



WHAT IS THE BIBLE?



AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, IN THE LIGHT
OF THE BEST SCHOLARSHIP, AND IN THE MOST
REVERENT AND CATHOLIC SPIRIT,

By J. T. SUNDERLAND.

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Emmett F. Fields

“The Bible is a record of truths and observances, of ways of life and ways of worship, handed down from age to age, moulded by each in turn, growing fuller and richer by time.”

DR. TEMPLE, BISHOP OF EXETER.

“The word unto the prophets spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken ;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.”

EMERSON.

The two indispensable conditions of a nobler and truer theology for the time to come, are, first, a thoroughly honest use of learning—a determination never to ignore or evade whatever criticism history or science demonstrates to be *fact*, however it may upset our preconceived notions or unsettle our traditional belief ; and, secondly, to cultivate with the utmost veneration and tenderness that spiritual element of our being which brings us into living communion with God, and which, though wonderfully nourished and strengthened by the teachings of Scripture, flows from the same divine source, and is only another working of one and the self-same Spirit which uttered Scripture itself.

JOHN JAMES TAYLER.

P R E F A C E.

A Book which finds a place not only in every church, but in every humble home, and which is more highly and more generally prized than any other book in Christendom, and justly so, because it stands at the fountain head of our religion and of much that is best in our civilization, is certainly a book about which we may suppose that all desire to be intelligent ; —and intelligent, not only in the small and meagre way of knowing by heart a good many texts that it contains, but also in the larger and more worthy way, of understanding the book as a whole—whence it came, how it came, from whom it came, under what circumstances it came, what it is, what relation it bears, if any, to other great Sacred Books of the race.

Upon all of these subjects a great deal of new and very valuable light has been poured by recent scholarship, particularly the scholarship of Germany, Holland and England. But as yet this light is shut up for the most part in numerous large and expensive works, a considerable portion of them in a foreign language, and either not yet translated or else translated but very recently, and in such form as to be accessible only

to scholars. It is exceedingly difficult, if not quite impossible, to find any treatment of these subjects that is at once brief, clear, comprehensive, unwarped by theological bias, and in any true sense abreast with the learning and best thought of the time.

For those who have access to the larger and more elaborate works, and have leisure and inclination to read them, this little book is not primarily designed. To such its chief value, if it has any value, will be as a sort of review or condensation, of knowledge which they perhaps have already gained by the expenditure of much time and labor. But the present age is one in which there are so many things to be done and so much to be known, that few persons can take time to go to original sources or to wade through exhaustive treatises. The majority must have information brought to them in a concise, sharp form. To take a single step in the direction of supplying such information, concerning a book which men read more and yet really know less about, than they know about almost any other book, is the aim of the following pages. I ought, perhaps, to add a word as to the origin of the present volume, at least in the form it now assumes.

Early in the autumn of 1877, I published a little book, about one-third or one-half as large as the present volume, bearing the title—"The Bible: What is it?" In less than six weeks the edition (1000 copies) was exhausted; although it was not

advertised, and was put upon the market only in Chicago and a few small towns outside. Since that time the demand for the book has been constant, not only from the particular localities where it was for a few weeks on sale, but from distant parts of the country where stray copies of it chanced to go. In response to this demand (which I have been unable to supply because the book was not stereotyped) and in deference to requests from many friends in my own city and at a distance, whose judgments I cannot but respect, who have assured me that the book meets a real want of the time, I have prepared this new edition,—re-written, embracing a discussion of many important points not touched in the other, and containing quite copious Notes and References for the benefit of any readers who may desire to know more fully the grounds for statements made and conclusions drawn, or who may wish to pursue further their investigation of subjects or points here treated too briefly.

J. T. S.

CHICAGO, ILL., 1878.

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CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE GREAT SACRED BOOKS
OR BIBLES OF THE WORLD.

“ Prophets who have been since the world began.”

SAINT LUKE.

“ In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.”

SAINT PETER.

“ Our own religion takes a place not distinct from, but *among*, all religions, past or present. Its relation to them, is not that they are earth born, while it alone is divine, but it is the relation of one member of a family to other members, who ‘are all brothers, having one work, one hope and one All-Father.’ ”

EDWARD CLODD.

“ Every race above the savage has its Bible. Each of the great religions of mankind has its Bible. These books contain the highest and deepest thoughts respecting man’s relations with the Infinite above him, with his fellows around, and with the mystery of his own inward being. In them are found the purest expressions of faith and hope, the finest aspirations after truth, the sweetest sentiments of confidence and trust, hymns of praise, proverbs of wisdom, readings of the moral law, interpretations of Providence, studies in the workings of destiny, rules for worship, directions for piety, prayers, prophesies, sketches of saintly character, narratives of holy lives, lessons in devoutness, humility, patience and charity.”

O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE GREAT SACRED BOOKS OR BIBLES OF THE WORLD.

The Bible as a Sacred Book. To the question, What is our Bible? scholarship makes, among others, this broad answer: It is one of the Sacred Books of the world; or, in other words, it is one of the six or eight great Bibles of mankind. The verdict is well nigh or quite unanimous that, taken all in all, it is decidedly superior to any of the others. But, however much it may tower above the rest, it is clearly one of a catalogue that includes them as well as it.

What are the other great Bibles of mankind?
They are

1. The Vedas of the Brahmans;
2. The Tripitaka of the Buddhists;
3. The Zend Avesta of the Parsees or Persians;
4. The Chinese Sacred Books of Confucius;
5. The Chinese Sacred Book of Laou-tsze;
6. The Mohammedan Koran.

There have been, and are, other Sacred Books in the world, besides these; these, however, are proba-

bly the most important—at least the most important that have come down to our day. Not to speak of the less notable sacred Books at present in existence, it is now known that the ancient Egyptians possessed sacred volumes ; and one of them—the Book of the Dead—has been brought to light, if not entire, at least in considerable part. In Babylon and Assyria, too, important fragments of what may be called a Sacred Literature, have been discovered. The Greeks have not left us anything which we can properly call a sacred book. The poems of Homer are great national epics, but they have never received that “general recognition or sanction, which alone,” as Max Müller says, “can impart a sacred or canonical character.” Whatever the Celts, the Germans and the Slaves may have possessed of sacred traditions about their gods and heroes, having been handed down by oral tradition chiefly, has perished beyond all hope of recovery. Some portion of the Eddas alone give us an idea of what the religious and heroic poetry of the Scandinavians may have been. So that I speak with sufficient accuracy, perhaps, when I name as the more important Sacred Books or Bibles of the world—the Brahman Bible, the Buddhist Bible, the Persian or Zoroastrian Bible, the two Chinese Bibles, the Mohammedan Bible ; and, added to these, the Jewish Bible (our Old Testament), and the Christian Bible (our Old and New Testaments).

Sacred Books that arise anonymously, and out of a back-ground of Legend.—Sacred Books or Bibles seem to come into being naturally and inevitably. Almost every people, as soon as they begin to have a literature at all, have a Bible, and it comes about somewhat in this way: In the early times of a people, before they have a literature and before they have writing, there are tales like our nursery tales, and stories and legends about extraordinary persons and events, which in one way or another get into existence. The most notable and striking of these will be told from generation to generation, from family to family, from tribe to tribe, and spreading far and wide will often become in the course of many ages the heritage of a whole nation. As all men are naturally religious, and as almost all in primitive conditions of society are warlike, these tales and legends will assume, quite prominently, either a warlike or a religious character. And as rude instruments of music are invented, and as the people attain to the ability to sing or chant, these legends and tales will assume, more or less, metrical forms. Hence come heroic ballads, war songs and religious hymns.

When at length the people arrive at that condition of civilization in which writing makes its appearance, it is, of course, these heritages of the past, these hymns, ballads, legends, and tales, together with accounts of religious rites, and expressions of re-

religious worship, that naturally are embalmed in writing first. These, because they come down from revered ancestors, and have the halo of a shadowy past upon them, are naturally looked upon as peculiarly sacred. The more religious of these become naturally the first germ of the future Bible. As ages go on, other writings come into being of one kind and another, some of which are of necessity religious or semi-religious. By a sort of natural selection the best of these, or such as meet with most popular favor, or are most in harmony with the religious feeling and sentiment of the people, are preserved, and grow in honor; while the rest sink into obscurity or pass away altogether. These that have thus been preserved and lifted up into honor, as time passes away, grow venerable, and by-and-by are added to the earlier Sacred Literature; and thus the Bible grows. These additions may be few or many according to circumstances. But at last there comes a time, as a result of national disaster, or the stagnation of intellectual and religious life, or for some other cause, when a line gets drawn, and the Sacred Book gets sealed up. Anything written at any point of time on this side the line is not true Bible. Such is in brief the history of the origin of *one class* of Sacred Books or Bibles.

Sacred Books that originate in a Man.—In the case of another class, the starting-point is a *man*. A

great religious teacher makes his appearance among a people, makes a profound impression, inaugurates a new religious movement, or, if you please, a new religion. It is entirely natural that a new Bible should come into being as a result. His followers of course desire to preserve an account of his life, and a record of his teachings. If he himself writes a book or a series of books, this or these will constitute the Bible, or at least the leading and most important part of the Bible. If, however, he does not leave behind anything written by himself, then, naturally, followers and admirers of him write out and preserve a record of his deeds and words as best they can, and these will constitute the Bible or the beginning of it. As Bibles that have thus had their origin in a man, we name of course the two Bibles of China, which sprung from Confucius and Laou-tsze; the Buddhist Bible, which sprung from Sakya-muni, or Buddha; the Koran, which came from Mahomet; and the New Testament, which is the outcome of the life of Jesus.

With reference to all the great Bibles of the world, in whichever of these two ways they may have had their origin, several things are to be said.

1. *Time brings Sacredness.*—All great Sacred Books, so far as we are able to find out, have acquired their peculiar sacredness, for the most part, by age. They might have been much prized at first, or they might not; but all thought of putting them in a

category by themselves, as Sacred Books, was, as a rule, absent at first, and only came in after times and by slow degrees. As they grew old they grew sacred. As men passed on away from the times and circumstances of their origin, they came by degrees to think of that origin as supernatural. The reverence that began to surround them was the halo of antiquity.

The tendency of the human mind is always and everywhere much the same ; the individual thinks of the years of his childhood as golden years ; the nation or race thinks of the age of its childhood as a golden age. Most peoples of the past have either worshipped their ancestors, or at least have thought of their ancestors as in some way more than human. Institutions, or customs, or traditions, or writings, or heritages of any kind that have descended through many generations, have invariably tended to become sacred in the eyes of those to whom they have fallen. Particularly has this always been the case in the more fixed and less progressive civilizations of the East, where originated the great Bibles of the world. Hardly one of these Bibles, indeed hardly one of the writings or fragments of which any Bible is made up, seems to have been regarded as in any true sense sacred when it first came into existence. What the fathers prized, the children venerated, and the children's children lifted up into the miraculous and the divine,

It would be interesting and instructive to take up,

in turn, several of the great Bibles mentioned, and trace in detail the steps, as modern scholarship has been able to discover them, by which they advanced from the position of merely good and highly prized books to the position of Sacred Books. But this the scope of our essay will not allow us to do with reference to any except our own Bible. Suffice it to say that with some of them this advance was very slow, and took hundreds of years. In the case of the Vedas and Zend Avesta it appears to have taken *many* hundreds of years—as is also the case with at least some parts of our own Bible. (See Chapter II.)

In regard to our Old Testament, as is well known, the idea of sacredness attached first to the Pentateuch, or the “Five Books of Moses,” or the “Law,” as it was called. And the sacredness of even this seems to have been something very shadowy and intangible for a long time. The part of the Old Testament called by the Jews “The Prophets” came next to be regarded as sacred; while all that part then known as “Hagiographa,” or “Chetubim,” and including such books as the Psalms, and Proverbs, and Job, which are generally held to-day in higher esteem than any other of the Old Testament books, did not come to be regarded as really sacred much before the time of Christ. Indeed, at the time of Christ, all this part of the Old Testament was ranked much lower in authority, or sacredness than the rest.

As to the New Testament writings, the Epistles seem to have come to be regarded as sacred, or authoritative, considerably earlier than the Gospels or the Acts. But for a long time—certainly for two centuries—the New Testament writings were none of them looked upon by the Christian church as equally sacred and authoritative with the Old Testament. And at least three or four centuries passed away before it was decided, more than in part, which particular ones, of the large number of writings produced within a century or two after the death of Jesus, should be included in the New Testament canon—that is to say, should be regarded as sacred—and which should be cast aside. But this subject of the formation of our own Scripture canon will come up for more extended notice further on.

2. *Fictitious perfection: facing backward.*—Another thing that may be said of all the various Sacred Books of the world, is, that just as soon and just in so far as any people have come to regard any book as sacred, they have begun to be blind to its faults, to take it as an ultimatum, and to be unwilling to seek for, or even to receive, anything as by any possibility better than it, in any particular. Religion is always an advancing and growing thing before it produces for itself a Sacred Book, and especially during the years or the centuries in which it is producing for itself a Sacred Book. But that Book once completed, as a

rule religion straightway ceases to advance or grow. Thereafter its eyes are not turned forward but backward. Everything henceforth must be estimated as good or bad according as it does or does not agree with the teaching of *the Book*.

Curious illustrations of this are abundant. For example: In early times the use of metals was unknown, and consequently the knives which the priests of a certain religion used in connection with certain of their rites, of necessity had to be of stone. Later, when metal had come into use, we should naturally suppose the crude stone knife would give place to a better knife of metal. Not so, however! The knife originally used was of stone; nothing else therefore would ever do in any future time but a stone knife. The fact that the Book had grown to be regarded as sacred had petrified the religion it taught—had cut off the possibility of future progress and improvement,—had made sacred every crudeness, every imperfection, every childish rite or ceremony, as well as every false doctrine, which but for the notion of a sacred and faultless Book the people in due time would have outgrown.

Thus it is that in India a single text of the Vedas (probably misinterpreted, at that), has resulted in the immolation of vast numbers of widows on the funeral piles of their husbands. Thus, too, it is, that we see many a religious rite practised, and many an absurd

doctrine believed to-day in Christendom, which long ago would have been laid aside but for the notion of a Book that is sacred, and whose every word, therefore, must be accepted, and whose lightest injunction must be carried out to the letter, as long as time lasts. Men can't get away from the stone knife. This seems to be the reason why one of the largest of the Christian sects in this country is so insistent upon performing the rite of Christian baptism in exactly the mode in which they conceive it to have been performed in Judea eighteen hundred years ago. The difference in times, habits of the people, climate, makes no difference ; at the time *the Book* crystallized into sacredness, baptism seems to have been practiced generally in a certain form ; and so it must be practiced in the same precise form to-day—even if a hole has to be cut through the ice in a river to make that form possible. It is the stone knife over again.

We have here, too, an explanation of the strange fact, that so many excellent Christian people in this country only a little while ago defended slavery as something good and right. It happened that the people from whom the Old Testament part of our Sacred Book came, held slaves, and, in common with most other nations in that early age of the world, thought it right so to do. The centuries that have passed since that time have carried the world forward to the point where all the leading nations now see plainly that

slavery is wrong. But the fact that the Sacred Book sanctioned slavery blinded many eyes. Instead of asking what was *right*, men and women asked what the *Sacred Book taught*: which was only equivalent to asking what was supposed to be right by a people of much lower civilization than ours, two or three thousand years ago, at the time the Book crystallized into sacredness. This was a fearful mistake, which resulted in arraying tens of thousands of as conscientious and kind-hearted people as the world ever saw, on the side of as dark and cruel, and in its spirit unchristian, an institution as has disgraced our modern world. Such is a specimen of the evils that necessarily come from going back into the past and taking a book written in an age long gone by, and for an age long gone by, and setting it up as a standard for the present age—as the various peoples of the world have set up their Sacred Books or Bibles as standards for all time.

3. *Sacred Books tolerate no Rivals.*—Another thing seems to be common with nearly all the great Sacred Books of the world, or rather with the believers in nearly all these books; and that is, that, just as soon as any one of these books comes to be set up as sacred, or as a Bible, it is from that time forward regarded by its adherents as the *only* Bible, and all the other Sacred Books of the world are cast out as false. In other words, the process of canonization of a book, if I may so say, or of lifting it up from a merely good

book into a Sacred Book or Bible, seems as a rule to be a process of degradation or condemnation of all other books and religions. And so the Buddhist has ever been the bitter foe of the Brahman, and the Mohammedan of the Buddhist, and the Christian of the Mohammedan. Whereas, the evident truth is, each of the world's Bibles contains a great deal that is good, with more or less that is of no value, if not positively bad. Each religion has divine elements in it, as well as elements that are very undivine, and it is a great pity that the eyes of men should be blinded to this fact. It is not only a great pity that the adherents of other Bibles and religions of the world should be blinded to this fact as regards our Christian Scriptures and religion, but it is also a pity that we should be blinded to the same fact as regards scriptures and religions which are not Christian.

4. *Reading Between the Lines.* — Another thing common to all of the world's great Sacred Book is, that as time goes on and the people who accept them grow to larger knowledge and better conceptions of truth than were possible in the earlier ages which produced the books, the adherents of these books always develop a marvellous facility for explaining away contradictions and inaccuracies and things which the increase of knowledge has shown not to be true, and for reading into the books in a thousand places all sorts of new meanings and so-called "deeper inter-

pretations," to make the teachings of the books harmonize with the increase of knowledge. As Viscount Amberley, in his *Analysis of Belief*, clearly points out, the readers of these books approaching them with the fixed notion that they contain vast treasures of superhuman wisdom, are sure to find there, to a large extent, what they seek. That which really belongs to the mind of the reader is attributed to that of the writer. The natural and simple meaning of the words is set aside. All sorts of forced interpretations are put upon them for the purpose of compelling them to harmonize with that which it is supposed they ought to mean. Statements, doctrines, and allusions are discovered in them which not only have no existence in their pages, but which are absolutely foreign to the epoch at which they were written. This process of false interpretation is greatly favored by distance of time. Says Prof. Benjamin Jowett: "All nations who have ancient writings have endeavored to read in them the riddle of the past. The Brahmin, repeating his Vedic hymns, sees them pervaded by a thousand meanings, which have been handed down by tradition; the one of which he is ignorant is that which we perceive to be the true one." Says Max Müller — "Greater violence is done by successive interpreters to sacred writings than to any other relics of ancient literature. Ideas grow and change, yet each generation tries to find its own ideas reflected in the sacred pages of

their early prophets. Passages in the Veda and Zend Avesta which do not bear on religious or philosophical doctrines are generally explained simply and naturally, even by the latest of native commentators. But as soon as any word or sentence can be so turned as to support a [religious] doctrine, however modern, or a [religious] precept, however irrational, the simplest phrases are tortured and mangled till at last they are made to yield their assent to ideas the most foreign to the minds of the authors of the Veda and Zend Avesta." This practice of interpreting into Sacred Books what later ages think ought to be in them, and out of them what later ages think ought not to be in them, is pointed out and illustrated with regard to the Chinese, Brahmanic and Buddhist Sacred Books, by Dr. Legge, Dr. Muir, Burnouf and others.*

Illustrations of the same with regard to our own

* The later Greeks regarded the writings of Homer with the same superstitious veneration, and interpreted into them all sorts of doctrines which could have had no place in the mind of the writer. For example, "they found therein the Neptunian and Vulcanian theory; the sphericity of the earth; the doctrines of Democritus, Herodotus, and of Socrates and Plato in their turn." *Parker's "Discourse of Religion."* "When reason, in its manly growth, can no longer be satisfied with the food that sustained its infancy, imagination comes with a vase of ambrosial allegories. In this way, Philo found the poetic system of Plato within the practical and circumstantial laws of Moses, and the Christian fathers found all the inward warfare of their souls in the wanderings and battles of the Israelites." *Mrs. Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas."* vol. iii., pp. 442, 443.

Bible are more numerous still. Indeed the whole history of Christianity is full of exhibitions of the most marvellous and unflagging ingenuity, in inventing new interpretations of Scripture, to keep pace with the growth of human thought and the progress of knowledge and science.

Almost every scientific theory that comes into existence is found to conflict in some point or other with the theological notions which an unscientific past has handed down. But the theologians are ever on the alert ; and war to the knife is at once declared against the scientific intruder. All friends of the Bible are summoned to the holy war. The conflict rages fiercely and shows no sign of abatement until it is seen that the scientists are getting the day, when it begins to be discovered by the theologians that after all the new theory is harmless, indeed there is no discrepancy between it and Scripture. The discrepancy that had been supposed to exist grew out of a wrong Scripture interpretation. In fact, instead of the two being in conflict, the scientific theory is really taught in the Bible.*

* "As soon as science has won the assent of public opinion to any of its discoveries, or even established the preponderating probability of any of its theories, the religious world has ever made haste to declare that former interpretations of the Scripture have been mistaken, and that this new discovery of science is just what the sacred record has always taught from the earliest times down, if only it had been rightly understood.

"The six days of the first chapter of Genesis never meant days

Thus we see a remarkable similarity in the methods of interpretation adopted generally by the adherents of the various Sacred Books of the World. Everywhere we discover the same facility in "explain-

of twenty-four hours, but geological epochs. The Adam whose creation took place just four thousand years before Christ was not, of course, the first man, but the progenitor merely of the chosen higher race. The Deluge was a local cataclysm or geological subsidence in the neighborhood of the Caspian Sea, etc., etc. As each past age read into the Bible its favorite theories, in Tertullian's time the materiality of the soul, and in Augustine's the flatness of the earth, so the interpreters and commentators of to-day with equal ingenuity can dovetail the inspired record into every latest crinkle of scientific fact or fancy. Spontaneous generation, they tell you, is plainly taught in Genesis; evolution anticipated by Moses; and Darwin and Job evidently had the same ideas. There is a popular story ascribed to the ex-premier of England, in which the objection made to a pleasant plan of marrying Garibaldi to a wealthy English lady, *viz.*, that Garibaldi already had one wife, is triumphantly met by the suggestion that Gladstone could be readily got to *explain her away*. The 'reconcilers' of Science and Scripture whom we have been speaking of manifest a theological dissipating power of equal strength."—*James T. Bixby*.

