

"I LOVE THE BLESSED BIBLE."

"We have not followed cunningly devised fables."

—2 Peter i. 16.

Some tell me that the Bible
Is not God's sacred word,
And brand as cunning fables
The records of the Lord ;
That Moses is a fiction,
And Prophets never spake ;
And e'en the blessed Gospels
As myths I should forsake.

There was a time I listened
To these old serpent's lies,—
My foolish heart sore tempted
The Bible to despise :
Its holiness rebuked me,
Its precepts crossed my will ;
I wished to silence conscience,
And thus my lusts fulfil.

I cared not for the Saviour,
This present world I loved ;
Its lusts, and wealth, and glory,
Alone my passions moved.
I cared not for a heaven,
I hoped there were no hell ;
I wished for no hereafter,
I loved my sins too well.

Alas ! in mad rebellion,
I hoped there were no God :
I cared not for His favour,
Though trembling at His rod ;
I wished His word a fable
That warned of wrath to come ;
"No God," my heart would mutter,
"No future weal, or doom !"

And yet my mother taught me,
In tones so sweet and mild,

To know its holy pages
 E'en when I was a child ;
 She read to me of Jesus,
 Of all His grace and love ;
 And sought with tears my blessing—
 His blessing from above.

Oh, why did I so madly
 My mother's law forsake ?
 Oh, why did I so basely
 God's righteous precepts break ?
 Oh, why did I so blindly
 His warnings all despise,
 And from the Friend of sinners
 Avert my heart and eyes ?

His mercy still pursued me
 While wand'ring far away ;
 His hand with sickness smote me,
 To wound, but not to slay :
 His Spirit then convinced me,
 And brought my guilt to light ;
 I saw my lost condition,
 How awful was the sight !

The serpent's crafty teachings,
 The heart's deceptive lies,
 The sceptic's subtle reasonings,
 All vanished from mine eyes :
 Naked, and lost, and guilty,
 Beneath God's searching eye—
 Eternity before me—
 Oh, whither could I fly ?

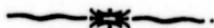
Oh then what beautiful sunshine
 Burst on my raptured sight !
 It chased away the darkness,
 And all was life, and light :
 I saw how grace and glory
 In God's free gospel shone ;
 Before the cross, my terrors
 And unbelief were gone.

I love the blessed Bible,
 I know it all is true ;
 It is a faithful mirror

In which myself I view :
 It shows me all my weakness,
 My folly and my shame ;
 But makes thereby more precious
 My Saviour's grace and name.

Oh what a light in darkness !
 Oh what a balm in woe !
 What streams of consolation
 Through all its pages flow !
 What mines of richest treasure,
 What glories fresh I meet,
 While, pondering the Scriptures,
 I sit at Jesu's feet !

His name, like sweetest music,
 Falls ever on mine ear ;
 I go to it, expecting
 My Saviour's voice to hear :
 A monument of mercy !
 Oh, may my life proclaim
 The truth of God's salvatiou,
 The glory of His name !



REMARKS ON MODERN RATIONALIST VIEWS.*

“ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father : there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me ; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ? ” (John v. 45-47).

Here we have more than one point. First,

* These remarks were originally penned by the writer for himself, but were subsequently sent to a religious magazine to shew Christians the bearing that modern rationalist views have on Christianity, so that they might not lightly suffer the taint of such views to approach them ; whatever might be their patience with those who may be deceived.

Moses' writings are attributed to him ; next, it is declared he wrote of Christ, of Jesus ; thirdly, his writings are spoken of, and, because they are *writings*, as of superior authority, as far as form goes, to Christ's *words*. If, therefore, we do not receive his writings, Christ's words have no authority—Christ made a mistake as to his writing of Him—His whole interpretation of Scripture is unfounded—His estimate of Himself is false as the object of this testimony. Who can guarantee its being well-founded on any other ground? He supposed God's mind was in the written word ; the modern doctrine makes this a mistake—He was not the object of Moses' writings—nor did Moses write them !

Who can tell then that there was a Christ to come? or if Jesus was not the subject of this testimony, He was, if there was any such testimony, deceived as to Himself. The whole authority of Christ and His words is gone—as to God's mind and as to Himself. Christianity and Christ Himself are without foundation. For if Christ's own testimony is unfounded and Moses' too as to Him—or rather, if there is none such, as Christ supposed there was—what foundation have I for anything in Christianity as a revelation of the mind of God and of His Son as the truth ?

