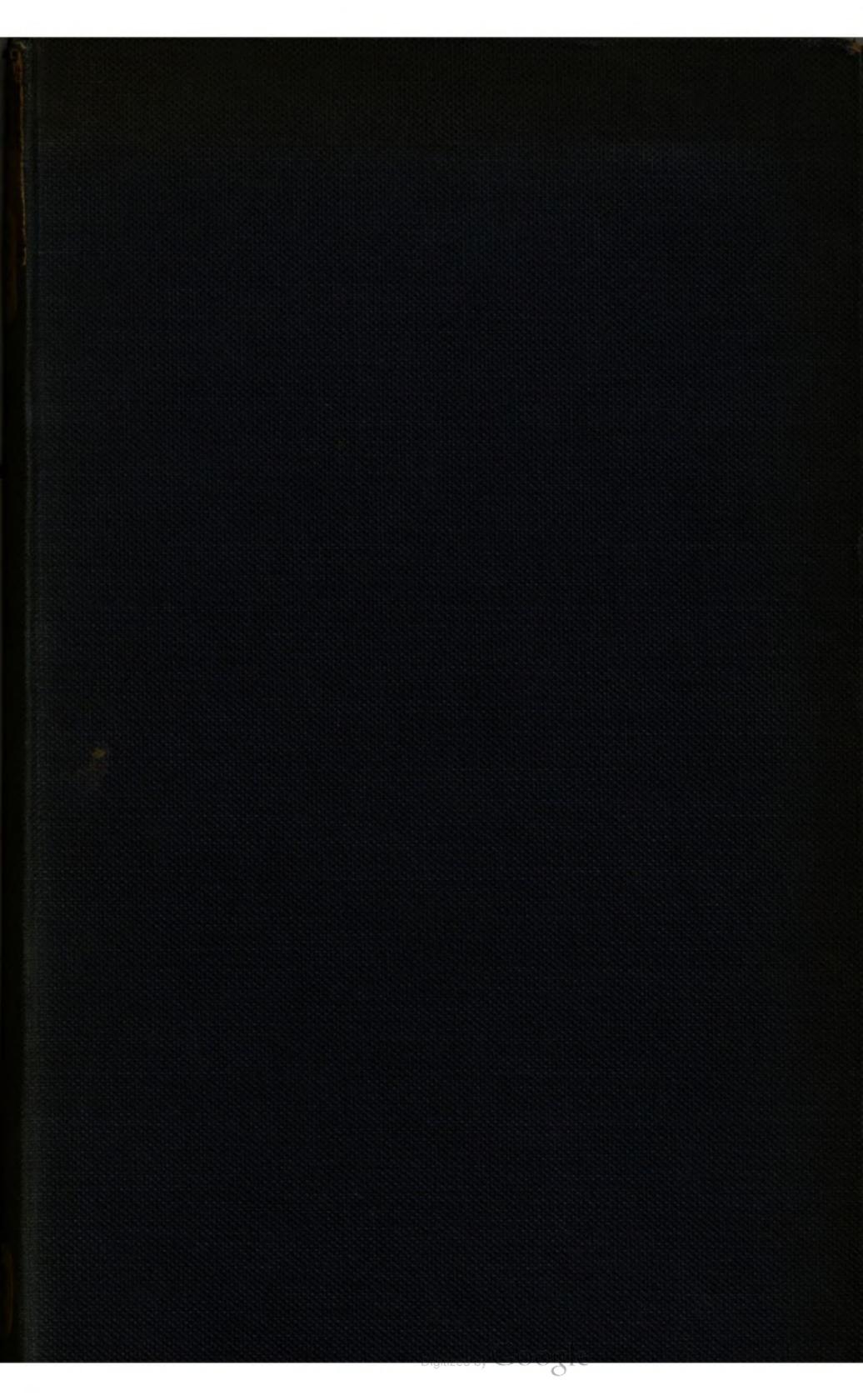

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4.10.10.

SOME REPLY
TO
“PHASES OF FAITH,

BY
FRANCIS NEWMAN.”

DESIGNED TO ASSIST CHRISTIAN READERS WHO MAY
BE STAGGERED BY ITS TONE OR SUBSTANCE.

BY
DAVID WALTHER.

“Les choses ont diverses *qualités*, et l'ame diverses *inclinations*.
Car rien n'est *simple* de ce qui s'offre à l'ame, et l'ame ne
s'offre jamais *simple* à aucun sujet.”—PASCAL.

LONDON:
J. K. CAMPBELL, HIGH HOLBORN.
1851.



P R E F A C E.

THE *object* of this little work being to fore-arm *Christian readers* against an attack upon their faith, I have taken notice, *principally*, of such arguments as might have a disturbing effect on *them*. This will explain the occasional introduction of matters belonging properly to *Christians*; as also the passing over of some things not really dangerous to them, but which the writer I am opposing may perhaps think deserving of notice. My *reason* for the latter course will be found in what I have said of the *nature of the evidence* of religious truth.

I trust that what is here presented may not be limited to the occasion that has called it forth, but may be of permanent service in fortifying the mind against that peculiar form of *anti-christian* philosophy through which the youth of this and other countries are in danger of being misled.

SOME REPLY,

ETC.

I. The work on which I here comment is, on many accounts, a remarkable book; yet *not* remarkable for profundity or originality. It may be an honest narrative of processes of thought which are *not honest*.

II. The writer appears to have been early attracted to a few individual Christians by a sympathy found in a common liberty from traditional errors. Among them he seems to have picked up much of the truth appearing in his book.* But they could not give him the good soil of a deep conviction of his state by nature. When their influence ceased, or was withdrawn, his natural mind resumed its bent, promising him liberty, but really making him the servant of its tendencies. These

* Such as the pre-millennial advent of JESUS;—Christian liberty of preaching the Gospel;—the prevailing confounding of dispensations that are seen in Scripture contrasted with one another;—the consequences in the unscriptural custom of *infant baptism*;—and the Judaizing of Christians on *Sabbath* observance, &c.

have led him through what may be called "*phases of unbelief.*"

III. There are, indeed, in his book, some things well deserving consideration : much true eloquence directed against evil things ; such as, the falseness of common profession ; the claim to oppress or quench conscience ; and the effect of dogma in hardening the heart. I would not restrain sympathy with these parts of his book ; rather would I deepen the impression of them ; but what I would guard the reader from is, the direction manifestly sought to be given to these things against the truth.

IV. The weakness of some arguments of the orthodox may, in certain points, give to F. N. an easy advantage. But this is perfectly separable from his own incompetent and, as I think, uncandid handling of a solemn subject.

He undertakes to prove nothing, nor yet to disprove anything. He does but narrate ; and is thus able to insinuate his own conclusions *without establishing one of them.*

Difficulties he leaves just where they were ; neither solving them, nor relieving us from them by shewing that the religion itself is a fable.

I find him thus expressing himself :—

"In my view the materials of the Bible were in theory divisible into two portions ;—concerning the one which I called *natural* religion, it not only was not presumptuous, but it was absolutely essential to form an independent judgment ; for this was the real basis of all faith : concerning the

other, (which I called *revealed* religion,) our business was not to criticise the message, but to examine the *credentials of the messenger*; and —after the *most unbiassed* possible examination of these,—then, if they proved sound, to receive his communication reverently and unquestioningly.”

Here we have F. N., in a carefully constructed sentence, dividing what he calls the materials of the Bible into *natural* religion, of which we are to form an independent judgment, and *revealed*, of which we are to examine the credentials in the most *unbiassed manner possible*.

Now it seems to me there is nothing real or truly scientific in this division. Is not the Bible, as a whole, and *from first to last*, direct revelation? a promise—afterwards enlarged;—a sacrificial rite, round which subsequent institutions are grouped? Is not *natural* religion, on the contrary, that which is attainable apart from revelation? its great facts being SIN, SUFFERING, and DEATH. And I ask whether—seeing revelation finds mankind *under sin and death*—this *perfectly unbiassed* examination of its credentials is possible, and if possible* whether it would not have in it the deep offence of pride; a settled alienation—or, in scripture terms, “*death in sins*”? For, be it remembered, that that which F. N. would have us examine in this *disinterested* spirit is nothing less than a proclamation of *mercy* from Him who “giveth to all life and breath and all things.” And this is addressed to *sinner*s, not to unbiassed *angels*! I own I do not expect that tidings of a

* Consider, on this point, the passage from Pascal in *title*.

gracious salvation will come with effect to sinners who in their own account are already safe; or that the Physician will have a welcome with any who say they are whole! To such *mercy* will I think come, if at all, in the disposing of their hearts to such an *earnestness of interest* in this Gospel as shall wish to find it true. May we not say, "*Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*" I would not object to such reasonable examination as includes a regard to the *suitability* of the Gospel to our need, but to the *spirit* which F. N. prescribes to *his* examiners.

V. A moral purpose to *use* the truth is necessary in investigation of *divine* things.

For He who formed the eye *sees*, and He will not indulge our taste for the *philosophy of sight*, if we disown our accountability to Himself who sees. The "*feeling after*" Him, which He delights to meet, is a feeling sanctified by the consciousness of responsibility. The owning of our *responsibility* makes room for conviction of *sin*. Have we *glorified Him*? Hence that sense of *need* which it is His glory to meet by the Gospel.

May we not express it by saying, that God presents Himself to us *need-wise*; while unconverted nature refuses to turn its *needy* side toward Him,—and instead of it erects its *head*.

It does not really "*call upon*" Him.—*Truly to call on Him* is to be delivered "*out of*" our nature.

VI. I see in this book no sign of truth sought by one who has learned the darkness of nature.

I see not this *preparation to receive light*. On the contrary I trace an active mind—unconfirmed in any truth by the use of it, and willing, therefore, to surrender it, and on some superficial inducement to take up a new lamp instead of the old. (Yet he tells us he “*struggled to the last.*”) So that when he says, such or such an “—ism could not give him one half hour’s rest,” what he means is not rest for his *soul*, but rest for his *thoughts*; and perhaps “half an hour” at any one landing-place is as much as those who follow F. N. in a similar spirit will enjoy;—judging from the easy faith he seems to have reposed in any argument, however shallow, that tempted him to give up great truth. How natural is all this to one who, not being at any time a *believer* in the true sense of the word, has never really known the establishment the truth receives by its proved value to the heart that leans on it and uses it!—A sovereign will be parted with as readily as a bright button by the child that has never learned its value.

Witness the way in which he gets rid of the Epistles 2nd Peter and Jude, and other scriptures. Does he not know that such slashing criticism would not be tolerated by those who watch the text of an ancient classic? And yet he must allow us to think that a single line in an epistle of a Galilean fisherman is of more value than a whole chapter of Thucydides or Livy.

VII. Thus we find him giving up the truth of the divinity of Christ, or His equality in Godhead, because of that text, “My *Father* is greater than I,” &c.

But is not this way of concluding on a high mystery utterly inconsistent? or else will F. N. throw aside his *present* thoughts because of the words, "Thomas said unto *him*, My Lord and my God?"

VIII. F. N. argues that the Son who is sent, and sent, as he represents, '*not after He was humbled to become man, but in order to be so humbled,*' must be 'not equal to—but less than—the Father who sent Him.'

But is this a fair statement of the creed of those who hold (in the words of scripture) that the second Person, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*; but *made himself of no reputation*, (emptied Himself,) and *took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men,*" &c. Does it not hence appear that the sending was consequent on His *self-emptying* and taking the form of a *Servant*? When found in fashion as a man there was a *further* humbling of Himself to the death of the cross.

