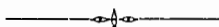


as to the quality of any water which must be used for drinking, it should always be boiled first as an additional safeguard. To pass from the matter of drinking-water into the great temperance question would be an easy transition, but discussion of that subject would be out of place on the present occasion. I do, however, very strongly urge on the clergy who profess to be temperance reformers that their duty is not done if they do no more than urge the abolition of beer and the closing of public-houses. They must lend themselves to the provision of substitutes for both—tea, coffee, aerated drinks, etc., in the one case, and coffee palaces, taverns, reading-rooms and clubs in the other case.

The foregoing ideas will, I hope, serve the useful purpose of suggesting to some of the clergy, and to some Church workers, that in many ways there is work of a useful kind to be done by them which perhaps may never have occurred to them.

G. F. CHAMBERS.



ART. III.—THE USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW.

THE use of the Old Testament in the New is a subject of special importance at a time when the treatment of the Old Testament is such as to undermine all belief, not merely in its function as part of the Divine oracles, but in its general trustworthiness and veracity. I take it for granted that the authority of the *New Testament* is accepted, that the words of our Lord are final, and that the expressed opinions of the evangelists and apostles are entitled to, at least, as much respect and deference as the opinions and conjectures of ourselves or other people. But I wish to investigate the conditions of the use these writers make of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and to consider the reasonable inferences we may draw therefrom. We will first examine the way in which the evangelists use the Old Testament, then the way in which it is used in the Epistles, and, lastly, the way in which Christ uses it.

I. In the first two chapters of St. Matthew¹ there are four quotations: three of them are by the prophet himself, one is referred to the chief priests and scribes. This latter is the more valuable, as witnessing to the current belief of the day as it was held by the authorized teachers of the people. They were able to give a distinct answer to Herod's question as to

¹ i. 23 ; ii. 6, 15, 18.

where the Christ should be born. They were able to tell from prophecy that it would be at Bethlehem. This is the more important, because it shows as a matter of history how prophecy was then regarded. It was a storehouse of predictive statement, which could be appealed to for information about the future. We are not called upon to criticise this opinion, but to note this fact. The prophecy referred to was seven hundred years old. It was implicitly trusted, and its information was believed to be not vague, but specific. Moreover, it had been *preserved* for seven centuries, through all the national calamities and vicissitudes, was in the custody of the priests, though the work of a prophet, was well known and regarded as authoritative.

St. Matthew himself quotes the prophets a dozen times, almost always with the formula, "that it might be fulfilled,"¹ "then was fulfilled," or the like. And it is to be observed that on one occasion he has apparently ascribed to Jeremiah what belongs to Zechariah; and on another² has rather given the sense of several prophecies than actually quoted any one.

In St. Mark there are but two places in which he refers to the Scriptures on his own account. These are in the opening of his Gospel, when he says, "as it is written in the prophets," referring³ to Mal. iii. and Isa. xl.; and in chap. xv. 22, when he says distinctly, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors." The other references to the Old Testament in his Gospel will come more fitly under our notice when we examine the way in which our Lord made use of the Old Testament Scriptures.

In St. Luke there are but three instances in which he appeals to the Old Testament on his own account. These are, chap. ii. 23, 24: "As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;" "And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons;" and in chap. iii. 4, with reference to John the Baptist, "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice," etc. Here, then, St. Luke acknowledges in this case the authority of the prophets, and regards the mission of John as fulfilling them, while in the other he bears witness to the observance of the law in Exodus and Leviticus at the time of the birth of Christ.

It may be convenient to examine here his custom in his other treatise of the Acts. In this book the references to Scripture, though numerous, are mainly to be found in the speeches of Peter, James, Stephen, and Paul. On two occasions

¹ i. 22.² ii. 23.³ i. 2.

only can we detect the personal testimony of the writer—namely, in the narrative of Philip and the eunuch, and even here it is that of Philip rather than St. Luke, and the occasion in which he tells us that the Bereans “were more noble,” or better born, “than those in Thessalonica, in that . . . they searched the Scriptures” to test the witness of Paul, and observes that it was owing to this scrutiny that many of them “believed.”

