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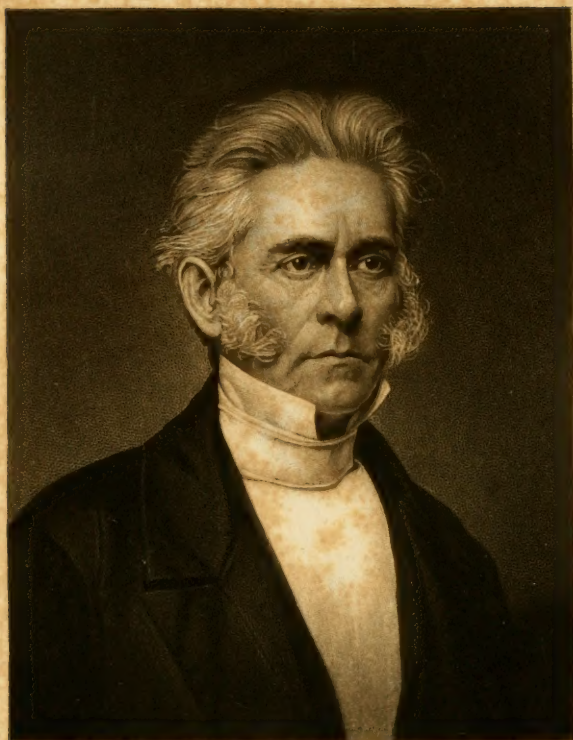
Rev. Alison R. Bryan
in memory of
his great grandfather

Rev. William S. Plumer

Class of 1827

Alumni
Alcove
(Ruffner,
Wm. H.)

G S Cunningham
April the 10th 1852



Eng^d by A. H. Ritchie

Wm. S. Plumer.

LECTURES
ON THE
EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY,

DELIVERED AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,

DURING THE SESSION OF 1850-1.

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Preface.

To prevent misapprehension and enhance the interest of this volume, it may be proper to sketch briefly the history of the University of Virginia, and to give some account of the origin of the following course of lectures on the Evidences of Christianity. This task seems naturally to devolve on the undersigned, who was Chaplain in that institution at the time of the delivery of these lectures.

It is a familiar fact that this distinguished State University was brought into being mainly by the exertions of the illustrious Thomas Jefferson—a man of versatile genius and varied literary accomplishments, if not of sound logical talent and profound erudition; one personally conversant with the most advanced forms of civilization in his day, yet thoroughly devoted to all that belonged distinctively to the structure of society and form of government in America, and ever desirous to contribute all in his power to the advancement of his country. He was fully possessed with the American idea as to the necessity of education and good morals among the people at large. And after his withdrawal from the national service, nothing seems to have engaged his thoughts and active exertions so much as the intellectual elevation of that State in which he was born, and in which was his fixed residence through his whole lifetime.

As early as the year 1814, in a private letter to a friend in Albemarle County, he proposed a scheme for a State College, and in 1816 the Legislature took the initiatory step in the execution of his scheme. In the Session of 1817–18, Mr. Jefferson drew up two bills, having for their object the establishment of a system of public instruction for the State, namely, 1st, A Bill providing for elementary schools, and 2d (introduced a little later), A Bill making provision for an extensive system of public schools. This latter bill embraced the provisions of the former, and further provided for a number of Colleges and a Central University. In accordance with the spirit of these bills, an act was passed February 21st, 1818, applying from the revenue of the Literary Fund, forty-five thousand dollars annually to primary schools, and fifteen thousand dollars annually for the endowment of an University. A Committee, of which Mr. Jefferson was Chairman, appointed

by the Legislature, among other purposes, for naming a suitable location for the proposed University, met at Rockfish Gap, on the Blue Ridge Mountain, and decided in favor of the site of the Central College, an embryo institution gotten up by private subscription of the friends of science, Mr. J. at their head, and located near Charlottesville, Albemarle County. The Legislature accepted the suggestion of the Committee; so that the Central College, including all its appurtenances, was absorbed into the University. The beautiful eminence selected for the buildings lay about five miles distant from Monticello, but in full view.

The whole plan of the institution, in respect of buildings, studies, instruction, and government, originated in the prolific mind of its devoted founder. With great discrimination and independence of mind, he culled from extant ideas and wrought out his own conclusions, some of which were novel and of undecided expediency, but are now gaining ground, as wise, practical principles. From the time of the passage of the final bill, January 25th, 1819, until the day of his death, July 4th, 1826, the venerable statesman seemed to possess the fire and activity of youth, so great was the assiduity and energy with which he gave his personal attention to all the details of the designing and erection of extensive and elaborate buildings, and to all the numberless features, great and small, connected with the establishment of a first-class University. He was spared to behold his long-cherished scheme successfully consummated. On the 25th day of March, 1825, its halls were thrown open for the reception of students. Its distinguished Father continued to watch over it, and treated its students with paternal kindness and attention. But in little more than one year his great spirit was summoned from the scene of his honorable and useful labors.

The University went into operation with eight professors and one hundred and twenty-three students. The average number of students up to this date has been over two hundred. For several years past there has been a sound and constant growth. The number of students now is about four hundred: and there are nine professors, one lecturer, one adjunct professor, and three tutors, making the corps of instructors to number fourteen in all.

It is a fact of general interest, that the subject of theology is omitted in the plan of studies, and no provision is made for having religious worship in the University. This omission has sometimes been ascribed to peculiarities in Mr. Jefferson's religious belief. It is not to be denied that amidst the violent agitations in the public mind during the latter part of the last century, throughout the civilized world, and the overthrow of many long-venerated opinions, Mr. Jefferson became as skeptical concerning the divine right of Christianity as he did concerning the divine right of Monarchy. But he studiously concealed his sentiments upon this subject during his whole life. "My religion is known to God and myself alone," he wrote within a few years of his death. Only to his most confidential friends did

he ever communicate any part of his religious opinions. He is not known to have ever made any attempt to propagate his views, or in any direct and open manner to interfere with the success of Christianity. The publication of his private correspondence has indeed disclosed fully his errors and bitterness respecting Christianity, but as the object of these lines is to present facts and views not generally noticed, I shall not farther allude to the melancholy revelations of those posthumous papers.

The absence of authorized religious instruction in the University is not justly attributable to Mr. Jefferson's single influence, nor is it in itself a proof of hostility to our religion. Christianity in Virginia, particularly among the more cultivated classes, was certainly at a point of great depression in those days, when memories of corrupt and despised Church establishments were still vivid, and when the wave of French infidelity which had rolled across, and had lashed the very base of the Blue Ridge, had not yet subsided to its parent depths. But in the opinion of many of those best qualified to judge, no greater favor could have been done to the cause of true religion than to save it from the dubious fate of falling again into the unconsecrated hands of State authorities. Virginia, ever shuddering with recollections of the past, and ever having before her eyes the jealousies of Christian sects, and the fierce discords in sister States, has uniformly decided that portentous and much-debated question as to the proper combination of religious and secular instruction, particularly in State schools, by leaving out the religious element entirely from her government institutions, yet never interfering with its introduction by private means, which do not interfere with religious equality.

In the arrangement of the University system, this subject was not left to go by mere default. It is interesting to find in the original scheme drawn up by Mr. Jefferson, and submitted to the Legislature of 1818, that it is proposed to leave a space in a conspicuous part of the grounds, which might be needed at some future time for a large building to be used among other purposes "*for religious worship*, under such impartial regulations as the Visitors shall prescribe." In the same document occurs the following pertinent paragraph:—

"In conformity with the principles of our constitution, which places all sects of religion on an equal footing, with the jealousies of different sects in guarding that equality from encroachment and surprise, and with the sentiments of the Legislature in favor of freedom of religion, manifested on former occasions, we have proposed no professor of divinity; and the rather, as the proofs of the being of God, the creator, preserver, and supreme ruler of the universe, the author of all the relations of morality, and of the laws and obligations these infer, will be within the province of the professor of ethics; to which, adding the developments of these moral obligations, of those in which all sects agree, with the knowledge of the languages, He-

brew, Greek and Latin, a basis will be formed common to all sects. Proceeding thus far without offence to the constitution, we have thought it proper at this point *to leave every sect provide as they think fittest, the means of further instruction in their own peculiar tenets.*"

Two years before the University went into operation, the idea contained in the concluding clause of the above extract was clearly and fully developed by Mr. Jefferson in a Report written by him, and sanctioned by the other members of the Board of Visitors, to the President and Directors of the Literary Fund. So true and excellent are the general views, and so novel and interesting is the proposition, contained in this Report, that it is worthy of being quoted entire, with the single omission of the paragraph copied above, which is made to form the opening of the Report. The document continues, "It was not, however, to be understood that instruction in religious opinions and duties was meant to be precluded by the public authorities, as indifferent to the interests of society. On the contrary, the relations which exist between man and his Maker, and the duties resulting from those relations, are the most interesting and important to every human being, and the most incumbent on his study and investigation. The want of instruction in the various creeds of religious faith existing among our citizens presents therefore a chasm in a general institution of the useful sciences: but it was thought that this want, and the entrustment to each society of instruction in its own doctrines, were evils of less danger than a permission to the public authorities to dictate modes or principles of religious instruction, or than opportunities furnished them of giving countenance or ascendancy of any one sect over another. A remedy, however, has been suggested, of promising aspect, which while it excludes the public authorities from the domain of religious freedom, would give to the sectarian schools of divinity the full benefit of the public provisions made for instruction in the other branches of science. These branches are equally necessary to the Divine as to the other professional or civil characters, to enable them to fulfil the duties of their calling with understanding and usefulness. It has therefore been in contemplation, and suggested by some pious individuals, who perceive the advantages of associating other studies with those of religion, *to establish their religious schools on the confines of the University*, so as to give to their schools ready and convenient access and attendance on the scientific lectures of the University: and to maintain, by that means, those destined for the religious professions on as high a standing of science and of personal weight and respectability, as may be obtained by others from the benefits of the University. Such establishments would offer *the further and great advantage of enabling the students of the University to attend religious exercises with the professor of their particular sect*, either in the rooms of the building still to be erected, and destined to that purpose under impartial regulations, as proposed in the same Report of the Commissioners, or in the lecturing room

of such professor. To such propositions the visitors are disposed to lend a willing ear, and would think it their duty to give every encouragement, by assuring those who might choose such a location for their schools, that the regulations of the University should be so modified and accommodated as to give every facility of access and attendance to their students, with such regulated use also as may be permitted to the other students, of the library which may hereafter be acquired, either by public or private munificence, but always understanding that these schools shall be independent of the University and of each other. Such an arrangement would complete the circle of the useful sciences embraced by this institution, and would fill the chasm now existing, on principles which would leave inviolate the constitutional freedom of religion, the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights, over which the people and authorities of this State, individually and publicly, have ever manifested the most watchful jealousy: and could this jealousy be now alarmed in the opinion of the Legislature by what is here suggested, the idea will be relinquished on any surmise of disapprobation, which they might think proper to express."

The general sentiments in this paper with regard to the importance of religious inquiry, not only are just and expansive, but form a very appropriate introduction to a volume such as that now presented to the public, and furnish an ample vindication of the propriety of having such a course of lectures delivered in the institution. This scheme of Mr. Jefferson's, although never opposed by any State authority, has been met by no response from the 'sects,' who perhaps were unwilling to range themselves as satellites around this great orb of secular science.

Although religion, didactic or devotional, has never had an acknowledged legal existence in the institution, yet since the third year after the University went into operation it has always had a footing and a welcome among the practical observances. By the year 1828, arrangements had been made by the faculty in their private capacity for regular weekly service within the walls of the University by the Episcopal and Presbyterian clergymen of Charlottesville, alternately. In the year 1830 a Presbyterian clergyman of Philadelphia accepted the invitation of the faculty to act as Chaplain to the institution. A systematic arrangement for securing regular religious worship was consummated in 1831, by which an annual appointment of a Chaplain was made from each of the four principal denominations in the State, in rotation. In 1848 the appointment of Chaplain was made for two years instead of one, the same system of rotation being continued. Since 1831 the compensation of the Chaplain has been made by the voluntary contributions of the officers and students. With a Chapel, a Chaplain, two services each Sabbath, a weekly prayer-meeting, a Sabbath-school, daily morning prayers, together with entire cordiality and accessibility on the part of all concerned, Christianity is now established at the University of Virginia on a basis

which secures to it as much purity and efficiency as could be expected in such an institution.

The lectures embraced in this volume contain nothing sectarian. They are fully within the domain of our common Christianity. They are couched in the language of love, and are designed not to insult, but kindly to reason with, the unbeliever. In reading these pages let every one bear in mind the truth so forcibly stated by Mr. Jefferson, that "the relations which exist between man and his Maker, and the duties resulting from those relations, are the most interesting and important to every human being, and the most incumbent on his study and investigation."

Much space need not be consumed in detailing the origin and history of this Course of Lectures. No such course ever had been delivered in the University, and its delivery was designed to narrow 'the chasm' of which Mr. Jefferson speaks. The only point which seems to need explanation is the fact that all the lecturers were chosen from one denomination of Christians. This was a point of much deliberation, and the plan adopted was considered the most likely to secure in the end the best and widest results. It was hoped that our example would be followed by the other denominations, as they in turn had possession of the Chaplaincy. And thus only could all be allowed an equal opportunity. The material being inexhaustible, let each denomination draw up its own schedule, select its own champions of the faith, and publish its own volume of lectures, and thus, and thus alone, might we hope to have the flower of American Christian intellect in the several churches engaged in a united assault upon the ranks of infidelity.

It is enough to say as to the ability of these lectures, that they are the best efforts of their distinguished authors. May God our Saviour use them for the extension of his kingdom, and to his name be the praise.

W. H. RUFFNER.

Philadelphia, December, 1851.

Man Responsible for his Belief.

BY

WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D.D.,

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

THOUGHTS WORTH REMEMBERING.

AUT undique religionem tolle, aut usquequaque conserva.—*Cicero*.

The way to hell is easy, for men can find it with their eyes shut.—*Castruccio Castracanni*.

That those persons should tolerate all opinions, who think none to be of estimation, is a matter of small merit. Equal neglect is not impartial kindness.—*Burke*.

Pride of opinion and arrogance of spirit are entirely opposed to the humility of true science.—*Locke*.

The fact is, men are not always in a mood to be convinced.—*Logan*.

Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.—*Jesus Christ*.

Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws.—*Blackstone*.

It is not only the difficulty and labor which men take in finding out of truth; nor again, that when it is found, it imposeth on men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor, but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself.—*Bacon*.

Men are ready to believe everything when they believe nothing. They have diviners, when they cease to have prophets, witchcraft, when they cease to have religious ceremonies; they open the caves of sorcery, when they shut the temples of the Lord.—*Chateaubriand*.

If I would choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing.—*Sir Humphrey Davy*.

MY RESPECTED FRIENDS :—

If the course of lectures, the first of which is now to be delivered, shall be worthy of any attention, they will justly claim your greatest candor, your most ardent love of truth, and your utmost docility of temper. It will be unworthy of you as men, and as lovers of knowledge, it will be unphilosophical, I think too it will be wicked for you to attend these discussions for the purpose of blindly receiving or rejecting whatever may be said. I bespeak your utmost ingenuousness in listening to the arguments that may be offered. "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Your eternal life is the stake involved in the solemn inquiry to be made into the truth of Christianity; for if the Scriptures be not true, there remain to us only darkness and lamentation.

There is found extensively diffused among men a book, called *The Bible*. Besides other lessons, it teaches that one of the highest exercises of virtue is faith, and that one of the most heinous sins is unbelief. It makes salvation to depend upon the former, and a loss of the Divine favor to be the fruit of the latter. It often and clearly settles these points. It says: "Without faith, it is impossible to please God;" and, "He that believeth not is condemned already."

Nevertheless, men are found who utterly reject this book as a revelation, some without inquiry, but not without scoffs, and some with a vain show of reasoning, but evidently without thorough and fair examination. Of the latter class, are those who insist that man is not, because he ought not to be, accountable for his belief in any matter, that faith is involuntary, and so not proper ground of praise or blame, reward or punishment. This opinion has some prevalence, and is worthy of examination at the beginning of a course of lectures on the evidences of Christianity. If it be true, the whole Christian system fails of the authority which it claims. Before entering on the main question, a few preliminary observations are proper.

Truth is the great and proper object of the mind of man, and may with safety be pursued to any length whatever. There is no danger in giving up any error, or in embracing any truth. Forsaking truth, and embracing error, angels shrunk into devils. Forsaking error and grasping truth, sinners rise to the dignity of saints, and to the companionship of angels.

The resemblance between truth and error is often so great as to call for the most patient inquiry, and for the soundest discrimination. Prejudice and passion are enemies to truth, and will defeat any quest after knowledge. All truths and all errors are not equally evident. Some of the most important truths bear no marks of credibility whatever, when first presented to the mind. And some of the most serious errors often for a while seem to be truths. Numerous instances, drawn from every branch of knowledge, might easily be given.

All truths are not equally important. Some we may never know, and yet attain all the highest ends of existence. But some have such a scope and bearing that it behooves all men to seek and find them, and then to hold them fast. Such are the great truths of religion. It cannot promise the slightest utility to reason with one who admits that there is a God, and yet cannot be brought to see that our relations to Him are momentous.

Though mere intellectual belief is not saving faith, yet, by the laws of the human mind, the former is a necessary foundation of the latter. When a man so believes as to be saved, his heart makes no war upon his understanding, his faith is not contrary to his judgment and reason. It is a glory peculiar to Christianity that it requires our religion to be a "reasonable service." "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" is one of its oracles. No man acts more wisely and rationally than when he solemnly and earnestly believes all religious truth.

An early Christian writer says: "He, who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature." And as the author of nature is confessedly the author of all truth, the argument from analogy is both legitimate and important on religious subjects. It does, indeed, furnish no direct evidence of any religious truth. But if difficulties, presented against religion, can be shown to lie with equal force against the constitution and course of nature, they can no longer be urged as valid objections. The nature of the subject

now to be discussed renders a resort to analogy entirely proper. The chief use of analogy in argument is to silence cavillers.

The connection between cause and effect in the moral world is as close as in the physical. Error will give trouble to the traveller to a distant city. May it not be fatal to the traveller to eternity? The former feels the consequences of mistake for a short time, the latter for endless ages. The plague produces pains, blotches, and death. Sin is more dire in its effects. No signals of distress are so appalling as those held out by men living or dying under moral maladies.

Let us now examine the statement that man is not, and ought not to be, accountable for his faith. At this point it is proper to make a few remarks on the grounds of belief in general. Every man finds his mind so constituted that it cannot but believe some things. Consciousness informs him that he exists, thinks, wills, loves, and hates. On these and like points he needs no other ground of belief. It is folly to seek it. This is adapted to the subject, and is complete. When a man tells me that I have the power of reflection, he gives me no new information, and no more evidence of the fact than I had before.

Man also believes some things by an intuitive perception of their truth. The whole is greater than a part, two are more than the half of three, a proposition, admitting of but one construction, cannot be both true and false, are truths so obvious to every sober mind, that to announce them is to prove them, to understand them is to believe them. To demand argument in support of them, is like calling for candles to show us an unclouded sun. We believe such things because we cannot, without violence to the constitution of our minds, deny or doubt them.

Again, mathematical demonstrations built upon the axioms of that science command our belief. The very lowest penalty for expressing a doubt of a proposition thus proven is the contempt of mankind. In long mathematical processes errors may indeed occur, but where each premise and each step are clear, our assent to results, however surprising, is most reasonable. Thus accounts are settled, seas navigated, countries partitioned, and nations divided.

Logical reasonings on moral subjects may be as fair and as conclusive as mathematical demonstrations. Parents should provide for their helpless children, children are bound to the offices of filial piety, the mother who cares not for her own offspring is a monster, he who loves slander, robbery, or murder, is an enemy

to virtue, are moral truths as fairly reached as any result in geometry. It is not true that our knowledge in morals is, in its own nature, less certain than in other branches of science.

Our senses also furnish good ground of belief. When a man sees a rainbow, he believes it has several colors, when he hears the songs of the mocking-bird, he believes it has exquisite musical powers, when he tastes honey, he believes it is sweet, when he feels ice, he believes it is cold, when he smells the incomparable flower of the magnolia, he believes it has strong odors. Nor does he need any other proof of these things. No process of ratiocination would add anything to his reasonableness in believing what his senses had already informed him of.

Consciousness, intuition, mathematical and logical reasonings legitimately conducted, and our senses are all to be relied on in their proper spheres. He, who rejects consciousness, intuition, the senses, and logical reasonings, can make no progress in knowledge, and will simply live and die a fool. He, who refuses to settle an account fairly and arithmetically made out, or to abide by a boundary fairly and mathematically ascertained, will be set down for a knave. Yet in the use of all these grounds of belief, mistake or deception is possible. He, who slanders a neighbor, may say that he is not conscious of malignity towards him. In this case we simply infer that he does not candidly observe or truly report the state of his own mind. But we do not on that account give up all evidence of that kind. Such facts teach us to be watchful and truthful, but not skeptical. So a first truth may not be clearly stated, or from heedlessness one may mistake its import. Would it on that account be wise to reject intuition, and begin to prove that the whole is greater than a part? In the use of the senses, and in mathematical and logical reasonings, errors have been committed. Shall we therefore abandon them all as instruments of advancing in knowledge? All sober men say, No. All these sources of evidence must be restrained to matters falling within their proper and respective provinces. Consciousness, intuition, logical reasonings, and the senses cannot determine how many acres of land are in a given field, or how many leagues a vessel has sailed in a day. Consciousness, intuition, mathematical and logical reasonings cannot prove a stone hard, an orange sweet, or a rose fragrant. One sense cannot testify for another, neither ought one of these classes of evidence to invade the province of another. Yet it is philo-

sophical, reasonable, right and wise to found belief on the evidence obtained from all these sources.

We have another source of information, on which to build our belief. Indeed, in the strict sense of the word *faith*, it is the only foundation of belief. I refer to the testimony of others. The necessity of reliance on testimony is based on our ignorance of many things, which can be known to us in no other way. The faculties of men are so limited, and time and space are so vast, as to preclude the possibility of his knowing thousands of things, important to be known, except by the testimony of others. Millions of men believe that the sea is fathomless, though they never cast a line into it; that lions and elephants are found in Africa, though they never were in sight of its coast; that a vast tract of the earth's surface is never whitened by frost, though they never were within the torrid zone; that there are vast deposits of gold in the mines of California, though they never were within a thousand miles of any part of that Western Empire State. Their belief in these and a thousand other things has no basis but the testimony of others. If a man concedes the reasonableness of so believing, he grants all that is essential for the basis of this argument; but if he denies it, he stultifies himself and all mankind. It is entirely by testimony that we believe in the existence, productions, appearance, or institutions of countries, which we never visited. It is only by testimony that any man's lineage is known to himself or his neighbors. In the same way the law of descents is executed, property is held, guilt and innocence proved, life and liberty legally taken or preserved. It is almost exclusively by testimony that the mass of men come to regard certain drugs, plants, and reptiles as poisonous. Very few men in each age of the world subject them to any actual test. It is solely by the testimony of men long since dead that we have any knowledge of the universal empires of antiquity, and of the men who reared, or who destroyed them. Let all men refuse assent to testimony, and all business must cease, all commerce be checked, and all law be a dead letter. Such a course would make earth a Bedlam, would convert every man into a murderer or a suicide, would produce starvation, dissolve society, and depopulate the earth. Men are therefore compelled to receive testimony, rely upon it, and be governed by it. In so doing they wisely submit to the laws of their nature and of their condition. Who will maintain that the Chinese were philosophical in disbe-

lieving, for thousands of years previous to the present century, the existence of the Northern and Southern Oceans? When a voyager in certain seas and seasons is told by the sailors that if he sleep on deck, it will cost him his life, is he a wise or a good man for believing not a word they tell him? To test the truth is to lose his life. To invite another to test it, is to tempt him to self-destruction. Here is a case, in which one has no guide but the testimony of men, and those strangers perhaps. The penalty, fixed by the Author of nature to such recklessness as refuses the warning even of a stranger, is death. When the king of Siam was told by the German ambassador that in his country water in winter became so hardened by the cold that men could walk upon it, was he wise in forthwith determining that it was a falsehood? Are Virginians unphilosophical in believing on the testimony of several men that the feat of climbing the Natural Bridge has actually been accomplished?

It is no valid objection to the principle of reliance on testimony, that it may be abused. Some witnesses are ignorant, some credulous, some dishonest. That is a good reason for patience, inquiry, candor, and discrimination, but none at all for blindly rejecting all testimony. There are said to be more than a hundred kinds of mushroom. Of these, but one is fit for food. Yet men easily learn to discriminate between the noxious and the wholesome. So we judge of all testimony that is submitted to us, and easily learn to discriminate between the precious and the vile, the false and the true. We wisely and universally receive testimony. The old and the young, the learned and the unlearned, the savage, the barbarian, and the civilized man all do it. If they acted otherwise, they would be madmen.

The whole force of testimony, considered by itself, depends upon the ability and honesty of the witness. We judge of the former by his general intelligence, and by his opportunities of information in the matter of which he speaks. We judge of the latter by his general character for veracity, and by his whole conduct in testifying. When the ability and honesty of witnesses are unknown, an inquiry on the subject is proper. Upon the testimony of competent and credible witnesses, we take property from one man and give it to another, and for offences thus proven, we punish men with loss of liberty, and even of life itself. Nor do good men live in a state of alarm lest they should be ruined by this state of things. On the contrary, it is one of the best means of preserving

all the dearest civil rights of men. Without it, no man is safe for an hour. All nations, therefore, have received testimony. All men have done it. All government rests mainly upon this cornerstone. There is no better proof of high civilization in a nation, than the perfection of its laws on this subject. It is the judgment of mankind that we are bound to admit testimony, and that we are highly culpable for refusing it. Take a few cases.

Serious charges are circulated against one of my neighbors. If true, they ought to lead to a suspension of all intimacy between us. All the facts are elicited. By ample testimony, my neighbor is proven guilty. Yet there is no change in my conduct towards him. Privately and publicly he is still my boon companion. What is the consequence? I declare my belief of his innocence, and give the highest proof of my sincerity. But men say that if I were not reckless of character, or had no sympathy with wrong-doers, I would certainly believe otherwise. If I still cling to him, I must bear a tremendous penalty, the forfeiture of the esteem of the wise and good. Or suppose the charge is fully disproven, and the innocence of my neighbor amply vindicated, and yet I declare my belief of his guilt. Is there no penalty for my rejection of testimony in his behalf? Do not all just men ascribe to malignity my belief of the guilt of one, whose defence has been triumphant? Do I not suffer severely, yet justly, for my belief in this case?

