

of green diorite, standing about four inches in height, rounded at the top and flat at the base. The weight was made by order of Nebuchadnezzar II., B.C. 605, and was the standard Mana authorised by Dungi, king of Babylon, B.C. 2500. The inscription of ten lines of Babylonian writing tells us that it is an exact copy of the original standard weight. There seems to have been two kinds of weights used in Babylon; one was the "Mana of the King," corresponding to our imperial measure, the other was a kind of commercial standard used for weighing silver. This would corroborate in an interesting manner the statement of Scripture that Abraham weighed the price of the Cave of Machpelah (400 shekels) to Ephron the Hittite (Genesis xxiii, 16.)

NINE-TENTHS of the opposition to the Church's retaining of her property proceeds from ignorance. People have been told by Liberationist lecturers and newspapers that the State endowed the Church, and that the State gave it can take away. Thousands think that Henry VIII. took the endowments and buildings away from the Roman Catholic Church and gave them to a brand new institution of his own devising, which he palmed off upon the people of England as a genuine antique. These lies need to be refuted, and people must have it drilled into them again and again that the endowments of the Church are, with a very few exceptions, the voluntary contributions of her devoted children in the past, and that the cathedrals and parish churches have been during the last generation saved from decay and ruin by the generosity of her members in the present; while, as for the other lie, there is no Act of Parliament or order of Henry VIII. to form a new Church at the Reformation, nor did any transfer of property take place as between one Church and another, during the reign of the rapacious monarch. The Church of England had during the Middle Ages been disfigured by the parasitical growth of superstition, and impeded by the shackles which the Popes had more or less successfully tried to fasten upon her, but always against her will and against her sturdy protest.—*Church Eclectic.*

ON BIBLE READING.

Whatever we think of modern criticism of Holy Scripture we cannot deny that it has been invited by exaggerated views of Inspiration. Possibly we are in the eve of returning to a Reformation of the use of the Scriptures likely to be as spiritually fruitful as was the *true ideal* of a Reformation of Christianity. Professor Sundry in his "Oracles of God" thinks that adverse criticism will probably lead to a substitution of Scriptural *principles* for collections of "proof-texts." If so we can thankfully hail it as discouraging the craze for inventing new kinds of religions by fresh selections of "texts" whose arrangement solely depends on the taste of the text-collector. In the good providence of God all sorts of ambition, whether in the guise of learning or on the part of pretentious sanctity, may be wisely overruled for the preservation of truth.

In our last we urged the Devotional reading of Scripture. Nothing in the plea of "startling results of criticism" need deter us from this. Those intellectual ventures have no *soul* to sustain them, even should they ever reach the masses. Nor may we hesitate on the score of denominational devisings, moving on a lower plane of action, though resting on metaphysical quibbles. They should not disturb the quiet confidence of the child of God. He has not left his truth in this nineteenth century to be dis-

covered now for the first time. Christianity is older than the new Testament itself; and the faithful should not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, whether it blow from papal pride and arrogance or from sectarian perversions of liberty and self-will.

Efforts to restore the Holy Writings to their real vantage-ground in relation to Christianity are often treated as disloyalty to Scriptures, to God. But do not many eagerly anxious assertions about "taking the Bible for our guide" provoke the suspicion that those so speaking are conscious of being on very debatable ground? Release scores of the modern "plans of Salvation" from the exegetical cruelty inflicted on a few dozen texts on the assumption that the Holy Ghost always "guides into such and such new Creeds, and how much will remain but a scaffolding of human folly? It will be speedily evident that *so far as they are sectarian* they are without Scriptural support, and it will also be found, so far as they are *really Scriptural*, that just so far as those Creeds retaining fragments of the old Catholic doctrines of Christianity. And yet the blunders, the mistakes and errors of such new Creeds, in their foisting modern fancies on detached portions of Apostolic truth, will be found to have been palmed off on too credulous minds as the teaching of Holy Scripture! But we unhesitatingly assert that nearly all the general and sceptical dislike of Biblical teaching to-day has had its origin in common-sense rejections of false phases of Christianity put forth as "the word of God." And many who sneer at the Bible and shirk the claims of Religion have been driven to this step by an honest rebellion in their innermost souls against false, crystallized, conceptions of the Gospel that were nearly as bad as their indirect result on thoughtful minds.