"Pretty soon it will be difficult to find an orthodox thinker who will not claim to be a disciple of Darwin. Just as we have lived to hear the old-fashioned Whigs assert that they always were original Garrisonian Abolitionists."—*John Weiss*.

"The doctrine of evolution is already almost triumphant. There scarcely remains for the recalcitrants any other resources than to demonstrate its perfect agreement with the (theological) dogmas they are not willing to abandon. The thing is in process of execution. The interpreters are skilful, the sacred texts obliging, the metaphysical theories ductile, malleable, flexible. Courage! We must be very narrow-minded, indeed, not to recognize in the first chapter of Genesis a succinct exposition of the Darwinian theory."—*Letourneau*, "Biology," p. 303.

ing away" whatever proves itself troublesome in their pages, and in reading into them whatever new meanings the changes of the times and the growth of men's thought may seem to make necessary.

5. *Similarities in the Teachings of the Various Sacred Books.*—One other thing should be said about all the Sacred Books, and that is, they have very much in common. This is true as regards the more superficial and less essential parts of their teachings—for example, their legends, their mythological notions, their accounts of miraculous events, their rites and ceremonies; and it is true, also, as regards the more deep and essential parts of their teachings—for example, their social and moral precepts, and the great body of their ethical doctrine.

1. First notice the more *superficial parts* of their teachings. Sacrificial ideas and ideas of atonements unquestionably came into the Jewish and Christian religions from the religions of the heathen world. If Mr. Moody will only go to the various heathen Bibles of the world, he can find texts enough to weave into not two but twenty sermons on "the blood." The rite of baptism is found to have existed long before the time of Christ, and in many parts of the world, besides in Palestine. The Sacrament, or Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, seems to be found essentially in other religions. Circumcision did not originate with the Jews, but was practiced in Egypt long before the

Jewish people had any existence. The ideas of immaculate conceptions and virgin mothers and virgin-born gods are common to many religions and Bibles besides the Jewish and Christian.* The Greek god Mars was fabled to have been born by an immaculate conception of Juno. Zoroaster was supposed to have been born of an immaculate conception by a ray from the Divine Reason. Both Buddha and Krishna of India are reported to have been immaculately conceived. The Hindoo Scriptures tell us that the mother of the latter (Krishna) was overshadowed by the god Brahma. The Messianic idea, too, is one found in other Bibles besides our own.† The Chinese Scriptures contain prophecies of a Chinese Messiah who was to come. The Hindoo Scriptures contain like prophecies of a Hindoo Messiah. Miracles are common to most of the Bibles, and even the very same kinds of miracles, such as raising the dead to life, healing the blind and lame, voices speaking out of heaven to persons favored of God, the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a dove, and so forth.‡ We are

* Brinton's "Religious Sentiment," p. 68, *et seq.*

† *Ibid.* p. 177, *et seq.*

‡ In the different religions of the human race, "we constantly meet the same leading features. The same religious institutions—monks, missionaries, priests, and pilgrims. The same ritual,—prayers, liturgies, sacrifices. The same implements,—frankincense, candles, holy water, relics, amulets, votive offerings. The same symbols,—the cross, the serpent, the all-seeing eye, the halo of rays. The same pro-

told that, when the first Christian missionaries went among the Buddhists, they were astonished to find a religion so much resembling their own in its rites and ceremonies and many of its ideas, that they could only account for the resemblance by supposing that the devil had forestalled God by coming there ahead of them, and setting up a counterfeit as near like Christianity as possible.*

phies and miracles,—the dead restored and evil spirits cast out. The same holy days; for Easter and Christmas were kept as spring and autumn festivals, centuries before our era, by Egyptians, Persians, Saxons, Romans. The same artistic designs; for the mother and child stand depicted, not only in the temples of Europe, but in those of Etruria and Arabia, Egypt and Thibet." "So also the idea of incarnation. He (the Messiah) is predicted by prophecy, hailed by sages, born of a virgin, attended by miracle, borne to heaven without tasting death, and with promise of return. Zoroaster and Confucius have no human father. Osiris is the Son of God; he is called the Revealer of Life and Light; he first teaches one chosen race; he then goes with his apostles to teach the Gentiles, conquering the world by peace; he is slain by evil powers; after death he descends into hell, then rises again, and presides at the last judgment of mankind; those who call upon his name shall be saved. Buddha is born of a virgin; his name means the Word, the Logos, but he is known more tenderly as the Saviour of Man; he embarrasses his teachers, when a child, by his understanding and answers; he is tempted in the wilderness, when older, etc." Higginson's "Sympathy of Religions," pp. 9-11.

* For more full and definite information regarding the similarities in superficial things existing between the various Sacred Books and religions of the world, see Mrs. Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas;" translations of the various Sacred Books; Amberley's "Analysis of Religious Belief;" Brinton's "The Religious Sentiment;" Tylor's "Primitive Culture."

2. But it is not simply in regard to the more external and unimportant things that there is a great deal in common between the different Bibles and the different religions of the world, but the same is even more emphatically true as regards the *deeper and more vital* things, particularly the *ethical and spiritual teachings* of the different Bibles.

Says Max Müller, "There is no religion—or if there is I do not know it—which does not say, 'Do good, avoid evil.' I wish," he continues, "that I could read you extracts I have collected from the sacred books of the ancient world, grains of truth more precious to me than grains of gold; prayers so simple and so true that we could all join in them." After giving a translation of a prayer of some length from the Vedas, he adds, "I am not blind to the blemishes of this ancient prayer, but I am not blind to its beauty either; and I think you will admit that the discovery of even one such a poem among the hymns of the Rig Veda, and the certainty that such a poem was composed in India at least three thousand years ago, without any inspiration but that which all can find who seek for it if happily they may find it, is well worth the labor of a life. It shows that man was never (nor in any nation) forsaken of God."

Here is a passage from Buddha, so noble as to be not unworthy of a place in our Old or New Testament:

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of him who draws the cart.

As the bee collects honey and departs without injuring the flower, so let him who is wise dwell on the earth.

'These sons belong to me, and this wealth belongs to me!' —with such thoughts a fool is tormented. He himself does not belong to himself; how much less sons and wealth!

Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh me. Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, It will not benefit me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled.

He whose evil deeds are covered by good deeds, brightens up this world like the moon when she rises from behind a cloud.

Let a man overcome anger by love, evil by good, the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth." *

Here is another passage, abridged from the Brahman Bible, which cannot fail to call to the mind of the reader some of the most exalted portions of our own Job, Isaiah and the Psalms :

"Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

He who gives life ; He who gives strength ;

Whose command all the bright gods revere ;

Whose shadow is immortality.†

* From a Collection of Buddha's Sayings, translated from the Pali. —See Max Müller's "Science of Religion," p. 112.

† "Some of the hymns (of the Brahman Bible), especially those addressed to Varuna, are marked by a deep sense of guilt, and the mighty Indra must be approached in faith. The doctrine of immortality, also, indicates the ethical character of the Vedic religion." Tiele's "History of Religion," pp. 116, 117.

Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He who through his power is the one King of the breathing and awakening world—

Who governs all, man and beast.

Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He whose greatness these snowy mountains, whose greatness the sea proclaims ;

He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm ;

He through whom the heaven was established,—nay, the highest heaven ;

He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by His will, look up.

Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

He who by His might looked even over the water-clouds—

The clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice ;

He who alone is God above all gods.

Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice." *

Here are some shorter passages from the various Bibles.

When a disciple asked Confucius about benevolence, he said, "It is love to all men ;" and elsewhere, he said, "My doctrine is easy to understand," and his chief disciple adds, "It consists only in having the heart right, and in loving one's neighbor as one's self." When he was asked, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule for all life?" he answered, "Is not

* Rig-Veda X., 121. See Max Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," vol. i., p. 29; "History of Ancient Sanscrit Literature" (by Müller), p. 569. Amberley's "Religious Belief," p. 438. (Am. Ed.)

reciprocity such a word? What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do that to others." *

How almost perfectly are these words from one of the Chinese Bibles like the very highest utterances of Jesus in our own Bible!

Here are two other noble passages from Confucius, in a different strain :

"In the Book of Poetry are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in that one sentence, 'Have no depraved thoughts.'"

"Heaven penetrates to the bottom of our hearts, like light into a dark chamber. We must conform ourselves to it until we are like two instruments of music tuned to the same pitch. Our passions shut up the door of our souls against God."

Says the other Chinese Bible—that of Laou-tsze—"Recompense enmity by doing good." The Koran, or Mohammedan Bible, says: "None of you can be

* It is sometimes claimed that the Golden Rule of Jesus rises incomparably above this corresponding utterance of Confucius, in that the former is positive in form, while the latter is only negative. Persons making this claim evidently forget to read the first half of Confucius' saying. In answer to the question put to him he points out that "*reciprocity*" is a word that serves as a rule for all life. But reciprocity is positive: it is "to do as we would be done by." Having thus, by this one comprehensive word, put forth the positive side of the rule, he then proceeds to state the negative side. I call attention to this, not because I do not place the teachings of Jesus, *as a whole*, above those of Confucius, if not in moral strength at least in spiritual elevation. I certainly do thus place them. But that is only an additional reason why I should be *just* to so great and noble a religious teacher as Confucius.

called a true believer till he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." Another passage of the Koran is this :

" Say there is one God alone—
 God the eternal :
 He begetteth not
 And he is not begotten ;
 And there is none like unto him."

The five commandments of the Buddhist Bible are :

1. Thou shalt not kill.
2. Thou shalt not steal.
3. Thou shalt not commit adultery, or any impurity.
4. Thou shalt not lie.
5. Thou shall not intoxicate thyself.

Again says the Buddhist Bible : " Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time ; hatred ceases by love."

The " eight steps," which, according to Buddha, lead to the highest happiness, are right views, right thoughts, right speech, right actions, right living, right exertion, right recollection, right meditation.

Says the Bible of the Brahmans. " Let no man be offended with those who are angry with him, but gently reply to those who curse him."

Says the Persian Bible : " To strike a man or vex him with words is a sin ;" and it gives this prayer to be used by all who would sincerely worship God : " In whatever way I may have sinned, against whomsoever I may have sinned, howsoever I may have sinned, I

repent of it with thoughts, words, and works. Forgive !”

And thus I might go on quoting from all these different Bibles at great length ; and, judging from the sentiments expressed, no one could possibly tell which I was quoting from—the Bible of the Brahmans, the Bible of the Buddhists, the Bible of the Persians, the Chinese Bible of Confucius, the Chinese Bible of Laoutsze, the Mohammedan Bible, the Jewish Bible, or the Christian Bible—so nearly alike are all these Bibles in their great central, ethical doctrines.

In short, if we could carry our study far enough we should find what Mr. Higginson says, essentially true, that “neither faith, nor love, nor truth, nor disinterestedness, nor forgiveness, nor patience, nor peace, nor equality, nor education, nor missionary effort, nor prayer, nor honesty, nor the sentiment of brotherhood, nor reverence for woman, nor the spirit of humility, nor the fact of martyrdom, nor any other good thing is monopolized by any form of faith. All religions recognize, more or less remotely, these principles ; all do something to exemplify, something to dishonor them.” *

* “Sympathy of Religions,” p. 25. For a comparison of the various Sacred Books and religions of the world with respect to their moral and spiritual teachings, see Conway’s “Sacred Anthology ;” Müller’s “Science of Religion ;” Müller’s “Chips from a German Workshop,” vol. i. ; Samuel Johnson’s “Oriental Religions” (volumes on China and India) ; Clodd’s “Childhood of Religions ;” Amberley’s “An-

Not that I would be understood as claiming that all the great Sacred Books of the world stand on a level, or that their teachings are identical. They do not stand on a level, and in a thousand things their teachings are not identical. As I have already said, undoubtedly our own Bible, particularly our New Testament, is greatly superior to any of the Bibles of the so-called heathen nations. For it must be remembered that the passages quoted above are among the finest to be found in the various Sacred Books from which they are taken. The contents of these Sacred Books range all the way from passages on a level with these quotations, down to the basest superstitions and the most childish follies. Of course therefore in comparing these other Bibles of the world with our own we must compare the foregoing passages not with the lowest, nor even with the average, but with the highest and best of our new and Old Testament teachings. What I affirm is, simply, what the broadest and best scholarship affirms, viz., that while all the great Bibles of mankind have enough in common of things trivial and superficial, if not erroneous, so that no one of them can say to the rest, "I am wholly of God;" it is also true that all have enough in common of

alysis of Religious Belief;" Clarke's "Ten Great Religions;" Tiele's "History of Religion;" Mrs. Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," and "Aspirations of the World;" and translations of the Sacred Books themselves, so far as such translations are accessible.

things that are deep and high and eternally true, so that no one of them can say to any other, "You are wholly of man or of the devil."

So, then, to the question before us : What is our Bible? we have our first answer, to wit : It is one—doubtless it is the highest and best—but it is *one of the six or eight* great Sacred Books or Bibles of the world.

Thus we see that Religion is a broader and therefore a richer thing than Jew or Christian or Pagan has been willing to believe.* Nations and peoples have ever claimed to have monopolies in Religion ; ever have they denied that it had any fountains beyond their own prophets and their own Sacred Books. But in the light of the scholarship of to-day, we see

* "It gave men larger and grander views of God when they learnt that the earth is one among many bodies circling round the sun, and that the sun himself is one of the numberless suns that are strewn as star dust in the heavens; and (rightly viewed) it cannot fail to give each of us, whose nature is made to trust, a larger trust in, and more loving thought of, Him, to learn that our religion is one among many religions, and that nowhere is there an altogether godless race. To use a homely figure, the religions of the world are like human faces, all of which have something in common—nose, eyes, mouth, and so on; while all differ, some being more beautiful than others. But wherever any religion exists which has struck its roots deep down into the life of a people, there must be some truth in it which has nurtured them, and which is worth the seeking; for the hunger of the soul of man can no more be satisfied with a lie, than the hunger of his body can be appeased with stones." Clodd's "Childhood of Religions," pp. 8, 9.

that all such ideas are narrow and poor. Religion is as universal as sunshine, or love, or God. Its fountains are in every land ; its prophets dwell under all skies. It has given mankind, not one Sacred Book, but many.

We may no longer believe that God chose out one little, isolated people of the world, to be the sole recipients of his revelation and his salvation, leaving all the other peoples and nations of the earth neglected and uncared for.* The study of the great religions of the world, which is going forward so rapidly, is giving birth to the nobler and worthier faith, that God is the God of the whole earth. As Saint Peter puts it—" God is no respecter of persons (that is, does not have pets and favorites among his human children); but in every land he that reverences Him and works righteousness is accepted with Him." Or, as it is sung by Whittier :

" ALL souls that struggle and aspire,
ALL hearts of prayer, by Thee are lit;
And, dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and centuries sit "

* Kuenen's Religion of Israel, vol. i., pp. 51-2. Higginson's Sympathy of Religions. Samuel Johnson's " Oriental Religions," vol. i., Introduction.

CHAPTER II.

MORE PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN AND
GROWTH OF OUR BIBLE.

“The collection of writings which forms the Bible is, in its greater part, the remains of the ancient Hebrew literature. It is not a Creed nor a Creed-book, which men are called upon to receive under penalty of damnation. It nowhere claims to be so. Nor is it a body of immutable laws for our time, or for any other. Many of its ideas on creation, on the Divine Being, and His intercourse with men, and on various other subjects, are simply such as were suited to the infancy of the human race. The Bible may nevertheless, if wisely used, be a help and an influence to guide and enlighten the conscience; as it is a channel through which the Unseen Spirit has often spoken to men, and may still speak to us, if we will listen.”—G. VANCE SMITH, *Member of the Bible-Revision Committee.*

“The experience of many ages of speculative revolution has shown that while knowledge grows and old beliefs fall away, and creed succeeds to creed, nevertheless that Faith which makes the innermost essence of Religion is indestructible.”—Prof. JOHN FISKE, in “*Cosmic Philosophy.*”

“No one would venture now-a-days, to quote from a book, whether sacred or profane, without having asked these simple and yet momentous questions: When was it written? Where? and by whom? Was the author an eye-witness, or does he only relate what he has heard from others? And if the latter, were his authorities at least contemporaneous with the events which they relate, and were they under the sway of party feeling or any other disturbing influence? Was the whole book written at once, or does it contain portions of an earlier date; and if so, is it possible for us to separate these earlier documents from the body of the book?”—MAX MULLER.

CHAPTER II.

MORE PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF OUR BIBLE.

The Bible a Collection of Hebrew Literature.—A second answer that the most broad and candid (and withal reverent) scholarship of the age makes to the question—What is our Bible? is this: It is a collection of Religious Literature of a religiously very notable ancient people—the Jews.

The word Bible comes from the Greek τὰ βιβλία (plural), which means *the books*, or *the little books*. Thus in its very etymology it reveals the fact that it is not *one* book but *many*.

As the Hindoo Sacred Books are collections of the early religious literature of the Hindoos, and as the Zend Avesta or Persian Sacred Book is a collection of the early religious literature of the Persians, so our Old Testament is a collection of the early religious literature of the Hebrew people, and our New Testament is a collection of religious literature

of a later period of Jewish history—that period which begins with Jesus and extends a hundred and fifty years after his death.

If we would get a proper knowledge of these two collections of literature (or, putting the two together and speaking of them both combined as one—if we would get a proper knowledge of this one collection of literature) several things need to be clearly understood.

The Hebrew People.—First, with regard to the people whose literature it is. In war, in politics, in art, in philosophy, in literature other than religious, the Jews do not seem to have been remarkable. But *religiously* they were most remarkable. It appears not to be extravagant to say, that in the ancient world they attained to an eminence as much above all other peoples of the *circum-Mediterranean* world, in religion, as did Greece in art, philosophy and science, or Rome in war and government.

As with individual persons, so with peoples and nations, one peculiarly gifted by nature in one direction, and favored by circumstances, attains to splendid eminence in that direction; while another, differently endowed by nature and differently circumstanced, attains to eminence in a different direction. The Jews seem to have had remarkable religious endowments, and to have been remarkably circumstanced religiously, and as a result we have from them in the

literature collected together within the lids of our Bible, doubtless on the whole the finest moral and religious product of the ancient world ; as fine in its way as were the different products of Greece and Rome in their respective ways.

However, we must not understand that the Jews always and from the beginning of their history occupied this high religious elevation, any more than we must understand that the Greeks and Romans always occupied their high elevation in government and art. On the contrary, all came up by a long and slow process of growth and development from humble and rude beginnings. Just as we can trace Greece back to the time when it had no art, no science, and no philosophy ; and Rome back to the time when it was only a handful of well-nigh lawless barbarians ; so we can trace the Jewish people back to the time when their religious ideas were, to say the least, very low and crude ; indeed to the time when (if we may follow such eminent authorities as Drs. Kuenen, Oort, Tiele and Kalisch) they had "no civil government," when their religion was more or less "polytheistic," when "bloody sacrifices formed the chief part of their worship," and when "even human sacrifices were not unusual" among them.* From this low condition, and

* Dr. Oort, *Bible for Young People*, Eng. Ed., vol. i., pp. 19-20. On the subject of the early polytheism of the Jews, Kuenen says : "At first the religion of Israel was polytheism. During the eighth

through a most extraordinary career, reaching over a period of time nearly two-thirds as long as has elapsed

century before Christ the great majority of the people still acknowledged the existence of many gods, and, what is more, they worshipped them. And we can add that during the seventh century and down to the beginning of the Babylonish exile (586 B. C.) this state of things remained unaltered. Jeremiah could say to his contemporaries without fear of contradiction: 'According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah!' Religion of Israel, vol. i., p. 123. Kuenen also argues with great force that for several centuries, indeed till near the time of the captivity, Jehovah was extensively worshipped under the form of a young *bull*. Religion of Israel, vol. i., pp. 235, 236, 345, 346. See I. Kings xi. 4-8, where we find Solomon setting up shrine to the heathen gods Milcom, Chemosh and Ashtoreth. See, also, I. Kings xii. 26-33, where after the division of the kingdom we discover the northern king building shrines at Dan and Bethel to make good the loss of the Temple, and placing in each a gilded bull, saying to the people, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt." See also Tiele's Hist. of Religion, pp. 86, 89. On the subject of *human sacrifices*, Kuenen, says: "In the worship of Molech, human sacrifice occupies an important place. But it not unfrequently occurs also in the worship of Jehovah. When Micah introduces one of his contemporaries, a worshipper of Jehovah, speaking thus:

'Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?'

it is undoubtedly implied that in his days such a sacrifice was not looked upon as at all unreasonable. Human sacrifice appears as an element of the bull-worship in the kingdom of the ten tribes; David seeks to avert Jehovah's anger by the death of seven of Saul's progeny (II. Sam. xxi. 1-14); Samuel hews Agag the king of the Amalekites in pieces *before the face of Jehovah* at Gilgal (I. Sam. xv. 33); Jephthah promises Jehovah a human sacrifice, and fulfils that promise in the immolation of his own daughter (Judges xi. 30, 31, 34, 40)." Earlier than this, Abraham is represented as offering up his son

since the Christian era, the Jewish people rose to the splendid height of religious development which they at last attained.

Isaac (Gen. xvii.) at the command of Jehovah. To be sure this, as it happened, did not result in the death of Isaac; but the account shows that Abraham intended to slay him, thought it right to slay him, and would have slain him had it not been for the voice which he thought he heard, and the discovery of the ram caught in the bushes. For a full statement of proofs that human sacrifice was practiced among the Jews, see *Religion of Israel*, vol. i. pp. 236, 237, 249, 252. Also see *Kalisch's Commentary on Leviticus, Part I.*, pp. 248-253; also *Bible for Young People*, vol. iii. pp. 316-317, 393-395. I will quote briefly from the latter: "The sacrifice of children to Molech was performed in the valley of the Son of Hinnom, which stretches along the southern boundary of Jerusalem. Now in this valley there was a certain enclosure walled off, and called 'the Tophet,' in which stood a number of altars and images. It was to this place that the children were brought for sacrifice. Jewish scholars, long after the beginning of our era, have represented the children as being burned alive, while the priests attempted to drown their shrieks with music. But this is incorrect. The children were slaughtered just like other victims, and their blood was poured over the sacred stones. Then the bodies were brought to the image of Molech, which was probably in human form, with an ox's head, and its arms stretched out before it sloping downwards toward a hole filled with fire, into which the children rolled when laid upon the outstretched arms, while music was played in honor of the deity. It is difficult to make out how far the Judaeans who sacrificed their children in the valley of the son of Hinnom distinguished between Molech and Jehovah, and in what relation the worship of the one stood to that of the other; but it is certain that these Molech worshippers frequented the temple of Jehovah, invoked his name, and thought they were pleasing him when they sacrificed their children. Sacrifice to Molech was a part of the ancient Israelitish religions, as well as those of Canaan. The straits to which Judah was reduced in the reign of King Ahaz, induced that monarch to offer one of these

The Literature Heterogeneous.—Coming back now from this glance at the people from whom the literature, gathered together in the Bible, came, what is the *character* of the literature?

