

the more intimate this conviction, the deeper ought to be the indignation that any man should attempt to exalt the Fathers, either singly or collectively, to the same level with the Scriptures, or attempt to divide their exclusive and paramount authority with that of a set of men on whose pages are so legibly inscribed the marks of error, absurdity, and fantastic raving.

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 • From the Literary Magazine.

### Why is the Bible divided numerically into chapters and verses?

This manner of subdividing the matter of a book into small verses is peculiar to the Bible; and it is the abuse of a contrivance, that was designed for another purpose, the history and progress of which is worth considering. The sacred Books, whether Hebrew or Greek, came from the pen of their writers, and were in the hands of those for whom they were originally composed, without any division of this sort. The first need of any thing like such a division was after the Babylonish captivity: the Jews had then mostly forgotten the original Hebrew; and when it was read in the synagogue, it was found necessary to have an interpretation into the Chaldee, for the use of the common people. To make this interpretation intelligible and useful, the reader of the Hebrew used to pause at short distances while the interpreter pronounced the same passage in the Chaldee; such pauses became established, and were marked in the manuscripts, forming a sort of verse like those in our present Bibles. This division into verses was confined to the Hebrew scriptures, and to the people for whose use it was contrived. No such division was made in the translation of the seventy, nor in the Latin version; so that the Bible used in the Greek and Western churches was without any such divisions, either in the Old or New Testament. It was, however, found necessary, in after times, to make a division and subdivision of the sacred Books, but it was for a very different purpose; it was for the sake of referring to them with more ease and certainty. We are told that Cardinal Hugo, in the thirteenth century, made a concordance to the whole of the Latin Bible, and that for this purpose of reference, he di-

vided both the Old and New Testament into chapters, being the same that we now have. These chapters he subdivided into smaller portions, distinguishing them by the letters of the alphabet; and, by those means, he was enabled to make references from his concordance to the text of the Bible. The utility of such a concordance brought it into high repute; and the division into chapters, upon which it depended, was adopted along with it by the divines of Europe.

This division into chapters was afterwards, in the fifteenth century, adopted by a learned Jew, for the same purpose of reference, in making a concordance to the Hebrew Bible. This was Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, who carried the contrivance a step farther; for instead of adhering to the subdivisions of Cardinal Hugo, he made others, much smaller, and distinguished them, not by letters, but by numbers. This invention was received into the Latin Bibles, and they make the present verses of the Old Testament. In doing this, he might possibly have proceeded upon the old subdivisions long before used for the interpretation into Chaldee. We see, therefore, that the present division of the Old Testament into chapter and verse is an invention partly Christian and partly Jewish, and that it was for the sole purpose of reference, and not primarily with a view to any natural division of the several subjects contained in it.

The New Testament still remained without any subdivision into verses, till one was at length made, for the very same purpose of a concordance, about the middle of the sixteenth century. The author of this was Robert Stephens, the celebrated printer at Paris. He followed the example of Rabbi Nathan, in subdividing the chapters into small verses, and numbering them; and he printed an edition of the Greek Testament so marked. This division soon came into general use, like the former one of the Old Testament, from the same recommendation of the concordance that depended upon it; and Latin Testaments, as well as Bibles, were ever after distinguished into chapters and verses.

It remained for the translators of the English Bible to push this invention to an extremity. The beginning of every chapter had been made a fresh paragraph in