

suited to gain access into men's minds, however differently constituted. A mind which revolts from abstract truth may be won by the charm of a narrative in which the truth is embodied. One who has no sense of the pathos or the sublimity of poetry may be gained by a chain of connected reasoning; and one who cares little for the rules of logic may receive truth most readily, when clothed in the forms which a lofty and passionate imagination suggests; while another may be reached most effectually by the point and terseness of a proverb or a parable. The Scriptures have all these, and are varying as the varying tastes and habitudes of men's minds, yet ever, and in all their variety of form and expression, containing the truth which it is man's greatest interest to know, to receive, and to obey. It is well that in point of fact such religion as we have is taken from them. We have a confession and catechism, which we greatly value and reverence; but which of us, for once he looks into them, does not look a thousand times, or ten thousand times, into the Bible?

Yet it is no doubt the natural tendency of the mind to form truth into a system, or to seek that it be so formed. It craves, that what of faith and practice is scattered over so large a surface and expressed in so many ways, should be condensed into shorter compass and put in plain words; and good purpose has been served by giving way to this natural desire. Truth so condensed is more quickly learned and more easily remembered. The relations of one truth to another are more readily apprehended, and there is opportunity afforded for protest against error; yet the difficulty is obvious of so summing up the truth, on so many great subjects as are treated of in such variety of ways in the books of the Old and New Testaments. The variety of the systems which have been drawn from the Scriptures, and their differences from one another, demonstrate the difficulty. Nor can the claim of perfect accuracy or of infallible authority be admitted to