As, in the very nature of the case is to be expected, it is made up of a great variety of writings; a great variety so far as matter is concerned, and also a great variety so far as style and quality of literary work is concerned.

Earliest of all, under the name of history, we have a collection of legends, myths, traditions, accounts of persons, so far as can be found out purely imaginary.* Later, or farther on in the volume, we come frightful sacrifices (II. Kings xvi. 3), and perhaps it was he who built the Tophet. Under Hezekiah, the worship there was suspended, or at any rate it languished; but it flourished more and more under King Manasseh, who led the way himself by sacrificing his first-born son. (II. Kings xxi. 6.)”

All these facts give us a startling revelation not only of the exceedingly low beginnings of the Jewish religion, but also of its slow progress, and the frequent terrible checks and reactions it experienced in its career. However, the splendid elevation it finally reached in some of its great teachers—as the Second Isaiah, Jesus and Paul—only becomes the more wonderful because of the long road it had travelled, and the great obstacles it had been compelled to overcome.

* Says Mr. Grote, in his preface to his *History of Greece*: “I describe the earlier times by themselves, as conceived by the faith and feeling of the first Greeks, and known only through their legends, without presuming to measure how much or how little of historical matter these legends may contain. If the reader blame me for not assisting him to determine this,—if he ask me why I do not undraw the curtain and disclose the picture,—I reply in the words of the painter Zeuxis, when

to real history, for a long time, however, mixed with much that is legendary, but growing more and more firm and reliable as we come down the stream of time.

the same question was addressed to him on exhibiting his masterpiece of imitative art : 'The curtain *is* the picture.' What we now read as poetry and legend was once accredited history, and the only genuine history which the first Greeks could conceive or relish of their past time."

This illustrates well the early condition, not simply of the Greeks, but also of nearly all other ancient peoples, the Hebrews included. It is only a little while since the vast back-ground of "shadowy times and persons" of early Greek legend and myth, was supposed to be, in large part at least, real history. So, too, it is only since Niebuhr that the legends of early Rome have been detached from Roman history. A hundred years ago the stories of Romulus and Remus, the elder Brutus, the Tarquins, the Horatius who

" kept the bridge
In the brave days of old,"

were all supposed to be reliable narratives of real persons and events. But now no respectable historian thinks of treating them as anything else but legends.

The same change in the method of treating early Hebrew history is rapidly making its appearance. The best writers are more and more distinguishing between the earlier period of legend (and perhaps also myth), and the later period of real history. Kuenen claims that the historical period cannot be carried back with any certainty beyond the eighth, or at the very farthest the ninth century B.C. "It is most clearly evident," he says, "that the Old Testament narratives of Israel's earliest fortunes are entirely upon a par with the accounts which *other* nations have handed down to us concerning *their* early history. That is to say: their principal element is *legend*. The remembrance of the great men and of the important events of antiquity was preserved by posterity. Transmitted from mouth to mouth it gradually lost its accuracy and precision, and adopted all'sorts of foreign elements. The

Then, also, we find poetry of various kinds, as lyric, didactic and epic—and of all degrees of excellence.

principal characteristics which legend shows among other ancient nations are found also among the Israelites." Religion of Israel, vol. i. p. 22.

However, let us not understand that because what comes to us from the earlier ages of Israel's existence is so largely legendary, it is therefore valueless. No conclusion could be further from the truth. True, it has little value as history; but history is not the only valuable form of literature in this world. In the poetry of a people, in the ballads and songs of a people, in the legends and traditions of a people, we often have a more precious legacy even than in their chronicles. The poems of Homer reveal to us the Greek people of his time—their hopes and fears, loves and hates, joys and sorrows, aspirations, yearnings, worship—the whole world, indeed, of their deepest thoughts and feelings, as no mere historic narrative of facts could have done. The same is doubtless, to a considerable extent, true of the Old Testament legends. They are products and survivals of what was deepest in the thoughts and feelings and beliefs of the old times which preceded the birth of reliable history.

See Kuenen, vol. i. pp. 12-27; Clodd's *Childhood of Religion*; Hedge's *Primeval World of Hebrew Tradition*; Max Müller's *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii.; Ewald's *History of Israel*, vol. i. pp. 11-41, *et seq.* For a collection of Legends of Old Testament characters, gathered from sources outside the Bible, see Baring-Gould's *Book of Old Testament Legends*. For Greek Legends, see Grote's *History of Greece*, vol. i. For a graphic account of the process by which legends have their birth or come into existence, see Macaulay's Introduction to his "Lays of Ancient Rome." For a discussion of the mythical element in the Bible, see Goldziher's *Hebrew Mythology*; also chapter on "The Mythical Element in the New Testament," in Dr. Hedge's "Ways of the Spirit." On the general subject of Myths, see Cox's *Aryan Mythology*; Tyler's *Primitive Culture*, vol. i.; Fiske's "Myths and Mythmakers."

We find also biographies ; collections of laws ; collections of proverbs ; accounts of religious institutions and ceremonials ; religious utterances of various kinds—as of preacher and prophet ; and finally quite a large number and variety of epistles or letters on speculative and practical religious subjects.

Difficulties in the Way of Fixing Dates.—Of course one of the first and most necessary questions to be asked is—When was this literature written ? This question, however, scholars find a very hard one to answer ; indeed, with regard to many of the books of the Bible, they find themselves as yet utterly unable to answer it. This grows partly out of the fact that the Jews were a small and very much isolated people, very little mentioned in the history and literature of other nations, so that we have few helps from outside in fixing the date of any event in Jewish history, whether it be the composition of a book of their Scriptures or any other. Then, again, it grows partly out of the fact that all Jewish writers seem themselves to have been very careless about their dates—very few of them leaving any data of any kind whereby their time of authorship can be more than approximately fixed. And finally, it grows largely out of the fact that Jewish literature is to so great an extent composite—not the product of any one time or one writer, but compiled from previously existing documents. Says Matthew Arnold, speaking of the earlier

historical books: "To that collection many an old book had given up its treasures, and then itself, vanished forever. Many voices were blended there—unknown voices, speaking out of the early dawn." Prof. Robertson Smith, in his famous article on the Bible, in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, after treating at some length of the great number of fragments from earlier documents that are found to have been woven into the historical books of the Old Testament, says: "And now a single word on the way in which these various elements, * * * dated from so various ages, came to be fused into a single history. The Semitic genius does not at all lie in the direction of organic structure. In architecture, in poetry, in history, the Hebrew adds part to part, instead of developing a single notion. The temple was an aggregation of small cells; the longest psalm is an acrostic; and so the longest Biblical history is a stratification, and not an organism. This process was facilitated by the habit of anonymous writing, and the accompanying lack of all notion of anything like copyright." We are sometimes told of the exceeding care taken by the Jewish scribes in making copies of their Scriptures—going so far, it is said, as to count the words and letters in the copies they had made, to be sure that they had not left out or put in even a letter. It is true that after the completion of the Scripture canon, and the rise of the order of scribes, great care came

to be exercised, finally, in copying. But this did not take place, at the very earliest, before about 100 B.C., if it did before the Christian era. Previously to that time, during all the ten centuries or more that elapsed while the books of the Old Testament were getting written and gathered together into an authoritative collection, there was no such carefulness. On the contrary there was a license exercised by copyists greater than, in our day, we have any conception of.*

“If a man copied a book, it was his to add to and modify as he pleased, and he was not in the least bound to distinguish the old from the new. If he had two books before him to which he attached equal

* Says Davidson: “As to Ezra’s (458 B. C.) treatment of the Pentateuch * * it is safe to affirm that he *added*;—making *new* precepts and practices either in place of or beside the old ones. He threw back several later enactments into earlier times. He did not scruple to refer to Moses what was of recent origin.” “Canon of the Bible,” pp. 20, 21. “We know that in the captivity, and immediately after, older prophesies were edited. Men of prophetic ability wrote in the name of distinguished prophets, inserted new pieces in the productions of the latter, or adapted and wrote them over. The first thirty-five chapters of Isaiah, and L. and LI., of Jeremiah are an evidence of that.” Ditto pp. 24, 25. “Like their predecessors of the great Synagogue, the Hasmonean rabbis revised the text freely, putting into it explanatory or corrective additions which were not always improvements.” Ditto p. 47. “After the last canon was made, about a century or more anterior to the Christian era, the text was not considered inviolate by the learned Jews; it received modifications and interpolations long after.” Ditto p. 48. Also see Kuenen’s Religion of Israel, vol. iii., pp. 6-9, 58-62.

ed them by such additions or modifications as he felt to be necessary." "On such principles minor narratives were fused together, one after the other." Moreover, continues Prof. Smith: "In the poetical as well as in the historical books, *anonymous* writing is the rule*; and along with this we observe great freedom on the part of the readers and the copyists, who not only made verbal changes but composed new poems out of fragments of others.* In a large part of the book of Psalms a later hand has substituted Elohim (God) for Jehovah. Still more remarkable is the case of the book of Job, in which the speeches of Elihu quite break the connection, and are almost universally assigned to a later hand."

This curious combination of the functions of the copyist and the author is shown to have continued right on through a large part of the Old Testament. Indeed, the same thing re-appears in the New Testament. Says Prof. Smith upon this point: "All the earliest external evidence points to the conclusion that the synoptic gospels are non-apostolic digests of spoken and written apostolic tradition, and that the arrangement of the earlier material in orderly form took place only gradually and by many essays."†

* Compare Psalm cviii. with Psalms lvii. and lx.

† This process of forming books out of other books and documents, Ewald calls by the suggestive name of "*book-compounding*." For a most excellent account of the anonymous character of Hebrew literature (especially of Hebrew *historic* literature) and of the extent

So that there is great vagueness, and in the very nature of the case there always must be great vagueness and uncertainty, hanging over this whole subject of the time when the books of the Bible were written. And even if we could find out just when they first assumed their present form, then the further question would immediately rise with regard to that whole number which are confessedly compilations, viz., when were those *earlier* books or documents written from which the present books were made up?

Approximate Dates of the Earliest and Latest Old and New Testament Books.—The notion formerly held was that the first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses, nearly fifteen hundred years before Christ. But, with the growth of modern scholarship, this idea has been steadily losing ground. Few of the best authorities now put the date of the composition of these books (in the form in which they now appear) earlier than the reign of Manasseh (696–641 B.C.) or of Josiah (636–609 B.C.).* Probably the oldest to which this practice of “book-compounding” was carried, both in Old and New Testament times, see Ewald’s *History of Israel*, vol. i., p. 56–61. The Book of Esther (as Ewald affirms) is the only Old Testament book which we may claim to have been preserved to us perfectly as it was first composed (p. 60).

* Indeed it seems difficult to evade the arguments adduced by Kuenen to show that some passages relating to the ceremonial law were composed and inserted as late as the exile. See “*Religion of Israel*,” vol. ii., pp. 152, 153, 191 307. See also Knappert, chapters xvii. and xviii.

est complete books of the Bible are the prophecies of Amos, Hosea and Micah.* These were written in the eighth century before Christ.

The remaining Old Testament books were written between that time and a point of time which is very uncertain—fixed by different authorities anywhere from 400 to 100 B.C.

Coming down to the New Testament, we find one class of critics fixing the dates of its various books between 50 and 100 A.D.; while another class affirm that some must have been produced as late as A.D. 175.

In short, this at least is true: the various histories, biographies, poems, prophecies, letters, and productions of one kind and another which make up this collection of literature called our Bible, was more than a thousand years in coming into existence; some of the productions making their appearance (at least in substance, if not in their present form) in the morning of Jewish civilization, as early in the nation's history as the nation had a literature at all; while others did not come into being until the nation had passed through long and varied experiences of contact with some of the richest civilizations of the ancient world, including among others the Phœnician, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek and the Roman.

Comparing the date of the origin of our own Sacred

* Davidson says "Amos, Hosea and Joel."

Scriptures with the date of the origin of the other great Sacred Scriptures of the world, we see from the foregoing that no part of our Scriptures can have been written so early by probably some centuries as the earliest portions of the Vedas and Zend Avesta, which are decided by the best authorities to have been produced as far back as from 1000 to 2000 B.C.* On the other hand, we see that certain portions of our Sacred Scriptures—the whole New Testament part, with possibly one or more books of the Old—were written considerably later than any of the other great Bibles except the Koran, which was not produced till the seventh century after Christ.

Writers of the Books.—By whom were the various books or writings composed, that make up this literature which we call our Bible? To obtain an answer to this question the best scholarship of the past fifty years has put forth its most earnest and untiring efforts, but with little result. With regard to fully half the books we are as uncertain about who wrote them as about when they were written. What has already been said about the composite nature of many of the books, and the habit, seemingly so well-nigh universal among Jewish writers, of copying and compiling with-

* Dr. Haug places the date of the earliest hymns of the Rig Veda at not later than 2400 B.C. For a brief discussion of the subject see Whitney's "Oriental and Linguistic Studies," pp. 21, 73, and Max Müller's "Chips," vol. i., p. 11.

out giving credit, goes far toward accounting for this. Speaking in a general way, ancient Jewish literature is an anonymous literature. To be sure, as we open our Bibles we find names of supposed authors at the head of a large proportion of the books. But we need to go only a very few steps in the direction of an examination of the subject, before we find that the mere fact of finding a name attached to a book signifies little or nothing. Modern scholarship, as represented in Eichhorn, DeWette, Ewald, Davidson, Kuenen, and the ablest Biblical critics of the century, has made it certain that there are very few of the more important books, especially of the Old Testament, that do not give evidence of more than one hand concerned in their authorship; and often the different authors live in ages far apart.

The Old Testament Books.—As to the *Pentateuch*, it has been already intimated that Moses cannot have been its author, at least in anything like the form in which it comes down to us.

It is certainly a compilation. At least three distinct documents, known among biblical students as the "Earlier Elohist," the "Later Elohist," and the "Jehovistic," are plainly traceable as running through it. *

* Davidson does not put the date of the earliest Jehovistic document farther back than 1000 B.C. Ewald fixes the date of the "Book of Origins" (the name given by him to the first extended histori-

All five of the books must have been put in the form in which we now have them by some editor (or editors) living at least six or seven hundred years after Moses. Who that editor was (or who those editors were) we can only guess. There is steadily growing doubt whether anything in either of the books may safely be assigned to Moses, or even to the time of Moses, except the ten commandments (in abridged form), and three or four other short fragments.* Deu-

cal document that we can get distinct continuous traces of in the Old Testament narrative) at about the same period. (See Ewald's History of Israel, vol. i., pp. 63-96.) Thus we have an interval of five hundred years (see Kuenen, vol. i., pp. 17, 18) occurring between the time of Moses and the appearance of any written documents giving accounts of his deeds. How were these accounts preserved during these five hundred years? They must have been preserved mainly by *oral tradition*. But if the events of the life of Moses came down for several centuries mainly by tradition, how must it be with the events which are said to have occurred long before Moses? The Book of Genesis purports to narrate events which occurred from 300 to 2500 years earlier than Moses. Whence came the original records of these? In attempting to answer, it may be well for us to bear in mind that these dates take us back to a period from 500 to 2500 years before the invention of a phonetic alphabet or the existence of anything which can properly be called writing.

* The earliest things committed to writing among the Jews were probably *the ten words* proceeding from Moses himself, afterwards enlarged into the ten commandments which have come down to us in two versions differing in some particulars. (See Exod. xx., and Deut. v.) It is also probable that several legal and ceremonial enactments belong, if not to Moses himself, at least to his time; as also the list of stations in Numbers xxxiii.; the Song of Miriam in Exodus xv. (probably consisting of a few lines at first and subsequently enlarged);

teronomy is distinct in authorship from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers; although the author of Deuteronomy may possibly have been the last editor of the other four.

Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are compilations. Davidson thinks they may have been put in their present form by the writer of Deuteronomy.

Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah seem to have been originally written as one book, at a very late date, probably not earlier than 400 B. C., or a hundred and thirty-six years after the return from the captivity; but the name of the author (or compiler) we do not know.

Esther was probably written about the same time—possibly in Persia. Its author is unknown. The book is entirely unreliable as history.

The origin of the Book of *Job*, as to author, time and place, is one of the great Bible-riddles. Most likely the book came into existence (except some few later additions) about the time of Josiah's reformation, a little before 600 B.C.; but from whom we have no data for judging.

The *Psalms* were written by many different persons—all the way from David down to the time of the Maccabees—between 175 and 100 B.C. How many

and the triumphal ode over the fall of Heshbon (Numbers xxi. 27-30). These fragments probably comprise all in our Bible that comes down from Moses' time. (Davidson.)

are from the pen of David cannot be definitely known ; it is certain, however, that the number is comparatively small. David was the greatest name among the psalm-writers of Israel, and hence the tendency was to ascribe to him psalms which really did not come from him ; just as the tendency was to ascribe to the great prophets, as Isaiah and Jeremiah, prophecies which did not come from them ; and to Solomon proverbs which he did not write ; and to Moses laws which had their origin many centuries later than Moses.

The Book of *Proverbs* is probably the work of many writers. It seems to be made up of four or five distinct collections, and may have assumed its present form during the reign of King Hezekiah. How many of the proverbs are from Solomon it is impossible to tell. The book takes the name of Solomon doubtless because he is the greatest of those who contributed to it.*

The Canticles (called the Song of Solomon) was probably not written by Solomon ; though it may possibly have come from near his time.

Ecclesiastes most likely (Kuenen says *certainly*) comes from a time subsequent to the Babylonish exile ; and therefore cannot of course be from the pen of Solomon.

Lamentations comprises five songs of mourning,

* It is said that the Greeks ascribed most of their sententious maxims to Pythagoras ; the Arabs theirs to Lokman and a few others ; the Northern nations theirs to King Odin. (Noyes.)

in which the deplorable condition of Judah and Jerusalem, after they have been conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, is depicted. The five songs are by different authors.

The Prophecies are less anonymous than any other parts of the Old Testament, though critics do not by any means agree as to the authorship of all the prophetic books.

Beyond question the book of *Isaiah* was written by at least two, and probably more than two, different writers. Since Gesenius the latter part of the book—from chapter xl. to the end—has been assigned by almost all the most distinguished commentators to a great unknown prophet writing near the close of the exile at Babylon. Many of the earlier chapters of the book, also, it is conceded, cannot have come from the pen of Isaiah.*

Perhaps no one of the so-called prophetic books has given rise to more controversy than the book of *Daniel*. Who wrote it, it is impossible to tell. The best authorities are, however, coming to be more and

* "Chapters xxxvi. to xxxix., which embrace historical narratives, especially that of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, belong to a later author. Chapters xl. to lxvi. are by a prophet at the time of the captivity, whom we generally call, for want of any other name, the second Isaiah. Probably, these prophecies were not collected together till after the fall of Babylon. The following passages, too, belong to later times: Chapters xiii. 1, to xiv. 23; xxi. 1 to 10; xxiv. to xxvii.; xxxiv. to xxxv. Though they cannot all be ascribed to one author, they all belong to the days of the captivity." Knappert, p. 13.

more agreed, that it was probably produced not within the period of the Captivity at all, as has been supposed, but two or three centuries later, during the time of the Maccabees; and therefore that its author cannot have been Daniel.

The Book of *Zechariah* is worthy of especial mention because of the fact that it contains utterances from three different prophets. Says Knappert: "The first of these wrote chapters i. to viii. He was really the latest of the three, and a contemporary of Haggai. The second author, a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Isaiah, wrote chapters ix. to xi. The third prophet, who was the author of chapters xii. to xiv., lived shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, at the same time with Jeremiah and Habakkuk. It is not improbable that it was the similarity of name of the three prophets that led to their writings being united in a single book." *

→ *Who wrote the New Testament Books?*—Passing on to the New Testament we find a condition of things not materially different from what we have

* For a remarkably clear account of the probable dates and authorship of the various Old Testament books, see Knappert's "Religion of Israel," chapters i., ii. and iii. This account coincides with the views of Kuenen, and differs only a little from the views of Davidson. See Davidson's "Canon of the Bible," Chapter ii. and "Introduction to the Old Testament." Ewald is somewhat more conservative, and as a rule fixes the dates a little earlier; yet his main conclusions do not differ widely from the views of Knappert, Kuenen and Davidson.

discovered in the Old. The authors of some of the books can be ascertained, the authors of others cannot. First of all we come to the Gospels. Asking the question—Who wrote these? we are at once in difficulty.

How and by whom they came into existence we cannot even begin to understand until we get clearly in mind the fact that *oral tradition* preceded any written Gospel record. “For a considerable period this tradition was the only source of information as to the fortunes and the teachings of Jesus. It was but natural that as long as Jesus was living no one should think of writing an account of his words and deeds. And even during the twenty or thirty years or so after his death, when his disciples were preaching him as the Christ to an ever wider circle, though the want of such gospels must soon have made itself generally felt, no one undertook to write one. For the Christians expected Jesus himself to return ere long from heaven, and what would then be the use of a written record of his former life?