Even in physical affairs men are, by the fixed laws of God, held accountable for their belief, and that under the severest penalties. Here is a white powder. A man is told that it is arsenic, and that a small quantity of it will destroy animal life. He has never known a death caused by this poison. The powder looks as harmless as so much flour or chalk. He does not *know* that it is arsenic. He does not believe that it is deadly poison. He refuses to receive testimony as to its destructive qualities. He says, it is impossible that anything, so harmless in appearance, should hurt any one. He gives it in a dose to some one. Death ensues. He is arrested, tried, convicted, and justly executed as a murderer. Or if he takes the dose himself, and thus gives the highest proof of the sincerity of his belief, an agonizing death, inflicted by God himself, as the Author of the laws of nature, soon follows. The penalty is certain, speedy, and dreadful. He dies in horror and in torture, for refusing testimony. Why is this? Is not God good? Yes, verily. But his goodness leads him to teach men that for their belief in things natural they are respon-

sible to him under natural laws, with penalties as severe as any that can be inflicted on this side of the grave.

Not one man in a thousand has ever seen human life destroyed by a fall from a high eminence, yet upon the testimony of others it is generally believed that it will be fatal. Suppose a man refuses to listen to the warning voice of others, and leaps from the top of a high precipice to the rocks below. His unbelief in the testimony he has heard will not make void the law of attraction, by which he is drawn with fearful violence to the earth's surface, and dashed to pieces. The Author of nature will not suspend the laws of the material world, but will terribly punish those who violate them, even if the violator of them has but heard of, but never proven their power and penalty. Nay, in things natural men suffer for the slightest disregard of the law of testimony. When a colony goes forth to a new country, abounding in plants of unknown qualities, it is under the general declaration that some are wholesome and some noxious, and that it is folly to eat of anything whose nature is unknown. When the first settlers at Jamestown gathered, and boiled, and ate the leaves of the stromonium, they acted rashly, they despised the general law of testimony concerning vegetable plants, and they felt the consequences. The same truth might be taught by many other well-known examples.

Besides, it is the common sentiment of mankind that a man's belief on moral subjects is a sign of his present character, and a good index to his future career. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," is a maxim not only of revelation, but of all judicious men. Take away the fear of punishment, and present the occasion, to him who believes that swindling or stealing are justifiable, and no man of sense is surprised that the belief rules the life. It is said that the great mass of convicts in our prisons believe themselves to have been justified in the perpetration of their crimes. So long as they thus believe, every orderly citizen knows that they are dangerous to society. A man is known to believe that doctrine of devils, that the end justifies the means. Does any wise man confide in him? Will he not lie whenever it is convenient to do so? As it is his creed, so shall you find it his trade to deal in falsehood. No merchant will employ a young man, who is known to believe that he may, without guilt, procure his pleasures at the cost of his master, and without his consent. A man's creed embodies his moral principles. To publish his

creed is to make known his principles. If he, who believes viciously, acts correctly, it is owing to causes foreign from his real character ; it is despite his principles, and there is no proper ground of praise in what he does. No respectable code of morals admits of cases of fortuitous or unintended virtue.

Moreover, it is the very office of reason to search for truth, to seek for light, to weigh arguments, and to determine the value of evidence. This whole work is voluntary. In performing it, every human being has the highest kind of evidence that he is a free agent. That evidence is his own consciousness. No man of sense will deny this. Nothing within the range of the human mind can be more free from violence, than the whole process of collecting, receiving, rejecting or weighing evidence. The proof of this is of the same nature with the proof of all our mental operations. All proper attempts to influence the human mind rest upon this basis. All other attempts to influence it are felt to be outrages. Persecution made Galileo submit to a humiliating confession. Good men have ever since felt the wickedness of the treatment he received. But his belief was unchanged. The echo of his confession that the earth did not move was hardly dead, till he was heard to say, "It does move," and if he had not said it, we know that such is the unchained and untamable freedom of all such mental operations, that after his confession, he must have thought just as he did before. If our belief is in any sense so involuntary, or so independent of the native freedom of our minds, that we may not be held accountable for it, what is the use of evidence ? If the result cannot be varied by the evidence presented, then the whole process of eliciting testimony and listening to arguments in any cause or matter is a mockery of reason, truth and justice. To answer a matter before he hears it is not folly and shame to a man, if he cannot by candor, by patience, by inquiry, learn what conclusion he should reach. This doctrine carried out into practice would make all judicial proceedings very short, and save much time. Whether it would be satisfactory to mankind, I will not inquire. It would also open the shortest road to science and learning. It would save these young gentlemen the toil and labor of demonstrating problems and theorems. They might be persuaded to believe all things that are told them without looking at the evidence on which they rest. Life at the University would then be a time of elegant leisure to be sure. But whether such a course would

raise up a set of *men*, or advance *solid* learning, you may determine without argument. Why do the laws provide with such care, and why do men labor with such zeal, that as far as possible judges shall be impartial, if the state of the mind has nothing to do in determining the weight of testimony? Why should a prisoner wish to be heard if evidence and argument strongly presented will not influence the belief of a just and good man on the question of guilt or innocence before the court? Why should a man ask for a *fair* trial, if there be not states of mind very *unfair* to the rights of truth and justice?

A court is in session. A cause involving great interests is to be tried. A jury appears. One of the first acts of a juror is to bind his soul under the sanctions of an oath that he will render a verdict according to the law and the evidence. If belief be involuntary and beyond control, this oath is a mockery. But this is not all. The trial proceeds. The evidence is clear and carries conviction to every impartial mind. The law is equally clear. The judge so states it. The jury retires, and brings in a verdict contrary to the law and the facts. What is the result? The public puts a mark of infamy on each of those men. Public indignation is like coals of juniper on their heads. Their reputation is blasted. All respect and esteem for them cease. This is sure to be the case in proportion as the community, in which they live, is intelligent and virtuous. Now why do all good men visit such conduct with so severe a penalty? Simply because the jurors did not stand to their oath. Even if there be no suspicion of bribery, even if there be no suspicion that the verdict is contrary to belief, yet the penalty is inflicted, not by a bailiff or constable indeed, but not less terribly, because the public inflicts it and that without ceremony. Men judge that none but bad men, who did not fear an oath, could entertain a belief so utterly at variance with law and fact. Here is another jury of twelve men. One pays no attention to testimony, argument, or the law. His mind is already made up. Another is a mere trifler. He neither knows, nor cares what is right in the case. Another listens eagerly to the testimony on one side only. Another attends partially to one side and fully to the other. One and but one carefully and candidly hears the whole case and decides accordingly. This is the only innocent man in the panel. Even if the rest agree with him, in the eyes of God they are guilty; and so far as their conduct is known, they are guilty in the eyes

of all good men. They have evinced a criminal recklessness, a base want of love of truth.

Again, if belief is involuntary in any sense, which sets aside the freedom of the mind, and with it accountability, there is a full end of the distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice. Thus we should fairly conclude that Saul of Tarsus, "breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, and making havoc of the Church, and haling men and women, committing them to prison," was not criminal, and ought never to have felt remorse for such conduct, for all the time he was doing these things he "verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Saul's belief in this matter was firm but erroneous. It was the result of prejudice and bigotry. He was "exceeding mad" against the Christians. Yet he believed he was doing right. But as soon as he became a candid, truth-loving man, he was covered with shame and filled with sorrow for this conduct. He never forgave himself for it, but went to heaven crying: "I am the chief of sinners—I persecuted the Church of God." And if he were not guilty for his bloody persecutions, neither should we be in doing the same things, provided we could only so far pervert our minds and hearts as to believe that we were doing God service.

By parity of reasoning, when in the midst of extreme perils and suffering and with incredible zeal, Paul preached Christ, there was nothing virtuous in all this, for although he did right and acted conscientiously, yet his belief, according to the error here opposed, was not a proper ground of praise. It was an involuntary result reached by his mind. For the same reason, he who believes in no God, and worships none, he who believes in one God, and worships him, and he who believes in thirty thousand Gods, and worships them, are alike acceptable or unacceptable to the Creator. Such are a few of the monstrous consequences of this huge error.

It has been shown that by the constitution of our natures we receive the testimony of men, that in so doing we act wisely and virtuously, and that if we violate this law of our existence, conscience, mankind and divine providence enforce severe penalties for the transgression. It is impossible for any man to attain the high ends of being or even to maintain that being on earth, unless he will listen to the testimony of others. Let us go a step further. The same law of our constitution, fairly interpreted,

a fortiori, obliges us to receive the testimony of God. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." The Bible claims to be God's testimony to man. It summons men to the investigation of great questions, involving at once the salvation of each man's soul, the general good of the human race, and the glory of our Maker. It declares that God would have our inquiries to be free, fair, thorough, calm and earnest. The tenor of Scripture on this subject is well expressed in such sentences as these: "Come now, let us reason together;" "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say;" "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good;" "In understanding be ye men;" "The truth shall make you free;" "Be ye not as the horse and the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle;" "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself;" "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Larger liberty of inquiry no man of sense could wish for. The sober legitimate use of all our mental powers is encouraged in every proper way. It is true that the Bible represses and forbids all those tempers, which are unfriendly to growth in knowledge. It says: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." This remark is as applicable to a student of nature, of law, or of medicine, as to the student of the Bible. It says: "He that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly;" but the truth here asserted is of universal application. Rashness of mind is no more contrary to religion than to sound philosophy. The Bible warns us against "philosophy falsely so called." Regard to this warning gave to the world the discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and Franklin. If the Bible calls for profound reverence in contemplating religious truths, it is because those things are divine and awful in their own nature. Levity of mind on sacred subjects is in bad taste, and proves that in such matters a man wishes to be a fool. He who sits on the bench during a trial for life, or investigates the question of the truth of Christianity in the same lightness of mind, with which he may throw pebbles into a brook, or spend an hour with the friend of his childhood, is a bad man, and every one, who is not bad, will say so. But the modesty, the caution, the candor, and the reverence, called for in such an inquiry, do not impair our freedom. They are the surest pledges, and the highest guaranties of its perfection.

It has been shown that man is held responsible for his belief in

temporal affairs; why should he be irresponsible where everlasting things are at stake? If in any case I am bound to receive the testimony of an intelligent, honest man, ought I not, in every case, to receive the testimony of God? If erroneous belief in the affairs of this life is mischievous and often fatal, who can show that it will not be equally or more so in the business of the life to come? If the well-being of man on earth requires him to believe the fixed laws of God's natural government, may it not be even more important that he should believe the fixed laws of his moral government? A man heard that the legislature of his State had abolished capital punishment. He committed murder, and under the gallows said he would not have shed innocent blood, if at the time he had believed the penalty was death. His erroneous belief on this one point made him an actual murderer. May it not be as mischievous for a man to disbelieve God, when he says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die?" If man, who is always fallible and often fallacious, must nevertheless in some things be believed, how much more must we believe the true and infallible God? If man's word is ever reliable, God's is always unimpeachable. He commits no mistakes, and is never deceived. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;" "His understanding is infinite;" "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning;" "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do;" "He understandeth the thoughts afar off;" "He searcheth the heart and trieth the reins;" He is omnipresent and omniscient; he knows all causes and all effects; he is in full possession of all the propositions, that constitute universal truth; he knows what is, and was, and is to come, as well as what might have been, might now be, or might hereafter be on any conceivable supposition. He who denies these things must be sent to school to learn Natural Theology. Some of the heathen believed as much of God. Such a witness as God is infinitely fit and competent to testify. If he speak of what shall be, he has infinite power and wisdom to bring it to pass. Failure is out of the question. "To God all things are possible." Nothing is too hard for him. He cannot be defeated. His veracity cannot fail. False testimony is unspeakably abhorrent to the infinite rectitude of his nature. He is a God of truth. Even "if we believe him not, yet he abideth faithful, and cannot deny himself." Natural religion teaches that he is infinitely removed from insincerity and decep-

tion. Despite all his grossness of character, Balaam proclaimed that "God is not a man that he should lie." This truth is never to be yielded. Sound reason unites with revelation in saying, "Let God be true and every man a liar." It is less foolish and less criminal to suspect the truth of all men, than to question the veracity of God. "It is impossible for God to lie." If then we receive the testimony of men, who often deceive and are deceived, is it not much wiser to receive the testimony of God? Could reasoning be fairer?

Nor is there any reasonable presumption against God's making known his will on the highest themes that deserve human thought. He instructs mankind by his works of creation and providence concerning things of comparatively slight importance. He teaches the husbandman when to sow and when to reap, he instructs the mariner when to furl and when to unfurl his sails, he gives men skill in all the useful and ornamental arts, he gives sagacity to statesmen and by them stability to governments. Those who obey the lessons he gives in nature and providence, are so far wise, prosperous and happy. Is it worthy of God to give us such ample and safe lessons concerning the body, health, riches, and the welfare of society, and say nothing of the soul, of the riches that endure to eternal life, and of that boundless existence, which all but brutish men believe to be before them? God is benevolent and knows more than man. It would therefore be worthy of his boundless goodness to teach us. He is our Creator and Law-giver. It is therefore to be expected that he will make known to us his will. There is nothing taught us by Natural Religion, which makes it probable that God cannot or will not reveal to us more than he teaches us in his works. In other words, there is no *a priori* argument of any weight against God's revealing to us his whole will for our salvation. Now if God has spoken to us in the Bible, it is our duty to honor him by believing what he says. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." He has done a very reasonable and proper thing. He has confided in his Maker's word. On the other hand, "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar." No inference could be more logical. He, that believes not man, charges him with speaking what he did not know to be truth, or with uttering what he knew to be false. Not to believe God is to do what in us lies to destroy confidence in his moral character, and to bring his name into contempt among his creatures. Every virtuous man feels

exquisite pain, when his veracity is questioned. No public person, as a judge, or governor, will brook the insult offered by giving him the lie, if he has power to redress it. God is the Judge of all the earth. He is the Governor among the nations. The harmony and happiness of the Universe depends upon the esteem in which he is held. To make him a liar is to offer him the highest kind of insult, and to sow the seeds of mischievous disaffection among his creatures. Confidence in God's veracity gone, all is gone. It is therefore for the best and highest reasons known to mortals that man is held accountable for his belief in the testimony of God.

If God has in the Gospel spoken to man, and man receives not His testimony, then by such unbelief he impeaches the Divine wisdom in the whole plan of salvation. To reject any measure proposed for our good, is to declare it unnecessary, or unsuited to the end proposed. In either case, it is an impeachment of the wisdom of the author of the plan. So, also, to reject God's word is to deny His ability to make good what He has promised or threatened. Unbelief makes the great First Cause inferior to second causes, and subjects the universal Lawgiver to the power of feeble creatures. It also impeaches the Divine kindness in making a revelation. If the Gospel be from heaven, its overtures of reconciliation are the strongest proofs of amazing love. But unbelief pronounces God a hard master, even in requiring the acceptance of proffered grace.

If the Bible be God's word, every candid man must admit that the Divine testimony contained in it is full and clear on the most important subjects. It abundantly teaches that man is by nature and practice a sinner, that he is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, that he is dead in trespasses and sins, that he is in love with sin and at enmity with God, that he is condemned by a law that is holy, just, and good, both in its precepts and in its penalty, that he is without strength, without righteousness, without hope, and without God in the world. If these things be so, it is kindness in God to testify them to us, especially as they are accompanied by offers of grace, mercy, and peace. Illumination, renewal of heart, pardon of sin, acceptance with God, strength to resist temptation, and victory over sin and death, are everywhere proffered in Scripture. Nor is the method of a sinner's recovery to the favor and enjoyment of God concealed, or obscurely handled in the Bible. Jesus Christ, the sole and sufficient cause of salvation to sinners, is clearly revealed. "The

testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." God has spoken of him "by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." "Yea, all the prophets from Samuel, and all that follow after, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days" of Messiah. In the New Testament, Christ is all in all, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. The Scriptures say that he was "equal with God," that "he was God," that he was "the Son of God with power," "the only begotten of the Father," "the Lord from heaven." They call him Messiah, Christ, the Anointed of God, Jesus, or Saviour, the one Mediator between God and man, the Surety of the Covenant, the Redeemer, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the true ark of safety, in which all who are sheltered shall be borne to the eternal mountain of God, when the deluge of Divine wrath shall drown the ungodly world. The testimony of God concerning his Son, as the author of eternal redemption, is given in many forms and with great earnestness, is peculiarly full and clear, is confirmed by the solemnities of an oath, and by many unmistakable tokens. The Bible claims that God long bore "witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." Before the eyes of successive generations for thousands of years its professed predictions have been in a course of apparent fulfilment. Every generation also witnesses very remarkable transformations of character from vice to virtue, from evil to good, which are ascribed to the power of God's testimony concerning his Son. Under the energy of Bible truth, order, reason, law, civilization, benevolence, piety, patience, humility, public spirit, all that can bless society and honor God, reascend their thrones, and sway their sceptres over men. If these things be so, I appeal to you whether there be not good reason and just cause for God's holding that man guilty, who rejects the Divine testimony? Is not man justly held accountable for his belief?

Some, indeed, object to the threatenings of Scripture against unbelievers, and say that they do not like to be frightened out of their unbelief. But may there not be as good reasons in a moral government for threatenings as for promises, for announcing penalties as precepts? The penal clause of every statute is a

threatening to wrong-doers. Ought the people of this commonwealth to turn felons, because the State, through the Legislature, has threatened to punish perjury, burglary, arson, and murder? Are not some men more influenced by the fear of evil than by the hope of good? In times of great temptation, may not the best of men find their virtue in some measure fortified by fear of the penal consequences of evil deeds? The threatenings of Scripture are chiefly to be regarded as kind and timely declarations of the unimpassioned but inflexible purpose of God to maintain his rights and authority at all hazards. The Bible is a code of laws, and God is a moral governor. Laws without penalties are mere advice, and laws without *known* penalties are among men always objected to. Besides, if we understood the connection between causes and effects in the moral world as well as in the natural, we might see that all the misery of which the wicked are forewarned, is the necessary and invariable fruit of sinful conduct here. As refusing food cannot but produce the death of the body, so refusing to receive Christ Jesus, the true bread that came from heaven, may as necessarily produce the death of the soul. The threatenings of Scripture, if true, are as really benevolent as its promises. Their place on the sacred page may heighten the gratitude of those who, by making peace with God, have escaped the wrath to come. They are also useful in awakening the zeal and compassion of those who preach the Gospel, when they see men ready to fall into the hands of a holy and just God. If the consequences of a wicked life were not clearly stated in a revelation, would not those who die in sin forever find fault with a government, that had observed a profound silence on so momentous a matter? Thus the objection appears to have no force. To urge it, is but to cavil.

A modern writer assigns as a reason why man should not be regarded as accountable for his belief, that the opposite doctrine leads to persecution. If man were responsible to his fellow-man *for his religious belief*, then, indeed, those monsters of iniquity who have gloated over the agonies, screams, and mangled limbs of their victims, might plead in their justification the doctrine maintained in this lecture. But the Scriptures teach that God alone is Lord of the conscience. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth," is the terrible rebuke of Scripture to all who invade the Divine prerogative, and undertake to punish men in matters in

which Jehovah has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." The pains and penalties due to misbelief or disbelief of God's testimony, and to all other offences of the same class, can be fitly judged of and condignly inflicted by none but God himself. A more daring outrage cannot be perpetrated by any creature than to rush into the judgment-seat of God, and deal out blows of vengeance for offences, the punishment of which the Almighty has reserved exclusively to himself. In civil and social affairs men may make us feel their just displeasure for our wrong belief, and course of action under it; but in religious affairs an attempt to punish us by the laws and courts of man, deserves the execration of men, and will, I doubt not, receive the reprobation of God. This objection, therefore, vanishes away.

Such is an outline of the argument designed as an introduction to this series of Lectures. Its object is to show that man may reasonably be required to believe sufficient evidence. What evidence is sufficient to oblige us to believe the Bible to be God's word, I shall not state. For purposes of illustration and argument, I have hinted at portions of it. I have also freely quoted the Scriptures, where it seemed important to educe their principles, or where they teach truths assented to by all wise and good men. But I have purposely avoided arguing any of the several kinds of evidence by which Christians suppose the Bible to be proven to be a revelation from God. In due time, each leading point will be discussed by those whom you will be pleased to hear.

The Necessity of a Revelation:

AND

THE CONDITION OF MAN WITHOUT IT.

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ARCHDEACON PALEY, in his "View of the Evidences of Christianity," says, "I deem it unnecessary to prove that mankind stood in need of a revelation, because I have met with no serious person, who thinks that even under the Christian revelation, we have too much light, or any degree of assurance which is superfluous."*

If this view of the subject is correct, it should only be our aim, to establish, from this conceded necessity, the probabilities, or the certainty that a revelation had actually been given to mankind. But if no "serious person" will assert, that man possesses more light than he needs, yet it is notorious, that many do deny the necessity for any supernatural divine communication. Even these, it is true, acknowledge a revelation of some sort, and dignify by that name, their boasted discoveries of truth, from the works of God interpreted by the human reason. This miscalled revelation they hold to be sufficient, and on that ground, reject any other as unnecessary, and therefore improbable. We, on the contrary, by demonstrating the insufficiency of their uncertain and erratic guide, prove the necessity of a supernatural divine communication, and thence, legitimately argue its probability, if not its certainty. The discussion of the former part of this argument, might not fall within the plan of the distinguished Author whom we have quoted. Its omission, however, did not need to be justified by an assumption so unwarranted.

But the argument which Paley pronounces superfluous, Chalmers is disposed to reject as invalid.

"There are some," he says, "who must be satisfied that a revelation is necessary ere they will proceed to inquire whether it is true. There seems to be no logical propriety in this. It presumes a greater acquaintance with the principles and policy of the Divine administration than belongs to us." * * * "We know vastly too little of that mysterious Being who suffered so many

* Paley's Evidences, p. 1.

ages of darkness and depravity to roll on ere that Christianity arose upon our world, and still leaves the great majority of our race unvisited and unblessed by her illuminations—we confess ourselves too unequal to the explanation of such phenomena as these, for confidently saying that because man needed a revelation, therefore, as a matter of necessary inference, a revelation was in all likelihood, if not in all certainty, to be looked for. For ourselves, we do not feel the strength of this argument, and can therefore have little or no value for it.”*

The argument which Dr. Chalmers thus depreciates, is confessedly, one of inference, and it may be granted, that we know too little of God and his government to explain every phenomenon, in his dealings with men, or to pronounce with confidence, what he would do in certain given circumstances. But if in many things, his ways are unsearchable, and his “judgments a great deep,” must we thence conclude, that nothing can be argued *a priori* from his attributes—no inferences can be confidently drawn from what He is? Are our notions of wisdom, goodness and justice, so inapplicable to Jehovah, that we cannot certainly expect the adaptation of means to an end; a benevolent regard to the condition and wants of his creatures, and all necessary arrangements whereby transgressors shall be made, ultimately, to feel and acknowledge the equity of his government? It is not necessary to the validity of arguments thus derived, that by a similar process of reasoning, we should be able to explain, much less to anticipate all the phenomena of the Divine administration. From those attributes which enter into our very idea of a God, we may confidently infer certain results, and yet be unable to conclude anything as to the time, or the mode of their accomplishment. It may be perfectly logical, to infer from the character of God, and the wants of mankind, that a revelation would be granted, and yet for the extent of that revelation, the mode, and the means of its universal diffusion, we may have no other light than that which is derived from its own teachings. Yea, in regard to these things, and such as these, we may be left in the dark even there, and yet it shall militate nothing against the just conviction, from the necessities of the creature, and the known attributes of the Creator, that a revelation of some sort, and at some time, would result. We hold, that from what may be learned of God by the light of nature, together with the demon-

* Chalmers' Evidences, book iii. ch. 1.

strated necessity to mankind of a superior revelation, this inference is fair, is logical, and unavoidable. Dr. Chalmers objects to this, our limited knowledge of the Divine government, and instances some mysterious phenomena, in the actual bestowment of this revelation. That is to say, because we cannot precisely determine, *a priori*, when and how a revelation would be given, therefore, we have no right to the primary inference, that it would be given at all. We may not conclude in favor of the general truth, because the same information will not warrant us, in predicating subordinate, particular truths. But it is obvious, that the two supposed conclusions, stand upon entirely different grounds. The one may baffle our inquiries, and be as far beyond our reach as the wisdom of God is superior to that of man, whilst the other may lie entirely within the scope of legitimate speculation, and be fairly deducible from the known attributes of Jehovah.

I may justly conclude, from the character of a parent, that he will relieve the necessities of a child, and yet with the utmost knowledge of even human nature, I may be unable to decide in advance, how, or when, his parental affection will be manifested. He may have reasons of which I am ignorant, that would vindicate both his wisdom and kindness, in withholding for a time the necessary aid; or if he have many children, he may, in like manner, vary their allotments, and yet give no ground to question his parental affection, to any one who should be admitted into his secret councils. Now, it is not ours to inquire into those deep things of God, which govern his unequal dispensations to mankind. And yet, without trenching at all upon this forbidden ground, assured of his wisdom, goodness, and justice, we may infer, and safely infer, that Jehovah would not leave his erring creatures, wholly and forever, without some surer guide, and higher revelation, than that which they by searching can find out.

It may be admitted, that this argument does not carry with it the urgency of a demonstration, and, to some minds, it has not the force of many others, in the extended and cumulative evidences of Christianity. But it ought not, therefore, to be needlessly given up, for it amounts at least to a presumption, and in some of its aspects, as we hope to show, it becomes a very strong probability, which may not be lightly set aside, by either the advocates or the rejecters of revelation. It may, indeed, be but one of the outworks, which surround the citadel of truth. And regarded with the eye of unbelief, by those who take only distant

and cursory views, of the bulwarks of our faith; or on the other hand, with the feelings of security, common to those who are strongly fortified within: the true position and importance of the argument may be easily overlooked. But in a day like this, when the skeptical tendencies of our nature have the most unbounded scope and license, and our holy religion is menaced, by every variety of stratagem and assault; it becomes us to stand upon the outposts, and yield no point to the pretensions or the arts of unbelief, until it has been fairly proved to be untenable.

Now the argument which we are to examine, may be regarded as a reply to the pretensions of unbelief, claiming the sufficiency of the human reason, as a guide to truth and duty, and therefore rejecting revelation as unnecessary. In this point of view, as a weapon of defence, the argument, if it can be made out, is certainly unexceptionable and conclusive. But it does not stop here, nor should we be content with disproving the boastful claim, wherewith reason would justify her neglect, and rejection of inspired truth. If the insufficiency of her teachings can be shown, that fact more than meets her cavil against revelation, and becomes at once a positive and valid evidence in its favor. We have then "*the necessity of a revelation*," and this, coupled with what reason teaches us of God and his government, constitutes one, and not the least among the probabilities, that a revelation has been granted. In this its affirmative aspect, the argument is two-fold, and its different parts mutually strengthen each other. There is first, the presumption, from the known attributes of God, that he would grant a revelation, to meet the pressing wants of mankind. This, by itself, would only warrant the expectation of some supernatural divine communication, and decides nothing as to the authority of any book claiming that distinction. But it falls also within the scope of the general argument, to mark the adaptations of Scripture, to meet the necessities of our condition, and this, while it adds probability to the foregone presumption, carries with it also, the force of a positive conclusion, that the Bible is indeed a revelation from God.

