle of feeding four thousand people with seven loaves and a few fishes was wrought; and the great transaction of the transfiguration, probably on Mount Tabor, took place. From this time Jesus began to prepare the minds of His disciples for His approaching sufferings and death.

In the month of October, A.D. 33, Jesus took His final departure from Galilee, for the purpose of attending the Feast of Tabernacles. His journey lay through Samaria, and in the course of it occurred the healing of ten lepers, and the sending forth of the Seventy on a mission similar to that which the Apostles had previously discharged. Arrived in Jerusalem, He devoted a large portion of His time to discoursing in the Temple with the unbelieving Jews, making occasional excursions into the neighbouring districts of Ephraim and Peræa, or the country beyond the Jordan. At Bethany, the great miracle of the raising of Lazarus was performed; in Peræa, the parables of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the publican, were spoken. At length, taking Jericho in His way, where the conversion of Zacchæus took place, and two blind men were restored to sight, our Lord once more arrived at Bethany, about six days before His fourth, and last, Passover.

The events of the next six days are detailed with more than usual minuteness by the Evangelists. It was on the Jewish Sabbath that our Lord arrived at Bethany, which, during this eventful week, He made His residence at night,

visiting the city daily. On the first day of the week, 10th Nisan = April, He made His public entry into Jerusalem ; on the next He cleansed the Temple, and pronounced a curse upon the barren fig-tree ; on Tuesday he discoursed in the Temple, took His leave of it, and, on His way to Bethany, foretold its approaching destruction, as well as His own coming to judgment ; on Wednesday the rulers conspired, and Judas laid his plan of treachery ; on Thursday evening, that is, the commencement of Friday, our Lord partook of the Paschal lamb, instituted the Lord's Supper, passed through the agony of Gethsemane, was betrayed and apprehended : He was brought, first before Caiaphas, and then before Pontius Pilate ; was condemned and crucified, and, before sunset, laid in the sepulchre.

At the request of the Jews, a guard of Roman soldiers was stationed at the tomb, which was also secured by a large stone rolled to the mouth. Early in the morning, however, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and some other women, who had come for the purpose of anointing the body with spices, found the stone removed, and the sepulchre empty. The other women hastened to the city to announce what they had seen, and in the way they were met by Jesus, who spoke to them encouragingly, and bade them tell the disciples to go into Galilee, where they should meet Him. During their absence, Peter and John, who had been summoned by Mary Magdalene, satisfied themselves, by entering the sepulchre, that the body was not there ; and after their departure, Mary, as she was standing at the entrance weeping, was favoured by a sight of her risen Master. The same day, but when is uncertain, He was seen by Peter ;¹ and in the afternoon occurred the interview with the two disciples, on the way to Emmaus. In the evening He appeared in the midst of

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 5.

the Apostles, and demonstrated the reality of His resurrection-body; and eight days afterwards the incredulous Thomas was convinced of the fact by the evidence of his senses. In obedience to His command, the Apostles now departed to Galilee, where He appeared to them at the lake of Tiberias, and afterwards, on a certain mountain, to above five hundred of the disciples at once. Returning to Jerusalem, the Apostles were favoured with a last interview;¹ and then, leading them out to Bethany, Jesus, after blessing them, ascended to heaven.

In one of the interviews with their Master in Galilee the Apostles had received their commission to preach the Gospel throughout the world; but they were not to fulfil this command until they should receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. This great event took place on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover; and with it properly begins the history of the Christian Church. The first-fruits of the outpouring of the Spirit was the conversion of three thousand souls by the discourse of Peter; and the number increased daily. Miracles accompanied, and confirmed, the word preached. It was not long before these proceedings excited the attention of the Jewish authorities: Peter and John at first, and then all the Apostles, were summoned before the Sanhedrim; but, at the suggestion of Gamaliel, they were dismissed, with an injunction to abstain from further speaking in the name of Jesus. They continued, however, publicly and privately, to teach, until Stephen's boldness and success brought matters to a crisis, and a violent persecution arose, which, however, by scattering the disciples, only promoted the cause it was intended to impede. It was thus that the Gospel was preached in Samaria, and that Æthiopia heard the word of God. But the time had now arrived for its

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 7.

promulgation among the Gentiles. To Peter, according to our Lord's prediction,¹ it was given to admit, in the person of Cornelius, the Gentile proselytes to the privileges of the Gospel; for the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles a special instrument was raised up. Among the most violent opponents of Christianity was Saul of Tarsus, a learned Pharisee, who had distinguished himself by the unrelenting zeal with which he persecuted the Church. It was on an errand of this kind, to Damascus, when his remarkable conversion took place; and thenceforth his sentiments and his course of life underwent a complete change. After an interval of retirement, during which a second persecution, or rather persecutor, Herod Agrippa I., deprived the Church of James the brother of John, and threatened the life of Peter, but did not prevent the spread of the Gospel to Antioch, the capital of the kingdom of Seleucus, to Phœnicia, and to Cyprus, Saul returned to Damascus, and preached with success until the animosity of the unbelieving Jews compelled him to seek safety in flight. He repaired to Jerusalem, where he was introduced to the brethren; but, being Divinely admonished that his sphere of labour was to be among the Gentiles, he departed, first to Tarsus, preaching throughout Syria and Cilicia, and then to Antioch, where, in company with Barnabas, he laboured for a whole year. The history of the Church, as far as it is contained in the New Testament, is, henceforward, a narrative of the life and labours of the great Apostle.

Antioch was the great centre of missionary operations. From this place, in company with Barnabas, and John Mark, Paul set out on his first missionary journey. Embarking for Cyprus, they landed at Salamis, and, after preaching there in the synagogue, proceeded to Paphos, where the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, resided. The

¹ Matt. xvi. 19.

proconsul was won to the faith of Christ ; but the aspect of things not being otherwise encouraging, the Apostles sailed to the coast of Pamphylia, and, after a short stay at Perga, went on to Antioch of Pisidia, where for two Sabbath-days they taught in the synagogue. Crowds flocked to hear them, when the further progress of the Gospel in those parts was put a stop to by a persecution on the part of the Jews, which compelled Paul and Barnabas to retire to Lycaonia. Here, in the cities of Iconium and Lystra, they gained many converts, among others Timothy, the future fellow-labourer of Paul ; but they were followed by their Jewish adversaries, who so worked upon the excitable populace, that they stoned the Apostle to whom they had just before been about to offer sacrifice. After a brief sojourn at Derbe, Paul and his companion retraced their steps, confirming the churches which they had founded, and arrived at Antioch, where they were gladly received by the Church, and where they remained for some years.

During Paul's stay at Antioch, the great question respecting the obligation of the Gentile converts to be circumcised and to observe the law of Moses, which for some time had agitated the Church, was discussed in a full assembly of the "Apostles, elders, and brethren," at Jerusalem, and decided in favour of the principles of Christian liberty. In deference, however, to the prejudices of the Jewish believers, the Gentile converts were recommended to abstain from things strangled, and from practices that had a direct connexion with idolatrous rites. Notwithstanding this solemn decision, such is the force of habit and education, that Peter, who had assisted at the deliberations of the Council, and to whom a special vision, inculcating the great truth that under the Gospel no distinction of persons was to be admitted, began, on his

arrival at Antioch, to waver on this essential point, and not only himself withdrew from full communion with the uncircumcised believers, but influenced Barnabas in the same direction. Happily for all parties, Paul stood firm; he administered a faithful reproof to Peter, which seems to have been effectual, for we read no more of his lending his name and influence to the Judaizing party.

Paul now proposed to Barnabas that they should revisit the scenes of their former labours; but a difference having arisen between them on the subject of taking Mark as their companion, who, on the previous occasion, had left them at Perga, they separated; and while Barnabas, with Mark, went to Cyprus, Paul, with Silas as his companion, passed through Syria, and Cilicia, and Lycaonia; and then, proceeding northwards, preached in Phrygia and Galatia, in which latter country the Gospel was very favourably received. But the time had arrived for the Apostle's entering upon a new and vastly enlarged sphere: a Divine intimation was given him that he should pass over into Europe; in obedience to which he and his three associates, Timothy, Silas, and Luke, embarked for Neapolis, and thence went on to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia. The conversion of Lydia and her household was the first seal to his ministry in this place; and the Gospel continued to make progress, until the expulsion of an evil spirit from a female slave, by which the unhallowed gain of her masters was put a stop to, so irritated the latter, that a tumult was excited, which ended in the magistrates committing Paul and Silas, after first ordering them to be scourged, to the public prison, as disturbers of the peace. Released by a miraculous interposition, which produced the conversion of the jailor, they departed next day unmolested; the magistrates, who had made themselves liable to severe penalties by scourging

Roman citizens uncondemned, obsequiously fetching them out of the prison, and requesting their departure.

From Philippi the two missionaries travelled to Thessalonica, the capital of the province of Macedonia, where a flourishing church was founded. Driven thence by his old opponents the Jews, Paul retired to Berea, which, however, from the same cause, he was soon compelled to quit; and, leaving Silas and Timothy behind him, he hastened to Athens, the centre of Greek literature and philosophy. Here he was enabled, indeed, to make a noble protest against the reigning idolatry, but not to gather in many converts; and, after a short delay, he passed on to the luxurious metropolis of Achaia, the emporium of commerce, Corinth. So important was this field of labour, and so cheering were the results of his ministry, both among Jews and Gentiles, that Paul continued at Corinth eighteen months; ably seconded in his efforts by Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who had been expelled from Rome, and whom he was instrumental in converting to the faith of Christ. From Corinth the two Epistles to the Thessalonians were written. At length, wishing to be present in Jerusalem at a certain feast, Paul took leave of the Corinthian Christians, and, after a passing visit to Ephesus, landed at Cæsarea, whence he proceeded to Jerusalem, and shortly afterwards returned to Antioch, having thus completed his second apostolic tour.

After a brief interval we find this indefatigable missionary engaged in his third and last apostolic journey. He passed through Asia Minor, "strengthening the disciples," and at length arrived at Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Here he remained for upwards of two years, preaching both to Jews and Gentiles. A great effect was produced: the votaries of magical science burnt their books publicly, to the value of about two

thousand pounds; the trade of silver shrines for Diana, whose temple was the great ornament of the city, became sensibly affected: when suddenly the Apostle found himself involved in one of the greatest perils which he had yet encountered. Demetrius, a master-craftsman of these silver shrines, summoned his workmen together, represented how seriously their interests were affected by the spread of the new faith, and succeeded, by their means, in throwing the whole city into a tumult. With great difficulty the commotion was appeased, and Paul, taking ship, departed to Macedonia.