“It was not till the expectation of the return of Jesus had fallen somewhat into the back-ground that such a task could be taken up with affectionate zeal. And meanwhile the oral tradition had already taken a tolerably settled form in the various circles of Christians. In an age when reading and writing were less common than they are at present, the

memory was much more tenacious, and words were remembered with greater accuracy. Detached accounts as well as whole sets of narratives referring to the labors of Jesus in Galilee, his journey to Jerusalem, his stay in the city, and his death were current amongst the Christians. His parables and his aphorisms, and his more elaborate discourses were also passed from mouth to mouth, sometimes in connection with some event and sometimes quite detached. One of the early fathers tells us that the apostle Matthew wrote a collection of 'Sayings of the Lord,' in Hebrew. This collection has probably been taken up into our first Gospel, which is specially rich in sayings of Jesus; and it may be from this fact that it derives its title 'according to Matthew.' *

The Gospels as "Mosaics."—As soon as we come to understand the foregoing facts, it no longer seems strange to us that the authors of the different Gospels cannot be certainly ascertained. They cannot be certainly ascertained because at least three of the four Gospels can have had no real authors, as we usually understand that word. They are the work of editors; they are compilations; they are "mosaics;"—the material which enters in to make them up being real utterances of Jesus, real events of his life, together with more or less of legendary elements

* Bible for Young People, vol. v., pp. 37, 38

and deviations from historic facts, occasioned by the lapse of years and the necessary imperfection of the human memory.*

“Our first two gospels appear to have passed through more than one revision. The third, whose writer says in his preface that ‘many had undertaken to put together a narrative (gospel)’ before him, appears to proceed from a single collecting, arranging, and modifying hand.” † Was that hand the hand of Luke? Were the compilers of the first and second Gospels, Matthew and Mark? Did the different Gospels receive no additions or glosses or alterations from later hands, after the last real editors or com-

* “Every historic religion, that has won for itself a place in the world’s history, has evolved from a core of fact a nimbus of legendary matter which criticism cannot always separate, and which the popular faith does not seek to separate. * * Christianity, like every other religion, has its mythology (or legends), so intertwined with the veritable facts of its early history, so braided and welded with its first beginnings, that the myth and legend are not always distinguishable from the history. * * Yet the mythical (or legendary) interpretation of certain portions of the gospels has no appreciable bearing on the character of Christ. The impartial reader of the record must see that the evangelists did not invent the character; they did not make the Jesus of their story; on the contrary, it was he that made them. It is a true saying that only a Christ could invent a Christ.” Hedge’s “Ways of the Spirit,” pp. 319, 340. The whole chapter (“The Mythical Element in the New Test.”) is full of thought, and will well repay perusal by any who care to understand how independent is moral and spiritual truth of its setting or form of expression.

† Bible for Young People, vol. v., p. 37.”

plers had done their work of putting them in the general form that we have now? * Upon all these questions our best scholars differ, and very likely always will. We do not seem to have sufficient data for the formation of a judgment that shall be much more than conjecture. A great deal can be said, and said honestly on both sides.

Passing to the *Gospel of John*, we are confronted with quite as great difficulties as those that meet us in connection with the other three. † Regarding the

* It is agreed by almost all authorities that the following passages, among others, are such later additions: Matt. vi. 13, Mark xvi. 9-20, Luke ix. 55, 56 (in part), John v. 3, 4; John viii. 1-11.

† The literature of this whole subject is immense, and constantly increasing. There are no better authorities than the Introduction to the New Testament by Davidson, De Wette, and Bleck. For a very brief but candid statement of a few of the more important points of the discussion, see Prof. Smith's article on the Bible, in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

For an admirable statement, in condensed and yet popular form, of the arguments adduced to prove that the apostle John cannot have been the author of the fourth Gospel, see Frothingham's "Cradle of Christ," Chapter vii. In the same chapter and Chapter viii., are also ably epitomized the theory of Baur (which it must be confessed is coming to have no little weight among scholars), that the New Testament literature as it comes down to us is, to a very large extent at least, the product of an early and very deep estrangement that sprung up in the Christian church between the more catholic Pauline party, who would put the Gentile Christians on a level with the Jewish Christians, and the more narrow and exclusive Petrine party, who would give the Jewish Christians a very decided precedence. For the most thorough and exhaustive works of New Testament criticism that have yet appeared in English (translation), see Keim's "Jesus of Nazara; "

authorship of the fourth Gospel, scholarship can hardly be affirmed to have reached anything yet that even approximates a decision. About all that can be said is that among all the more candid critics there seems to be a steadily growing tendency toward the judgment that at least the same author cannot have written the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse.

The Acts and the Epistles. The book of Acts is almost certainly, to some extent, a compilation. Conservative scholars say the compiler was Luke; an affirmation which the most advanced scholars of the radical school dispute.

Following our present order of New Testament books, we come next to the epistles.

Probably the earliest-written of the New Testament books are some of the Epistles of Paul. These are doubtless older than the gospels, although *fragments* or *parts* of the Gospels are very likely older than anything from Paul. Moreover, some of the Pauline epistles, are the most certainly authentic of the New Testament writings. However, there is doubt as to the authorship of a few of them. In one (II. Thessalonians, ii. 2), it is intimated that even during the apostle's lifetime, letters of which he had not written a word, were published under his name. The Epistle to the Hebrews was almost certainly not writ-

Baur's "Paul;" Zeller's "Acts of the Apostles;" and Bleek's "Lectures on the Apocalypse."

ten by Paul ; who was its author can only be conjectured. Such authorities as Baur and Zeller hold that of the fourteen epistles usually ascribed to Paul we cannot be certain that he wrote more than four, viz. : Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians.

Second Peter, Second and Third John, James, Jude and Revelation (or the Apocalypse), have long, and by great numbers of writers, been considered doubtful as to authorship.

Character of the Authors of both the Old Testament and the New as Revealed in their Writings.—What was the character of the writers of the various books of the Bible, so far as we know who those writers were, and so far as we can ascertain their character from their writings? They were men of very different mental ability, very different degrees of culture, very different moral worth, very different degrees of religiousness and spiritual insight, very different habits and associations and tastes. They were representatives of all phases of the progress and mutations of Jewish civilization for a thousand years. They reveal in their writings all the changes which human thought naturally undergoes in so long a period. What one book asserts, another not unfrequently denies ; or what one enjoins, another not unfrequently forbids.

As brief illustrations, contrast the following passages :

"If a man cause a blemish to his neighbor, as he hath done so shall it be done to him, breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." Leviticus xxiv. 19, 20.

"Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." Deut. xix. 21.

"Recompense no man evil for evil." Romans xii. 17.

"Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. v. 44.

Progress in Conception of God.—There is vast change, advance, we may almost say revolution, in the conception of God which appears in the various writings as we go forward from the earlier part of the Old Testament to the later, and especially as we go forward to the New Testament. The earlier writers of the Old Testament represent God as walking, talking, having bodily form, "wrestling with one patriarch, eating veal and cakes with another, contending and for a while in vain with the magic of other Gods," getting angry, being jealous, repenting, sanctioning fraud, commanding cruelty, and exhibiting almost every passion and imperfection of man. But as we advance this tends to pass away. Long before we leave the Old Testament we find the conceptions of Him, entertained by writers, greatly elevated and purified. Not, however, until we come into the New Testament, to Paul and John and Jesus, is the change completed. Once arrived here, the twilight is gone, and we have reached at last the full day.

The earliest conception of God that we find among the Jews (indeed it does not entirely disappear until

near the time of the Captivity) is, not that their God, Jehovah, was the *only* God, but that he was *one of many* gods, though *superior to the rest*. Thus we have the passage (Exodus xv. 11), "Who is like unto thee, Jehovah, *among the Gods?*" Again (I. Kings, viii. 23), "There is no God *like thee*, in heaven above or in the earth beneath." When Moses by Jehovah's command repairs to Pharaoh to demand that he let Israel go, the former does not represent Jehovah as the one sole God of the universe; he simply represents him as the "*God of the Hebrews.*" In the delivery of the Commandments at Mt. Sinai, God is not represented as saying "I am the *only* God; there is *no god but me.*" Instead of that we have him declaring "I am the Lord *thy* God;" "thou shalt have no *other* Gods before me"—at least tolerating the idea that there *were other* gods of other peoples, whom these other peoples might worship, but *they* (the *Hebrews*) must worship *Jehovah* their God. And all along down the history of the Jews * for many hundreds of years we keep coming upon lapses of the people into idolatry: but these lapses are never called *atheism*, as surely they would have been if Jehovah had been regarded as the *only* God, they are simply called *infidelity* or *unfaithfulness to their own* national God, who had brought them up out of Egypt, and done so much for

* See above, p. 45, *note*. Also see Greg's "Creed of Christendom," vol. i., pp. 103-108.

them, and whom they were therefore under obligation to worship.

To show as clearly as I may what advance there is in the conceptions of God held by various writers as we come down into the later ages of the Old Testament, I will place side by side a few passages.

First I select two which represent God as having a *local habitation* and a *bodily form*, putting beside these two or three others which portray him as a *spirit*, *without form or locality*.

“And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, that the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle; and Jehovah talked with Moses.—And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto a friend.” Exod. xxxiii. 9, 11.

“And Jehovah said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by! And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen.” Exod. xxxiii. 21-24.

“But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain thee: how much less this house that I have builded!” I. Kings viii. 27.

“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit! or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” Psalm cxxxix. 7, 8.

The following passages show how different were the conceptions of the *moral* nature of God held by different Old Testament writers.

“The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets.” II. Chron. xviii. 22.

“The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth.” Psalm xxxiii. 4.

“The Lord said unto Moses, Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor jewels of silver and jewels of gold. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them. And they spoiled the Egyptians.” Exodus iii. 21, 22. xi. 2, 3; xii. 35, 36.

“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight.” Prov. xii. 22.

“Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. Psalm xv. 1, 2.

I quote next two or three of the large number of passages which command burnt offerings and sacrifices, and represent God as delighting in these things; placing opposite them two or three of that other large number of passages which represent God as having no interest in any offerings or sacrifices but those of the human heart. The former class of passages are, as a rule, earlier in time than the latter, as would appear more plainly if the books of the Old Testament followed each other in the order of their age. Moreover, the former class are, as a rule, from the priests, and the latter from the prophets—it being everywhere characteristic of the priests and prophets respectively that the religious teachings of the former are comparatively crude, narrow, full of bondage to the letter, wanting in such lofty moral and spiritual utterances as are found everywhere in the latter.

“And Noah offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake.” Gen. viii. 20, 21.

“Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering.” Psalm li. 16.

“Ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord.” Num. xxviii. 27.

“Ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord, thirteen bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs.” Numbers xxix. 13.

“I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.” Isaiah i. 11.

“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil? What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to humbly walk with thy God?” Micah v. 6-8.

However, as I have already intimated, it is not till we reach the New Testament, and Jesus the greatest of the prophets, that we find the very highest conception of God. This we doubtless have in these words of Jesus: “Our Father who art in heaven;” and these: “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Belief in a Future Life makes its Appearance.—The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul does not appear in the first half of the Old Testament. Even so cautious and conservative a writer as Dean Stanley admits this. Indeed, it does not seem too strong to say that the doctrine is positively denied by some of the Old Testament writers, for we read from the pen of the author of Ecclesiastes such words as these: “The dead know not anything, neither have they any reward.” “That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts—even one thing befalleth them; as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast.”

When the idea of immortality does appear, it is

only in a vague and indefinite way until we reach the end of the Old Testament, though it had received some impulse from the Persians during the captivity. The doctrine seems to have come into general popular belief among the Jews during the interval elapsing between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New. As soon as we reach the New Testament, we find it shining from almost every page. Perhaps there is no teaching of the New Testament more conspicuous than that of a future life.

Belief in a Devil and a Hell.—The doctrines of the Devil and of Hell are absent from all those parts of the Bible written before the Captivity. These two doctrines seem to have come into Judaism from the religion of the Persians, with whom the Jews came into very close contact during their exile.*

Thus we see that there is change in thought and doctrine and conception of things touching religion, manifest in the Bible from first to last. Generally it is progress, though not always so; sometimes it is retrogression. And any one, therefore, who reads this varied literature of a thousand years, expecting to find the same teachings, or even always necessarily harmonious teachings, in it, from beginning to end, as regards God, and man, and duty, and the present life, and the life to come, and the great doctrines of religion generally, is expecting something which does not

* See Knappert, pp. 173-4.

exist, and indeed which, in the nature of the case, would be an impossibility. Almost as well might one read the literature of Rome for a thousand years, and expect to find, from first to last, through kingdom, republic, and empire, the same social and political ideas prevailing; or the literature of England for a thousand years, and expect to find there, in all that time, no changes and antagonisms of thought and belief manifesting themselves in religion, philosophy, politics, social affairs.

Relative worth of the Different Books.—Are all the books of the Bible of equal value? I reply—To be sure they are not. How can they be? Can a book like Genesis or Exodus, made up largely of legends, be of equal value as history, with a later book which really *is* history, and can be verified? Can a book like Chronicles, or Kings, or Judges, or Joshua, made up of records of bloody and inhuman wars, be of equal value with a biography of Jesus? Can the Song of Solomon*—an amatory

* The voluptuous imagery of the Song of Solomon has been very generally interpreted allegorically by Christians to signify the perfect union of Christ with his bride the Church. In like manner, spiritually-minded Hindoos were accustomed to consider all descriptions of sexual love in their Sacred Books, as typical of complete absorption of the human soul in the Supreme Soul of the universe. "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. iii. pp. 300, 301.

Dr. Adam Clarke, the great Methodist commentator, speaking of those who attach a spiritual meaning to the book, says: "Their conduct is dangerous; and the result of their well-intentioned labors has been of very little service to the cause of Christianity in general, or to

poem which the author of *Don Juan* or of *Laus Veneris* might well blush to have written, be weighed over against such grand and noble books as *Job* and

the interests of true morality in particular. By their mode of interpretation, an undignified, not to say mean and carnal, language has been propagated among many well-meaning religious people, that has associated itself too much with selfish and animal affections. In it (the *Song of Solomon*) I see nothing of Christ and his church, and nothing that appears to have been intended to be thus understood."

Says Prof. Noyes :

"Certain interpreters tell us that the work expresses the mutual love of Jehovah and the Hebrew nation, or of Christ and the Church, or of God and the individual soul. In opposition to this, it is enough to say, that it is mere fancy; that there is not the slightest allusion to God, to Christ, to the Church, or to the soul of man as related to God, in the whole book. We find in it only lovers and maidens; the praise of personal beauty and passionate expressions of love; lovers conversing with each other, placed in different scenes, eating, drinking, sleeping, embracing, running, climbing, visiting gardens, feeding flocks, in fine, all that is usually found in amatory poetry. To me it appears singular, that any one should think it to be for the honor of the book, or of the Jewish religion, or of the Bible, to regard the *Canticles* (*Song of Solomon*) as designed to be a book of devotion. If it be regarded as a specimen of the erotic poetry of the Hebrews, it will be treated with indifference by most readers, and consequently do no harm. But, if regarded as an inspired model and help to devotion, its tendency is injurious to morals and religion." Noyes' "Introduction to the *Canticles*." See this introduction for a full and thorough discussion of the moral and religious character of the poem.

We have it on the authority of Jerome that the early church would not allow their young people to read the *Song of Solomon* until they were thirty years old. *Progress of Religious Ideas*, vol. iii. p. 300. The Jews placed it among their interdicted books, or books "withdrawn from ordinary use." Noyes, p. 154.

Isaiah, full of conceptions of God and man and duty, as lofty as can be found in literature? To look at the time and circumstances of the origin of the various books is to answer the question whether all can be of equal value. Certainly, to look for a single moment, candidly and without bias, at the books themselves, is to answer it beyond peradventure.

Other Scriptures besides those preserved to us.—Are the books and writings which we have bound together in our Bible all the writings that were produced among the Jewish people during this thousand years? And if not, why were not the rest gathered and included in our Bible with what we now have?

The first of these questions I have partly answered in what I have said about many of the Bible books being made up to a greater or less extent of compilations, and extracts from other books. Both questions, however, demand further consideration.

It seems that there are no less than sixteen books missing from the Old Testament which clearly ought to be there; at least which are referred to in one place or another in the Bible as if they were genuine and true Old Testament books.*

The Prophecy of Enoch is referred to in Jude 14, 15.

* See McClintock and Strong's "Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature," Article "*Apocrypha*."

The Book of the Wars of the Lord is referred to in Numbers xxi. 14.

The Book of Jasher (Joshua x. 13, and II. Samuel i. 18).

The Book of the Manner of the Kingdom, written by Samuel (I. Samuel x. 25).

The Books of Nathan and Gad concerning King David (I. Chron. xxix. 29).

The Book of the Acts of Solomon (I. Kings xi. 41).

Of the remaining ten I will simply give the names. They are:

The Books of Nathan, Ahijah and Iddo.

Solomon's Parables, Songs and Treatises on Natural History.

The Book of Seraiah.

The Book of Jehu.

The Book of Isaiah concerning King Uzziah.

The Words of the Seers.

The Book of Lamentations over King Uriah.

The Volume of Jeremiah burned by Jehudi.

The Chronicle of the Kings of Judah.

The Chronicle of the Kings of Israel.

I say all these sixteen Old Testament books, mentioned in various places in the Bible as genuine and true, are now lost, or supposed to be lost.

Then, there are fourteen books called Apocryphal

—which are extant; which the Roman Catholic Church claims belong properly to the Old Testament, and prints as a part of the Old Testament. We, however, as Protestants, take the responsibility of casting them out; though now and then a Bible falls into our hands (generally a large family or pulpit Bible) which contains these Apocryphal books. Whether they ought to be cast out or included is a question upon which the Christian world is about evenly divided.

Coming to the New Testament, the difficulty does not grow less. In connection with this part of the Bible there are no fewer than forty-one apocryphal books ("*pseudepigraphal*" books they are more generally called), now in existence. I give the titles of a few; indicating the language in which ancient copies have been preserved.

The General Epistle of Barnabas. (Greek.)

The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. (Greek.)

The Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. (Greek.)

The Descent of Christ into Hell. (Greek and Latin.)

The Apostolic Constitutions. (Greek, Ethiopic and Coptic.)

The First, Second and Third Book of Hermas. (Greek and Latin.)

The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians.
(Greek and Latin.)

The Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour.
(Arabic and Latin.)

The Narrative of Joseph of Arimathæa. (Greek.)

The Gospel of the Nativity of St. Mary. (Latin.)

The Acts of Pilate. (Greek and Latin.)

In addition to this list of forty-one works *now extant*, we find another list of apocryphal (or pseudepigraphal) New Testament books, sixty-eight in number, *not* now extant, but which are mentioned by writers of the first four centuries after Christ as existing at that time. Among these we find such titles as :

The Acts of Andrew.

The Gospel according to the Twelve Apostles.

The Gospel of Bartholomew.

The Epistle of Christ to Peter and Paul.

The Acts of John.

The Gospel according to the Hebrews.

Here then is the answer that we find to our question—Are the books, or writings, which we have bound up together in our Bible, all the writings that were produced during the thousand years of time over which our Old and New Testaments extend?

As to the further questions—If there were so many other books produced, how do we know that

the books which we have in our Bible, are just the ones that ought to be there? How do we know but that some of the others ought to be in, and that some of those which are in ought to be out?—I say as to these questions, we can only answer—we do not know.

The Formation of the Old Testament Canon.—How the canon of the Old Testament was settled, no one can tell. When or by whom it was settled, no one can tell. Indeed, it never was *settled* at all. The first step toward the formation of a canon seems to have been taken by Ezra, in the fifth century before Christ. From this time, various influences, oftener indefinite than definite, conspired to carry it forward. By the time of Jesus it had, somehow or other, come to be about what it has since remained. And yet there seems never to have been a time previous to the establishment of Christianity when the Jews were at all perfectly agreed among themselves as to which books were properly canonical. And certainly since that time there has been no period when the Christian church has been at all unanimous upon the subject. Indeed, as I have already said, one-half the Christian world, to-day, contends that the fourteen extant apocryphal books of the Old Testament ought to be included as a true part of the Old Testament, and actually publishes them in its Bible as such; while the other half casts them out as spurious.

Formation of the New Testament Canon.—As to the New Testament canon, that was never settled only in a most haphazard and utterly inadequate way. Up to the beginning of the second century, no one seemingly ever thought of such a thing as any writings ever being regarded as Sacred Scripture, except the Old Testament writings.* For a long time after the gospels and various epistles came into existence, they were much less esteemed than the Old Scriptures. Indeed, up to about the middle of the second century they were not so highly esteemed as the oral traditions of the churches in which any of the apostles had preached. By the close of the second century, however, a change appears. Certain New Testament books have come into more general favor than the rest, and are beginning to be classed to a certain extent by themselves as a new collection of Sacred Scriptures. As time goes on, they grow more and more into use among the churches. Yet for centuries the various churches continued to use, side by side with the writings which make up our New Testament to-day, various books which we call spurious. It is curious to note that hardly one of the great writers and

* For a full account of the formation of the Canon of the Old and New Testaments, see "The Canon of the Bible," by Davidson: or the article on the "Canon" in the Encyclopedia Britannica. For views of the more conservative school of writers, see "The Canon of the New Testament," by Westcott.

“Fathers” of the early church draws the line of canonicity of New Testament books just where we draw it. In almost every case they either include some books that we reject, or else reject some books that we include. For example, Irenæus, one of the earliest and most authoritative, rejects five books which we have now in the New Testament, viz.: Hebrews, Jude, James, II. Peter, III. John; while he puts great value upon the “Shepherd of Hermas,” one of the so-called apocryphal books which we reject, and calls it “Scripture.” Again, Clement classes the three apocryphal books—to wit, the “Apocalypse of Peter,” the “Epistle of Barnabas,” and the “Shepherd of Hermas”—as of equal value and authority with our three New Testament books, to wit; Hebrews, II. John and Jude. The celebrated Tertullian cast out all the books of the New Testament, except the four Gospels, Acts, thirteen epistles of Paul, the Revelation and I. John. Even Athanasius quotes a number of the apocryphal books as of equal value and inspiration with those which are included in our present canon. Origen (in the third century) says that “the churches use Tobit”—an apocryphal work. Jerome, late in the fourth century, quotes the apocryphal book, Sirach, as Scripture, remarking that it is in the Christian catalogue.

It is claimed by some that the Council of Laodicea (363 A. D.) settled the canon finally; but this,

Davidson, our highest English authority on the subject, denies. Says Davidson: "Notwithstanding the numerous endeavors both in the East and West to settle the canon during the fourth and fifth centuries, it was not finally closed. The doubts of individuals were still expressed, and succeeding ages testify to the want of universal agreement respecting several books." Indeed, if that council did settle what books properly belong in the Old and New Testaments, then we are wrong to-day in not including Baruch in our Old Testament, and in retaining Revelation in our New. Moreover, if, as is sometimes claimed, the Council of Carthage (A. D. 397?) settled the canon, then we are wrong in not including Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Tobit, Judith, and First and Second Maccabees in our present Bible.

