

A LECTURE

ON THE

Authenticity of the Scriptures;

SHEWING THE ORIGIN OF THEIR PRESENT CORRUPT STATE, AS
PROVED BY FRIENDS TO THE CHURCH AND BIBLE :

ALSO,

SHEWING THE NECESSITY OF MODERN DIVINE REVELATION;

DELIVERED BY A

Member of the Nottingham Spiritual Circle,

IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, NOTTINGHAM, NOV. 16, 1858,
AND AT OTHER PLACES,

IN BEHALF OF THAT CIRCLE, AND THE

GREAT UNIVERSAL ORGANIZATION,

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J. G. H. BROWN, MEDIUM.



I, as a member of the Spiritual Circle, appear before you to treat upon a most important subject. It is more especially so, as the great masses of the people have hitherto been so ingeniously kept in ignorance of their own Ecclesiastical history, and have been taught from their infancy, to believe that the book on which they must build their faith, is the pure word of God without corruption: and all persons who have dared to doubt this, or have ventured to investigate, and to think for themselves, have always been stigmatised by the Clergy of every denomination, and their ignorant followers, as sceptics, infidels, heretics, &c. But the time has now come, when all who will not read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest all things for themselves, and hold fast that which is good, will be cut off in the calamities which have now commenced in the world, and which will shortly spread throughout all the nations of the earth.

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The subject then, to which I would direct your attention is, the Authenticity and Corruptions of the Scripture; and to enquire whether Divine Revelation is now necessary.

We could, if time would permit, prove from the book we call the Bible, that God is a "changeable God;" that He will turn about and change or alter his decrees and dealings with man, according as man may alter and change; He not being sufficiently omniscient as to foreknow, how men will act or proceed, until he has experimentalized, the same as man in his worldly pursuits; consequently it is stated that He had to shew grief or sorrow at some of His previous dispensations of Providence on behalf of His creature man. And we could likewise prove from the same book, that He is an "unchangeable God;" that He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, knowing the secrets of all hearts; that He cannot lie or repent, but is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. Therefore, as the bible sets forth God in these two extremes, as being a changeable God and an unchangeable God, and as it is impossible for Him to be both, there can be no better proof than this, that the scriptures have been corrupted. For if all scripture is given by inspiration of God, as some would have us believe, and He be a changeable God, it is certain that He would never reveal Himself to His creature man, as being an unchangeable God: and, on the other hand, if He be an unchangeable God, it is impossible that He should have represented Himself as being a changeable God. This being the case, it is impossible for mankind, taking the scriptures as they now stand, to determine which of the two God really is, whether changeable or unchangeable; consequently, we shall shew that divine revelation seems necessary in these the latter days of this dispensation, to determine this most important question; and, also, as there appears many contradictions and mystical passages therein, together with many unfulfilled prophecies: divine revelation further seems necessary, in order to determine what therein is the pure word of God, and what is not. But say some, divine revelation has long since ceased, and is not necessary to be revived again. To this we answer, we are aware that it ceased long before the apostolic age; but not because God had become a changeable God, and that divine revelation was not further necessary, but because, as Micah and other prophets declare, "The heads of the people judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof have divined for money; yea they, through their covetousness and wickedness, have made the people to err;" therefore, for these things God declared "that night should be unto the prophets, that they should not have a vision, that it should be dark unto them, that they should not divine." Consequently, divine revelation ceased.

until the apostolic age; when Peter declared that the prophecy of Joel was then being fulfilled, which was this; "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophecy." Thus the gift of prophesying was revived again during the apostolic age, but was soon withheld, and, consequently discontinued after that age; but for no other purpose or cause, than for the causes given for its discontinuance under the old dispensation; so that this prophecy of Joel was only partially fulfilled. Therefore it is quite clear, that it has ever been man's fault why God has not ever had His chosen instruments in the world, to thus reveal himself to man, and direct him when enquired after by him as of old, in all his important actions through life. But God, as we have shewn in our works and publications, still being unchangeable, will not let any of His words which He hath declared of old, fall to the ground unfulfilled in His own appointed time; and therefore in order to fulfill His decrees, we have likewise shewn in the same works, that He has thus commenced to shew forth His justice, mercy, goodness and holiness, and to reveal himself again as of old, and to make known His will to the world; free from corruption, ere the end of this dispensation shall arrive, that His chosen instruments should thereby be the means, as the Prophet Malachi says, of turning the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children, before that day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble, it shall burn them up saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

We will now hasten to enquire and determine whether Divine Revelation is now necessary by examining into some of the ancient Manuscripts and Translations of the Scriptures, and lastly into our Authorized Version, and thus shew the reason why God knew, from all eternity, that Divine revelation *would* be necessary again, previous to what is called the last great day of God Almighty.