IX. Of course F. N. has other objections against a Trinity. It is only wonderful that for years he should have overlooked them!

He quotes John xvii., "To know thee the *only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." But what we have here is but the necessary result of the Son having stooped to declare and glorify God on earth; for it is evident He is speaking as the *Sent One*, who has left His *own* glory.

1 Cor. viii. 6, is, at first view, too favourable to *Unitarian uses* to be passed over. "To us there

is but one God—the *Father*, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” (Think of such a word being *thought necessary* by the Apostle on the assumption of the *mere* humanity of Jesus!) F. N. exclaims against the Irish clergyman’s insisting that the “Father” here includes the Trinity. Nevertheless, I venture to think that this word *Father* is, in this place, not so much intended to mark a distinction in the Divine Persons, as a relation toward God of that One who (besides what belonged to Him in Godhead) was called Son of God, because conceived of the Holy Ghost:—and through faith in whom as *risen*, according to the 2nd Psalm, believers have the Spirit’s witness to *their* relationship as *sons*, and the *communication* of the glory given to the Son by the Father: a glory they are to “behold” as *His* glory; the Father having loved Him before the foundation of the world:—*given* glory; not the glory of the relationship existing in the Persons of the Godhead.—It is this position that God takes “to us” as *the Father*, and Jesus Christ as *Lord*:—“God having made him, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts ii.) But this is the result of the second Person having emptied Himself, and does not touch what existed in the Divine Nature before all worlds.

By the *Son* God made the worlds, and by the *Son* the Church believes *in God*. Christ glorified not Himself,—He kept His sheep in His Father’s name. The Apostles told of the glory of the Person whom the world had rejected. The New Testament writers, though discovering to us that

glory, more often present Him in the relation He graciously sustains for us as *Head*.* On His personal glory they are express. It is to the *Son* they apply the words, "Thy throne, O *God*, is for ever and ever;" again, "He is the first and the last," (the Almighty,) "the first and the last, who *was dead* and is alive for evermore."

The passage in Timothy is remarkable: "There is *one God*, and one mediator, *between God and men*, the *man* Christ Jesus, who *gave himself*," &c. In the orthodox view this is, at least, as direct against the mere *humanity* as against *simple Deity* in Jesus. But, it may be asked, who but one who "was God" could *take this place*, or could *give Himself*? The Scripture adds the words, "the *man* Christ Jesus;" blessedly reminding *us* of the understanding sympathy of Him who fills this place of mediation.†

* The Church, we are told, "has systematized too much." This is true. Even the Trinity is mostly known only in a kind of dry anatomy, and not as a doctrine warm with application to the need of souls, and no otherwise presented. To *oppose* formal creeds may be wrong, save where they are contrary to scripture,—yet the effect of them is to limit truth.

† In 1 Tim ii. 5, we learn the truth of a relationship as God toward all, and as God *by a Mediator who gave Himself*, toward those who accept that mediation.

If such texts were intended to preserve believers from *too high thoughts* of the Lord Jesus, *they were indeed needed* to neutralize such passages as, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." "By him were all things created that are in heaven or in earth, &c."

When it is said "the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do," it is plain the reference is to the perfection of communion of will.

X. God looking on man sees him sick and alienated. To the *wise* Greek the word is *not* "we will shew you *more wisdom*," but "we pray be ye reconciled to God."—It is a *beseeking*.—Dionysius the Areopagite, and the woman Damaris are won by the very same argument.

XI. It is scarcely necessary to say that reading the Bible, and gaining an 'idea of a scheme of doctrine,' the good habit of 'prayer,' and some effect of Christianity in the subjugation of moral 'conduct,' does not amount to *conversion*.

XII. There is a condition of soul which makes the most gifted creature on earth a *blot*. It is the fruit of an *independence* sweet to man's natural taste, but which to others, who are in the light, is seen as the disorder of a creature.* This choice of independence finds itself in presence of a power *controlling results*. This, of itself, would engender enmity. The claim of God disturbs *indolence*; the government of God crosses the energy of our will.—The alienated are only agreed in *alienation*.—So, that cry, "Away with him," came, doubtless, from the self-righteous and the profligates; from the rich who, for the sake of their goods kept the peace, and the violent who for robbery broke it. "We will not have **THIS ONE** to reign over *us*," united all. A creature seeking independence would naturally get to a distance;

* I speak of independence of *God*, not of independence of man, which F. N. rightly counts a most valuable birthright.

it would 'not like to retain God in its knowledge,'—as a necessary result it would be darkened and degraded. It is a palpable truth that the creature, of the "largest discourse" is an alienated *subject*, or rather *rebel at heart*. The alienation does not shew itself out *fully*,—possibly because divine mercy moderates and veils its own *over-rulings*, leaving a semblance of effect to man's energy. Let none answer, We don't feel this alienation. The sense of it is one step toward recovery *out of it*. If many do not own its existence—is it not because they are yet *in* their sins? and let not even a Christian be surprised if his own feeling of it is *slight*, for this may be owing to the work in his soul being yet but slight.

XIII. I doubt not that F. N. is, in many respects, an amiable man. He, probably, tastes the happy clearness which generally follows an early life comparatively clean. But let him not, on the strength of this, disown his NATURE. Has he contemplated it in his own child, or the child of another? From his bold talk of going into God's presence *without atonement* I must doubt it. The self-complacency that is in darkness may deny connection with evil found *on the same tree*. The first man never struck his brother. *His first-born did!* The first man would repudiate connection with her who was "bone of his bone." Cain asked, Am I my brother's keeper? *Adam* did not make war; but *men* arm a hundred thousand of a city to control the residue. If we enter the city gates we find the "hateful and hating" sentencing their *brother* the murderer to

die.—A *city* calls into light manifold relationships, while it *hides God*. Cain went out from the Lord's presence, and builded a *city*, and called it after his first-born. Let F. N. consider his *own nature*,—not as it is seen slumbering unaroused but,—as it shews itself in the world it sets on fire.* If he charges this upon mis-rule or oppression, there is an answer from every clime and country, that these things *come from the heart*,—from *within the man*. The tree is corrupt, or whence these fruits? †—On this account I must meet F. N's daring sentence with no other word than this, "We pray you be *reconciled to God*."

XIV. The existence of moral *evil* is a mystery that, more strictly speaking, pertains to natural religion.

Revealed religion, or redemption, has its own mysteries.

The Bible, also, has its own difficulties, which we are far from disowning. *There* we have the recorded fruit of the first transgression of commandment. But this is unaccompanied with any promise to remove the mystery that moral evil should have been permitted to enter.

XV. Redemption mystery, great as it is, is surely not *greater* than that involved in this fact of the existence of *moral evil*.

* It is reported of Robespierre that, when a child, he sobbed bitterly over a pigeon frozen to death during the night.

† "Neither can a *corrupt* tree bring forth *good* fruit."—No, not one! however fair the fruit may shew.

XVI. Sin is *lawlessness*,—the absence of willing subjection to the divine will.

The added *law of commandments* does but make sin to *abound*, or run over, in *transgression*.

XVII. Herein is a *nodus* beyond the moralist's art. Scripture meets it at its root, by a mysterious remedy,—a remedy certainly not open to the charge sometimes brought of injustice, for the *vicarious* atonement it sets forth is of a *voluntary* Redeemer.

XVIII. The marvellous effect designed (Luke vii. 47) and *achieved*, is to convert the serpent-brood into a seed of *love*,—and through removal of condemnation to bring in the *love* of the law. A life is declared to have been given, against which there lay no charge of forfeiture;—so precious that the laying it down went beyond forgiveness, quickening believers with Him on whom they believed, and involving in it forgiveness of all trespasses.

XIX. Now this, in order that it might be gospel, or glad tidings, must be *most simple* in the statement,—love demanded this, for God loves the simple. But more than this, it is a principle of the divine wisdom, “whoso will not receive as a little child shall not enter.” The wisdom of man is set aside and counted nothing of in the question of a need of reconciliation. The proud go away in a rage:—yet, surely, this faith of conscious *helplessness*, looking beyond *self*, is necessary to make salvation to the praise of the glory

of God's *grace*:—accordingly it is “by faith, and to faith.” The object of our faith must be apprehended and *embraced*. It is toward *all who believe*. Distinctions of intellect are abolished in the common *need*. The rest of the soul, like the sleep of the body, must be tasted, if at all, on the level of the need of all—there is no difference. We have such a gospel declared in 1 Cor. xv. Its very ground is laid in sins that needed one to die, who being Himself NOT A SINNER should have the sins of OTHERS laid on Him, and come clear out of His work for them.

XX. Christians say that the unspeakable gift of SUCH AN ONE is realized to an election. We know the outbreak of the natural heart against the doctrine. Yet surely we may say God does no wrong. Hath not the Potter title to make of the *same clay* vessels to honour as to dishonour? Or is He bound to make *all alike to one honour*? Did ever any one take up the cause of a worm of the clod and ask why the Creator did not build it into the form of a man? Can it be shewn that He doth the clay *wrong* by raising it up, shewing its evil, and His wrath against the evil, and hardening what of *its own will* hardens itself. *Why* the clay is such—is, I repeat, a mystery of natural religion. (not of the Bible.)

XXI. But the Bible tells us that *after death* there is *judgment*; and, according to the orthodox statement, eternal consequences of this transitory life's misused opportunities. F. N. argues that the *eternity* of punishment is a tenet without

scripture authority. Let him but prove this; many will rejoice: for the feeling he describes as “comforting itself under the prospect of the *eternal misery* of others by the selfish expectation of personal blessedness” is surely not the *general* feeling of *Christians*. Many may *dilate* on this solemn subject. I find scripture awful but *brief*. Our English word “*everlasting*” is doubtless too definite. Other expressions may be resolvable into *strong figure*; but, after all, will there not remain, as the obvious conclusion from scripture, the *hopeless finality* of the judgment after death? This *unbounded* dark shadow is most consistent with the solemn “*Now*,” or “*accepted time*” of salvation. I hold no other salvation than that by faith in Jesus in this time of faith. *Universal salvation* seems,—at best,—the soft dream of a kind heart. *Restitution of all things* I see as relating to *Jewish* things; or to the taking up in perfection of things which have been marred in man’s hand. The word in Matt. xxv., that confirms life *eternal* to the righteous, does not more plainly exclude the *fear* of its *ending* than the same word, in the same passage, excludes the *hope* of the termination of punishment. Therefore, without denying the power of God to terminate unhappy existence, I can deny the warrant to teach such a thought. Nevertheless the expressions of the orthodox do not oblige my conscience. A conscious loss of blessing would be real punishment: and the fire of the valley of Hinnom may well be thought to be as undying as the holiness that casts the impure into it.

But let us hear F. N. on this solemn subject.

“How,” says he, “was *I to think* that a good humoured voluptuary *deserved* to be raised from the dead, to be tormented for 100 years? and what shorter period could be called *secular*? or, if he was to be *destroyed*, was he worth the effort (!) of a divine miracle to bring him to life, and again *annihilate* him?”

Who shall answer F. N.?

In the night watches, when pride is hidden from man, other views of sin and others of judgment also may be forced upon him very different from these gathered in “man’s day.” In such visions of the night there may pass before us, a *creature*—responsible,—intelligent—with *eyes* that look out, from a forehead of rebellion,—in rejection of *truth* and *grace*. Then instruction may be sealed to us: and we may come forth and learn that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

On all this range of things the word is for those to whom it comes. Its aim is, surely, not to instruct us how they shall be judged who never heard it.

