

givings and doubts? Had not his children, his branches, been lopped off? *Was* he not the scorn and by-word of his clan? And yet, *was it for his sins* that he had been stricken? *Was* it because he knew not God, or had put Him from his thoughts, that he had become the contempt of the tribes? *Has* posterity forgotten him, or do we remember him only with hatred and amazement? So far from being set forth as a warning against bold impiety, he is set before us as an example of suffering patience. So far from gloating over his ruin, we rejoice in his deliverance.

S. COX.

SOME RECENT CRITICAL READINGS IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

II.

A FEW of the readings recently adopted by modern critics in the first three Gospels have already passed under our notice. We now take two examples from the Gospel of St. John.

John v. 3, 4.—The rendering of the *Textus Receptus* after the word “withered” in Verse 3 is given by the Authorized Version in the following form, “Waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” Three out of the four editions of the New Testament to which we are at present referring omit these words altogether. They are indeed retained by Lachmann; but the evidence against them is so strong that, notwithstanding this exception, we may regard them as displaced by our chief modern critics from the text. Nor

is it difficult to imagine how they got into it. In Verse 7 we read in the reply of the impotent man to Jesus the undoubtedly genuine words, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." The narrative, then, did speak of a "troubling of the water," without saying anything of the cause. It was believed that an angel was the cause; and some well-intentioned scribe, feeling that there was an omission in the text, noted down his impression of the fact in all probability upon the margin of his manuscript. From the margin it crept into the text. It is, however, of little moment to us at present whether this explanation be well founded or not. We have to do with the fact that modern criticism rejects the last half of Verse 3 and the whole of Verse 4. It is not possible to be insensible to the gain of doing so. However firm our faith may be in special interpositions of the Almighty and in the miracles of the New Testament, it is extremely difficult to read the words of which we speak, as they stand before us in our Bibles, without feeling that our faith is subjected to a very trying strain. There is an apocryphal air about the story that not only makes the reader suspicious of it, but even threatens to cast doubts upon miracles as a whole. Thousands upon thousands have been compelled by their very reverence for Scripture to look about for some means of explaining away this angelic interposition. How was it possible to think of anything of that kind going continuously forward? And then, too, natural explanations were at hand. Volcanic agencies in that volcanic region, hot springs, intermittent springs, could not fail to suggest themselves. Yet the words were there, "An angel went down." We may well be thankful for the simple solution that the words have no

right to be in the text. This, however, is not all. The removal of the words in question has an important bearing upon other difficulties occasioned to many a mind by the narrative of which they form part. Men are troubled, not only by what is said of the angel in the Received Text, but also by what they read of the healing virtues of the water. It is certainly possible that we have mention made of a gaseous spring, and that such a spring might be more active in the days of Jesus than it is now. We have many notices in ancient writers implying that in the early Christian era the volcanic agencies of Syria, and probably therefore of Palestine, were in a state of greater activity than has been exhibited by them in later times. But there is no need to raise discussion upon the point. It is far from certain that the pool here spoken of had the healing virtue generally ascribed to it. The Evangelist, when we read the true text, does not say that it had. *He gives no indication that the cures expected by the sick around the pool were actually performed.* Nor is the number of the sick, or the length of time they may have lain there, inconsistent with the idea that the supposed virtues of the pool were a delusion. Some sick persons may have benefited by the waters. The story may have got abroad and have been exaggerated. This once done, the experience of all countries, even in modern times, shews us how eagerly the popular mind will magnify such influence, and how tenaciously it will cling to the impression of its miraculous character in spite of innumerable disappointments. That the impotent man *expected* to be restored, could he but reach the water, is clear. Yet no word of Jesus and no statement of the Evangelist forbids us to believe that, even

although he had reached it, he would have been little the better for the immersion

John ix. 4. — In the Authorized Version, founded upon the *Textus Receptus*, this verse runs, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day." But three of our modern editions, Lachmann retaining the common text, read "We" instead of "I," Tischendorf even going the length of substituting, though certainly erroneously, "us" for "me" after "sent." The modern, to say nothing of its being also the true, reading must thus be held to be, "We must work the works of him that sent me;" and the gain is at once perceptible. The disciples of Jesus had begun the inquiry about the blind man before them, but only as a matter of curiosity and speculation, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus immediately turns their thoughts to the practical; and, identifying Himself with them and them with Himself, He says in substance, Speculative inquiries of that kind concern us not. You and I have one great task committed to us demanding all our care. We must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. Does any one object that, as Jesus was about to perform a miracle, He could hardly identify his disciples with Himself in that. The answer is, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (St. John xiv. 12). Jesus does not work alone. On all the members of his body is laid the charge that they do, and continue to do, the very works which He was commissioned to do by the Father who sent Him. They and He are one, as He and the Father are one.