First, then we would observe, it would seem that according to the 22nd chapter of the second book of Kings, and the 34th chapter of the second book of Chronicles, that there was only one book of the law known; and *that* had been entirely lost, and was again accidentally found, while the workpeople were repairing the temple under the direction of the good king Josiah. This was only 624 years before Christ if the chronology of our Bible be correct. It would seem though, that from the time of Ezra to the birth of Christ, copies of the scriptures had become numerous; and that they were

corrected by a standard copy, which was kept at Jerusalem, till that city was taken by Titus; when it was then carried to the royal palace of Vespasian at Rome; but what became of it afterwards there is no account on record. But history informs us that after the final destruction of Jerusalem, 70 years after Christ, there was then *no established* standard of the Hebrew scriptures. This fact then being handed down to us through posterity, does it not throw open a wide field for the supposition that designing men would alter, add to, and take from, and thus mystify the whole, so as to make it a mass of fabulous mystery, as modern divine revelation hath declared it now is. The inference just drawn, will be shortly seen is not an idle one, but too true to be refuted.

The most distinguished exemplars on record, produced at different periods by learned Rabbins, which served as standards for the rulers of synagogues and others to correct their copies by, were first the copy of Rabbi Hillel, who is supposed to have lived about A.D. 1000. But as there were many persons of that name, it is stated that nothing certain can be affirmed respecting him. Kimchi, who lived in the twelfth century, says he saw a manuscript copy of the scriptures which went by his name, and was preserved at Toledo, in Spain; and Rabbi Zacuti, who flourished towards the close of the fifteenth century, says that part of it had been sold and sent to Africa. What a loose account is this of the *first* ancient manuscript of the scriptures, which served as a standard since the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 years after Christ, till the year 1000: a period of upwards of 900 years, and no better authentic account than this of a copy of the Hebrew scriptures, used as a standard, being in existence. The writer, you hear, is supposed to have lived about the year 1000, but as there were many persons of his name, nothing certain can be affirmed respecting him. The next we have an account of which served as a standard copy, was that of Aaron Ben Asher. He was one of the celebrated doctors of Tiberias, and the president of the academy in that city, and flourished about the year 1034. His manuscript was kept for many years at Jerusalem, and was distinguished from others by the name of the Holy Scriptures of Israel, or the people of Palestine: and the printed copies of the Hebrew scriptures, and the manuscripts of the Western Jews, are, it is stated, almost wholly derived from transcripts of this manuscript. The next used as a standard copy is one by Jacob Ben Napthali, who flourished at the same time with Ben Asher, and was president of the academy at Babylon. His text was generally adopted by his countrymen, and other Oriental Jews beyond the Euphrates; but it is stated there are many differences and various readings between his manuscript and that of Ben Asher. Notwithstanding the vague

accounts thus given of these copies, which served as standards, the Rabbins asserted to their hearers that the copies of the Hebrew text were perfectly uniform and immaculate; but at length the learned Morinus Capellus, called into question this statement, and, after an interval of some years, during which a careful examination of different manuscripts took place, and the result was that some thousands of different readings and discrepancies were discovered; and the account goes on to state, that it should be observed, that of the various Hebrew manuscripts which have been preserved, few comprise the Old Testament entire; but the greater part contain merely select portions of it; and this diversity, it is said, is occasioned partly by the *design* of the transcriber, and partly by the *mutilations of the hand of time*.