XXII. Reception or rejection of Christ is not a mere “intellectually differing,” as F. N. would represent. It is the natural result of a certain state of the *affections*—taking, or declining to take, our *true* place before the truth; and *for this* who will affirm that man is not responsible?

XXIII. The “children of wisdom,” in every

time of the divine teaching, justify wisdom. When John comes neither eating nor drinking, but calling to confession of sin, they mourn ; when Jesus comes eating and drinking, they dance. The real question when God speaks to us is, how does He find us in our affections and preparation of heart to *hear Him* ?

XXIV. How the philosophy that is abroad, and which we have drunk into, turns from the belief of the existence of an evil spirit, and yet his agency remains when we have got clear of childish traditions of the nursery that ascribe to him horns and a tail. Such nursery tales have indeed no small effect in indisposing us to receive the testimony of scripture on this subject in riper years.

XXV. F. N. is far more versed than I am in logical forms ; but are not these often mere tricks of logic ? Divines use many weak arguments in favour of a strong cause,—not seeing, perhaps, where its real strength lies. Butler and Paley were of a higher order of reasoners.

XXVI. Before further meeting objections it may be well to lay it down that a soul must have come to Christ for *salvation* before it can intelligently receive His *teaching*. Many things in Christian *experience* it is positively wrong to set before swine ; and yet, in its season, *experience* will justly have weight, as confirming truth previously established in our reasonable convictions. Further, there is an order in teaching I must be subject to, and ought to imitate. I would not put

the Trinity *foremost* in presenting truth to the Jew,—nor indeed to the Gentile.

XXVII. The *solving* of high mystery is not, as insinuated by F. N., made the condition of salvation, any where in scripture. The receiving Christ as Saviour, *is*. The physician does not make our understanding the *nature* of the *medicine* he prescribes a condition of recovery; but as *sent for because we are sick*, he demands the *reception* of the medicine in the form in which he exhibits it.

XXVIII. As to miracles we are told, “miraculous phenomena will not prove the *goodness* of God.” Admitting this; are the miracles or judgments recorded in scripture inconsistent with that goodness which we learn elsewhere? F. N. sets in *opposition* things never found really opposed:—true, the moral and spiritual sense is the only faculty of the uneducated;—we may observe that it is to the moral quality of His miracles, as meeting *need*, (appealing to the moral sense of those who witnessed them,) that we find our Lord referring, when He answered John’s messengers. Mere miracle might arouse and evidence that a higher power was at work, but in general would stop there.

XXIX. Where do we find a commandment given by the Lord contrary to a pure moral principle? The seven nations stood convicted of abominations for which the land might well spue them out; the execution of judgment was long delayed; human

passion was not permitted to come in; Israel was not to avenge their own wrongs,—vengeance was the Lord's, as Judge, and long did He delay;—and when Israel was sent as executioner of the judgments on Amalek or others, they might learn instruction from the holy severity of Jehovah against the sin of Amalek, &c. The direction in Deut. xx. 15, is not a license given to human passion, taking up its own quarrel, but a solemn sentence to be carried out, in going to war at the Lord's bidding. The war was to be the Lord's. His people were to be the head, and not the tail, so long as He was with them, and they were His sword. In principle it was true then, as by and by; "the nation who would not serve them, should utterly perish." A slight yearly tribute, however, sufficed to associate the neighbouring nations in the peace of Israel's superiority.

XXX. I am commenting on an autobiography. Let me say a little of my own. More than forty years ago I began my study of the Christian Evidences, with Leslie's method with the Deists. The subject fixed my interest, and my opportunities for following it up were abundant. For many years I had hardly less than 40,000 volumes within my reach. It would not be easy to name the works I looked into, *against* as well as *for*, christianity:—there was no one to fetter my liberty. I have known passing doubts, but, in general, my convictions have been kept *settled*. Many years ago I was brought to the conclusion that the only difficulties that need at all embarrass a Christian are those found in the Scripture itself.

XXXI. But here I meet F. N.'s contrary implication, by the remark, that the *Bible* is *not* its own evidence to the *unconverted*. No one book in it was written to convince the unbeliever. It was given for the instruction of a *believing people*.

XXXII. I hold it inspired: every word as originally given by divine wisdom plenary inspired, and providentially guarded. The evidence of all this, I do not think, is properly produced for the satisfaction of those who have no interest in the scriptures as their title deeds. But I may refer to a tract I once put together, entitled "A Word to the children of God, on the plenary inspiration of scripture," in which the objection from St. Paul's words, 1 Cor. vii., is considered.

XXXIII. The Bible cannot be separated from the history of *man*. It contains the very earliest credible accounts of our race, and is confirmed by later history, as soon as it descends within its reach. It must appear that any number of *partial* objections to a record of the divine dealings extending through 6000 years, are insignificant to oppose to the wide argument in its favour.

There is a fallacy, and it is a deep injustice, that runs through much of F. N.'s book. It is that he argues as if faith in the Bible were demanded on the ground of those passages the difficulties of which he knows so well how to blazon. But it is far otherwise; and very difficult to conceive that F. N. is not aware that it is so. Therefore, in noticing his difficulties, let it be remem-

bered, I am *not* presenting the Christian argument.

XXXIV. We may leave *Geologists* to search the evidence of previous states of this globe between the 1st and 2nd verses of the book of Genesis;—I do not much care to controvert their views.

So with the wonders of *Astronomy*. I respect and would leave to the astronomer the freest liberty to extend the boundaries of our knowledge of the *mechanism* of the heavens: but I would like to rivet my reader's attention to the *moral mechanism* of the human spirit, its arduous responsibilities, and the witness borne to it *in its lameness* by the word of life: a subject—as beyond comparison surpassing in interest the grandeur of mere matter,—as the thoughtful interest that bends over the *cradle of a child* goes beyond the admiration that gazes on Montblanc, or goes out on any object that is destitute of *moral worth*.

XXXV. I have mentioned *internal objections* to the truth of scripture. These have been from the beginning very obvious,—they are familiar in every mouth,—most of them have been current for sixteen centuries. It is singular how very little, in the way of objection to the Bible, has been brought forward, that is not found in Celsus and other early opposers. I believe such partial difficulties have been designedly permitted, and have their uses; some of these uses, I think, we may trace: one may be the proof they afford of the faithful transmission of the inspired records,

with all their difficulties, to our own time. Many objections have been most satisfactorily answered. I hope to give instances of this; but first I would meet F. N.'s dilemma as to the nature of the *evidence*.

XXXVI. This evidence is neither altogether nor principally *external*,—nor yet *moral* in a sense that recognizes the mind of the *natural* man as upright and unbiassed and perfectly able to choose and discriminate. It meets indeed the openings of hearts and minds renewed through a sense of *need* to the ability of right judgment. We yield assent to that which *dovetails* with *necessity*; while we appreciate gratefully, at a *secondary*, yet real value, the *miracles* that are a *lesser* putting forth of God's power; (Matt. ix. ;) as also the *moral* excellence of the effects of God's revelation of Himself. The demonstration is of the Spirit to man's spirit—*spiritual*. The confirmation—varied and convergent.

XXXVII. The manifest bearing of the Scripture is to reveal God in His purpose and dealings towards our race; and, in so doing, to establish in us the features of likeness to Him, to be combined in one harmonious whole as the mind or likeness of Christ.

XXXVIII. As children who often play with their mother's *robe* instead of looking up into her *face*—as children in understanding of God's *high* purposes—men call on us to occupy ourselves on some fifty points in our Father's actions *which we do not*

understand, out of many thousands which witness of His purposes and character, and are clear of misconstruction.

XXXIX. I think this unreasonable; but it is my purpose to notice many of F. N.'s *malignant** insinuations against the most blessed light that ever came into this dark *world*. In the earlier part of his narrative this character does not appear; but it does toward the latter and more recent part, thus betraying the spirit in which the book is published. It is indeed dangerous from its skilfully combining the tones of a superior reason with the popular force of T. Paine and a crowd of others.

* I use the word with a feeling of regret; for F. N. is not malignant toward his *fellow* men: toward them he is often just and generous, and eloquent in his praise. But what shall we say of such imputations as follow on that *Name* and *walk*, which have for eighteen centuries been a breathing from heaven—"bowels of mercies"—in a hard world; the relief of burdened spirits; and a banner against those who "walk over" them? The Blessed One is represented as "solely anxious that people should believe in him, *without caring on what grounds*"—"ready to answer off-hand all difficult questions, critical and lawyer-like"—the riding on an ass, we are told, "Jesus *appears* to have *planned* with the express purpose of assimilating himself to the lowly king described by the prophet." "Supposingcould it authorise *me*," asks F. N., "to plait a whip of small cords, and flog a preferment hunter out of the pulpit? or would it justify *me* (!) in publicly calling the *Queen* and her *ministers* a brood of vipers who cannot escape the damnation of hell?" In another place he speaks of "the selfish and self-righteous texts of the three first gospels"—"their genealogies, dreams, visions, devil-miracles,

XL. We have metaphysics—logical turns—the influence of *names* of some of lax opinions all brought in to shake the faith of others,—false inferences from some parts of scripture set against truth found in other parts,—irony and invective; all woven together in a *narrative*,—designed to interest; and which has *an* interest,—but not the interest that attaches to honest processes of thought, by which I mean, the thoughts of an earnest heart aching in the sense of its *need* and feeling after God as the one to meet that need.

XLI. The mere climbing of the natural mind, with all its restless working, is wanting in *honesty*, because of the absence of the purpose to use aright the light it seeks. Solomon appealed to the *heart* to manifest the true, in contrast with the pretended mother. Looking at the point of time in which that incident comes in, I think I see much that may be typical of a future day. In the manifestation of the righteous judgments of God, it will be seen wherein the heart affected the

and prophecies *written after the event* :”—a tirade that seems designed to lead us to accept *his* conclusion that “much in the *three* first gospels is legendary”—A *fourth* gospel remains: but at a subsequent point of *progress*, F. N. tells us that a certain “monotony” in John “*infallibly* (!) indicates that John has made the Baptist and Jesus speak as John himself would have spoken,” and that “we cannot trust the historical *reality* of the discourses in the *fourth* gospel!” And on the very next page this is called “a *severe* shock to John’s general veracity!”

See here the *spirit* that is behind the skilfully disposed drapery of F. N.; and the spirit in which his narrative is published to the world.

head.* For us, indeed, there is that word, "Judge nothing before the time." Our fellow man's responsibility is in general far removed from our dim-sighted *ken*. But no varieties of constitution or complication of circumstances can destroy that responsibility.†

XLII. I repeat, the *moral evidence*, by which I mean the excellence of the preceptive parts of revelation, is not received on the credit of its miraculous facts,—nor yet the *miracles* on the credit of the *moral* excellence of its preceptive parts, (which is the alternative F. N. offers us.) The strong ground on which faith lays hold and rests is the fact that revelation is an answer to an universal *need*, whether in civilized man or savage. The moral excellence of its preceptive parts *comes after* as confirmatory, just as miraculous facts may *precede* or *accompany* it to awaken or fix regard.

To the Jew, prophecy came first—I mean prophecy *as a whole*, as preparing the heart for the 'consolation.' (In this sense I understand 2 Pet. i. 20, to speak of prophecy in all time,—no part to be taken out of connection with the whole.) To the Gentile, miracles would come before the evidence of prophecy; but with Jew and Greek the great argument would be that revelation met *need*. This is an argument intelligible wherever need is *felt*, and not likely to be shaken by man's subtlety—just as we should not allow ourselves to

* —that the *thoughts* of many hearts may be revealed. (Luke ii. 34.)