During the Apostle's sojourn at Ephesus, the state of the Church of Corinth had caused him great uneasiness. Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, of great learning and eloquence, had, after his conversion to Christianity, selected Corinth as a suitable sphere for his ministerial activity; and the fickle Corinthians, prone to over-estimate intellectual gifts, had made him, no doubt against his own will, a party leader. Practical corruptions, too, prevailed in the Church. These circumstances gave rise to the two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, the former written from Ephesus, the latter from Philippi; and not long afterwards, having "preached the Gospel round about unto Illyricum,"¹ he repaired in person to Corinth, for the purpose of correcting the disorders which prevailed, and promoting a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem. These objects having been accomplished, he set out for Palestine, proceeding not by the direct route, but through Macedonia, to escape the machinations of the Jews: and embarking at Philippi, he and his companions landed at Troas, and thence sailed, past Mitylene, to Miletus, where, having summoned the elders of the Ephesian Church, he took a solemn and affecting farewell of them. At Tyre, and again at Cæsarea, prophetic intimations met him of the

¹ Rom. xv. 19.

dangers that awaited him at Jerusalem; but his resolution was fixed, and arriving at the holy city, he took up his abode with an old disciple named Mnason.

The day after his arrival, he met the elders and brethren of the Church, to whom he gave an account of his missionary travels, and delivered the contribution for the poor with which he had been entrusted. What course he should now take became a matter of serious concern. The unbelieving Jews regarded him as a renegade, and even the Jewish converts entertained strong prejudices against him, as the great defender of Gentile liberty. It was thought best that, to remove any suspicion of contempt, on his part, of the law of Moses, he should join with some Christian Jews in the fulfilment of a vow, which required their presence in the Temple. No sooner, however, did he appear within the sacred precincts than he was recognised by certain Jews of Asia, who at once raised a tumult, and, collecting a mob of zealots, dragged the Apostle out of the Temple, and would have put him to death, but for the timely interference of the Roman guard in the fortress of Antonia. Rescued with difficulty, he attempted to address the populace, but the mention of the word Gentiles excited their fury afresh, and Lysias, the chief captain of the guard, found it necessary to convey him into the fortress. The next day the Sanhedrim assembled to hear him; but perceiving that, before such an audience, it was useless to plead, he skilfully set the Pharisees at variance with the Sadducees, and, amidst the confusion that ensued, Lysias again withdrew his prisoner. A plot was now laid to assassinate him; but intelligence of it coming to the ears of Lysias, he sent the Apostle away by night to Cæsarea, the residence of the Roman procurator, Felix, where for upwards of two years he remained in captivity. The Jews were summoned from Jerusalem to make their

accusation, but no decisive result followed: Felix hoped that a bribe might be offered for his captive's release, but no offer was made: and when his successor, Porcius Festus, arrived to assume the government, Paul was still in custody.

The new governor was importuned by the Jews to send his prisoner to Jerusalem, their intention being to assassinate him by the way; but Festus refused their request, and appointed a day for the trial at Cæsarea. At the time fixed Paul and his accusers were once more confronted, and the old charges were made and refuted; but, perceiving that Festus was desirous to rid himself of the matter by complying with the wishes of the Jews, the Apostle, as a last resource, appealed to the Roman emperor, and the case was thus taken out of the hands of the inferior authorities. For the gratification of Herod Agrippa II., who happened to be on a visit to Festus, and for the further information of the governor himself, who was ill-versed in Jewish questions, Paul was permitted once more to plead his cause in public: his innocence was admitted, but the appeal to Cæsar made it necessary for him to be sent to Rome.

He was accordingly, with some other prisoners, committed to the charge of a centurion, who chartered a vessel, first to Myra, on the coast of Mysia, and then to Italy. The former part of the voyage was accomplished successfully, but the latter ended in the total wreck of the vessel on the island of Malta. No lives, however, were lost, and, embarking again in an Alexandrian ship, the Apostle arrived in safety at the end of his journey, and was committed to the custody of the prætorian prefect, who gave him permission to dwell in his own house, with a soldier to guard him. Thus two years were spent, during which time Paul had frequent opportunities of preaching

the Gospel : the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon, were also the precious fruits of this period of comparative leisure.

The inspired history here breaks off, and the rest of the Apostle's life is involved in some obscurity. While some have held that this captivity was his last, others suppose that he was released from it, and accomplished a fourth apostolic journey through Asia Minor, and thence to Spain ; after which he visited Macedonia, Crete, and Epirus, in which last place he was arrested, and again sent to Rome, where, under Nero, A. D. 68, he suffered martyrdom.

Of the history of the rest of the Apostles we have only obscure traditions. Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision as Paul was of the Gentiles, is said to have suffered death by crucifixion at Rome. John, having survived his banishment to Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse, settled at Ephesus, and lived to an extreme old age. Most of the other Apostles are said to have suffered martyrdom.

We close this sketch of the history of the Apostolic Church with a short notice of its ecclesiastical polity and rites. The first Christian societies seem to have been constituted after the model of the synagogue. Like that of the Jewish institution, the religious worship of a primitive Christian assembly was homiletic, not sacrificial ; it consisted in prayer, singing, and exhortation.¹ There is a correspondence, too, between the officers in either case, the deacons answering to the inferior ministers, and the presbyters to the elders, of the synagogue. The Temple and its rites had their fulfilment in Christ ; the synagogue reappeared in local Christian churches. The progress of organization was gradual, as need required. Of diocesan episcopacy the New Testament does not seem to present

¹ 1 Cor. c. xiv.

any clear instance, for the commissions of Timothy and Titus were but temporary, and the words presbyter and episcopus are in the New Testament perfectly synonymous. The episcopal form of government, however, may reasonably lay claim to apostolical sanction; how else could it have so speedily and so universally prevailed? The destruction of Jerusalem probably marks the date of this further extension of Church polity.

The ceremonies of the primitive Church were few and simple. Of the administration of the sacraments little is recorded beyond the fact. Converts were baptized with water in the name of the Holy Trinity, and probably by immersion; baptized Christians "broke bread," that is, celebrated the Lord's Supper, it should seem very frequently; beyond this no details are given. We know not what, or whether any, form of consecration was used; certainly no liturgical formulary at that time existed. The Lord's Supper was commonly preceded by an agape, or love-feast, and, as we learn from the instance of Troas,¹ it was not uncommon to celebrate it in the evening. The first day of the week appears set apart for religious worship. No buildings for that purpose as yet existed; the disciples "broke bread from house to house." In this absence of minute prescription we recognise the Divine wisdom; for Christianity was not to be a new ceremonial law, but a new life, and, retaining its essentials, it was, in matters of ritual and polity, to adapt itself to all varieties of climate, national temperament, and mental culture. The law of Moses was an iron band, encircling one nation; Christianity was to pervade the world, and needed a corresponding elasticity in its outward equipments.

¹ Acts, xx. 7.

CHAPTER IV.

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

No classification hitherto proposed of the Books of the New Testament is perfectly accurate; for the divisions are either incomplete, or they run into each other. Thus the old arrangement of "Gospels," and "Apostles," seems to imply that the Gospels were not written by Apostles; and that of "Gospels" and "Epistles" excludes the Book of Acts, and the Revelation of St. John. There are, however, certain books which consist chiefly of narrative, such as the Gospels and the Book of Acts, and these we may call historical: in certain others, as the Epistles, the dogmatical element is most prominent, and hence they may receive the name of doctrinal: and one Book, the Revelation, is of a prophetic character.

SECT. I.—*Historical Books. The Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.*

§ 1. *On the Gospels in general.*—The word Gospel, *i.e.* God's spell, or word, is a sufficiently accurate translation of the Greek term, which signifies good tidings. Properly it means the substance of the message of salvation; but in time it came to be applied to the books in which especially the advent and ministry of the personal Saviour are described. Four such accounts, of inspired authority, have been transmitted to us, two of them written by Apostles and eye-witnesses of the principal events of Christ's life, and two by companions of the Apostles. The necessity of such an authoritative record is obvious. Oral traditions, or written histories, professing to furnish the particulars of Christ's ministry upon earth, would naturally be circulated among the first Christians, many of them defective, and

many inaccurate; in order to supersede these, inspired men were commissioned to commit authentic accounts to writing. Why these should be four in number the Fathers have assigned several fanciful reasons, which it is needless to repeat: it is sufficient to observe that, while one general impression is conveyed by the memoirs collectively, each brings out more distinctly than the rest a peculiar side and aspect of Christianity and its Author. The three first Gospels belong substantially to one class, that of historical narrative, without comment; they describe the *man* Christ Jesus: they resemble each other, too, in the circumstance of their confining themselves almost exclusively to our Lord's ministry in Galilee. The fourth Gospel enlarges upon the Divine attributes of the Son of God, and supplies those particulars of His visits to Jerusalem which are omitted by the others. The three synoptic Gospels, however, when compared with each other, exhibit each its own peculiarities. In St. Matthew, Christ appears as the "Minister of the circumcision;" in St. Mark, as "a Prophet mighty in deed;" in St. Luke, as the "Saviour of the world."

The evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels has been already detailed. No ancient books come to us with such a weight of testimony in their favour. Early in the second century a collection of them into one volume was current among Christians. In the fourth century the Bible, substantially as we possess it, formed one sacred code. Moreover, in these inspired memoirs of Christ, we possess four independent and separate accounts of the facts therein related; for that any of the Gospels were borrowed from the others, or even that the respective writers, with the exception, perhaps, of St. John, had seen the compositions of their fellow-labourers in this field, has never been satisfactorily made out, and, indeed, is extremely improbable.

The coincidences which we find in the first three Gospels must be referred, not to any designed imitation, or connexion, or dependence, but to the fact that Christ's promise, that He would bring all things that He had spoken to the Apostles' remembrance, had been fulfilled, and that the Apostles were at hand to supply St. Mark and St. Luke with the necessary information.

§ 2. *The Gospel according to St. Matthew.*—This Gospel is universally allowed to have been written by the Apostle whose name it bears. By St. Mark (ii. 14), Matthew is called the son of Alphæus, and he was therefore, probably, the brother of James the Less, though by some the father of Matthew is distinguished from Alphæus, or Cleophas, the father of James. He was a native of Galilee, and by profession an inferior tax-gatherer, under the Roman government, at Capernaum. By Mark and Luke he is called Levi (Mark, ii. 14; Luke, v. 27); and it is not improbable that, either on his entering upon his official duties, or on his becoming a disciple of Christ, he assumed the second name of Matthew. His calling to the Apostleship is related by himself (c. ix. 9); but, in all probability, he had been for some time a disciple of Christ, pursuing his worldly calling, until he was thus finally separated to his high vocation. On this occasion he gave a parting entertainment to his friends (Luke, v. 29). He is mentioned only once more in the New Testament, in Acts, i. 13: how long he remained in Judæa after the day of Pentecost, or what his end was, we have no authentic account.