Indeed the Romanists allow that the canon was not settled until the modern Council of Trent, held in 1546, in the midst of the German Reformation. This Council proceeded to pass a formal decree declaring what books properly belong in the Bible. The list is that of our present Protestant Bible, with the addition of the fourteen books of the Old Testament Apocrypha. The Romanists, therefore, with their theory that their church is infallible in its decisions, may well claim to have an authoritative Scripture canon. But there can be no ground for such claim on the part of Protestants.

Luther was decidedly of the opinion that our present canon is imperfect. He thought that the Old Testament book of Esther did not belong in the Bible. On the other hand, in translating the Old Testament, he translated the apocryphal books of Judith, Wisdom, Tobit, Sirach, Baruch, First and Second Maccabees, and the Prayer of Manasseh. In his prefaces he gives his judgment concerning these books. With regard to First Maccabees, he thinks it almost equal to the other books of Holy Scripture, and not unworthy to be reckoned among them. Of Wisdom, he says he was long in doubt whether it should be numbered among the canonical books; and of Sirach, he says that it is a right good book, proceeding from a wise man. He had judgments equally decided regarding certain New Testament books. He thought the Epistle to the Hebrews came neither from Paul nor any of the apostles, and was not to be put on an equality with Epistles written by apostles themselves. The Apocalypse (or Revelation) he considered neither apostolic nor prophetic, and of little or no worth. He did not believe the Epistle of Jude proceeded from an apostle. James' Epistle he pronounced unapostolic, and "an epistle of straw."

The great Swiss reformer, Zwingli, maintained that the Apocalypse is not properly a Biblical book. Even Calvin did not think that Paul was the author of Hebrews, or Peter of the book called II. Peter;

while as to the book of Revelation, he denounced it as unintelligible, and prohibited the pastors of Geneva from all attempts at interpreting it.

From the foregoing facts it will be seen that whereas our Bible, as it stands to-day, contains doubtless what may truly be pronounced on the whole the most valuable part of the large mass of literature produced by the Jewish people during the thousand years of their Palestinian history, yet to suppose that it contains all of that literature that is valuable and truly inspired, or that there are not books left out of the Bible which are superior to some that are in, and books included which are inferior in every way to many left out—I say to suppose that, the foregoing facts show to be entirely gratuitous and unwarranted. And if to-morrow a council or commission of the ablest and most unbiased Biblical scholars of the world could be called to settle what books properly belong to either New Testament or Old, there seems room for scarcely a question that the list would stand materially different from that which we now find in our Bible.

The Ignorance and Credulity of the Age in which the Canon of the New Testament was formed. One fact alone, when we come duly to consider it, makes it impossible for us to think of the age which gives us our New Testament Canon as an age capable of any other than imperfect work in such a direc-

tion. That fact is the universal credulity and want of critical scholarship of that age. We, in our age of science, which investigates and tests everything, can have no adequate conception of the ease with which men accepted whatever they desired to accept, upon the smallest modicum of evidence, or even with no real evidence at all. In the weighty and carefully considered words of Dr. Hedge: "After all that Biblical critics and antiquarian research have raked from the dust of antiquity in proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament, credibility still labors with the fact that the age in which these books were received and put in circulation was one in which the science of criticism as developed by the moderns—the science which scrutinizes statements, balances evidence for and against, and sifts the true from the false—did not exist; an age when a boundless credulity disposed men to believe in wonders as readily as in ordinary events, requiring no stronger proof in the case of the former than sufficed to establish the latter, viz.:—hearsay and vulgar report; an age when literary honesty was a virtue almost unknown, and when, consequently, literary forgeries were as common as genuine productions, and transcribers of sacred books did not scruple to alter the text in the interest of personal views and doctrinal prepossessions. The newly-discovered Sinaitic code, the earliest known manuscript of the New Testament, dates

from the fourth century. Tischendorf, the discoverer, a very orthodox critic, speaks without reserve of the license in the treatment of the text apparent in this Manuscript—a license, he says, especially characteristic of the first three centuries.” *

We must bear in mind that it was from such an age as this that our New Testament canon comes.

Says Davidson : “ The exact principles that guided the formation of a canon cannot be discovered. Definite grounds for the reception or rejection of books were not very clearly apprehended. The choice was determined by various circumstances. The development was pervaded by no critical or definite principle. No member of the synod (that might be at any time engaged in considering the subject of what books ought to be regarded as canonical) exercised his critical faculty ; a number would decide such matters summarily. Bishops proceeded in the track of tradition or authority.” Moreover, a great deal of bigotry, and partisanship, and bad blood was manifested from first to last. Bishops freely accused bishops of forgery of sacred writings and of alteration of the oldest texts, and altogether the debates and proceedings of the synods and councils that had part in set-

* “ Ways of the Spirit,” p. 325. For an excellent picture of the intellectual condition of Christendom during the ages in which the canon of the New Testament was being settled, see Lecky’s “ History of European Morals,” vol. ii. pp. 108-211.

ting the canon, remind one very much of some of the political conventions of our day.*

And yet, out of all this a result came, the excellence of which, on the whole, we may well be appreciative of. It is easy for the scholarship of to-day to see that the men who are responsible for our Bible being what it is now, made many and grave mistakes. Nevertheless, could we understand all the circumstances, we should very probably be surprised, and certainly we should see that we had reason to be grateful, that those mistakes were not more and graver still. That the books which have been declared canonical and handed down as such to us, are on the whole of so high a type, morally or spiritually, as they are, argues much for the trustworthiness of the moral and spiritual intuitions of the race. Moreover, it argues that a great and wonderful law, like that which the scientists call "natural selection," or "the survival of the fittest," exists and works powerfully and perpetually not only in the physi-

* On the spirit that pervaded the Councils, see Lecky's "European Morals," vol. ii. pp. 207-210.

"Nowhere is Christianity less attractive than in the Councils of the Church. * * Intrigue, injustice, violence, decisions on authority alone, and that the authority of a turbulent majority * * detract from the reverence and impugn the judgments of at least the later Councils. The close is almost invariably a terrible anathema, in which it is impossible not to discern the tones of human hatred, of arrogant triumph, of rejoicing at the damnation imprecated against the humiliated adversary." Milman's *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, vol. i. p. 202 (quoted by Lecky).

cally organic world, but also quite as really in the intellectual, moral and religious worlds. Or, to put essentially the same thing in the form in which Christianity would put it, it argues that there is abroad in the world an infinite "Spirit of Truth" working everywhere, and "leaving himself not without witness" in any age.

This, then, is in brief the story of the origin and development of the extraordinary book which we call our Bible, as the most candid and scholarly criticism of our day little by little has gathered up that story out of the darkness and uncertainty of the far away past, and brought it into clearness before our eyes, so that we to-day may look at it as it is. Thus we see how profoundly true is Emerson's couplet :

"Out of the heart of Nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old ;"

and the words of Dr. Temple, Bishop of Exeter :
"The Bible is a record of truths and observations, of ways of life and ways of worship, *handed down from age to age, moulded by each in turn ; growing fuller, and (as a whole) richer, by time.*"

Analogy between the formation of the Christian and Buddhist Canons.—No little light is thrown upon the origin of the New Testament writings and their formation into a canon, by the account given by Max Müller of the origin of the Buddhist Sacred Writings and their formation into a canon, which I could

scarcely excuse myself if I did not quote before leaving this part of my subject.

During the life of Buddha, says Müller, "no record of events, no sacred code containing the sayings of the master was wanted. His presence was enough, and thoughts of the future seldom entered the minds of those who followed him. It was only after Buddha had left the world to enter into Nirvana, that his disciples attempted to recall the sayings and doings of their departed friend and master. Then everything that seemed to redound to the glory of Buddha, however extraordinary and incredible, was eagerly welcomed, while witnesses who would have ventured to criticise or reject unsupported statements, or detract in any way from the holy character of Buddha, had no chance of being listened to. And when, in spite of all this, differences of opinion arose, they were not brought to the test of a careful weighing of evidence, but the names of 'unbeliever' and 'heretic' were quickly invented in India as elsewhere, and bandied backwards and forwards between contending parties, till at last, when the doctors disagreed, the help of the secular power had to be invoked, and kings and emperors convoked councils for the suppression of schism, for the settlement of an orthodox creed, and for the completion of the Sacred Canon. We know of King Asoka, the contemporary of Seleucus, sending his royal missive to the assembled elders, and tell-

ing them what to do and what to avoid, warning them also in his own name of the apocryphal or heretical character of certain books, which, as he thinks, ought not to be admitted into the Sacred Canon.

“We here,” continues Müller, “learn a lesson, which is confirmed by the study of other religions, that canonical books, though they furnish in most cases the most authentic information within the reach of the student of religion, are not to be trusted implicitly, nay, that they must be submitted to a more searching criticism and to more stringent tests than any other historical books.”

In reading the above, one can hardly believe that it is not the history of the origin of our own New Testament writings and the formation of our own New Testament canon, that Prof. Müller is tracing, instead of the origin of the Buddhist Sacred Writings and the formation of the Buddhist Canon. For if we substitute “Jesus” in the place of “Buddha,” “the countries around the Mediterranean sea” in the place of “India,” and the “Emperor Constantine” with one or two other Christian emperors in the place of “King Asoka,” we shall have an almost exact record of the origin of a large part of the literature which came into being as the result of Jesus’ life and teachings, and the manner in which a portion of this became singled out from the rest and by degrees united into essentially what is now our New Testament.

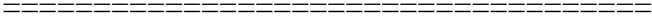
CHAPTER III.

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE BIBLE.—DIFFICULTIES
IN THE WAY OF THE THEORY.—SOMETHING
BETTER.

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“An Inspiration as true, as real, and as certain, as that which ever prophet or apostle reached, is yours if you will.”—F. W. ROBERTSON.

“Jesus came to reveal the Father. But is God, the Infinite and Universal Father, made known only by a single voice heard ages ago on the banks of the Jordan or by the Sea of Tiberias? Is it an unknown tongue that the heavens and earth forever utter? Is nature’s page a blank? Does the human soul report nothing of its Creator? Does conscience announce no Authority higher than its own? Does reason discern no trace of an Intelligence, that it cannot comprehend, and yet of which it is itself a ray? Does the heart find in the circuits of creation no Friend worthy of trust and love?”—CHANNING.

CHAPTER III.

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE BIBLE.—DIFFICULTIES IN WAY OF THE THEORY.—SOMETHING BETTER.

What, then, is to be said about the theory, so commonly taught and believed, of the Infallibility of the Bible? Do not the facts that have been cited, and the conclusions that have been reached, destroy this?

I reply—Doubtless if even a tenth part of what has been written above is true, then the Bible cannot be infallible. And yet the long array of facts that have already passed before our minds, all declaring with cumulative emphasis that infallibility is impossible, does not exhaust a tithe of the evidence there is against it.

Infallible Transmission as Necessary as Infallible Origin.—For grant even that the Bible was originally infallible,—that is to say, grant that the books were written in such a marvellous way as to insure their infallible correctness at the time of their writing; and grant that all the books which have been excluded from the canon of Old Testament and New

by us Protestants, are just the ones that ought to be excluded, and that all which have been included are just the ones that ought to be included, and that all which have been lost were spurious, so that the loss does not affect at all the perfectness of the canon—grant all that ; yet even now how far have we got toward certainty that this Bible which we hold in our hand *to-day* is infallible—is infallible *as it comes to us*. In other words, grant that the stream, as it began its course away back yonder in Palestine twenty-two or twenty, or eighteen, or sixteen centuries ago, was infallible in its outset, what assurance have we that now, after wandering and winding down through the dark maze of the ages, it is *still* infallible? For mark : after we have got the writings all infallibly written, and then after we have got them all collected together just as they should be into a canon or infallible collection, we have still got to devise a way to get them down to our time. How are we going to do that?

How *have* they come down to our time? In order intelligently to answer this question it is necessary to bear in mind that the books of the Bible were, a majority of them, written originally in Hebrew.

Was the Hebrew Language Infallible?—The Hebrew written language at the time of the origin of the Bible, had in it no vowels. Everything had to be written in mere consonant outline—somewhat like

the abbreviated running hand of a reporter. Try to imagine how long infallibility could be preserved in writings made up purely of consonants—which simply put, say, *bk* for book or back or beck, *ppr* for paper or piper or pepper, *pn* for pen or pun, or pain or pan, and so on.*

That I may not convey a false impression, let me cite a word or two from the ancient Hebrew. The Hebrew word (or consonant outline of a word) *qtl* may be a noun, a verb or a participle; and if a verb, it may be active, passive or reduplicative; and it may have nine different meanings, according to the vowels that the reader supplies in connection with it. The Hebrew word *dbhr* may have five different meanings, to wit: "a word," "he hath spoken," "to speak," "speaking," "it has been spoken," and "a pestilence," according to the vowels we supply.† This then is the

* The "*points*," by which the *vowels* are indicated, were not introduced into the text until long after Christ—probably not earlier than the seventh century—when Hebrew had for some time been a dead language. See article, "Hebrew Language," in McClintock and Strong's "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature."

† It is now ascertained that we do not know with certainty even what was the name given by the Hebrews to their God. We have always spelled it "Jehovah": but it is now found out that that spelling is probably not correct. The real name is probably "Jah-veh," or "Yahweh." (See Appendix, by Russell Martineau, at the end of Ewald's History of Israel, vol. ii.) The true spelling became lost as the result of writing by mere consonant outlines, and thus forgetting in the process of time what vowels were to be supplied. Such writers as Ewald, Kuenen, Baur, Zeller, and Keim, all are adopting

kind of written language in which the larger part of our Bible finds itself originally recorded. As Gesenius says, "How imperfect and indefinite such a mode of writing was, is easily seen." But we must not forget that for our supposed originally perfect Bible to get down infallible to us, it must pass through centuries of transcribing by pen in this same kind of language. Can we suppose that the copyists made no mistakes?

the spelling Jahveh or Yahweh, and laying aside the old spelling Jehovah.

"So long as the Hebrew language was a spoken tongue it was written without vowels or any letters being doubled. This is just the way our short-hand writers now take down speeches, and is generally sufficient to remind the reporter of a speech, the ideas of which have been distinctly and recently understood. Some years ago a friend undertook to learn short-hand. Hessian boots were worn in those days with little tassels, one in front of each. Going out hastily, this gentleman discovered that a tassel was torn off one of his boots, and to show his proficiency in the new art, he wrote his teacher in another room to ask: "Have you an old boot tassel?" The vowels being all omitted, and also the doubling of the letters, signs were made for the following letters: 'Hv y n ld bt tsl,' which his friend not unnaturally read thus: 'Have you an old boot *to sell*?' Why his pupil could want to buy an old boot from him, required more explanation than short hand could well give. Now the difficulty of the ancient Hebrew without points is just this: that, although where people were very familiar with the subject and language, this style of writing was ordinarily sufficient at least to guide the priests, and remind them of the law, so that they could explain it to the people; yet there would always be many cases where the meaning was left extremely doubtful, without the aid and authority of tradition." Curtis, "Human Element in Inspiration," pp. 170-174.

Certainly we do not find infallible copyists now-a-days, even with our comparatively perfect language.

Were the Translators Infallible?—Next come the translators. To-day translators are very fallible beings. Have the translators of all the ages, who have translated Hebrew into Greek and Latin, and Greek and Latin into English, and Hebrew into English, in connection with the Old and New Testament books, been miraculously preserved from making errors? If so, what mean the many thousands of errors which the great Commission of English scholars, who are now making for us a new English translation of the Bible, find in the common translation or version of King James?*

So, then, what becomes of our infallible Bible? It has melted away into thin air if there be one single link imperfect in all the two-thousand-years-long chain of preservation and transmission of the original writings down to us. And this on the supposition too

* "The whole number of various readings of the text of the New Testament that have hitherto been noted exceeds a hundred thousand, and may perhaps amount to a hundred and fifty thousand." (*Genuineness of the Gospels*, by Andrews Norton, p. 417.) Some of these variations, it is true, are very slight, and in no way affect the sense. But others again are very marked, and affect the sense most materially. For example, the celebrated text (I. John v. 7, 8) of the three heavenly witnesses, which has been for a thousand years the strongest scripture bulwark of the doctrine of the Trinity, is admitted now on all hands to be an interpolation. For other important interpolations see above, p. 67, *first note*.

that those original writings were every one infallibly perfect at first, and moreover that the canon of both Old Testament and New was formed with infallible perfection. What then shall we say when, interrogating the best scholarship of the age, and in its light tracing the history of the origin of the various Bible books and of the formation of a canon, we find in connection with these, instead of infallibility, traces of many-sided *fallibility* everywhere?

Sixty-six Infallible Books?—Nor must we forget that even if we could prove the infallibility of one or even a score of the books of the Bible, that would not establish the infallibility of the rest of the books. For, as we have seen, originally the books were not together. There is no way of establishing the infallibility of the Bible as a whole, only by establishing the infallibility of each and every one of the books that make it up. If I have in my library sixty-six miscellaneous volumes of prose and poetry, history, biography, letters, etc., written in three or four different countries, and by men of all grades of character and culture, some of them living ten centuries apart, will the fact that I may be able to prove a certain thing about one or more of the volumes justify me in claiming that I have proved it concerning all? Certainly it will not. Very well, the Bible is just such a library of sixty-six miscellaneous books, of various and, for the most part, utterly unconnected origin. Every

book, therefore, which has a place in it stands or falls by itself. The various books are not a whit more related to each other than they would be if they were printed and bound as sixty-six different and distinct volumes, each under its own separate name. The real question then is not as to *one* infallibility, but as to *sixty-six* infallibilities.

But a large number of the most serious difficulties in the way of believing in the infallibility of the Bible, I have not mentioned at all. I should be inexcusable if I did not point out some of the more prominent of these, so that it may be seen as plainly as possible how increasingly hard and hopeless a task candid men, who think and investigate, are finding they have before them, when they undertake to keep their belief that the Bible is a book of perfect and invariable accuracy and truth. The following points I mention without stopping to elaborate them more than in the briefest manner.

1. *The Doctrine of Infallibility has its Origin in some other Source than the Bible itself.*—The Bible does not claim to be infallible. While in places certain claims of superior inspiration or guidance of God are doubtless put forth, there is not even one single book of the Bible that claims to be *infallible*.*

* "The frequent use in the Old Testament of such solemn phrases as 'Thus saith the Lord;' 'And God said;'; 'And God spake these words and said;'; and verses which tell us that 'All scripture is given by in-

Of the few Scriptures passages that are quoted in support of the infallibility theory, the following is conceded by every writer, so far as I know, to be the strongest, to wit: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II. inspiration of God; ' that 'holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' form one of the chief foundations on which the claim (that the Bible is infallible) is rested. Upon the use of the phrases quoted, some very instructive facts are given by Sir Samuel Baker in his book on the ' Nile Tributaries.' He says (pp. 129-131): 'The conversation of the Arabs is in the exact style of the Old Testament. The name of God is coupled with every trifling incident in life. Should a famine afflict the country, it is expressed in the stern language of the Old Testament: "*The Lord hath sent a grievous famine upon the land.*" Should their cattle fall sick, it is considered to be an affliction by Divine command; or should the flocks prosper and multiply, the prosperity is attributed to divine interference. * * Thus there is great light thrown upon many Old Testament passages by the experience of the present customs and figures of speech of the Arabs. * * With the Bible in one hand and these unchanged tribes before the eyes, there is a thrilling illustration of the sacred records. * * Should the present history of the country be written by an Arab scribe, the style of description would be purely that of the Old Testament, and the various calamities, or the good fortunes that have, in the course of nature, befallen both the tribes and individuals would be recounted either as special visitations of divine wrath, or blessings for good deeds performed. If in a dream a particular course of action is suggested, the Arab believes that God has *spoken* and directed him. The Arab scribe or historian would describe the event as the "*voice of the Lord*" having spoken unto the person; or that God appeared to him in a dream and "*said*," etc. Thus much allowance would be necessary on the part of a European reader for the figurative ideas and expressions of the people?"—Clodd's "Childhood of Religion," pp. 236-238.

Tim. iii. 16.) But as soon as we begin to look at this passage carefully, two or three things appear, which rob it utterly of its value as proof that the Bible is infallible. (1.) It says nothing about infallibility: it speaks only of inspiration. Nor are the two necessarily connected. For Peter and Paul, who are regarded as inspired men, confess that they make mistakes. But if inspired men may err, why not an inspired book? (2.) At the time this epistle of Paul to Timothy was written, there was no New Testament, nor the slightest thought on the part of anybody, so far as we can find out, that there ever was going to be one. The "all Scripture" spoken of can refer therefore only to the Old Testament. So that even if this text proves infallibility at all, it is only of the Old Testament. (3.) But there is no evidence that it proves even that, as seen from the fact that our translation of the passage is at best a disputed translation. The original Greek of the passage is certainly capable of being translated: "Every writing, divinely inspired (or which is divinely inspired), is also profitable for instruction, reproof," etc. And that is the rendering of the passage that seems generally to have been given it, taking the history of the church as a whole. The Syriac, the Vulgate, nearly if not all the ancient versions, Clement of Alexandria, Theodoret, Origen six or seven times over, most of the Christian Fathers, thus interpreted the passage.

Moreover the present Roman Catholic Bible thus translates it, as did Wickliffe, Tindal, and the Bible of 1551. But as soon as we concede that the passage ought to be translated in this way, or even may be translated in this way, all its value as a proof of the infallibility even of the Old Testament is gone. So much then for this passage, conceded to be the strongest of any in the Bible as proof of infallibility. I cannot stop to consider in detail other texts sometimes quoted. Suffice it to say that a careful study of the whole subject can scarcely fail to convince any unprejudiced mind that the claim so strongly made in our day that the Bible is infallible does not come from the Bible itself.*

2. *Did not appear till modern Times.*—The doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible, in the rigid sense in which it is widely held and taught now, was unknown to the early Christian church. Indeed it did not come into existence until the sixteenth century, not having been held even by the earliest and greatest of the Reformers. The Catholic church has never adopted it.†

* See "The Creed of Christendom," by W. R. Greg, vol. i. chaps. i. and ii., also "The Human Element in Inspiration," by Prof. T. F. Curtis, chaps. vi. and vii.