As to the uses of this argument then, there can be no dispute about the first named. If the light of human reason is not adequate to meet the felt necessities of our nature, there is an end, at once, to the grand assumption upon which all Deistical writers proceed.

That there is force also in the presumptive evidence derived from this fact in favor of a revelation. We argue—

1. From the strenuous efforts of the most philosophical skeptics, in every age, to disprove it.

Though the language of these men is like that of the builders of Babel, a confusion of tongues, yet their object is the same : the subversion of the truth, by superseding its necessity, and erecting a fabric of human folly, pride and power, which shall reach unto the heavens. Let the necessity of a Divine revelation be granted, or proved, and the entire superstructure of these self-styled philosophers will crumble to the earth. Its foundation is laid in the assumption, that nature contains sufficient notices of God, and his government, and sufficiently discernible to the human intelligence, to lead us on to virtue and happiness. In the vaunted fulness and sufficiency of this universal code, they affect to find *prima facie* evidence, that any other must be the invention of designing men, and dishonoring to the Almighty. Some, therefore, to depreciate the disclosures of revelation, exalt their own discoveries. Others, compelled to concede the narrow limits of human knowledge, would persuade us to rest satisfied in our ignorance. And others still, find the goal of all intellectual achievements and the end of all inquiry, in the murky darkness of universal doubt and uncertainty. These, contending that darkness is better than light ; these, that the glimmer of a few straggling stars, is all that we ought to desire ; and those, that the dim twilight of reason is brighter than the noontide splendors of the Gospel.

Now, whence this effort to extinguish the felt necessity of a revelation, and to supersede its teachings, but from the conviction, that this necessity acknowledged, would carry with it, also, a presumption and probability, of a revelation actually given ? The historical argument, indeed, has not been left unassailed, and not a few have been the efforts to impeach the Divine authority of the Scriptures, from their own contents. But underlying all these attempts has been the assumption, that a revelation was unnecessary, and therefore not to be looked for. If the contrary can be shown, as to the premises of this proposition, the converse to the conclusion must also follow, our enemies themselves being judges.

2. The presumption drawn from the necessities of our condition, acquires additional force, from the actual expectation, based upon these necessities, of the best cultivated minds of ancient heathenism, that a revelation would be given.

The mind struggling after truth unrevealed, soon finds the limit

of its attainment, and longs for superior aid. It is when the discoveries of revelation are connected with unwelcome truths, and its authority enforces ungrateful precepts, that a human philosophy seeks some pretext to discard it. Then, often availing herself of so much of its light as shall serve to define her own vague impressions, she vaunts her ability, in discovering the rudiments of religion, and elaborating these, into an attenuated system of morality, she arrogantly propounds it, as the perfection of wisdom. It was not among those who were left only to its guidance, that the sufficiency of the human reason was asserted. It was not till called to grapple with the claims of the Bible, as an inspired book, that men learned to deny the necessity of a Bible. So far as there is any speculation upon the subject, man's need of supernatural guidance is felt, where it is not enjoyed, and the religions of heathenism, universally, contain the formal confession of this need. The only vitality which they have, and which for so long has animated the enormous mass of their monstrous errors, is the perverted truth of God in communication with man. It is because the mind yields to this truth, with almost instinctive readiness, that the mystic leaves of the Sibyl, and the vague responses of the raving Pythoness, obtained any credit in the world. We may wonder at the credulity of even a classic age, which could be decided, upon the most momentous undertakings, by the casual flight of a bird; the relative position of the stars; or the yet more indeterminate auguries derived from the entrails of a beast. But the foundation for a belief so absurd, is laid deep in the constitution of our nature. These were but the erratic goings forth of the mind, after a supernatural guidance, from the impressed conviction that man needed, and might expect, the direction of Heaven. The sagacity of civil rulers enabled them to practise upon this impression, and invest their enactments with the sanction of Divine authority. Much more have the founders of false religions always claimed for their teachings a direct revelation, and found the claim easily admitted. If a few gifted minds, in an age bordering upon "the fulness of the times," were able to discover, and to discard this empty pretence, it was not without a confession of the actual and apparent necessity upon which it was based; it was not without the expression of a hope, more prophetic than the oracles, that that necessity would, at some time, be met. In the monuments of the brightest minds of antiquity, there are found several passages, containing, at once, the confession of their ignorance,

and the felt necessity of a Divine interposition. "The truth is," says Plato, "to determine or establish anything certain about these matters, in the midst of so many doubts and disputations, is the work of God only." Again, in his apology for Socrates, he puts these words into the mouth of the sage, "You may pass the remainder of your days in sleep, or despair of finding out a sufficient expedient for this purpose (the reformation of manners); if God, in his providence, do not send you some other instruction." But the most remarkable passage, is in the well-known dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades, on the duties of religious worship. Alcibiades is going to the temple to pray, Socrates meets him, and dissuades him, because of his inability to manage the duty aright. "To me," he says, "it seems best to be quiet; it is necessary to wait till you learn how you ought to behave towards the gods, and towards men." "And when, O Socrates! shall that time be, and who will instruct me," says the wondering disciple, "for gladly would I see this man, who he is?" "He is one," replies Socrates, "who cares for you; but, as Homer represents Minerva taking away the darkness from the eyes of Diomedes, that he might distinguish a god from a man, so it is necessary that he should first take away the darkness from your mind, and then bring near those things, by which you shall know good and evil." "Let him take away," rejoins Alcibiades, "if he will, the darkness, or any other thing, for I am prepared to decline none of those things, which are commanded by him, whoever this man is, if I shall be made better." Such were the utterances of nature's longings, for that revelation which has since been given to the world.

3. In favor of the presumptive argument, for which we contend, we remark again, that the expectation thus expressed, is justly founded upon the known attributes of God.

Let it be observed here, however, that the idea of obligation on the part of God, to bestow the desired boon upon mankind, is utterly excluded by the origin and nature of that necessity under which they labor. The revelation, of whatever kind it was, given to man at his creation, though measured by his wants, was not granted as his right. No such claim can be based upon the mere relation of creatures to their Creator: much less can it be made out, in favor of those, who originally endowed, have "become vain in their imaginations," and whose "foolish hearts" are thereby "darkened."

Nevertheless, there may be a well-founded expectation of a desired good, where there is no valid claim to its enjoyment. Such an expectation will be more general or defined, according to the extent of our knowledge. If derived from obscure analogies it is indefinite and vague, and therefore only partially fulfilled by the event, yet the event which disappoints it in part, may at the same time justify the reasoning upon which it was built. I may know enough of God and his government to infer the probability of a revelation, and yet the very analogies from which I reason, will themselves teach me, that I do not know enough to anticipate beforehand, the extent or mode of that revelation. If, then, passing beyond the only conclusion which my information will warrant, I go about to form a definite conception of my own, as to the *how*, or the *when*, of this supposed revelation, the event may entirely disappoint all such expectations, and yet by fulfilling, justify, the primary inference.

It is by these considerations, that we vindicate our argument from the objection, that God has not given to all men a revelation, though all men are under a like necessity. If a revelation is to be inferred from the condition of men, it may be said, that a universal revelation ought to be inferred, since all men are in this respect in the same condition. But as all have not been blessed with the light of the truth, the fact is, therefore, in opposition to the inference. Now, if the argument necessarily implied, that man's necessities constituted a claim upon his Maker; or if it professed to proceed upon so clear a knowledge of Jehovah's purpose, as to determine beforehand, the extent and mode of any Divine communication, this objection would be fatal. But as man has no claim of right, and can expect the desired boon only as the bestowment of grace, he cannot know beforehand, that God will make no distinctions in its bestowment. He cannot anticipate the degree, or any one circumstance in the manner of imparting the supposed revelation. Such detailed and definite expectations are not warranted by his information. Their being disappointed by the event, therefore, can in no way impair the force of an inference, justly derived from ascertained premises. To say that there are considerations which warrant the expectation of a Divine revelation, is one thing: but to say furthermore, that such a revelation if given, will be universal, is a very different assertion, and one which would require a very different set of analogies to prove it.

Assuming then, the necessity of our condition, we argue, that

the expectation of a Divine revelation is justly founded upon what may be known of God and his government.

In the exercise of those attributes which are deemed essential to every reasonable conception of God, he has created man with a physical, intellectual, and moral nature. With varied dispensations towards races, and ages, and individuals, we yet find that he has made ample provision for man's physical and intellectual wants. The earth, though bearing the marks of changes, unfriendly to its products and its clime, and in some of its wide-spread regions yielding a precarious, and in some a scanty, and in all a seemingly reluctant support to her teeming populations, is yet, by evident design, adapted to man's physical constitution. The very difficulties of its climate and soil, requiring skill and labor to overcome them, as they stimulate to exertion, furnish also "verge and scope" for the exercise of his intelligence. If gifted with faculties seeking a wider range than the daily supply of his necessary wants, he is surrounded also with objects appealing to his curiosity and inviting his research: he is in the midst of a world of wonders which ages would be too short to explore, and himself the greatest wonder of them all. If, with still more adventurous thought, he would rise from the actual to the probable, and from a real to an imagined existence, his discursive fancy may weave into unnumbered combinations the elements of being, or a bold speculation may busy itself in conjecturing or discovering the reasons of things. By the wise arrangements of the Creator, there is then abundant employ and a rich reward to the utmost stretch of his intellectual powers. But man has no less certainly a moral, than he has a physical and intellectual nature. There is that within him which recognizes the distinction of right and wrong, and gives no unequivocal notice of his accountability. Yea, he has a religious nature; a sense of the Divine existence, if you will, which, not until he has reasoned himself into metaphysical madness, or besotted his soul by long habits of sensuality, will permit him to say in his heart "there is no God," or leave him wholly insensible to the obligation of his worship.

Might we not then expect, from the analogy of his dealings in other things, that God would make provision also for this part of man's nature? And might we not expect it the more, by as much as this is the highest and most distinguishing element of his complex being? Is it conceivable, that whilst caring for all

his subordinate wants, as he manifestly has, God should leave him unprovided in this the most essential want of his nature: that he should leave him with the consciousness of obligation and accountability, and yet uninstructed in the relation which he sustains to his Maker, and the paramount duties growing out of that relation?

It is a monstrous supposition, which sober Deism itself would reject, with indignant scorn. And yet on the assumption that man needs a revelation, by just so much as this supposition is at war with right reason, and the analogies of the divine government, by so much the opposite presumption gathers strength and force—that a revelation would be granted. The Deist would, of course, contend that God had made ample provision for man's moral and religious nature without a revelation. But we are arguing now upon the assumption that he has not, and we say, that that assumption being granted, or the fact being proved, even Deism itself must admit that a revelation is probable.

Now thus much, we have deemed it necessary to say, towards exhibiting in advance, the nature and strength of that presumptive argument, which from the necessities of our condition, infers a revelation. Standing thus by itself, the argument, of course, claims not to have the urgency of a demonstration. But establishing a probability, that probability may serve as a link in the chain of induction, which binds us down to a positive and unavoidable conclusion. We have intimated already, that the inference of a revelation as probable from its alleged necessity, is but a part of the general argument in its affirmative aspect. The expectation of a revelation brings us to the Book itself, and we come to the investigation of its claims, not as if it were an unlooked-for phenomenon, but as to an event, which from its antecedent probability, has already an established title to our credence; a title which can only be set aside by being actually disproved. There is here a presumptive claim which casts the *onus probandi* upon the opposite party. Arrived at this presumption, we hold then that the argument has made progress, and the evidence of revelation in any of its departments gains force and urgency from this foregone probability.

But the probability thus derived especially leads us—and in the attitude of expectants, an attitude perfectly compatible with exemption from prejudice—to examine the claims of any supposed revelation, with particular reference to those necessities on account

of which it was given. And if we find in the Bible an adaptation to the felt wants of our spiritual nature, we are brought to the direct conclusion, upon the principles of Deism itself, that the Bible is a revelation from God. For just as we argue from the adaptations of external nature, a designing cause, we may also argue from the adaptations of Scripture its supernatural and Divine origin. As conclusively as in the one case, these adaptations prove the being of a God; those, in the other case, transcending as they do, the discoveries of the human intelligence, prove the Bible to be from Him. Thus much, Dr. Chalmers fully concedes, and in conceding it, shows that his previous exceptions can only hold against those defective representations of the argument, which make of the presumption a certainty, or suppose the reasoning to stop short at the inference, and passing over the intermediate steps, to leap at once from the bare probability of a revelation, to the conclusion that the Bible is that revelation. It is only with reference to such a view that we can understand him as saying that "the argument is altogether premature if we base it upon the necessity alone." We may certainly base upon the necessity the strong presumption which we have considered, and that presumption leading us to examine and find the perfect adaptations of Scripture to our felt necessities, we may thus "arrive at the truth of the gospel through the medium of its necessity," and by "a pathway" too, sufficiently "solid" for even the Herculean tread of a Chalmers. "The fitness of the Bible," he says, "or of the truths which are in it, to the necessities of the human spirit, may as clearly evince the hand of a designer in the construction of this volume, as the fitness of the world, or of the things which are in it, evinces the same hand in the construction of external nature. They are both cases of adaptation, and the one is just as good an argument for a revealed as the other is for a natural theology."

If we have occupied considerable space in exhibiting the true ground and scope of our argument, it is not more than seemed to be required by the treatment which it has received. If we have succeeded in establishing its logical propriety and force, and marking out the track by which it advances to a just and definite conclusion, we shall follow, with the greater interest and satisfaction, the several steps of its progress.

The main question is now before us, and we shall endeavor to substantiate what we have hitherto assumed.

THE NECESSITY OF A REVELATION.

In exhibiting the proofs of this necessity, we shall have no occasion to depreciate the powers of the human reason; to overlook its achievements in the varied departments of knowledge, or to deprecate its most unfettered exercise. There is no such antagonism between reason and revelation, as that the claims of the one, can only be made good at the expense of the other. It is to the reason that Christianity addresses itself, as a system claiming to be Divine. It is the province of reason to judge of its credentials. And it is always the faith of a rational conviction which our religion demands. Reason has, then, an important office to perform, not only in natural theology, but also in supernatural. It is her province, by deductions from the works and the ways of God, to lead the inquirer on to the vestibule of truth. It is hers to enter with him into the temple itself, and pointing out the glories and beauties of the inner sanctuary, it is hers, together with her disciple, to bow in adoring reverence at its shrine.

The question is not, whether reason can teach us anything concerning God and duty, but whether she can, unaided, teach us everything which it is necessary for us to know;—not whether she has any light, but whether she has light enough, to dispel the darkness which envelopes our condition and our destiny. Her instructions may be authentic and truthful, but at the same time they may be indefinite and incomplete. Her light may be light from heaven, and yet, like the lightning's fitful flash, or the pale glimmer of the stars, it may only reveal our danger, without revealing also the way of escape.

Nor is it our purpose, in this discussion, to portray the horrors of heathenism, ancient or modern, and presenting the dark picture of its degrading rites, disgusting manners, and cruel maxims, to bid you look upon this as the utmost effort of the unaided reason. Your whole moral nature, revolted at the appalling spectacle, would recoil from the assertion, that this was the last and highest result of reason's struggle after truth. You would say, and justly say, that it is not amid barbarous and savage tribes we are to find the measure of our intellectual and moral attainments, any more than we would look for the perfection of our physical nature among the dwarfed, deformed, and crippled inmates of a lazaretto. And yet the horrors of heathenism have their lesson upon this subject; a lesson which we cannot ignore or escape. They reveal

to us, at least, the depths of that abyss into which erring humanity may plunge, if left to its own guidance. Moreover, account for this monstrous departure from the principles of even natural theology as you may, the tremendous fact is still before you, the incontestable evidence, that reason is not universally an adequate guide. If it could be proved that, in any case, her discoveries were commensurate with our wants, it must still be admitted that to millions of the race, and for countless ages together, she has not served as a guide to even the rudiments of truth ; she has not saved them from the utmost degradation of which our nature is capable.

But turning from savage to civilized society ; from the barbarous and semi-barbarous to the most enlightened and polished nations and ages of antiquity, the result of our inquiry will be scarcely more flattering to the pretensions of reason as a sole guide in religion. There is room to believe, and ground for the assertion, that the most eminent sages and philosophers were more indebted for any just views of the being and attributes of God, and the relations and obligations of man, to immemorial tradition, the lingering light of the original, or the scattered rays of the Mosaic revelation, than to their own independent discoveries. And yet, with all this extraneous aid, how meagre and imperfect their systems at best ; how inoperative in restraining and removing the idolatry and superstition of the masses. Upon the primary questions of natural theology, their doctrines were obscure, and conjectural, and contradictory. Upon all that pertains to the worship of God, they were silent, from a confessed incompetence to speak, or acquiescent in absurdity, because ignorant of a more excellent way. Upon questions vital to man's happiness, both here and hereafter, the great problems of his origin and his destiny, they were content with the wildest dreams of poetry, or despairing of a satisfactory solution, they awaited in dread uncertainty the disclosures of hereafter.

The question of reason's competence might fairly and safely be rested upon her actual achievements, or more properly speaking, upon her obvious failures, in the ages preceding the advent of the Son of God. The philosophers of the Academy, the Porch, and the Grove, must be admitted, on all hands, as the competent witnesses and examples of her power. They lived in an age of learning and of leisure ; they walked and talked amid the noblest creations of art ; and their lives, devoted to philosophy, were spent beneath the shadow of Parnassus, and beside the cool flowing

streams of Helicon. And yet, what is their concurrent testimony, direct and indirect, but the unequivocal and unanswerable evidence, that "the world by wisdom knew not God."

But it may be alleged, that in this, as in other respects, the world has grown wiser, as it has grown older; that science has made progress in these latter days, and penetrating farther into the arcana of nature, reason has been able to strike out new light and discover new truths concerning God and his government. Not, therefore, to the sages of antiquity, but to modern philosophy, the appeal should be made. Be it so; we have nothing to object against this transfer of the inquiry, if so the inquiry shall be properly conducted. But we must put in a caveat here, lest the light of revelation should be confounded with the deductions of reason.

It is a notorious and instructive fact that the most full and conclusive systems of natural theology, extant in the world, have been constructed by Christian writers. And the reason is obvious. There is an immense difference between gathering up and marshalling the proofs, which go to establish an ascertained conclusion, and marching up by a long line of existent but scattered evidence to the same conclusion, as yet undiscovered. It is just the difference between a demonstration and a discovery—the one may be comparatively easy, to those with whom the other is simply impossible. To say then, that in the unaided exercise of reason, human philosophy, in the nineteenth century, is capable of constructing a system of doctrine and morals which shall be exempt, by its superior elevation and purity, from many of the objections which lie against the various systems of antiquity, is to assert what cannot be proved by the simple production of such a system. Philosophy has now for nineteen centuries lived and breathed, under the light of revelation. And for her now, to claim as discoveries of her own, truths long ago announced, and found that claim upon her ability to demonstrate what has been known for ages and demonstrated too, would only be equalled in absurdity, by one who in this day, having sailed from Europe to America, should claim, on the ground of that exploit, to have discovered a continent. The question is not, what can be proved by reasoning to be true; but what in its unaided exercise the reason can discover.

What, then, has modern philosophy whereof to boast, over the sages of antiquity, beyond that, which she owes to the light of revelation? We are not advised of any new principle in morals

evolved by the progress of physical science. If there has been a more complete analysis and classification of our mental exercises, neither has this changed the quality of actions, or added a single precept to the code of human obligations. More just and exalted conceptions of God and his government may now enter into the speculations of philosophy. But we claim it for revelation to have originated those conceptions, and the claim can only be disproved by authenticated examples of the like, which cannot be traced directly or indirectly to the influence of its teachings.

There are many truths to which the mind readily assents as soon as they are proposed, and for the establishing of which it can easily gather up abundant and conclusive evidence, but which yet lie upon the very borders, if not actually beyond the limit of its discovery.

Like Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream, there may be some lingering and indefinite recollections, not enough to recall the embodiment or the outline of the departed image, though assisted by all the arts of the magicians and the wise men of the world ; and yet enough to recognize it instantly when it is made to stand out in all its proportions of gold and silver and brass and iron, by the revelation of the Prophet. So there may be lingering lines and traces of the Divine character, written upon the heart, and written upon the external creation, which by the light of nature alone, men cannot read for themselves, but which illumined by the light of revelation become at once the legible and impressive records of God and his government. And under the clear shining of a sun, in the heavens, the philosophy of our day may decipher these records, and expatiate through all the fields of natural theology, and attain to some exalted conceptions of God and duty, the while discarding, but not the less indebted to that supernatural light, by which all her inquiries have been directed to a just conclusion. But the question of her capacity, is not to be settled by ascertaining how much of truth she can demonstrate, but how much she can discover.

Now, to settle this question, the only legitimate appeal is to experience. We must judge of what man can do, by what he has actually done ; and accurately to judge, it must be by what he has done under circumstances which preclude the suspicion of aid derived from that revelation which he discards. Under any known circumstances, indeed, his efforts must be regarded with the unavoidable impression of a lingering tradition, more or less

defined, which had its origin in a higher source than his own intelligence. But subsequent to the advent of the Son of God, the dim remains of tradition have given place to the effulgence of Gospel truth. And, under the blaze of this truth, the whole field of inquiry has been so illumined, that even the skepticism which has most wilfully shut its eyes, and, mole-like, has burrowed the deepest, has still found its caverns, to some extent, lighted up by its rays. Reason cannot now, if she would, construct a system of natural theology, which shall be the product alone of her own deductions. Truly to find out her power, we must go back to the theologies of antiquity, or we must take our estimate from the abominations of that heathenism which has as yet been unvisited by the light of revelation.

But to vindicate our argument to the fullest extent, and establish the inadequacy of reason, it is not needful to press this advantage, or insist upon the inquiry taking either of these directions. Natural theology, in its highest development, is yet inadequate to meet the obvious and felt wants of humanity.

1. And it is so, first, because its teachings are so diverse, and therefore uncertain, concerning even the first principles of religion. Those of its disciples who have carried their speculations the farthest, and whose circumstances have been the most favorable for the discovery of truth, are by no means agreed in their doctrines, or in the processes by which the truth is to be reached. To a great extent, the history of modern philosophy has been the history of motion without progress; conflicts and victories without conquests; deductions and dogmas without discoveries; the rise, prevalence, and decadence of systems, without satisfaction, certainty, or safety to the inquirer. From the ample and diversified page of nature without, and the irregular actings and agitations of the spirit within, as the data of their investigations, each one has had his interpretation, his theory, his dream, until, in the endless jargon of the schools, the mind bewildered, has accepted words for wisdom, sound for sense, and the latest as the greatest and the best exposition of truth.

(1.) Take, for example, the teachings of philosophy concerning the being and attributes of God, and from the polytheism of Greece, to the pantheism of Germany, where did ever her deductions meet and centre in a Divinity,

"A God full orb'd,
In the whole round of rays complete,"

worthy the worship of an ingenuous mind, and meeting all its aspirations and desires? The light of nature, to those who have followed it only, has not always brought the conviction of that cardinal truth, the existence of a God. Thus, one disciple of reason would solve his doubts by a silly experiment, and he staked his faith in this article upon the issue of throwing a stone at a tree, whether he should hit it or not. And another, a poet, not unknown to fame, amid the inspirations of Alpine scenery, deliberately writes himself an atheist. But, convinced that *God is*, there remains still the question, "What is God?" And philosophy, not in all her disciples exhibiting the modesty of a Thales, has yet exhibited her incompetence to reply, in every attempted answer to that question. Surveying the vast, complicated, and yet admirably adjusted and harmonious mechanism of the universe, she returns from her research to tell us of a mechanical God: the artificer of worlds and systems; known to his creatures only by the evidence of skill and contrivance, in every organization of matter. Turning, then, to the world within—the chaos of human emotions and passions—and from the heights of abstract contemplation, looking down upon the actings and agitations of the heart, she deifies the less degrading elements of character, and presents us with the God of sentimentality; the Divinity of the imagination; an apotheosis of some hero of romance. Again, constrained by unaccountable events, and phenomena that fall not within the operation of ascertained laws, to acknowledge some constant connection between God and his works, and yet shrinking from the implied personal supervision and control of a universal Governor; by the potent alembic of her sophistries, she forthwith transmutes both the God of sentimentality and the Creator of the universe into the universe itself; "a power without personality, an essence without feeling;" the dream-God of modern pantheism.

"Man must have a God." But if left to himself, by searching to find Him out, he will form his own divinity, and he will make it a god after his own image. Or, if made sensible of the absurdity of deifying his own tastes and desires, and disgusted with a Divinity which bears so strong a likeness to himself, he seeks to rise to a more exalted conception of God; in the mazes of speculation he elaborates an ethereal essence, too impalpable and unreal to be the object of human love or aversion. Embodying, then, a vague, unintelligible idea, in the amplitude of high-sound-

ing words and phrases—as an idle fancy gives colossal shape and limbs to the mist-cloud of a summer morning, he virtually vacates the throne of the Eternal, enthroning there the phantom of his brain.

Listen for a moment to the oracular utterances of a High Priest of modern philosophy. “Thy life, as alone the finite mind can conceive it, is self-forming, self-representing will, which clothed to the eye of the mortal with multitudinous sensuous forms, flows through me and the whole immeasurable universe—here streaming as self-creating matter through my veins and muscles—there pouring its abundance into the tree, the flower, the grass.”*

We may cease to smile at the narrow and distorted conceptions of God—the deities of an earlier and darker age, when in our own there emanates from the schools of philosophy, such sublimated nonsense as this.

(2.) In the department of morals, the teachings of philosophy are no less diversified and inadequate. If it were true, as has been asserted, that every cardinal precept of the Bible, may be found somewhere in the writings of some one or other of uninspired men; yet they would also be found scattered too widely, to be gathered into a system, modified and neutralized by contradictory doctrines; and founded upon such different and debatable grounds of obligation, as materially to weaken, if not wholly to destroy their weight and authority. The mind bewildered in its notions of God, can never have clear and settled conceptions of duty.

(3.) So also concerning futurity, reason can give us nothing but diversified conjectures. Granted, that her deductions are so direct and conclusive, as to leave the conviction of an existence beyond the grave, yet it is at best, a conviction, which may be characterized as an apprehension rather than a hope. Until some traveller returns from the unseen regions of the dead, or a revelation from God lifts the veil which intercepts our views, imagination may picture its scenes in the dreams of poetry, and conscience may anticipate its reversions with alarm; but reason can never pronounce with certainty or satisfaction.

2. But even though we should grant that, to a few gifted minds, the toil of patient and profound investigation might be rewarded by the discovery of all necessary truth; yet their deductions, lying far beyond the reach of the mass of mankind, and clothed

* Fichte. See McCosh, on “Method of Divine Government.”

with no manifest authority from heaven, must be wholly inoperative as restraints, and entirely inadequate as guides.