While the testimony of the early Church is unanimous that St. Matthew was the first of the Evangelists, the precise date of his Gospel has been a subject of dispute. The earliest assigned year is A.D. 37, the latest A.D. 64; and the point is not susceptible of satisfactory determination. It must have been written before the destruction of

Jerusalem; and, on the whole, the evidence is in favour of an early date, or a few years after the ascension. Another question, much controverted, is whether the original Gospel of St. Matthew was not in Hebrew, or rather Syro-Chaldee, the language of Palestine at that time. Of those who maintain this opinion, some have supposed our present Greek Gospel to be a translation from the Hebrew, and others have supposed that there were two originals, the earlier in Syro-Chaldee, the later in Greek. External testimony is, no doubt, in favour of a Hebrew original: it is mentioned by Papias, Irenæus, Origen, Jerome, and many other Fathers. But it is a question whether the gospel to which they allude be not the spurious gospel according to the Hebrews, which they were led to believe was the work of Matthew; and as there are no traces in the Greek Gospel of its being a translation, and it is quoted as early as the other Gospels, we cannot doubt that it is an original, if not the only original, work of the Apostle. The Hebrew gospel, if such ever existed, has utterly perished,—a circumstance which, of itself, renders its existence problematical.

External, and internal, evidence combine to prove that Matthew wrote chiefly for the use of Jewish converts in Palestine. He traces, for example, the genealogy of Christ from Abraham through David; he but seldom appends interpretations of Jewish phrases or customs; he quotes largely from the prophets; and he narrates at length those discourses of our Lord in which the formalism, and self-righteousness, of the Pharisees are exposed.

Like the other synoptic Gospels, that of St. Matthew consists of three main groups of facts:—those relating to, 1. The birth of Christ, and the preparation for His public ministry (cc. i.–iv.). 2. The active life of Christ, especially in Galilee (cc. v.–xxv.). 3. The closing scenes;

including the institution of the Lord's Supper, the agony in the garden, the betrayal, the apprehension, the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension (cc. xxvi.—xxviii.).

§ 3. *Gospel according to St. Mark.*—This Evangelist, whose Hebrew name was John (Acts, xv. 37), was the son of a pious woman named Mary, who lived at Jerusalem, and who was sister to Barnabas. He is supposed to have been converted by Peter, who calls him his "son" (1 Pet. v. 13). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts, xii. 25); but left them in Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem (Acts, xiii. 13). This gave rise to the separation between these two Apostles, when planning their second journey; Barnabas wishing again to take Mark with them, and Paul refusing to do so on account of his former departure (Acts, xv. 39). Mark accordingly accompanied Barnabas to Cyprus; but he afterwards seems to have become reconciled to Paul, for he was with the Apostle during his first captivity at Rome (Col. iv. 10). From Rome he seems to have repaired to Peter, with whom tradition reports that he travelled in the capacity of amanuensis, and there the inspired history leaves him; but he is said to have returned with Peter to Rome, and to have eventually settled at Alexandria, as the first bishop of that church, where he suffered martyrdom.

Of the genuineness of this Gospel as far as c. xvi. 8, no doubt has ever been entertained. From c. xvi. 8, to the end of the Gospel, bears the appearance of having been added subsequently. External evidence is divided; internal, on the whole, preponderates against the authorship of Mark. But the addition, if it be one, is of very ancient date. With respect to the substance of the Gospel, the general belief has been that it was composed under the superintendence of the Apostle Peter. Internal evidence seems to confirm this supposition. The actions and dis-

courses of Christ at which Peter was present are detailed with a minuteness which implies the testimony of an eye-witness; and while the excellencies of Peter are thrown into the background, his failings are fully recorded.

That the gospel of Mark was written for the Gentile Christians is obvious, from his omission of the genealogies of our Lord; from his interpretation of Syro-Chaldee terms (c. vii. 11), and his explanation of Jewish customs (c. vii. 3); and from the scarcity of quotations from the Old Testament. That it was written in Greek was never disputed, until, in recent times, certain Romish writers (Bellarmine and Baronius) maintained, on the authority of a pretended autograph of the Evangelist in St. Mark's Library, in Venice, that the original language was Latin,—a hypothesis wholly untenable, as contradicting historical evidence, and inconsistent with the fact of the supposed Latin gospel having so soon, and so completely, disappeared, that no ancient writer alludes to it.

With respect to the place, and date, of its composition, traditions are conflicting. The best attested account is that it was written at Rome, and about A.D. 63.

Mark is distinguished from the other Evangelists by reporting the works rather than the discourses of Christ, and by the minuteness, and graphic touches, of his descriptions. His narrative is more limited in range than that of Matthew and Luke; but the scenes which he narrates abound in interesting particulars not noticed by the other Evangelists. Compare, for example, Mark, ix. 14–29, with the corresponding account in Matthew and Luke.

§ 4. *Gospel according to St. Luke.*—Ecclesiastical tradition, which there is no reason to doubt, identifies the author of this Gospel with the Lucas, or Lucanus, mentioned in Col. iv. 14. He is said to have been a native of

Antioch, and, from his name, it is probable that he was descended from heathen ancestors, and passed through Judaism to Christianity: his acquaintance, certainly, with Jewish customs is such as could hardly have been possessed save by a proselyte. By profession he was a physician, and, as such, must have received a liberal education. Some of the Fathers make him one of the Seventy (Luke, x. 1), but this is contradicted by his own testimony, that he had not seen Christ in the flesh (Luke, i. 2).

The first mention of him in the New Testament occurs in Acts, xvi. 10, where the person changes from the third to the first. From Troas he accompanied Paul to Macedonia, and thence to Asia and Jerusalem; was with him at Cæsarea (Acts, xxvii. 1); and sailed with him to Rome, where he appears to have remained with the Apostle to a late period (2 Tim. iv. 11). Of the manner, or time, of his death we have no certain account.

The origin of this Gospel is stated by its author. "Forasmuch as many had taken in hand" to draw up accounts of our Lord's life, "it seemed good to" him "also," after careful inquiry, to communicate the results of his researches (c. i. 3). Not himself an eye-witness, he yet gathered his information from those who had been "eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word." When and where it was written is doubtful. But as it was completed some time before the Book of Acts, and as that book proceeds no further than the close of St. Paul's two years' imprisonment at Rome, or A.D. 63, the Gospel must have appeared some years earlier. Tradition reports that it was written in Greece. That the author had Gentile converts in view, or them particularly, may be inferred from the general structure of the Gospel, in which, as compared with the others, Christ appears as the Saviour of all men. Hence our Lord's genealogy is traced up to Adam, instead

of to Abraham; hence such parables as that of the good Samaritan and the prodigal son.

That this Gospel was written in Greek admits of no doubt. Though its language is tinged with Hebraisms, it is more classical in style than that of the other Gospels, as might be expected from the superior education of the author. The preface is composed in pure classical Greek.

Of all the Gospels St. Luke's approaches nearest to a complete biography of our Lord. He supplies many important particulars not narrated by the other Evangelists; as, for example, the events preceding and accompanying the birth of Christ (cc. i. ii.); the narrative contained in the large section from c. ix. 28, to c. xviii. 14, which is almost peculiar to this Evangelist; the parables in cc. xv. and xvi.; and the account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (c. xxiv. 13-35). Though the sources of St. Luke's information are substantially the same as those from which St. Matthew and St. Mark drew, his Gospel has the air of an independent and original narrative.

§ 5. *Gospel according to St. John.*—John, the acknowledged author of this Gospel, was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother of James the elder. The family resided in Galilee, probably at Bethsaida; and the father, and his two sons, followed the occupation of fishing on the lake of Galilee. They were by no means of the lowest class; we read that Zebedee employed hired servants (Mark, i. 20); that Salome was one of those who ministered to Christ's wants (Matt. xxvii. 56); and that John was enabled, after our Lord's death, to receive Mary into what seems to have been his own house in Jerusalem.

It has generally been supposed that one of the two disciples of the Baptist who, from the testimony of the latter, were induced to follow Jesus (John, i. 37), was the Evangelist himself. After this first acquaintance with

the Saviour, he returned to his occupation in Galilee, until he was called to be with Christ permanently (Luke, v. 11). To him and his brother James our Lord gave the surname of Boanerges; either on account of their zealous disposition, or prophetically, on account of the position they were afterwards to hold in the Church.

Of all the Apostles John was admitted to the closest intimacy with his Divine Master; doubtless from a kindred purity and tenderness of disposition. He is called "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" he was one of the three favoured Apostles who were present on the most momentous occasions of our Lord's life,—the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and the agony in Gethsemane; and to his care Jesus, on the cross, committed His mother (John, xix. 26). John's attachment to the Redeemer was reciprocal. Though, in common with the rest of the Apostles, he forsook his Master in the hour of danger, he soon returned, and alone was present at the closing scene.

How long John remained at Jerusalem cannot be exactly determined. As long as Mary lived, he could hardly have quitted that city; and we find him there on St. Paul's third visit, about A.D. 52 (Gal. ii. 9). After this period, we are dependent upon tradition for his history. We may consider it as certain that the latter part of his life was spent at Ephesus, from which place he exercised a superintendence over the churches of Asia Minor; but when he came thither we know not. It is not, however, likely that he did so until after the death of the Apostle Paul. Under Domitian he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation; and under Nerva he returned to Ephesus, where he died, it is said, in the hundredth year of his age.