† This may be borne in mind when we hear of modern science dealing with things we count *moral*.

be persuaded that a key that opens the manifold wards of a lock is not the key we want.

XLIII. Were it necessary to answer every objection before a perfectly reasonable faith could be exercised we should have to give up the greater part of our convictions on all subjects.

XLIV. But it is in vain that F. N. shews his ignorance, or hides his knowledge of the great argument for Revelation being, as I have said, that it meets man's *need*. He lays it down that the Messiahship of Jesus is a *literary problem*; aware, no doubt, of the inference that follows, that all who are deficient in the requisite acumen must go unsaved! Certainly the saved ones would in that case be saved to the praise of *their own acuteness*, rather than 'to the praise of the glory of God's grace.'

XLV. As Christians are often found relying in no small degree on the spiritual fruits of the doctrine of Christ, as a confirmation of that doctrine, F. N. goes the length of asserting that the spiritual fruits of christianity are entirely unconnected with its complicated creed. Indeed! peace and joy in the Holy Ghost unconnected with the Spirit's testimony to that by which peace is made*—humility unconnected with the example of Christ—disinterestedness unconnected with His not pleasing Himself. "These," he continues, "depend on the heart's belief in the *sympathy* of God

* "I can testify," says he, "that the *Atonement* may be dropt out of Pauline religion without affecting its quality"!!!

with individual man." Does he mean a *holy* God's sympathy with man in his natural *moral* condition, in other words, with man *as a sinner*, without any atonement? Is F. N.'s God a *holy* God?

XLVI. Of course the benevolence of God in *creation* does not rest on the matter of *revelation*; but that very benevolence is the greatest embarrassment to one who, apart from revelation, enquires how man in his *present* moral state can live happy in the presence of his *benevolent* Creator.

XLVII. The Gospel tries the state of the affections by a gracious invitation—the consciously sick, publicans and sinners, *draw nigh*. F. N. puts away the grace, as not knowing the *need* for it, and talks of gazing upon God while rejecting *atonement*. But to those who know their *need* surely *atonement* is glad tidings; and any one's refusing it does not make it the less *glad tidings*.

XLVIII. NOW is the accepted time, NOW is the day of salvation. Hereafter judgment is to be exercised by that man whom God has raised up, and in whom faith is now offered for salvation. He who values this grace will not easily be persuaded to give up the word that conveys it.

XLIX. But F. N. tells us the mediation of Jesus was to him "always a *mere name*," profanely adding, "otherwise it would have been mischievous"; apparently adopting most unfairly the vulgar misrepresentation that presents Christ as reconciling *God*

to man, rather than *man* to God. But Scripture reveals Christ as given and sent by the *Father*, the proof of God's love.

L. As to F. N.'s long chapter entitled "On Calvinism," &c., all I would say is, that it is a theme an unbeliever cannot understand. There are a few broad facts close at hand, written on the forehead of F. N., and every man that lives: to these I wish to confine myself. I am reminded of the word, "The eyes of a fool are at the ends of the earth." The claims of Christianity, and his own responsibility are the real questions for F. N.

LI. I freely admit that on all sides, and in every branch of the enquiry, enough of 'appearing uncertainty' has been permitted to come in—to give ground and colour of defence for an unwilling heart's refusal of the message. It is a solemn fact which I have no thought of denying. See, on this subject, a valuable chapter in Butler's Analogy.

LII. It may be said, and is said, that the will has nothing to do with our conclusion. I think, on the contrary, that the *will* has a great deal to do with it; although *we* are confessedly unable to apportion the moral guilt incurred by those who reject the Gospel.

How differently writes that profound thinker, whose reflection I have already cited and would thus translate:

" Things have different *qualities*, and the soul

divers *inclinations*. For among all the things that offer themselves to the soul, not one is perfectly *simple*, (or of single quality,)—and man's soul does not turn in *simplicity* (or singleness) to any thing that offers itself."

Thus; the religion of Jesus has a background of precedent history, *with many questions adhering thereto*. It has also a seal of miraculous signs *open to dispute*: it reaches us by transmission through dark ages of *fraudful superstition*. It has a moral side deeply offensive to the *morality* which labours in nature's strength and is already established in men's minds. In short, the religion of Christ is only simple on its *Gospel side*; and in other respects is not simple.

And how does it find Man? Is he found *upright*, as originally made,—or built up in his inventions? Is there no *self*—dishonestly shrinking from a doctrine that is instinctively felt to abase the pride of his self-sufficiency? Is he *quite willing*, in obedience to light, to take that place of *conscious crookedness*, which alone makes room for judgments 'true and righteous'? *No*, he will rather turn about the subject until its *point* against his darling *self* is eluded, or blunted. The distractions of this life will be admitted. He will seek and find some aspect or bearing of the subject that demands no sacrifice of his pride,—but rather flatters it, by appealing to his judgment.

How superior for wisdom is the lesson of a despised gospel tract, that tells of a poor girl who was directed to pray, "Lord! shew me *myself*;" and some months after was advised to change the petition to "Lord! shew me *Thyself*;"

and on a third visit was found realizing victory over the king of terrors !

To take our *true* place is the greatest step in practical wisdom. It is *there* blessing finds us.

LIII. But to come closer to this *Bible* so strangely clung to by many from whom F. N. might expect something different—this book that associates itself with all the divine teaching of man—this long roll of prophecy, extending through forty centuries, gemmed with biographies of saints, whose *faith* we are called to follow,—just as if science and progress had done nothing to advance the starting point for truth.

LIV. The inspiration of Scripture is rejected by F. N. At a later point of *progress* he sets aside its credit for common veracity. With all this he represents the Scripture as having been written to convince *unbelievers*. Now where is the proof of this? Is it not the fact, on the contrary, that the scriptures were written especially for believers? (Luke i. 4; 1 John i. 4; v. 13.)*

He tells us Luke expressly disclaims inspiration. Where does he find this? Is it in his having “had perfect understanding” of the things he records? Who before ever counted inspiration as a thing that destroyed knowledge derived *mediately*? Inspiration, in our view, recalls infallibly, suggests right words, excludes error,—but without exclud-

* There we read of the “days of old,” “the years of ancient times,” the “works of the Lord,” His “wonders of old,” all His works and doings for His people whom He hath redeemed and leads.

ing individual character and peculiarity—working in the midst of all these modifying influences, as well as going *beyond* them.

LV. We say the Bible was written for *believers*. It takes no account of natural reason's conceptions of divine dignity as above and out of sight! It presents God coming down to the level of those to whom the word came; clothing a familiar fellowship in familiar forms and *media*; and conveying His communications after a manner in which F. N. sees only "a gross imagination of antiquity which made Abraham and Jehovah dine together on the same carnal food." Many indeed are the questions we might have to ask on these things, but our questions can wait: meanwhile can our responsibility be adjourned? Is there no voice in the record for *ourselves*?

LVI. It is F. N. who thinks the scriptures were written to *convince gainsayers*. It is F. N. whose thought of *dignity* counts such perfect condescension derogatory. So, in another place, it is F. N. who exclaims, speaking of St. Paul, "how different *his logic* from ours"! as if the apostle of the Lord would make his lessons to depend upon what F. N. calls his *logic*, but which is, all the while, only a confirming of truth already received, by his own experience; or the mere illustrating, by the analogies of a past dispensation, of truth that rested on his own authority as a divinely commissioned teacher.

LVII. While repudiating F. N.'s account of

the nature of the christian evidence, it is still true that Christianity receives confirmation from the "mighty signs" wrought at its outset. Now it is plain that either those mighty signs must be continued *to our day*, (in which case such evidence would be ordinary and not extraordinary,) a continuance which F. N. will certainly not allow,* or they must be *historically* communicated from a former age to our own; and then we may fairly controvert F. N.'s axiom, and say it is by no means "absurd to believe *because they who lived long ago believed.*" Of course many tests may come in, for estimating their testimony at its true value. At this point the learned would have some advantage. A very moderate measure of learning will suffice to enable us to take up Paley's Evidences, a book which leaves little or nothing to be desired, and is, I believe, unanswerable on *this branch* of the evidence.

LVIII. F. N. tells us that the healing of disease is no adequate *motive* or *reason* for a miracle. Well, agreed. But will F. N. deny that it was a most fit *occasion* for the putting forth of *power* 'that men might know that the Son of man had authority to forgive sins'? This at least is sufficiently important: the real *motive* for the miracle being to certify His title 'to forgive sins *also.*' Hence we may see the reason for the remarkable absence of any case of a person who was *already a believer*

* See his observations on the tongues among Irvingites. The Irish clergyman's remarks on these are worth remembering.

being raised from sickness by miracle. I might instance Epaphroditus, Trophimus, and Timothy. Hence also the peculiarly *gospel character* of these miracles of healing; the *lame* walked, the *blind* received sight, the *lepers* were cleansed, the dead raised up, and to the *poor* the GOSPEL WAS PREACHED.—We get something by picking up the darts of an adversary.

LIX. It is plain that in the whole subject matter of Scripture we have to deal with facts that no sane mind can altogether reject; and equally clear it is that in these writings there is no anticipation of the criticism of after times, and no pretence made to completeness. Thus one writing supplies what another has passed unnoticed;* and in this independence the one of the other, we have such manifold undesigned coincidences, discerned under a semblance of disagreement, as have established, beyond all reasonable doubt, the reality of the facts. (See *Horæ Paulinæ*, and *Blunt's Coincidences*.†)

LX. Demoniacal possessions are a mystery—but so are *dreams*; the latter no one disputes, because they are of almost universal *experience*; yet it would be hard to give a reason *a-priori* for the latter, while denying the *possibility* of the former. On the principles of sceptics the man born blind would reject the doctrine that there is a sun in the heavens.

* So in the *New Testament*, we have one evangelist recording that Jesus was blindfolded; and another recording the taunting question, "Who is he that smote thee?"

† Also F. N.'s admission, page 23.

LXI. The work in which Jesus is opposed to Paul is not quite unknown to me. I should not think it worthy a lengthened reply. It was the work of an acute mind of the last century,—a lawyer's clever attempt to confuse an honest witness. We may give up, as beyond our skill, the endeavour to make evidence, given under different circumstances, in all its parts accordant. I remark that, probably, no one was more prepared than that ingenious lawyer to confirm Paley's observation, that circumstantial variety with substantial identity, is generally the character of true testimony. See some striking examples instanced by Paley.

LXII. It may be observed, generally, that all the objections to Scripture derived from its contents, are extremely limited in their bearing; affecting only some secondary, and often minute, point. It is not meant that errors or contradictions in minute particulars, will not tell injuriously on the character of a record in which they appear. But looking at the breadth and bearing of Scripture, its great and glorious object, there appears something pitiful in such objections.

LXIII. As to the theory of different races, sometimes brought to disprove the descent of men from one parent, if I am not mistaken the authority of Prichard* may be cited, as shewing that the facts in evidence by no means

* *The Natural History of Man, by Charles Cowles Prichard, M.D.* The argument is simply this: true hybrids (that is, the offspring resulting from the intercourse of distinct races) cannot generate: but no tribe of men has yet been found that cannot generate.

amount to any such disproof,—I understand this is now generally admitted.

LXIV. The German hypothesis, of two different classes of documents, on which the book of Genesis is supposed to have been framed, may be fairly left to be pushed about, for a few years, by the active minds of that ingenious people. The same may be said of other hypotheses. I know little of Straus's theory, and do not feel it necessary to discuss it, — others have done this. I prefer to consider objections that are intelligible to the common sense of mankind.