The utmost that can be claimed for natural religion, implies in its disciples, an extent of intelligence, reflection and reasoning, to which the great mass of mankind never attain. And though the maxims of the few may be delivered to the many, yet regarded only as the opinions of men, they have always failed to preserve public morals and order.

The reign of terror, in France, was the jubilee of unbelief. Revelation discarded, and Christianity proscribed, natural religion had an open field, in which to work out its results, and make full proof of its power. In an age of learning and refinement; an age of distinguished progress in science and the arts, at a period bordering upon the nineteenth century; and in the fairest capital of Europe, with philosophers for its priests, the temples of God for its altars, and unlimited power and wealth for its support; what was the result? The story has been often told, and in the annals of the world's history it will stand a record to all coming time, of human depravity unrestrained, misery unmitigated, and crimes without a parallel. Atheism, practical and avowed, obliterated all reverence for the being and authority of God; lust and cruelty triumphed over prostrate order and virtue; a cannibal fury trampled upon the instincts of nature; and with hands dripping gore, with banners inscribed with names of blasphemy, and with bacchanal songs upon their lips, a phrenzied people march to the very altars of religion, to crown and consummate their extravagance of impiety, by enthroning a harlot as the goddess of reason!

That such excesses are at variance with the principles of natural religion, and the dictates of right reason, will not be denied. We appeal to them, not as the examples of what reason would teach, but as the examples of depravity triumphing over reason, when, discarding revelation, she exalts herself as the guardian and guide of public morals. We appeal to them as the instances, in which the fountain of iniquity in the human heart has poured out the tide of its bitter waters, sweeping away the frail barriers which human philosophy had reared; overflowing its ancient channels, and ploughing up the very foundations of society. Take away the hold which revelation has upon the conscience, and the elaborate theories, profound maxims, and admired precepts which a philosopher may excogitate in his

study, will fall as powerless upon the ear of an excited populace, as falls the snow-flake upon the billows of the storm-ridden ocean. Even Robespierre confessed, that to save France from lapsing back into barbarism, it was necessary to find a God, or to invent one. And when the far-reaching sagacity of Napoleon restored the former religion, in spite of the scorn and ridicule of the philosophers, it was well said by one of his counsellors, "The natural religion to which one may rise by the effects of a cultivated reason, is merely abstract and intellectual, and unfit for any people. It is revealed religion which points out all the truths that are useful to men, who have neither time nor means for laborious disquisition."

3. But we have now arrived at a point in the argument, from whence we may take higher ground. We have alluded to the confessed inadequacy of the unaided reason, as discovered in the varied religions of heathenism. We have considered her achievements, when receiving important, but unacknowledged aid, from the revelation which she discards; and we have found that, even then, her discoveries and her influence have not been equal to her pretensions. Let us now estimate her teachings under the most favorable circumstances, when the whole field of investigation is lighted up by revelation, and when her inquiries are all directed towards ascertained conclusions.

The question is not now what reason can discover, but what she can *prove to be true*. So far as the character and government of God are manifested in his works, nature, rightly interrogated, always gives truthful answers. The incompetency of the unaided reason, as it has thus far appeared, is to be ascribed mainly to the misdirection of her inquiries, and the lameness of her deductions. The accumulated experience of the past, therefore, proves the necessity of a revelation, by as much as it proves that reason never would have discovered even those truths which the volume of nature contains. With that volume before him, written all over with the handwriting of God, man has not been able to read the truth, or if he has, by the potency of an evil heart, he has also "changed the truth of God into a lie."

But let nature have an interpreter, and yet we hold, that when interrogated in every part by an instructed reason, her responses will be too few to satisfy our wants—wants increasing with our knowledge. It was the wise and profound saying of D'Alembert, that "man has too little sagacity to resolve an infinity of ques-

tions, which he has yet sagacity enough to make." Now this appears to be precisely the case with Natural Theology. There is a limit to her instructions, beyond which she cannot carry us; and yet beyond that limit lie unresolved the most momentous questions of our condition and destiny. Natural Theology brings us to these questions, and leaves us there. She states the conditions of the problem, but gives us no solution. She sets before us the difficulty and the danger, but she points to no way of escape, except as her silence, when further interrogated, intimates the necessity, and inspires the hope of another and safer guide.

Let us look at a few facts, and the conclusions to which they lead.

There is in man a certain law, faculty, or sentiment (call it by what name you please) in obedience to which he universally recognizes the distinction of right and wrong. This is one of the most obvious facts in human nature. It may have been obscured, at times, by the speculations of philosophy, but, throughout the whole circle of metaphysics, the fact has still been acknowledged, whilst the contention has been about questions of nomenclature, or theories of explanation. As little has philosophy invaded the generally conceded and felt supremacy of conscience. "Upon whatever," says Dr. Adam Smith, "we suppose that our moral faculties are founded, whether upon a certain modification of reason, upon an original instinct called a moral sense, or on some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted that they are given us for the direction of our conduct in this life." "The rules, therefore, which they prescribe, are to be regarded as the command and laws of the Deity, promulgated by those vicegerents which he has set up within us."* Cicero, in his celebrated passage, represents the conscience, in like manner, as a universal law, clothed with Divine sanctions. "Nor does it speak one language at Rome and another at Athens, varying from place to place, or from time to time, but addresses itself to all nations, and to all ages, deriving its authority from the common Sovereign of the universe, and carrying home its sanctions to every breast by the inevitable punishment which it inflicts on transgressors." "Had it strength," says Butler, "as it has right, had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world." Its right to the throne of the human heart

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. iii. chap. v.

is acknowledged, even when that throne has been usurped by some dominant inclination or passion.

"Cast your eyes," says Rousseau, "over all the nations of the world, and all the histories of nations. Amid so many inhuman and absurd superstitions—amid that prodigious diversity of manners and characters, you will find everywhere the same principles and distinctions of moral good and evil. The paganism of the ancient world produced, indeed, abominable gods, who on earth would have been shunned or punished as monsters, and who offered, as a picture of supreme happiness, only crimes to commit, and passions to satiate. But Vice, armed with this sacred authority, descended in vain from the eternal abode: she found, in the heart of man, a moral instinct to repel her. The continence of Xenocrates was admired by those who celebrated the debaucheries of Jupiter,—the chaste Lucretia adored the unchaste Venus,—the most intrepid Roman sacrificed to Fear."*

Now these quotations are given, not so much to establish, as to express a truth, to which the consciousness of every man responds, that there is within his breast a power, principle, or sentiment, which recognizes moral distinctions, and delivers its decisions with the authority of a judge, and with the high sanctions of present and prospective pain or pleasure.

But from this truth, we easily rise to another. The monitions of conscience imply a rule of duty, and a ground of obligation. The acknowledged supremacy of conscience, even where its dictates are disobeyed, is the confession that this obligation is paramount, and this law is heaven-derived. The sentences pronounced by this judge within the breast, are felt to be the echoes from a higher tribunal. And the sanctions with which they are clothed, proclaiming the Divine regard for virtue, and aversion to sin, proclaim also the righteousness of God, and a moral government administered by Him, connected with rewards and penalties. If, from the constitution of external nature, we infer the wisdom and power of God, so, from the original moral constitution of man, we may also infer other and higher attributes. And if upon that constitution he has impressed the law of righteousness, we may be sure "it must have been transcribed from the prior tablet of his own nature."

But, it may be objected, the decisions of conscience are too diversified and contradictory to warrant this inference. The

* Quoted by Dr. Brown, Lect. 75.

apparent want of uniformity in our moral judgments will not be denied; an examination of the facts, however, would show that this diversity is more apparent than real. The conscience, like a court of law, decides upon an action according to the evidence laid before it, and if it ever approves the wrong, or disapproves the right, it is because the understanding has presented a false issue to its decision, being itself either misinformed or misled.

But if we look a little more closely into the operations of conscience, we shall find that its sanctions do not terminate with the present pleasure or pain, consequent upon its approval or disapproval. For the time being, its voice may be so far overborne by the turbulence of passion, as hardly to awaken the sensibilities. But when its sentence falls upon the heart, like the voice of doom, and its reproaches, like a whip of scorpions, yet its inflictions always imply something more than any measure or degree of present remorse. Memory has recorded the deed of guilt, and whenever the record is perused, conscience repeats its sentence, and re-enacts its punishment. Nor is this all. In every decision of this judge upon any particular act, whether it be for the first, or for the fiftieth time, the pleasure of its approval is always linked to the inspiration of hope, and the pain of its condemnation is enhanced by the apprehensions of fear. Thus conscience herself proclaims, that her sentence and her sanctions are not ultimate, but the prognostics and precursors of higher rewards, or heavier vengeance, consequent upon the final sentence of the infinite Judge.

Now, it is in full view of these ascertained truths;—that God is a righteous moral governor, and will maintain the distinction of right and wrong, in the administration of his government, by rewarding the one and punishing the other; that conscience, yet further, pronounces upon the character of every man, and its verdict, in regard to the individual, is always, *Guilty!* This, her sentence, is recorded in every breast, and for the proofs of the fact, we have but to refer to every man's consciousness. Such, then, is our condition, according to the teachings of natural theology;—there is a righteous God, administering a government of retributive justice, and by the testimony of our own hearts, we are *guilty* in his sight: and, yet more;—this consciousness of guilt brings terror in its train. We feel that the disapproval of conscience is not the ultimate punishment; is not all that we deserve; but is itself the confession, that we deserve some-

thing beyond it. The guilty mind turns involuntarily towards the future, and, unable to penetrate its darkness, looks upon its darkness with instinctive apprehension. So far as past experience or observation throws any light upon that darkness, it serves but to heighten that apprehension. For, whenever we have suffered what may be styled the natural consequences of sin, in the pains and penalties attendant upon a violation of the laws of our nature, we have not found any degree of present suffering, satisfying the demands of conscience, or silencing its voice; but the rather awaking its sterner rebukes, and its more fearful denunciations. And when, in others, we have seen the consequences of a single sin, or a series, mysteriously interwoven throughout the whole history of life, and bringing down accumulated sorrows upon hoary age, the conscience of hoary age has still re-enacted its sentence, and, in the very hour of dissolution, it has still thundered through the chambers of the soul the verdict of *Guilty!*

And this brings us to still another fact, which, together with the preceding, will give us the true conditions of a problem, which natural theology may propound, but cannot solve.

It is manifest, from the constitution of our nature, and the dispensations of Providence, that God exercises a moral government over the world. But it is equally plain, that, in this present world, the sanctions of that government are not fully developed. We see enough to conclude that He is a God that "loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity," and yet we do not see a system of rewards and punishments, invariably meting out to individuals according to their deserts. The spectacle of flourishing impiety and suffering virtue, whilst not so constant as to unsettle the conviction of a righteous government, is yet too common to admit the supposition that present allotments are its ultimate rewards. But from the manifest tokens of retribution on the one hand, and the occasional discrepancies between character and condition on the other, there is but one conclusion to be derived. We live under a moral government, which, as to its sanctions, is not yet fully developed. Conscience has pronounced its sentence, but the execution is postponed. Analogous to those cases, in which the transgressor enjoys for years a seeming impunity, until suddenly the consequences of his sin overtake him, so there may be reserved for a futurity beyond the grave, the punishment of sin which has passed through life with a seeming exemption. The difficulties which surround the administration of Divine Providence, demand

this explanation ; and conscience confirms it, by those presages of the future, which still attend the sinner down to the very gates of the grave ; there she dismisses him from all further sorrow and suffering on earth, and yet she sends him thence into eternity, with the verdict of "*Guilty*" upon his soul, to await the final award.

Given, then, by the deductions of Natural Theology, a righteous Governor, a broken law, a condemning conscience, and a retributive administration, which carries its sanctions into the other world, and we have now the problem to be solved, the grand question upon which human destiny hinges, "How can man be just with God?"

We come with this question to the disciple of Natural Theology, and we demand an answer, other than that which revelation has given, which shall yet be satisfactory to the reason and the conscience.

He certainly will not point us to the altars of heathenism, streaming with the blood of beasts, or dyed with human gore. There we may read the confession of guilt, and the felt and fearful demerit of sin ; but no words of pardon are written there, which reason recognizes as the handwriting of God.

He may refer us to the evident proofs of the Divine benignity, in the azure beauty of the heavens ; the balmy breath of spring ; the odor of spices ; the song of birds ; the teeming earth, robed in its mantle of green, radiant with sunlight and flowers, or rich in the golden sheen of its waving harvests. But if, in these, he would find the impress of a benevolence which knows no wrath, the darkening heavens frown upon the false induction ; the burning simoom of the desert, or the borean blasts of winter, sweep away the idle hope ; the desolating tornado, or the dark wing of the pestilence, leave destruction and misery in their path, and the yawning earthquake answers back to the crashing thunder of the clouds, that the God of nature, moving in terrible majesty, is a God to be feared as well as loved.

Will he tell us, then, of those natural consequences of sin, its effects upon the body, and the mind, and the condition, in this present world, as its only and sufficient expiation ? This connection between sin and suffering, though it may be real, is not always apparent. To the utmost of our apprehension, it is often interrupted, and oftener still disproportionate. When it occurs as a most manifest retribution, it does not silence, but rather stimu-

lates, the reproaches of conscience, and the apprehensions of the guilty. It reaches onward, sometimes, from the early dawn to the evening shadows of life, and, linking the sorrows of old age to the transgressions of youth, it marks a progression of punishment which has no necessary termination at death, and which reason and conscience concur in extending into eternity.

But we are told of a repentance, which recognizing the authority of the law, and implying some kind and degree of sorrow on account of its transgression, may come in the place of suffering, and equally satisfy the Lawgiver.

If such is indeed the fact, it can only be known by means of some communications, more or less direct from God himself. But revelation discarded, it must then, either be written on the heart, legibly as the law itself, or it must be ascertained by induction and inference.

1. But, so far as our observation of God's dealings extends, there is nothing to warrant this inference. What are called the natural consequences of sin, and which are but so many intimations of the Divine purpose to punish it; are not suspended by the repentance of the sinner. Contrition the most hearty, brings not back to the debauchee his ruined health and fortune; unlocks no prison doors; empties no hospitals. The connection between sin and suffering, so far as we can trace it, is uninterrupted by repentance, and argues not forgiveness, but its opposite.

2. Is the conclusion, then, rested upon the analogy of human conduct? This would require us first, to show that any of the relations which men sustain to each other, is in every respect the counterpart to that which we sustain to the Almighty, and then, that our conduct in that relation is heaven directed. It is true that a parent forgives a penitent child, and God is our Heavenly Father. But then it is also true that our Heavenly Father is *God*. As creatures of the same mould our authority over each other is limited, and can bear but a faint analogy to the prerogatives of Jehovah. A sense of our infirmity and errors should make us forgiving, whereas the essential attributes of Deity, would rather imply in Him, an inflexible justice. It is, then, at best, a precarious inference, which from the analogy of human conduct would conclude, the probability of Divine forgiveness.

3. But will it, then, be said, that God has written the law of forgiveness upon the heart, side by side with the law of obedience,

and by the same light by which we read the one, we may learn the other also?

Wherein such an arrangement would differ from a direct repeal of the law, it must, from the known principles of human nature, serve only to stimulate transgression, by a seeming restraint, and render it the more daring, by an actual impunity. It would be substituting repentance, for the penalty of the law, and certifying the sinner in advance, that a life of iniquity, when the limits of its enjoyment had been reached, could all be expiated by the brief sorrows of contrition. But let us examine the record, and we shall find that no such law of forgiveness has been written upon the heart. The denunciations of conscience do indeed call the sinner to repentance, and her sentence becomes the more severe, and his guilt is increased by every disregard of that call. But when it is regarded, and the culprit at her bar, stands convicted and penitent, recognizing the authority of the law, and his own demerit, does conscience thereupon dismiss the cause and the criminal, from all further jurisdiction and impeachment for that crime? So far from it, it is the most alarming element in her sanctions, that her sentence hands him over to a higher tribunal, and meanwhile she holds him as in durance, by keeping before his mind, ever and anon, his sin and its demerit. His tears cannot wash out the record, but the more sincere his repentance, the clearer his conception of the turpitude of his sin, and the more distinct his acknowledgment of its ill desert, without the slightest implication of forgiveness, in the exercises of his own heart. The connection between repentance and pardon is not a doctrine of natural Theology, whilst the connection between sin and suffering most clearly is. The question then returns upon us, with all its urgency, "How shall man be just with God?" The grand problem of humanity remains yet unresolved, Natural Theology having served only to develop its conditions, and press home the necessity of an adequate and authorized solution. This limit to its teachings, is well summed up, in the nervous language of Chalmers. "There is in it enough of manifestation to awaken the fears of guilt, but not enough again to appease them. It emits, and audibly emits a note of terror; but in vain do we listen for one authentic word of comfort from any of its oracles. It is able to see the danger, but not the deliverance. It can excite the forebodings of the human spirit, but cannot quell them—knowing just enough to stir the perplexity, but

not enough to set the perplexity at rest. * * There must be a measure of light, we do allow ; but like the lurid gleam of a volcano, it is not a light which guides, but which bewilders and terrifies. It prompts the question, but cannot frame or furnish the reply. Natural Theology may see as much as shall draw forth the anxious interrogation. "What shall I do to be saved?" The answer to this comes from a higher theology."*

From the insufficiency of Natural Theology, then, as manifested in the errors and abominations of heathenism ; in the limited and defective systems of a classic age, blending numberless absurdities with a few elementary truths ; in the results of modern philosophy ; and in the law of conscience ; we conclude, that the necessity of a Revelation, is no longer an assumed, but a demonstrated fact.

1. But if so, this necessity, as we have seen, overthrows that entire fabric of infidelity, which is built upon the assumption of the sufficiency of nature's light.

2. It furthermore rises above the ruins of that hypothesis, a well-founded presumption, which in the light of God's attributes, becomes a strong probability, that a Revelation would be given.

3. From the vantage ground of this probability, we are brought to inquire for that revelation so justly expected. And by as much as the Bible is superior and eminent beyond comparison, among all alleged communications of the Divine will, by so much, this probability becomes a direct evidence to its truth. The proofs of its Divine original, in all their variety of miracles, prophecy, and precept, gain strength and urgency from this foregone probability. But if, besides, we find in the Bible a complete correspondence and adaptation to those wants of our nature which proclaim its necessity, the argument, here, becomes demonstrative, and is, precisely, that reasoning from effect to cause, by which, from the adaptations of external nature, we prove an intelligent Creator.

To exhibit, fully, this correspondence and adaptation, would require another Lecture, yea, it would require a volume. But, from even entering upon a field so inviting, we are precluded, not merely by the vastness of its extent, but because unwilling to trench upon a topic which belongs more properly to others. You will have no reason to regret the limits, thus imposed, and for ourselves, we are well content to perform the humbler office of an usher, to an

* Bridgewater Treatise.

argument, which we regard as one of the most convincing within the whole range of the Evidences of Christianity.

But if we may not extend our argument, and carry it home to a legitimate conclusion in the track which we have indicated, we may, perhaps, prepare you the better for that conclusion, and deepen the felt conviction of the necessity of a revelation, by recurring for a moment to

THE CONDITION OF MAN WITHOUT IT.

It is recorded of a tyrant, whose cruelty rivers of blood could not satiate, that in the greediness of a cannibal ferocity, he uttered a wish, that the whole Roman people had but one neck, and with a single blow he would destroy them all. By their manifest desire to extirpate the existence, and the very name of Christianity from the earth, the advocates of infidelity confess to a wish even yet more atrocious.

We do not judge them too harshly, in saying this, for whilst we would not ascribe to them, in all cases, a malice prepense, in that which they desire, yet we do maintain, that he labors to inflict a greater injury upon his race, who ignorantly or otherwise seeks to shut out the light of heaven from the human mind, than he who could find it in his heart to annihilate a nation. Happily, the purpose of unbelief is quite as impracticable as the fiendish thought of a Nero, every assault upon Christianity having only served to establish it the more, by bringing out into more bold relief the accumulated and accumulating evidences of its truth. But let us suppose the object of infidelity to be accomplished, the light of revelation to be extinct, and Christianity forgotten from among men : would it not be like striking out the sun from the heavens, and bringing back upon the earth the darkness of chaos, and transforming the abode of man into a void and formless waste ?

1. To estimate how much society owes to the Bible, we must estimate the value of all those civil and social institutions, which distinguish the most enlightened from the barbarous and semi-barbarous nations of the earth. To trace the progressive influence of revelation in the world, is to trace the progress of civilization. Commensurate with the increase of the one, has been the advance of the other, and the same causes which have obstructed and hindered the former, have invariably retarded the latter.

It is believed by many, and upon the ground of evidence which

cannot be easily set aside, that it is to revelation, the world owes its knowledge of language and of letters. It is at least certain that the literature of the world, has in every age received from this source its highest impulse and aid. It is here alone that history, carrying back her records to the birth of time, and across that void, which antiquity had sought in vain to fill up with her fables, absurd and monstrous, dates her narrative "*In the beginning*," and leads it on from thence, with a consistent chronology, and in annals bearing the manifest impress of truth, down to the authentic monuments of an age, comparatively recent, which but for the Bible, had been the earliest within our knowledge. Poetry and eloquence have ever found their finest models in the Scriptures, and the loftiest genius has not been ashamed to borrow its inspirations from them. "It is not undeserved homage to this sacred book to say that philosophers and great men of other times, lighted their torch in Zion, and the altars of learning caught their first spark from the flame that glowed within her temple."* Natural science has found in the Bible a key to many of the mysteries of Creation, and in all her departments, has received from it aid, more than she has been always willing to acknowledge. In the leaf of every plant and flower, botany reveals the marks of creative wisdom and design. But it may be questioned, if the preconceived attributes of God, did not first give direction to her inquiry, and guide to her discoveries. The maxim that "Jehovah has created nothing in vain," we hold to have been the basis of all those minute investigations, which have evolved from the organism of insects, and animalculæ, the same proofs of omnipotent skill and contrivance, which appear in the constitution of man, and the creation of a world. So also on the broader scale of a more extended inquiry, the knowledge of a Great First Cause, has guided the labors and aided the discoveries of the astronomer. He has advanced with a bolder stride through the fields of space, and stretched his thoughts to the compass of theories more extended and sublime, from a more just conception of Almighty power. We verily believe, that the stupendous disclosures of this noble science would never have been attained, or if attained, would have so overwhelmed the mind by their vastness, as to beget a suspicion of their truth, but for the previous knowledge of Him

* Dr. Spring. See on this whole topic his admirable book, "Obligations of the World to the Bible."

" who leads Orion forth
And guides Arcturus round the north."

It cannot be doubted that the human mind, freed on the one hand, from the darkness of that superstition, which overcast the brightest intellects of ancient paganism, and exempt on the other, from that tendency to universal doubt and distrust, which always pertains more or less to skepticism ; under the genial light of revelation, and certified of those great facts which it contains ; acts with a more confident freedom, springs to a higher vigor, and expands to the grasp of sublimer truth. " Why is it that the chief secrets of nature have been penetrated only in Christian times, and in Christian lands, and that men whose names are first in the roll on which science emblazons her achievements, have been men on whom fell the rich light of revelation ?" It is true, unbelief and atheism have also had their representatives among these illustrious names. But their eminence has been attained under the light which they discarded, by the aid of its influence, and in spite of their errors. Compare the present advancement of science in any of its departments, with the brightest days of oriental philosophy, and find a satisfactory reason, if you can, for that astonishing progress which has marked the Christian era, especially in its later centuries, other than the influence, direct and indirect, of the Christian Scriptures.

It would be easy to trace this influence, also, in the progress of the useful and elegant arts ; in all those contrivances of skill and inventions of genius, by which the elements of nature, once so formidable as to be deified, or so subtle as to be deemed supernatural, have been subjugated to the necessities, the convenience, and the pleasures of men. But we mark the influence of revelation more distinctly, in its healthful effects upon the varied relations of life. We owe to the Bible, all the hallowed associations and nameless endearments, that cluster round the domestic hearth, and impart its magic power, to the place we call our *home*. It is Christianity which consecrates the union of willing hearts, in the marriage bond, and pronouncing its benediction upon their plighted vows, environs this relation with those solemn sanctions, which are the safeguards of virtue, and the barriers to the unlimited concubinage of lawless passion. Under its tutelage parental instinct becomes " strong as death," and binds the mother to the cradle of her infant in all the tender assiduities of watching and weariness, by a tie which only grows and strengthens with each new demand

upon her care and toil. While the history of pagan nations, and the habits of licentiousness engendered by a philosophy which owns no law but desire, give us the manifold and mournful proofs, that a mother may forget her sucking child and cast it out, a sacrifice to the demon of superstition, or to the demon of lust. The Christian family circle, the home of love and piety, is itself, a triumph of the gospel, which proclaims its pre-eminence, even if it had no other.

But it has also triumphs upon a larger scale. Where among all contemporary nations will you find a form of government, which can bear a comparison with the inspired and equitable code of the Jewish theocracy? Study then the subsequent history of governments, and you will find, that since the dawn of the Christian era, wherever the principles of civil and religious liberty have prevailed, wherever public order and personal safety, the just authority of government, and the highest immunities and welfare of the governed have been combined, there the influence of the Bible has been proportionably felt and acknowledged. There have been despotisms, it is true, under the name of religion, but when tyranny puts on this mask, it is always careful first, to put out the light. "Christianity," says Montesquieu, "is a stranger to despotic power." "Religion," says De Tocqueville, "is the companion of liberty in all its battles and conflicts, the cradle of its infancy, and the divine source of its claims." England owes to the Bible the great charter of its liberties. And our own Republic stands this day, unexampled in the history of the world, simply because it is a land of Bibles. Take away the influence of this book from our wide-spread country, and how long would it be, under the necessary and rapid degeneracy of public morals, before the decisions of the ballot-box, would give place to the decisions of the sword, the prerogatives of right to the power of might, law to lust, government to anarchy, and anarchy to despotism?

We may not further pursue this train of thought, but with these suggestions, we point you to the manifest influence of revelation upon the literature, the learning, the arts, the domestic ties, and the political relations of mankind, and pointing you at the same time to the absence of this influence where alone it is absent, amid the darkness of heathenism, we ask, if the condition of man without revelation is not, of necessity, a condition of barbarism?