Thus then we have given you a short account of the ancient Hebrew manuscript copies of the scriptures used as standards before printing was invented. What think you of them? do they bear any thing like the semblance of infallibility, or the word of God without corruption? No established copy of the Hebrew Scriptures was used as a standard, after the final destruction of Jerusalem 70 years after Christ till we come to the year 1000. At which time a copy appears and is taken as a standard whose author or transcriber is unknown, and nothing certain can be affirmed respecting him. Can it be then for one moment supposed, that during this interval of 900 years, that no corruptions had crept into them, since first one and then another who could, and would, take the trouble to transcribe them, did so as they chose, and as it would appear either adding to, or taking from, or transcribing only a part of them, and leaving out other portions, as they thought well? Thus this state of things went on, till many manuscripts were in existence; and at length, some of them were compared together, and the result was, as before stated, that there were thousands of discrepancies and different readings, caused, you hear, it is candidly confessed, partly by the *design* of the transcriber, and partly by the mutilations of the hand of time. Verily then after these candid acknowledgements of facts as related in ancient history, by your own ecclesiastical writers, relative to the ancient manuscripts of that book on which we are taught to build our faith, is there any one present but what will acknowledge that divine revelation is now necessary in these the latter days of this dispensation, even supposing that no other corruptions had crept in, after the period to which we have now arrived?

But some people ignorantly argue thus; they do not believe that the scriptures have been corrupted, for what design could a man have to alter and corrupt them? Others will say, they do not believe that any man dare alter the word of God.

In answer to the first hypothesis we would say, that Saint Peter foretold the design that man would have for altering them in his second Epistle, second Chapter, where he says, "That many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of which the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, and *through covetousness* shall they with feigned words make *merchandise* of you."

And in answer to the second, we would say, what is there too hard for some men to do, even in this age? All men are designing men: some design to live out of the honest fruits of their labour; and others will use all the artful devices imaginable to live without labour, or out of the labour of others in idleness. Would it be too hard for a man of the latter class to strain points a little at times, in order to carry out his wicked designs? Would it be too hard for the drunkard, for instance, the whoremonger, or the infidel, or even the man who will stand in the pulpit and declare to the congregation, that neither them nor their servants, nor their cattle, shall do any manner of work on the Sabbath day; and yet their own domestic servants at the same time shall be toiling at home often harder on that day than any other, and their servants, carriages, and horses, are waiting for them at the church doors when they come out? Would not, I say, any of such characters do, what the honest and upright man would scorn to do, even in our day? And yet, men of all these characters are to be found standing in the pulpit and preaching against these several sins, and will tell you that fire and brimstone in hell with the devil and his angels, is the certain reward of all such sinners, and this they will do for the sake of a living. Can it be believed that such men believe what they teach? If, then, such persons are to be found now, can it be too much to suppose that there were men in those days, when education was not universal as it now is, and when none but the learned and great were possessed of a copy of the Scriptures, and in fact but few of them? These facts before us, it cannot be too hard to suppose that such would be the case, even if ancient history did not bear us out in them, but which, you hear, it really does.

We will now examine into the accounts given of the early *printed* editions of the Hebrew Scriptures and Polyglots.

The first we would notice is a copy of the Hebrew Bible, which it is stated, must have contained *nearly* the whole of it, was printed at Naples, in 1487, as appears from an inscription thereon, written by Dr. Pellet, to whom it belonged, and who presented it to Eton College. This rare and invaluable copy, as it is called, contains many readings different from all printed copies, and contrary to the *Masora*, which was a collection of criticisms on the Text, by a set of men called Masorites. So you hear it is called an *invaluable* copy,

although it does not contain the whole, and has many readings different to all other printed copies. The second, is the Hebrew Bible with points, printed at Soncino, 1488, a small town in Italy, and edited by Abraham Ben Chayim. This is stated to be the first edition of the entire Hebrew Bible ever printed. Dr. Kennicott, who is universally acknowledged to be good authority, states, that there are no fewer than *twelve* thousand verbal differences between this edition and that of Vander Hooght; but that it, as well as the preceding, are allowed to be equal to manuscripts. What will those who now advocate the immaculate state of the Scriptures say to this? The first edition of the entire Hebrew Bible ever printed having twelve thousand different readings to any other, and yet to be considered equal in value to manuscripts. And, in fact this seems perfectly correct, since such are *their* diversity, occasioned partly by design, and partly by the mutilations of time, that they also contained some thousands of various readings, and some parts gone altogether by mutilation.