LXV. The reader will see I am looking at objections, and passing over, as out of place in this argument, the blessed lessons of truth opened in the divine communications with the patriarchs. Thus I leave the *faith* of Abraham to withstand the mocking of F. N.,—only observing that that faith is beautiful to the children of faith.

LXVI. The descendants of this same Abraham by *barren* Sarah have been for above *three thousand years* distinguished from all other nations on the earth by the rite of circumcision *on the eighth day*. The insinuation that this rite was borrowed from the Egyptians is at once refuted by the age at which it was and is still performed, plainly shewing both *when* and *with whom* it was first established. Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised; (Gen. xvii. 25 ;*) The descendants of Ishmael still practise this singular rite

* Isaac was circumcised when he was eight days old. (Gen. xxi. 4.)

about the thirteenth year. The Jews ONLY on the eighth day. How that single fact puts the stamp of insignificance on such partial objections as are grounded on our inability to explain many things!

God was in the history of that people with outstretched arm. He who gives life and continues it, and silences our questions with famine and pestilence, made Israel *His* sword for *His* purposes, and their and our *teaching*. Let us settle in our hearts His right to act thus, and we shall see that the wars of Israel were "of the Lord." "When thou goest to war," addressed to a people so entirely the Lord's, clearly meant just this,—that when the Lord of all would use them as executioners of *His judgments*, obedience was to be preferred before sacrifice, and their eye was not to pity. When any act recorded is uncommanded we are not tied to the defence of it.

LXVII. A few verses after the account of the Creation we are brought to the first transgression. The eating of the fruit of one tree brings out the proof of the exceeding malignity of *sin*, that could make a scene of blessing a place of hiding from the Author of blessing. This *self*-hiding, or going out of the Divine presence, may, by F. N. not be seen connected with its root in *sin*; but they who do not confess it are not the less examples of the truth; like children, they hide *their* faces and think they are not seen!

LXVIII. Genesis vi., and other scriptures, are not bound by F. N.'s interpretation. A believer

finds *there* deep teaching in a record of human wilfulness.

LXIX. Actions are often simply recorded ; the Spirit that dictated scripture does not stop to characterize what the *believer* ought to condemn. Thus the sin of Reuben, of Amalek, or of others, gets its character with the subsequent judgment on it.

LXX. Abraham's *faith* is beautiful to the *believer*, who enters into the principle and teaching of it. Abraham's *lie* is not likely to be chosen as an example. In commenting on the trial of Abraham's faith in Gen. xxii., F. N. would seem to charge upon the Bible the doctrine that a dream or a vision may authorize our violation of the plain law of morals ; but there is really no such doctrine here. It is simply *a history* which must be taken as it stands. There is not any dream or vision in it. F. N. has elsewhere been rather severe on the *gross* intercourse of the divine Being with the patriarchs. And it is plain there *was* a very remarkable familiarity and kind of *daylight certainty* in those communications, altogether unlike the shadowy impressions of a *dream*. The fact therefore was that the God who had miraculously given a son to Abraham, now claimed that son back in the way of extraordinary surrender. Instead of setting out to *murder* his son, that is, to disobey God, he set out to obey Him ; accounting that He was able to raise his Isaac from the dead.

LXXI. In Exodus it is no longer gross fami-

liarity of communications with patriarchs; but an entire nation called out and set in ordered nearness to the Almighty; its enemies *His* enemies—its prosperity and its holiness *His* glory. His oracles were committed to them in writings that commend *not* them, but *Him*,—as likewise in institutions expressive of *great religious truth*, such as to this hour is the portion of believers *only*. How evidently I write at a disadvantage when, in answering F. N., I feel precluded from resting on the *significancy* of these divinely constituted laws—where he sees only the SEVERITY which sanctified the Sabbaths, and guarded from all imitation the anointing put upon the Priest for his mysterious office. To the *believer* how full of teaching are these things!

LXXII. The fact is, the Law was richly significant of vitally important truth, which an *unbeliever cannot appreciate*. The violation of the *law* practically obscured or despised the *truth* it figured. “*My Sabbaths*,” says God, “they greatly polluted.” To rest from *working*—that they might take up *His praise*, was a sign,—as well as type,—of the believer “entering into rest.” The gathering even of a few sticks profaned the *doctrine* in the dishonour of *the day*. So in the gospels,—the walking on the sea, and commanding the winds, were something more than mere *miracles*:—“useless miracles” to F. N., they are to Christians examples of their Lord’s faithful care and of their own faltering trust.

LXXIII. Joshua could produce a warrant for

the execution done upon the seven nations,—a warrant issued, after long patience, by One who gave—and had continued the life those nations had degraded below that of the beasts; the time was at length come when their iniquity was full, and the land would spue them out.

The wars were the Lord's wars. The deliverances, as has been said, were of *His* people, of *His* giving, and to *His* praise. "He slew mighty kings, for his *mercy* endureth for ever."

Take the acts of Moses and Joshua apart from the facts that spoke of war "from generation to generation,"—exterminating war, by proclamation *from God*,—and we are utterly unable to justify them. But what candid reader of the Bible will separate these things from the sole authority for them?

But a *caviller* will notice all contained in the record on which a charge may be founded, while he will overlook or reject what is said in that same record in vindication; as for instance in tracing up an action to God's commission. Thus F. N. rejects the miracles that shew God in these wars, while he rests on whatever can be turned against the history or the actors in it.

LXXIV. Instead of driving out the nations Israel had made league with them; therefore it was said, "*I* also will *not* henceforth drive any of the nations out." Therefore, although at first tributaries, they at length "mightily oppressed" Israel. Now there was peace between Jabin king of Canaan that reigned in Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite, Jael's husband, who was of

the children of Hobab, father in law of Moses. Jael, we may suppose, knew (comp. Joshua ii. 10) and felt that this peace was disobedience, for it had been said to *Israel*, "ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land"; and therefore she slew the captain of the oppressors of Israel. Deborah at the first foretold that Sisera should fall by the hand of a woman. The Lord discomfited the host, and Sisera falls by the stratagem and treachery of Jael. Then sang Deborah and Barak, "Praise ye the Lord for the *avenging* of Israel:" "Awake, awake, *Deborah!* arise, Barak!" "Blessed (or praised) *above women* shall *Jael* the wife of Heber the Kenite be; blessed shall she be *above women in the tent.*" It is a description of the sudden destruction of the enemy of the people of God by a weak woman.

These are the facts. *If God be left out of the narrative* it is a deceit and murder, without excuse. If God be seen and owned—it is a *deliverance* of His people from *His* and *their* enemies under *His* warrant.

Ehud's act, in the same chapter, had been seen as a "deliverance." There is this difference, that Ehud was of *Israel*; but in neither case can we gather a warrant for deceit and murder. The declamatory burst of F. N. will not weigh much when the circumstances are considered.

LXXV. Joshua's history or rather the miracle in the xth chapter is, of course, entirely disbelieved by F. N.,—and I own that, as commonly understood, it is characterized by a strange *disproportion* between the miracle and the effect of giving light

to complete the discomfiture of the Amorites. Of course there is no question of *power*; but such disproportion is not the usual character of scripture miracles. On this subject the candid enquirer will consider the view that, without departing from the text, regards the miracle as a delaying of the *light*, rather than as the stoppage of the *body* of sun or moon. The reader may consult a dissertation in Calmet, Taylor's edit. The same may be said of the *shadow* on the dial of Ahaz.

And there may be other instances in which mis-translation may have come in. Thus in Judges xv., we may read with the margin, "God clave the hollow place which is in *Lehi*," instead of an hollow place that was in the *jaw*.

LXXVI. Numbers xxii. 28 is referred to in 2 Peter ii. 16, where we read "the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet." To some this may but recall the prodigies they read in Livy: for the blind ignorance of unbelief sees only the strangeness of the wonder without its *instruction*. Others see there Balaam *thrice* persisting in disobeying the Lord, as the ass on which he rode *thrice* turned aside in disobedience. "Would that I had a sword," said the prophet, "for then would I slay thee!" *Israel* was the sword of the Lord; and among the slain by that sword was *Balaam* the son of Beor. (Numb. xxxi. 8.)

LXXVII. F. N. tells us that scripture contains *errors* in history, chronology, physiology, and geology. Now it no wise stumbles me to find

the word of God speaking of some of these "*ologies*" as they were generally understood. But the *history* of the divine dealings is more important; and here we may call on F. N. for his *proofs*:—The Abbé Guenée and others have exposed and shewn such imputed errors to be not seldom *errors of the objectors*. Suppose we find Luke differing on some fact from Josephus,—why are we to infer that the testimony of Josephus is to be preferred? In the absence of any motive for deceiving, I should prefer the testimony of the one who wrote less, but was more interested in the accuracy of his facts. And is it not really begging the question to judge the professedly inspired history by other merely human, and therefore fallible, histories?

As to the "*flood of difficulties*" F. N. speaks of, they may be too many for me to put to rest;—but are they indeed such as to bear with any force as a *flood* against the truth of the history?

LXXVIII. In respect of all ancient documents of a people whose usages are but imperfectly known, we may generally assign our own ignorance as the cause of most of our difficulties; and expect their solution sometimes through research,—at other times through some happy discovery. To begin by accusing the record of *mistake*—is to refuse to learn. What F. N. charges as mistakes in *chronology* (and perhaps also many of our difficulties as to the *numbers* found in scripture) may be nothing more than the proof of our ignorance. A few hours' journey lands us among a people who say *huit jours* to express seven days. It

is not easy to account for such national usages. 1800 years ago it raised no objection in Judea to say that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth;" and yet to put on record that Christ "rose again *early on the third day.*" (Comp. Mark ix. 31.) Nor was it held inconsistent to say that *at the end of three years* the king of Assyria took the city; when in the very same passage it is expressly said he came up against Samaria and *besieged* it in the fourth year of Hezekiah, and *took* it in the sixth year of the same. Yet the Jews were not, as a people, inattentive to times. Usages still more extraordinary may have regulated the chronology of that nation. Some go further, and allege that not only national usages, but *divine principles*, full of significancy, lie at the root of our difficulties. I would advert to one such, not as entirely accepting it, but as deeming it deserving of consideration. It is—that periods of apostasy, or of *standing off* the ground of faith, or of the entire nation's *banishment from the place of faith*, are dropt out of the divine reckoning. It is remarked that Ishmael was fifteen years in the house of Abraham; that the different periods of the oppression of Israel in the days of the Judges and Samuel, make, when added together, just 131 years;—that the sabbaths the land enjoyed during the Captivity were seventy years, or the neglected sabbaths of 490, making together 560 years. By these periods of 15, 131, and 70 years, discrepancies in the statements of scripture are supplied,—either *exactly* or with an *approximation to exactness*.

It is interesting to know that the same principle of reckoning is applied to the seventy weeks of Daniel; which, calculated, as they should be, from the decree to rebuild the *city*, (A. C. 457,) bring us to the date of the Crucifixion,—*or* to the end of a future week,* when Israel's long unbelief shall be over, and dropt out of the reckoning.

But supposing that no possible solution of such difficulties appeared, what could be more rational than to conclude that we *Christians* do not understand such parts of the *Hebrew* Scriptures:—or that the text in such passages has not reached us *immaculate*.

LXXIX. But a more curious illustration of what may be expected by *discovery*, where research has long laboured in vain, may be here produced touching the genealogies in Matthew and Luke's gospels. On this subject F. N. is particularly triumphant in tone; he returns to it again and again, while, as usual, he gives us nothing new or helpful on the matter.

