

**INTRODUCTION TO THE
SACRED SCRIPTURES,
IN TWO PARTS**

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Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures, in two parts by John MacDevitt

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JOHN MACDEVITT

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IN TWO PARTS**

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TO THE
SACRED SCRIPTURES.

In Two Parts.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

THE terminology of Latin has a fixed meaning, no longer subject to the changes incidental to a living tongue. Hence the unfolding of the Sacred Sciences in that language, according to the time-honoured practice of the Catholic Church, possesses advantages, so many and so obvious, that almost every Catholic work on the Introduction to Scripture is written in Latin. While, however, the Catholic Church uses in her liturgy, and legislation, the Latin tongue, which is one and the same for the Italian, and the Scandinavian, she is careful to expound her ritual and laws in the vernacular of every country. Acting in this spirit I have employed the English, a language which is now spoken by 80 or 100 millions throughout the world, in the hope that by aiding towards a wider knowledge of God's written-word, the love of Catholics for it will be deepened, and that amongst non-Catholics, earnest minds may be led to see the truth about the Bible. I feel, too, that at a time when the age is embittered with angry controversy on the *authority* of Scripture, it

is desirable to have a direct statement of Catholic teaching on this solemn question.

It is right to add, in affectionate memory of my dear brother, the late Bishop of Raphoe, that in a few places I have drawn upon notes he bequeathed to me. I am also under obligations to the lamented Dr. Dixon, who, before his elevation to the Primatial See of Armagh, filled the chair of Scripture in Maynooth, and left an enduring record of his profound Biblical erudition, in his "General Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures," published in 1852.

In conclusion, I hope this little book will help to foster tender associations in the many loving and generous hearts, who pass year after year out of these halls, away from home, to the holy work of keeping the faith active among the sons and daughters of Ireland in foreign countries.

ALL HALLOWS FOREIGN MISSIONARY COLLEGE,
DUBLIN, *Easter*, 1889.



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CHAPTER I.

THE SCRIPTURE ORIGINALS.

Religion—Revelation—Bible—Its original material and form—Its division into Old and New Testament—Language of the Old Testament Originals—Hebrew believed to be the primeval tongue—Jewish distribution and classification of the Old Testament—When and how the Hebrew character of the Old Testament was modified—When and how the words and sentences in the Old Testament Text were separated—How the Text of the Old Testament was arranged before the introduction of chapters and of verses—The Old Testament Originals—Their oldest copies—The Samaritan Pentateuch—Copy of Esdras—The Masora—Mishna—Gemara—Talmud—Keri—Ketib—Hebrew vowel Points—Copies of the Masora by Ben-Ascher and Ben-Nephtali—Present copies—Language of the *New Testament* Originals—Their change in form of Greek letter—The separation of their words and sentences—Ancient divisions of the New Testament—Its modern chapters and verses—Autographs of New Testament Originals—Their copies—The Codex Sinaiticus—Codex Vaticanus—Codex Alexandrinus—Codex Ephrem, etc.

RELIGION:—Seeing that the Sacred Scriptures contain a large proportion of the truths of Religion, it is right that this Introduction should begin with a short notice of Religion and its teaching. God created man and placed him in a state of probation where he may earn for himself eternal beatitude. Hence every human being finds rooted in his rational nature a feeling of entire dependence on the Creator, a desire to propitiate Him, and a longing after blessed immortality. This solemn sense of