When we turn to St. John, though there are but seven or eight passages in his Gospel in which he speaks in his own person, it is interesting to find that he reverts to the formula of St. Matthew, “That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes,” etc.; and adds the significant words, “These things said Esaias when he saw His glory, and spake of Him.”¹ And, again, in his narrative of the crucifixion, he says that the soldiers cast lots for Christ’s raiment, “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted,”² etc.; “And after this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst;”³ and finally, “These things were done that the Scriptures should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken; and, again, another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”⁴ In the two other passages that he quotes he simply says, “His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up;”⁵ “And Jesus, when He had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not,”⁶ etc.

From this summary of the evidence we are able to form a just estimate of the way in which the evangelists regarded Scripture. St. Matthew is the most emphatic, and St. John approximates to him. The other two, though they do not use quite the same formula, evidently regard the Scriptures as something special and peculiar, possessed of a meaning independent of any reference to circumstances of the time, and only receiving the fulness of that meaning in the events which they recorded.

And so far as the evangelists were warranted in this use of the Scriptures, they can only be justified on one of two principles—either the writers of these Scriptures were specially illuminated to foresee and to foretell the events to which their words are referred, or else they spoke words which, though

¹ xii. 38-41.

⁴ xix. 36, 37.

² xix. 24.

⁵ ii. 17.

³ xix. 28.

⁶ xii. 14, 15.

originally referring to something else, were overruled, and intended by the Holy Spirit to have a fuller and more appropriate reference to things far future. In this case, the appropriateness would be due to the providence of God rather than to any special superhuman endowment of the writers themselves, except in so far as they were the selected agents to whose words this appropriateness would attach. Thus their illumination, we may perhaps say, was dynamic rather than mechanical.

II. In St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans there are some fifty or sixty direct quotations from the Old Testament, introduced for the most part with some such formula as "it is written," or the like. What is more especially striking here is that it is evident that the Christian converts at Rome were as familiar with the Old Testament as we ourselves are, and, it is to be feared in many cases, much more so. But this is surely very remarkable, that Greeks living at Rome fifteen centuries before the invention of printing, which has brought every production of the mind of man within the reach of everyone, should be so familiar with the Septuagint version of the Scriptures, which existed only in MS., as to be able to recognise the Apostle's quotations and allusions, and to follow the reasoning he based upon them. It is more than doubtful if a modern writer in a document of equal bulk with the Epistle to the Romans were to make fifty quotations from Milton or Shakespeare whether they would at once be recognised by those whom he addressed. And yet it is obvious that the Roman Christians were perfectly familiar with the history of Abraham and the writings of the prophets, though they were only to be found in books which can merely have come to them secondhand, as it were, through the despised channel of the Jewish nation, and existing only in MS. This fact alone is sufficient to show the importance already acquired by these writings; and that the standard of education must have been, comparatively speaking, quite as high as, and not improbably higher, than it is among ourselves.

We turn to the first Epistle to Corinth, and in the very first chapter we find one quotation from Isaiah and another from Jeremiah, introduced respectively with the formula, "for it is written," "as it is written,"¹ showing that his readers must have been familiar with each writer, and must have conceded to both of them an authority and a specific value which they would not have attributed to Æschylus or Sophocles. The Apostle's use of the Old Testament in this Epistle extends to sixteen other instances, and contains quotations from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, and Hosea. It is

¹ i. 19, 31.

clear that his mind was saturated with the Old Testament Scriptures, and that his readers also were hardly less familiar with them.

In the rest of his Epistles we have between twenty and thirty direct quotations, besides many possible allusions.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the quotations are from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, 2 Samuel, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Haggai, with, of course, frequent reference to Leviticus; and here we have a special instance of the way in which the writer regarded the Old Testament. He did not consider the promises and assurances of the Old Testament merely in their historical light, but believed them to be legitimately of individual application. Thus, for instance, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou," xii. 5, etc. This is treated as addressed not to an imaginary son, but to each of those Hebrew Christians who were in danger of giving up their faith in Christ. And, again, xiii. 5, "Be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper," etc. Now, this was spoken historically to Joshua, and it was spoken by God and not the historian; but the writer regards it in the light of a veritable Divine message or revelation, addressed indeed in the first instance to Joshua, but intended to be appropriated by everyone who had the faith to do so.