The difficulty is well known, as one of the very earliest felt to attach to the New Testament record. A letter of Julius Africanus written about A.D. 230, with a view to its solution, is still extant. (*Routh Reliquiæ Sacræ.*) Many have been the hypotheses since offered,—none of them, I believe, satisfactory.

* Or *half-week*—according to some. But I must refer the reader to *Denny's Cycle of Seventy Weeks*, with its explanatory letterpress; and some other works on the same subject. "*Times and seasons*" are regarded as ordered in reference to God's earthly people the Jews, in recurring cycles of seventy weeks, or 490 years.

But in the year 1759 a small duodecimo printed at Brussels, under the title of *Analyse de Dissertations sur differens Sujets*, first gave to the Christian student a view of the subject, so distinguished by its manifold results as to merit more particular attention. The view it presents was introduced to English readers in the *British Magazine*, about ten years ago. *First*. Its hypothesis involves no supposition of any change in the *original* of Matthew's table. *Secondly*. It makes that table agreeably to its heading,—the generation of Jesus,—that is by his *mother* Mary. *Thirdly*. It makes Matthew's table exactly three series of fourteen descents each, agreeable to the Evangelist's summary. *Fourthly*. It leaves us free to understand Luke's genealogy as that of Joseph, the reputed father of Christ, according to Luke iii. 23. *Fifthly*. It explains the silence of the Jews, who seem never to have objected to the genealogy of Jesus; while it accounts for the appearance of the difficulty just when it began to be felt. *Lastly*, it gives, among additional results, the probable origin of a very early slander current among the Jews, and still seen in early writings of their nation against Christianity.

Having said thus much, I may briefly state that it takes *Joseph*, the husband of Mary, in Matt. i. 18, to be then *first* introduced,—and assumes that the Hebrew table of descents, given us by Matthew, had, (as is most common in Hebrew,) an ellipsis of the noun of *parentage* in v. 16, which it proposes to read, “Jacob begat Joseph the *father* of *Mary*, of whom was born *Jesus*.”

It is, in my judgment, no objection to the

view here taken that it denies the Church's claim to be an infallible keeper of tradition.*

LXXX. I now come to the subject of PROPHECY, than which surely nothing can be more important to us than to give to it its right place. It is as the woof in which God's teaching runs. Therein we have the sum of the divine communications by holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. I regard it as a very solemn fact, that in the last days of this dispensation we should be admitted to see more than our fathers could declare to us of the structure of the prophetic testimony. Yet all own the obscurity of the subject—how partially unrolled:—so that the grand climax of accomplishment is manifestly still future; and all that we can say is that that which *is* fulfilled is of a nature to be *germinant* of a *future* that *may* answer to what is unfulfilled.

The "spirit of prophecy" was and is "the testimony of Jesus." And no doubt where it is

* The paper referred to is printed in the British Mag. for July 1834; and, somewhat abridged, in a Collection of the Quotations of the New Test. by H. Gough, 1851.

I would notice that it takes up also the genealogy in *Luke's* gospel. In *Luke* we now count 76 descents. Nevertheless we read in *Irenæus*, who lived A.D. 178, the following: *Lucas genealogiam quæ est a generatione Domini usque ad Adam septuaginta DUAS (72) generationes habere ostendit finem conjungens initio.*

But the names *Levi* and *Matthat*, occurring ver. 24, are repeated in ver. 29; and those of *Zorobabel* and *Salathiel* in ver. 27, it is supposed were at first written in the margin opposite their contemporaries *Neri* and *Rhesa*, and by mistake of the copyist introduced into the text.

predictive of His first appearing and work it touches more immediately His claim to be the Messiah. F. N. tells us that Jesus has not verified the prophecies; that the narrative in the Gospels is strained by credulity into artificial conformity with imagined predictions; that, for instance, the riding into Jerusalem on an ass was planned to answer to the lowly king of the prophet, &c.

On this subject of prophecy F. N. is more than usually confident; and I do not doubt that to himself, and probably also to others, his objections will appear to possess much force. I well remember that the deists of the early part of the last century, who took this ground, did more to shake my faith than any others. Yet I have lived to see the very point where the argument seemed to fail *open out in wonderful illustration of the divine foreknowledge*, confirming the christian application of the prophecies, and sustaining our faith in their further and final fulfilment.

We may lay it down as a rule that the principles on which the prophets spoke must be gathered from the scriptures of the prophets themselves. When we enter on the perusal of them we feel that we breathe the *present* urgency of the appeal to Israel as to those who stood nearest, and were to gather up the immediate blessing of warning or correction, &c. Standing thus in the midst of the visions of holy men of old, we feel that the panorama must have seemed altogether *Jewish*. The contemporary vicissitudes of Israel are the nearest objects in the prospect; but then these are overtopped by other more distant objects; and these last, as being very dissimilar, appear in not easily

understood juxta-position—trouble with *deliverance*—suffering with *glory*—like mountains that neighbouring each other in the prospect *hide* the defile that separates them, and by which the worshipper is led forward into another amphitheatre or more advanced dispensation.

Now, why was this? Was it that as yet it stood not revealed that Israel would reject the blessing, and that so the *salvation* they put from them would become the portion of an election both of the Jews and of the Gentiles; though ultimately to return to them and embrace, together with them, *all* the Gentiles?

Foreknown as this was, it was not revealed unto the prophets of Israel. What if the veiling of it was a thing designed? (Eph. iii. 5.) Would it not follow that the fulfilment of the prophecies of Micah or of Isaiah only *up to a certain point* is no sort of objection to, but rather a pledge of, the complete accomplishment? Unless, indeed, what is *unfulfilled* is become *impossible* by reason of what has come to pass.*

And here how worthy of note is the point at which our Lord stops in his quotation from Isaiah lxi. See Luke iv. 17—21, where we read the words, “this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”† We see the Lord stopping before he came to the words, “the day of vengeance of our God,” that day being not yet come. So again in

* This seems insinuated in the following words: “*Philitia, Moab, Ammon*, are distinctions entirely lost.” But see on this, Lynch’s U. S. Expedition to the Dead Sea. 1850.

† Luke’s former treatise was, as we read in Acts i., of things that Jesus “*began to do and teach.*”

the 1st chapter of the same evangelist, we may notice that the angel sent to Zecharias, the priest, in quoting from the prophecy of Malachi, passes unmentioned the turning of the hearts of the "*children* to the fathers," and the "smiting the earth with a curse.

It is a fact that *eighteen centuries* have come in between that which was then seen or heard in the "preaching of the gospel to the poor," and the "day of vengeance" spoken of in Isaiah.

So in Acts ii. we have *Peter* pointing to the mere bud of fulfilment of *Joel's* prophecy. But who can read that chapter of Joel without feeling that it is not only not exhausted, but that its full accomplishment has been also delayed for *eighteen centuries*?

Peter, in the beginning of Acts, had spoken of God visiting the Gentiles, "to take *out of them a people for his NAME*"—surely not the work of a day! Is it not still going on now after *eighteen hundred years*?

Agreeably to this we have the same Peter in his epistle speaking of *long delay*, (the Lord had spoken of the same: some would say, "my Lord *delayeth* his coming,") and of ungodly mockers as a consequence of that delay. All this we are to count as the Lord's "*long-suffering*." There was a *Bride* preparing—a great *mystery**—the veiled dispensation—kept secret for ages, thenceforth declared—*Paul* its special witness and builder.

* The *great Mystery* was not that the Gentiles were to be blessed. This had been declared to Abraham; but that an election from out the Gentiles should anticipate Israel in blessing.

To it Peter therefore gives, in his 2nd epistle, a *brother's* testimony.

But *Paul* spoke out, "according to the knowledge given to him." But he too guarded against the error of expecting the absolute *speedy* return of the Saviour; although he would have its certainty realized and brought nigh by faith. Instead of encouraging the mistake F. N. imputes to him, he looked to a *distant* day, when the *election having been brought in*, Israel should *turn to the Lord*, and the *Redeemer come out of Sion*. Read Rom. xi., comparing Isa. lix. Have not eighteen centuries rolled away since Paul wrote? has *Israel* turned to the Lord?

And this appears to correspond with the Lord's prophecy in Matt. xxiv; where the proximate fulfilment is seen arrested by the 14th verse, and a *preaching of the Gospel* that may extend through no less than *eighteen hundred* years.

So, in the ministry of the blessed Lord on earth, when as yet it did not appear whether the nation would reject Him, we have intimations given us of the same interval. The heir was to be cast out of the vineyard—the *stone* was first to be *rejected*—the lord of the servants was to take his journey for a long time—the nobleman was to go away into a far country to receive kingly authority, and *return* to exercise it.

Is it not plain that we have the same *break* in all these glimpses of the future; and that the same ELLIPSIS, of more than *eighteen hundred years*, comprises the Lord's *absence* and delay of return—the time of *long-suffering*—and *gathering of an election as a people* for His name; thus filling up

and connecting what is *fulfilled* with what is *unfulfilled*?

But we may observe the same reference to a *first* and *second* coming of Messiah in those expressive *actions* recorded of our Lord, wherein He seems to claim the application of the prophecies. Announced as "thoroughly to purge his floor," we see Him making a scourge of *small cords*, and laying the *fear* of a day of vengeance on the *buyers* and *sellers* who denied the true character of God's house as the *house of prayer* for all nations. He rides into Jerusalem amid the acclamations of *babes and sucklings*, with this word for the wise and prudent—"Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, '*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*'"

James, in like manner, writes in a time of suffering of a Coming that was to be waited for. John speaks of the same thing; and so does Jude.

Here I imagine a disputer to reply: "Well, I allow you have proved that a *two-fold coming of Messiah* was either intimated, or assumed, in the very beginning of Christianity; and that it has since been so recognized as to become a part of its established teaching: but how am I to be assured that this was not an invention resorted to for the occasion, to meet a palpable failure of complete correspondency between the facts and the prediction?"

The Lord Himself answers where He leads us to the 110th Psalm,—(how ought we to watch His ways!) There is no question that this Psalm was anciently, and even from the beginning, understood of the Messiah. Its terms are the

plainest possible. It stands alone — a lesson marked off by divine inspiration ; within the compass of seven verses we have this utterance with a divine exposition :

“THE LORD (*Jehovah*) said unto my Lord,

“SIT THOU *at my right hand*—UNTIL

“I *make thine enemies* THY FOOTSTOOL.”

We have here,

First, A *coming* of David’s Lord.

Second, The fact that He has enemies.

Third, A period during which He sits in a place of power, His posture of sitting expressing a finished work, though His enemies are *not* yet subdued.

Fourth, and lastly, A *second* appearing when His enemies are put under His feet !

And this prophetic testimony, with its divine divisions, is proved to have been declared a *thousand years before Christ came*. This, then, is the answer to the objection supposed to be made.

I do not pretend that this ray of light, cast on the testimony of prophecy, will at once make the whole lucid, or enable us to arrange its details. Obscurity I know still remains. One end secured by this obscurity is the exclusion of *artful accommodation* to the prediction. Another end, and worthy the One who gave these divine oracles, is the multiplication of blessing arising from minor and reiterated fulfilments of the truth declared ;—all which fulfilments were truly in the mind of the Holy Ghost. And, observe, God would not have His messengers without sympathy with all they spake. The prophet *ate* the roll,—sweet or bitter. Therefore the more immediate application

to the present trials of the nation was ever uppermost. The more *spiritual* of the nation went forward in their thoughts, and rejoiced in the brightness of the far horizon.

