

course of Triennial Confirmations for this Diocese, since the appointment of the present Bishop, and it is an auspicious beginning.

Foreign Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

We copy the following excellent letter on the Essays and Reviews, which have caused so much scandal to the Church at home.

To the Editor of the Guardian.

SIR.—A correspondent of yours mentions me with others (I know not whether excluding or including me) who are called upon by their position to answer the unhappy *Essays and Reviews*. The subject has been in the minds of many of us. The difficulty has arisen, not in providing definite answers to definite objections, but in giving systematic answers to a host of desultory attacks on revelation, its evidences, the Bible which contains it, and the truths revealed. The well-known passage in the unbelieving *Westminster Review* states the extent to which the truth has been attacked; it did not fall within its object to notice the guerilla, pelemole character of the attack. But look at the list:—

"Now in all seriousness we would ask, what is the practical issue of all this? Having made all these deductions from the popular belief, what remains as the residuum? In their ordinary, not plain sense, there has been discarded the word of God, the creation, the fall, the redemption, justification, regeneration, and salvation, eternal punishment, prophesy, heaven and hell, liturgies, and articles, the truth of Jewish history, and of Gospel narrative, a sense of doubt thrown over even the incarnation, the resurrection, and ascension, the divinity of the second person, and the personality of the third. It may be that this is a true view of christianity, but we insist, in the name of common sense, that it is a new view."—(p. 305.)

An attack may be made in a short space. If any one cannot rest on the authority of the Universal Church, attested as it is by prophesy, nor again, on the word of Jesus, he must take a long circuitous process of answer. But already, if books we must have, these would need to be essays upon—1. Revelation; 2. Miracles; 3. Prophesy; 4. The Canon; 5. Inspiration; 6. Our Lord's Divinity and Atonement; 7. The Divinity and Offices of God the Holy Ghost? But beyond this, there is the miscellaneousness of their random dogmatic scepticism. The writers, in their own persons, rarely affirm any thing, attempt to prove nothing, and throw a doubt upon every thing. If any of us had dogmatised as to truth, as these do as to error, what scorn we should be held up to! They assume every thing, prove nothing. There is only here and there any thing definite to lay hold of. One must go back to the foreign sources of this unbelief, to find it in a definite shape, which one could answer. I have made a list of the subjects on which I should have to write on my own special subject, the interpretation of the Old Testament. Some indeed admit of a short answer, as when one says, "The title given by Isaiah to our Lord, 'Mighty God,' perhaps only means 'strong and mighty one,'" or that Isaiah in the words "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son," means "a maiden's child, to be born in the reign of Abaz," or that "kiss the son" (Psalm 2,) should be rendered "worship purely," or that for the words "They pierced my hands and my feet," there should stand the senseless "like a lion." Apart from inspiration, no one could think that any human writer, who wished to be understood, would use the words *el gibbor* of Almighty God in one chapter ("the remnant shall return unto

Almighty God.") and, in the chapter before us those self-same words of the child who was to be born, in another sense. The "kiss" was a well-known sign of fealty to a king, or worship to an object of worship; but the Hebrew word for "kiss" would no more mean "worship" by itself than our English word. It could be shown in brief space that *Almah* means "unmarried maiden" or virgin, and that the conception spoken of is beyond nature. Popularly it has been said, "If Isaiah did not prophesy the birth of a virgin, the LXX. did." It would take no great space to show that the rendering "as a lion," is unmeaning, without authority, against authority, while the rendering "they pierced," is borne out alike by authority and language. But these are but insulated points, easy to be defended, because attacked definitely. But when their range of attack extends from Genesis to Daniel, when one says that credible history begins with Abraham (Williams, 57;) another, that there "is little reliable history" before Jeroboam (Mr. Wilson, p. 170, of course, contradicting each other as to the period between Abraham and Jeroboam;) another denies the accuracy of the Old Testament altogether according to our standards of accuracy (Professor Jowett, p. 347,) asserting that "like other records," it was "subject to the conditions of a knowledge which existed in an early stage of the world" (ib. 411,) that "the dark mists of human passion and error form a partial crust upon it" (Wilson, p. 177,) that the truth of the unity of God in scripture only gradually "dispersed the mists of human passion, in which it was itself enveloped" (Jowett, p. 296.) When contradictions between the Kings and Chronicles are vaguely assumed (Wilson, 178, 9, Jowett, 342, 7;) when it is asserted that prophecies of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos failed (Jowett, 343;) and implied that God could not predict the deeds of one of His creatures by name (ib. ;) that when Nahum prophesied, there were human grounds to anticipate the destruction of Nineveh, which he prophesied (Williams, p. 60;) or that Micah, in prophesying the birth at Bethlehem, meant only a deliverer in his own times (p. 68;) that "perhaps one passage in Zechariah and one in Isaiah (it is not said which) may be capable of being made directly Messianic" (Williams, p. 69;) and that "hardly any, probably none, of the quotations from the Psalms and Prophets in the Epistles is based on the original sense or context" (Jowett, p. 406;) when the genuineness of the Pentateuch (Williams, p. 60,) of much of Isaiah (ib., 68, Jowett, p. 318,) Zechariah (Williams, p. 68,) Daniel (69, 76) is denied; when it is asserted that the aspects of truth in the Book of Job or Ecclesiastes are opposite or imperfect (Jowett, p. 347,) that actions are attributed to God in the Old Testament at variance with that higher revelation which He has given of Himself in the Gospel (26,) when Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is attributed not to God, but to "the fierce ritual of Syria" (Williams, p. 61,) not to speak of the temptation in Paradise (p. 177,) the miracle of Balaam's ass, the earth's standing still, "the universality of the deluge, the confusion of tongues, the corporeal taking up of Elijah into heaven, the nature of angels, the reality of demoniacal possession, the personality of Satan, and the miraculous nature of many conversions" (Wilson, 177,) or the Book of Jonah (Williams, p. 73)—how can such an undigested heap of errors receive a systematic answer in brief space, or in any one treatise or volume? Or why should these be more answered than all the other attacks on the same subject with which the unbelieving press has been for some time teeming? People seem to have transferred the natural panic at finding that such attacks on belief could be made