Before passing to the Epistles of the New Testament it may be well to take from the Acts of the Apostles an illustration of the point before us of a kind different from those supplied either by the Epistles or the Gospels. We take *Acts* xiii. 19, 20. The translation of the *Textus Receptus* as given in the Authorized Version is to the following effect, "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." The chronological difficulty presented by these words is of a very formidable kind, and it is rendered still more formidable by the fact that the statement contained in them is substantially confirmed by Josephus. The Jewish historian calculates the period from the *Exodus* to the building of the temple at five hundred and ninety-two years (*Antiq.* viii. 3, 1). Of these, we know that forty years have to be assigned to the wandering in the wilderness, twenty-five to the leadership of Joshua (*Antiq.* v. 1, 29), forty to the time between Samuel and the close of the reign of Saul (*Acts* xiii. 21), forty to the reign of David (1 Kings ii. 11), and four to the first years of Solomon (1 Kings vi. 1). Deducting these from the five hundred and ninety-two, we obtain four hundred and forty-three years as the period during which the Judges ruled, according to Josephus. St. Paul, indeed, says four hundred and fifty; but the difference, seven years, is slight, and may easily be taken as covered by the "about" in Verse 20 of our passage. Two statements of the kind so nearly agreeing appear to corroborate one another, and to attest the accuracy of

both. The whole period, again, according to St. Paul, between the *Exodus* and the building of the temple, will be five hundred and ninety-nine years.

But if so, there immediately arises an irreconcilable contradiction to the date given in 1 Kings vi. 1, where four hundred and eighty years is distinctly stated to be the time between the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt and the time when Solomon "began to build the house of the Lord:" there, five hundred and ninety-nine; here, four hundred and eighty years. The efforts of commentators to explain this difference have been extremely numerous, and all have failed. Alford justly pronounces them, in all the various forms which they have assumed, and which we have not space to enumerate, "arbitrary and forced" (New Testament *in loc.*). He himself, accordingly, follows Meyer, and probably the majority of recent scholars, in adopting the idea that St. Paul was guided by an extra-biblical computation; in other words, to use the language of Bunsen, one of the adherents of this view, that he "corrected Holy Writ by holy tradition."¹ Such a conclusion cannot be satisfactory, for it is in the highest degree improbable that St. Paul, addressing a Jewish audience, in whose eyes the date given in 1 Kings vi. 1 must, considering the two great epochs to which it referred, have been peculiarly sacred, should have forsaken the Bible record and substituted another, as he is supposed to do.

But there is a different reading of the passage, adopted by our four Editors, the effect of which is to transfer the words "about the space of four hundred and fifty years" from Verse 20 of the Authorized

¹ Bunsen's "Chronology of the Bible," with preface by Saycè, p. 26.

Version to Verse 19, so that we shall read: "He gave their land for an inheritance, about the space of four hundred and fifty years; and after these things he gave them judges, until Samuel the prophet." The whole meaning of the date is thus changed. It has now nothing to do with the time of the Judges. It has to do with the whole course of events the description of which begins at Verse 17, "The God of this people Israel," &c. It cannot possibly, as some recent commentators have supposed, have to do only with the clause immediately preceding it, because (1) the verb "gave for an inheritance" refers to a definite *point* of time, not to a period. (2) The "things" of "after these things" must *include* the four hundred and fifty years. We cannot, passing over that clause, go back to the simple fact "gave," &c., thus producing the absurd sense that the Israelites had possession of the land for four hundred and fifty years before they were under Judges. (3) The dative case of "the four hundred and fifty years" in the Greek is to be distinguished from the accusatives of Verses 18 and 21. The latter denote continuance of time, the run of the years. The former takes us back to a point at the beginning of the run, and encloses the whole space. That point here can only be fixed at the first of the successive clauses, at "the God of this people," &c., in Verse 17. Our four hundred and fifty years then embrace a period *altogether previous* to that of the Judges, and extending from the date implied in "the choosing out of the fathers" to the division of the promised land.¹