2. But there are still other aspects of his condition, presenting a yet more melancholy picture.

There is in every breast an abiding conviction, which neither the pleadings of sophistry, nor the dominion of passion, can wholly extirpate, of an invisible almighty power, the disposer of events, and the arbiter of destiny. So universal is this, that it may with some propriety be styled "a sense of the Divine existence." Man must have a God, simply because he cannot possibly prove, and he has never been able, effectually, to persuade himself, that there is none, though many a "fool may have said it in his heart." But if God is revealed to us, only in his works, our utmost knowledge of Him, can only serve to awaken apprehension and stimulate our fears. In the phenomena of nature there are indications of wrath as well as goodness. In the events of life, there is a succession and intensity of sorrows, would justify the sentiment, that "man was made to mourn." And in the presages and premonitions of conscience there is "a fearful looking for, of judgment and fiery indignation." With no better support than the deductions of a fruitless and bewildered philosophy, man is called, then, to encounter "all the ills that flesh is heir to." And he must meet at every turn of life, with afflictions which he cannot explain, with sorrows which know no solace. By a sudden calamity, or a succession, the garnered wealth of years is swept away, and hope expires within the breast of him who has neither the fortitude to endure, nor the ability to retrieve the unlooked-for reversion. The grave closes upon the objects of a tender regard, and there is nothing to restrain, or to sweeten, the bitter tears of the mourner. Disease invades the frame, and we cannot tell, whence cometh sickness, nor why. We mark the dread approach of Death by the painful harbingers of his coming, but his aspect of terror is unrelieved, for even when his skeleton hand is on our brow, and the light of life is darkening, we know not, 'what is Death?' or 'what is there beyond it?' It is a hard blow to bear, when he who yesterday was rich, stands to-day amid the wreck of a departed fortune, penniless and bankrupt. And we wonder not at that sullen gloom of disappointment, sometimes deepening into despair, and seeking in suicide an end to its sorrows, of those who in a Christian land, are yet wanting in a Christian's consolation.

To the heart of sensibility, it is a harder blow, when one, in whom its life, and love, and hopes are centered, to whom the very

soul is knit by a thousand nameless ties, is torn from the last embrace, and hidden from the eyes forever. A man may put on the stoic then, and wrap about him the frigid maxims of a cheerless philosophy, but they soothe not the anguish of a bleeding heart. Nothing but a voice from beyond the grave can waken, again, the inspiration of hope, and whisper its throbbings into peace. Read the touching lament of Augustine for his friend, while yet his darkened soul was moving in a heathen element, and you will understand what an apostle means by "sorrowing without hope." "At this grief," he says, "my heart was utterly darkened; and whatever I beheld was death. Mine eyes sought him everywhere, but he was not granted them, and I hated all places, for that they had him not. I became a great riddle to myself, and I asked my soul, why she was so sad, and why she disquieted me sorely; but she knew not what to answer me. If I said, '*trust in God,*' she very rightly obeyed me not; because that most dear friend, whom she had lost was, being man, both truer and better, than that phantasm she was bid to trust in. Only tears were sweet to me, for they succeeded my friend, in the dearest of my affections." But there is a grief too great for tears, and if you take away the light which Revelation sheds upon the tomb, and then are called to stand upon its brink, and hear the rumbling earth as it falls upon the confined dust of the loved and lost, if your heart has ever swollen with a true emotion, you will know, what is that greater grief.

To you, young gentlemen, in the morning freshness of your day, and with your sky as yet, perhaps, unclouded, these considerations may seem to have but little urgency. But, mark it! you will not have travelled far in the appointed pilgrimage of life, before you will both find and feel that life is not that bright and sunny scene which youthful hopes had pictured it. It has its shadows, too, deep and sombre shadows. It has its sorrows, which Heaven alone can heal. Man's devious pathway to the grave is, full often, a "*via dolorosa*," in which he needs a comforter, as well as guide. You may destroy his sensibilities, and, as he approximates the brute, he will cease to feel. You may dethrone his reason, and, in the delirium of passion, he will laugh away his cares. Thus, without the Bible, he may stumble on through life in stern and sullen gloom, or, insensate and reckless, stifling his nature, and forswearing humanity, he may bound along, as gaily and as madly as e'er a gibbering maniac among

the tombs; but, as a rational and sentient being, without the Bible, he can only tread his sad and tearful way bewildered and desponding.

But grave or gay, reckless or thoughtful, it is a brief pilgrimage at best, and life's battle, or its *ballet*, ends in the strife of death. Under whatever aspect we may view it, this inevitable event is the most momentous in the history of man. Be it so,—that physically it is but “the turning of a few ounces of blood into a different channel,” and thereafter an eternal sleep;—yet who that knows the boon of being, recoils not from the thought of that being's end, as the incomparable calamity? There is a greater, we do allow, and it is only the guilty fear of this could ever have fathered the wish, or endured the thought, of the soul's annihilation. And yet that thought, that wish, can never so possess the mind as to exterminate that fear. Tell us not of death-scenes, calm and peaceful as the Christian's dying hour, where no Christian's hope was known. Is it the untutored savage upon his couch of turf, who dreams of happier hunting grounds? If you could yourself become a savage, ignorant as he, like him you might also die the victim of a fond delusion. It avails no more to plead the few examples of classic story, except you can also reinstate the Olympian gods, and make to yourself a gospel of Charon and his boat. And as for the boasted instances of modern philosophic calmness, we aver, that, upon the principles of Deism itself, it can be shown that such calmness, if it is real, is a treason against nature, and an outrage upon right reason. If Natural Theology cannot demonstrate that there is a hereafter, much less can she demonstrate that there is none. Under a dread uncertainty of a future state, coupled with a conscious guilt, which, in the prospect and probability of retribution, deepens into remorse, tell me then, ought man to be calm, in this dire necessity of his nature? Only an authentic voice, from the eternal throne, can possibly give him the assurance, that with the destruction of the body, his being ceases, or that, continuing to exist, his existence shall not be one of suffering. But nature has no such voice, and all her utterances, fairly interpreted, contradict the hope. To die, without the light of revelation, is to take a fearful leap into an abyss of darkness, and on the brink, conscience, like an avenging spirit, points to a thousand evil omens, in the spectral array of long-forgotten sins, and cries in the dying sinner's ear, “'Tis an abyss of woe!”

If, then, with respect to his civil and social relations, man's condition without the Bible is a condition of barbarism, no less, with respect to his personal spiritual interests, is it a condition of unmitigated, hopeless misery. On the supposition which we have considered, if we conclude not that this is a God-forsaken world, it must be because there are in it the manifest tokens of Divine displeasure. Man struts his little hour upon its surface, ignorant alike of his origin and his destiny. Doubtful and desponding, he reaches the goal of mortal life, pressed down by present sorrow, and yet shrinking and aghast at the thought of "greater ills he knows not of." He dies! scarce knowing whether he should most desire a conscious immortality, or an eternal sleep! The grave closes upon him, but no promised resurrection consecrates his dust, no words of hope are written on his tomb!



J. B. Ruffner

Henry Ruffner

ACCORDING to the evangelical records, Jesus Christ appealed to his miracles as evidences of his Divine mission. (John v. 36.) His apostles made the same appeal. (Acts ii. 22; Heb. ii. 4.) They did not require men to believe the gospel on the bare word of its preachers. They founded its claim to a Divine origin on the attestation of God, as given in the mighty signs and wonders which he exhibited, first by the agency of the Great Founder, and then by the instrumentality of the twelve apostolical witnesses, who were commissioned to publish the gospel among all nations.

Without some miraculous token of the Divine sanction, no system of religion can present infallible evidence of its being a revelation from God.

Men may publish doctrines that are sublime, pure, benevolent, and fully approved by the reason and conscience of mankind; yet, however they may appear worthy to have emanated from heaven, they may still be the product of merely human wisdom. Whatever the human mind is capable of receiving by revelation from God, it may also by possibility originate by the exercise of its own powers. Divine revelation, though flowing from an infinite source, is necessarily limited to the capacity of the recipient. In God and in his works, are depths of wisdom, reaching infinitely beyond all the profundities of human thought. The human mind seems indeed to have an indefinite range of thought; it can form combinations innumerable of those elements of thought, which it derives from sense and reason. But it can form no conception of anything beyond the informations of sense and the suggestions of reason. Therefore while human nature remains unchanged, the Spirit of God can reveal nothing to the spirit of man, but what is already within the natural range of human conception, and intrinsically undistinguishable from the natural products of the mind. Many a poor enthusiast has mistaken the ardor of his feelings and the vividness of his conceptions for the inspirations of God. Without an external sign from God no man can certainly distin-

guish a Divine revelation from what is purely human; for revelation is necessarily so humanized in passing through a human medium, that nothing indicating its Divine origin remains distinctly impressed upon it. As external evidence is necessary to distinguish genuine history from ingeniously wrought fictions, so without the criterion of miracles we might confound the revelations of the Holy Spirit with the dreams of the enthusiast and the inventions of the impostor.

But when God connects miraculous demonstrations with the doctrines of inspired men, we know that the teachers speak by his authority; for whilst we know that men can originate whatever doctrines men can understand, we know also that no man can work a miracle, unless God be with him.

My subject is miracles, their nature, their susceptibility of proof, and the evidence which they afford of the Divine origin of Christianity.

I shall first discuss the theory of miracles in general, and secondly, the miracles of Jesus in particular, considered as an evidence of his Divine mission.

I. The general theory of miracles comprehends two points of inquiry,—1st. What is a miracle? and 2d. Can the occurrence of a miracle, if it should take place, be proved by the testimony of men?

First, then,—What is a miracle? Various definitions have been given. A miracle is a suspension or violation of the law of nature. It is a supernatural event: It is a deviation from the course of nature, &c. Any of these definitions with a little explanation will answer. But I will offer another which is more explicit. *A miracle is a sign, obvious to the senses, that God has interposed his power to control the established course of nature.*

The novelty of an event does not make it miraculous; else every new discovery in natural science would be a miracle. Nor is an event which is simply unaccountable, to be esteemed miraculous. Unaccountable events sometimes occur, such as the fall of meteoric stones, which come hissing, glowing, and exploding, from the upper regions of the atmosphere. All that we can say of them, is, that we know not whence they come, nor how they originate. But for aught that we know, they may be the product of natural causes.

It should be observed that our knowledge of the laws of nature, and of their various complicated workings, is very partial and

defective. We see many effects of which the causes are hidden. If they are such as frequently occur, we reasonably infer from their frequency, that they spring from natural causes. Even when the event is extraordinary in its nature and of rare occurrence, we may still judge from circumstances, that it is merely the effect of a rare combination of natural causes, like the connection between the Siamese twins. The rarity of an event may also be accounted for sometimes by the regularity of nature in her courses, producing only once in a long time the most striking coincidences. Thus the planets vary their aspects in the heavens continually;—age after age they pursue their mazy dance through the zodiac, presenting innumerable figures to the astronomer's eye; until at last they all meet together in a splendid group, a wonder to human eyes; then they begin their grand cycle again; to meet once more perhaps long after the generations of mankind shall have passed away. In this case we know that the event proceeds from the regular movements of nature: but why may not equally rare phenomena, result from a secret concatenation of natural causes, stretching back to the creation of the world?

Phenomena purely mental or spiritual cannot be demonstrably miraculous, although they may be such in reality. We understand too little of the nature of spirit and of the action of spirit upon spirit to distinguish the natural from the supernatural in spiritual agency. We cannot trace the various phases of human madness to their causes: how then can we determine what is or is not according to nature in the deeper mysteries of the spiritual world?

A miracle, to be cognizable by mortal man, must appear within this "visible diurnal sphere," in which he is an agent and a looker-on, from the cradle to the grave. Here he learns by his own experience and that of the generations before him, what are the constitution and laws of nature, what is the orderly course of events, what are the causes of many things, and what is within the power of those living agents that God has created upon the earth. All his experience of external things is gained through the medium of the senses, and the objects of sense are those with which he is best acquainted. Here then is the field within which he can distinguish between the natural and the supernatural. Here, if anywhere, will God give him signs from heaven, by which the revelations of God may be distinguished from the wisdom of

the philosopher, the dreams of the enthusiast, and the impostures of the false prophet.

But there are false miracles as well as false prophets,—delusive appearances by which the credulous are often deceived. Hence the necessity of an infallible criterion by which the miracles of God may be distinguished from the impositions of man.

As we derive all our knowledge of external things from the senses, so we must hold that our senses give infallible evidence of what they perceive. Jugglers and false prophets may elude our senses and impose on our understandings; but they can do it only on the supposition that we see what we see and hear what we hear. They deceive us by what they conceal, not by what they exhibit. If we could perceive by our senses all that was done, the deception would be at an end and the wonder would disappear. But because our understandings are liable to delusion, when objects are but partially and indistinctly apprehended by the senses; nothing should be construed as a miracle, but what is in the first place definitely, distinctly, and evidently perceived by the senses,—in the second place, clear and intelligible to the understanding;—and in the third place, manifestly inconsistent with the established order of nature; and therefore impossible to be accounted for without supposing that God has interposed to control the law of nature.

When we consider that a real miracle is a sign which God exhibits of his power to control the laws of nature, we cannot doubt that every real miracle will have in it a dignity and a character befitting its sublime and glorious author. God can never descend to play the petty tricks of a juggler, or to employ his miraculous power for so low an end as to puzzle the understanding or to excite idle wonder in his creature man: nor would he endow a human being with supernatural power for any base or trifling end. Hence a miracle must not be in the power of a man to produce at will, or by the use of means. It must not come by magical incantations, nor by mesmeric “passes,” nor by questions to be answered by “spiritual rappings.” It must not submit to be sold by perambulating lecturers at so much a ticket. It must be nothing ridiculous or fantastic, nothing like the petty tricks usually ascribed to the devil, because the puzzled spectators know not to what else they should ascribe them. It must not be an unmeaning sign, an insignificant display of supernatural power, teaching nothing but the fact, which is better taught by nature in her regular move-

ments, that there is a God. Do not the heavens and the earth evidently show the handiwork of their Creator? Is not nature herself the greatest of all miracles? When God makes nature deviate from her prescribed course, it must be for a special sign of some extraordinary communication from himself.

Again, if a miracle be supernatural; if it imply a suspension of some known law of nature:—then I hold that no created agent can by his own power work a miracle. No angel nor demon, however “great in might,” can break the order of nature, or disturb the operation of those physical laws by which the creation is regulated and preserved. God has so constituted the system of nature, and so regulated its operations, that the whole is a glorious manifestation of his supreme power, wisdom and goodness. Were he to subject any part of this magnificent and well-ordered system to the discretionary control of any created being, then nature would cease to be altogether an expression of his Divine attributes; the workings of her infinitely complex machinery, would be no longer under his exclusive control; some of his own creatures would share with him the sovereignty; the inferior creatures, such as man, would be in some measure dependent on subordinate rulers of the world, who would justly be feared as gods, and the ancient system of heathenish idolatry would be founded on fact.

But can we believe that the Author of nature would subject any part of the system to the will of a creature, who is himself but a part of the same system, and, consequently, subject to its laws? He has endowed created agents with faculties greater or less; but these are themselves subordinate to the preordained laws of nature. Rational beings may violate the moral law; but so much the more necessary is it, that they should be strictly subjected to those physical laws, by which God maintains his sovereignty over nature.

I argue also from analogy against the opinion that any created being can, by his own power, work a miracle. We know that man has vastly more power, both mental and corporeal, than the worm which he treads under his feet. His understanding is comparatively infinite, his strength ten thousand fold greater, yet is he as absolutely subject to the laws of nature as the worm in the dust, or the animalcule, whose life-time is a day, and whose world is a drop of water. He can devise and construct machines, of which the poor worm can form no conception, but for the effect of these, and all his other operations, he is entirely dependent on

the laws of nature. What these enable him to do, he can do; but, contrary to these, he can do absolutely nothing at all. He cannot make a hair of his head either white or black,—he cannot make a grain of sand either heavier or lighter,—he cannot make a thorn-bush bear grapes, nor reanimate the dead body of a fly. Suppose his wisdom and his physical strength to be increased a thousand fold; will he then be able to do any of these things? Will he then have advanced a single step towards a sovereign power over the laws of nature? No; nor is the mightiest demon in the universe any more able to control a law of nature, than a Solomon or a Samson,—a worm or an animalcule. The power that can work a miracle must differ, not only in degree, but in kind, from that of created beings. It is a creative power. A man may kill his brother man, because the law of nature gives him the power; but when he has killed, neither he nor all the hosts of heaven and hell can restore that dead man to life. Only the God that made him can raise him from the dead.

I conclude, therefore, that every miracle, every manifestation of a power superior to the law of nature, is a sign from God, that he has, for some important and holy end, seen fit to interrupt the established course of nature.

I proceed to the second inquiry under this head, which is,—*Are miracles susceptible of proof by testimony?* In other words, *Can we in any case reasonably believe men, who testify that they have witnessed a miraculous event?*

A miracle must, from its nature, be a highly improbable event. It is an exception to the uniform rule of nature; a partial derangement in the long-established working of this great machine, the universe.

One of the earliest lessons that experience teaches mankind, is the uniformity of nature. Our belief in this uniformity seems to be constitutional, and to be developed immediately after experience begins. The burnt child dreads the fire. He believes from one experiment that it is the nature of fire to burn. So his instinct teaches him to reason about nature in general. Experience in general confirms our first conclusions respecting the established relation between causes and effects. God has wisely ordained that things should be distinguishable by their permanent properties, and that the course of events should depend upon established relations between antecedents and consequents, causes and effects. Without steadfastness in the course of nature, human

reason could have no guide, human sciences and arts could not exist, neither instinct nor intelligence could avail the creatures of God, and nature herself would have no voice to proclaim her Divine original.

In a disordered universe, there could be no miracle, because there would be no law of nature by which reason could distinguish the natural from the supernatural. If the Deity often changed the course of nature, the laws of nature would be weakened; and the course of events being unsteady, the signs of God would be less manifest, both in the regularity of nature and in her deviations. As miracles more frequently occurred, the less miraculous would they appear. They would come to resemble the jarrings of an ill-constructed machine, and would be expected as things of course.

Miracles, therefore, to answer any useful purpose in the moral government of God, must necessarily be reserved for rare and important occasions. But for the very reason that they must be the most rare and extraordinary of all events, they are in themselves the most improbable, and require the strongest evidence to render them credible.

Besides the intrinsic improbability of miracles, the frequency of false reports of supernatural events, and the ingenious methods by which impostors often delude credulous people, should make us particularly cautious how we give credence to any report or any appearance of a miracle. So improbable an event should not gain our belief, until we have carefully scrutinized both the nature of the fact reported and the evidence of its occurrence.

But reported miracles are not all equally improbable. The degree of their antecedent improbability depends on the nature, circumstances, and relations of the event. Though all miracles are equally impossible with man and equally possible with God, they are not equally improbable in themselves. Reason teaches us to expect that if God work a miracle, he will not on the one hand make it so portentously great as to derange the general course of nature, nor on the other hand so contemptibly small as to excite ridicule. He would not summon the thunders of heaven to kill a fly. Whilst he made the miraculous nature of the event sufficiently evident, he would also make it correspond in moral significance with the occasion on which it was introduced; making it a miracle of benevolence, when it was designed to authenticate a mission of mercy, and perhaps a miracle of punishment, when

it was designed to enforce the authority of a violated law. I deem it reasonable to assume that God would not turn nature out of her regular course without some moral necessity, nor exhibit a sign that was incongruous to the occasion. Much less would he affix his signature to anything that was revolting to the reason and the moral sense which he implanted in the human breast. How absurd is it to imagine that he would sanction by miracles the scheme of a wicked man, the vagaries of a fool, or the visions of a half-crazy fanatic! Or is it credible that God Almighty would be so lavish of his miraculous signs, as to employ them for the establishment of relic-worship and transubstantiation?

But when the reported miracles appear to have been morally necessary for the establishment of some great and salutary truth, and when they are in themselves, their circumstances and their human agents, altogether worthy of their Divine Author; then I think that in the opinion of all candid men, they are not so improbable, as to put their proof beyond the reach of human testimony.

Consider, friends, what the consequences would be, if God had so constituted the nature of things as to make it impossible to prove a miracle by the testimony of eye-witnesses. In this case the Father of mankind would have forever precluded himself from making a supernatural revelation of his will. In my introductory remarks I showed that miracles are the only reliable test of Divine revelation. I have also shown that frequency of miracles would detract from their efficacy as signs of God. But how exceedingly common and how apparently natural would they become, if they were exhibited to all mankind as evidence of a Divine revelation! I have not the presumption to say absolutely that God could not prove a revelation to mankind, by working miracles before the eyes of all in every age. But I can say without presumption that such a method would bear no analogy to the general system of Divine government. It is true that God has written the signs of his existence and perfections over the whole face of nature, and displayed them to the eyes of all mankind; yet how few are able of themselves to give them the right interpretation! How generally did mankind, with the heavens and the earth in view, fail to discover the One Only Living and True God, and in their blindness worship imaginary gods and dumb idols! Is it probable, that they would have succeeded

better in the interpretation of a universal system of miracles in proof of a revelation from God? A French atheist* once demanded, why, if there be a God, he did not give a proof of his existence, by so arranging the stars in the form of letters, that they should spell his name! But the poor fool did not say, in what language God would write his name in the heavens more intelligibly than he has already done. Without discussing this point farther, it is sufficient to say that God has made the mass of mankind dependent on testimony and on the instruction of qualified teachers, for nearly all their knowledge; and we may presume that this is on the whole the wisest and best way in which the knowledge of revelation could be imparted to the human race. In this way, it would be impossible for God to verify a system of revealed truth, unless he made miracles capable of proof by testimony.

And consider whether there be not questions of the utmost importance, which men cannot solve by the light of nature, but which our Father in Heaven might be disposed to solve by revelation; such questions as these, for example. Are our souls immortal? Shall we be rewarded and punished in a future state for the deeds done in the present life? Will God forgive us our sins; and if so, on what conditions? These are questions on which human destiny hangs, on which human laws and morals depend for their principal sanctions, and human society for its improvement from age to age. Without faith founded on a Divine revelation of future rewards and punishments, and of pardon for sin on the conditions of repentance and atonement, the motives to virtue and amendment of life would be defective. Without a revealed religion, the generations of men must ever wander in the mazes of error and superstition, or cast off the shackles of false religion only to run into the licentiousness of practical atheism.

Without a revelation from God there can be no assurance of immortal life, of retributions after death, of Divine forgiveness of sins, of grace, to help us in our time of need, or of a Heavenly Father's watchfulness and care over the helpless children of mortality. Human philosophy cannot unveil the secrets of death; reason has invented a telescope that can penetrate the starry skies; but wherewith shall the soul of the living pierce the

* Mirabeaud, in his *Système de la Nature*.

"shadows, clouds, and darkness," that rest upon the eternal state of man?

For all that man needs to know respecting the material world and the common affairs of life, nature and reason are sufficient teachers; but if this world be only the cradle of the soul, or at the most its infant-school—and if for its better training here, and its happier state hereafter, it needs a spiritual instruction which nature and experience cannot give—then surely it is not impossible, nor so very improbable, that the Parent of mankind should send us a message of instruction, adapted to our wants, and accompanied by visible signs of its heavenly origin.

Now, supposing that we should hear of a teacher who professed to be a messenger from heaven, who taught a religion, solving the great questions before mentioned, and embracing a pure and benevolent code of morals—a teacher whose personal character was every way befitting his profession, and who wrought miracles of mercy and goodness in proof of his mission—I ask, would such a report, taken altogether, be so utterly incredible, that no sort or amount of testimony could make it worthy of credit? May I not appeal to the common sense of every one who hears me to bear me out in the assertion, that such a report might be verified to the satisfaction of any reasonable man by the testimony of witnesses? The reported miracles, taken in connection with the other reported facts, could not be so improbable as to make all possible testimony in their favor unworthy of belief.

But the celebrated historian and philosopher David Hume attempted to frame an argument against miracles, which he fancied would overthrow all faith in revealed religion, by showing that human testimony could not in any case afford proof of a miraculous event. This argument, invented by a skeptical philosopher, fond of paradox, has received more attention than it deserves; but as it is ingeniously framed, and contains all that can be said against the credibility of reported miracles, I shall give you the sum and substance of the argument in his own words, and then point out the fallacies interwoven with it, and demonstrate the sufficiency of human testimony to prove any fact, however improbable.

"Experience (says Hume) is our only guide in reasoning." "A wise man weighs the evidence; he considers which side is supported by the greater number of experiments; to that side he inclines with doubt and hesitation." "When the fact which the

testimony endeavors to establish partakes of the marvellous—the evidence resulting from testimony admits of a diminution, greater or less, in proportion as the fact is more or less unusual.”

“The reason why we place any credit in witnesses, is not derived from any connection which we perceive *a priori* between testimony and reason, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them.”

“When the fact is such as has *seldom fallen under our observation*, here is a contest between two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes, and the superior can only operate on the mind by the force which remains.” “But let us suppose that the fact is not only marvellous, but really miraculous; and suppose that the testimony amounts to an entire proof (considered apart and by itself;) in that case there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail, but still with a diminution of its force, in proportion with that of its antagonist.”

“A miracle is a violation of the law of nature, and as *a firm and unalterable experience has established that law, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined.*”

“Nothing is a miracle that happens in the common course of nature. It is no miracle that a man seemingly in good health should die on a sudden, because such a kind of death has been frequently observed. But it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life, because *that has never been observed in any age or country.* There must therefore be *a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation.* And as a uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof from the nature of the fact against the existence of any miracle; nor can such proof be destroyed or the miracle rendered credible, but by an opposite proof which is superior.” Consequently, “No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle unless the testimony be of such kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact which it endeavors to establish.”

Such is Hume’s argument, from which he concludes that “No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle.”

The general principle of reasoning stated by Hume is not materially objectionable; but a fair use of that principle would not have served his purpose; he therefore connected with it several

gratuitous assumptions, by which an argument otherwise legitimate though inconclusive, has been converted into a mere sophism. He assumes by way of premise, that "*a miracle has never been observed in any age or country,*" that the "*uniform experience of mankind is against every miraculous event, otherwise it would not merit that appellation*"—that is, the mere fact that an event has happened, proves that it deserves not the appellation of a miracle; and on this assumption, he grounds the assertion, that "there is a direct and full proof from the nature of the fact against any miracle."

What is all this but a mere begging of the question, an arbitrary assumption of the matter in dispute?—"No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle," is Hume's conclusion. What is the reason? (we ask.) Because, (says the philosopher) no miracle has ever been observed, and no observed event can merit the appellation of a miracle!—Indeed! (we may well exclaim) if so, the argument is at an end: *that* is the conclusion of the whole matter. Why infer anything about the insufficiency of testimony to prove what has never been observed, and what, from the nature of the fact, never can be observed? When a philosopher can take it for granted that a thing *is not and cannot be*,—surely it is puerile in him to come forth triumphantly with the conclusion, that it *cannot be proved*.

But Hume builds his argument upon the basis of experience. Let us see how he has managed to raise an insuperable barrier of experience against all possible testimony for miracles.

He begins with each individual's personal experience. He says, "When the fact is such as has seldom fallen under our observation, here is a contest between two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other so far as its force goes, &c." What two experiences are those which he represents as coming in conflict, when the fact is such as we have seldom observed? They are our positive and our negative experience in relation to the fact. For illustration, suppose that a neighbor of yours told you, that he had seen a man's leg broken by a fall from a scaffold. You had never perhaps seen precisely such an event, but you had seen, we will suppose, one instance of a man getting his arm broken by a fall from his horse. Let this be your positive experience in respect to facts of that sort. It is something; but how small compared with your negative experience in relation to such events! You had lived and observed the events of human life for years,

and except in that single instance, you had never observed anything like the event which your neighbor reported as a fact. Now here according to Hume is a contest of opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other so far as its force goes. But if negative experience has any force against positive, then in this case the vast preponderance of the negative must overwhelm the positive, and make your neighbor's report exceedingly improbable. — *Would* it have that effect on your mind or that of any sane man? Certainly not; for no rational man reasons in this manner from his personal experience.