There are here involved, therefore, two most important principles—first, the principle that there is a veritable revelation in the Old Testament records, an actual communication from God to man; and, secondly, that this communication, though historically conveyed in a particular instance, was so conveyed and recorded that it might be trusted and relied upon in the case of all those who, feeling the want of it, were disposed to accept it as made to themselves. But if this principle holds good of Scripture at all, it holds good of it as a whole, and thus throws light not only on the use intended to be made of the Old Testament, but by parity of reasoning, and yet more emphatically, on the statements and promises of the New Testament. If there is indeed a true Word of God, that Word, it follows of necessity, must be spoken by God to all His children, and in every case the acceptance of the Word must be conditioned only by the faith which apprehends it. To believe in the existence of such a Word of itself demands faith, and to believe in its personal fitness, and in the right of individual application, calls yet further for the putting forth of individual personal faith, to which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews so plainly and urgently exhorts.

The quotations from the Old Testament in the Catholic Epistles are comparatively few—some ten or a dozen. I shall remark only upon one—namely, that in 1 Pet. ii. 6. The Apostle, mindful, no doubt, of his own name received from Christ, has been speaking of *Him* as “a living stone, chosen of God and precious,” and his spontaneous use of that word “precious”—“Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou Me?*”—reminds him of the prophet Isaiah's words, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone elect, precious”; and so, because this is “contained in the Scripture,” he returns to it, “Unto you, therefore, which believe He is *precious*,” or an *honour*, borrowing the noun suggested by the prophet's adjective, delighted, as it were, to find that the prophet has before used the same expression, and therefore the more earnestly commending it to his readers. This gives us, then, the Apostolic authority for emphasizing the *words* of Scripture. Indeed, it stands to reason that if we have a *written* revelation, that revelation cannot be independent of the language in which it is couched; and unless the language chosen is chosen at haphazard, after a manner that would do discredit to any earthly writer, it follows that we may with advantage “read, mark, and inwardly digest” the actual words of the Divine message, and trust them as being selected for a purpose, the discovery of which will, it may reasonably be supposed, reward the diligent searcher.

III. We must now turn to inquire into the use made of the Old Testament by our Lord. And first and foremost comes the occasion of His temptation in the wilderness; and here the sole weapon He used in His conflict with the evil one was the thrice-repeated appeal to Scripture, “It is written.” The attempt has been made to lessen the force of this appeal by remarking that it leaves untouched the question of authorship, as though it were a matter of absolute indifference whose the words were, and we were, therefore, at liberty to assign them to Moses or to an unknown and unauthorized writer seven centuries later. But unless there is any evidence that our Lord used the words “it is written” in the vague sense of “a certain writer has said,” merely meaning that it had been said by somebody, it mattered not who, it is impossible to do so with any justice. It is unquestionable that our Lord fell back upon Scripture as upon an authority by which He acknowledged Himself bound, and which He knew His adversary could not dispute. For this reason, therefore, to say “It is written” was to appeal to what they both regarded as the Word of God; but in order that it should be the Word of God it must have been authenticated as that Word, and received as such, and if not so authenticated even

the use of it by Christ Himself would not have given it any such authentication. Now, if the words in question, instead of having the authority of Moses as the law of God, were merely ideally ascribed to Him by some obscure and unknown individual in the time of Josiah, it is absolutely and manifestly impossible that they can have had the kind of authentication which our Lord assumed, and the authority which He implicitly ascribed to them. That He should have appealed to them at such a time does not in any way give them this authority, but shows that in His opinion they *possessed* it. Of course, it is possible to slur over the incidents and the record of the temptation, and to abolish, if not the person of the adversary, at all events the exceptional and superhuman character of the conflict, and to relegate the entire episode to the region of the purely subjective; but if it is regarded as in any sense the record of a really historical and objective, and not an imaginary transaction, then we may surely suppose that the adversary would not have been slow to avail himself of the substantial advantage it would have given him to be able to rebut the Lord's quotation with the rejoinder that the narrative was fictitious and the words spurious; but perhaps the devil in those days was not so acute and learned as modern criticism has enabled him to become.