† That the Jews also did not regard the Old Testament as infallible, is shown by the fact that they assigned to different portions of it different degrees of inspiration and authority (see above, pp. 19, 20); also by the fact that so great freedom was exercised by Ezra, by the Great Synagogue, and by transcribers generally, in making emenda-

3. The Bible testifies of itself that it is not infallible, in the fact that it contains many things which it is impossible to reconcile with the theory of infallibility.

(1.) *Contradictions*.—It contains plain contradictions. These furnish evidence so incontrovertible, that I shall cite a considerable number, though only a small part of all there are. Fully a hundred cases of clear contradictions lie before me as I write.

Comparing II. Samuel, xxiv. 1, with I. Chronicles, xxi. 1, we find the same event spoken of, viz. : David's numbering of Israel. But in one passage we are told that it was the *Lord*, and in the other that it was *Satan*, that *prompted* David to make the numbering. Of course both cannot be true, unless the Lord and Satan are the same being.

I place a few passages side by side :

“And David's heart smote him that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord I have sinned greatly in that I have done.” II. Sam. xxiv. 10.

“David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.” I. Kings xv. 5.

In one of these passages we have David represented as having sinned in the matter of numbering Israel; in the other as never having sinned in anything except in robbing Uriah the Hittite of his wife.

tions and alterations in it. See note, p. 53. See Curtis' "Human Element in Inspiration," pp. 96 and 97. Also Greg, vol. i. pp. 6-8.

Compare these passages :

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham." Gen. xxii. 1.

"O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." Jer. xx. 7.

"Lead us not into temptation." Matt. vi. 13.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." James i. 13.

The endeavor is made to explain away the contradiction here, by saying that the word "tempt" in the passage from Genesis does not mean to tempt, but to "try one's faith." I reply, if we change its meaning to suit our notion in one case, we must at least be consistent and change the meaning correspondingly in the others. But this done, our contradiction remains just as completely as before. Moreover, even if we grant that in Genesis "tempt" does not mean to tempt, does it not at least mean that in Matthew? And in Jeremiah do we not have God not only tempting to evil, but carrying the temptation to the length of actual deception? So, then, explain it as we will, we have the contradictory representation of a God who both tempts and does not tempt men.

Compare these passages :

"The earth abideth forever." Eccl. i. 4.

"Who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed forever." Psalm civ. 5.

"The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." II. Peter iii. 10.

"They shall perish, but thou remainest." Heb. i. 11.

"I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them." Rev. xx. 11.

And these:

"Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." II. Kings ii. 11.

"No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man." John iii. 13.

And these:

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; he cannot sin because he is born of God." I. John iii. 9.

"There is no man that sinneth not." I. Kings viii. 46.

"There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." Eccl. vii. 20.

And these:

"Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Isaiah xl. 28.

"I am weary with repenting." Jer. xv. 6.

"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Ex. xxxi. 17.

And the following:

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place." Prov. xiv. 3.

"There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Job xxxiv. 22.

"And David took from him a thousand chariots and seven hundred horsemen." II. Sam. viii. 4.

"Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death." II. Sam. vi. 23.

"And the men which journeyed with him (Paul) stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." Acts ix. 7.

"I have seen God face to face." Gen. xxxii. 30.

"Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden." Gen. iii. 8.

"And David took from him a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen." I. Chron. xviii. 4.

"The five sons of Michal, the daughter of Saul." II. Sam. xxi. 8.

"They that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." Acts xxii. 9.

"No man hath seen God at any time." I. John iv. 12.

"I am the Lord, I change not." Mal. iii. 6.

"With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James i. 17.

"I will not go back, neither will I repent." Ezekiel xxiv. 14.

"There is no respect of persons (partiality) with God." Rom. ii. 11.

"He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Job vii. 9.

"And God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not." Jonah iii. 10.

[There are no less than fourteen places in the Bible where God is spoken of as repenting.]

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom. ix. 13. (See vs. 10-18.)

"The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised." I. Cor. xv. 52.

There are many contradictions connected with the accounts we have of the *life of Jesus*. I can only refer to a few of them, and in the briefest way.*

First of all there is a difficulty in accounting for the childhood of Jesus. According to Luke he was born in Bethlehem, after which (Luke i. 22) his parents took him to Jerusalem to perform some religious ceremony in the temple, when he was forty days old, and then at once departed (Luke ii. 39)

* For contradictions in the Gospels see "Bible for Young People" (called "Bible for Learners" in Am. Ed.), vol. i.; Greg's "Creed of Christendom" chaps. vi. to xii. and xiv.; "The Jesus of History," by Sir R. Hanson; "The Fourth Gospel," by Rev. J. J. Tayler; "The English Life of Jesus," published by Thomas Scott, Ludgate; and Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament." On contradictions in the Bible at large, see (in addition to the above-named works) Bishop Colenso's writings; "The Hebrew Monarchy," by Prof. F. W. Newman; "Bible for Young People," vols. on the Old Testament; chaps. iii. to v. of "Creed of Christendom;" "Common-Sense Thoughts on the Bible," by Wm. Denton (pamphlet); "Self-contradictions of the Bible" by S. S. Jones (pamphlet); "The Bible, is it the Word of God?" by T. L. Strange; and Davidson's "Introduction to the Old Test."

into Galilee to their own city, Nazareth; and from there they went up every year to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover (ii. 41). Thus we have the childhood of Jesus accounted for up to twelve years of age. But now turning to Matthew (chapter ii.) we find a different and conflicting account. Matthew tells us that immediately after the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi, his parents took him (not back to Nazareth, but) down into Egypt; and the return to Nazareth was not until after a residence of some time in Egypt and the death of Archelaus, Herod's son and successor. How are these two accounts to be harmonized?

Again, there are irreconcilable difficulties in connection with the genealogies of Jesus given by Matthew and Luke. Both these genealogies trace the ancestry of Jesus through Joseph. But having done this, both Matthew and Luke tell us that Joseph was not the father of Jesus at all. Thus Jesus is claimed to have descended from David, because a man who is not his father descended from David. A most extraordinary claim! Moreover, Matthew says the number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen, and from David to the Captivity fourteen, and from the Captivity to Christ fourteen. But if we look carefully at the genealogy, as he himself gives it, the number from Abraham to David is only *thirteen*, and the number from the Captivity to Christ

is only *thirteen*. Furthermore, the genealogies of Joseph, the husband of Mary (called the genealogies of *Jesus*, but not the genealogy of Jesus at all unless Joseph was Jesus' father) as given by Matthew and Luke, are radically different, agreeing in only fifteen names in the whole list, and differing in forty names. Now, when we bear in mind that these genealogies both run back in the male line, from son to father, and then grandfather, and then great-grandfather, and so on, we see that divergence can mean nothing else but error in one or the other of the authorities, or both. Nor may we suppose that one genealogy is that of Mary. Such a supposition rests on not a shadow of evidence, while it is positively contradicted by the language of the text.

Passing on from the birth and childhood to the ministry of Jesus, there are many more discrepancies and contradictions. For example, in the first three Gospels Jesus is represented as going to the wilderness *immediately* after his baptism, and remaining there forty days. But when we turn to John, he tells us that on the third day after the baptism Jesus is in Cana of Galilee at a wedding, and not a word is said about any wilderness or temptation. Of course both these accounts cannot be true, unless Jesus can have been in two places, one in the northern part of Palestine and the other in the southern, at the same time.

The inscription on the cross is given differently by each of the Gospel writers as follows :

“ This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.” Matt. xxvii. 37.

“ The King of the Jews.” Mark xv. 26.

“ This is the King of the Jews.” Luke xxiii. 38.

“ Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” John xix. 19.

Of course only one of the four can be correct. Or, if it be claimed that, as the inscription was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, the form may possibly have varied in these different languages, and one Gospel writer may have reported one form and another another ; even then the difficulty is only slightly lessened ; for this would give us only *three* varieties of form, whereas we have coming down to us *four*. So that still we are obliged to confess that at least one of the Gospel narrators has made a mistake.

One case more. Paul tells us (I. Cor. xv. 5) that Christ was seen of the *twelve* apostles after his resurrection. But there were not twelve apostles to see him ; there were only *eleven* : since we are told that Judas had hanged himself, and the twelfth apostle, Matthias, was not elected until after Christ's ascension.

There are several very palpable contradictions in the accounts given of the resurrection, and the events

occurring between the resurrection and ascension; but I pass by these, as well as a great number of contradictions in other parts of both the New and the Old Testaments. Indeed, much as I have enlarged upon this point of the contradictions of the Bible, I have not used a quarter of the material that has accumulated on my hands. Want of space, however, compels me to stop here.*

Of course I am aware of the cheap way of meeting these contradictions, which is coming to be so common, viz., sneering at them as the "invention of infidels," declaring that they are "as old as Christianity," and "have been answered a thousand times

* It is a subject of general wonder and lament that there should be so many sects in Christendom. "How is it," the question is asked in astonishment, "that people going to the same Bible for their doctrines and creeds, reach so many different beliefs?" Generally, either the riddle is thought to be inexplicable, or else an explanation is sought in the blindness of men's mental vision, the perversity of their judgment, or the "hardness of their heart." The time will some time come when it will be seen that there is an explanation a great deal simpler and more rational than either of these. That explanation lies, in no small part, in the fact that the Bible is not one whole, but sixty-six wholes; that it is not one book, but a literature made up of sixty-six books,—written many centuries apart, in three or four different countries, under widely different conditions of civilization, by writers differing in belief and style, and aim and character, as widely as Whittier and Joaquin Miller, or John Calvin and John Murray (compare Romans with Canticles, and John's Gospel with Ecclesiastes), and with no thought on the part of any of the writers (so far as we can find out) that their writings would ever be bound up together.

over." To this I only care to say—they are not the "invention of infidels" or of anybody else; they are simply obstinate *facts*, that refuse to accommodate themselves to the wish of either "infidel" or Christian. As to their being "as old as Christianity," this is true; that is to say, careful and unprejudiced students of the Bible from the earliest ages have perceived contradictions in it, though with the lapse of time and the advance of biblical scholarship, the number of these contradictions discovered has constantly increased. As to their having been "answered a thousand times," I have only to say, they have been *replied to* a thousand times—they have never been *answered* at all.

I pass on now to notice other things which the Bible contains, which it is impossible to reconcile with the theory of infallibility. Concerning these I shall be more brief, citing only illustrations enough (of the many that might be cited) to make my meaning clear.

(2.) *Things absurd.*—The Bible contains many things intrinsically absurd. For example, the statement that the first woman was made of a rib taken out of the first man's side; the accounts of a serpent, and of an ass, talking; the stories of Jonah living three days within a fish (Matt. xii. 40, says a *whale*), and of Nebuchadnezzar eating grass like an ox for seven years. When we find such stories as these in any of

the Sacred Books of the world except our own, we do not for a moment think of believing them. We say they are so absurd that of course we can't believe them. But do they become any less absurd by being found in our own Sacred Book? *

(3.) *Historical Mistakes.*—The Bible contains accounts and statements not historically correct. For example. We read in Luke, that Augustus Cæsar, the Roman emperor, issued a decree that "all the world should be taxed"—that is, enrolled or registered for the purposes of a census; and that it was in connection with the carrying into effect of this decree, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, that Joseph and Mary went, as the decree required them to do, to Bethlehem, Joseph's native city, to be taxed (registered); and while they were there Jesus was born. (See Luke, second chapter.) Now in connection with this account there are no less than three or four distinct mistakes. In the first place, history is silent as to a census of the *whole* (Roman) world ever having been made at all. In the second place, it is true that Cyrenius (Quirinus) did make an enrollment in Palestine, but it was confined to Judea and Samaria, and did not extend to Galilee, and hence Joseph's

* I mean, these stories are absurd when we look at them as accounts of *actual events*. When looked at as we look at similar stories in other Sacred Books, viz., as *legends* and *myths*, they are all interesting, and some of them are beautiful and instructive.

household (in Nazareth) could not have been affected by it. In the third place it did not take place until ten years after the death of Herod, instead of during the reign of Herod as the account of Luke states. Finally, at the time of the birth of Jesus, the governor of Syria was not Cyrenius (Quirinus) but Quintus Sentius Saturninus.

Take another example. In Matthew xxiii. 35, it is stated that the Jews "slew Zacharias, *Son of Barachias*, between the temple and the altar." This is an error. It was Zechariah, *son of Jehoiada*, quite a different man, who was thus murdered. (See II. Chron. xxiv. 20-22). Zacharias, son of *Barachias*, lived some 230 years later. There are a considerable number of as plain cases of historical error as these.

(4.) *Scientific Errors*.—The Bible contains statements opposed to science. The Genesis account of the creation, the story of the deluge, the standing still of the sun at the command of Joshua, are illustrations. Attempts are made to harmonize these with science; but the distorting of language that has to be resorted to in order to accomplish even a semblance of reconciliation, is such as would be tolerated nowhere outside of theological discussion; indeed it is such as destroys the signification of human speech, making it mean anything or nothing.*

* See above, pp. 27, 28. Compare the disingenuous subtleties, distortions of language and special pleadings of the majority of the "har-

(5.) *Exaggerations.*—The Bible contains evident exaggerations. For example—the statements that Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years ; and Enos nine hundred and five years ; and that Lamech was a hundred and eighty-two years old when his first son was born. Also, the account given in II. Chron. xiii. of the number of soldiers in the Jewish armies—to wit, under Abijah 400,000, and under Jeroboam 800,000 *picked* men ; of the latter 500,000 fell in a single battle. That this must be an enormous exaggeration—utterly beyond possible truth—will appear when we remember that the whole country of Palestine from which these 1,200,000 “chosen, mighty men of valor” were raised at one time, was not as large as the little country of Wales. Napoleon’s largest army—that with which he invaded Russia—consisted of only 500,000 men, the exact number here said to have fallen on one side in a single fight.

monizers” of Science and Scripture, with the manly frankness and fidelity to truth of such men as Dean Stanley, who does not hesitate to say : “It is now clear to all students of the Bible that the first and second chapters of Genesis contain *two* Narratives of the creation, side by side, *differing from each other in almost every particular* of time, place and order.” Memorial Sermon at the funeral of Sir Charles Lyell. See Bishop Colenso’s Works ; Curtis’s “Human Element in Inspiration,” chap. iv ; “The Irreconcilable Records : or Genesis and Geology,” by Wm. Denton ; “The Deluge in the Light of Modern Science,” by the same author ; “The Bible and Science,” by John Weiss ; “The Conflict Between Religion and Science,” by J. W. Draper ; “The Warfare of Science,” by President A. D. White.

Again, we have an account given (see I. Saml vi. 19) of 50,070 men of the little village of Beth-She-mesh, being on a certain occasion slaughtered by the Lord, because they looked into the ark. Not to say anything about the enormity of punishing in so terrible a manner so trivial an offense, notice the number of the slain. In no community is it ever estimated that more than one in five of the population can be men. So then we see that Beth-Shemesh (which we know to have been only an insignificant village) must have contained, to make the account true, not less than 250,000 population. Does this look like infallibility? But such exaggerations are numerous in all the older historical parts of the Bible.

(6.) *Childish Representations of God.*—The Bible contains representations of God which, in the light of such teachings as those of Jesus, we cannot do otherwise than regard as childish. For example—in Exodus xxx. 34–38, we have an account of God giving Moses very minute directions for making perfumery, of a kind that would be “holy for the Lord,” to be used in the tabernacle when God came to meet with Moses; and if any other person made the same he should be put to death. So, then, we have the Creator of the universe engaged in the very dignified business of giving instructions as to what kind of perfumery is agreeable to him; moreover, making sure that he shall have it alone, and no one else shall have it with

him, by attaching the death penalty to all rival manufacture of the perfume.

(7.) *Morally Degrading Representations of God.*—The Bible contains, among certain of its Old Testament writings, representations of God according to which he is not a morally perfect being. For example, we are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart that he should not let the children of Israel go out of the land of Egypt (Ex. vii. 13, and xi. 10), and then punished him in the most terrible manner for not letting them go. Would this be right, on the part of God? Certainly not; unless morality is an altogether lower and poorer thing with God than it is with us. Again, in the Second Commandment (Ex. xx. 5) the reason urged by God against idolatry is that he is a "*jealous God.*" Thus a trait of character is ascribed to him which everybody will agree is degrading even to a human being.

Again, we read that God ordered Moses to say unto the King of Egypt, "Let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God," when the object of their going was not that, at all, but to escape altogether out of the land, not to come back. Thus we are told that God commanded Moses to lie. In harmony with this we are told that God ordered the Jewish people when they got ready to start on their journey, to borrow every valuable thing they could of

their Egyptian neighbors, and carry it off. Thus they are commanded to rob as well as lie.

Again, while the Israelites are in the wilderness a revolt breaks out, headed by three men, Korah, Dathan and Abiram. God commands Moses and Aaron at once to separate themselves from the rest of the people, that he may consume the others with fire. But Moses and Aaron beg God not to be angry with the whole congregation for one man's sin. In spite of this plea, however, fourteen thousand seven hundred persons died of the plague, besides the two hundred and fifty insurrectionists who were swallowed up by an earthquake. And the plague would have gone on until all were dead, innocent and guilty alike, had not Aaron rushed in with a censer full of incense, which made an atonement for the people, and the plague was stayed (Num. xvi. 20-50). Thus Aaron and Moses are represented as not only more merciful, but more just, than God.

Again, we find it recorded that God commanded Joshua to massacre the people of a certain list of cities—all the men and women and innocent children; the only reason being, so that he (Joshua) and his followers might possess their cities and their rich lands. (Joshua x. 28-41). Now if the Koran contained records of such commands, said to have been given by the God of the Mohammedans to a Mohammedan general, Christian men would never make an

end of pointing to them as illustrations of the low and degraded ideas about God taught by Moham-medanism. But if such ideas of God would be low and imperfect as taught in the Koran, are they less low and imperfect when taught in our Old Testament ?

Again, to mention only one more case, we read in the career of Jehu of as horrible crimes as it is possible for man to commit, all done under the command of God and with his approval. (See II. Kings, chapters ix. and x.) First Jehu shoots King Joram, and then orders the assassination of King Ahaziah ; then by craft he obtains the heads of seventy of Ahab's children, which are packed in baskets and sent to him to Jezreel ; pretending to have had nothing to do with this massacre, he follows it up by slaying all the rest of Ahab's relations and friends, and great men and priests, until " he left him none remaining." It seems, however, that forty-two brethren of Ahaziah and a temple full of priests still live ; these he murders without a word of warning. " It is easy enough to see that Jehu only acted like an unscrupulous usurper, who finds the safety of his throne dependent upon the extermination of the late dynasty, while his slaughter of the worshippers of Baal was done partly as a sop to the priests of Jehovah, who had been instrumental in urging his pretensions, and partly to crush all lingering sympathy with the house of Ahab in the minds of the people. He was a consummate

dissembler, hypocrite, and murderer; and yet the Bible tells us that he did according to 'all that was in God's heart,' all that was 'right in God's eyes,' and received for so doing God's approval and reward."

(8.) *Inculcation of what is wrong.*—There are many places where the Old Testament both directly and indirectly not only sanctions but inculcates what is wrong. For example, in Exodus xxii. 18, we read the command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." This command to put witches to death, it is probably safe to say, has resulted in the hanging, burning, drowning, and killing in one way and another, of hundreds of thousands if not millions of innocent persons; just as a somewhat similar text in the Vedas (previously mentioned) has caused multitudes of Hindoo widows to perform the dreadful rite of Suttee. So tremendous is the power for evil of a false precept or bad command laid upon men in the name of an Infallible Book!

In Deuteronomy xxi. 18–21, we have the command to stone to death unruly and disobedient children; and that, too, on the simple accusation of their parents, without trial. Think of the enactment of such a law to-day, by one of our legislatures, and its attempted enforcement by the civil authorities! How long before the public conscience would condemn it as not only unjust, and cruel, but horrible? In Deut. xiv. 21, we read: "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth C

of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in the gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." How does such a way of disposing of bad meat harmonize with the golden rule? In Psalm cix. we have a prayer of David, in which he implores that the most terrible calamities may be visited upon his enemy, and not only upon him but upon his children. He prays that his enemy's "days may be few;" that his "children may be fatherless, and his wife a widow;" that his children "may be continually vagabonds and beg," and that there may be "none to show them mercy." Elsewhere he exclaims, "happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!" Was David inspired when he wrote these words? If so, then it becomes a serious question—Was it by God or by the Devil?

In Leviticus xxv. 44-46, we have slavery inculcated, and that too not as a temporary institution, but as something which was to be perpetual. "Of the heathen that are round about you, shall ye buy bondmen and bondwomen," * * * "and they shall be your bondmen forever." In Hosèa i. 2, and iii. 1, the prophet is commanded in the most explicit terms to break the Seventh Commandment. But enough! Such, then, are a few examples of sanction and inculcation of what is wrong, taken almost at random from the far larger number that crowd themselves on the attention of every careful student of the Bible.

Summing up.—I have now caused to pass in very brief review before the reader, some of the most obvious difficulties that rise up in the path of candid, earnest men, who, in the light of the scholarship and general intelligence of the time, undertake to believe that the Bible is a book of perfect and infallible truth.

It is very common for preachers and religious teachers to charge upon men who disbelieve the infallibility of the Bible, that their disbelief is something which they *choose*, and choose from bad motives—in other words that it is something wilful and wicked. I trust I have shown that this is not necessarily true. Men are *obliged* to believe that *two and two make four*; they can't believe that two and two make five, no matter how hard they try. So, when they set about the study of the Bible with their eyes open, and find that it contains imperfections corresponding to the imperfections of the people and the times from which it comes down, the mere fact that they may wish still to regard it as perfect and infallible does not by any means enable them to do so. We read in an old German fable of a priest who was offered a bishopric if he would come to the conclusion that the sun was triangular. After a good deal of effort he finally succeeded in seeing the sun to have three sides and three corners, instead of being round as he had before supposed. However large a class of persons there may be, or may not be, to-day, who can accommodate their

vision to their wish in regard to the teachings of the Bible, there is a large and growing class that find it impossible to do this. These manifold imperfections that I have pointed out, and multitudes of others with them, rise up before their vision, and, in spite of all their efforts to see them as perfections, persist in appearing as imperfections. This being the case, the continued insistence of the church that they *must* see them to be *perfections* would seem a great and strange folly.