The next we will notice is the *London Polyglot*, published in 1657, by the learned and laborious Bryon Walton, D.D., afterwards Bishop of Chester. It is stated to be less splendid and beautiful with respect to paper and printing than the Antwerp and the Paris Polyglots, but is more valuable, being more accurate and more ample. More *accurate* indeed! how was it known to be more accurate? What man could determine this question? With no two ancient manuscripts or printed copies alike, varying as we have shewn they did, and yet we are told that the *London Polyglot* is more *accurate* than those of Antwerp and Paris! We shall not have time to make further extracts from other accounts given of the Hebrew scriptures and Polyglots, but we will simply ask any unprejudiced unbiased thinking person, whether he does not think that, after the accounts thus given of these scriptures, by your own ecclesiastical writers, divine revelation is not again necessary?

We will now examine into the accounts given of the ancient manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. There are several hundred ancient manuscripts still extant, and are of various ages, and of different authority. Some it is said are mutilated and very imperfect, some have been interpolated and corrupted, others consist of only particular books, and many only select parts. Thus you hear we do not begin much better with the accounts given of the Greek New Testament, than we did of the Hebrew, or Old Testament. The manuscripts are of different authority, some mutilated and very imperfect, others interpolated and corrupted. Interpolated, you are aware, means something added, or put to.

The first then we have an account of, is the Alexandrian copy, deposited in the British Museum in 1753, and sent in 1628 as a present to King Charles I. Cyrillus Lucaris, patriarch of Constantinople, brought it with him from Alexandria, where it is stated it was probably written. He says, in a schedule annexed, that it was written by Thecla, a noble Egyptian lady, about the year 328, who lived soon after the Council of Nice. Others, however, not believing this statement, assign it a much later date, and bring it as low as the fifth, sixth, seventh, and even the tenth century; but the account goes on to say, that it is certainly one of the most ancient and reputable manuscripts known to exist. What think you then of the most reputable Greek manuscript that is known to exist? It is thought to have been written by an Egyptian lady, some say about the year 328, others say not till the fifth sixth, seventh, or the tenth century. The account thus given of this the most ancient manuscript, we think, does not argue much in favour either of its authenticity or of its purity, if it cannot be told to 700 years when it was written. The second we would notice is a copy in the Vatican at Rome, said to be a valuable manuscript, and contests the palm of antiquity with the Alexandrian copy. as it is supposed to have been written some time in the fourth century, before the time of Jerome; though some people refer it to the fifth or sixth century. Thus we see it cannot be told to 300 years when it was written, but certainly not till the fourth century; so that the account of it does not argue much in favour of its authenticity. Other manuscript copies might be named, as there are nearly 500, but these are the most ancient; which you hear does not come within two hundred years of the times of the Apostles; and as these accounts of the most ancient manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures, like the Hebrew, are void of anything like accuracy or purity, they being interpolated and corrupted as before described, does it not, again we say, show the necessity of Divine Revelation in these the latter days of this dispensation? But where are the manuscripts that were written during the first 300 years of the Christian era, or in the times of the Apostles? Not one word is said of them, nor are they even hinted at. Not a single copy can be found or even hinted at till upwards of 200 years from the Apostles' times, and even they, are doubted whether they were not written in the fifth, sixth, seventh, or even the tenth century. Verily then, does it not prove modern Divine Revelation to be true, which declares of them that "There is not an original copy of the Ancient Prophets or Apostolic writings now in existence, they having been re-copied from the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, by persons who were interested in destroying their pure meaning, and inserting laws and doctrines hypocritical and oppres-

sive to man and displeasing to God; destroying the original documents of the Prophets and Apostles, and thus handing down to the rising generations, spurious documents, which now do not retain the doctrines which the men who then had the power inserted."