Again He says, on the most solemn occasion as to the repentance or ruin of the Jews. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." All this was misleading—they were not authentic.

But further, if they are not heard, Christ declared His resurrection has no force to persuade: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." But all this was a blunder. There was no real power in Moses and the prophets. Christ made a mistake. Whatever His resurrection might do, Moses' writings were a forgery and had no authority whatever; so that there was no adequate ground to be persuaded by the resurrection itself. This was all Christ's solemn attestation was worth. Yet here the Lord was taking them out of the whole system of Jewish legalism. The event proved the truth of His words. They did not believe though one rose from the dead; but then, it was a mistake of the Lord from that to blame them for not receiving the testimony of Moses and the prophets, for they were of no value at all. It was not Moses at all.

So, when He said, "Search [or, ye search] the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of Me"—the business, He declares, of the Scripture was to testify of Him, Jesus, as the Christ. On whose part? Was it God's testimony, or the wild notions, previsions, or interpretations of fanatics that Christ appealed to? What was the person testified to, or who appealed to their worth if they were? But if of God, "The Scriptures" are so. We all know what that meant in a Jew's mouth.

Again in Luke xxiv., "and beginning at Moses

and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." What was He doing? And here no stupid, blasphemous pretext about His having the prejudices of the Jews is of any avail. He was risen. I suppose He was freed from prejudices by that time. But what shall we say? It was not Moses; and the testimony of Scripture was no really inspired prophetic testimony; consequently, not about Himself. The risen Lord misled, as much as when walking, before His death, on the earth. And Christians are to believe this! But He goes a step farther. He uses divine power over their minds as to it. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer"—opened divinely their understanding to understand forgeries, or even, if you please, the rhapsodies of patriotic bards and pious compositions from old legends. Is not that singular? We have no truth as to Christ and what He did, if this be so; for what is ascribed to Him as risen and divinely operating on men's minds was never pressed in in respect of an imposture. The utmost foundation was an obscure legend, patched up into a false story, and He not only mistook, when risen, all about it, but opened divinely their understanding to understand it!

Further, the Lord Himself quotes, as His reply to Satan, the Scriptures with the emphatic decla-

ration: "It is written." And when even Satan sets about, consequently, to use Scripture, He does not leave this ground, but says, "it is written again." Impossible to give a more striking testimony to where truth and power were to be found to baffle the enemy. He was led of the Spirit to this solemn conflict, that He might bind the strong man, and deliver men, spoiling his goods. But His victory was founded on a forged imposture, something that Jeremiah's fanaticism and Huldah and the chief priest's deceit got up to try and work a reformation: but in vain. So they tell us. I suppose the devil must have been a prejudiced Jew too, to let himself be silenced in this way! He was more blind and easily cheated than we are led to suppose.

Poor John the Baptist too! He was misleading the people, for he quotes the Scriptures as testifying of himself. But that was all a mistake. How many am I to cite of them? In Matthew half the things which he recites are fulfilments of prophecies—some expressly so in purpose. But this was all a delusion.

When Jonas and Solomon are cited by the Lord, God knows what the cases are worth. When the Lord contrasted one of the ten commandments as the commandment of God with man's tradition—He made a gross mistake in condemning the scribes thus. It was no more such than the tradition. It may have been a more respectable tradition; but the ground which the Lord laid it on

was all a blunder. The very point He insists upon, and which He declares was of such weight as to make all their worship vain, was a grave mistake. It was not to be believed, that they were really spoken or given of God at all. The appeal to Esaias was a mistake, and His own judgment equally so.

The appeals of the Lord to the Scripture are, I need not say, incessant. "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected," etc. This was a prophecy just going to be fulfilled through their conduct towards Him. Was His appeal just?

When David in Spirit calls the Son of David his Lord, was it inspired or not? When the scribes and Pharisees, evil as they were, sat in Moses' seat, they were to be listened to. Why, if Moses had not authority as a Divine testimony? Their fathers had killed the prophets—but they were no prophets at all, if we are to listen to our new masters. When the Lord appeals to Daniel as speaking of the abomination of desolation, and presses on them to give intelligent attention, all this was a mistake, or a wilful deception. Of all prophets, Daniel, they tell us, was the most false and unreal.