Driving men into Infidelity.—Nothing can be more clear than that the result must be sooner or later to drive this class of men into hostility to the church and the Bible. Indeed, the fact, so much lamented over by the clergy and the religious press, that so many of the most intelligent minds of the country are already turning their backs upon Christianity, clearly finds an explanation to no small extent in the blind folly of Christianity in continuing to demand that men must subscribe to the belief in an infallible Bible or else stay outside the Christian fold. Why does this folly continue? Is Christianity bent upon intellectual suicide? Can it be possible that it does not see that it is putting itself in a position where men who read and think for themselves on religious subjects, have no alternative left them?—they must either subscribe to what they do not believe to be true, or else they must turn their backs on Christianity!

Something Wiser and Better.—How is it that intelligent Christian men fail to see that there is no necessary connection whatever between belief in the correctness of all the statements of every kind contained in the Bible, and belief in the great moral and spiritual teachings of Isaiah and Paul and Jesus? Surely, then, the part of wisdom would seem to be, for the churches and those who care for Christianity, to take an entirely new departure with regard to this matter of Bible infallibility. Let them no longer attempt the useless, foolish, and inevitably losing game of trying longer to bolster it up. There is something better for them. Freely and without hesitancy admitting all the errors and imperfections that fair and honest criticism finds in the Bible, let them confidently rest their claim for it upon the transcendent merits that the same criticism gladly and freely confesses it to possess. Let them say—“We want no one to believe what there is not ground for believing. We are interested, as much as you can be, to find out errors and imperfections, that men may be warned against them. It is truth that we care for; especially do we care for moral and spiritual truth, the truth of the conscience and the heart, which is self-witnessing, and which men find little to dispute or differ over when once they begin seeking without prejudice or bigotry for that.” Now the moment the Christian churches and Christian people generally

will take this position (and some of the wisest among them are taking it), that moment all this crushing burden of carrying the imperfections of the Bible—this hopeless Sisyphus task of apologizing for these imperfections, and trying by hook or by crook to convince the intelligence of the age that they are perfections, is gone; and the mental energies of Christendom are left free to be expended in better and more worthy directions.

Relation of Religion to Science and Rational Scholarship.—Moreover, too, the moment this is done, that moment Christianity changes its attitude and relations, utterly, with reference to rational scholarship and science; that is to say, that moment it ceases to be antagonistic to these, and assumes a position of friendship and co-operation. The value and importance of this change can scarcely be over-estimated. Once let it be accomplished and it will be seen that the gain is immense in every way. As Greg, in his Creed of Christendom, so well says: "Religion then becomes safer; Science becomes free; the temptation to dishonest subterfuge, so strong (under the old theory of an Infallible Book) that few could resist it, is at once removed; and it becomes possible for divines to retain their faith, their knowledge and their integrity together. It is no longer necessary to harmonize Scripture and Science by fettering the one, or tampering with the other; nor for men of Science

and men of Theology either to stand in the position of antagonists, or to avoid doing so by resorting to hollow subtleties and transparent evasions, which cannot but degrade them in their own eyes, and degrade their respective professions in the eyes of the observing world."

The Bible Improved as a Book of Worship and of Practical Religion, by giving up the Idea of its Infallibility.—Nor could the surrender of the dogma of the infallibility of the Bible hurt the volume, as some fear, as a book of devotional and practical religion. Rather, in important respects, it would help it as such. For, as already intimated, the loss of the idea of infallibility would affect not in the least the higher and more spiritual teachings of the Bible—those portions that are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It would be simply the letting in of a healthy wind to blow away such chaff as has no power to feed anybody: for example, the imprecations of three or four of the Psalms; the brutal exploits of Samson; exaggerations like those that I have pointed out in connection with the number of years lived by the patriarchs, and the number of soldiers in the armies of Jeroboam and Abijah; the falsehood of Abraham when he denied that Sarah was his wife; the various contradictions between Scripture and science; the incredible stories of Jonah, and of the falling down of the walls

of Jericho at the sound of the ram's horns; and all that class of things, which, so far from having in them any food for pious souls, or spiritual edification for anybody, are, on the contrary, found generally to be a hindrance to piety, and a detraction from edification almost in the exact degree in which men feel under obligation to apologize for them, and to resort to all sorts of expedients of interpretation in the effort to make them harmonize with proper notions of righteousness and worthy ideas of God.

No room for Indifference.—Thus it will be seen that the subject of Bible fallibility or infallibility is not something which we may any of us be *indifferent* to; it is not something with reference to which the truth may be known or not known, and all will be the same. The truth is, the idea that we have in the Bible an infallible book, is a great and grave evil entrenched in the very heart of our Christianity; and it is all the while silently working harm in many ways, both to our religion and our civilization.* For example, I have already shown that certain parts of the Bible contain degrading representations of God—representations of Him as jealous, angry, unjust, brutal, commending and approving such things as shock every sound moral nature. And yet *if the Bible is infallible, of course all these representations are true, and God is just such a Being as these picture him to be.* Thus we

* See above, pp. 22, 23, 123.

are driven to the alternative either of confessing that God is a superhuman tyrant, an infinite devil, or else *denying that the Bible can be infallible*. Does any one fail to see which of the two is the *religious* as well as the reasonable thing to do? Surely there is a weighty and solemn religious obligation resting on us to deny the truth of a dogma which aims so cruel a blow at the character of the Being we worship, and the validity of our moral intuitions. The highest and holiest things of religion and life are very deeply at stake. As we care for religion, therefore, we must not shrink; when we come upon representations of God in the Bible that are degrading and immoral, we *must* say, "They are wrong; the men who wrote them had the low and imperfect ideas of their age; we, to-day, standing in the light that shines from Jesus, and from the eighteen centuries since, worship a God vastly higher and better than the God of those imperfect old-time pictures."

Furthermore, we have seen that the Bible sanctions and inculcates much that is wrong in human conduct. All this is *harmless if we look at the Bible rationally*—as a book that has come down to us from a far past, containing much of the highest wisdom and noblest inspiration of that past, but necessarily containing also not a little of its crude and imperfect morality which our age has outgrown. But if, on the other hand, we look at everything the Bible contains as

from God and *infallible*, then its inculcations and approvals of evil and wrong are *anything but harmless*.

The Doctrine of Infallibility an Enemy to Virtue, especially among the Young.—It is the growing feeling of many of our wisest and soberest minds that virtue has few greater obstacles to contend with in our age than the widespread insistence on the part of the church that Old Testament morality is perfect morality. Old Testament morality is not perfect morality. No one coming to the study of it with a mind unbiassed would for a moment think of calling it perfect. Even the men who contend most earnestly for its perfection, should they find precisely the same in one of the other great Bibles of the world, would, without the slightest hesitation, pronounce it defective. Why, then, is such morality set up in this day and age as a standard? Can it fail to do grave harm—especially among the young? Think of millions of Sunday school children, with their young and plastic minds, being systematically taught from Sunday to Sunday, for years, such things as that it was right for Joshua to perpetrate his massacres of men, women and babes, and for Jehu to murder all the house of Ahab, and for Hosea to break the seventh commandment, and for Moses and Aaron to lie to Pharaoh, and for the Jewish people to put witches to death and hold slaves, and the like (things, all of them, which we are told *God commanded*), and then reflect what

a foundation all this lays in these millions of children, upon which to build virtuous characters and sensitive consciences, and pure and high manhood and womanhood! Can anything ever compensate for, or make good, such an utter confusion and perversion of moral ideas in the minds of the young? Can we expect anything else but that children thus instructed will have low and confused ideas of right and wrong, and blunted consciences, as well as unworthy conceptions of God, when they grow up to be men and women?

No! while we continue to hold earnestly to the Bible, we must discriminate. While we cannot appreciate too highly the rich legacy of moral and religious truth and sentiment that comes down to us in its revered pages, let us not be guilty of the fatal folly of consecrating error because it happens to be associated with truth. While we may well keep the Bible in our Sunday schools, and churches, and houses, as our great, and in a true sense, our sacred book of religion, to be studied reverently and appreciatively by ourselves and by our children, we must beware that we do not make it a curse instead of a blessing, to ourselves, and especially to them, by accepting it and teaching them to accept it as what it is *not*, viz., *an infallible book*.

CHAPTER IV.

INSPIRATION.—REVELATION.—DID THE BIBLE CREATE RELIGION, OR RELIGION THE BIBLE?—THE REAL VALUE OF THE BIBLE.—FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

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“ Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.”—PAUL.

“ There is a common impression that the Bible has created a religion for man by a positive enactment. The Bible has not made religion, but religion and righteousness have made the Bible.”—PROF SWING.

“ In holy books we read how God hath spoken
To holy men in many different ways ;
But hath the present worked no sign nor token ?
Is God quite silent in these latter days ?

“ The word were but a blank, a hollow sound,
If He that spoke it were not speaking still ;
If all the light and all the shade around
Were aught but issues of Almighty Will.”

—H. COLERIDGE.

“ The only safe way of meeting this danger (that threatens the Bible—the danger, on the one hand, of hostility ; and, on the other, of indifference), is to find, as grounds for men’s continued veneration and use of the Bible, propositions which can be verified, and which are unassailable. This, then, has been our object ; to find sure and safe grounds for the continued use and authority of the Bible.”—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

CHAPTER IV.

INSPIRATION.—REVELATION.—DID THE BIBLE CREATE RELIGION, OR RELIGION THE BIBLE?—THE REAL VALUE OF THE BIBLE.—FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

I PASS on now from the subject of the infallibility of the Bible, to touch upon a few questions, often asked, which are of such importance that they ought to be considered here.

1. *Inspiration.*—If these writings, which in their collective form we call the Old and New Testaments, are not infallible, are they inspired? To this question I reply—There is not the slightest antagonism between the views set forth in the preceding pages, and the idea that the Bible is a book rich with true and noble inspiration. What do I mean? This is what I mean: “God is the life of all that lives, and the motion of all that moves. Every good and holy thought, every noble deed, every high endeavor, every pure aspiration, is by and through so much of God as works through humanity; for without him we can do nothing. ‘In him we live and move and have our

being.' So, then, inspiration is natural to the human soul, and its degree is determined by character and capacity." All men have it; some more, some less, according as their natures are large or small, and according as they open their minds to truth, and their hearts to goodness, or refuse thus to open them. Touching *some portions* of the Bible, I have nothing to say about their inspiration. But when I come to other portions, words are all too poor to express my sense of the richness and glory of the inspiration that they reveal. From what fountain but the fountain of God's truest inspiration could have come any one of a hundred passages, from both Old Testament and New, that instantly flash on our minds when we think of what is loftiest in religion? At what spring but that of the world's purest, sweetest, divinest inspiration, could all those men have drank whose words have sounded down the ages, thrilling the hearts of untold millions as human hearts have almost never else been thrilled? *

* "That 'inspiration of the Almighty, which giveth understanding,' is not a less mighty fact because we find that the writers of Scripture had it not different in kind from that which comes to every man who opens his soul to receive it. It dwells in those earnest ones whose yearnings after the unseen found utterance in Bible, Rig-Veda, Zend-Avesta, Tripitaka, King (Chinese Sacred Book), and Koran, and it dwells in earnest souls to-day, wherever the love of truth abides. And for us, in whatever written or spoken word, or sound of many-voiced nature, we find that which speaks to our heart as true, *there is* for us an inspired truth."—CLODD.

2. *Revelation*.—Is the Bible revelation from God? Or, rather, does the Bible *contain* revelation from God? I reply—For one, I firmly believe that it does contain such revelation, and that, too, in large measure and of inestimable value.

I do not think there is any nation or any human being, through whom God does not, to a greater or less extent, reveal himself. Certainly, then, through the profoundly religious Jewish nation, and especially through its great seers and prophets and religious teachers—its Abraham, its Moses, its David, its Isaiah, its Paul, and, far above any other, its Jesus—certainly through these I cannot but regard God as having revealed himself most marvellously and preciousy. The various writings that make up our Bible revelations of God! Yes, in their several degrees! some higher, some lower; some more perfect, some less perfect! Not God's *only* revelations, however. On the whole, the highest and best, doubtless, that ancient times produced, but not all that the world has seen. For shall we assert of God that he has been a God of partiality, choosing out of the nations of the world one small nation—the Hebrews—and making himself known to them, and to no others? Shall we push aside all the other Sacred Books of the world—the Hindoo and Persian Bibles, both older than our own; the Buddhist Bible, held to be sacred by more people than all who hold to the Christian Bible; the Chinese

Bibles, ancient and venerable books; and the Koran, the Bible of some of the noblest peoples of the past—I say, shall we push aside all these Sacred Books, and declare that there is no voice of God in them? For one, I dare not do that. Nor dare I deny that God has revealed himself through thousands of great and pure souls whose thoughts fill the books of all our libraries; and that he is revealing himself still, and ever more and more fully revealing himself as the ages go by, in nature, from flower up to star; in science, in all its wide domain; in art, in poetry, in music, in history, in the mind and conscience and heart of man. I dare not say that any valuable knowledge, or any helpful truth, or any noble aspiration or inspiration or impulse, ever comes to man, but it comes from God, and is in just so far God revealing himself. God's revelation confined to a single book or set of books! Why, all the books in the world are too small to hold God's revelation. And if book-writing goes on for ten thousand years, until libraries vast as the old library of Alexandria are multiplied as the stars of the sky, still the fountain of God's revelation will be as far as ever from running dry. Until the end of time—nay, until the end of eternity—wherever there is an eye to see, or an ear to hear, or a mind to apprehend, there there will be a God to reveal, and ever more and more fully reveal his truth.

3. *The Bible as the Producer of Religion and Mor-*

als vs. Religion and Morals as the Producer of the Bible.—Is or is not the Bible the source of religion and of morals in the world? If there had never come into existence any such Bible as ours, would we have had any religion—that is, any *true* religion among men, or any morality?

Of course in the light of the preceding discussion these questions seem scarcely less than superfluous : and yet they are so often asked among certain classes of sincere and earnest persons, that they ought perhaps to be definitely met here. It will be a sufficient answer, however, if I simply point out in a word the bearing of what has gone before, upon them. Both religion and morals had an existence among men long before our Bible or any part of our Bible was born. In parts of the world where our Bible has never been heard of they have both flourished and borne beautiful fruits for thousands of years. In the earlier pages of this book it was shown that many of the purest and loftiest moral and religious teachings of both our Old Testament and New, are found, in greater or less prominence, in other Sacred Books of mankind,—some of those Sacred Books being of earlier date than our own. And when we search the literature and history even of peoples that did not have any Sacred Book at all, as for example the Greeks and Romans, we still find numerous exhibitions of noble virtues : while as to piety, we find also

much of that, of such kind as we cannot but feel to be pervaded with the spirit of true and pure worship.

Thus we see that instead of our Bible being the original fountain and creator of morals and true religion in the world—that is to say, instead of morals and true religion depending for their existence in the world upon the previous existence of our Bible—as so many persons seem to think—the very opposite of this is true. It was morality and religion in the world—ever growing and developing—ever struggling from dimness and confusion and weakness in men's minds toward greater definiteness and strength—that produced our Bible, and all the other Bibles of mankind. And if our Bible, and all the rest of the now existing Bibles, were destroyed, religion and morality would produce others, and others, so long as others were needed. The foundations of virtue and religion are not in any book, but in *God*, in the *Nature of Things*, in the *Soul of Man*. Not but that the Bible, once produced, has helped, and helped most efficiently, to carry forward the religious and moral development of the nations among whom it has come: so that, as a rule, these nations owe very much to it, and would have had a very different history morally and religiously if it had never made its appearance among them. Indeed, we may call our Bible in a certain true sense the fountain from which the particular form of religion known as Christianity has come,—

just as we may call the Vedas in a certain true sense the fountain from which the form of religion known as Brahmanism has come. Nevertheless the words of Prof. Swing are true: "The Bible has not made religion; but religion and righteousness have made the Bible."

4. *Distinguishing the True from the False—the Inspired from the Uninspired, in the Bible.*—If there are errors and imperfections in the Bible—that is to say, if the Bible is not all infallible inspiration, how are we to know what parts are true and inspired, and what parts are untrue and uninspired—in other words, what parts we should keep and what parts we should cast out? This question, I know, often causes real trouble to earnest and conscientious minds, and yet it seems strange that it should; for the answer is surely very simply and plain. With reference to all scientific and historical questions, and all questions of *fact*, connected with the Bible, doubtless we are to find out what is truth and what is not truth in exactly the same way that we find out truth and falsehood anywhere else, viz.—by inquiry and investigation. By honest inquiry, and candid investigation, almost all the more important of these questions of fact can doubtless be solved. That so many remain still unsolved, is undoubtedly due in large measure to the fact that as yet so little really honest and unbiassed investigation has been made. If a tithe of the time

and energy of mind that have been consumed in anathematizing heretics, and trying to bolster up this and that purely speculative theory about the Bible, had been spent in honest endeavors to find out the truth, whatever it might be, a thousand questions which are still in dispute concerning the Bible, would long ere this have been settled.

As to the way we are to find out what we should accept and what reject in the direction of the *moral* teachings of the Bible, the matter is even simpler still. Indeed there is not and never has been any serious difficulty on this score—certainly not to persons who study the Bible earnestly and rationally. The great leading doctrines of morality are clear and unmistakable. They are written in the very nature of man ; and as the race advances to higher and more perfect civilization these come out into greater and greater distinctness ; and that, too, even where men have never known anything of our Bible. Certainly, then, it is a strange thing if we, in the midst of the highest civilization that the world has ever seen, require to have a Bible that is supernaturally infallible in order to know virtue from vice, and the noble from the base in human conduct. When we read other books we find no difficulty, as a rule, in forming a judgment as to what in them is excellent and admirable, and what is degrading and wrong. Why, then, should we find it difficult, in reading the Bible, to de-

cide between the morally good, and the morally bad in it?

And so, too, with regard to the great *spiritual* teachings of the Bible—these also all carry their credentials and authority in themselves. Such utterances as the Golden Rule, the Beatitudes, and Paul's chapter on Charity, it is impossible that men should mistake about. The whole matter reduces just to this—and nothing could be simpler—whatever in the Bible, as men read it, helps them, strengthens them, gives them nobler conceptions of God, increases their faith in humanity, widens their sympathies, purifies their desires, deepens their earnestness, brightens their hope, sends them forth with a more abiding consecration to the true, the beautiful and the good, is certainly of God—and is to be received as such with as much assurance as if it were spoken to every one by an audible voice from the skies. Whereas, on the other hand, whatever is in the Bible, or anywhere else, that tends to degrade men's conceptions of God, or confuse moral distinctions, or lower their ideals of life or standards of duty, or dim their spiritual vision, is certainly not of God—and no ecclesiastical consecration or sanction, and no alleged attestation of miracles, or anything else, can make it their duty to do anything else than reject it.*

* "There is no danger that we shall not know what is true when we see it. The sane reason cannot reject it. 'The true,' says Novalis,

Place the Beatitudes side by side with the imprecations of the 109th Psalm ; or the story of treacherous Jael secretly murdering one whom she ought to have befriended, beside the parable of the good Samaritan ; or Solomon's utterance, " Man has no pre-eminence over a beast," beside John's declaration, " Beloved now are we the sons of God ;" and is there any difficulty in understanding which is from above and which is not from above ? The simple truth is, when men take up the Bible to read it as they would any other book, without any infallibility theories to disturb their common sense or introduce confusion into their judgments, the trouble we are considering almost or altogether disappears,—the practical difficulty of knowing what in the Bible to accept and what to reject, which, viewed from a distance, seems to some so great a difficulty, melts away into thin air, and is found to have been really little more than a theological dream.

5. *The Bible as compared with other Books.*—Is the Bible, then, to be placed on the same level with other books ? To this question I reply, in accord with what I have more than once in the preceding pages intimated—The most authoritative criticism seems, with almost perfect unanimity, to answer, No ! 'is that which we cannot help believing.' It is the *perceptio per solam essentiam* of Spinoza. It asks not faith, nor yet testimony ; it stands in need of neither." Brinton's "Religious Sentiment." p. 41. Says Coleridge : "Whatever FINDS *me*, bears witness of itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit."

Though there are in the world many cataracts, there is only one Niagara; though there are many countries that have produced noble art, yet is there only one Greece; though all nations and ages have had their poets, yet the world has produced but one Shakespeare. So, though there are many lands that have given birth to great and noble religions, it seems not to be invidious to say that there is only one Palestine; and though in connection with these various religions have appeared many great and pure religious teachers, yet has the race produced but one Jesus. Nature is always sparing of her very best products, whether in the world of matter or of mind. Evidently her best moral and spiritual product of that old world from which all our great religions and the deepest streams of our moral and spiritual life have come, appeared in Judea and Galilee, and is represented in this collection of Hebrew religious literature which we call our Bible.

6. *The Real Value of the Bible.*—One other question, often asked, and as important to be considered as any that have gone before, remains to be noticed, viz.: In what does the value of the Bible consist? Why should we, living in this late day—in times and circumstances of life so far removed from those of the Bible, and enjoying so much greater intellectual light than the men who wrote it enjoyed, continue to read

it, and study it, and give it the place of honor among our books of religion ?

I reply—The value of the Bible is many-sided—its claims upon our attention, our appreciation, and our reverence, are not one, but many.

(1.) *The Bible as a Literary Production.*—Portions of the Bible, at least, have confessedly a high literary value. It seems to be the judgment of the most competent critics that certain books of both the Old Testament and the New are not out of place side by side with the best literary productions of any age or country. There is no lack of authorities who rank some of the Psalms with the lyrics of Pindar and Wordsworth ; the Book of Job with the tragedies of Sophocles and Shakespeare ; the Prophecy of Isaiah and the Epistle to the Romans with any religious or ethical writing in the world. Probably few persons will dispute with me when I call the Bible as a whole, as it exists in the hands of the people to-day, in the common English version, our greatest and noblest English classic. The first translation of the Bible into the vernacular was made so early, and so soon thereafter it became so emphatically the one great book of the people, that it has exerted an influence in moulding the English language, and indeed English literature, vastly greater than any other book. We may almost say that the English language of to-day is formed on the basis of King James's translation of

1611. Probably quite nine scholars out of ten, of those best qualified to judge, if called upon to select the best model in the language, of simple, terse, vigorous, and at the same time elegant, English, would choose the Bible, in our common translation.