But we will now hasten to review the accounts given of the early *printed* editions of the Greek New Testament. The first printed edition we have an account of is that of Erasmus; who, it is stated, had the distinguished honour of publishing the first edition of the entire New Testament, printed by Froben, at Basle, in Switzerland, in 1516, from manuscripts of no great antiquity, and which are preserved in the public library at Basle. Three years afterwards he published a second edition, with numerous alterations. In 1522 a third edition, in which it is stated he inserted the controverted passage, 1 John, 5th chapter, 7th verse. In 1527, a fourth edition, and in 1535, a fifth edition. All these editions, it is said, are much esteemed, notwithstanding their faults, and are, in some respects, considered equal to manuscripts. Now let us turn and see what this passage is which Erasmus had the audacity to add to his third edition, 1 John, chap 5th, 7th verse. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." Why, it may be asked, did Erasmus add this verse? Is it not easy to determine this question? Was it not to make it agree with, and to bear out other spurious additions relative to the absurd doctrine of the Trinity?

The second early printed edition we will notice, is one which forms the fifth volume of the Complutensian Polyglot, published in 1522. The manuscripts used in this edition, though characterized as very ancient and correct, are, it is said, generally supposed to have been comparatively modern, and the editors charged with altering the Text, in order to make it agree with the Vulgate, or Latin version, of which we will notice by and by.

The third early edition we will mention is that of Beza, first printed in 1565, and again in 1576, 1582, 1589, and 1598. And this last was adapted as the basis of our English version of the New Testament, published by authority, 1611. This edition of Beza was made up from Erasmus's fifth edition, and the Complutensian Polyglot before named, together with fifteen manuscripts in the Royal Library of Paris, and some others. Time will not permit for us to give you an account of more, but as we have related the most ancient, and that which was adapted as the basis of our English version of the New Testament, these will be sufficient for our purpose in this Lecture. We have given you an account of the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and first printed editions of the Old and New Testament, and now a word or two of the Samaritan

text. It is stated to be the same as the Hebrew text except being written in the Samaritan character, supposed to be the ancient Hebrew character, and more fuller, having many letters, words, sentences and often several verses together, which are not to be found in any Hebrew copy whatever. Thus we see we cannot go to the Samaritan text for either more truth, accuracy, or infallibility. We could give an account of the Chaldee, the Arabic, Persian, Ethiopic, Syriac and many others, but as it would only be a sort of repetition of such and such like things as regards purity, we will pass on to the Old Latin Versions. They were made by different and unknown authors, which were in use before the time of Jerome; some of which he complains of as being extremely corrupt and self-contradictory. This account given by Jerome of *these* versions, we cannot you hear, refer to them for what we want to find, viz, an ancient version without corruption. We will now review the Vulgate Latin Version. This was executed by Jerome, at the request and under the patronage of Pope Damasus, A. D. 384. This version was begun as a revision, it is stated, to remedy the growing corruptions of the Old Latin Versions, and ended in a new translation of nearly the whole of the Scriptures. Now mark what comes next! It was introduced *by degrees* into the Church, for fear of offending weak persons! till it acquired so great authority from the approbation it received from Pope Gregory I, as to become almost universal, and was in consequence exclusively adopted by the Catholic Church. Copies of this version soon multiplied, and it is said that perhaps no book has been more corrupted than the Vulgate. Several persons attempted to remedy this evil, but their labours not meeting with the entire approbation of Pope Sixtus V, *he* prepared a new edition of the Vulgate, which was published at Rome 1593. This edition, though stamped with the infallible authority of the Pope, as the authentic Vulgate, was found so excessively erroneous and self-contradictory, that another authentic edition was undertaken by his successor Clement VIII, widely differing from that of Sixtus. From this edition, it is said, though far from being correct, all those now in common use were formed; and that it may be considered equal to a manuscript of the fourth century. Thus far for the Vulgate Latin version of the scriptures. You hear the old Latin versions, made by different and unknown authors, were complained of by Jerome as being so extremely corrupt and self-contradictory, that another is executed by that prelate by command of the Pope; and it would appear it was so very different from its predecessors, that the people would not receive it; the consequence was, it was a work of time to get the people to believe the fallacies they no doubt considered it contained; and, in consequence, it had to be