And before I quote the Scriptures where this is seen, and, I might say, *felt*, let me also say that the continual reiteration, or repeated application of words of warning, is most rich in blessing to Christians. The Christians of *Christendom* read in Isaiah xlvii. the call to pride to 'come down and sit in the dust.' Who can tell how this chapter has served to *keep* the souls of real Christians in the days of Rome's, or Spain's, or England's pride of earthly glory?

In Isaiah ix. there is a cotemporary deliverance, couched in words wherein we discern a *looking through* that deliverance to a greater.

So also in Isa. vii. the mysterious Child rises above the infant pointed to for those who were seeking a present deliverance. (*Horsley's Bibl. Crit.*)

The chief priests without hesitation apply the prophecy in Micah v. to Messiah. In the prophet this is seen connected with the gathering in of the nation and the establishment of the Lord's house in the last days, a time of peace for *Israel*, with judgments on the land of *Assyria*, and the *land of Nimrod*. This did not prevent Matthew's telling us the fact of the interpretation of the chief priests, although he is recording how Christ came and was rejected—neither does it hinder *faith* seeing in the prophecy a yet future day of travail and deliverance from assembled enemies.

The *coming of the Son of man*, spoken of in

Matt. xxiv., carries our thoughts to Daniel's prophecy. Our thought as to what is described as the *sign* of that coming will depend much on our view as to the time and duration of the *tribulation* which that sign is declared to follow, as also on our correct understanding of the (figurative?) expressions employed in ver. 29.

Sometimes the reference of one prophet to another is traced. The citation in Matt. xxvii. appears to look through *Zechariah* to Jeremiah xviii., xix. : the *clay* was the house of Israel.

Sometimes the nearer deliverance, as that by *Cyrus*, the Lord's anointed to build the temple, (Isaiah xlv. 28,) leads *forward* to an ulterior deliverance and restoration in joy and humbleness, after long discipline.

We read, in 1 Peter, that the prophets searched diligently what "manner of time" the Spirit in them signified; and that they needed to have it revealed to them that "*to us* they ministered those things." *We* seem to need to be reminded that, joined with this ministry of *our* things to us, there was a ministry of consolation to sustain the faith of their day.

The lxxiind Psalm shews Christ *exalted* and His enemies licking the dust;—which "we see not *yet*." Now the believing Israelite must through many generations have drunk of this consolation—not knowing that *two thousand eight hundred* years of vicissitude and banishment would first pass over his nation.

The xlth chapter of Ezekiel shews an *ordered* prospect, well suited to the obedient heart that kept the Lord's statutes and walked in His ordi-

nances. *Such* may have rejoiced in that prospect, without a thought that four and twenty centuries of confusions and loss of all things, should come between their faith and its fulfilment. So to the *brother's* heart in Israel how much comfort must have flowed in from the xxxviith of the same prophet, where they found it foretold that in place of Ephraim envying Judah, and Judah vexing Ephraim, the children of Israel should be again *one nation* upon their own mountains.

The same gracious *reserves* of the Lord are traceable in the first leadings of Abram as the head of their national separation? He believed, and had the promise of the whole land wherein he sojourned. But that which subsequently was opened out was what he could scarcely have looked for:—the interval was to be passed over by faith:—“he looked for a city;” but in deep sleep, and horror of great darkness, he had to learn that his seed were to be strangers and afflicted in a strange land, and *after* to come thither.

Fulfilments seem often of the nature of springing reproduction, or exhibition of the same truths or principles seen in the divine dealings, or in our nature as the subject of those dealings.

Not only in the lessons, but in the facts there may be traced what has been termed a family likeness; and Israel's future history *may* present some striking *literal* correspondency with their *Exodus* and wilderness experience. The countries and nations whose border touched the promised land *may* again stand prominently forth. But this family resemblance is also found in the

spirit of the facts;—for there is such a thing—though we rightly repudiate the spiritualizing in which the facts are evaporated. In this way the Church, in this dispensation, drinks into whatever in a former has a *spiritual* taste, and grows in understanding of the Bridegroom. In Israel's deliverance from Egypt we see a *spiritual* Israel of believers. And this is confirmed to us in 1 Cor. x. And do we not all through scripture trace a divine over-ruling of events to the formation of a *mould of character*; so that the trials of the saints of old, and especially of the man David, should draw forth cries more perfectly expressive of the experience, in due time, of David's Lord;—leading him *beyond his own experience*, in such utterances as, "they pierced my hands and my feet?" We need to have our minds enlarged as to all this range of things. Often we are too rigid in our interpretations, and hence fail to receive the teaching. "Moses wrote of *Me*," said our Lord. Where? perhaps, one will ask. Was it in Deut. xviii., or was it not much more in the expressive similitudes and significant defects of the Mosâic institutions? So we read of the "things written in the *Psalms* and in the prophets concerning *ME*." Here we understand, 1st, things exhibiting *Christ* personally; 2ndly, *Christ* in those whom He leads, whether in a remnant under teaching,—oppressed but trusting,—or delivered and praising: that is, Christ identifying Himself with those in whom He works and whom He leads.

How wonderful is all this—in the statement! What is *general* throwing up on the surface strange particulars, (Ps. xxii.,) and on the other

hand *particulars* intimating or illustrating the widest and most comprehensive truths. (A bone of Him shall not be broken.)

But this principle of identification of the Lord *in grace* with those whom He leads, is most deep and important. It will help to explain some chapters of Isaiah where Messiah and the *for-given* nation both seem to claim the application of the prophecy.

Bearing in mind these various and multiplied fulfilments, and the enlarging reproduction of the great teaching of the prophecies, we shall have a key to the strength and fulness of the terms of prophecy. The fact is, that in this point of view, nothing is really inconsiderable; for that nation was formed to be God's servants, and His witnesses. Their treacherous dealing—their captivity—and their final restoration—are the warning, instruction, and comfort of all who truly know Him. Well might Paul exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

I rejoice as I review this wide field of prophecy wherein are so many things which I need that some one should shew me. I am as a child before it. The light is seen at intervals, but the bow spans the horizon of man's history. *Babel*, —*Babylon of old*,—lifting up itself, and oppressing His saints, and—the *City* of the Apocalypse, each in its season, comes into remembrance for judgment. Time develops what is ever coming up before God. His wrath is declared against it. But judgment *lingers*, and descends only by *mea-*

*sure.** He confounds and scatters, and men leave off to build their city and tower;—but, again, and in the same country, we find a “golden city,” rejecting God and oppressing His people. The golden city is brought down into the dust; and again the judgment *stays*; or, as we say, it is fulfilled up to a certain point. Let us carry this thought with us in reading the prophets who spake of Babylon. It is as if the Spirit in them held aloft the vial of wrath, and poured out a *measure* of its contents, while looking into what was as yet restrained, and declaring that it should be *emptied out* on proud Impiety at its climax in judgments “*in one day*” and “*in one hour.*”†

What then has the writer I am opposing proved, but that which needed no proof? Prophecy has *not yet* run out its course in fulfilment: Christ’s enemies are *not yet* seen under His feet,—and therefore there are *scoffers* who say “all things continue as they were.” What he calls “the great day of judgment” has *not yet* arrived: F. N. considers it *ought* to be upon us; for, says he, “the *Grecian Monarchy*, which that day was immediately to follow, is long since passed away.” He comes to this conclusion by counting the *Median*

* So, in Israel, there was the “*green tree*,” and the “*dry*,”—the *tender branch* and the *summer*.

† Compare Isa. xlvii. 5, with Rev. xviii. 7.

Jer. li. 13, with Rev. xvii. 1.

Gen. xi. with Jer. li. 53, and

Jer. li. 63, with Rev. xviii. 21; and, generally,

Isa. chap. xi., xii., xvi., xxi., xxiii., xxxiv., xlvii., li., lii;

Jer. l., li., and Rev. xiv., xvii., xviii., xix.

Horsley, noticing the names, *Israel*, and *Jacob*, in Isa. xiv. understands them of a *future day*.

and *Persian* monarchies *separately* as the *second* and *third* of the prophet. Now besides that the most learned are of quite another judgment, it appears that *Daniel himself* meant otherwise when he wrote the 28th verse of his fifth chapter and eighth of the following:—(Comp. also Esth. i. 19.) I do not think F. N. will on this point have the concurrence of *one* open and independent judgment. But I must here leave this portion of his argument.

LXXXI. In one place F. N. speaks truly of the “unapproachable moral superiority” of the writers of the New Testament; or, as he elsewhere expresses it, “the moral chasm” that separates between them and the writers that immediately came after them. Indeed this is an argument of no mean force to any acquainted with early Christian literature. They know what puerile fancies and vain wisdom very early began to mingle with the common teaching.

It is a comfort to reflect how pure the canon of scripture has been kept for those who in all ages have sought to it as a rule of faith and walk.*

* God has watched over the canon of inspired scripture. Account for it as we may, the *fact* is independent of our reasons, that the general body of Christian scholars, in every age, critical or not, have agreed in receiving our books, and ours only. I know of no evidence,—and I certainly do not believe, that *one* heart seeking sincerely to God’s word for guidance in *faith* or *walk* has been allowed to mistake as to *where* that word was to be found. It is a beautiful example of providential overruling in this respect, that without collusion, and starting from different points, the critic Erasmus gave to the Christian world a *pure text*

Nothing can be fairer than the principle that to SCRIPTURE, TO ALL SCRIPTURE,—but then I add, TO NOTHING BUT SCRIPTURE—Christians are bound. Why then would F. N. give us *more* than the canon of scripture, as scripture to defend against his own sneer? Is he conscious that the points he has selected for attack in the canonical scripture do not let in any serious damage to its authority? When he refers his readers to the book of *Tobit*, can he be ignorant that that book has never in any age,—critical or uncritical,—made a part of the canon of received scripture?

But his liberality in this way goes much further; and he tells us that “the apostle Jude *quotes* the *Book of Enoch*.” Now if he had said that that apostle gives us a tradition concerning Enoch’s *prophesying*, which tradition is found mixed up with much weak imagination in a recently discovered apocryphal book under the name of Enoch, I should not object. But I *do* object to the assumption, as altogether improbable, that Enoch *wrote any book at all!*—much more to the statement that Jude *quoted* from the strange and fanciful book *recently* discovered in the Ethiopic, and which (or probably the same) had been for many ages lost.*

in the same year (1516) in which the reformer Luther was recalling men to the authority of scripture. (See the *German Theology* with Luther’s *preface*. (1516.) The celebrated *Theses* were a year later.)

* The book of Enoch has been translated by Archbishop Laurence. It is a literary curiosity—wild and childish. As to the real age of this *book* opinions are divided; one assigning it to the age of the Gospel, another to the second century; internal evidence seems to favour the latter view.

To make my argument clear, I remark that in the same short epistle of Jude we read, that "Michael the archangel contended with the devil concerning the body of Moses" (whatever that passage may mean). Now it is certainly very supposeable, that some writing may hereafter be discovered wherein that fact may be found amplified, and the *contention* itself circumstantially related! This would be quite agreeable to what we find in apocryphal writers. *All this*, on F. N.'s principle, we might be just as much expected to defend.*

And yet we have only to turn over a few pages, and we find F. N. so alive with suspicions of authenticity, that he brings forward Luther's headlong rejection of the Apocalypse, and Neander's and Arnold's doubts concerning the 2nd epistle of Peter and the epistle of Jude;—although, as he can hardly fail to know, their doubts are overborne by the unanimous recognition of those books by critics of tenfold their authority on such matters.