¹ The solution given above was long ago substantially, although in an inadmissible way, suggested, as Meyer tells us (*in loc.*), by Calovius, Mill, and others. They supplied *γεγόμενα* after *πεντήκοντα* in Verse 20, rendering, "And after these things, which took place in four hundred and fifty years." The "things" thus

The chronological difficulty has disappeared, and the only remaining question is, Whether general Old Testament chronology warrants the conclusion that the new period before us was what it is thus stated by the Apostle to have been. Before answering, we must fix the beginning of the period. When did God "choose out the fathers"? The answer is, At the first fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant, at the birth of Isaac. Alford indeed asks, "Why the birth of Isaac?" We reply, Because Isaac was the first of the line of the promised seed, the first of the "chosen seed" spoken of, a choosing out which does not refer to separation from a place, as if the call of Abraham out of Haran were meant, but to separation from nations or from men—a separation, therefore, which was first accomplished in Isaac. It was in Isaac that the promised line of descent began which was to terminate in Jesus; and it is the clear object of St. Paul to trace *this* line from its beginning to its close in the discourse before us. If further proof of this were wanted we have it in Verse 26, where, having completed his historical statement, the Apostle begins a new part of his address by calling his hearers "sons of the race of Abraham;" not "sons of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7; comp. Rom. iv. 12; James ii. 21), but sons of that race which, though it began *from* Abraham, really began *in* Isaac, the child of promise¹ The period before us, thus beginning with

spoken of then begin at Verse 17. To the suggestion as a whole, Alford justly objects, "The words will not bear this construction." The view, though true in itself, can be reached only by the amended reading.

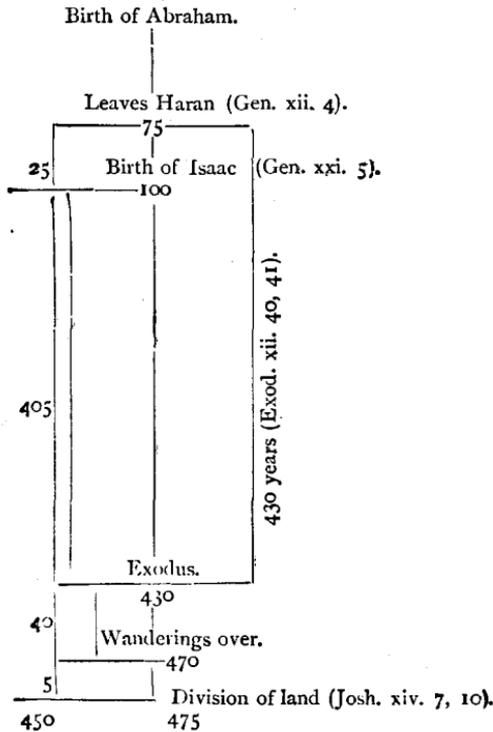
¹ It may be worth while to notice the emphasis lent to the address, "sons of the race of Abraham," by the fact that the Apostle begins each of the three parts into which his discourse divides itself with a different address. At Verse 16, "Men of Israel;" at Verse 26, "Men and brethren, sons of the race of Abraham;" at Verse 38, "Men and brethren."

the birth of Isaac, extends downwards to the division of the land. In estimating the length of this period we shall follow purely Biblical *data*, and shall make ourselves independent of the exact dates of the different chronological systems. From Exodus xii. 40, 41, then, we learn that from the time of Abraham's leaving Haran to the *Exodus* four hundred and thirty years elapsed. But Abraham left Haran at the age of seventy-five (Gen. xii. 4), and Isaac was born when the patriarch was one hundred (Gen. xxi. 5; Rom. iv. 19). Deducting therefore the difference between these two numbers, that is, twenty-five from four hundred and thirty years, we have four hundred and five years from the birth of Isaac to the *Exodus*. Add forty years for the wanderings in the wilderness, and we have four hundred and forty-five. But a comparison of Joshua xiv. 10 with xiv. 7, and of both with Chapter xiii. of that book, shews us that the division of the land took place five years after the wanderings closed; so that, again adding five, we have from the birth of Isaac to the dividing of the land four hundred and fifty years, *the precise period mentioned by St. Paul* in his address. So far from the date in this passage being in contradiction to the Old Testament, it is in most striking harmony with it. (See foot-note on page 203.) So far from St. Paul's following an extra-biblical tradition in the face of the Mosaic record, he depends upon that record in the strictest manner for the figures that he employs.