I do not go any farther. I have cited sufficient of this class of texts to shew that the authority of the Old Testament (Moses in particular, but Psalms and Prophets too, is so interwoven with the whole text and substance of the New Testament,

that if it goes the New goes with it ; and the authority of Christ, His being really the Christ too (for then His testimony and judgment are not worthy of credit), and Christianity itself. And this applies to Him, quite as much when risen and operating by Divine power, and supposing that He opened man's understanding Divinely to understand forgeries and imposture. This may do for rationalists, but not for men in their senses. And I pray the reader to remark, that we have not the expression "the word of God," as to which men might cavil, but "*the Scriptures.*"

Moses and Elias appeared in glory. Can we believe that this was no sanction to the places they held in Old Testament Scriptures ?

The Lord declares that Moses gave the commandment as to divorce, but because of the hardness of their hearts. All a mistake ! Nor had He any need to blame or excuse him. David himself, He tells us, said, by the Holy Ghost, that Christ was to sit on God's right hand. Was this inspired, or what is Christ's authority here ? They might in the books of Moses have read of God's appearance in the bush, a proof of the resurrection—all a fable ! The Son of Man was to go as it was written. He could have prayed, and had twelve legions of angels ; but how, then, should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be ? It governs the Lord's own mind in the most solemn moment on which all hang, if Christianity is true, as in His early conflicts with Satan. When Jerusalem was

encompassed with armies, they were the days of vengeance, that all things that were written might be fulfilled. But these were only idle threats of zealous Jehovists : so they would have us believe. Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied and declared that the raising up Christ was as had been spoken by the mouth of God's holy prophets since the world began. Here we get three-fold delusion. In Luke, who says Zacharias spoke by the Holy Ghost ; in Zacharias, who declared the coming of Christ was fulfilling the prophets ; in the supposition that they were God's Holy prophets. This was so far from being the Holy Ghost, that it was Jewish prejudice ; and the prophets themselves were fanatics or guilty of pious frauds ! This is a comfortable basis for a religion and laying down your life for the truth of it. Christ quotes Elias and Eliseus according to this history ; but His quotations of them are constant, and as applied to Himself and owning the prophets, and the law as distinct as in a passage already referred to in another view : " These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Here the well-known division of the Hebrew Scriptures is given. The Lord (and remark He is risen here) puts His seal upon them, and treats them as to be fulfilled as having spoken of Himself. The risen Lord treats them as inspired, and as prophecies of Himself.

And then, as we saw before, He opened their understanding to understand them.

The Scripture, the Lord declares to us, cannot be broken. Here men would have Him speak *according to Jewish notions*. Did He come then to sanction them and to deceive men? In John they (the Jews) are always treated as reprobate; and this is the chapter where He is taking His sheep out of their fold. So the Evangelist treats Esaias as inspired in the judgment pronounced on Israel, and declares the glory seen in Isaiah vi. to be Christ's glory, and chapter liii. to apply to Christ. In the most solemn of all hours that Jesus passed on earth, Jesus, intelligently aware that all things written of Him as to His path here were accomplished, says, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, I thirst," and then, the last word being fulfilled, gives up His own Spirit. But all this, for our new teachers, is a mistake and a delusion! And what comes of Christianity and of Christ? That John should quote other Scriptures then as fulfilled is of small moment comparatively, save that it takes away all foundation as to any Divine authority in any Christian documents.

That the Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if Paul was right, commended in the account we have of it, was all a mistake! It was no way of judging it at all. They ought to have judged of Paul by their own minds, and the Scriptures themselves by the same measure. When Peter refers to Psalm xvi. as a proof of Christ's resurrection,

all such prophetic statement of facts or reliance on Scripture is unfounded. That Pentecost was a fulfilment of Joel—this is all a mistake. Pentecost was a comparatively modern invention; faith in prophecies—a delusion of the Jews. I refer to these cases to shew that the Lord and the apostles systematically, constantly, and as of Divine obligation, refer to the Scriptures as of authority, as inspired prophecy, and make Christianity a fulfilment of them. Its truth is inseparably involved in it; its character is a fulfilment of them, though there be more in it. Christ Himself is declared to be “a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. xv. 8). But all this is a mistake. That is, the promulgation of Christianity, as alone it was promulgated, was all error. Christ, Peter assured them (Acts iii.), was the prophet that Moses had spoken of. This was all a mistake—Moses never wrote it—it was a legend; and he never spoke of Christ at all. Peter was misleading the Jews when he called them the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with Abraham. All was delusion. It was no true history at all—not authentic; and prophets were patriotic, but deceived themselves, persuaded themselves, like any modern fanatic, that they were inspired.

