2. The matters which they record were such as they could not possibly be deceived about. They are such as any man with the use of his senses, and an ordinary portion of discrimination, was as fully competent to judge of as the most profound philosopher. The passage of the Red Sea, for instance, or the re-appearance of our Lord after his death, was a fact respecting which no man in his senses could be deceived. Unless the sacred writers were the wildest enthusiasts (of which, however, no trace is discover­able in any other part of their conduct, but the contrary), they could not have been misled into the belief that they had seen such things, if they had not seen them.

3. The blameless character and disinterested fidelity of these witnesses show that they were not themselves de­ceivers. The mind of man is subject to certain laws, upon which we may calculate with the same security as upon the laws of matter ; and one of these is, that no man of gene­rally irreproachable character will deliberately and pertina­ciously propagate a falsehood, save under the influence of very strong temptation. Now the sacred writers were men of blameless character, so that if their narrative be false, it can only have been under the stress of very urgent neces­sity or sinister inducement that they can he supposed to have promulgated it. But where was this stress in their case ? What evil had they to shun, what prodigious ad­vantage to gain, by falsehood ? On the contrary, did not their adherence to their story expose many of them to the severest privations and the cruelest sufferings, even to death itself? Do men, then, ever so fall in love with falsehood as to consecrate their lives to its propagation, and willingly to endure every species of contumely, persecution, and oppres­sion, rather than relinquish it ? Would not such a thing be a moral miracle, infinitely more incredible than any of those which the sacred writers narrate, because, unlike theirs, performed not only without the affirmation of divine agency, but in direct opposition to the law of the God of truth ?

4. Their narratives were published at a time when the events they record were so recent that it outrages all pro­bability to suppose, either that they would have had the audacity to publish what was false, or that their falsehoods would have been allowed to descend to posterity uncontra­dicted. Who can for a moment imagine, that had the Is­raelites not crossed the Red Sea in the manner described by Moses, he could have persuaded them to believe that they had ? or that the facts of our Lord’s history could have been palmed upon the world when there were so many still alive both interested in and competent for their refutation, had they not really occurred ?

5. These histories account satisfactorily for numerous un­deniable facts that are otherwise unaccountable, such as the existence and present state of the Jews, the existence and propagation of Christianity, and the prevalence of certain rites and ceremonies among Jews and Christians, such as circumcision in its religious aspect, the weekly Sabbath, the Lord’s Supper, &c. They further tally with the testimony of profane history, in as far as the field is common to both. They “ interweave themselves,” as Dr Channing has well observed, “ with real history so naturally and intimately, as to furnish no clue for detection, as to exclude the appear­ance of incongruity and discordance, and as to give an ade­quate explanation, and the only explanation, of acknow­ledged events of the most important revolutions in society.” That such narratives should be fictitious, the same writer justly concludes, “ is a supposition from which an intelli­gent man at once revolts, and which, if admitted, would shake a principal foundation of history.” Discourse on the Evidences of Revealed Religion, p. 34, 4th (English) edi­tion, Liverpool, 1831.

6. The credibility of the sacred historians is strikingly confirmed by the traditions and histories of all the ancient nations, by many facts of natural history, and by numerous

monuments of human art which are still existing, such as coins, medals, and inscriptions.

See Faber’s *Horæ Mosaicæ,* vol. i. ; Bryant’s Antient Mythology, three vols. 4to, 1774 ; Edwards on the Truth and Authority of Scripture, vol. i. ; Gray’s Connection of Sacred and Profane Literature ; Lardner’s Credibility, and Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, &c. Works, vol. i.-viii. ; Redford’s Lectures on the Divine Authority of the Bible, as confirmed by Science, History, and Human Consciousness, 1837 ; Horne’s Introduction, voL i. 116-20.

Sect. VI.— *Canon of the Sacred Scriptures.*

The Greek word *χαvωv* signifies originally a *straight line* or *rod ;* hence tropically a *rule,* and hence a *list* or *cata­logue,* as that which contains the rule or order of the things contained in it.

In this last sense it is applied to the Scriptures, but with a different reference, according as it is used in inquiries of a dogmatical or in inquiries of a historico-critical nature. In the former, it means the list of books deemed *inspired ;* in the latter, the list of books recognised as *genuine* by Jews and Christians. In either case, such books are op­posed to those that are *apocryphal (ἀποχϑυφα,* “ ea scripta quibus *publice* ecclesia non utebatur, sed *privatim* habebat legebatque qui vellet.” *Ludovicus Vives ad Augustin, de civ. Dei,* **l. XV.** c. 23.).

In regard to the sacred writings, both these lists are so far identical, that all the books which are found in the for­mer are found also in the latter.

An ancient and not improbable tradition represents Ezra as the person who formed the Jewish canon in its present state ; but this can only mean that he made it up as far as the books composing it were written in his day. It is ge­nerally supposed that Nehemiah, who is said to have col­lected a *βιζλιοθηχη* of the sacred books (2d Macc. ii. 13), and Malachi, the last of the prophets, closed the canon by adding to it their own writings ; though some affirm that the list was not finally made up until about the time of the Syrian invasion under Antiochus Epiphanes, in the third century b.c. Certain it is that by that time all the books now ex­tant had been composed and arranged in their present or­der, as they not only were then translated into Greek, but are spoken of by Jesus Siracides, who lived about two hun­dred years b. c., as divided into three classes, and as of con­siderable antiquity.

At what time the canon of the New Testament was made up we have not the means of accurately determining. We arc sure, however, that from a very early age these writings were collected, and were referred to in their collected cha­racter, as the received documents of the Christian commu­nity. Tertullian does so repeatedly in his writings, deno­minating them sometimes “ the New Testament,” and some­times “ the Divine Instrument,” in the singular number. The collection was doubtless made gradually ; and from what we learn from Eusebius respecting a distinction be­tween books *ὁμολογουμεvα* and books ἀ*ντιλεγομεvα (Hist. Ecclesias,* lib. iii. c.25, ed. Heinichen, vol. i. p. 244), it would appear that the claims of every book were carefully weigh­ed before its canonicity was admitted.

See Cosin's Scholastical History of the Canon of the Holy Scrip­ture, London, 1672 ; Jones’s New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament, Oxford, 1798 ; Alexan­der’ Canon of the Old and New Testaments Ascertained, London, 1828; Ch. F. Schmidtii *Historia Antiqua et Vindicatiο Canonis Vete­ris et Nονί Testamenti,* Lipsiæ, 1775 ; Haenlein’s *Einleitung in die Schrif­ten d. X. T.,* bde. i. s. 341, Erlangen, 1801 ; Henderson’s Lectures on Inspiration, lect ix.

The apocryphal books of Scripture may be divided into two classes, the one containing those that are simply dog­matically, the other those that are both dogmatically and his- torico-critically apocryphal. To the former belong the books of Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and perhaps