**38.**] That Moses conversed with both the  
Angel of the covenant and our fathers,  
implies that he was the *mediator between  
them,* as indeed the words, **who received  
the living oracles,** more plainly declare.

the word rendered **the church** means, probably, **the assembly** held (Exod.  
xix.) for the promulgation of the law at  
Mt. Sinai, not *‘the Church’* generally.  
Dr. Wordsworth observes on the meaning  
which the words *“the Church in the wilderness”* carry for the student of Christian prophecy, Rev. xii. 1—6.

**living oracles,** see reff.not *‘life-giving:’* still less  
to be understood ‘given *vivâ voce.’*

**39.**] Another instance, brought home  
again by the words **our fathers,** of *rejection  
of God's appointed messenger and servant.*

**they turned back in their hearts to  
Egypt:** not *‘they wished to return to  
Egypt,’* of which in Exod. xxxii. there is no  
trace (but later, in Num. xiv. 4), and which  
would hardly suit the term **to go before  
us;** but ‘they apostatized in heart,  
to the Egyptian idolatries.’ The very  
title by which Aaron proclaims his idol, is,  
‘These be thy gods, O Israel, which  
*brought thee up out of* the land of Egypt,’  
Exod. xxxii. 4. See also Neh. ix. 18.

**40. gods to go before us**] As God had done  
in the pillar of the cloud and fire. The  
plural is not put for the singular, but is  
used categorically: not Perhaps without  
implying also, that the only two religions  
were, the worship of Jehovah, and that of  
*idols,* a multitude. The plural is used by  
Aaron, see above.—In the opprobrious  
term, this **Moses,** may be implied, as Meyer  
suggests, ‘who was the strong opponent.  
of idolatry.’

**41. they made a calf**] apparently in imitation of Apis, a bull  
worshipped at Memphis as the living  
symbol of Osiris. The *ox* was a common  
symbolic form of idols in the East; it was  
one of the cherubic forms, Ezek.i.10; and  
the most recent discoveries at Nineveh  
have brought to light colossal bulls. Sir  
Gardiner Wilkinson thinks the golden  
calves of Israel to have been imitations of  
Mnevis, a bull kept at Heliopolis as a  
living symbol of the sun. Jeroboam afterwards set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan, and with the same proclamation : see  
1 Kings xii. 28.

**42. God turned**] i.e. God, who had hitherto watched over them  
for good, *now provoked by their rebellion,  
changed,* and delivered them up to their  
own ways.

gave **them** up—not *‘suffered them:’* all these explainings away  
of the strong expressions of Scripture belong to the rationalistic school of interpreters (which is not modern merely; even  
Chrysostom has here *“He permitted  
them”):* it was a *judicial delivering up,*not a mere letting alone, see Rom. i. 24,  
26, 28.

**to worship the host of heaven**] This fact is not mentioned in the  
Pentateuch, but may refer to the worship  
of Baal. In after-times we have frequent  
traces of star worship: see 2 Kings xvii.  
16; xxi. 3, 5; xxiii. 4, 5; Jer. xix. 13;  
Zeph. i. 5. See also Deut. iv. 19; xvii.3; Job xxxi.26.

**The book of the prophets**, regarded as a whole, contained this  
prophecy. The citation is from the LXX.  
I should take the question here as a