Before closing our remarks upon this passage, it may be well to say a word or two on its general structure, more especially as the view taken above of the point of time from which the four hundred and fifty years are

to be reckoned will be thereby confirmed. It is the object of St. Paul, then, in the first section of his discourse, to trace the historical preparation for the coming of Jesus from the birth of Isaac, who is the first seed of Abraham, downwards to Him who is the true seed of the patriarch, Christ. In doing this he divides the whole period into two parts, the first extending from the birth of Isaac to the division of the promised land, the second to Jesus Himself. The two periods terminate in similar events, the second of the two being the fulfilment of the first. It is on this account that St. Paul uses the remarkable expression in Verse 24, of which the

It may help our statement a little if we present in the form of a diagram what has been stated above in the text.



Authorized Version conveys a most inadequate idea, "When John had first preached *before the face of his entering in;*" and that the word "Saviour," the Greek for Joshua or Jesus, is prefixed to the name "Jesus." Jesus Himself is the true Joshua, "entering" first, and giving his people an "entrance" into their inheritance, as Joshua of old had given to the people whom he led an entrance into Canaan. On this account also he probably speaks of the baptizing of John, that baptism corresponding to the passage of Israel through the river Jordan. Such is the general idea, but each of the two sections is further, as shewn by the successive aorists, divided into five parts corresponding to one another.

(1) "Chose out our fathers" (Verse 17), corresponding to "Gave judges" (Verse 20); (2) "Exalted the people" (Verse 17), corresponding to "Asked a king" (Verse 21); 3) "Brought he them out" (Verse 17), corresponding to "Gave them Saul" (Verse 21); (4) "Bare he them as a nursing father" (Verse 18), corresponding to "Raised up David to be their king" (Verse 22); (5) "Gave their land for an inheritance" (Verse 19), corresponding to "Brought unto Israel a Saviour Jesus" (Verse 23); the whole history being thus comprised in ten parts, after the same manner as that in which Stephen had adduced ten successive stages of God's dealings with Abraham in Acts vii. 2-8.¹

From the Acts of the Apostles we turn to the Epistles of the New Testament; and, referring our readers to Canon Lightfoot's book on "The Revision

¹ Comp. Baumgarten's "Apostolic History," Clark's Translation, vol. i. p. 147. It may be doubted if the ten points are given by Baumgarten with perfect correctness; but, even if a slight change be made, the number ten remains. Comp. also p. 415.

of the New Testament" for some extremely interesting examples of readings recently adopted in the Epistles of St. Paul, we turn in the short remaining space at our command to one or two from later books.

Hebrews iv. 2.—The Authorized Version gives this text in the words, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." The last clause is a translation of the *Textus Receptus*, the participle "mixed" being in the nominative case, and agreeing with "the word" immediately preceding. But there is another reading of the participle which makes it an accusative instead of a nominative, and this reading is adopted in three of the editions of the New Testament now before us, Tischendorf alone retaining the nominative. The accusative participle, of course, agrees with "them," it being then said that these had not profited by the word, "not having been mingled by faith with those who heard it." Hence, however, an almost insuperable difficulty in the passage; for "they" who did not profit by the word are the whole congregation of Israel, except two men, Caleb and Joshua. Those who "heard" in faith are these two; and it seems so much out of the question to speak of a multitude of persons as "mingled with" two, that Alford, who follows the evidence and reads the accusative, remarks, "The passage is almost a *locus desperatus*" (*in loc.*). His own explanation, indeed, leaves it in full possession of this character. He takes "those who heard it," not in a historical, but in a categorical sense, as descriptive not of any particular persons, but of a class of hearers, those who listen to the word in a becoming spirit; and the

sacred writer is understood to say that those who fell in the wilderness were not profited by the word, because they were not one in faith with true hearers of it, did not correspond in their method of receiving it with faithful hearers whom it does profit. "I fairly own," he adds, "that this interpretation *does not satisfy* me; but it seems the only escape from violation either of the rules of criticism or of those of grammar, and therefore I am constrained to accept it until some better be suggested." Not satisfying him, it will hardly satisfy others. It is indeed wholly impossible to take "those that heard" in the categorical sense proposed. The text and the context alike, the grammar and the thought, require that we shall understand it historically, and refer it to Caleb and Joshua.