What can be said of this? the *Apocalypse*, *Peter*, *Jude*, are to make way—*Tobit*, and the *Book of Enoch* are to be brought in! And why not? if behind the recognition of these last, Unbelief may take its stand, and inwardly mock at all alike!

Where has F. N. shewn us that any apocryphal writing is fit to be named in company with the scriptures? What has become of the "*moral*

* Since writing the above, I find that Surenhusius (who edited the *Mischna*) has actually given a long extract from the *Ialkut Rubeni*, which details the history of Michael's contention! In like manner we have a Gospel of the Infancy, &c., &c.

chasm" which, by his own account, separates between the writers of the New Testament and the writers that immediately came after them? What are we to say of this dance, that F. N. would lead his readers? Is it only thus that he can lead them into unbelief?

LXXXII. One people, and only one, among all the nations of the earth, has preserved the annals of its own delinquencies and disgrace. We see them cling to a code of laws, which had they kept them, would have been their title to prosperity; but which denounced against their rebellion the very degradation and dispersion in which their existence has been continued for eighteen centuries! Meanwhile, we see their "diminishing" has become "the riches" of the nations, and the oracles committed to them, the treasure of believers in all the countries where they are scattered.

The written law of this people is plainly the *root* and *preservative* of their separate existence as a nation. But, we find it recorded in Chronicles, that in the reign of king Josiah the "book of the law by the hand of Moses" (either the autograph of Moses, or perhaps an authenticated Temple-copy) was found in the Temple, and read publicly in the ears of the people, amid the lamentation and weeping of the hearers; the natural inference from which incident is, according to F. N., that the contents of this book of the law were "previously unknown, and the very fact of its loss forgotten;" and then he asks "*could this have been if it had been then received sacred law?*"—

A plain answer would be, "no, it *could not*." But F. N.'s answer is quite otherwise: its extravagance saves all reflection: his words are: "*evidently* this book of the law was *then first* compiled or produced and made authoritative"! If I could think of this as sincere, it would be a good sample of what some have well designated the *credulity of Unbelief*.

To take another instance:

The later date of John's gospel, written probably near the close of the first century, and the more developed form of its teaching, with a certain resemblance between what is therein related to have been spoken by the Lord, and the style of the evangelist, renders it "*perfectly certain*" in F. N.'s account—(and herein again his suspicion of authenticity reappears,)—that the *last discourses* of Jesus, (which John alone records,) as well as much more in the Lord's teaching,—"*were in reality never spoken!!*"*

Now, I ask, might not the words of Jesus, abiding in John for *fifty* years, account for a certain resemblance of style? How natural that the *beloved apostle* should have more deeply entered into both the truth, and the form of expressing the truth of redemption-life. Might not the Spirit also "divide" and "bring to the apostle's remembrance" things *spoken* by Jesus, after such a manner as to shew a peculiar using of this evangelist, as a vessel?

A modern writer has remarked, that "human

* *Possibly* in John iii. 36 it may be correct to say, we have the *Evangelist himself* speaking the *Gospel* as he goes on in his narrative.

language, being impressed with all the infirmities and darkened by all the mental obscurities of those who have invented, employed, and modified it, *must* be a most imperfect vehicle and exponent of *thought*. And that, consequently, communications reaching us, from the Deity Himself, through the channel of our own words and ideas, *must* partake more or less of the indistinctness and ambiguity inseparable from all *our* thoughts and *our* discourse."

Agreeing with this thought, let me remark, that the words which Jesus spake were *spirit and life*, and might lodge in the heart of John a *more developed teaching* than in the heart of Matthew; for He who spake was the Master of all miracle, and no imperfection of words limited the *truth* communicated. *Power* went with the words according to His will,—it ran in the channel of them, but might well pass over and go beyond them, to each disciple according to His will.

LXXXIII. There is in this work a confounding together of two things most distinct:—namely, the religion of Jesus, and—Christianity in the sense of *Christendom*; or the Roman Empire in the days when Christianity, it is said, "*acted in it.*"

It seems to me that in every thing God deals with the affections. He does not *proclaim down* the conditions of society, its rich and its poor. His power appears in making the rich "*glad to distribute.*"

Thus: it may be conceded to F. N. that '*Christianity*' developed no "*public* opposition to Slavery

as an institution.”* We may claim for the religion of Jesus a far higher praise. It gave to the slave that which no oppressor could take from him; while it so softened the authority of the *believing* master as to make occasion for that word, “those that have *believing* masters let them not *despise* them.” Where *this* miracle was wrought, it is no wonder Paul should send back Onesimus, “without a hint that Philemon ought to make him legally free.” He was to be received, “not now *as a servant*, but above a servant, a *brother beloved*.” Some, however, see in those words an indication that Paul desired that Philemon should give Onesimus his liberty.

We have the like confusion in such statements as—the “*Christian religion* cannot pretend to self-sustaining power,” but was “early polluted by false philosophy;” and again, “from ferocious men *it* (the Christian religion) learnt ferocity.” And yet all that can be truly said is, that false philosophy found entrance in the professing *Church*,—and men learnt ferocity from their fellow men, without ceasing to bear the *name* of Christian. Let the religion of Jesus be judged by its own standard in scripture;—herein I claim for it only what I would concede to Mahomedanism.

LXXXIV. F. N. has taken some pains to convince his readers that “Christianity” has *not* really “raised *woman-kind*,”—he ascribes this effect to “Germanic sentiment.” He tells us Paul

* “The first public act against slavery came from republican France in the madness of atheistic enthusiasm.”—F. N.

“does not encourage a man to desire a mutual soul,” “not seeming aware that the fascinations of woman refine and chasten society,” &c., &c. Surely F. N. *ought* to know that the love that bears the infirmity and gives honour to the weaker vessel, nourishing and cherishing it, in the sacred sympathy of “heirs together of the grace of life,” is unspeakably beyond that which derives its motive from what he calls *sentiment*. There is a “*moral chasm*” (to use his own word) between them.*

LXXXV. It is not easy to unravel a web like F. N.'s so as to expose in plain words what is *assumed* in his finished periods. But a Christian moderately instructed will at once dismiss such assertions as that *Paul* believed the resurrection of Jesus *on the evidence of prophecy*;—or on the mere testimony of *others*;—or that he learned his gospel by *internal* revelation; if by that is intended the working of his own thoughts;—or that he neglected Christ's teaching *on earth*;—or that *Peter* did *not* teach the resurrection of Christ *bodily*, because he speaks of His being “quicken^d in the Spirit;”—or that the sleep of the disciples who “beheld” the transfiguration disqualified them

* Some of his reflections on this topic are really absurd, and only worth noticing as shewing the *animus* of the writer. Speaking of the marriage service he tells us, “the Pauline doctrine, (in such passages as Ephes. v.?) is felt by English brides and bridegrooms to be so offensive and degrading, that many clergymen mercifully make unlawful omissions.” Elsewhere he assures us, that “the real elevators of the female sex are the *Poets* of Germanic culture”!!

to be witnesses of all that passed;—or that Paul *anxiously disparaged* the gift of tongues, in simply declaring it unprofitable in the absence of interpretation, &c., &c.

LXXXVI. Some of F. N.'s minuter criticism I would not pass altogether unnoticed. Such as his remark on the incident of the fig-tree, in Mark xi., "about which," says he, "we are so perplexingly told that it was not the time of figs." Now all that is necessary seems to be to understand "the time of *fig harvest*," when the figs would have been gathered—that time "was not yet:" and Jesus came seeking fruit and found none.

Concerning Judas, it seems allowable to say—(Acts i. 18) he purchased or gained *that* into which the reward of his iniquity was turned—a *field*, afterwards called the "field of blood." For this he gave *his* interest in the One with whom he had companied for years, and whom he now betrayed with a kiss.

There is some apparent discrepancy between the account given in the 1st of Acts and that given in Matthew of the death of Judas, but the fact stated in the former is not *contradictory*, but *additional* to the circumstances stated in Matthew.

LXXXVII. Whatever may be said of such questions,—F. N. may be assured that they do *not* "go very deep" (to adopt his own expression) "into the heart of the Christian claims."

The religion of Jesus has claims. The greatest and foremost is the claim it makes to cure the

sin-sickness of the soul. It is a claim on which F. N. would seem not to have sufficiently reflected. He seems still to hold a place among the mass of this proud and evil world. *It is possible*, that after having known and discarded much truth in the understanding, the truth that a *sinner* needs may one day reach his conscience. Then this question of revelation will to him become **NEW**.

LXXXVIII. I desire to feel for F. N.; his unbelief has not destroyed his title to sympathy. I can still love such. In one sense Christians ought to be found loving the world. If I were a better Christian my love toward him would be far stronger; but then it would be as seeing in him a perishing sinner.

It is also true that a Christian may look with much real and sincere interest on what is going on "in the world;"—its culture, and progress. It is his own clay. It is also the field in which his Father is working.

But this is very different from the feeling F. N. avows in those remarkable words, "I now with deliberate approval love the world." It is the language of one who knows nothing better to love. The Christian has been chosen "*out of this world.*" He has been *with* Christ and found *His* claim stronger than all the claims this world can make on his affections—and—Christ has *sent him into the world*, sanctifying, by the word, every right connection with it,—and excluding, (by the text F. N. appears to have had in view,) all that is not so sanctified. Hence that gracious direction keeps his heart, "*Love not the world, neither*

the things that are in the world. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

LXXXIX. I shall close my task by a few sentences from a writer whom F. N. has quoted,—I mean Neander. He is speaking of Celsus, who wrote against Christianity as early as the year 150.

“Whoever this Celsus may have been, he is an important individual in our history; for he is in fact the representative of a class of intellects which in the various attacks on Christianity has over and over again presented itself. Wit and acuteness *without earnestness of purpose or depth of research*—a worldly understanding looking at things on the surface and delighting in difficulties. His objections serve an important end. They present in the clearest light the opposition between the Christian position and that of the ancient world; and the relation which revealed religion will ever be found to hold to the ground assumed by *natural reason*. Thus many of his objections are nothing less than testimonies to the truth. In what light the divine foolishness of the Gospel of the faith which was to make the highest truth the common property of all mankind, must appear to the twinkling wisdom and aristocratic enlightenment of the ancient world, is clearly seen where Celsus objects that the Christians refused to give reasons for what they believed, but were ever repeating, ‘do not examine, only *Believe*;—thy *faith* will make thee blessed!’ And again, ‘Let no educated—no wise man approach,—let

whoever is ignorant, uneducated—whoever is like a child, let him come and be comforted. But associated with this objection is another of *directly opposite character*, shewing how the religion thus accused of demanding implicit *faith* called into exercise the power of thought. In the beginning, says Celsus, ‘when the Christians were few, they may have agreed among themselves, but as they increased they separated into parties, attacking each other, and retaining nothing in common but the name.’”

Alas, *this witness is true!* but then *Christians* must take the shame: let none cast it on a doctrine that teaches to believe on the Name of the Son of God, and to love one another as He gave us commandment. The *Name* of God’s Son—instead of our own—for *confidence*; and the love of brethren, in His spirit who laid down His life,—our *example*. Some may patronize that Name whose blessing it would be to be saved by it;—and some may speak of brotherly love who know not the Father. But sinners justified by Christ’s blood and sanctified by the Spirit of God, notwithstanding all their failures, will be, through eternal ages, a praise to GOD’S HOLY GRACE.

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