But this is the only promulgation of Christianity which we have; and what comes of it and of Christ Himself, too, when it is the only testimony? So

the second Psalm is quoted. To Him give all the prophets witness. All a mistake! Stephen's speech is a tissue of legendary and unauthentic inventions; resisting the Holy Ghost—the Jews never were guilty of at all. They had judged justly in not believing Moses and the prophets. The mistake was in Christ and His apostles. Peter and the dying Stephen were only deluding themselves and others. When Philip opened his mouth and taught the docile eunuch out of Isaiah and other Scriptures, as prophecies about Jesus, this was a mistake. He was baptized, as a fiction. That the Spirit caught away Philip . . . who then is to believe? When Gentiles were admitted (Acts x.), Peter declares: "To Him give all the prophets witness." All a mistake! Paul, in Antioch, recites briefly the history of Israel given by Moses, Judges, etc., and declares God's promise there referred to Jesus the Son of David, declares that the Jews' conduct in putting the Lord to death was by the Jews not knowing the voice of the prophets, which yet they fulfilled, that they fulfilled all that was written of Him, and that now God had fulfilled to the Jews the promise made to the fathers, and quotes the Psalms as fulfilled in Christ's resurrection, and declares that this was accomplishing the sure mercies of David, of which the prophet had spoken. That is, he founds Christianity on the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures. It was God's fulfilment of what God had said. So in Thessalonica he reasons out of the Scrip-

tures to prove its truth. So Apollos mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ. In all his testimony Paul declares before Agrippa, that he was saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say. His appeal to Agrippa was: "Believest thou the prophets?" All this was delusion or deceit. When he came to Rome, he persuaded them concerning Jesus out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning to evening, and he declares that the Holy Ghost spoke by Esaias.

I have thus brought forward these repeated instances, as shewing that the whole structure of Christianity is based on the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, and on the truth that God's mind was intentionally expressed in them; and that Christ presented Himself, and the apostles presented Him, as the fulfilment on God's part of what God had said, that there might be a positive previous testimony. If this be not so, then the whole system falls. There was no such intention, no such prophecies, and no such fulfilment. Christ and His apostles mistook the whole matter—and what are they?

We shall find the Epistles proceed upon the same foundation. It would be endless to quote from the Epistles to the Romans, the Hebrews and others—all the Scriptures quoted as conclusive authority, as being God's statements; and hence leaving no room for argument. But some pas-

sages as to the place given to Scripture in the New Testament, and to those in the New Testament itself, it is of importance to quote definitely.

In Romans xvi. 26, the New Testament Scriptures are thus referred to: "But now is made manifest and by prophetic Scriptures [this is the literal and only literal translation], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." I say the New Testament—for the mystery is declared to have been kept secret since the world began, but to be made manifest now (ver. 25). There were things revealed before, as we have seen; but the doctrine of the Church, the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, the Gentiles being fellow-heirs and of the same body, was hid in God (Eph. iii.), and required a positive revelation, and a new one.

The revelation of Christ, Son of David, and other truths, God had promised afore by the prophets in the holy Scriptures. God Himself is the author of them, and Christ the purposed fulfilment of Scripture; but there was needed a new revelation for certain truths, and we have it in prophetic Scriptures.

"As it is written" (Rom. iii.) is sufficient with Paul to bring in the whole world guilty. The great privilege of Israel was, that the oracles of God were committed to them; they were "oracles of God" for the apostle. In Exodus xxxiii. "God spake to Moses," he tells us; and "the Scripture

saith to Pharaoh ;" so "the Scripture saith" suffices to set aside the whole Jewish system (Rom. x.). Let the reader only take a concordance and see the use of "it is written," say in the single chapter of Romans xv.; so in Galations iii., "the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen," thus giving the authority of God's own mind to Scripture : and that to Moses's statements of God's revelations to Abraham.

And note, as the foundation and character of Christianity itself, Scripture concludes all under sin (Gal. iii.). What authority has it here? The law was our school-master ;—nay, Christ submits to its prescribed curse—and it is not authentic !

Here is the apostle's account of his revelations. He knew the things by the Spirit ; he spake them by words which the Holy Ghost taught, and they were received by the grace of the Spirit. Now I recognize freely here that this applies to preaching. I quote it to shew the direct assertion of revelation by the Spirit to him, and that his communications were in the words taught by the Spirit. But he can add, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv).