Yet even while we do so, the sense is so far from "desperate," that it is in a high degree interesting and striking. At the same time it illustrates in a remarkable manner that Pauline spirit of which there are so many traces in the Epistle to the Hebrews. What we have to account for is, that the sacred writer should speak as he does when they who *did not* listen of old to the word were a multitude, those who *did*, only two? How could the former be described as "not mingled with" the latter? Let us look back at Chapter iii. Verse 16, interpreted by most modern commentators as a question, "For who, having heard, did provoke? Was it not all who came out from Egypt by means of Moses?" Surely that interpretation is not correct. It is, at all events, contradicted by the fact; and, even if it were confirmed by the fact, it has no immediate bearing on the argument, which involves in it the thought of certain persons saved quite as much as of certain lost.

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We take the words, therefore, in their simple and natural meaning, "For some, having heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out from Egypt by means of Moses." Why "some"? when we know that the remark applies to nearly all, to all except Caleb and Joshua. The answer is that, while equally answering the purpose of the argument, it *softens the charge and is less calculated to offend*. So far as is consistent with the end that he has in view, the writer of the Epistle would conciliate the proud people to whom he speaks; and instead of saying that the whole congregation of their fathers provoked God in the wilderness, and that only a few were saved, he says "*some* provoked," leaving it to be inferred that *some* were saved. So also, then, in the passage before us, the "them that heard it" are the same that had been permitted to enter the promised land; the "them not having been mingled by faith" are the same that refused to listen; and when there are thus before our eyes, not opened to the full facts of the case, "some" on both sides, there can be no impropriety in saying that the one "some" was not mingled with the other. Thus viewed, the true text of the verse we are considering bears out all that we asserted of it. It is full of power and beauty. It illustrates also that gentle courteousness of the Apostle Paul, whether we believe the words to be immediately his or not, which led him so often to introduce qualifying expressions into his charges, in order that he might thus win rather than repel, and might look at offences from the most favourable, rather than from the most unfavourable, point of view. Let us put ourselves into the position of the Hebrews written to. In a high degree jealous, haughty, sensitive as to the glory of our past, we yet

need to have its solemn and humbling lessons brought home to us. The sacred writer addresses us as he does. As we read, we cherish for the moment the pleasing delusion that our fathers who did not fall in the wilderness were not merely the nobler, but it may be even the larger, part of the congregation that came out of Egypt, and we think with increased condemnation of those who would not hear in a similar faith. The tact of our teacher spares our feelings, and yet the sad example of so many of our fathers makes us "fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into God's rest, any of us should seem to come short of it" (Chap. iv. 1).

1 *Peter* iii. 15. — In Authorized Version, after the *Textus Receptus*, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts;" but our four editions adopt another reading, the effect of which is to make the rendering, "But sanctify in your hearts the Christ as Lord." As to the propriety of adopting this reading there can be no doubt, nor can there be any as to its importance when adopted. The words are a direct application to the Christ of Isaiah viii. 12, 13, "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear." Thus language applied by the prophet to the Lord of hosts is here applied to the Redeemer. The dogmatic importance of the text is unquestionable.

1 *John* iii. 1. — In the *Textus Receptus*, as translated in the Authorized Version, we read, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;" after which the sacred writer goes on, "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." But between these two sentences the words *καὶ ἔσμεν* ("and

