

**THE JUDGMENT OF THE COURT
OF ARCHES AND OF THE
JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE
PRIVY COUNCIL, IN THE CASE OF
ROWLAND WILLIAMS**

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The Judgment of the Court of Arches and of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in the Case of Rowland Williams by Benjamin Wills Newton

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BENJAMIN WILLS NEWTON

**THE JUDGMENT OF THE COURT
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PRIVY COUNCIL, IN THE CASE OF
ROWLAND WILLIAMS**

THE JUDGMENT
OF THE
COURT OF ARCHES
AND OF THE
JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE
PRIVY COUNCIL,
IN THE CASE OF
REV. ROWLAND WILLIAMS, D.D.,
One of the Writers in "Essays and Reviews,"
CONSIDERED.

BY
BENJAMIN WILLS NEWTON,
Formerly Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford.

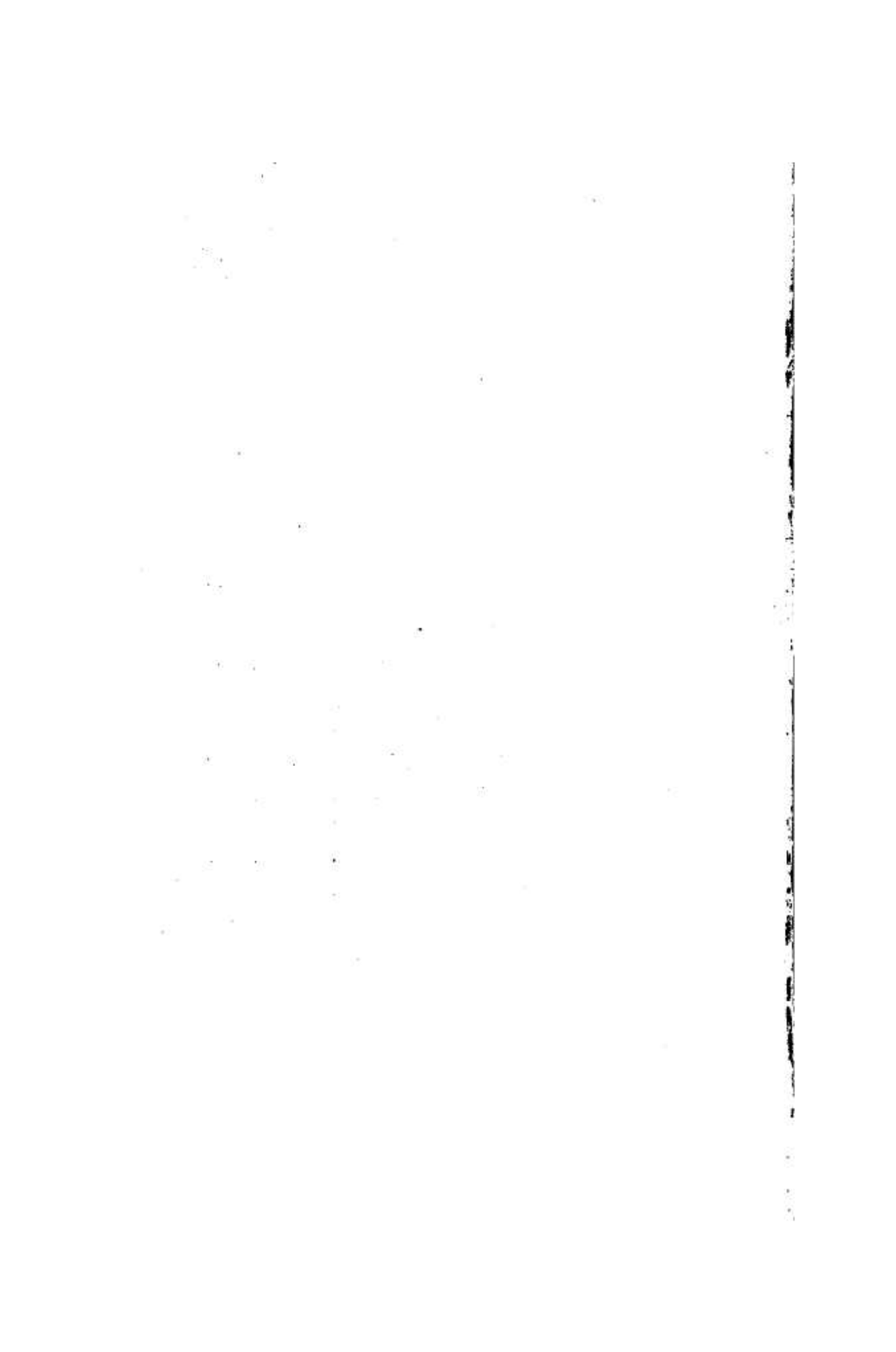
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1866.