The genuineness of this Gospel has been universally

acknowledged. The accurate knowledge and vivid impressions of an eye-witness are everywhere apparent in it. Whether John had the other Gospels before him when he wrote his own is uncertain, but he must have intended to communicate to the Christian world something different from, and beyond, the cycle of actions and discourses which is common to them. What they mention he omits, and supplies what they pass over in silence. Thus Christ's first visit to Jerusalem, with its attendant circumstances, His purging the Temple, His discourse with Nicodemus, &c. (cc. ii. 13—iii.), we know only from this Evangelist. The same may be said of the controversial discussions with the Jews, which occupy so large a space in the middle chapters of the Gospel. To set forth the glory of Christ as the Son of God is obviously the main design of the whole. Hence the discourses of Christ, in which His essential oneness with the Father is asserted, and those in which He presents Himself as the source of life and comfort to His people, are narrated at length; and the six miracles which this Evangelist records direct the mind to the same truths. That St. John had a particular controversy in view, *e.g.* to refute the tenets of Cerinthus, has never been satisfactorily made out; and, indeed, according to his own statement, his object was a more general one: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (c. xx. 31). To promote advanced Christian knowledge, as distinguished from the fancies of Gnostic speculation, is the aim of the author; but he accomplishes it rather by positive teaching than by the refutation of unsound doctrine.

That St. John wrote his Gospel at Ephesus is probable, but the date of his writing is very uncertain. All that can be affirmed is, that it must be placed between the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, and the end of his life.

The date commonly assigned is A.D. 97. From the difference of style, and from the character which it wears of an appendix, it has been supposed that c. xxi. was added by the author some years after the Gospel, ending with c. xx., had been completed.

§ 6. *Acts of the Apostles*.—This book, the fifth and last of the historical books of the New Testament, contains a portion of the early history of the Church, immediately after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It is of inestimable value, both as furnishing an introduction to the Epistles, and as expounding the principles on which the Apostles proceeded in their work of founding Christian churches. The most cursory glance, however, is sufficient to show that it never was intended as a complete history of the Church during the period comprised in it. Thus it is silent upon the state of Jewish Christianity after the conversion of Paul, as also upon the progress of the Gospel in the East and in Egypt: even of St. Paul's history it omits some interesting portions, *e.g.* his journey into Arabia, and his various shipwrecks (2 Cor. xi. 25): it contains no information respecting the founding of the Church at Rome, or the labours and lives of the majority of the Apostles. It is rather a specimen of Church history than a professed history. As such, however, it is sufficient for every purpose of guidance and instruction; for, in the first place, from the marvellous results of the Pentecostal effusion, it illustrates the spiritual nature of the Christian Church (cc. i.—xii.); in the second place, it exhibits the universality of Christianity, Gentiles as well as Jews being gradually admitted to the full privileges of the Gospel (cc. xiii.—xxviii.); and in the third place, without any formal code on the subject, it exhibits, interspersed throughout, the leading principles which should govern the visible organization of Christian societies.

From the introductory sentences of the book, it is evident that it is the production of the same writer as composed the third Gospel. Where, and at what time, it was written, has been a subject of dispute. But, since it is continued to the end of St. Paul's imprisonment, it could not have been written before A.D. 63, and, since it relates no part of his history afterwards, it could hardly have appeared much later; A.D. 63 is, therefore, the most probable date. And no place can be assigned with greater probability than Rome, where, during these two years, we know that Luke was the companion of Paul, and had abundant means and leisure for learning from the Apostle's mouth such parts of his history as occurred previously to their connexion. The events up to the death of Stephen must have been gained from other sources, probably the Apostles who resided at Jerusalem. By its dedication to Theophilus, it appears that the book was intended for the same readers as the Gospel was, *i.e.* Christians in general.

The settlement of the chronology of the Acts is of great importance, but of equal difficulty. Many learned disquisitions on it are extant. We content ourselves with the following table of the principal events, according to the most generally received view:—

	A.D.
The Ascension	30
Martyrdom of Stephen, and conversion of Paul (cc. vii.—ix. 19)	37
Paul's first visit to Jerusalem (c. ix. 26)	40
Paul's second visit to the same place (c. xi. 30)	43
Martyrdom of James (c. xii. 2)	44
Paul's first missionary journey (cc. xiii., xiv.)	45
Paul's third visit to Jerusalem (c. xv. 2)	50
Paul's second missionary tour (c. xv. 40)	51
Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem (c. xviii. 22)	54

	A. D.
Paul at Ephesus for more than two years (c. xix. 10)	57
Paul's fifth visit to Jerusalem (c. xxi. 17)	58
Paul at Rome (c. xxviii. 16)	61

SECT. II.—*Doctrinal Books.*

§ 1. *On the Epistles in general.*—It was promised by our Lord to the Apostles, that they should enjoy supernatural assistance in the discharge of their official duties, as witnesses of His resurrection and founders of the Church, and the promise seems to extend beyond the term of their natural lives: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”¹ How was this latter part of it to be fulfilled? The Apostles were not immortal, and, as Apostles, they had no successors; how, then, are we to interpret the assurance of Christ that He would be with them, even to the end of time? We reply that, as *Apostles*, they are still present with us by that inspired record of their teaching which is contained in the Epistles. In them Peter, Paul, John, still speak to us,—still authoritatively expound Christian doctrine, regulate the affairs of Christian societies, and plant the Gospel among the heathen. It is in this sense alone that we have Apostles amongst us; we have, and we need, no other infallible authority.

The Epistles thus contain a record—the only authentic record—of Apostolic teaching, and their place in Scripture is distinctly marked. Addressed to existing Christian Churches, and presupposing a knowledge of the great facts of redemption, they furnish an inspired comment upon these facts; they explain their import and connexion. Questions, too, of casuistry, practical difficulties making their appearance in the infant Church, are solved on principles applicable to every age, and so much guidance

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

on such topics is given as is consistent with the spiritual and universal nature of the new dispensation. It is obvious that the occasional and unstudied form of these communications is the very best that could have been adopted to secure the particular end in view.

Of the Epistles, by far the larger portion was written by St. Paul; probably fourteen, certainly thirteen, of the twenty-one. In this, the superintending care of the Divine Author of the Scriptures is manifest. Who so fit to expound the spirit and practical bearings of Christianity as this chosen vessel, at once a Jew and the special Apostle of the Gentiles, and possessing qualifications of mental culture which fall to the lot of but few? The Pauline Epistles, therefore, stand first in our Bibles; they are not, however, arranged in chronological order, but are placed according, either to their intrinsic importance, or that of the Churches to which they were addressed. On both accounts precedence has been given to—

§ 2. *The Epistle to the Romans.*—At what time or by whom the Gospel was first preached in the metropolis of the ancient world it is impossible to determine. Left to conjecture, we must suppose that some of the “strangers from Rome,”¹ who were witnesses of the great events of the day of Pentecost, carried back with them to that city the knowledge of Christ; and owing to the intercourse that existed between the capital and the provinces, their number would be soon increased by converts from other parts of the world. That Peter had any share in founding the Roman Church is contradicted by the clearest historical evidence. In the Epistle to the Romans, no mention occurs of Peter, not even in the salutations to individuals; and it is incredible that his name should have been omitted had he held a position of authority in the Church, or even

¹ Acts, ii. 10.

been at Rome at the time. The history of the Acts, too, is inconsistent with this supposition. Nor does any allusion to Peter's being, or having been, at Rome occur in the Epistles of Paul written during the imprisonment of the latter. If the former Apostle, then, ever visited the metropolis, it must have been after Paul's sojourn there.

Whoever was the founder of the Roman Church, it had, when Paul penned his Epistle, acquired great celebrity. Its "faith was spoken of throughout the world."¹ If we may judge from the tenor of the Epistle, it was composed both of Jews and Gentiles, for both parties are successively addressed, though a greater prominence is given to questions in which the latter would feel an interest.

The genuineness of this Epistle has never been doubted, save by a few obscure sects of heretics. As little has it been questioned that it was written in Greek. Nor is it strange that a Roman Church should have been addressed in that language. At that period, the knowledge of Greek was universally diffused, far more so than that of Latin; at Rome, especially, it was a necessary part of a polite education. Nor must we forget that, though addressed to particular churches, the apostolical letters were intended for the benefit of the whole Christian body, of the greater part of which, at that time, Greek was the vernacular tongue. Respecting the date, we can fix it within narrow limits. The decree of Claudius, banishing the Jews from Rome, was issued about A.D. 54, and from Acts, xix. we learn that, two or three years after this date, Aquila and Priscilla were at Ephesus; for in 1 Cor. xvi. 19, written during St. Paul's sojourn there, they send salutations to the Corinthians. But in the Epistle to the Romans they are described as being at Rome (xvi. 3); that Epistle, therefore, could not have been written before A.D. 57.

¹ Rom. i. 8.

Further, it appears from the epistle that the author was about to proceed to Jerusalem with a collection for the saints (c. xv. 25); which journey, in fact, was that which led to his imprisonment at Cæsarea, and his transmission to Rome, A.D. 61. The Cæsarean imprisonment lasted at least two years; and allowing a further time for Paul's journey through Greece (Acts, xx. 2), we have A.D. 58 as the date of the epistle. The place, too, is easily ascertained. Gaius, his host (Rom. xvi. 23), was a resident at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 14): Erastus, "the chamberlain of the city," (Rom. xvi. 23) was a Corinthian (2 Tim. iv. 20); and to Phœbe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, who was about to take a journey to Rome, the epistle was given in charge. From all these circumstances we gather that it was written at Corinth, during St. Paul's three months' abode in that city, and on his way to Jerusalem (Acts, xx. 3).

Of all St. Paul's epistles, that to the Romans is the most systematic and comprehensive. It consists of two main divisions,—Doctrinal (cc. i.—xi.), and Practical (cc. xii.—xvi.) Under the first head the Apostle, after a short introduction (c. i. 1–15), proceeds to show the need of a Saviour, both on the part of Gentiles (c. i. 16–32) and of Jews (cc. ii. iii.), both being "concluded under sin." He then unfolds the Divine method of justification through faith without the works of the law (cc. iii. 21 — v. 11); and of sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit, the law serving only to convince of sin, not to subdue it (cc. vi. vii.): the privilèges of a justified state follow (c. viii.); and the Divine counsels respecting the Israelites, their existing condition and future prospects, bring this part of the epistle to a close. The practical division comprises exhortations to self-dedication and holy walking (cc. xii. xiii.); and to Christian charity, on the part of the stronger

towards the weaker brethren (cc. xiv. xv.). Various salutations to the Christians at Rome, and from the Christians at Corinth, conclude the whole (c. xvi.).