we are," or, "and *such* we are") are inserted by our Editors. There can be no doubt as to the propriety of the insertion, and just as little as to the interest and beauty of the reading. High as is the privilege of being "called" sons of God, the beloved disciple cannot rest in that, and he passes on to the thought that he and his fellow-disciples "are" what they are called. With this he then immediately connects the inference that the world which knew not the Son of God does not know us who are sons of God in Him. Because, in short, we are one with Jesus, we must share his fate. Of the true followers of the Redeemer it may be said to the world as it was said of their great Master, "There stand those among you whom ye know not" (John i. 26). The words find also a striking parallel in those of Jesus Himself to his disciples at the foot-washing, "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am" (*εἰμὶ γάρ*—John xiii. 13). It may be well to observe that the verb "call" is represented in this passage by a different verb from that in the text before us, that in the Gospel expressing the more outward form of address, "Ye address me as Master and Lord;" that in the Epistle expressing a calling in which it is known by him who calls that there is an inward reality corresponding to the outward name. (Comp., for this use of *καλεῖν*, John i. 43; Rev. xi. 8; xii. 9; xvi. 16; xix. 11, 13). The name "sons of God" given us in the Epistle is bestowed, not by the world, but by the Father. The Father calls us "sons of God." Still further, the style of thought in the words before us is interesting when compared with examples of a similar style in the Apocalypse: "Calling themselves apostles, and they are not" (not as Autho-

rized Version, "and are not," Chap. ii. 2); "Which say that themselves are Jews, and they are not" (not as in Authorized Version "and are not," Chap. ii. 9).

1 *John* v. 18.—In this Verse, after the first clause, running in the Authorized Version, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not," we read, in correct translation from the *Textus Receptus*, "But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." But there is a more recent reading adopted by three out of our four editions, Lachmann failing us here, which substitutes *αὐτόν* for *ἑαυτόν*, "him" for "himself;" so that the true rendering becomes, "But he that was begotten of God keepeth him." "He that was begotten of God" refers then, not to the believer, but to Jesus, the Son Himself, the eternally begotten of the Father. The believer is described in the first clause of the Verse, which ought to be translated, "Every one that hath been begotten of God" (comp. this sense of the same participle in Chap. ii. 29; iii. 9; iv. 7; v. 1); the Son is described in the second clause as "he that was begotten;" and the statement of the Verse is not that the former keepeth himself, a statement which has afforded no small trouble to orthodox expositors, but that the Son "keepeth him." How striking is the parallel thus presented to us to the words of the high-priestly prayer of Jesus, which, as we see also from Verses 16, 17 of this Chapter, was at the moment so much in the mind of the Apostle. "While I was with them I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me" (*John* xvii. 12). Nay, more: is there not a special encouragement conveyed to the followers of Christ by the new reading which was wanting with

the old? Even if we substitute "begotten" for "born," so inexplicably inserted by the Authorized Version in the first clause, while it leaves "begotten" in the second, it is a poor rendering that we obtain. "We know that whosoever hath been begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is (was) begotten of God keepeth himself, and that (the) wicked one toucheth him not." We keep ourselves! It is little that we can do. But such is not the sense. It is that the eternally-begotten Son, identified with us by the fact that as He "was begotten" so we "have been begotten," keepeth us. To Him the prince of this world came and had nothing in Him; but with Him we are one, secure in his security, victorious in his victory. He makes us partakers of his own nature, bids us occupy his own position, conveys to us a full participation in his own privileges. We do not as yet realize it wholly, but we dare not faint by the way; for "we know that every one that hath been begotten of God sinneth not, but he that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the wicked one toucheth him not."

The examples now given must suffice. It will be obvious that they might have been very largely extended, but the limits within which a paper such as the present must be confined forbid any attempt to increase their number. The reader will hardly fail to have noticed that those selected have been of very different kinds, some relating to historical, others to dogmatical, questions; some tending to remove difficulties hitherto acknowledged to be insuperable, others only adding point to the narrative or force to the argument of the sacred writer. The effect ought to be to dispel from the minds of candid inquirers the prejudices with which

the introduction of these later readings is apt to be regarded by not a few whose reverence for Scripture is worthy of the highest respect and admiration. It cannot be denied that men are apt to approach this subject with hasty prepossessions and foregone conclusions. We have heard from a friend, present at the time, a story of one of the most eminent and pious of the Scottish clergy of a past generation, illustrating what we say. A dispute had arisen in a company in which he was as to whether or not a certain text ought to be considered an interpolation. After much argument, an appeal was made to the minister of whom we speak, when he replied with great solemnity, "I am sorry for him who does not tremble at the Word." It had strangely escaped his notice that the whole question was whether the disputed text was to be regarded as a part of the Word or not. A similar prejudice still exists in the minds of many against the results of recent criticism, and it ought to be highly satisfactory to them to see that not only is the danger apprehended by them imaginary, but that the force and beauty of the Word which they value are brought out into a clearer light than before. The effect of this ought to be to win assent to readings which they might at first have shrunk from. The natural and true course of feeling upon this point has been so well expressed by Dr. Vaughan, that we shall quote his words, taking them however, not directly from the book in which they are found, but from Dr. Scrivener's last edition of his "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament," and this because Dr. Scrivener's quotation shews that he, too, acknowledges their truth. "Yet, while refusing without hesitation the claim of the *monstra* which