by those bound to maintain it, to the subjects themselves, as if the faith was jeopardised because it has been betrayed. With the exception of the still imperfect science of Geology, the *Essays and Reviews* contain nothing with which those acquainted with the writings of unbelievers in Germany have not been familiar these thirty years. The genuineness of the books impugned, the prophecies, whose accomplishments in themselves, or in our Lord, is so summarily denied, have been solidly vindicated, not in essays, but in volumes. An observation on the comparative freedom and reasonableness of "the Conservatism of Hengstenberg" and John (Williams, p. 67) is, I believe, the only indication, given in the volume, that much which the writers assume as proved, has been solidly disproved. Some volumes have, I believe, been already translated.

But this circuitous process cannot be necessary to faith. God did not reveal Himself to us for disputers. These answers may have their place; but there must be some briefer, directer road to faith. One of the essay writers owned that their system could never be the religion of the poor. Then it cannot be the true gospel, which was for the poor. Those who believe our Lord's words need no further proof as to the Old Testament. He has referred to it as of authority, and as speaking of Himself. He has sealed to us the whole of the Old Testament, as, in all its divisions, speaking of Himself (Luke xxiv. 44 and 27.)

It has been observed that he has authenticated to us just that class of facts in the Old Testament which, to human reason, would seem most to need confirmation—Jonah in the fish's belly (Matt. xii. 40), the conversion of Nineveh (ib. 41), the flood (Matt. xxiv. 37-9, Luke xvii. 26, 27), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. x. 15, xi. 23, 24, Luke xvii. 2, 8, 9), Lot's wife (ib. 32), God's appearance in the burning but unconsumed bush (Matt. xii. 26), the brazen serpent (John iii. 14), the manna (ib. vi. 33), the personality of Satan (Matt. iv. 10, xii. 26, Mark iii. 23-26, Luke iv. 8, xiii. 16, xxii. 31). Again, of that early history, which two of these writers throw a slur on, our Lord sets his seal on one birth of a single pair, according to the account in Genesis (Matt. xix. 4, 5), the death of Abel (ib. xxiii. 35), the flood, (as I said), the history of circumcision (Luke vii. 22, 8). Then, again, as to prophesy, it is our Lord Himself who quotes Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 15, Mark viii. 14); the denied chapters of Isaiah, as scripture (Matt. xi. 13, Luke iv. 17, 18, xviii. 31-3, John vi. 45), Zechariah (Mark xiv. 27). He alleges the prophecies of the Old Testament in the way which this school condemns (Matt. xiii. 14, 15, xxi. 42, Mark vii. 6), and one of those which have been called "imprecatory psalms," (John xxvii. 12). The principle of this argument not confined to the Old Testament. It includes equally the reality of demoniacal possessions (Mark v. 9, vii. 29, ix. 25, 29, xvi. 17) and eternal punishment.

The *Westminster Review* calls it a "dangerous assumption that the Old Testament is a part of christianity." Not in the eyes of the reviewer who unhappily believes neither. Our Lord has bound them together for his disciples, and, however it may be charitable or right to meet in any other way the perplexities which people make for themselves or others, there must be some more compendious way for the mass of mankind. Life is not given for proving revelation to one's-self, but for belief, love, worship, duty.

I have written at this length, because there seems to be a feverish anxiety in some minds that answers should be written to these essays. Answers have, in fact, been written to very many of the attacks by Tholuck, Hengstenberg, Veil, Havernich, and others. Answers will doubtless be written in this country. Some of the object-