§ 3. *Epistles to the Corinthians*.—Corinth, in St. Paul's time the political metropolis of Achaia, was situated on the neck of land joining the Peloponnesus with the northern division of Greece. From the advantages of its situation, commanding as it did both seas, the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs, it became the great emporium of commerce between the East and the West, and the mother of several powerful colonies. The Roman capital, Corinth, was founded on the ruins of the ancient town by Julius Cæsar, and speedily recovered a large measure of its former prosperity: at St. Paul's visit thither it was the residence of a Roman proconsul. Superstition and profligacy were the leading features of the place. The patron goddess of the city was Venus, to whom was erected a magnificent temple on the Acro-Corinthus, where one thousand prostitutes were maintained. The wealth which poured into the city, and the crowds of merchants who flocked thither, made it the favourite abode of courtesans; and these noxious influences so affected the character and morals of the people that they became notorious throughout Greece for effeminacy and vice. It was in this place, humanly speaking so unlikely, that the Lord had "much people" (Acts, xviii. 10).

It was on his second missionary journey, as already related,¹ that Paul arrived from Athens at Corinth (Acts, xviii. 1). He found there Aquila and Priscilla, who, in consequence of the decree of Claudius, had been compelled to leave Rome, and discovering that they were of the same trade with himself, viz. the manufacture of hair-cloth tents, he associated himself with them. Their conversion

¹ P. 347, 348.

appears to have speedily followed; and they proved valuable helpers to the Apostle in his arduous labours, which continued with much success, though amidst violent opposition on the part of the unbelieving Jews, for a year and a half. At the end of this time the Apostle proceeded to Asia Minor, and in his absence, Apollos, an eloquent Alexandrian Jew, took up the work, and watered the seed which had been planted (1 Cor. iii. 6).

It was during his absence at Ephesus that Paul wrote the first Epistle to the Corinthians. It has been disputed whether a third epistle, now lost, did not precede both of those which have come down to us; and certainly the expressions in 1 Cor. v. 9, "I wrote unto you in an epistle," can hardly be explained on any other supposition. Assuming this, the order of events may be thus arranged: During his sojourn at Ephesus, Paul receiving unfavourable tidings of the state of the Corinthian Church, especially its laxity of discipline, addressed an epistle to it, to which the Corinthians replied (1 Cor. vii. 1). His written admonitions proving of little avail, he paid them a short visit; as it should seem, with no better result. On his return to Ephesus, and not long before his departure from that city, or in the spring of A.D. 57, he wrote a second epistle, our present first, in which he enters at length upon the points which needed correction. Soon afterwards he left Ephesus and proceeded to Macedonia, having first sent Timothy (Acts, xix. 22), and then Titus (2 Cor. xii. 18), to Corinth, to report upon the state of things there, and especially upon the effect which the epistle had produced. On Titus rejoining him in Macedonia with more favourable accounts, our second epistle was written, and was followed, shortly afterwards, by the Apostle himself.

The leading evil tendencies, against which Christianity had to contend in Corinth, were, a fondness for speculative

philosophy, party spirit, and laxity of practice. The first led to a denial, or an explaining away, of some of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, such as the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. xv.), which, probably, was interpreted to signify a mere spiritual resurrection of the soul in this life; the second led to the formation of schisms and parties, some professing to be followers of Paul, others of Apollos, others of Peter, and others, whatever is meant by the expression, of Christ (1 Cor. i. 12); the last produced delinquencies of the gravest description (1 Cor. v. 1),—besides abuses at the Agapæ or love-feasts, which preceded the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 21), and an over-estimation of spiritual gifts as compared with the great duty of charity (*ibid.* c. xiii.). These evils were increased by the presence of Judaizing teachers, who made it their business to depreciate the authority of the Apostle.

The preceding remarks will throw light upon the contents of the two epistles. In the first, Paul commences by noticing the divided state of the Church, which he traces to its true source, undue reliance upon the human instrument; whereas, whether it were Paul, or Apollos, or Peter, all were but stewards of the mysteries of God. For himself, he had determined to know and to preach nothing save Christ and Him crucified, and this with all plainness of speech; yet he did not expect any save the spiritual man to appreciate such topics (cc. i.—iii.). After vindicating his apostolic mission (c. iv.), he proceeds to the questions in hand, giving directions for the excommunicating of the incestuous person (c. v.), for the settlement of differences among Christians (c. vi.), on the subject of marriage (c. vii.), and on the treatment of the weaker brethren (cc. viii.—x.). The abuses connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and with the exercise of spiritual gifts, are then noticed (cc. xi.—xiv.), and the

epistle concludes with a vindication of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body (c. xv.), and a request for a contribution in aid of the poor saints at Jerusalem (c. xvi.).

The second epistle commences with a notice of his sufferings for Christ's sake, amidst which he was cheered by the ready obedience of the Corinthians to his admonitions. The incestuous person, having given satisfactory proofs of repentance, was to be restored to the communion of the Church (cc. i.—vii.). Chapters viii. ix. treat at length upon the subject of the collection recommended in the former epistle. In the concluding part (cc. x.—xiii.), the Apostle defends himself against the insinuations of the false teachers, who had endeavoured to undermine his authority, and threatens, unless they changed their tone, to make them feel the rod of discipline.

§ 4. *Epistle to the Galatians.*—Galatia was a province in the centre of Asia Minor, which derived its name from the Gallic or Celtic tribes who occupied it about B. C. 280. In the year B. C. 189 it fell under the power of the Romans, and B. C. 25 it became a Roman province. From the intermixture of Greeks, it was also called Gallo-Græcia.

Into this district the Gospel was introduced by Paul himself. His first visit is mentioned in Acts, xvi. 6; and from the epistle it appears that he was very favourably received by the inhabitants (Gal. iv. 14). Another visit is recorded in Acts, xviii. 23. Since there is no mention in the epistle of more than one visit, it is probable that it was written in the interval between the two, and either at Corinth or Ephesus; that is, either A. D. 54 or A. D. 56.

We gather from the epistle that, soon after Paul's departure from Galatia, the Judaizing party sent emissaries to the churches in that region, who zealously pro-

pagated their tenets respecting the continued obligation of the Mosaic law upon the Gentile converts. As was usual with this party, they also insinuated that Paul was not a divinely-commissioned Apostle. The fickle Galatians, but imperfectly grounded in the faith, lent an ear to these seducers, and were in danger of receiving another Gospel, fatally adulterated. Intelligence of this having been conveyed to the Apostle, he addressed to his converts this—perhaps the most earnest and admonitory of all his epistles—exposing the pernicious nature of the error in question; and that it might come with more weight, contrary to his usual custom, he wrote it with his own hand (Gal. vi. 11). The genuineness of this epistle has never been doubted.

The epistle consists of three parts. In the first, the Apostle, after expressing his wonder that the Galatians should so soon have become unsettled on the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, vindicates his apostolic authority and the independence of his mission. He had received his knowledge of Christian truth, not at second-hand, through man, but directly from Christ Himself; so that the Apostles, whom he afterwards met at Jerusalem, “added nothing” to him, but rather he was enabled to set Peter right when the latter showed symptoms of wavering (cc. i. ii.). In the second part he treats, dogmatically, of the great doctrine which the Judaizing party assailed. He appeals to the Galatians’ own experience, who had received the gifts of the Spirit, not through the law, but by faith. He enlarges upon the case of Abraham, who had been justified by faith long before the law was given. As for the law, it was interposed between the promise to Abraham and its fulfilment in Christ, for a special purpose—to convince of sin; it never was meant to give life. The state of the Jew under the ceremonial

law was a state of pupilage ; this has now given place to the manhood of the Gospel. Christ has redeemed us from the yoke of the law ; and in Him we are complete (cc. iii. iv.). The third division comprises practical admonitions, — not to abuse this Christian liberty, and to walk in conformity with the precepts of the Gospel (cc. v. vi.).

§ 5. *Epistle to the Ephesians.*—Ephesus was a celebrated city, the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It lay not far from the coast, between Smyrna and Miletus, and in St. Paul's time was the principal emporium of Western Asia. It was chiefly celebrated for the magnificent temple of Diana, built by contributions from the whole of Asia Minor ; which, by the ancients, was counted one of the seven wonders of the world. It was famous, too, for the practice of occult arts, the usual accompaniments of a voluptuous civilisation. A large number of Jews appears to have settled in this city. Two visits of St. Paul to Ephesus are recorded ; the former, a short one (Acts, xviii. 19) ; the latter, for two years and three months (ibid. xix. 10). A large and flourishing Church was the result of his labours ; and he would, probably, have continued there for a longer period, had not the tumult raised by Demetrius, the silversmith, compelled him to leave the city. On his last journey to Jerusalem, the Apostle sent for the elders of the Ephesian Church to Miletus, and took leave of them in the affecting address recorded in Acts xx.

Of the genuineness of this epistle no reasonable doubt exists. But it has been a question to whom it was originally addressed. Some MSS. omit the word Ephesus in c. i. 1 ; and since St. Paul speaks in Col. iv. 16, of an epistle to the Laodiceans, no longer extant, it has been thought that this is the epistle in question. The absence of any reference in our epistle to Paul's sojourn in Ephesus

has been urged as confirmatory of this supposition. But tradition is altogether in favour of the common opinion; and any peculiarities in the internal structure of the epistle are satisfactorily accounted for by the hypothesis that it was a kind of circular epistle, intended for all the Churches, of which that at Ephesus was the centre: local allusions would, therefore, naturally be omitted.

This epistle was one of those written during the Apostle's first imprisonment at Rome, about A.D. 62. It seems to have been subsequent in time, though at a very short interval, to those to the Colossians and Philemon. It was conveyed to the Ephesians by Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21), who was also the bearer of that to the Colossians (Col. iv. 7).

The Epistle to the Ephesians is the outpouring of a heart completely filled with the powers of the world to come. Overjoyed to receive a good account of the faith and love of his converts (c. i. 15), the Apostle breaks out into a continuous strain of triumphant thanksgiving for the blessings of redemption, in all its main features of electing grace, free justification, and abiding union with Christ: this may be called the doctrinal portion of the epistle (cc. i.-iii.). In the latter half, the various duties of the Christian life, personal and relative, are inculcated; and an exhortation to watchfulness and Christian fortitude concludes the whole (cc. iv.-vi.).

§ 6. *Epistle to the Philippians.* — The Church at Philippi was founded by the Apostle himself, whose first visit thither was marked by the interesting conversions of Lydia and the jailor (Acts, xvi.). A second visit was paid by him before his departure from Greece (Acts, xx. 6). Philippi was a city of Proconsular Macedonia. It was formerly called Krenides, from its numerous fountains; but having been

taken and enlarged by Philip of Macedon, it was called by him after his own name. It was the first place in Europe which received the Gospel.