follow to be regarded as a part of the sacred text, we are by no means insensible to the fact impressed upon us by the Master of the Temple, that there are readings (*e.g.*, Mark vii. 19; 1 John v. 18) which conciliate favour the more we think over them: it is the special privilege of truth always to grow upon candid minds. We subjoin his persuasive words: 'It is deeply interesting to take note of the process of thought and feeling which attends in one's own mind the presentation of some unfamiliar reading. At first sight the suggestion is repelled as unintelligible, startling, almost shocking. By degrees light dawns upon it—it finds its plea and its palliation. At last, in many instances, it is accepted as adding force and beauty to the context, and a conviction gradually forms itself that thus and not otherwise was it written'" (Vaughan, "Epistle to the Romans," Preface to the third edition, p. xxi.).¹ The process of thought thus described and commended is both ingenuous and true, and we are persuaded that it is that through which all will pass who calmly weigh the claims of the text adopted by our most recent Editors of the New Testament. In a multitude of instances they will be unable to resist the conviction that the gain is, in one direction or another, of great importance, and they will accept, after reflection, what they at first rejected.

But that will not be all. There will be a further step in their reasoning not less important. They will see that the readings now admitted by them were not adopted because they pleased those who put them into the text, but upon *evidence*; and they will draw the conclusion that the evidence which led to a decision

¹ Scrivener's "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament," 471, note.

acceptable in some cases must also be bowed to in other cases, although the beneficial effect may not be so immediately perceptible. It would never do for each student of Scripture to select readings according to his own taste or fancy, to give way to subjective impressions, or to yield too much to what is called internal evidence, although it is often nothing more than the verdict of individual education, habit, or caprice. The question in each case, it will be seen, is one of difficulty and delicacy, not unfrequently of very great difficulty and very great delicacy; and it will be acknowledged that it would be in the highest degree unjust to allow mere liking for one reading rather than another to overbear the legitimate results of varied processes of proof.

If it be said that the interests at stake are momentous, and that doctrines long held in the Church of Christ may be endangered by some of these newer readings, we might reply that any such impression is false. There is not the least fear of that result. Any changes of doctrine, should such be in store for us, will come, not from changes in the text, but from changed methods of reasoning on the text. This, however, is hardly the proper method of reply. It would be more just to say, that were changes of doctrine to be the certain result of readings demonstrated to be correct, there is all the more need that these readings should be introduced without a moment's delay. By what right does any man allow that to stand in the Bible of whose correctness he is not satisfied, and all the more if it be of a character to affect doctrinal results? There is but one course open to us: first, that of patient and reverent inquiry; next, that of faithful-

ness to God, to what we believe to be truth, and to ourselves. Yet it is pleasing to think that the course of truth will prove also the wisest and best. Of the great advantages that will be secured upon the whole, there cannot be a doubt. By seeking first the kingdom of God it will be won, and much also will be added to us.

One brief remark more, and we have done. Defenders of more recently adopted readings ought not to plead, by way of palliation, that they are few and unimportant. Were they so, we might be asked with some show of reason, Why disturb men's minds about them? But they are both many and important. They may not change doctrines received in the Church, but there is a vast deal besides that of consequence; and the more these readings are studied, the more varied and far-reaching will *be seen to be their influence*. The one consideration to be ever before us is, that they, as a part of Holy Writ, are the cause of God; and that it is our duty to be on God's side, be the consequences to human calculation what they may. W. MILLIGAN.

*THE LAWS OF THE KINGDOM AND THE
INVITATION OF THE KING.*

ST. MATTHEW xi. 25-30.

I.—THE FIRST LAW.

THIS passage has been discussed so recently in the pages of THE EXPOSITOR, and in so full and able a manner by Dr. Bruce, that it may seem scarcely necessary to go over the ground again. Yet Scripture has many sides, and it is possible that every earnest stu-