Our philosopher being aware that individual experience is too narrow a basis for his argument, makes a sly transition to the general experience of mankind, where he makes the assumption already mentioned, that no miracle has ever been observed, or in other words, that universal experience is against every miraculous event. But what I have to remark at present, is the fallacious manner in which he sets universal experience against testimony for miracles. He leaves out of view the fact, that we derive from testimony all our knowledge of what other men have experienced from the creation of the world to this day. Our personal experience is but a drop in the ocean of universal experience.

Now when he asserts that the uniform experience of mankind is against the occurrence of a miracle, if he means, as his language would imply, that all testimony is against miracles, the assertion is false, for there is much testimony in their favor; or if he means that all the testimony that goes to establish the general regularity of nature is true, but that all, without exception, which goes to prove occasional deviations from that regularity, is necessarily false, then we demand a reason why the one should be true and the other wholly false. It cannot be, because they are contradictory testimonies, and therefore the strongest should prevail. If one man testify that he has seen fishes without eyes, and ten thousand men should testify that all fishes ever seen by them had eyes, there is no contradiction in the statements; both may be true; the general fact is, that fishes have naturally two eyes, but in particular cases they have none. Here is no contest between opposite experiences or opposite testimonies, as Hume sophistically pretends. Hence you can easily perceive the fallacy of his argument, when he says, "A miracle is a violation of the law of nature, and as a firm and unalterable experience has established that law, *the proof against a miracle, from the*

very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument can possibly be imagined." Here he assumes, artfully and sophistically, that all the proof by which the law of nature is established, lies in full force against the occurrence of a miracle: whereas, on the contrary, no miracle can occur where there is no law of nature; for according to Hume's own definition, a miracle is a violation of the law of nature. Be it so then,—that human experience proves the existence of the law of nature: we all admit the fact,—we must admit it before we can believe the occurrence of a miracle. Where there is no law there is no violation of a law; where there is no rule there is no exception. Milton represents the chaos, or unformed elements of nature, to be full of wild hubbub and confusion. No wonder; chaos has no law, and none of its disorderly workings can be deemed miraculous. Now to represent the experience which proves the law of nature as being an entire proof against a miracle, is exceedingly illogical; for such experience, however firm and unalterable, it may be, is entirely consistent with any supposed experience of a miracle, which, "from the nature of the fact," must be an exception to the general experience of mankind.

The only condition on which experience can furnish any *proof* against a miracle, is, that it be opposed to the particular fact reported as a miracle. Thus, if one man testifies that, at a particular time and place, he saw the sun miraculously darkened at noon-day; and another man who was present at the same time and place, testifies that he saw no such thing, or only a natural obscuration of the sun by a cloud; in such a case there is an opposition of reported experiences, of which those on the negative side may amount to full proof against the miracle.

But Hume's argument assumes that a general negative experience, or mere non-experience of a fact by mankind in general, amounts to an entire proof against its existence. On this principle many facts of very rare occurrence are disproved by a firm and unalterable experience of the generality of mankind. So singular a phenomenon as the Siamese twins would be disproved by the experience of mankind; so rare a phenomenon as the fall of meteoric stones from the atmosphere, would be incapable of positive proof, because the negative experience of nearly all mankind has raised an insuperable barrier against its credibility.

One more remark on this part of the argument will suffice. Though the experience to which Hume refers is merely negative

in respect to miracles, it is positive, so far as it goes, in respect to the law of nature. I have already shown that this does not make it inconsistent with the supposition that a miracle has been experienced, but that, on the contrary, a miracle supposes a pre-existing law of nature. Yet there is a supposable case, in which positive evidence of the regular operation of the laws of nature would disprove the occurrence of a miracle in times past. If we knew from experience, or otherwise, that every event had come to pass heretofore in accordance with the laws of nature, then, of course, any supposed miracle would be inconsistent with our positive knowledge. So far must our knowledge of nature and of the events of time go, before Hume's argument from experience can have any validity. The moment you admit that our knowledge of events and of their causes is defective; that innumerable events have occurred of which we know nothing, and that many events have been observed to happen from causes unknown;—that moment is it evident that human experience does not, as Hume affirms, afford an entire proof, or anything like it, against the occurrence of a miracle. And you know this to be the fact. No living man or set of men are acquainted with the millionth part of those facts which the generations of mankind have experienced; and of that very minute fraction of them, that we have ourselves observed, how many have resulted from causes of which we have no certain knowledge! All this numerous class of contingent events may or may not have happened in the regular course of nature. For aught that we know, some of them at least may have resulted from the interposition of Divine Providence, by which the natural course of things has been changed. Take an instance given by Hume: a man apparently in good health suddenly dies from a cause unknown. He says that this is no miracle, because it has been frequently observed. Certainly, we do not call it a miracle, but the true reason why we do not, is that we are ignorant of the cause. Did we know that according to the law of nature, the man would have lived for years, but that God killed him by a stroke of supernatural power, then it would be a miracle. Take another instance: a man apparently at the point of death from disease, recovers, we know not how nor why. Does experience of events like these and innumerable others of the like contingent nature, prove anything either positively for the uniformly regular operation of the laws of nature, or negatively against occasional devia-

tions by the act of God? Certainly not. But they do demonstrate conclusively, that experience—even common, every-day experience—raises no such insurmountable proof against miracles, as Hume pretends; and that, in fact, experience is not inconsistent with the supposition, that the Deity does sometimes vary the course of nature for particular ends. But then, supposing that God does produce contingent events by controlling the course of nature, we do not recognize any event as miraculous unless it be manifestly contrary to the law of nature; and as, for reasons before mentioned, such events must rarely occur, they are still so improbable as to require stronger proof than ordinary facts. Although negative evidence cannot amount to a proof, as Hume's argument assumes, it can, nevertheless, extend so far as to raise a strong presumption against a reported fact, and this it does in the case of miracles.

Having thus disposed of the principal sophistries which Hume has wrought into the body of his argument, I come now to consider the principle from which the argument derives all its logical force. Had the skeptical philosopher made a legitimate use of the principle, unmixed with unwarrantable assumptions and other tricks of sophistry, in combating the testimony in favor of miracles, his argument, though inconclusive against the miracles of Christ, would have been fair and worthy of respectful consideration.

He thus lays down the principle: "No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous [that is, more improbable,] than the fact which it endeavors to establish."

This is a just principle. The improbability of a miracle must be overcome by proof, which must be stronger in proportion as the improbability is greater. That proof must, to those who are not eye-witnesses, be furnished by testimony. But human testimony is liable to error and falsehood. Hence, it is only probable that a witness will tell the truth, and more or less probable according to his competency, his moral character, and the motives that operate on his mind in giving his evidence. Without some particular motive to falsify, all men will probably tell the truth, substantially at least.

But, however lowly we may estimate the veracity of mankind in general, certain it is that testimony is susceptible of indefinite accumulation, by increasing the number of witnesses; especially when the witnesses are of good character, and are competent to report

correctly what they have observed. Still, however, the credibility of their testimony, in a particular case, will be weakened in proportion to the improbability of the fact to which they testify. Hence, to justify our belief of an improbable fact, we must judge the fact to be less improbable than the falsehood of the testimony; and the degree of our belief will be stronger, as the weight of the testimony preponderates more strongly over the improbability of the fact. Hence, because a miracle is a very improbable sort of event, a firm faith in its occurrence ought not to be entertained without much stronger proof than is necessary in regard to ordinary facts. The testimony ought to be such, that its falsehood shall be decidedly more improbable than the fact itself. This is Hume's principle, and I adopt it in arguing against Hume's conclusion, that "no testimony is sufficient to prove a miracle."

The argument is now on the general question, whether or not a miracle is susceptible of proof by testimony. Hume denies it; we affirm it. We take for granted, that a miracle is, from its nature, a very improbable sort of event, and that the testimony of man is fallible, yet capable of affording evidence, more or less, of any possible event. We have to determine, whether it can have sufficient weight to overcome the improbability of a miracle.

I undertake to demonstrate that human testimony is susceptible of such a cumulative force, that it can overcome any assignable degree of improbability in the fact which it tends to establish.

Before I proceed to analyze the force of testimony, let me call your attention to some familiar examples of its power to produce conviction against strong antecedent improbabilities. You know that we derive the far greater part of our knowledge from the reports of other men, that is, from testimony. All our belief in facts beyond the narrow sphere of our personal experience, is founded on testimony. Many of these facts are highly improbable, if we judge them by our own observation and experience. We shiver in the moderate cold of our winters, yet we firmly believe the men who report, that whole tribes of mankind live and enjoy life in an atmosphere that freezes mercury. We know that the general mass of materials composing this globe is incombustible, yet we believe that mountains disgorge rivers of melted rocks, even amidst frozen oceans and glaciers of eternal ice. We know that masses of stone are with difficulty heaved a few yards into the air; but we fully credit the reports of a few men who profess to have seen red-hot stones of considerable weight fall from the upper regions of the

atmosphere, though we cannot imagine how they were projected to such a height, or whence they could have originated. When we consider the present state of the earth, and what we know of its living tribes, it is hard to believe that monstrous animals, four times as large as the elephant, should once have lived by tens of thousands in the frozen regions of Siberia; yet we give our unhesitating assent to the testimony of a few travellers, who declare that innumerable bones of such animals are found in the icy soil of that country. We also hold it for certain, on the testimony of men, that the skeletons of strange monsters of various kinds, have been found imbedded hundreds of feet deep in the solid rocks of this globe. And how improbable in themselves are the stories which travellers relate concerning the artificial wonders of Egypt! What is Egypt but a narrow vale between immense deserts, where no rain falls, and where two or three millions of poor inhabitants draw subsistence from the mud of the Nile. Yet here do travellers pretend to have found the most stupendous monuments of human labor, that the world ever saw—the pyramids, the catacombs with their millions of mummies, and the ruins of Thebes. How could such structures and such excavations in solid rock, have been made by human hands in such a country? You wonder, and yet you believe with as firm a faith as if you had seen those unaccountable objects with your own eyes. And how much like a wild romance is that ancient story of Alexander of Macedon? Can you believe that so petty a king, whose hereditary dominions were a small space between the mountains and the sea in a corner of Europe, could have conquered Asia with 30,000 men?—that he could have overthrown millions of soldiers, and crossed vast deserts, in his victorious march, from the Mediterranean sea to the Indian ocean? Yet although the story is more than 2000 years old, and rests upon the authenticity of a few ancient records, every reading man has full confidence in its truth. You may never have seen the Alps, yet you easily believe on testimony that they are a mountain barrier, so high, so precipitous, so covered with perpetual ice and snow, that it is very difficult for travellers to cross, except by a modern road constructed with immense labor. What think you, then, was the feasibility of marching a great army across them in ancient times, when there was no road, when every valley and gorge was occupied by savage mountaineers, ready to roll huge rocks from the precipices upon every invader? Yet on the authority of a few ancient historians, you

believe that Hannibal led an African army of 60,000 men through those narrow gorges, up those frightful precipices, over those fields of ice, over those snowy peaks, and down again into the gulfs that led to fair Italy; that he took with him not only his 60,000 men, but all their provisions, forage, tents, arms, horses, and elephants—all, over a route where often even the experienced chamois-hunter would scarcely venture to climb. You have no doubt of these facts.

Consider how *absolutely certain* you feel concerning innumerable facts, of which your knowledge is derived wholly from testimony, oral or written. Does anything appear more certain to you, and to all other intelligent men, than the existence of such a country as Japan, or the former existence and actions of such men as Christopher Columbus, Martin Luther, and Napoleon Bonaparte? But in respect to most facts that have come to your knowledge, and of which you feel *indubitably certain*, the testimony on which you rely is exceedingly indirect. Between you and the original witnesses are many intermediate reporters. Yet the man who should presume to deny these facts would be wondered at as a curious specimen of the *genus homo*—a very peculiar sort of fool.

The illustrations just given of the power of testimony to produce a firm conviction of even the most improbable facts, are sufficient to show that belief in testimony is a law of our nature, and that no conceivable fact can be rejected as incredible, when the full power of testimony is brought to bear upon the mind.

I now proceed to analyze the force of testimony, and to show how it is susceptible of indefinite augmentation, until it shall overcome the highest conceivable degree of improbability in the fact to which it is applied.

In the first place, testimony may derive any degree of force from undesigned coincidence in the statements of different witnesses, who give independent testimony.

Witnesses and their testimony are said to be independent when there is no previous concert or design by which the testimony of one witness is made to coincide with that of another. It is an evidence that the coincidence is undesigned, when the witnesses have not communicated with one another about the matter of their testimony. But this is not necessary to constitute independent testimony. It is sufficient that each witness tells his own story, without depending on the information or instruction of an-

other as to what he shall testify. You have probably remarked in the manner of witnesses, and in the matter and circumstances of their testimony, sufficient evidence that they spoke independently from their personal knowledge of facts, and not from the promptings of another. But I need not explain by what means we may ascertain the independency of witnesses. It is enough for you to know that there are such witnesses, and that the coincidence of their testimony is not the result of concert or design. Then the coincidence can result only from chance, or from the truth of their testimony. We suppose that the facts of which they testify are of a contingent nature, and capable of being known as facts only from actual observation.

Thus, if two men were to tell you independently that they had seen a certain man killed accidentally by the fall of a tree, it is evident that either the report is true, or they must by mere chance have hit upon the same falsehood. In proportion as it is improbable that such an undesigned coincidence in falsehood should occur, is it probable that the testimony is true, even though the witnesses were personally unworthy of credit.

Now the more numerous the particulars in which these witnesses concur in their statements, the more improbable is it that the coincidence should have resulted from chance; not only so, but the improbability increases in a geometrical ratio, as the points of coincidence increase in number. Contingent events are infinitely diversified in time, place, and circumstances. Many men have been killed by the fall of trees, yet probably no two instances have coincided in all their circumstances. Two men might possibly feign or fancy an incident of this sort about the same time; it is not impossible that they should happen to do it near the same place; nor will I pronounce it impossible that they should happen to tell this fiction of theirs to the same person, as a fact which they had seen. But you will allow that an undesigned coincidence, even to this extent, is exceedingly improbable. What would you say then if they agreed exactly in regard to the time and place of the accident, the sort of tree that fell, the cause of its fall, what sort of injury it inflicted on the man, &c.? Would you not feel that it was morally impossible to attribute such a web of coincidences to chance? Hence, if it be granted that the witnesses were independent, you would say at once that the testimony *must* be true.

I said that the degree of probability increased in a geometrical

ratio as the points of coincidences increased in number. This is capable of mathematical demonstration; but I shall not enter fully into this method of proof. I shall only illustrate the principle sufficiently to make it intelligible.

Suppose the two men referred to should happen to conceive the idea of telling the falsehood, that a certain man was killed: yet the chances we will suppose are only 100 to 1 against their happening to coincide in respect to the manner of his death by the fall of a tree. Then suppose they each invent for himself a place at which they will locate the accident, the chances are at least 1000 to 1 against their coinciding on this point. But the chances were 100 to 1 against their coinciding in the other, therefore the chances would be 100,000 to 1 against their coinciding in both at once. Now, suppose they consider, each for himself, what sort of tree he shall pitch upon as the cause of the man's death. Here the range of choice is limited; say the chances are only three to one against their coinciding in this particular; then the probability is, that they would coincide three times as often in the two former points as in all three at once. Therefore, the chances are 300,000 to 1 against their coinciding in all these three points. So, as they coincided in four, five or six, or more points, would the chances against the falsehood of their testimony be multiplied, until they amounted to a moral certainty that the testimony could not be false.

But equally potent is an increase in the number of independent witnesses to multiply the chances against the falsehood of their testimony, or, what is the same thing, to multiply the degree of probability in favor of its truth. I supposed that when two men happened about the same time to invent a lie respecting a certain person's death, the chances were at least 100 to 1 against their both hitting upon so rare a cause of death as the fall of a tree. I have assumed too low a number, but let it stand. Now, supposing the very improbable case, that three men should at once, without concert, take it into their heads to fabricate a tale about the same person's death. We will leave out that improbability, and suppose that the three did chance to do this improbable thing, and that the chances were, as aforesaid, 100 to 1 against any two of them coinciding in respect to the cause of his death. Then it is evident that two of them would coincide in this particular 100 times as often as all three would; that is, the chances would be 10,000 to 1 against their all coinciding at once. And so on

would we have to multiply the former results throughout, as we added witness after witness. You can easily conceive then that the power of testimony, considered merely as undesignedly coinciding, is practically unlimited, and capable of such accumulation, as to overcome any assignable degree of improbability in the fact to which such testimony is applied.

Should any of the younger part of my audience not have as yet a clear conception of the grounds of this mathematical sort of reasoning on chances or probabilities, I can only refer him to any good mathematician, or any good treatise on the subject, for a fuller explanation. No method of human reasoning is more certain in its results than this. The only room for error is in the numbers assumed to express the chances, or the degrees of probability or improbability. The method of calculation is infallible; and I have given you a specimen of it merely to show how rapidly the probabilities of truth are multiplied, as the points of coincidence and the number of the independent witnesses increase, and how soon they accumulate to such a degree of moral certainty, as to overcome any conceivable degree of improbability in the nature of the fact.

To illustrate the principle of this method of reasoning, I will propose to you some simple case, in which events are referred to what we call chance. Suppose for example, that you had before you a confused heap of printer's types, and you thrust your hand among them at haphazard, and drew out successively two types, with the design of spelling the little word *so*. Would you not probably have to make many trials before you succeeded in drawing the right letters in the right order? But suppose that you chose a word of three letters instead of two, as the monosyllable *man*. Consider how much the chances of failure would be multiplied by this single addition of a letter; how often you might hit the two first letters without hitting the third at the same time? So it is with coincidences when they result from chance. And then if two of you should try the same experiments together, how often might the one or the other succeed before both should succeed at the same trial? So is it with independent testimony, when we increase the number of witnesses. How often might one of them hit upon a particular set of circumstances when he invented a lie, before both should hit upon them all at the same trial.

I trust that I have sufficiently demonstrated the power of independent testimony to establish the most improbable sort of facts;

and that too without respect to the moral character of the witnesses.

In the second place, testimony derives force from the character of the witnesses, for veracity and competency; and this too is susceptible of infinite accumulation.

Men naturally tell the truth; and although motives of interest and passion may lead them to swerve from it, sometimes, there is also implanted in the human breast a moral feeling which resists the motives to falsehood, and gives more or less weight to the testimony of honest men, even when they are tempted to utter a falsehood. Regard to reputation is another powerful check upon the motives to falsehood. A liar is one of the most infamous characters in society. Mankind feel the necessity of maintaining truth with one another. Therefore they brand the false witness as a dangerous character, and point at him with the finger of scorn. But nature prompts even liars to tell many more truths than falsehoods; and nature and moral principle and regard to reputation combined, give a general character of truth to the testimony of mankind; at least of substantial truth, even when interest or prejudice causes it to be somewhat disfigured.

But men may err in their testimony through incompetency to observe and report correctly the facts of which they testify. Due allowance must be made for this in estimating the credibility of a witness. When the facts are simple and obvious to the senses, almost any man is competent to testify about them. He can tell what he plainly saw and heard and felt, though he may not be qualified to reason on the subject.

To demonstrate that testimony may have force sufficient in the personal credibility of the witnesses, it is not necessary to assign to each witness a high degree of credibility. Let it only be probable that a witness will tell the truth, and the force of the testimony will, as in the former case, be multiplied by every additional witness. Let the probability be only as two to one, that a single witness will tell the truth; then the probability will be as four to one that the testimony of two such witnesses, when they concur, is true;—and so on the probability of truth will be doubled by each additional witness. But when the witnesses are honest, conscientious men, you will readily admit that the probable truth of their testimony is far greater. When such a man is not very powerfully tempted to swerve from the truth, you will allow that 1000 to 1 is a very low estimate of the probable truth of his tes-

timony. Then let two such witnesses concur, and the probability is a thousand thousands, or a million to one, that their testimony is true; and every additional witness of this character will multiply the probability a thousand-fold. Now suppose that twelve such witnesses concur; if you calculate the force of their united testimony, it mounts up to an almost inconceivable quantity,—to a moral certainty of truth so powerful, that no degree of improbability in the fact attested, can resist its force. Yet the number of witnesses is supposed to be only twelve: what if it were a hundred or a thousand?

Observe that we put the probability of truth in one scale of the balance, and the improbability of the fact in the other, as Mr. Hume directs; and then give our judgment in favor of the side which preponderates. We must therefore allow the testimony its full weight independently of the nature of the fact; taking care not to let the improbability of the fact itself detract anything from the testimony, until we put them into the scales.

If any one should be at a loss to understand how the addition of one witness can in this case so multiply the force of the testimony, I ask his attention to this observation. When the question is whether a particular event has or has not occurred, if we can believe any one witness, who testifies that it has occurred, then we must consider the fact as established. All that we need, therefore, to justify our belief of the fact, is to feel morally sure that one witness out of all who testify can be relied upon as true. Then it matters not whether we can rely upon the rest, or not; for if any one tells the truth, then it follows that all who concur with him, also tell the truth in that case, though they should falsify in other cases. In this case, if one be true, all must be true; and it is only on the supposition that all concur at once in the same falsehood, that their testimony can be discredited.

From this observation, it may be easily understood, when witnesses are probably honest, how an addition to their number not only increases but multiplies the force of their testimony, because it multiplies the chances that some one among them can be relied on as a true witness, or what is the same thing, multiplies the improbability that they should all concur in the same falsehood.

I have now shown satisfactorily, I trust, that human testimony is susceptible of two sorts of force, each of which may be aug-

mented to any extent necessary to overcome the improbability of any conceivable event.

What shall we say, then, of the force of testimony, when it combines these elements of strength ;—when the force of undesigned coincidence in the testimony is multiplied by the force of honesty and good faith in the witnesses ? Yet these elements of strength may be, and often are, combined. How miserably diseased with skepticism must a man's intellect be, who can affirm, as Hume did, that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle !

But I need not urge the force of testimony any further ; for this same skeptical philosopher, after elaborating an argument by which the force of all possible testimony for miracles was to be paralyzed, does in the same Essay give up the point, by admitting that the most stupendous miracle might be proved by the testimony of men ;—no less a miracle than this, namely, that at a certain time, ages ago, the sun was totally darkened for the space of eight days. If testimony might, as Hume says, have force enough to prove such an awful derangement in the course of nature, how much less would be sufficient to prove that a teacher sent from God had miraculously healed some diseased persons, and had himself risen from the dead ?

But whilst he thus concedes that testimony is of force to prove an unheard-of miracle, void of all moral use and signification, he resolves that religion shall not benefit by his concession, for he expressly excepts religious miracles as wholly incredible, because mankind have been often imposed on by stories of such miracles. He summarily disposes of religious miracles forever, by declaring that they ought to be universally rejected without examination. But if the frequency of imposture in relation to a class of facts be a sufficient reason for scouting the whole as incredible, then we ought to reject all reports of cures by medicine, because mankind are daily imposed on by the worthless nostrums of advertising quacks.

And this, at last, is the result of Hume's Essay on Miracles, which has given so much trouble to writers on the Evidences of Christianity. After packing together a mixture of sound principles and miserable sophisms into the form of an infallible argument against miracles, the author himself virtually abandons his argument, and falls back upon the last refuge of a despairing skeptic,—a resolution not to believe in Christianity, whatever may be its evidence, and to scout all religious miracles without exami-

nation. This resolution shows that he found *it very hard to disbelieve the miracles of Jesus Christ.*

II. I come now to the second head of the general subject, which is to consider the nature and the evidence of the mighty works ascribed to our Saviour Jesus Christ. I confine myself to these among all that are recorded in the Bible, in order, by simplifying the discussion, to reduce it to the narrow limits of a lecture; nor is it necessary to go beyond them; for these are obviously the test miracles, by which the Christian religion must, so far as its Divine authority is concerned, either stand or fall.

First, then, let us examine the nature of these mighty works, and determine whether any of them were really miraculous or not. I say, *any of them*, because even one undoubted miracle is sufficient to prove the Divine interposition, and to establish the doctrines of the great teacher. The certainty, also, that one or a few were real miracles, will also determine the nature of those which, if considered by themselves, might be in some degree questionable.

In determining the nature of the mighty works ascribed to Jesus Christ, we must take the facts as they are related in the evangelical records; for we are not considering whether those facts actually occurred, but whether, supposing them to have occurred, they were really miraculous or not.

In respect to some of them, it is easy to determine that they could not have resulted from natural causes: they must, therefore, have been miraculous. Of this sort was Christ's walking upon the sea (Matt. xiv. 25); his feeding thousands with a few small loaves and fishes (Matt. xiv. 15.); his giving sight to a man born blind by the application of clay moistened with spittle (John ix.); his raising Lazarus from the tomb (John xi.), and his own resurrection from the dead and visible ascent to heaven.

Next to these is a sort of cases, which, if taken singly, are not demonstrably supernatural, but when taken collectively and in connection with the circumstances, must also be considered as unquestionably miraculous. Of this sort are the numerous cases in which Christ instantaneously healed men of diseases, which were almost, if not quite incurable by natural means,—such as inveterate leprosies, palsies, epilepsies, lunacy, &c. (Matt. viii. Luke v. Mark v. John v.) Admitting that in some rare instances, persons deeply affected with such diseases, might naturally recover, I think that you will esteem it impossible for any man without

miraculous power to effect instantaneously many cures of this sort in succession, and without a failure, as often as the patients presented themselves. What I have to say on a third sort of cases will apply with additional force to these also, and remove any doubt that may linger in your minds.

In the third sort of cases, the events were such as might proceed from natural causes, and the only evidence of their miraculous character, consisted in the circumstances and manner of their production. Such was the sudden fall of the wind on Lake Tiberias, when Jesus commanded it to cease (*Matt. viii. 18*). The recovery of patients from ordinary diseases without the application of remedies, as in the case of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, who was ill of a fever (*Luke iv. 38*). Into this class I also put the cases of Jairus's daughter and the widow's son, who were resuscitated after apparent death (*Luke viii. 41, Luke vii. 11, 12*). For although cases of revival after apparent death are rare, yet as they do sometimes occur from natural causes, the mere occurrence of the fact is no evidence of a miracle.