There appears to have subsisted between this Church and the Apostle a peculiar attachment. He speaks of it as the only Church from which, during his first visit to Macedonia, he permitted himself to receive any gift (c. iv. 15). And the immediate occasion of the epistle was a contribution which the Philippian converts had sent to him at Rome by the hands of Epaphroditus (c. iv. 18). It is plain, from the expressions of the epistle, that Paul was then in bonds at Rome (c. i. 13); and from his apparent expectation of a speedy release (c. ii. 24), it was probably written towards the close of his imprisonment, or A.D. 63.

Full of gratitude for its affectionate remembrance of him, the Apostle addresses this Church in terms of warm approval. It has been remarked that this is almost the only epistle in which no expression of censure occurs. In the first part, after the usual salutation, Paul assures the Philippians that his imprisonment had turned out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel, for which object he was willing either to live or to die. He then passes on to exhortations to brotherly love, and states his reason for sending Epaphroditus to them instead of Timothy, as he had originally designed (cc. i. ii.). In the second part he warns them against the Judaizing teachers, stating the change which, on his conversion, his own views had undergone, on this point (c. iii.). The last chapter contains admonitions to individual members of the Church, with general exhortations, and a delicate acknowledgment of their gift, which, though he had learned in every state to be content, he accepted as a grateful offering to God (c. iv.).

§ 7. *Epistle to the Colossians.*—Colosse was a city of Phrygia, on the river Lycus, and in the vicinity of Lao-

dicea and Hierapolis. By whom the Gospel was first preached there is uncertain. From Paul's expressions in the epistle (c. ii. 1), it should seem that, though he twice visited Phrygia, he did not reach Colosse. But during his sojourn in Ephesus persons from different places must have fallen in the Apostle's way; and of these probably Epaphras (Col. i. 7) was one, who, embracing Christianity, on his return to his own city made known to his countrymen the glad tidings of salvation. Epaphras had been sent to Rome by the Colossian Church to consult Paul, and was with the latter when this epistle was written (c. iv. 12).

From the striking resemblance, both in thought and expression, between this epistle and that to the Ephesians, it is evident that they must have been written within a few days of each other at most; and from the Apostle's mention of his "bonds" (Col. iv. 3), it appears that he was, at the time, in captivity. The epistle was, therefore, written from Rome, A.D. 62, and was intrusted to the care of Tychicus. After being read at Colosse, it was to be sent on to Laodicea (Col. iv. 16), and the Colossians were to receive from that place another epistle which Paul had addressed to them, and which, if it be not the epistle to the Ephesians, is lost.

The epistle to the Colossians is directed against a class of errors which had some affinity with the tenets of Montanus in the next century; a proneness, on the one hand, to philosophical speculation on points beyond man's capacity; and, on the other, to the practices of a rigid ascetism. The Judaizing party, too, appear to have had adherents in this Church. It may be remarked, that Phrygia had ever been the fruitful parent of religious fanaticism: it was here that the worship of Cybele, with its maddening orgies, chiefly flourished. In the dogmatical part of the epistle,

therefore, the Apostle enlarges upon the perfection of Christ's person and work, pointing out that believers are complete in Him, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" after which he warns them against vain speculations, *e. g.* on the number and nature of angels, and against once more yielding themselves to the yoke of a ceremonial law (cc. i. ii.). The practical portion contains precepts on the relative duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants; and concludes with salutations from himself and his fellow-labourers at Rome (cc. iii. iv.).

§ 8. *Epistles to the Thessalonians.*—Thessalonica, originally called Thermæ, was the capital of the second part of Macedonia, and the residence of the Roman authorities. Its favourable situation, at the head of the gulf of Salonichi, the modern corruption of the ancient name, attracted thither, for the purposes of trade, a large mixed population, of which Jews formed a considerable part.

Shortly after their release from Philippi, Paul and Silas arrived at Thessalonica (Acts, xvii. 1), and through their preaching a flourishing Church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, was speedily formed. Driven from the city by the violence of the unbelieving Jews, the Apostle retired to Athens, and thence to Corinth, having meanwhile despatched Timothy to Thessalonica to confirm the disciples. On the return of the latter with good accounts of the state of the Church, Paul, still unable to fulfil his intention of visiting it in person, wrote the first epistle, not, as the subscription has it, from Athens, but from Corinth, A.D. 53. It is, therefore, the earliest of all the Apostle's extant letters; and, perhaps on this account, is accompanied by an injunction that it should be read publicly in the church (1 Thess. v. 27). The second epistle

must have been written from the same place, and shortly after the first.

The general design of the first epistle is to encourage the Thessalonians under the trials which the profession of Christianity in that age involved. He reminds them of the joyful reception which they gave him as an ambassador of Christ, and commends their steadfastness under affliction (cc. i. ii.). The tidings of their faith and love had cheered him in his own troubles (c. iii.). The time was short; and the Lord would speedily appear, to gather his elect to Himself (c. iv.). This prospect should lead to watchfulness, and patient perseverance in well-doing (c. v.).

The allusion in this epistle to the second advent of Christ seems to have led to a misunderstanding on the part of the Thessalonians, as if the day of Christ were close at hand; in consequence of which they neglected their secular duties. In the *second* epistle the Apostle corrects this error; and, while repeating what he had said respecting the approach of the Lord to judgment, he informs them that this great event would not take place until a great apostasy had manifested itself in the Christian Church (cc. i. ii.). He concludes with exhortations to holiness, and the practical duties of their station in life (c. iii.).

The genuineness of both epistles is attested by the strongest evidence.

§ 9. *Epistles to Timothy*.—These, with the following Epistle to Titus, are called the Pastoral Epistles, from their being, to a great extent, occupied with directions for the discharge of the duties of the Christian ministry.

Timothy was a native of Lycaonia, of a Jewish mother and Greek father. He had been carefully trained by his

pious mother in the knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15); and, on St. Paul's first visit to Lystra (Acts, xiv. 6), he seems to have been led by the Apostle's preaching to embrace Christianity. On St. Paul's second visit (Acts, xvi. 1), he received such favourable accounts of the young disciple that he chose him as the companion of his missionary labours, and thenceforward Timothy always appears connected with the Apostle. His history subsequently to St. Paul's death is unknown: tradition makes him Bishop of Ephesus. That he was not, during Paul's lifetime, a bishop in our sense of the word, is obvious; for he never remained long in one place. He belonged to a class of persons who may be called Apostolical Commissioners; persons in constant attendance upon Paul, and who by him were despatched, as need required, to different Churches, to supply the Apostle's place: such were, besides Timothy, Silas or Silvanus, Tychicus, Titus, Artemas, Marcus, Aristarchus, &c.

It appears from the first Epistle to Timothy, that the latter was left at Ephesus to govern that Church in the absence of Paul, who had departed to Macedonia. Beyond this we know nothing of its date, or the place of its writing. It has been assigned as early as to A.D. 56, and as late as to A.D. 64, after St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. The latter seems, on the whole, the most probable. The genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles has been assailed by modern German critics; but they have come out from the ordeal triumphantly.

The first epistle, after the introduction (c. i. 1, 2), instructs Timothy how to conduct himself in the execution of the office with which he had been entrusted, in reference—1. To false teachers, who, by Jewish fables or Gnostic spiritualism, were undermining the simplicity of the Gospel (c. i.). 2. To matters of Church discipline,

such as the celebration of public worship, the ordination of ministers, the correction of abuses, the admission of widows to the alms of the Church, &c. (cc. ii. v.). 3. To certain practical defects, such as the love of money, to which the Ephesian Church appears to have been prone (c. vi.).

For the date of the second epistle we are dependent entirely upon internal evidence. That Paul was a prisoner when it was written appears from c. i. 8; and that he was at Rome is probable from c. i. 17; but whether the imprisonment is that mentioned in Acts, xxviii., or a second one which ended in his martyrdom, has been disputed. The evidence is in favour of the latter supposition. The Apostle no longer speaks in a tone of confidence of his approaching release, as in Philip. i. 25, but anticipates a speedy departure from his labours (2 Tim. iv. 6); he writes for articles which he had left at Troas (ibid. iv. 13), but he had not visited that place for five years before his first Roman imprisonment. His condition, as compared with the treatment recorded in Acts, xxviii. 30, 31, seems to have changed for the worse (2 Tim. iv. 16). From these circumstances, it may be concluded that this epistle was written about A.D. 65, shortly before the Apostle's death. It is, therefore, the last of all St. Paul's epistles. Where Timothy was at the time is wholly unknown.

In it Paul informs Timothy of the trying circumstances in which he was placed, and utters a last protest against the errors, Jewish and Gnostic, which were infecting the Church (c. i.). Timothy is exhorted to fortitude and patience in the exercise of his ministry (c. ii.); and is warned against false professors, the increase of whom is predicted (c. iii.). Paul requests Timothy to join him as soon as possible, and sends salutations to the brethren in Asia (c. iv.).

§ 10. *Epistle to Titus*.—Titus was of Greek origin, and

is first mentioned as having accompanied Paul to Jerusalem when the question respecting circumcision was to be decided (Gal. ii. 1). Afterwards we find him at Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 18), and in Macedonia with Paul (2 Cor. ii. 13). Like Timothy, he was a constant attendant on the Apostle, who everywhere speaks of him in terms of affection.

By whom, and when, the Gospel was preached in Crete is uncertain. The only visit of St. Paul to that island, recorded in the New Testament, is that which took place on his journey to Rome (Acts, xxvii. 8), when it is not likely that, prisoner as he was, he could have founded a Church: moreover, he could not then have expected to winter at Nicopolis (Tit. iii. 12).

Various suppositions have been made on the subject, but from the great similarity between this epistle and the first to Timothy, the most probable is, that Paul visited Crete after his first Roman imprisonment, and being obliged for some reason to leave the island suddenly, left Titus there to organise the Church, and soon afterwards, or A.D. 65, addressed this epistle to him, probably from Macedonia. Tradition reports that Titus was the first Bishop of Crete, and died there at an advanced age. The genuineness of this epistle was never doubted in ancient times, except by the heretic Marcion.

The inhabitants of Crete were proverbial for falsehood, licentiousness, and idleness. The Jewish settlers were not behind the natives in immorality. Titus's task, therefore, must have been a difficult one; and to instruct him in the discharge of it is the design of the epistle. The Apostle speaks of the qualifications to be required in elders (c. i.); of the duties incumbent on various classes of persons, especially the young of both sexes (c. ii.); of the obedience due to the civil power, and the

avoiding of unprofitable disputations (c. iv.). He concludes by directing Titus to join him, as speedily as possible, at Nicopolis.