The Lord's reference to the law in the sermon on the mount is manifestly not intended as in any sense a disparagement of that law, but rather as a re-enactment of it with circumstances of greater stringency, and in order to supersede an imperfect law with one more spiritual and perfect. There are some thirty passages in St. Matthew's Gospel and fifteen in St. Mark's in which our Lord refers to Scripture. It is impossible to examine them all, but two or three are worthy of special attention. For instance, he says of John the Baptist: "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face who shall prepare Thy way before Thee."¹ Now, here we have to note that His interpretation is authoritative; He does not hesitate in giving it; He tells us distinctly that it was John the Baptist, and no one else, of whom the prophet Malachi wrote four centuries before. This is too often forgotten or overlooked, for criticism can discover no one else as the subject of the prophecy but John the Baptist, unless it be the prophet himself, which is in the last degree improbable. But Christ tells us it was John. How, then, does this bear upon what Driver calls "the analogy of prophecy"? Malachi lived four hundred years before Christ.

¹ xi. 10.

He spoke distinctly, our Lord tells us, of John the Baptist. Here, then, surely is a crucial instance for determining the analogy of prophecy. Either the prophet's words had a meaning or they had none. If they had no meaning, we need not trouble ourselves to find out what it was; but if they had a meaning, then by no critical sleight of hand or exegetical manipulation can they be made *not* to show that a prophecy was given which entirely overlooked the immediate present, as also the four intervening centuries, and, like Noah's dove, which found no rest for the sole of her foot, was utterly without significance till it lighted on John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. Here is verily a case by which we can partly decide what the analogy of prophecy really is. And this becomes the more apparent when taken in connection with Malachi's concluding promise to send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the day of the Lord.

But further, it is to be observed that our Lord puts Himself in the place of the speaker in the prophecy, and announces Himself as the person whose way is to be prepared, though in the prophecy that way is the way of God. The natural inference, therefore, is that He lays claim to the assumption of Divine personality, unless we are to attribute to Him or to the evangelist an unpardonable carelessness in the use of language which has confused the pronouns to no significance or purpose. So certain is it, that if we study the Scriptures like any other books we shall more and more find them to be unlike all other books.

Not only in His temptation did our Lord make use of the phrase "It is written," but that or an equivalent one was His habitual appeal. "Have ye never read?" "Did ye never read in the Scriptures?" and the like. It is by no means unfair to take this as an index of the state of education at the time, and of the extent to which the persons addressed were acquainted with Scripture, which is the more remarkable and striking when we bear in mind the exclamation of His enemies, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learnt?" It is evident that, judged only as a man, our Lord's acquaintance with Scripture was very great, and, what is more, He always assumed the existence of an equal knowledge of it in His hearers. But when we read His application of Scripture with the authority to which He laid claim, it becomes evident not only that He was acquainted with it and had the key to its meaning, but that He regarded it (and we must never forget that it was the Old Testament that He so regarded) as in a special, pre-eminent and supernatural way the Word of God. For example, when brought face to face with the anguish that was coming upon Him, and glancing

for a moment at the possible help of twelve legions of angels, He felt Himself bound by the inexorable necessities of the written Word. "But how, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" Surely it is impossible not to see from this that prophecy in the Old Testament must be a very real and potent thing, to which we dare not assign any analogy of merely human foresight, penetration, or skill in the interpretation of current events. There cannot be a shadow of doubt from the way in which our Lord in the Gospels refers to prophecy that He assigned to it a very high place in the economy of Providence, and regarded it as something which could not fail. There are but two ways of looking at His conduct in this matter; either we must conceive of Him as endeavouring to fashion His career according to His previous conception of what was needful to make it correspond with prophecy (which, however, is inadequate to account for the fatal termination that was brought about by the combined malice of His enemies at least as much as by His own action), or we must regard Him as submitting—not without an intense inward struggle—to a necessity imposed upon Him by the expressed declarations of the Divine will, in which case prophecy at once assumes the character He assigned to it—that, namely, of a word given and recorded, not without illumination more than human, and by a providence not fortuitous. Compare, for example, such statements as: "The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed";¹ "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered";² "I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took Me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled";³ "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished";⁴ "This that is written must yet be accomplished in Me";⁵ and as if to show that this view of the function of Scripture could in no way be referred to the necessary limitations of His human nature, He said unto His disciples after He was risen: "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";⁶ from which we plainly see that He ratified and confirmed after His resurrection the teaching of His ministry while He was in the form of a servant and made in the likeness of men.

¹ Matt. xxvi. 24.

² Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27.

³ Mark xiv. 49.

⁴ Luke xviii. 31.

⁵ xxii. 37.

⁶ xxiv. 44.