The well-known passage in 2 Timothy iii. gives us the clearest instruction on this point. It has peculiar emphasis, because the Church had already separated from godliness and order, and perilous times were to come, and evil men and seducers

wax worse and worse. The saints needed a sure ground to go upon ; a resting-place for their hearts somewhere. Besides personal confidence in Paul, which we have only in his writing, the apostle continues, "and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All (every) Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Now here, when the resource of a soul in a dangerous and distracting time had to be furnished, what was it? The holy Scriptures, the holy writings. Forgeries are not holy, they are very unholy, whatever pious frauds may be in them ; and certainly they are not a resource in dangerous times. It is a knowledge of it as a child takes it, a known resource of authority over the mind ; next, it is not partial. All (or more exactly, 'every') Scripture is (*theopneustos*, literally, 'God breathed') given by inspiration of God.

It is said, it is the Old Testament here. Be it so. The part attacked as legends and frauds is inspired. But it is not so. It is an assertion of what the true character of all Scripture is ; whatever has a claim to that title (the prophetic Scriptures spoken of, Romans xvi.), they are given by inspiration of God, and sufficient to make the man of God perfect..

Now, remark here, that if I receive Christianity, I receive it as a revelation of Divinely-inspired teachers. But these teachers (whatever credit they assume to themselves, both Christ and the apostles) refer me to the holy Scriptures as Divine authority, and quote them as absolutely conclusive, an authority by which they would be judged, and sufficient proof of their words ; and refer to them as we have them, and in particular to Moses as the giver of the law.

The whole authority of Christianity as a revelation fails, if the inspiration and authority of Scripture fails. There is nothing else certain in it. It professes to give it as a security always, and especially where men failed in practically acting up to it.

Other passages confirm this. In the Hebrews we read : " God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." The Epistle to the Hebrews is wholly founded on the authenticity of the law as given of God, and that, as a Divine revelation, prospective of Christianity, a shadow only it is true, but purposely designed to be only such, and the tabernacle and its furniture to be given of God as a pattern of things in the heavens ; and, if there was then a veil and it was rent now, the Holy Ghost was signifying, it tells us, something by it. I repeat, the whole structure of the New Testament, and the religion it reveals, is interwoven into the inspiration of the Old, as of itself. Take

it away, and it is a false system : both of them are,

Note here, that the Epistle to the Hebrews never refers to the temple, which might be said to be then before them, but to the tabernacle, and the Mosaic account of it, and in chapter xi. quotes, I may say, the whole history of the Book of Genesis, and all the Pentateuch and Joshua, as the Lord used Deuteronomy against Satan.

And, remark, all the New Testament writers thus quote Scripture. All the prophets, Job, the Kings, the Pentateuch, Joshua are quoted by James as acknowledged ; nor for him can the Scriptures speak in vain.

Peter is equally clear. The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, and " testified beforehand." Because " it is written " is a sufficient authority—the natural appeal. Christianity is then for them to act on, because also it is contained in the Scripture, " Behold I lay in Zion," etc. Again, the prophecies of Isaiah are interwoven with his own statements. What Isaiah was prophesying, he was preaching ; both stand or fall together (1 Peter i. 23, 24 ; ii. 8). So as to Exodus and Hosea (chap. ii. 9, 10, 24) ; Genesis, the Psalms (in chap. iii.), and Isaiah. It is a complete working up of the Old Testament Scriptures. In his second epistle we have the glory of Christ as seen on the mount of transfiguration ; a confirmation of the Old Testament prophecies, which were a candle till the full light of the dawn of Christ's coming on earth should arise in their hearts.

But Scripture was no isolated individual announcement; every prophecy of *Scripture* was divine. Holy men—not patriotic bards, or concocters of pious frauds to act on the mind of a young king—had spoken. Prophecy did not come in old time by the will of man, exactly what is alleged as to it; but “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” He also calls the writings of Paul Scriptures; putting them on a level with the rest. John is very bold, and says that listening to the apostles is a test whether a man is of God or not. “*Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of error.*” He that knoweth God heareth them, he tells us. How am I to listen to him now? He and Jude both refer to the Pentateuch as of unquestioned and unquestionable authority. We know what the Revelation threatens to them who mutilate or add to it. Such are the witnesses which the Lord and His apostles give to the authority, authenticity, and inspiration of Scripture.

What is the Christian to do? Am I to believe, or throw up the authority of Christ and His apostles? What is the authority of Christianity itself if I do? Am I the disciple of impostors or deceived men, or of the blessed Son of God; and receiving Divine truth from His inspired servants?

“*And now, brethren, I commend you TO GOD, and to THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*” (Acts xx. 32.)