But whilst events of this sort are not necessarily miraculous, neither are they necessarily the result of natural causes. The most common sort of event is miraculous, when it happens out of the regular course of nature,—when the cause on which it naturally depends is wanting, and its occurrence can be accounted for only on the supposition of a supernatural cause. A gust of wind may suddenly blow over,—a sick man may regain his health, and a blind man may recover his sight; and a man after lying breathless for hours may return to life; and though the cause may be unknown, yet the circumstances of the case may give no indication of a miracle. Before a miracle can be inferred, there must be a sign of supernatural agency. What was the sign in these cases? It was the wonderful coincidence between certain acts of Jesus and the events which immediately followed. According to the law of nature, the acts of Jesus could not have produced such effects; yet the events sprang forth instantaneously, as the effect springs from the cause, and quite as certainly and regularly as if all had occurred in the ordinary course of nature. A storm agitates the waters and threatens to overwhelm the frail boat in which Jesus lies asleep. He is wakened with the fearful cry, Lord save, or we perish! He rises, and commands the winds to be still. Instantly there is a great calm. A woman lies ill of a great fever. Jesus happens to arrive at the house, and seeing her condition, he takes

her by the hand and rebukes the disease: the fever flies at his command, the woman rises and attends to her household duties as usual. A blind man happens to meet with Jesus and begs for the restoration of his sight. Jesus touches his eyes, immediately the film that had for years drawn its dark curtain over them is dispelled, and the world again flashes upon his sight. At another time Jesus happens to meet a funeral procession, attended with extraordinary lamentation and woe; he learns that a heart-broken widow is following the dead body of her only son to the tomb. He orders the bier to be stopped; he uncovers the corpse, and commands the dead to rise. Immediately the current of life resumes its flow, the pale cheek reddens, the lungs breathe, the eyes open, the limbs move, the soul resumes its tabernacle of clay, and the poor widow embraces her recovered son.

Such a coincidence between the word of a man, and the forthcoming of an event,—between the command of a mortal and the obedience of nature,—if it happened once would be deemed extraordinary; if twice in succession, wonderful; if ten times or a hundred times without a failure, certainly miraculous. And justly would it so appear; for although such a coincidence might once or possibly twice occur by chance; yet that it should continue to happen regularly a dozen and even hundreds of times, is a sure indication of supernatural power.

If further proof were required that such coincidences could not be accidental, it could easily be afforded by reducing the argument to a mathematical form, as I did when discussing the force of testimony. Take for instance the case in which the wind ceased at the command of Jesus. A violent gust of wind in full blast might chance to fall on a sudden when a man uttered a command that it should; but you will admit this to be so improbable, that it could not be expected to happen oftener than one time in a hundred. So a high fever, as it does, though very rarely, happen to cease all at once without apparent cause, might possibly happen once in a thousand times to do so at the moment when a certain man called at the house and rebuked the disease. If we assume these numbers as correctly expressing the improbability of the two coincidences taken singly, then it would follow that the two could happen in succession only once in a hundred thousand times that the trial should be made. If we suppose again that a person who has been for hours apparently dead, would chance to revive at the moment when a certain man met the fu-

neral procession and commanded the dead to rise, as often as once in ten thousand times; then compounding this case with the other two, the three would not successively occur by chance oftener than once in ten thousand times one hundred thousand times; that is once in a thousand millions of times. Such then is the degree of improbability that lies against the supposition of accidental coincidence in only three out of hundreds of similar cases recorded or alluded to in the Gospels. How then can any man imagine that all these cases should be the result of accidental coincidence between the acts of our Saviour and the apparently miraculous effects that immediately followed?

Had Jesus failed in many instances or even in a few, when he attempted to produce such wonderful effects, the argument would lose much of its force, but as not a single failure appears to have occurred, we must reject the hypothesis of accidental coincidence as utterly absurd.

But there is another, which may be reasonably applied to many reported cases of miraculous healing, and which deserves therefore to be respectfully considered in the present argument.

The hypothesis is that the *faith* and *imagination* of the patient, often have a wonderful effect upon the disease, and sometimes produce a cure when ordinary remedies fail.

This is true, and what seems to give the hypothesis more applicability to the miraculous cures related in the Gospels, is that Jesus often required faith in his power to heal, as a condition on which he would undertake the cure (Matt. viii. 10; ix. 22. Mark x. 52).

But however plausible this hypothesis may at first sight appear, a little examination will prove that it cannot throw even a doubt upon the miraculous nature of our Saviour's mighty works.

It may sufficiently account for some extraordinary cures performed among superstitious people, by faith in the relics of a dead saint, or in the prayers of some austere fanatic, believed to have miraculous power;—but in reference to the miracles of Christ, it is either inapplicable, or where applicable yet inadequate to solve the phenomena.

In many of Christ's miracles, faith and imagination could have no effect, as when Christ himself "walked the waves,"—when he multiplied the loaves and fishes in the wilderness,—when he raised the unconscious dead, and when he was himself raised from the dead. And in many cases in which the subject of the miracle

could exercise faith, the effect was too great and too sudden to be ascribed to this cause. How could faith suddenly dispel the catarract from a blind man's eyes, or instantaneously infuse perfect health and vigor into the half-dead members of a bed-ridden paralytic?

Respecting the healing power of faith and imagination, it should be observed that it operates by producing strong emotions, by which the vital energy is increased and salutary effects are often, but not always produced. As most medicines are liable to failure, so it is with faith as a curative agent. In some cases it effects a complete cure either speedily or slowly; in others it produces only partial and temporary relief; and in others again it wholly fails to benefit the patient. Some diseases too are beyond the reach of its influence.

Now the fact, according to the gospel narrative, that in every case and in every sort of ailment, the cure was immediate and perfect, demonstrates that the cures ascribed to Jesus Christ could not have been effected by any degree of faith or any workings of the imagination in those who were healed: and the additional fact that in not a few cases, no faith or fancy could operate at all, is conclusive evidence, that if the gospel narrative be true, Christ did possess miraculous power, and to this power alone should we ascribe all his mighty works.

But if so, why did he in some instances require faith in those upon whom he exercised his healing power? This may, I think, be reasonably accounted for without supposing that he depended in any case on the patient's faith for his ability to effect a cure.

Many of his works were intended, not merely to prove his Divine mission, but to teach moral lessons of the highest importance. There is an obvious analogy between the nature of his miracles and the object of his mission. His miracles were works of salvation; his mission was to save sinners. His works of Divine power were illustrations of Divine mercy. He manifested his power to redeem men from their iniquities by redeeming them from the evils of mortality. But whilst he could save their lives and restore their health by a physical operation on their bodies, he could save their souls only by a moral operation upon their spiritual nature through the medium of faith. To inculcate the necessity of faith in him as the Saviour of the soul, he also required that applicants for his healing power should profess their confidence in his ability to save them from disease and death.

This was conformable to his usual mode of teaching. He made all the incidents of his ministry and all the occurrences of life the means of conveying moral instruction. He required faith of those who came to him for health and life, because he also required faith of those who should come to him for salvation from spiritual disease and death.

No more needs be said to prove that the mighty works ascribed to Jesus Christ were real miracles. If these works or any of them were truly reported by the evangelists, then they afford evident signs of the Divine mission of our Saviour, and of the Divine authority of his gospel.

But before we can reasonably believe the gospel on this evidence, we must have satisfactory proof of the authenticity and substantial truth of the evangelical records in which these miracles are related. I say, *their substantial truth*; for if we have reason to believe that Christ wrought any such miracles as are recorded in the Gospels, we shall have sufficient ground of belief in his Divine mission, although the Gospels should appear to contain the usual portion of error to which historical records are subject.

I come now in the last place to investigate the proof on which our belief in the miraculous power and Divine mission of Jesus Christ is founded. The question is, *Have we sufficient evidence of the substantial truth of the evangelical records to overcome the intrinsic improbability of the miraculous events which they relate?*

The amount of evidence required will depend on the degree of improbability to be overcome. According to the theoretical principles laid down in the former part of this discourse, a miracle is necessarily an improbable event, and requires for its establishment a greater amount of proof than a common event, and so much the greater as the nature and circumstances of the miracle render it more improbable. But we must observe that in this case the amount of proof needs not to be augmented in proportion to the number and variety of miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ; for you will readily admit that if he had power to work miracles at all, he could as easily work many as few, and great miracles as small; because when the Divine power interposes to produce supernatural events, we readily understand that some great occasion has arisen, and that God will probably multiply and vary his signs, so as to make them evident to the senses and understanding of all observers. Also by exhibiting them at divers times and places, and in a vari-

ety of forms, they would be more susceptible of proof and better fulfil the great design for which they were exhibited. Hence, the improbability of Christ's miracles is rather diminished than increased by the number and variety of those ascribed to him.

Further to estimate the degree of their improbability, we ought to consider the professed object for which the Deity was said to have interposed, the character of the person through whom he was said to have wrought miracles, the doctrines which that person professed to confirm by signs from God, the sort of miraculous signs which he is supposed to have exhibited, and any other circumstances by which a reasonable man could judge what degree of improbability should be assigned to the facts for which testimony is adduced.

What then is the *object* for which God is supposed to have endowed Jesus Christ with miraculous power? No less an object than this, to introduce a new and holy religion for mankind through the agency of his own Son, who was to confirm it and render it efficacious by the sacrifice of himself; and by which mankind might be saved from the errors of idolatry, the prevalence of sin, and the ignorance under which they labored respecting their future destiny. Surely, if ever the Father of mankind should exhibit in this world the miraculous tokens of a revelation from himself, it would be for an object like this,—to bring life and immortality to light,—to disperse the dark clouds of superstition, and open to his erring and sinful creatures the pathway to peace on earth and glory in heaven.

And what sort of person was he, through whom, as the Gospels tell us, these miraculous signs were given, and this revelation of light and mercy was sent? Do they so represent his character and actions, as to make it credible that he should be honored with this Divine mission and endowed with miraculous power?

According to the programme of this course of lectures, another has assigned to him the delightful task of portraying the character of Jesus of Nazareth. Suffice it to say here that by the acknowledgment even of infidels, if ever a human being was worthy to represent the moral majesty and goodness of our Father in heaven, the Jesus of the gospel is that man; who without the vain pomp, and glory of the world, or any circumstance which could dazzle to blind, presents a character so morally pure, so humanly amiable, and yet so divinely great, that neither the examples of history, nor the ideal portraitures of genius, have ever exhibited his

parallel. With a soul as gentle as the dews that fell upon Mount Hermon, all melting with pity for the sorrows of humanity, all forgetful of self, and regardless of worldly applause and pomp and power, he possessed a fortitude which nothing could break,—a patience which nothing could exhaust,—a zeal for the cause of God, which glowed like a star of heaven, a philanthropy which could sacrifice both honor and life for the welfare of man,—and withal a heaven-taught wisdom which confounded the subtlety of lawyers and scribes, separated the good from the bad in religion and morals, and produced a system of doctrines, worthy to have emanated from God whose glory they display, and worthy to be accepted by man, who, if he would hope for heaven's bliss, must find it through the religion of Jesus Christ, or despair of it forever: for if such a teacher as Christ, and such principles of piety and morality as he taught cannot guide us aright,—then where—oh where in all the earth shall we look for a heaven-taught "Guide to everlasting life through all this gloomy vale?"

What shall we say then? Does the character of Jesus Christ—does the religion which he taught—reflect discredit upon the miraculous power ascribed to him? Is there anything in the miracles of mercy recorded in the evangelical histories—any incongruity, any want of dignity, any sign of imposture, or any circumstance whatsoever, that should make them either intrinsically or circumstantially more improbable than miracles must of necessity be? May I not, on the contrary, affirm, that of all the reported miracles in the annals of the world, those ascribed to Jesus Christ are in their nature and their circumstances the least improbable, and therefore require the least amount of proof to render them credible?

But do not mistake my meaning. I do not offer the character of Christ and of his doctrines as affording any proof whatsoever of his miraculous power or of the truth of Christianity. My present object is not to prove his miracles, but to estimate in a general way the degree of improbability attached to them, and consequently the amount of proof requisite to overcome that improbability and to justify our belief of his Divine mission. In the first part of my lecture, in which I discussed the theory of the subject, I showed that all reported and all conceivable miracles are not equally improbable. The degree of their improbability varies according to the nature, the circumstances and the occasion. I leave it now to your candid judgment to determine

whether the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ be more or less improbable than the generality of those which have been reported in ancient and in modern times.

I come now to consider the evidence by which the miracles of Christ are supported.

Not having witnessed them ourselves, we must rely upon the testimony of others who professed to have been eye-witnesses. But as Jesus Christ lived upwards of 1800 years ago, we have to rely upon written documents for all the facts. All the evidence is to us historical. The great distance at which we are separated from the original witnesses of "what Jesus did and taught," may seem to weaken the evidence so much as to make it inadequate to prove a miracle. But notwithstanding the wide interval of time, we are in fact within a step or two of the original testimony. A single step takes us back about 1800 years to the publication of the New Testament records, especially to the four evangelical histories of Jesus Christ, purporting to have been written partly by eye-witnesses of his acts, and partly by contemporaries who professed to derive their information from original witnesses.

The first step is to ascertain the authenticity of these records. This being done, we have reached the testimony of the original witnesses: then the only remaining question will be, Has their testimony sufficient force to overcome the improbability of the miraculous facts which they profess to have witnessed?

Respecting the authenticity of the evangelical records, I must pass it over with a brief remark or two, because I have not time to discuss it, and because that will be done by another lecturer from whom you doubtless will hear a satisfactory argument on the subject. I will only remark, that, according to all accounts in every age, from the first century downwards to this day, the four gospels and most of the other books of the New Testament were considered on all hands as being genuine documents of apostolical times, and as containing true accounts of what the apostles and other primitive Christians *reported* concerning the acts and doctrines of Jesus Christ.

I shall take it for granted, therefore, not only that the twelve Apostles who first preached the gospel, professed to be eye-witnesses of what Jesus did and taught, but also that we have in the New Testament a substantially correct account of what they and other primitive Christians testified respecting Jesus Christ.

But before we consider the credibility of these original wit-

nesses, we must remove an objection which infidels have frequently urged against the evangelical records of their testimony. No one pretends to dispute the sufficiency of these records to establish a number of leading facts. Few even of the French infidels have denied that such a man as Jesus of Nazareth lived and taught and was crucified; and that twelve men called his apostles professed to have witnessed his mighty works and his resurrection from the dead; and that on the strength of their testimony they did with much labor and suffering make many converts and found many churches in different countries, and that the four Gospels are authentic records of what was reported among Christians in apostolical times respecting the life and miracles of Jesus.

So far there is no dispute worth noticing between believers and unbelievers in the Divine mission of Christ. But the unbelievers object to the four evangelists, that they disagree in their statements, and as two of them were apostles, and the other two were companions of apostles, the inference is that the twelve apostles disagreed in their testimony, and are therefore unworthy of credit.

The truth of the matter is this: when we compare the four evangelists we find a general and substantial agreement in all their narratives; but they differ in several respects.

1. Some relate facts which others wholly omit: this argues no disagreement, since none of them profess to relate all the facts relative to their subject.

2. They differ somewhat in the order of the facts related: but neither does this argue anything to their discredit, since they do not profess to give those facts in the order in which they occurred.

3. In their account of the same facts, not only does one relate circumstances which another omits—as the most veracious witnesses and narrators are apt to do—but in a few instances they relate the same circumstances differently. Thus for example, in their accounts of the Saviour's resurrection, whilst they agree fully in regard to every material fact, they relate several of the circumstances differently. Take one of them as an illustration of the whole. Whilst they all agree that Jesus rose from the tomb early in the morning, and that Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb and discovered that he was not there, yet they differ as to the precise time of her coming. Matthew says that she

came when the day began to dawn ;—Mark says that she arrived there at sunrise ;—Luke says less definitely that it was “very early in the morning ;”—and John says that it “was yet dark.” Such are the variations of the evangelists in regard to this circumstance : and what is the amount of discrepance among them ? I answer, Little or nothing ; for if you suppose that John by its being yet dark meant a dusky twilight, and that Mark by “sunrise” meant a clear twilight, such as occurs when the sun’s rays first touch the high mountains, and then allow for the time that Mary Magdalene was on the way, perhaps a mile in length, and surely there is nothing here over which a man should blow the trumpet of infidelity. And as to the other circumstance, that John mentions Mary Magdalene alone on this occasion, and that the others mention another Mary as having gone with her, it is merely an instance of omission by one evangelist of what another mentions. Mary Magdalene was the one to whom alone Jesus showed himself on that occasion : therefore John names her alone in his account of the matter.

These variations in the evangelical histories, instead of invalidating, serve rather to confirm the substantial truth of their narratives ; for they show that the authors did not copy from one another, but wrote independently and drew their information from independent sources. Who does not know that the most truthful witnesses, when they testify what they have observed respecting the same event, always differ in the same manner in their statements. An exact agreement in every particular would raise a strong presumption that they borrowed of one another, instead of giving independent testimony.

There is no reason, therefore, to doubt that we have in the four evangelists a substantially true report of what the twelve apostles testified respecting the life and miracles of Jesus Christ. The simple, unaffected, truthful manner in which they tell the wonderful story, adds no little to their credibility. And finally, as no other or contradictory account of what the apostles preached has ever been heard of among ancient records or traditions, I feel authorized to assume that we have the recorded testimony of the apostles in the New Testament. I may also assume that we have there a substantially true history, so far as it goes, of what the apostles did and suffered as witnesses for Christ, as well as what they testified respecting his doctrine and miracles.

Let us now consider what credit is due to their testimony as competent, as honest, and as independent witnesses.

First, then, were they competent to give us a correct account of such miraculous events as we find recorded in the Gospels? Were they sufficiently intelligent, accurate, and cautious observers to raise them above the suspicion of having been deluded, either by the arts of another, or by their own stupid credulity?

They were, it is true, but simple and unlearned men, they had nothing of the philosopher or the skeptic about them, but they were, nevertheless, as their own candid writings, and the writings of others about them, plainly show, men of good, sober, common sense; on some points rather hard to convince, especially in regard to the great miracle on which the truth of Christianity mainly depends, that is, the resurrection of their crucified master. There is nothing that indicates a want of competency on their part to observe and report with accuracy such facts as are recorded in the Gospels.

Be it observed, that we do not depend on their testimony for anything but simple facts, open to the senses, and requiring nothing but the sober senses and common memory of mankind to observe and to report. Give us these and we can judge for ourselves, whether there was any fraud in the exhibition, or any miracle in the facts exhibited.

Let us take for illustration, the case of the paralytic, of which we have an account in the 2d chapter of Mark. What were the facts and circumstances that presented themselves to the witnesses? Simply these: when Jesus is preaching to a crowded house in Capernaum, four men come to the place, bearing a helpless paralytic on a bed. Unable to press in through the dense crowd, they have to mount the low roof of the house and to let their patient down before the feet of Jesus, and consequently also in full view of many who were present. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Some scribes were sitting there, who inwardly charged him with blasphemy, in assuming the Divine prerogative of forgiving sins. Jesus then put the question to them, "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Then he commanded the patient to rise, take up his bed and go home, and (says Mark) immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them

all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it in this fashion.

Such were the facts of the case, according to the testimony of the witnesses. Could not a fisherman observe and relate those facts as truly and as accurately as a philosopher? We care not how the witnesses reasoned about them. Let us know all the material facts—all that they saw and heard, and we can do the reasoning for ourselves; and thus it is, that like a lawyer before a court, I argue that the witnesses in this case could not have been deluded in respect to what they saw and heard; for the facts were as plain and evident to the senses as any in the world, and were exhibited in open day before a throng of spectators almost touching the paralytic, and some of them scribes, disposed to watch and find fault with every act of Jesus. Nor can we presume that they were imposed on by a pretended paralytic. He was no doubt a man of the same town, known to some of those present. His looks and actions would also have betrayed him, had he attempted a deception. Had Jesus undertaken to delude people with a false paralytic and a false cure, he would not have chosen to try the experiment in open day before such a crowd of witnesses, and in a town where, according to the evangelists, he had many enemies.

Whether the cure was miraculous or not, every one may judge for himself. All that we want from the witnesses are the facts as they occurred. The apostles were surely competent to give them. Therefore no objection can lie against the witnesses on the score of competency.

The next question is in respect to their honesty or disposition to tell the truth. This is the main point. If we can rely upon the conscientious veracity of the apostles, their testimony respecting plain, simple matters of fact, like those just mentioned respecting the cure of the paralytic, must have great weight.

We must judge of the honesty of the apostles, as we judge of all ancient men,—that is, by their actions as recorded in history, by their writings and speeches, by the opinions of those who knew them, and by circumstances from which something may be inferred concerning them. In one way or another, we have, I think, all the evidence necessary to enable us to form a well-grounded judgment of the apostles.

And first, I may assert, negatively, that there is no evidence of any sort that tends to convict the apostles of dishonesty, worldly

ambition, hypocrisy, deceit, covetousness, or any base or selfish design in their labors as missionaries of Jesus Christ. All the evidence that we have, goes to establish their sincerity and disinterestedness. Their own writings, and all that others wrote of them in their own time and country, bear them witness that they fully believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world, and that they believed it on the evidence of his miracles wrought in their presence, and especially on the evidence of his resurrection from the dead.

Let us consider for a moment this *miraculum crucis*, this decisive miracle of the resurrection, as affording the most natural solution of the conduct of the apostles, and the best criterion of their moral character.

Ask yourselves the question, Did the apostles believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, or did they not? Then reason on each supposition,—that they did, and that they did not believe so,—and see which of the two will enable you to account most rationally for their conduct. Suppose, first, that they did believe what they published to Jews and Gentiles at the expense of so much labor and suffering, and at the frequent hazard of their lives; then if they were sincere good men, seeking the glory of God and the salvation of mankind, how natural was their conduct, how probable was all that others wrote of them! How consistent with nature and with truth are the style and matter of their own writings! How easily understood the origin and the institutions of the church?

But again, suppose that they did not believe their own story of the death and resurrection of Christ, then, how can you solve the problems that instantly present themselves? The voluntary labors and privations of the apostles; their unshaken constancy, their indomitable fortitude, the unwavering consistency of their testimony; and amidst occasional differences about personal matters, their enduring co-operation to the last in fulfilling their high commission, and establishing the great truth, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again. If they believed not their own statements, then they were wilful liars, and unprincipled impostors: in that case they must have acted from a selfish motive; they must have promised themselves some personal advantage. But what motive? What advantage? How can you account for their conduct? Yet their conduct must have been such as the New Testament represents it; or how can you account for

the existence of the church, and the doctrines and institutions that have come down to us from the age of the apostles?

And do you not feel the force of St. Paul's reasoning in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians; which is directly to the point of our argument? "I delivered unto you first of all that Christ died for our sins,—that he was buried,—that he rose again,—that he was seen of Cephas (Peter), then of the twelve apostles, and after that of above 500. brethren at once; after that he was seen of James, and then again of all the apostles." So Paul reasons about the fact of the resurrection. Then he reasons about the motives of those who preached this fact, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ." He adds another consideration. "If in this life only we (apostles) have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." And so they were among the most miserable of mankind; they sacrificed the present life to propagate a lie, without a hope of the life to come. So they felt, and so they reasoned; and who can deny either the force of their reasoning, or the sincerity of their belief, that Christ had risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept?

And with such evidence as these twelve men alleged for the death and resurrection of Christ,—the evidence of their senses fortified by the evidence of many others,—who could doubt? or who could be mistaken? The same men affirmed that they had witnessed the miracles which Christ wrought during the years of his ministry, and that they were themselves endowed with miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, as a confirmation of their testimony. If they lied in regard to the one fact of the resurrection, so they did in regard to all the rest; so that if they were not honest witnesses, they were thorough-paced liars, full of all hypocrisy and deceit, and utterly destitute of moral principle. In such a case there is no medium. They cannot be considered as well-meaning enthusiasts acting under a delusion; nor as a compound of the self-deluded enthusiast and the wilful impostor, who, believing his ends to be good, believes that he may promote them by pious frauds. Such characters have often appeared, but such the apostles could not have been. The whole body of their ends and views was founded on the miraculous facts which they professed to have witnessed, and if these were false, all was false and wicked. Mahomet was a saint compared with these unscrupulous, untiring,

unblushing, insane, propagators of lies concerning Jesus Christ ;—lies which they invented to impose on mankind for no conceivable end of advantage to themselves or to others ;—lies which they solemnly affirmed in the name of God to be facts witnessed by themselves. How base, how thoroughly depraved must these twelve apostles have been, if they were not honest men ! Yes, the whole twelve, without a single exception, were thoroughly base and unprincipled. No bandits were ever more dishonest.

But on the supposition that they were such abominable liars and hypocrites, several circumstances are unaccountable.

How shall we account for it, that these lying apostles and hypocritical reprobates should have devised and propagated a religion supereminently holy and benevolent ?—That such unprincipled impostors should have set forth, as the Saviour of the world, a character of such purity and loveliness as that of Jesus Christ ?—That in everything except their falsehoods about miracles, they should appear, in all they did and all they said and wrote, to have been simple-hearted, good men, haters of everything false, deceitful, or any way dishonest ?—That they should have pointedly condemned all pious frauds,—that is, the practice of doing evil that good may come, and of promoting the glory of God by falsehood and deception ?*

And then if these men were lying impostors, how strange is it that in all that we read of them, especially in their own writings, we should see such numerous and evident tokens of the artless simplicity of their character, and such unmistakable signs of unaffected zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men, and in their writings, such ardent outpourings of the heart, as could spring only from a deep conviction of the truth of what they inculcated. I need not quote passages from their writings in proof of this : for you cannot read any part of their epistles and discourses, without perceiving the evident signs of an unwavering faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and of an ardent zeal for the salvation of sinners.

Finally, if the apostles were a set of lying impostors, who banded together to deceive mankind, how can you account for it that not one of them ever confessed the imposture, and that every one of them, and of their coadjutors, adhered to the falsehood under every temptation and trial, and either suffered mar-

* See Romans iii. 5-8. 2 Peter ii. 1-3. Also Ephesians iv. 14-25. 2 Timothy iii. 10-14.

tyrdom, or was ready to suffer it, in attestation of these useless and unprofitable fictions?

I conclude that the apostles could not have been such wicked and unprincipled impostors as they must have been, if they were not honest men and sincere believers in the miracles, the resurrection, and the Divine mission of Jesus Christ. We must therefore embrace the alternative, that they were honest men, and sincerely persuaded of the truth of what they testified concerning Jesus Christ. Therefore, so far as the facts which they stated were of the natural and ordinary sort, you and all rational men would readily believe their testimony. But as some of those facts were miraculous and therefore in their nature improbable, you may reasonably suspend your belief until you have duly considered whether the testimony has sufficient weight to overcome the improbability of the facts.

We have considered the testimony of the apostles only so far as it derives weight from the competency and honesty of the witnesses. It remains to consider whether the testimony derives any additional weight from the independency of the witnesses.

Although I think that we might safely rest the argument upon what has been already advanced, it is proper to consider also whether or not the testimony of the apostles and evangelists can be regarded as in any measure independent.