Again, it is to be observed with respect to the law of Moses that this is regarded by our Lord as having Divine authority; for He says to the Scribes and Pharisees (Mark vii. 9): "Full well ye reject the *commandment of God*, that ye may keep your own tradition; for *Moses* said, Honour thy father and mother; but ye, laying aside the *commandment of God*, have made *the Word of God* of none effect through your tradition." It is clear, then, that He identifies the precept given by Moses with the Word of God and the commandment of God. And it is impossible to lessen the force of this by saying that Christ accepts the traditional value of the law as admitted by the Scribes and Pharisees, and is content to dwell upon their inconsistency with their professed principles; because the law was either human or Divine, if it was human, their infringement of it would have been excusable, whereas it was only because it was Divine that it had been set aside and violated by their tradition, to their just condemnation. It was not a case of tradition *versus* tradition, but of tradition *versus* the actual commandment and Word of God. In like manner our Lord attributes the errors of the Sadducees with respect to the conditions of the resurrection to their ignorance of the Scriptures, as though an honest study of Scripture would have saved them from it: "Do ye not *therefore* err, because ye know not the Scriptures nor the power of God"¹ as taught thereby? And once more there are the well-known words, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me."² It matters not whether we read this as an indicative or an imperative, because in either case the force of the words "they are they which testify of Me" is the same; or perhaps it is even greater if taken in contrast to an habitual practice which was unavailing because it missed its true object, which was not the study of the Scriptures as an end in itself, but for the discovery of the Person to whom they testified.

Such, then, is our Lord's teaching as to the value and the function of the Scriptures as referring to Himself.

It is, furthermore, instructive to note the Scripture *history*, which has received the authority of our Lord's recognition. He refers to the words spoken on the creation of Eve,³ to the blood of righteous Abel,⁴ to the days of Noah,⁵ to Lot's wife,⁶ to Sodom and Gomorrah,⁷ to Tyre and Sidon,⁸ to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,⁹ to the burning bush,¹⁰ to the law of Moses,¹¹ to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness,¹²

¹ Mark xii. 24.

² John v. 39.

³ Matt. xix. 5.

⁴ xxiii. 35.

⁵ xxiv. 37.

⁶ Luke xvii. 32.

⁷ Matt. x. 15.

⁸ Matt. xi. 21.

⁹ Luke xiii. 28.

¹⁰ Luke xx. 37.

¹¹ Matt. xxii. 32; Mark xii. 16.

¹² John iii. 14.

to the manna in the desert,¹ to David and the shewbread,² to the glory of Solomon,³ to the ministry of Elijah and Elisha,⁴ to the history of Jonah,⁵ to the prophets Isaiah⁶ and Daniel⁷ by name, to the blood of Zechariah⁸ the son of Jehoiada, to the prophecies of Zechariah, to the 8th,⁹ 22nd,¹⁰ 35th,¹¹ 41st, 69th,¹² 82nd, 110th, 118th Psalms.¹³ Thus our Lord's testimony amply covers the three great divisions of Scripture—the law, the prophets, and the Psalms; and more especially Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the prophecies of Isaiah, Micah, Jonah, Daniel, and Zechariah, and the Psalms. And this, it must be remembered, is His own personal testimony, not that merely of His disciples, which I have already noted. Now, in the view of this evidence, it is hardly possible to doubt that the selection of this body of references was designed; it was plainly intentional on the part of Christ to show that He acknowledged the authority of the canonical Scriptures of the Jews as they possessed them. There was no important section overlooked; even the Books of Chronicles, which, for interested purposes, are assigned a very late date, and such books as those of Jonah and Daniel, which of themselves suggest and invite criticism, are included by Him, and receive, as it were, the *imprimatur* of His recognition. Such ancient narratives as those of Abel, Noah, Lot, Sodom and the like, which, from their very character, are so liable to be consigned to the realm of the mythical, and have been treated as idle tales, are, from the very fact of His selecting them in the course of His teaching for the purpose of illustration, thereby raised at once to the higher elevation of solemn reality; for instance, when He says, "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man" (Luke xvii. 26). We can hardly suppose that He makes use of the mythical to illustrate the real, for if so, the next step will only too naturally be to resolve the real likewise into myth, and to say that as the one was mythical, so the other was and is imaginary and unreal.

