

are to substitute a vague "general idea" of the Bible for a close study of its details. Every flower in it, as Luther quaintly says, is a garden, and every tree a forest. But we must first find out where, when, by whom, and under what conditions, a passage was penned, and what it could have meant for those who originally read it, before we go on to ask what meanings its words may be made to include for us. Of course this will involve some trouble, but while God does make provision for our unavoidable ignorance, He does not make provision for our uncalled-for indolence. The good we each get from the Bible must depend upon the amount of earnest effort we put into our reading of it. Often, because we will not make that effort, we are half-hearted and unstable in the faith, when we might be whole-hearted and strong.

The whole Bible must always be looked at in its two complementary aspects of *Unity* as a *Divine* Book on the one hand, and *Diversity* as a *Human* Book on the other.

Observe (a) *Unity of Authorship*. Throughout God speaks, and He changeth not (James i. 17). The same Lord who said to Adam, "Thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. ii. 17), said to S. John, "Fear not" (Rev. i. 17). But very different was the knowledge of the Apostle from that of our first father. From Eden to Patmos, God's revelation of Himself was gradual, as men were able to bear it (John xvi. 12; I Cor. iii. 2). "Truth is one, and right is ever one," sings Edmund Spenser; but humanity, educated by God, is ever making progress, and so His teaching, though one, was not uniform. From age to age there was a continuous advance, not from less to more true, but from simple to complex manifestations of truth, each of which must therefore be considered in connexion with its own period. And though the Canon was closed 1800 years ago, the Bible is a book of progress still, for its meaning can never be exhausted. Its Divine Author still leads us into all the truth, and each generation may learn more from its pages than the last. Many things are clearer to the average Christian of to-day than to the most enlightened Christian of bygone times, as those of us who read the religious books of the remote past know well.

(b) *Unity of Time*. Its history covers 3700 years, but