introduced by degrees into the church; and it was not till the time of Pope Gregory I, who exclusively adopted it, that it became universal. Other editions you hear, widely differing from each other, were successively issued, and the last is considered equal to a manuscript of the fourth century. While we have such glaring accounts as these on record of the ancient manuscripts and early printed editions of the scriptures, what possible conclusion can we draw of our authorized version, which is of course derived from them? for, even supposing its translators were an exception to so many of their predecessors in handling what should be the word of God, and they give a correct and faithful translation from the so called originals, how in the name of faith can any man, in this our age, who is conversant with all these facts which we have laid before you, stand up and declare to the great masses of the people who have not had an opportunity of reading these things for themselves, that the scriptures—that book on which all are taught to build their faith, contains the word of God, wholly and undefiled, and without corruption? But some men who, designedly or without sufficient thought, or who are ignorant of their own ancient history, will say, it was impossible for any one to corrupt the scriptures without being detected. But facts are stubborn things. We would refer all such persons to the account given of the Latin Vulgate, for instance, to the many editions successively brought out, all widely differing from each other; because, no doubt one person thought he could make his copy more conformable to his own lustful taste and appetite than his predecessor. Look again at the copies of the Hebrew manuscripts which the Rabbins declared to be immaculate, and Morinus Capellus discovering some thousands of discrepancies in them. And there are Authors who declare that there are upwards of 30,000 various readings or discrepancies. The American Translators frankly stated, that since there was such a vast difference between all the manuscripts they had seen, that it was utterly impossible for them to give a correct copy of the Scriptures. They further stated that whenever they came to a difficult word or sentence as to knowing their pure meaning, they found they could not go to the writings of any professor of religion to gather what might be supposed their true and real meaning, for all interpreted them to suit their own particular creed. They therefore state that they have gone to the writings of non-professors for the last one hundred years, whose opinions or interpretation of such word or sentence they have invariably taken. If this be the character they gave of modern professors, what charitable conclusion can be drawn of their predecessors? Does not this, in one respect, account for there not being two copies alike? This fact, and the many others we have named,

do they not we say, speak louder than the words of any individual who will thus ingeniously argue for no other purpose than to gull the minds of the people, to keep them from searching for themselves, and thus still to keep them in ignorance. And while the knowledge of all these things have been so ingeniously kept from the great masses of the people in this age of learning, science, and enterprise, what are we to naturally suppose the learned, the great, and the evil designing man was able to accomplish in the dark ages of the world, when but few could either read or write, and probably not one in a thousand could possess a copy of the Scriptures? Away then, ye great masses of the people, with these delusive arguments, and search into these things, and read for yourselves.

And now, lastly, let us review our own English authorized version. We will give extracts from the same *acknowledged* authorities, so that you may hear in what way it was executed. The English authorized version was formed in consequence of a resolution, grounded on the request of Dr. Reynolds to King James the First, in the conference held at Hampton Court in 1603, that a new translation, or rather a revision of what was called the Bishops' Bible, printed in 1568, should be made. Fifty-four learned men, divided into six companies, were appointed for the accomplishment of this important work; but seven of the persons nominated appear either to have died or declined the task before it commenced, as only forty-seven names appear in the list furnished by Fuller. All of them were pre-eminently distinguished for their piety, and for their profound learning in the original languages. Ten were assembled at Westminster, to translate from the Pentateuch, (five Books of Moses) to the two Books of Kings; and eight at Cambridge, were to finish the rest of the Historical Books and the Hagiographa (Holy Writings). At Oxford, seven were to take the four greater Prophets, with the Lamentations, and the twelve minor Prophets; and another company of seven at Cambridge were to translate the Prayer of Manasseh, and the rest of the Apocrypha. The Apocryphal Books you are aware, are not now received by Protestant teachers to be the Word of God; and consequently, they are not attached to our Bibles. The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse (Revelations), were assigned to a company of eight, at Oxford; and the Epistles of St. Paul and the *other Canonical Epistles*, to a company of seven at Westminster. Mark! Canonical Epistles! What is meant by this expression? It would seem that there were *other Epistles* besides what our present New Testament contains, which, for some cause or other, were omitted, they not being deemed by the Church at that time canonical, the same as the Apocrypha is not received in our day. These forty-seven, then, received instructions