In fact, our Lord's use of Scripture is very much bound up with the validity of His own mission. How can we be sure as to what He has told us about Himself if we cannot trust what He has said of Scripture? What was the point of His being greater than Jonah if the existence of Jonah was a myth? The fame of Nelson is enhanced if we say that he was greater

¹ John vi. 44.

⁴ Luke iv. 25, 27.

⁷ Matt. xxiv. 15

¹⁰ Matt. xxi. 16.

² Matt. xii. 4.

⁶ Matt. xii. 40, 41.

⁸ Matt. xxiii. 35.

¹¹ John xv. 25.

¹³ Matt. xxi. 42.

³ Matt. vi. 29.

⁶ Matt. xv. 7.

⁹ Matt. xvi. 31.

¹² John xix. 28.

than Rodney or Blake, but not by saying that he was greater than Jason. We may rightly compare Wellington with Marlborough or Napoleon, but not with Hercules or Theseus. If the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is a myth, what is there terrible in saying that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for the city that repenteth not (Mark vi. 11), and if so, may not the day of judgment itself be a myth? If the appeal of Christ in the one case was to the popular prejudice and belief, what is there to show that it may not have been so in the other? If Moses, from the hardness of the people's hearts, suffered them to put away their wives, where was the inferiority of his license in this matter to the standard of the original constitution, if God had said only in the story-book, "They twain shall be one flesh"? If so, why might not the Scripture, with equal facility, be set aside, which spake of "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow"; and where was the force of the question "How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?"¹ Christ either "knew all things that should come upon Him,"² or He did not. He either was mistaken in His estimation of the Scriptures or He was not. He either was a safe guide to us as to their authority or He was not. It seems to me we must make our choice and abide by it. He was either right or wrong in saying that Moses wrote³ of Him, and if it was not Moses, but someone else, who wrote of Him, then, in all probability, nay, rather we may say with absolute certainty, it was not He of whom that unknown somebody wrote. We may reasonably suppose that in saying this our Lord referred to the special promise of Moses that the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto Him.⁴ Let us, then, suppose that seven hundred years later someone put those words into the mouth of Moses (for it is absurd to suppose that they could have been preserved by tradition alone for all that period), then most undoubtedly the promise becomes no promise; and as for Moses having *written* of Christ, it is on the hypothesis impossible; and if Christ was the person intended by the apparent promise, then we must believe that the Spirit of God made use of this dramatic fiction to embody and convey a prophecy of His Son, which, ages afterwards that Son would point to, though erroneously, as a prophecy written by Moses of himself, a position surely not by any means so probable or tenable as the received and *prima facie* one that Moses, being what he was, should have prophesied and written of Christ, and that Christ should refer

¹ Matt. xxvi. 54.

³ John v. 46.

² John xviii. 4.

⁴ Deut. xviii. 18.

to the passage in which He did so. We can easily determine what kind of faith in Christ that would be which could accept that position in preference to the other, and can partly see the question with which our Lord asked, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?"¹ The one is preliminary and preparatory to the other; and if the one is not admitted it is not likely that the other will be except in pretence and feignedly.

Our Lord's citation of Scripture may be interpreted in three ways.

First. It may be regarded as a conventional use, even as He certainly adopted the conventional expression of the law, meaning thereby the whole of Old Testament Scripture, when He said of a verse² in the 82nd Psalm, "Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods;" and added, "If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken;" and again, "But this cometh to pass that it might be fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause" (John xv. 25), the reference in this case also being to the Psalms; or, as the multitude said, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever" (John xii. 34). To suppose, however, that such a usage will account for our Lord's reference to Noah, Lot, and Abraham, or for his quotation of the law as the law of Moses, is inconsistent with His assertion on the one hand that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail; and with what in any other case we should almost call His superstitious deference to the requirements of prophecy, as when He said, "But how, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" as though He were bound by the letter of Scripture as by a kind of destiny. Even admitting that He adopted the premisses of His adversaries with regard to Scripture, we still have to explain the fact that He acknowledged the predictions of Scripture as the chart that was to direct and govern His own career, and consequently we must estimate any other utterances by these, rather than reduce them to the supposed level of the others, which is, from the nature of the case, impossible; and therefore to suppose that our Lord's language in reference to Scripture is merely conventional, is incompatible with the facts, and inconsistent with His character.

STANLEY LEATHES.

(To be continued.)

¹ John v. 47.

² John x. 34.