§ 11. *Epistle to Philemon*.—Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, who was one of Paul's converts at Colosse, and a man of consideration in his own city, had fled from his master to Rome, where, by means of the Apostle, he was converted to the Christian faith. Thinking it right to send him back, Paul at the same time addressed this beautiful letter to Philemon, in which he intercedes for Onesimus, requesting, not merely that he may be pardoned, but received with confidence and affection as a Christian brother. It appears from v. 9 that Paul, at the time of his writing it, was in bonds; and that this must have been his first imprisonment at Rome is plain from comparing Philem. 12 with Col. iv. 8, and Philem. 23, 24, with Col. iv. 12–14. It was written, therefore, A.D. 62.

After an affectionate salutation to Philemon, to Apphia, who is supposed to be his wife, and to Archippus, a pastor at Colosse, the Apostle enters upon the main subject of the epistle. He pleads with Philemon as "Paul the aged," his father in the faith, and now "a prisoner of Jesus Christ;" and, in the most delicate manner, hints that if he had suffered any loss by Onesimus's flight, he (Paul) was prepared to make it good. He then expresses a hope of being speedily set at liberty. The epistle has ever been regarded as a model of elegant composition.

§ 12. *Epistle to the Hebrews*.—Of this great epistle, or rather treatise, the authorship has been keenly contested. In our authorised version it is ascribed to Paul, nor is there any reason, in the present state of the evidence, to dissent from this judgment. It must not, however, be concealed, that eminent critics have been, and are, divided upon this point; and, even of the ancient Church,

the judgment is not unanimous. The internal differences between it and the acknowledged epistles of the writer are important and obvious. It does not commence, as the other epistles, with a mention of the name of the writer; and the style is more rounded and rhetorical than is usual with Paul. On the other hand, there is much in the contents of the epistle that is in favour of a Pauline origin. The Apostle's favourite topics—the glory of Christ, as God manifest in the flesh; the inferiority of the Mosaic law to the Gospel, and its approaching abolition; the excellence and efficacy of faith;—are here enlarged upon and illustrated. We have here too instances, though comparatively few, of the involved parentheses, the fondness for a particular word, and what Paley calls “a propensity to go off at a word,” which are characteristics of Paul's manner. The few personal allusions which the epistle contains—such as, apparently, the writer's deprivation of personal liberty (c. xiii. 19), his mention of Timothy as a brother, and his sending salutation from saints in Italy—agree well with St. Paul's circumstances in his first Roman imprisonment. On the whole, the internal evidence points to St. Paul as the author. So striking, indeed, is the correspondence between the sentiments of this epistle and those of St. Paul's undoubted productions, that the strongest opponents of the Pauline authorship have supposed it to have been written by some one thoroughly imbued with the Pauline type of teaching. By those who reject the commonly-received opinion it has been ascribed to Barnabas, to Luke, and, above all, to Apollos. The last-mentioned hypothesis, first started by Luther, appears to the favourite one among modern critics. None of these theories, however, have succeeded in gaining universal assent.

With respect to the external evidence, it is, as has

been remarked, divided. While the Eastern Church, from the first, received the epistle as one of St. Paul's, the Western, on the contrary, for three centuries, hesitated upon this point; at length, in the fifth century, we find the Western Church also acceding to the common opinion. Since the epistle was undoubtedly written in Greek, and for a branch of the Eastern Church, the Jews of Palestine, the judgment of the Eastern Church seems entitled to the preference.

It is not difficult to fix the date of the epistle. It must, of course, have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as it speaks of the Levitical ritual as in existence; and, the Pauline authorship being assumed, the allusions in c. xiii. lead us to conclude, that it was written towards the close of the first Roman imprisonment, or about A.D. 63. It appears to have been addressed to the Jews, either at Jerusalem or Cæsarea, but was manifestly intended for the use of Jewish converts throughout the world.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is an inspired commentary of inestimable value on the import and uses of the Levitical ritual: it is the only composition of the New Testament, which expressly treats of this subject. Proving that all the types of the law have had their fulfilment in Christ, it forms a bulwark against the whole of that class of errors which would transform the Gospel, once more, into a ceremonial law; errors which, in one form or another, and in greater or less degree, have prevailed in the Church ever since the Apostolic times.

This epistle consists of two main divisions: in the first of which the supercession of the Law by the Gospel is demonstrated; and in the second, the Hebrews are exhorted to perseverance under existing trials. The writer commences by proving from the Old Testament Scriptures the

divinity of Christ (c. i.), and then asserting His perfect humanity (c. ii.); from which it follows that He is both infinitely superior to Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, and also capable of fully sympathizing with the sufferings of His people (cc. iii. iv.). Let them take heed, then, to hold fast the word of truth which they had received (c. vi.). The sacrifice and priesthood of Christ are as much superior to those of the law, as His person is to that of Moses. The legal appointments were but shadows, for a temporary use: Christ's sacrifice is the real atonement, He, in His priestly office, is the true Mediator; the former, therefore, is never to be repeated; the latter is perpetual. We have, therefore, in the Christian Church, neither visible sacrifice nor human priest (cc. vii.—x. 18).

In the second division, the wavering Hebrew converts are admonished by the awful danger of apostasy (c. x. 18–39), and by the example of “a great cloud of witnesses,” who, with Christ at their head, “endured the cross, despising the shame,” to hold fast their profession (cc. xi. xii.). The epistle concludes with various practical exhortations, and a benediction (c. xiii.).

§ 13. *Epistle of St. James.*—This is the first of the so-called Catholic Epistles, a designation of which the origin is uncertain. It is supposed that they were so called, either from their not being addressed, like St. Paul's epistles, to particular churches or individuals; or from the first epistles of John and of Peter having been, from the first, universally acknowledged, whereas the others were disputed: whence these epistles were called Catholic, and the title was extended to the whole seven as soon as their claims to form part of the canon became admitted.

The authorship of the epistle before us has been a matter of doubt. At least two persons, bearing the name

of James, are mentioned in the New Testament; viz. James the son of Zebedeè and brother of John, commonly called James the elder, and James the son of Alphæus, also one of the twelve. To these, by some, a third has been added, James "the Lord's brother" (Gal. i. 19), who afterwards presided over the Church at Jerusalem; but by others this James is identified with the son of Alphæus. Since it is altogether improbable that James the son of Zebedee, who suffered martyrdom so early as A.D. 32, was the author of the epistle, it must be ascribed to James "the brother of the Lord," who is always spoken of as the author by those ancient writers who make a distinction between him and the son of Alphæus.

This James, after the dispersion of the other apostles, remained at Jerusalem, where he exercised an undefined presidency over the Church. From his singular piety he was surnamed, by his unbelieving countrymen, the Just; but at length, in a tumult excited by the Pharisees and Scribes, he was put to death by being precipitated, it is said, from a battlement of the Temple, about A.D. 62. This epistle is supposed to have been written shortly before his martyrdom. The state of degeneracy which it describes, both in doctrine and practice, is hardly consistent with an earlier date.

As the salutation runs, it was written for the use of Jewish converts in general; and from its similarity in sentiment and diction to the writings of the prophets it must have been admirably adapted to gain their attention. Its canonicity was in early times questioned. "Not many of the ancients," says Eusebius, "have mentioned it." Soon after the Council of Nice, however, it was received both in the Eastern and Western Churches, and continued to be so till the Reformation, when the ancient doubts were revived by Erasmus and Luther, but chiefly on dogmatical grounds.

This epistle is one continued strain of exhortation, the only doctrinal section being an allusion to certain errors on the subject of justification, which appear to have been then prevalent. The converts to whom the Apostle writes being in circumstances of trial, he commences with topics of consolation (c. i. 1-15), and then passes on to the practical fruits of religion, patience, charity, and humility (cc. i. 16-ii. 13). Faith without works is profitless (c. ii. 14-26). The tongue especially should be kept under control (c. iii.), and the evil tempers of envy, covetousness, and pride, checked by the consideration of the approaching advent of Christ (c. iv. 5-10). Intercessory prayer, with unction in the name of the Lord, shall be effectual to procure recovery and forgiveness for the sick (c. v. 14-20).

§ 14. *Epistles of St. Peter.*—Peter, one of the three favoured Apostles, was the son of Jonas, and resided, at the period of the Gospel history, at Capernaum. Here he must have enjoyed frequent opportunities of hearing Christ, and witnessing His miracles; and at length, with his brother Andrew, he was summoned to attach himself to the Lord's person as an Apostle (Matt. iv. 18-20). His subsequent history, as far as it is comprised in the Gospels, is well known.

After our Lord's ascension, Peter for some years took the lead in the affairs of the Church. To him, according to Christ's promise (Matt. xvi. 19), the privilege was granted of being the first to admit both Jews and Gentiles to the kingdom of heaven; the former, in the three thousand converted by his preaching on the day of Pentecost; the latter, in the person of Cornelius. He took a prominent part in the Council held at Jerusalem, A.D. 49, and gave his voice for the emancipation of the Gentiles from the yoke of the Law. Afterwards he seems to give place to the superior influence and activity of Paul; and at no

time is there a trace of his having exercised anything like a supremacy over the other Apostles. On the contrary, Paul "withstood him to the face" (Gal. ii. 11).

Of his other labours nothing certain is known. He is said to have preached the Gospel in the countries mentioned in his first epistle, and to have suffered martyrdom at Rome, under Nero, A.D. 64, by being crucified with his head downwards. This is probable; but it is certain that he was never, for any length of time, resident in that city, and exercised no jurisdiction over the Church there.

The genuineness of the first epistle has never been questioned. External and internal evidence combine to attest its authorship. It professes to be addressed to the "strangers," *i.e.* the Jewish converts scattered throughout the provinces of Asia Minor; and to have been written from "Babylon" (c. v. 13), which some have thought to be a mystical name for Rome. But there is no evidence that at that early period Rome was mystically called Babylon; and as the epistle is not, like the Apocalypse, figurative in character, there is no reason for rejecting the literal sense. We must suppose, therefore, that it was really written from Babylon or the neighbourhood, and probably about A.D. 63.

The general design of the epistle is to console the Jewish Christians under the afflictions which were their lot. With this view they are reminded of the necessity, uses, and transitoriness, of earthly trials (c. i. 1-12); and exhorted, looking to Jesus, to walk worthy of their vocation (c. i. 13-ii. 10). Particular duties, incumbent upon them in the several capacities of citizens, slaves, husbands, and wives, follow (c. ii. 13-iii. 8); and after admonishing them to use their various gifts to the glory of God, the Apostle concludes with a special address to pastors on the duties of their office (c. v.)