how they were to proceed, having, as directors over them, the Deans of Westminster and Chester, for Westminster; and the King's Professors in Hebrew and Greek in the two Universities. They were then directed to use Tindal's, Coverdale's, Matthew's, and Whitchurch's Geneva Translations; when, we presume, they suited their purpose better than the Bishops' Bible. (This Bible received this appellation because Queen Elizabeth, by her letters patent, empowered several Bishops in her time to translate, or rather review it). This Translation by the forty-seven learned divines, was commenced in the Spring of 1607, and the completion of it occupied almost three years; at the expiration of which, three copies of the whole Bible,—one from each University and one from Westminster,—thus translated and revised, were sent to London. Here a committee of six, two being deputed by the companies from each place, reviewed and polished the whole work, which was finally revised by Dr. Smith, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, who wrote the preface, and by Dr. Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, and first published in 1611. It goes on to say further, that this venerable translation which has been universally admired for its general fidelity, perspicuity, and elegance, was *corrected*; and many parallel texts added by Dr. Scattergood, in 1683; By Bishops Tenison and Lloyd, in 1711; and afterwards by Dr. Paris, at Cambridge. But the latest and most complete revision is that made by Dr. Blayney, in 1769, under the direction of the vice-chancellor and delegates of the university of Oxford, in which the *errors* found in former editions were corrected, and the text reformed to an unexampled standard of purity.

Thus much then for our authorized version of the Scriptures. We will now ask a few plain questions, which we think would naturally strike any inquiring mind. Does it not seem rather strange that the fortyseven profound learned divines, after they had completed their work, which we presume they were as capable of performing as any who could possibly be found, since they were acknowledged to be pre-eminently distinguished for their piety and profound learning in the original languages, should give the whole, into the hands of six individuals to *review* and *polish*? and then this into the hands of two Bishops for them to *polish* again? then again in 1683, to be put into Dr Scattergoods hands for another *polish*? In 1711, into two others, and after this, another? and last of all in 1769, into Dr. Blayneys hands to complete the *polish*? And this was done you hear, to *correct* the *errors* found in former editions; and then it was considered to be reformed to an unexampled standard of purity.

By this then it would seem, that neither the forty-seven profound learned divines, nor the committee of six, nor yet the two Bishops,

who all polished in their turn previous to its publication in 1611, could polish it to suit the designs of the Clergy in 1683; those of that age could not suit those in 1711; and those in 1711, could not suit those in 1769. This then was the last *polish* it has undergone, and we must leave all persons to draw their own conclusions as to its *standard of purity*, after all these polishings: You will be enabled to form some judgment of the difference in different translations, by comparing the Psalms in the Book of Common Prayer, with the Psalms in our Bible. The Psalms in the Prayer Book were taken out of the Bible called the "Great Bible," which was translated by Tindal and Coverdale, and revised by Cranmer in 1541. Besides the many other differences and various readings which you may read for yourselves at your leisure, you will find that there are three verses altogether in the 14th Psalm in the Prayer Book, which is not in the 14th Psalm in the Bible at all. But we will now examine the *materials* from whence our version is derived. What were their authenticity? You hear it was a revision of the "Bishops Bible," and four or five other translations. What were the materials made use of for these several translations? No original manuscript used as a standard of the Hebrew Scriptures in existence within 900 years of the Apostles, and they having thousands of discrepancies and different readings, occasioned partly by the design of the transcriber, and partly by the mutilations of the hand of time. No printed Hebrew Bibles till 1487, and they and the copies immediately succeeding, differing in the manner we have previously described. As to the Greek, Latin or other manuscripts of the New Testament there are none in existence within 200 years of the times of the Apostles, and it is doubted whether these, the most ancient, were not written in the 5, 6, 7 or even the tenth century. Some of these manuscripts you remember had been mutilated and were very imperfect, some interpolated and corrupted, and others consisting of only particular books. But our translation of the New Testament, was from the printed edition of Beza; and Beza's was from Erasmus's fifth edition and the others before named. With these and all the other facts related before us, it is plainly seen, that they cannot lay claim even to antiquity; Beza's edition being only published in 1598; much less then can they lay claim to infallibility.