The following observations have been already published in No. IV. of "Occasional Papers on Scriptural Subjects," but I have complied with a request that has been made to me from several quarters, to publish them in a separate form.

November 5th, 1866.

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Introduction.

The Judgments of the Court of Arches, and of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in the case of the REV. ROWLAND WILLIAMS, D.D., one of the writers in the Essays and Reviews—Considered.

THERE are two ways in which Holy Scripture may be degraded from the place assigned to it by God. It may be directly charged with falsehood; or else, its truthfulness being admitted, it may, nevertheless, be deprived of its supremacy by the exaltation of other writings, or of Tradition, or of Decrees, into co-equal authority with it.

It scarcely need be said that the mere acknowledgment of the authority of Scripture is not sufficient to constitute a true Christian. Personal faith—personal reliance of soul on the blood of expiation alone brings into the fold of Jesus. Yet it should be remembered, that the denial of the supreme authority of Scripture in either of the ways mentioned, involves, *ipso facto*, in the guilt of direct rebellion against the government of God. God, as the great Ruler of the Universe, has sent into the world His written Word abundantly attested by adequate evidence; and He requires that its authority should be recognised by all who have that evidence presented to them. It is evidence too strong (if honestly examined) to be rejected by any, except those who wilfully blind themselves to its force. As then, the subject of an earthly monarch would be deemed a rebel if

he deliberately refused to own the authority of ALL his sovereign's laws; or, if he exalted into co-equality with them other pretended laws which his king had *not* sanctioned, so, he who rejects that Book which God has sent into the world as the one authoritative exponent of His will (either by charging it with falsehood, or by exalting anything else into co-equality therewith) does thereby constitute himself a rebel against the Divine government. He commits a breach of the most important of the natural relations in which man, as a creature, stands before God.

A revived apprehension of the honour and reverence due to God's Holy Word gave to the Protestant Reformation its chief impulse. The Reformers in contending with the Papists argued for the sole authority of Holy Scripture. In contending for its *sole* authority it is superfluous to say that they contended for its truthfulness. The assertion of the supreme authority of Scripture formed the very keystone of the Protestant arch. Protestantism rejected the blasphemous dogma of Neology, that the inspiration of the writers of Scripture differed not in kind from the so-called inspiration of Milton, or Luther, or any ordinary Christian; and they equally rejected the no less blasphemous doctrine of the Romanist, that "there is a divine voice *immutably and infallibly* guiding the Church at this hour."* The Romanist affirms that a verifying and legislative faculty resides in what he is pleased to denominate the Catholic Church. The Neologian contends that such a faculty dwells in mankind generally, whereby each man is made the regulator of his own way. If the one system be Scylla, the other is Charybdis. Both equally destroy, and that for ever.

* See Dr. Manning as approvingly quoted by Dr. Pusey. *Birenicon*, p. 9.

The government of England, at the time of the Reformation, apprehended the momentous importance of this question. Solemnly and formally, they acknowledged Holy Scripture as coming truly from God, and as containing, and alone containing, the authoritative revelation of His will.

As a consequence of this national recognition of the Scripture, great and peculiar mercies have been vouchsafed to our Land. Will any one deny this who reviews the history of this country for the last three hundred years, and contrasts it with that of other countries (France, Italy, Spain) where the Scripture has not been similarly recognised or disseminated?

But how different is England's governmental relation to the Bible now!

A few years ago, Neologian Teachers, openly impugning the truthfulness of Holy Scripture, suddenly appeared in the established Church. The government of England were not unacquainted with the history of Neology in Germany and elsewhere. They knew what havoc it had wrought in foreign lands; how it had doubted, and questioned, and subtilised, and analysed, until it had made Truth a phantom, and left humanity like a ruined wreck to drift rudderless on the dark ocean of sceptical uncertainty. I am "rolling rudderless," said Coleridge in 1807, "the wreck of what I once was." "Wretched, helpless, hopeless," was his description of himself seven years later. Coleridge had drunk deep of Germanism; and on him primarily rests the responsibility of introducing it into this country. Coleridge's personal history was well known in England, and did of itself supply a sufficient warning.

But no warnings have been heeded. On the contrary, Neology has, in the persons of some of its chief teachers, been by the government of England smiled on, honoured,