The *second epistle* must have been written not long after the first, and in the immediate prospect of martyrdom (c. i. 14). It is reasonable to suppose that it was addressed to the same persons, and from the same place. Of all the books of the New Testament, this has sustained the severest attacks on its genuineness, both in ancient and modern times. The doubts, however, which some ancient writers, as Origen and Eusebius, express as to its claims, may be accounted for by the fact of its having been, comparatively, so little known to antiquity. It is certain that before the close of the fourth century it began to gain an acknowledged place in the Canon; and it is enumerated in the Canon of Laodicæa, and the decrees of the Councils of Hippo and Carthage. The controversy has since been revived, but nothing material has been elicited to shake the general faith of Christendom.

There is, no doubt, a great difference between the style of the second chapter and that of the first epistle; but there are resemblances also. The sentiments are entirely worthy of an Apostle; and no sufficient reasons have as yet been given for dissenting from the judgment of Jerome, Augustine, and others, by whom, after due investigation, the epistle was received as genuine. The date is generally fixed about A. D. 65.

The author, referring to the former epistle (c. iii. 1), states it as his design to address a last warning to his converts. He exhorts them to grow in Christian fruitfulness, and to take heed of false teachers, whom he describes and denounces in terms of awful severity (cc. i.—iii. 8). He predicts the advent of Christ, and the dissolution of the world by fire (c. iii. 8–12); and concludes with a caution against the misinterpretation of certain parts of St. Paul's epistles (c. iii. 15, 16). The striking

resemblance between this part of the epistle and that of St. Jude has led some critics to the conclusion that one writer must have borrowed from the other; but to which the priority is to be assigned is matter of dispute.

§ 15. *Epistles of St. John.*—The genuineness of the first epistle rests upon unimpeachable testimony. And though no name is prefixed to it, the sentiments and language correspond so closely with those of the Gospel of St. John, as to leave no doubt upon the mind that both are the productions of the same author. The writer had personal knowledge of Christ in the flesh (c. i. 1), and writes as an eye-witness of His ministry.

Concerning the date of this epistle much uncertainty prevails. Some suppose it to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem; others, towards the close of the first century. The particular errors which it assails seem to point to the later date. Hence, too, we gather that it was addressed to the Christians of Asia Minor; for that region was the birthplace of the Cerinthian and Docetic heresies. Though called an epistle, it possesses nothing of an epistolary character.

The design of the writer is, in the first place, to establish the true doctrine respecting Christ's person; he asserts both His proper divinity (cc. ii. 23; v. 20), and His proper humanity (c. iv. 3); and, in the next place, to enforce the truth that a holy walk and conversation is inseparable from real communion with the Saviour. (cc. iii., v.) As might be expected, the Christian grace of love is particularly enlarged upon, and made the decisive test of the new birth. The chief peculiarity of the style consists in the absence of logical connexion between the sentences; from which circumstance, though the meaning of each statement is clear, it is difficult to trace the

sequences of thought. The history of the disputed clause, c. v. 7, 8, must be sought elsewhere; it is now generally omitted in critical editions of the Greek Testament.

The second and third epistles are classed by Eusebius among the disputed books, and are not received by the Syrian churches. Various reasons have been alleged for their tardy recognition, the most probable of which is, that being addressed to private persons, they remained for a considerable time unknown; and when at length they were discovered, those who could have vouched for their genuineness were no more. They were probably written about the same time as the first.

The second epistle is addressed to a Christian lady, who is styled "Elect," or "Electa,"—a name either proper or significant. She is commended for her piety, and warned against the same heresies which the first epistle condemns, those of Cerinthus and the Gnostics.

The third epistle is addressed to Gaius, of whom nothing more is known. It has been conjectured that he was the Gaius of Corinth, who likewise was noted for his hospitality towards Christians (Rom. xvi. 23); but this is doubtful. The scope of the epistle is to commend Gaius for his hospitality; to caution him against a certain Diotrophes, probably bishop of the church, noted for his ambition and arrogance; and to recommend Demetrius to his friendly offices. The title which the writer gives himself of "Elder" has led some to suppose that it could not have been the Apostle; but Peter also calls himself a "co-presbyter" with the pastors whom he addresses: that the last survivor of the apostles should have received or adopted the title is by no means extraordinary.

§ 16. *Epistle of St. Jude.*—Of the Apostle Jude, surnamed Thaddæus or Lebbæus, little more is recorded than that he was the brother of James, and therefore stood

towards our Lord in the same degree of relationship as the latter. (Matt. x. 3; xiii. 55.) The only saying attributed to him is the question how Jesus could manifest Himself to His disciples and not to the world? (John, xiv. 22.) After our Lord's ascension, he is mentioned as consorting with the Apostles, and, doubtless, was partaker of the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit. Of his subsequent life nothing certain is known. He is said to have preached in Syria and Arabia, and to have suffered martyrdom in Persia.

The date and place of writing this epistle are matter of conjecture. If Jude had St. Peter's second epistle before him when he wrote, the date cannot be fixed earlier than A.D. 66; some have assigned so late a period as A.D. 90. The latter opinion is founded on the supposition that the epistle quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch, written after the destruction of Jerusalem; but the prophecy of Enoch (ver. 14) may have been derived, not from any book, but from a traditional source. The same may be said of the passage in which the Archangel Michael is said to have disputed with Satan about the body of Moses (ver. 9); if, indeed, the writer be not alluding to Zech. iii. 1-3.

The whole of this epistle is occupied with a description, and a denunciation, of certain false teachers, who are manifestly the same as those portrayed in 2 Pet. ii. The Apostle warns Christians against the dangerous tenets of these men by the examples of the fallen angels, and of Sodom and Gomorrah; reminds them that the appearance of such characters had been foretold; and exhorts to perseverance in faith and love. The style is remarkable for energy and vehemence.

§ 17. *Revelation of John.*—The Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John, is the only strictly prophetic book of

the New Testament. From the author not styling himself an Apostle, it has been attributed to John the Presbyter; but the external evidence is decidedly in favour of the common opinion. Considerable diversity of view prevails respecting its date, and the place where it was written. From the writer's own statement, it appears that the visions he beheld were vouchsafed in the island of Patmos (c. i. 9), and it is probable that the book was written either there, or shortly afterwards, at Ephesus; but the time of St. John's exile has been variously fixed, some maintaining that it occurred under Nero, A.D. 67, while the received opinion assigns it to Domitian's reign, A.D. 94. The latter opinion seems the best supported by the evidence; and, according to it, the date of the Apocalypse would be about A.D. 97.

For the theories that have been propounded respecting the interpretation of the prophetical symbols of this book the student is referred to works expressly treating upon the subject. A mere enumeration of them would fill a volume. In its two main divisions the book refers to—1, The “things that are,” *i. e.* the existing state of the seven churches of Asia Minor mentioned in cc. ii. iii.; and, 2, The “things which shall be hereafter” (c. i. 19), or the history of the Church from the close of the first century to the end of time. There is an obvious resemblance between the visions of the Apocalypse and those of Daniel; and, indeed, the two books should be studied together, the former being a continuation of the latter. What prophecy was to the Jews, the Apocalypse is to us; and the same blessing which, no doubt, attended the devout perusal, on the part of believers of old, of the elder volume of prophecy, is, by special promise, attached to the study of this, the last of the inspired communications which it has pleased God to vouchsafe to His people.

TABLES

OF

MONIES, WEIGHTS, AND MEASURES, MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.

1. Jewish Money reduced to the English Standard.

				£	s.	d.
A gerah	.	.	.	0	0	1·2687
10		A bekah	.	0	1	1·6875
20		2	A shekel	0	2	3·375
1200		120	50	A maneh, or minah	Hebraica	5 14 0·75
60000		6000	3000	60	A talent	342 3 9

A solidus aureus, or sextula, was worth 0 12 0·5

A sculus aureus, or gold shekel, was worth 1 16 6

A talent of gold was worth 5475 0 0

In the preceding table, silver is valued at 5s. and gold at 4l. per oz.

2. Roman Money, mentioned in the New Testament, reduced to the English Standard.

	£	s.	d.	far.
A mite (Λίπτρον or Ασσάριον)	0	0	0	0½
A farthing (Κοδράντης) about	0	0	0	1½
A penny or denarius (Δηνάριον)	0	0	7	2
A pound or mina	3	2	6	0

3. Jewish Weights reduced to English Troy Weight.

	lbs.	oz.	dwt.	gr.
The gerah, one-twentieth of a shekel	0	0	0	12
Bekah, half a shekel	0	0	5	0
The shekel	0	0	10	0
The maneh, 60 shekels	2	6	0	0
The talent, 50 maneh or 3000 shekels	125	0	0	0

4. *Scripture Measures of Length reduced to English Measure.*

							Eng. feet.	inch.	
A digit							0	0·912	
4	A palm						0	3·648	
12	3	A span					0	10·944	
24	6	3	A cubit				1	9·888	
96	24	6	2	A fathom			7	3·552	
144	36	12	6	1·5	Ezekiel's reed			10	11·328
192	48	16	8	2	1·3	An Arabian pole	14	7·104	
1920	480	160	80	20	13·3	10	A schœnus or measuring line	145	11·04

5. *The Long Scripture Measures.*

				Eng. miles.	paces.	feet.				
A cubit				0	0	1·824				
400	A stadium or furlong			0	145	4·6				
2000	5	A sabbath-day's journey			0	729	3·0			
4000	10	2	An eastern mile			1	403	1·0		
12000	30	6	3	A parasang			4	153	3·0	
96000	240	48	24	8	A day's journey			33	172	4·0

6. *Scripture Measures of Capacity for Liquids, reduced to English Wine Measure.*

				gal.	pints.				
A Caph				0	0·625				
1·3	A log			0	0·833				
5·3	4	A cab			0	3·333			
16	12	3	A hin			1	2		
32	24	6	2	A seah			2	4	
96	72	18	6	3	A bath or ephah			7	4
960	720	180	60	20	10	A kor or coros, chomer or homer	75	5	

7. *Scripture Measures of Capacity for things Dry, reduced to English Corn Measure.*

				pecks.	gal.	pinta				
A gachal				0	0	0·1416				
20	A cab			0	0	2·8333				
36	1·8	An omer or gomer			0	0	5·1			
120	6	3·3	A seah			1	0	1		
360	18	10	3	An ephah			3	0	3	
1800	90	50	15	5	A lettech			16	0	0
3600	180	100	30	10	2	A chomer, homer, kor, or coros	32	0	1	

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