The source from which all this information is derived, is from a book—viz., Bagster's Comprehensive Bible—which is in the hands of hundreds of ministers and teachers of the people, for, if we are correctly informed, it is given to many of them at their ordination. These things being so, that hundreds of clergymen, no doubt of various denominations, knowing these things, how can they, or, why do they stand up before their congregations, and declare that they

are preaching and teaching the pure word of God without corruption? Who can say that they have no *design* for this? and that that design is not to still keep the great masses of the people in ignorance of the real truth, that they, as St. Peter declares, "through their pernicious ways, through covetousness, with feigned words, should make merchandise of you?" that they should still handle the word of God, deceitfully, in order to live out of the people in idleness. Verily, then, is not Divine Revelation again necessary, in order to show to mankind really and truly what God's mind and will is concerning them, in these the latter days of this dispensation, ere He sends his judgments upon the earth, previous to the coming again of that Christ who died for us, that all men through purification in the spirit by his blood, might reach eternal rest. Surely, then, we have proved that Divine Revelation is now necessary, and that God in his wisdom and foreknowledge knew that such would be the carnal state of man's mind, that he would thus corrupt and mystify his holy word, which He permitted; and therefore, as we said before, He promised in Revelation, through the mouths of Joel and Malachi, that He would send again his chosen Prophets in the last days, so that the things which man had estranged from and lost, should again be revealed in all their purity, in order to fulfil his purposes, which He, who is unchangeable, had determined before time was known to begin; so that they who will listen to his counsels, and accept the means sent amongst us, as his, might be saved in the coming calamities.

We would, then, beseech all to unshackle their minds of all prejudice, strife, contention, and scepticism, and begin, ere it be too late, to search for themselves. Do not turn Infidel, as many have done, after finding out the things we have now laid before you, for depend upon it, a part of the Bible *is the Word of God* WITHOUT CORRUPTION; God not having permitted some parts thereof to be thus vitiated by man. Search, therefore, your own Ancient Church History; then search your Bible, and compare it with modern Divine Revelation, revealed direct from the throne of God, by holy angels as of old, and you will soon find to your satisfaction what, in the Bible, is the pure Word of God, and what is not. We are quite aware that there are hundreds of men who act as local preachers and teachers who have never had an opportunity of reading and knowing the things we have now laid before you. Such men, we consider, honest and conscientious men; they set forth what they have ever been taught to believe is the pure Word of God without corruption, and such being the case, their labours are and have been acceptable in the sight of God, to the extent of the knowledge they possessed, and have no doubt been thus far blessed. But to

the men who have ever had a knowledge of these things,—who have ever known that they have been teaching doctrines which are hypocritical and oppressive to man—who have ever known that they have been setting forth in superfluous eloquence, the things which are said to be God's words, but which are many of them the corruptions of by-gone ages, that they may receive reward of worldly wealth and aggrandisement,—we say these are the responsible characters for these false doctrines and delusions; but remember, so soon as any person becomes acquainted with all these things, they immediately become responsible for that knowledge, and if they still continue to go on in the old path, they then become partakers of the evil deeds of these teachers of false doctrines, and God will punish accordingly.

Are the things which we have now laid before you correct or incorrect? Or are the members of the Great Organization, which have been denounced from the Pulpit as blasphemers, deluded? Or are the great masses of the people deluded and deceived, through the mistranslations and other corruptions of the Scriptures, and the knowledge thereof designedly withheld from them by those whose interest it is, and even has been, to keep them in ignorance? Search into all these things, we beseech you; read and investigate what we have told you. Heed not what evil designing men may say of you, or what they say of us; but pray to God for his Holy Spirit to assist you in your search, and by perseverance in this course, you will soon be able to discover what is right and what is wrong, and also true happiness in this life, with speedy rest and glory in the world to come, together with such other things, which, in consequence of the mistranslations, mystifications, and corruptions of the Scriptures, you are at present utterly ignorant of.

Let the cowardly and bigoted editors of the "Leicester Guardian," "Leicester Free Press," and "Rugby Advertiser," who so unmanfully vilified and calumniated the Great Organization, say, after perusing this lecture, what they think of their holy religion, as founded on the precious Bible, and exposed by its own votaries.