The necessity for the correct view of the Holy Bible as a witness to the living voice of an undying Church, instead of being simply a Koran-like book which all are free to expound as they like, is realized on reflecting that the Bible cannot be the author of the Gospel confusion prevailing to-day. It is as impossible that God could show weakness by giving a book that must equally teach three hundred kinds of Christianity, as that His revelation could be wrong in itself. But just as the wide-spread systems of Polytheism have doubtless had their origin in "fresh treatments" of the primitive Monotheistic revelation, so distortions of Christianity are founded, not on the original witness to Christianity, but on *mis-applications of that witness*. Further, it appears that the disciples of those various divisions of Christians do not get their distinctive dogmas from the Bible about which they talk so much, but rather accept with unsuspecting meekness the *traditions* of the sect to which they happen to belong, and quite unconsciously substitute those favoured traditions for the living voice of the living Church. And by a large exercise of faith they get to believe that their Christian ideas are *somehow* taken from the "word," though quite forgetful of the fact that such traditions often make "the word of God of none effect." This liberty, taken collectively by so many "branches," is individually improved on by each man, woman or child who indulges his private opinions that, as "the Spirit bears witness with our spirit," whatever he believes must be right. Thus the absurdity of an infallible pope is replaced by the absurdity of infallible "believers," and the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is kept back in its progress by the Holy Bible being so abused that the hand of every Christian is turned against his fellow.

The difficulty the Christian has to face now-a-days is not only to find what the Bible teaches, but what Christianity is, as witnessed to by the Bible. This practically resolves itself into discrimination between "the truth as it is in Jesus" as held by the great links of Christian tradition and witnessed to by the Holy Writings

on one hand, and on the other the private and special traditions recently invented and propagated under the watchword, "the Bible only," which is but a rallying cry after all for the unwary. This is not out of unison with the teaching on Scripture and tradition in the Articles.

To illustrate the prevalence of modern tradition, let us take the Plymouthite Heresy. This heresy is plainly in the category of those coming creeds, claiming to be "of Christ" only, (1. Cor. 1., 12) of which St. Paul warns us to beware. No doubt many of its members rise above the delusions of the sect. But this is no justification for it. One cannot help thinking of the vitality of former gnostic heresies when trying to bring light to the victims of this superstition. Certainly its founder, Darby, like Newman in the same age, meant well; but while both aimed at the restoration of Christian Unity, they unconsciously so followed the bias of their respective minds that the latter landed in an iron-bond system of papal externals, while the former gravitated to the most repulsive expression of subjective or dreamy imaginings. Both are valuable lessons on the danger of extremes. But directly as Plymouthism was invented the whole Bible was twisted and distorted to support it, though nothing could be further from Scriptural principles than its particular features. Now this sect is foremost among those indulging in scriptural phraseology; but we venture to say that *not a plymouthite alive ever learned this strange religion from the Bible*. The process of initiation into the absurdities of the sect was simply one of absorbing the peculiar traditions of the sect, which implies committing to memory so many "proof texts" and firmly persuading one's self that, like the ancient prophets, he is under some very special guidance of the Holy Spirit! Thus mistaking his own hallucinations for the voice of God he joins the most uncharitable of all sects, and, like the proud pharisee of old, regards all others as "prodigals." But the point illustrated by their

Creed, while applying to others as well, is that the Bible is neither the source nor the cause of such errors, unless when it is used for a purpose for which it was never intended,—used, indeed, as if there were no Living Christianity independently of it, and to which it is to bear witness. The key to truth is that "the Church teaches" by continuous tradition and "the Scriptures prove" this tradition. These are the "two witnesses" for God. Both stand or fall together. Therefore we urge on all good Churchmen a prudent and diligent reading of the Holy Bible, for with St. Hippolytus, we trace all heresies to an ignorance or a *onesided* knowledge of the Sacred Writings; and, we may add, to lack of sanctified common sense.—*West Indian Churchman.*

"TER SANCTUS."

BY JAMES E. WOOD.

Like the "Sursum Corda," the "Ter Sanctus" has been in use in the Church since Apostolic times. St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, A. D. 362, states that this confession of the seraphim whom Isaiah saw surrounding the throne of God, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth," is rehearsed by Christians that they may join in the hymn sung by angelic hosts.

It is known as the "Triumphal Hymn" in the liturgies of St. Basil and St. Chrysostom, and in other ancient liturgies, as the "Hymn of the Seraphim," being an expression of that belief in the presence of angels at the celebration of the Eucharist, which has prevailed in the Church from its earliest days.

The prophet Isaiah describes the self-abasement in which he is cast by this laud of the Seraphim, when sung before the "high and lifted up throne" of the "Lord of Hosts."