(2.) *The Bible Interwoven indissolubly with every Phase and Department of our Civilization.*—The Bible occupies a far more central and important place in European and American civilization than any other book. Indeed it is doubtful if a man voyaging through our modern Christendom as a student of its history, its literature, its philosophy, its art, its politics, its institutions, would find himself so much inconvenienced by being unacquainted with Homer, Plato, Virgil, Cicero, Dante, and enough others to make a good dozen of the greatest writers of the world, outside of the Bible, as he would by being unacquainted with the single volume of our Sacred Scriptures.

In nothing, perhaps, does this more plainly appear than in *art*. Going through the great art galleries of Christendom one finds that the art of whole ages, and some of these the most productive since classic Rome and Athens, is well-nigh exclusively occupied with Bible themes. So closely was the art of Europe, from the fall of Rome until very recent times, allied with the Christian Religion, that a knowledge of gravitation is scarcely more essential to an understanding of

astronomy or physics, than is a knowledge of the Bible to an understanding of European art as a whole.

But a careful student of European *literature, history, philosophy, politics, and institutions* will hardly be willing to say that the Bible has a *less close connection with any of these* than with art. Its connection with these may not be so direct and easy to trace, as with art, but as we look deeply into the heart of things, we discover that it is really scarcely less intimate.

(3.) *The Bible as a History of the Evolution of Religion.*—We have in the Bible a far more vivid and impressive picture than can be found anywhere else in literature, of what I may call the *evolution of religion and morals* on a large scale. The Bible presents us with the literary memorials of the growth of the people of Israel, through ten or twelve centuries of varied and wonderful history, from ideas of God and worship and morality that were at best very low and poor, up into such ideas as those taught by Jesus, which are confessed to stand in the front rank of the loftiest religious and ethical teachings of the world. Indeed I have pointed out what would seem to be proof that the Jewish people, even for centuries after Moses, continued to worship to a considerable extent other gods as well as Jehovah ; * held conceptions of Jehovah some of which

* See pp. 45-48, *note*.

were very low and degrading ; * did not believe (so far as we can find out) in the Immortality of the Soul ; † practiced in war most shocking barbarities ; ‡ and even, there is only too much evidence for believing, offered their own children as religious sacrifices.§ But all this by degrees passes away ; and we have in the Bible a many-sided and most instructive picture of the nation's advance all the way from this darkness to the splendid light of the gospels—where one deity has taken the place of many ; God has become the holy, loving “Heavenly Father” of all the race ; worship has grown to be, no longer a thing of cruel, bloody rites, but the sincere homage of affectionate hearts ; and the doctrine of Immortality has come forward into distinctness and prominence.|| In other words, as we

* See pp. 70-74, 120-123.

† See pp. 74, 75.

‡ See the account of the maiming of the three score and ten kings, Judges i. 6, 7 ; also Samuel's word to Saul as he went away to battle—“Spare no Amalekite, slay man and woman, infant and suckling,” I. Samuel xv. 3 ; also the hewing of King Agag in pieces by Samuel, I. Sam. xv. 8, 33 ; also the indiscriminate, wholesale massacre of men, women and helpless children in the conquest of Canaan, Deut. xx. 16, 17 ; Joshua viii. 18-29 ; x. 28-41. Numbers xxi. 35 ; xxxi. 17, 18.

§ See pp. 46-48, *note*.

|| The ordinary reader of the Bible in the form in which it comes down to us has difficulty in tracing in any satisfactory manner the steps of this development ; indeed he discovers much that seems to militate against any such idea of development, in the fact that some of the highest religious utterances and noblest conceptions of God, in

study the Bible in the light of candid and rational scholarship we see Israel passing before our eyes through all the steps of progress, from (shall we not say?) a degraded polytheism, to the highest religious development attained by any ancient people. It is easy to perceive what an invaluable legacy the religious world has in such a history of religious evolution on such a scale. We speak of the growth of the English Constitution as something marvellous, and the history of it which comes down to us as perhaps the

the Bible, are found in those books that seem to come down from the earliest ages. But if he will begin studying the results of the best biblical scholarship he will soon find out that the case is very different from what appears on the surface. He will learn, as has been shown in the preceding pages, that (1) the books of the Bible do not stand in our version in the order of their dates; (2) those books that deal with the earliest events in point of time, were written in the form in which we have them now, comparatively late in the history of the Jewish nation; (3) a large part of the books are compilations, containing fragments of different ages. These facts learned, the way is clear before him for an examination of the question as to whether the history of Israel does or does not reveal a moral and religious progress, development, evolution, such as I have described. Let him now take up such a work as Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," or Ewald's "History of Israel," and see how, as the result of incredible labor and painstaking, these great scholars have unravelled the difficulties that surrounded the subject, and traced the different books and fragments to the ages which really produced them, and he will soon discover, not only how many and strong are the proofs of the advance and development claimed, but how clearly marked both as to point of time and manner of accomplishment are many of the more important steps of that development.

most valuable *political* bequest that the past has made to the English-speaking world. Somewhat such a bequest as this, only far more valuable, does the *religious* world have in the history of the growth of religion as portrayed in our Old and New Testaments.

→ (4.) *The Bible and Monotheism.*—The Bible is the *parent of Monotheism* in the world, so far as a book can be. It is worthy of note that the three great monotheistic religions, all send back their roots directly or indirectly into our Scriptures—Judaism and Christianity directly, and Mohammedanism indirectly. We are apt to give the Bible credit for nothing only what allies itself with Christianity. This is wrong. Judaism is a noble religion, and has exerted, not only before the Christian Era but since, a great influence in the world. When all is known that history has to tell us, it will probably appear that our modern civilization is more indebted to Israel than we have been willing to confess, not only as regards religion but as regards commerce, education, science and letters.*

* For an account of the great influence exercised by the Jews in Rome and throughout the Roman empire during the early Christian centuries, see Prof. Huidekoper's "Judaism in Rome."

For the work they did in the middle ages in founding and endowing universities, and promoting science, especially medical science, see "Draper's Intellectual Development of Europe," pp. 414, 417 (Harpers' Ed.). But perhaps never since the destruction of Jerusalem have the Jews been so prosperous or influential in the world as now.

So, too, Mohammedanism is in some respects at least a noble religion ; and certainly its influence, not only upon the world's religious history, but also upon its intellectual and political, has been very powerful and far-reaching ; and if we may trust the accounts that come to us from Asia and Africa, it is to-day spreading in the world more rapidly than even Christianity.

But Mohammedanism can be understood only very imperfectly without a knowledge of the Bible—so truly the child of the Bible as well as of the Koran is it ; while Judaism cannot be understood at all without a knowledge of the Old Testament.

It is most remarkable that one book should thus be so closely related to the three great monotheistic religions of the world. This fact alone may justly be claimed as giving our Bible a pre-eminence over all the other Sacred Books of mankind.

(5.) *The Bible as a Book of Practical Religion.*—But it is not until we come to study the Bible as a book of practical religion, or *conduct*, that after all we approach its highest value. With all its imperfections, it must still be confessed to be, on the whole, a book of unequalled moral earnestness, incitement, inspiration. With an iteration and reiteration that is untiring, and with an emphasis that is sometimes fairly tremendous, do all the greater writers of the Bible impress upon us the grandeur of the moral side of life—the impor-

tance of justice, truth, mercy, but especially righteousness in human conduct. A body of men of deeper moral earnestness, or more brave and loyal to what they believed to be true and right in religion, perhaps the world never saw, than were the old Testament prophets. Bigoted sometimes ; coarse and cruel sometimes ; true children of a rude age, some of them ; occupying very different planes, morally and spiritually, as well as intellectually and socially,—they yet, as a whole, were grand men, whose words are even to-day moral bugle-calls to the race.

Matthew Arnold has said—" So long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for Inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense for Righteousness most glowing and strongest ; and in hearing and reading the words which Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find a glow and a force which they could find nowhere else. As well imagine a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek art, or a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct (that is righteousness or virtue) not cultivating it by the help of the Bible."

(6.) *The Bible as a Book of Spiritual Consolation and Quickening.*—So, too, with regard to all that which we commonly call the spiritual side of life—that side

of life which includes love, gratitude, reverence, prayer, hope, faith, aspiration, worship—it is not too much to say that the world has produced no book which has proved itself more powerful, if any has proved itself equally powerful, as a help and inspirer of men on this side of their being. Such passages as the Sermon on the Mount, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of John, the fifteenth chapter of Luke, the eighth chapter of Romans, the fifth and sixth chapters of Ephesians, the twenty-third, twenty-seventh, thirty-seventh, one hundred and third, one hundred and thirty-ninth, and a score more Psalms, and selections from the last sixteen chapters of Isaiah, are spiritual food than which the voice of the ages declares there has been no richer given to the race. They are fountains which never run dry, but which, repair to them often as they would, untold millions have found always full of water for the soul's deepest thirst.

- “ We search the world for truth, we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful
From graven stone and written scroll,
From the old flower-fields of the soul ;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said,
Is in the book our mother's read.”

These words of Whittier, as applied to the moral,

but especially as applied to what I have called the more purely *spiritual*, teachings of the Bible, are scarcely too strong.

Furthermore, also, they suggest one other thing about the Bible—perhaps not often enough thought of—which to multitudes gives it, and will always continue with good reasons to give it, if not a higher, at least a more tender and heart-felt value than it could ever otherwise have. I refer to the fact that our Bible *is* the book “our mothers read”—in other words, that it is a book which has come down to us all, as the one great, sacred book of the Christian ages, hallowed by the dearest and grandest of associations and memories. It is not only *our* book of religion, but it is a book *rich with the very life-blood of all that was highest and holiest in the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the faiths, the prayers, the aspirations and yearnings, of our fathers, and our father’s fathers, and nearly all the noblest men and saintliest women of all the Christian ages.* How much that means, only men’s hearts, not their heads, can answer! Surely such a book, with all its shortcomings, may well lay heavy claims upon our love, our appreciation, our reverence.

Here, then, in as much detail and carried out in as many directions as space will allow, we have our answer to the questions—In what does the value of the Bible consist? Why should we, in our day, con-

tinue to read and study it, and give it the place of highest and peculiar honor among our literature? We see its value to be various, many-sided, far-reaching, deep-reaching, tangible, real, and in no sense dependent upon any theory of miraculous infallibility concerning it.

Concluding Words.—*Real Friends and Real Enemies of the Bible.*—Of course I cannot be unaware that it will be said by some that, in giving expression to such thoughts as are found in the preceding pages, I am trying to overthrow the Bible.

In reply, I have only to say that the exact opposite of this is true. I am trying to save the Bible. We may as well open our eyes to the fact that, if the Bible is to be saved to the less credulous and more intelligent and independently thinking ages that are to follow us, it must be by letting the truth be known. There is one basis upon which it can stand as long as time endures, and stand safe from every assault, and that is the basis of fact—the basis of what it really *is*—the basis of the shining and transcendent excellencies which, aside from and entirely independent of its manifold defects, it clearly possesses. But there is no other basis upon which it can stand. We hear much said about “friends” and “enemies” of the Bible. There are no such enemies of anything as foolish and short-sighted friends. Does any one say that I and others with me, who believe in telling

candidly the truth about these things, are enemies of the Bible? We are not; we are friends of the Bible. *They* are the enemies of the Bible who insist on keeping it standing upon a fictitious basis, which tends ever to melt away before free thought and candid investigation, as ice melts before fire. *They* are the enemies of the Bible who refuse to allow men to discriminate, judge, apply tests of reason and common sense—who say such utterly senseless things as that the Bible is “either all true or all false,” and that we must “either believe it all, from cover to cover, or else throw it all away.” If the array of facts, of so many and varied kinds, exhibited in the preceding pages, proves anything, it proves that the Bible isn’t either all true or all a lie. Ten thousand things in it are true, and grandly true—but some things in it are not true. We are not necessitated, either to believe it all or else throw it all away, any more than I am necessitated to tear down a beautiful picture from my walls because there are scratches or dust specks on it, or turn my mother out of my house, because, with all her wealth of tenderness and love and goodness, there may be possible flaws or imperfections in her character, as there are flaws and imperfections in the character of us all. There is no such alternative existing as that the Bible must be accepted as a whole or else rejected as a whole. To say that there is, is as great folly as it would be to say that men must either

give up the use of corn as food, or else consume it husks and all ; and wheat, or else consume it chaff and all.

This alternative is usually insisted on with the thought that men will of course shrink from giving the Bible all up, and therefore the pressing of this alternative, it is thought, will compel them to accept all of the Bible as the only thing left that they can do. It is a sort of thumb-screw arrangement, by which it is supposed men can be forced to adopt the theory of infallibility. But what really are the results? Really, how many minds are thus forced to what their judgments rebel against? Doubtless, among the weaker and more timid and less conscientious, considerable numbers. But among conscientious minds, and especially minds of strength and independence, very few indeed. Far more of these are forced by the alternative to go the other road, and throw the Bible all away. They say, We can't eat husks with our corn, or chaff with our wheat ; therefore, if you will not let us make any separation, all must go—wheat and corn as well as husks and chaff. Thus do the short-sighted friends of the Bible, by insisting upon infallibility or nothing, defeat their purpose, and drive multitudes of our best minds not only away from the Bible, but even away from religion.

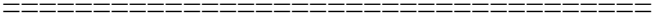
Probably there is no truer conception of the Bible than as a gold mine—a gold mine inestimably rich—yet a *mine* still. There are quartz and earth in no

small measure mixed with the gold, as in all mines ; but there is also gold—true gold of God, more precious than we shall ever fully find out—mixed plentifully with the quartz and the earth. Evidently, then, the part of rational men and women is, neither to resort to the folly on the one hand, of declaring that the quartz and earth are gold, nor yet the equal folly on the other hand, of throwing away all, and declaring there is no gold, because they can plainly see quartz and earth with the gold ; but the part of rational men and women surely is to delve earnestly in the mine, casting out, without hesitation, what plainly is not gold, but saving and treasuring up, with glad appreciation and thankfulness, rich stores of what clearly is gold.

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The Bank of Wisdom publish all works of human interest, we scorn no ideas of serious thought. Ideas and beliefs some may think “dangerous” and would want to hide, we seek to reproduce and distribute for the consideration and intellectual development of every human mind. When peace and understanding is established throughout the world it might be said that humanity has achieved an acceptable degree of civilization, but until that longed for time we must never cease to search for greater truth and a higher morality for humanity.

The wealth of thought hidden in obscure books of past ages makes festinating reading, and as much of this original thought was suppressed by the sheer power of the established systems of the time, these ideas may well be those needed for the future progress. One thing is certain, the belief systems we have are not the ones we need.

Emmett F. Fields
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APPENDIX.

List of Books that may be read or referred to with advantage by persons desiring to get further INFORMATION upon the subjects treated in the following pages :— with prices and brief explanatory and critical comments.

ALLEN, J. H.—“*Hebrew Men and Times.*” 12mo, \$1.50. A very good and interesting account of the Hebrew people “from the Patriarchs to the Messiah.” To some extent a summary of Ewald’s “*History of Israel.*”

AMBERLEY, VISCOUNT.—“*Analysis of Religious Belief.*” London, 2 vols. Am. Ed. 1 vol. 8vo, \$3.00. A book of comparative religion. Describes religious rites, gives accounts of all the important sacred books and founders of religions of the world, and seeks to analyze the religious sentiment, pointing out what is actually true in it, and what objective basis it has. Full of valuable information, though not the highest authority.

APOCRYPHAL NEW TESTAMENT. 12mo, \$1.25. A collection of Gospels, Epistles, etc., now extant, attributed in the first four centuries to Jesus

Christ, his Apostles, and their companions, but not included in the New Testament by its compilers.

ARNOLD, MATTHEW.—“*Literature and Dogma*,” and “*God and the Bible*,” each 12mo, \$1.50. Treat such subjects as “The New Testament Record;” “The Fourth Gospel;” “The Bible Canon;” “Proof of Religion from Miracles and Prophecy;” “The True Greatness of the Bible and Christianity,” and “How to save the Bible to the ‘Masses.’” Extremely radical, and yet in their way thoroughly constructive. Very fresh and powerful.

BARING-GOULD, REV. S.—“*Legends of Old Testament Characters, from the Talmud and other Sources*,” 12mo, \$2.00. Interesting and suggestive.

BAUR, F. C.—“*Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, his Life and Work, his Epistles and Doctrine*.” A contribution to a Critical History of Primitive Christianity. Translated from the German by Rev. Allan Menzies. Published by Williams and Norgate, London. 3 vols.; per vol. \$5.25. The ablest work on the Life and Teachings of Paul that has appeared from the most advanced critical school.

BLEEK, F.—“*Introduction to the Old Testament*.” Translation from the German. 2 vols. crown 8vo, \$9.00. “*Introduction to the New Testament*,” from

the German, 2 vols. 8vo, \$6.00. Scholarly, moderate, valuable.

BRINTON, D. G. "*The Religious Sentiment.*" 12mo, \$2.50. Discusses the development of Religion among peoples of low civilization. Fresh and suggestive, but somewhat one-sided.

CHILD, L. MARIA. "*Progress of Religious Ideas.*" among all the Principal Nations of the World, and through Successive Ages. 3 vols. \$6.00. Not abreast with present scholarship, but candid, appreciative and on the whole very valuable. "*Aspirations of the World.*" 12mo, \$1.25. The best popular collection of *Gems* from the great religious teachers of the world.

CLARKE, JAMES FREEMAN. "*Ten Great Religions.*" 12mo, \$3.00. Gives a brief, comprehensive account of Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism, Parsism, Judaism, Christianity, and the religions of China, ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, and Scandinavia. For popular study the best single work covering this ground.

CLODD, EDWARD. "*Childhood of Religions.*" 16mo, \$1.25. Covers in a briefer way still, much of the ground trodden by J. F. Clarke in his "*Ten Great Religions.*" As fascinating as a story, yet reliable. The best short introduction to the study of the religions of the world, especially for the young.

- COLENSO, BISHOP. "*Lectures on the Pentateuch, and the Moabite Stone; with three Appendices containing I. The Elohist Narrative; II. The Original Story of Exodus; III. The Pre-Christian Cross.*" 8vo, \$6.00. "*The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined,*" 12mo, \$3.00. Both able, candid, critical.
- CONWAY, M. D. "*Sacred Anthology: A Book of Ethnical Scriptures.*" 12mo, \$2.00. A valuable volume of *Selections* from the Sacred Writings of the Orient—including Chinese, Parsi, Hindoo, Buddhist, Mohammedan, Hebrew, Christian, and others.
- CURTIS, PROF. T. F. "*The Human Element in Inspiration.*" 12mo, \$2.00. Aims to show that the Inspiration of the Bible is not of such a character as to insure Infallibility. Scholarly, popular. Standpoint moderate orthodox.
- DAVIDSON, DR. S. "*Introduction to the Old Testament.*" 2 vols. 8vo, \$21.00. Critically examines each book of the Old Testament as to its date, authorship, historical value, general contents, etc. "*Introduction to the New Testament.*" 2 vols. 8vo, \$15.00. Does the same for the New Testament that the former work does for the Old. Decidedly the best Introductions to the Bible. Candid. Standpoint rationalistic. No authority higher. "*The Canon of the Bible.*" 16mo, \$2.50. An

account of the formation, history and fluctuations of the Old and New Testament canons ; critical and yet popular. The best short work on the canon. (The same, abridged, appears in the 9th Ed. of the Encyclopedia Britannica, art. Canon).

DENTON, WM. "*The Irreconcilable Records ; or Genesis and Geology ;*" pamphlet, 80 pp., 25 cts. "*The Deluge in the Light of Modern Science ;*" pamphlet, 36 pp. 10 cents. Published by Wm. Denton, and for sale by Colby & Rich, 9 Montgomery Pl., Boston. Clear and strong statements of the difficulties in the way of harmonizing the Genesis records with modern science.

DRAPER, J. W. "*Conflict Between Religion and Science.*" 12mo, \$1.75. History of the opposition which Christian theology has made in the different ages to the advancement of Science.

EDKINS, JOSEPH, D. D. "*Religion in China ; Containing a Brief Account of the Three Religions of the Chinese ; with Observations on the Prospects of Christian Conversion among that People.*" 8vo, \$2.50. Perhaps as good a popular account as has appeared of the religions of China. Written from the Evangelical Christian stand-point, but candid.

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA. Ninth Edition. The articles on Biblical and religious subjects in the new edition of this work are worthy of especial

attention, as being on the whole not only more full, but more unbiassed, and better up with the latest scholarship, than those found in any similar English or American work. Notice particularly articles by Dr. S. Davidson and Prof. W. Robertson Smith on the "Canon," the "Bible," and other kindred biblical subjects; also articles on the various *extra-Christian* religions and great religious teachers.

EWALD. "*History of Israel.*" Translated from the German by Russell Martineau, 5 vols. 8vo, \$31.25. An elaborate history of the Hebrew people, religion, institutions and literature, to the time of Christ. A masterly work by perhaps the greatest biblical scholar that Germany has produced. Advanced (not extreme) in theories, conservative and thoroughly constructive in spirit.

FARRAR, CANON. "*Seekers after God.*" 12mo, \$1.75. A very interesting account of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and Antoninus, showing in how many respects they were at one with Jesus and Paul. Fascinating and reliable.

FISKE, JOHN, PROF. "*The Unseen World.*" 12mo, pp. 349, \$2.00. Contains two valuable essays on "The Jesus of History," and "the Christ of Dogma;" written from the standpoint of the advanced German criticism.

FROTHINGHAM, O. B. "*The Cradle of Christ: A*

Study in Primitive Christianity." 8vo, \$1.75. Largely follows the Tubingen (extreme critical) school, in dealing with the Gospels, but in an independent way. Regards the accounts of Jesus as mostly mythical; argues that very little, if anything, can really be known of the history of such a person. Aims to be comprehensive and popular rather than minute and critical. Eloquent and interesting.

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