As the apostles were often together, both during the Saviour's ministry and shortly after his crucifixion, it might seem at first view, that they cannot be considered as independent witnesses. But the mere fact that they had opportunities of communicating with one another about the matter of their testimony, does not preclude us from considering them as independent witnesses. The independence of witnesses does not arise from their having no communication with one another about the matter in question, but on the fact that each witness speaks from his own knowledge, and not from the suggestion or information of another. The circumstance that the witnesses have had no communication with one another, is important only as a proof of their independence. But other circumstances may afford sufficient proof of independence. When we perceive that each witness tells the story in his own way, agreeing substantially, but not in all points circumstantially, with the rest, this is a strong argument of independence; especially when the manner and matter of each one's testimony bear that impress of personal knowledge in the witness, which is more easily

felt than described, when we hear the testimony. It consists partly in a certain promptitude and sincerity of manner, and partly in the incidental mention of minute circumstances.

There is nothing in the history or in the testimony of the apostles inconsistent with the supposition that they were independent witnesses. We have not on record the distinct testimony of every one: we must judge, therefore, from the specimens that we have. We have the testimonies of Matthew and John in the gospels which they wrote. They bear infallible evidence that these two apostles did not borrow from one another, nor from any common source. Mark and Luke were not apostles; but as their accounts were evidently not borrowed from Matthew or John, but derived from independent sources, we may justly consider them as being at second hand the testimony of other apostles and original witnesses. We have also in the Acts and apostolical Epistles frequent allusions to the actions, sufferings and resurrection of Christ, taken not from the four Gospels, but either from the personal knowledge of the writers, or from the mouths of original witnesses, and therefore favoring the hypothesis of independent testimony. On the whole, we may from all these facts conclude that the apostles and other original witnesses testified independently. I do not affirm that the independence of their testimony is perfect, and carries with it as much weight as under other circumstances it might have done. But your candor will lead you to admit, that whilst the occasional differences in small matters show the independence of the witnesses, the general coincidence in their testimony affords no small evidence of its truth, independent of the personal character of the witnesses.

Let us now endeavor to sum up the amount of the evidence, and to form some notion of its force. I shall not presume to measure it with mathematical precision, though as heretofore I may use numbers to aid our conceptions, without pretending that they give an exact expression of the quantities which they represent.

We have then, on reliable authority, the testimony of twelve competent and honest witnesses of our Saviour's miracles, and particularly of his resurrection from the dead. Though, for want of documents, we cannot distinctly exhibit what every one of these witnesses testified, yet we have satisfactory evidence that they all concurred in the material facts and circumstances of their testimony, that we have in the four Gospels the sum and substance of what they all avowed respecting Jesus of Nazareth.

If any of you still think that something more should be adduced before we can rely on having the testimony of twelve good witnesses to the gospel history, then I refer you to the great quantity of auxiliary evidence which the New Testament records present; for we can doubtless rely on these records for facts so ordinary in kind and so probable in themselves, as the fact that others, not few in number, besides the apostles, professed to have witnessed some at least of Christ's miracles. You will bear in mind that the apostles began their preaching and testimony only a few weeks after the crucifixion of Christ; that they began at Jerusalem, where he was crucified, to proclaim his resurrection before the multitudes of Jews collected from all parts of the land at the great festival of Pentecost;—that they exercised their ministry for several years in various parts of the Holy Land, where Jesus himself had travelled and exhibited the evidence of his claims as a missionary from God; and that not only had multitudes gathered around him, many believed in his mission, and many others, especially scribes and Pharisees, watched and opposed him, ascribing his mighty works to the devil—but the apostles, after his crucifixion, going over the same ground, and testifying before the same generation the fact of his resurrection, converted thousands, and established numerous churches on the faith of his miracles when alive, and of his resurrection after death.

Now if there be any truth in these statements, which cannot be reasonably denied, then the apostles were far from being the only witnesses who testified to the same facts. If the apostles told the truth, many others must have corroborated their testimony; if they published falsehoods, many others must have been able to contradict them: for they not only gave the facts of their story specifically and circumstantially, but they gave the times and places, and thus exposed them to decisive investigation, and virtually referred them to other witnesses for confirmation or denial.

It is true that Jesus did not after his resurrection show himself openly to all the people. This would have been useless, for he could not have been infallibly recognized, except by his intimate acquaintances, and by them only after an inspection so close and minute as would necessarily confine it to a few individuals. Recollect the instances recorded in history, of impostors successfully passing themselves off for dead princes, and how often you have yourselves, upon a slight or distant view, mistaken one man for another.

Recollect, also, that it was not easy for the apostles to be fully satisfied of Christ's identity after his resurrection. The fact was so extraordinary, so difficult of belief, that it was not until they had irresistible evidence of its reality, that all their doubts were removed. He had to appear to them at divers times and in divers manners; to eat with them, converse with them, and submit his body to a tactual examination, before all of them were satisfied. Yet these men had been with him in close companionship for years. How then could a public exhibition of himself have decided the question of his resurrection, even if he had submitted himself before his enemies to a degrading course of examinations, which would after all have afforded them an occasion for pretending that it was all a piece of imposture? Not only was it more consistent with his dignity, but a more conclusive mode of proof, to verify his resurrection by first giving his chosen witnesses infallible evidence of his identity, and then confirming their testimony by "signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost."

Now, to say nothing of the five hundred brethren to whom, as St. Paul informs us, he appeared once after his resurrection, we may affirm that all who witnessed the apostolical miracles, could afterwards by means of this testimony of God, confirm the testimony of the apostles by their own. When St. Paul, writing to the Galatians, appealed to the miracles which he had wrought among them, would not the testimony of these witnesses of his miracles afterwards corroborate St. Paul's own testimony respecting the truth of Christianity?

Thus supposing that the apostles testified what the New Testament records uniformly declare that they did testify, and supposing that they professed to confirm their testimony by miracles, as the same records declare,—then if these records are not wholly spurious and false, which no one can reasonably suspect, it follows that the apostles did not stand alone in their testimony. They could not have stood before unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, in the same places and in the same years in which all those alleged miracles, Christ's and their own, were exhibited, if exhibited at all, and have appealed successfully to those miracles, unless others besides themselves could be appealed to in corroboration of their statements.

I conclude, therefore, that we have for the miracles of Christ what is more than equivalent to the testimony of twelve honest

men, speaking independently from personal knowledge, that these men had no motive of interest or of passion to swerve from the truth, that their conduct and writings afford the strongest evidence of honesty and sincerity. I have before shown that they were fully competent to observe and report such plain facts as they relate concerning Jesus Christ.

Considering these things, what degree of credibility would you assign to each apostle's testimony, leaving out of view the nature of the facts to which he testifies? How often do you think that a man of such character would, ordinarily, tell the truth, before he would solemnly bear false witness? Surely, an upright, conscientious man would not, in ordinary cases, tell less than ten thousand truths to one lie. But it is enough and far more than enough, if we can assign a probability of only one thousand to one, for the truth of each apostle's testimony. Then the concurrence of two apostles would produce a probability of truth amounting to a thousand thousands, or a million to one. A third concurring would again raise it to one thousand millions; a fourth would swell it to a million millions to one. The twelve would multiply it to an inconceivable magnitude of evidence in favor of Christ's miracles. Subtract from it whatever amount of improbability you can reasonably assign to his miracles, and there must still remain an immense balance of evidence for the miracles of that purest and best of the sons of men, Jesus who died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

But this weight of evidence will be greatly augmented if we combine with the character of the apostles as honest men, their character of independent witnesses, whose manner of giving their testimony, so far as we know it from the records, shows that they did not borrow from one another. If we allow that only a few of them were independent, or that we have only a moderate probability in favor of the independence of the twelve as witnesses, then their testimony will come with greatly augmented weight against the improbability of the facts.

Should the result of my reasonings on the evidence for Christ's miracles surprise any one, because the weight of apostolic testimony appears to be astonishingly great; I refer him to his own experience. Let him consider this. He places full confidence in the testimony of two or three witnesses of common honesty, when they concur, when there is no opposing testimony, when they appear to be independent, and when they sacrifice much in

giving such testimony. The fact to which they testify must be exceedingly improbable to raise even a doubt that the witnesses speak the truth. But suppose that other witnesses are called, and one after another confirm the statements of the former, till twelve have testified, and all the twelve suffer much in consequence of their testimony, yet adhere firmly to it all their lives long. Is there any miracle recorded in the Gospels which he would not believe, or you would not all believe on such testimony? Surely not. Such testimony has irresistible force upon minds open to conviction.

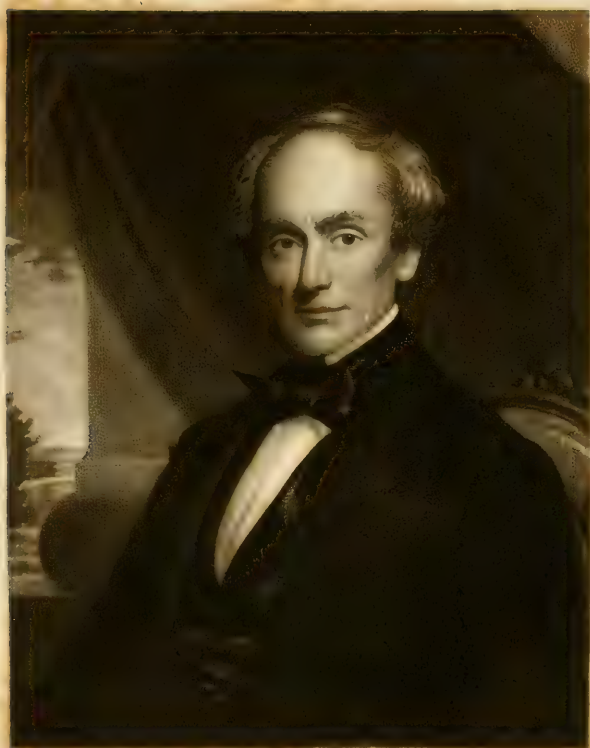
Many in the apostolic age heard the testimony of the apostles without believing it. This is not surprising. They were imbued from the cradle with other religions and were filled with various sorts of prejudices. Not many heard the testimony of more than one or two apostles, after these witnesses left Jerusalem on different missions; and the notion that demons could work miracles enabled unbelievers to evade the force of evidence which we reasonably consider irresistible.

Here I close this long argument, too long if the subject had been less important or could have been satisfactorily discussed in less time. I was not willing to make a lame and impotent defence of our religion on the most essential part of its evidence as a revelation from God. I have been compelled to omit many things which might be adduced with advantage to the argument.

The prophecies of the Old and New Testament being sensible interpositions of God in control of the established course of things, which no natural causes can explain, are as really miraculous as any of the wonderful works of our Lord; and have the additional advantage of being subjected in their proof to our own observation: but as this topic has been assigned to another, I have of course entirely omitted it in the present discussion.

If what God has enabled me to say shall tend to strengthen any man's faith in the Divine mission of our Lord Jesus Christ—who loved us and gave himself for us—then to our merciful Father in heaven be the praise. Amen.





Henry T. McGill

Prophecy,

BY

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I.

It will not be denied, that sacred prophecy was extant, with its text completely finished, four hundred years ago ; when the Bible was first printed, with movable metallic types, by Guttemberg of Mentz. The last four hundred years, however, have been the most impenetrable of all eras, to the exercise of human foresight ; teeming with more numerous, involved, and utter contingencies, than pervade the whole duration of ages before. The passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope ; the discovery of a western hemisphere ; the great reformation in Europe ; the revolutions in England, America, and France ; not to speak of magical changes, by means of science, invention, and art ;—all these have made the history of man a maze of transformation, compared with which the former times were vista, obstructed by this labyrinth alone.

Surely, it can be no human foresight, which could delineate, in the lapse of such a future, lands devoted to the exception of a curse ; and say, that this and that particular country, or people, would be palsied by the side of universal progress—not affected materially, nor affected at all, by the extreme vicissitudes and overwhelming emergencies which have come on the whole world besides. Least of all would human sagacity have ventured to affirm, that Egypt, Palestine, and Syria would be as they now are ; for until that very time, these countries had been a theatre of perpetual changes, and the most wonderful events that burden the pages of history. Simultaneous with that primitive impression of the Bible, was the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Ottoman Turk : and who, with less than superhuman prescience, could have told, that here the waves of eastern revolution would be stayed, that Turkish turbulence itself would not break the stillness of desolation henceforth, that the day of civil redemption for all civilized nations, the day of liberty and commerce, art and science, would not first dawn, nor dawn at all, on

the regions of rapid and extreme revolution, through all previous time.

Defer then, if you please, the whole question of date, integrity, and preservation of these oracles ; and the faithful corroboration, with which all history details the facts of their fulfilment, until you subject their minute vaticinations to the inquest of living observers, and the verdict of journalizing infidelity itself. We have not only the general condition of ruin, yet to be seen, just as the Scriptures foretold it, over lands which have as delicious a climate, and as fertile a bosom, by nature, as any others on the face of the earth—itself conclusive proof that these prophets “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ;” and the general exemption from change, during a period of unparalleled changes, everywhere else, in lands, which, down till the accession of Mohammed the 2d, had been a battle-field of every power and every principle that struggled for mastery in human affairs—which monotony of ruin is also, of itself, a miracle in forecast ; but we have minute accomplishments of the ancient letter, within these last four hundred years—a touch of Providence, here and there, upon the general picture, which might convince a skepticism, low enough to doubt all evidence anterior to the age of printing.

“The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth,” said Isaiah, in foretelling the judgments of God upon his country : and what traveller does not verify, to its letter, the truth of this prediction, since the Turk established his empire over Palestine ? “In the interior of the country,” says Volney, “there are neither great roads, nor canals, nor even bridges, over the greatest part of the rivers and torrents, however necessary they may be, in winter. Nobody travels alone, for the insecurity of the roads. The roads among the mountains are extremely bad, and the inhabitants are so far from levelling them, that they endeavor to make them more rugged, in order, as they say, to cure the Turks of their desire to introduce their cavalry.”

“Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot,” said the prophet Jeremiah, in bewailing the same future desolation. And Volney has detailed the accomplishment, with a minuteness of description which no other testimony has surpassed. After enumerating a long list of pastoral marauders, who infest the whole region of Syria, in which he includes Judea—Curds, and Turkomen, and Bedouin Arabs—he informs us, that the most sedentary inhabitants are compelled to

become wandering bandits, in self-defence, and that, "under a government like that of the Turks, it is safer to lead a wandering life, than to choose a settled habitation."

"I will give it into the hands of strangers, for a prey," said Ezekiel, "and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil. The robber shall enter into it and defile it." "When the Ottomans took Syria from the Mamelukes," says the infidel tourist, "they considered it as the spoil of a vanquished enemy. The government are far from disapproving of a system of robbery and plunder which it finds so profitable."

Even the prophecies of Moses, on the same subject, never had their accomplishment written out, with more striking exactness, than by the pen of this great academician. "The stranger," says Moses, "that cometh from a far land shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid on it—Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto this land—what meaneth the heat of this great anger?" "Good God!" exclaims Volney, who did come from a far land, a stranger in every sense to the scene he surveyed—"whence proceed such melancholy revolutions—for what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed—why are so many cities destroyed—why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated?"

These are specimens, taken at random, from only four ancient prophets, relating to a single topic, restricted to the latest era of fulfilment, and confirmed by the unwilling testimony of a skeptical philosopher. Evidence, precisely similar, might be multiplied to any extent of modern travel—in regard to Samaria, Judea, Philistia, Tyre, Ammon, Edom, Egypt—every country whose doom is recorded in prophecies of Scripture. Everywhere, minute and incidental, but not less forcible demonstrations of their truth, have been enacted, since the day when chirography resigned to the press that toil of transcription, which infidelity is fain to cover with suspicion of unfaithfulness.

Now, if enlightened observers, like Volney, are so much astonished at the singular and constant desolation of those Eastern countries, with the whole operation of second causes fully before them, surely, no intelligence of man could have ventured four, (much less thirty) centuries ago, to draw such a picture: not even with the clear anticipation of despotic Islamism, firmly established, during this period: for, in the light of history, all those regions

wanted to retrieve their melancholy wastes was rest—rest, though burdened with tyranny rapacious as that of Roman procurators, under whom, according to Josephus, Galilee alone contained more than two hundred towns and cities crowded with industrious people.

Geographical accuracy itself, in these predictions, might be called a miracle of truth. Where is the author, not to say the score of authors, from Strabo, to Malte Brun, whose description of places and manners referred to in the prophets, though far less particular, is not contradicted, on almost every page, by travellers and writers more recent? But all the researches, of believers and unbelievers alike, conducted with the utmost help of science, literature, and leisure, have not hitherto discovered one mistake among the innumerable assertions and allusions, of the many authors, in this holy volume. And yet, instinct with its own aggressive life and truth, it will not rest in this freedom from valid contradiction. Where, from the poverty of ancient annals, it had been left a lone witness to facts on which its prophecy was based, in the luxury, magnificence, and crime, of cities and countries, over which it uttered the doom we witness at the present day; and after it has waited long for the accomplishment of one particular, that men would not even know where that ruined grandeur reposed, it comes, with the spirit of this eager age, to dig its *terminus a quo*, from the bowels of the earth, or scale it on the desert rock, and guide the hermeneutics of science herself, by the hints of obsolete prophecy.

Another proof, that these predictions are a miracle, even if their date could not be traced beyond the epoch of a printed Bible, is the condition of the Jewish people. At the middle of the 15th century, what sagacious diviner among men, judging from the tendency of visible events, would not have said, that the Jews would soon become entirely merged in other nations, and cease to be known as a distinct and singular people? The golden age of their modern learning had just pre-occupied the admiration of Europe; and it was not the learning which had signalized the palmy days of ancient Israel—historical writing, chronicles, and genealogies, that were naturally conducive to their perpetuity as a separate family. They had now become the best of medieval philosophers—the physicians, astronomers, and political economists, of dawning science. Their poetry itself had been divorced from national traditions, and from the imagery of altar and sacri-

fice, tabernacle and temple, as well as the parallelism of its Hebrew metre; and become localized and fresh, as the lays of the Troubadour. The agricultural industry which had been their ancient pride, and which more than any other pursuit of life, would isolate a people, had been relinquished; not for mysteries of art, reserved to themselves and their children; but for the business of exchange, open and wide as the commerce of the world. Add to this, the many particular facts, which had just transpired then, especially on the greatest theatre of observation, at that time, in the civilized world—Catholic Spain—where amalgamation itself threatened their extinction as a separate people, and inquisitors complained, that almost every noble family in the realm had become tainted, by intermarriage with the *mala sangre* of the house of Judah, and where thirty-five thousand converts from Judaism had been made, by the eloquence and legerdemain of one St. Vincent Ferrier alone. And yet, the lapse of four hundred years, intensely working all the while, with influences, and agencies, and accidents, which have never failed in any other case, with less than half their force, to annihilate a nation, has left them still a distinct and singular people. Take but the land of their fathers, from any primitive tribe on this continent, in North, or South, or Central America, and they fade from the earth. No matter what beautiful lands of prairie and forest you give in exchange, and what pains you take, to perpetuate their own barbarous tongue, and what beneficence you exert, to heal their diseases, teach their ignorance, and encourage the arts of husbandry and peace and independent self-government—come to their place, and they perish from the nations. Similar, if not so frail, is the tendency of all distinctive national existence to vanish away at the contact of heterogeneous civilization, or change of language, law, intercourse, or custom. But here is the unparalleled exception. Bred, in every diversity of language and custom under heaven—steeped in every element of social, civil, and religious change—scattered and peeled, within this period, by more horrid persecutions to the constancy of individual fortitude, than ever befel their fathers, at the hands of Adrian and Heraclius—and then, again, released, indulged, caressed; made richer in the old world, than Solomon himself “in all his glory,” and freer in the new world, than judges of their ancient commonwealth—it is all the same. “A full end,” according to one of these prophecies, approaches to Spain, and Portugal, and every modern na-

tion, distinguished for oppressing them, just as it has been completed on Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Rome, and every ancient "rod" of vengeance in the hand of almighty truth—but they survive!

Why, the miracle of this anomaly itself, might well bespeak the credibility of oracles, sent down through such a living mystery among us; but when we know, it was foretold, ages before the contingencies that shape it could have been imagined, how irresistible the inference, that God alone foretold it, and must have given the Bible; where alone these marvels can be explained; where, even the portions they reject, inform us, that the mystery of this preservation is the completion of prophecies, yet to be effected by their instrumentality. What is there peculiar, in the past and present condition of the Jews, that was not prophesied, and threatened more than promised, in the prophecies, and therefore most unwillingly fulfilled? Their dispersion among all nations, and yet everlasting immiscibility; their blindness and suffering, feebleness and fearfulness; their ceaseless agitation, compulsion to idolatry, and temptation to hypocrisy; their obdurate unbelief, deep malignity, avarice of wealth, and exposure in every age to robbery, mockery, and remorseless oppression—all were foretold by their own early prophets, and among these, even the meekly patriotic leader of their exodus from bondage, over the infancy of their national existence, while as yet they were a most fickle and fluctuating people, so changeable, as to surprise him with a complete revolution of sentiment, during his absence of forty days on the mount, although the thunders of Sinai had been commissioned, meanwhile, to keep them in constancy.

II. But it is time to advance from our gratuitous position, and to indicate the boundless field of confirmation, which the true date of these predictions will throw open. We received the Old Testament prophecies from the Jews; and certainly, no corruption of the text can have occurred, within the last 1800 years of deposit in the hands of Christians, for Jews and Christians have checked each other, all the while, with a vigilance which has never slept: and galled, as the former have always been, by the evidence of fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth, they would have exposed, with loud and long reprehension, the slightest alteration of the text that could have crept into Christendom.

Before the advent of Christ, the integrity of every book, and the truth of every date, were guaranteed beyond a doubt by the

superstition, which numbered the words and the letters, and denounced death on the man who would alter a point or iota; by the jealous animosity of parties in opposite schools, or political factions, which were founded on diverse interpretations, and existed from the days of the prophets themselves; by the public reading in the synagogue, which engraved the words on the memory of the people; by the existence of translations, and especially the Greek, at Alexandria, nearly 300 years before the Christian era, and in a metropolis of learning, where religious eclecticism was the fashion of philosophy, and would be sure, in the hands of both Jew and Greek, to fix a special attention upon this wonderful volume: these considerations, and others, such as the internal evidence, from language, allusion, and order, prove most clearly that no *post eventum* interpolation can have mingled with these prophecies, and no surreptitious date can have cheated the church under any dispensation.

True, the temerity of unbelief has often assailed this clear demonstration. Porphyry said the book of Daniel must have been written after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, because the events of his reign are so minutely described—thus, in fact, yielding the argument; and leaving us no more to refute than a cavil of criticism, which hardly stands to be told—a play upon words, which he discovered in some apocryphal appendage, that was published with the Greek translation of Daniel; from which he conjectured that the book had been written in Greek, originally, and translated into Hebrew: and yet, beyond all question, the book was extant, in Greek, more than a hundred years before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, which, itself, suffices for the argument. When we know that this is all an accomplished adversary, sixteen hundred years ago, with all his pains and opportunities, could do, in discrediting the date of these predictions, we may well suppose, that any hardihood like his, in modern times, would slaver worse in the infatuation.

And so it happens with renowned *neology*; the very fame of which has propped the infidelity, that never read a page of German exegesis. This new era of interpretation is perfectly explained, so far as our subject is concerned, when we say, that it has brought all the learning and ingenuity of man, to argue in a circle, that there can be no proper prophecy at all—no revelation of the contingent future. This negation of our faith is always presumed in order to be proved; and now, that they have had

a century of time for the work of their own great doctrinal prejudice, in their own way of logical injustice, what are the results? We ask not for a system, coherent and complete, which they have built on the ruins of our supernatural faith; for system they never proposed; and, in destruction to the objective bulwarks of religion, they have destroyed one another in quick and constant succession. But what principles of interpretation may we glean from the vast researches, and progressive development, with which the rationalistic criticism would emancipate man from belief in the marvellous? Just enough to subvert all historical evidence, and cover with doubt the whole authenticated past.

Whatever has come down to the eighteenth century, undisputed and unchallenged, through ten thousand generations, of the learned and the unlearned, must, of course, be considered spurious until the contrary be proved. By this canon the prophecy of Isaiah has been set aside. Whatever, on the other hand, has met a challenge, at any time, in the course of criticism or of controversy, however long posterior to its proper date, must be also rejected. By this canon, Daniel and the Apocalypse are both set aside. Wherever another reading can be conjectured, materially different from that which has been received, it is to be the true reading until the other can be proved: and wherever the fertility and taste of any author, avoid the use of a remarkable expression, more than once, that expression must be considered an interpolation by some later hand. By these canons, all prophecy is rifled of its pure vaticination, and left a turgid rhapsody, without even the gems of literature to commend it.—No other limit shall be imposed on the license of critical acumen than a man's own critical feeling: and wherever, by the dictates of this critical feeling, there may be internal proof of genuineness and integrity in any book, this proof can establish no more than a good imitation by a subsequent writer. By these canons, all revelation becomes a subjective chameleon, forever uncertain to the most believing individual.

Such are some of the axioms which must be the basis of all exposition, and the bottom of all deep research, if you follow these guides in biblical study; or venture any investigation whatever, with that same refinement of criticism which three generations of progressive neology have attained, by seeking rest in letters for the foot of enlightened infidelity. And is it not enough to establish the truth of every date, and the integrity of

every text, that we point you to this amazing fatuity of gifted scholars and profound philologists, who have devoted a lifetime to the work of their repudiation? Deadly recoil forever attends the impotent endeavor.

But now, that the true antiquity and antecedence of these prophecies will bring all history before us, in the range of their accomplishment, compared with which, the attestations we have indicated, within the last four hundred years, are but a glance at the sepulchre as it remains until this day—where shall we begin or end the illustration of our theme: or how compute the greater cogency of this great argument, when the retrocession of the date, not only multiplies the number, but enhances the contingency of prophesied events, by so many more intervening threads of complicated influence and incident? Thebes, and Petra, and Rabbah, and Gaza, and Tyre, and Samaria, and Jerusalem, and Nineveh, and Babylon—cities in particular, whose greater minuteness of destiny would be far less adventured by human conjecture than countries or kingdoms—all had their downfall described, and their present condition of ruin foretold, in remote antiquity, and at the very time when each in its proud glory was most rampant and secure. Go, we beg you, to the most rigid and careful examination, with the Bible in one hand, and history in the other. So numerous are the prophecies before us, that no less than two hundred distinct predictions may be counted in relation to the family of Abraham alone; most of which have been already fulfilled to the very letter, none of which have ever been falsified, and such as remain to be accomplished, guaranty the certainty of that event, not only by words which have never failed, but by facts, submitted to the observation of every age, in the standing miracle of Arabic as well as Jewish nationality. Despairing of justice to any part of this great field, and oppressed with the magnitude of its claims to a full investigation, we shall merely stand for a little at the central theme of inspired predictions, the truth of every promise, the substance of every shadow, the mystery of God manifest in the flesh.

Four thousand years, at least, before the birth of Jesus Christ, it was announced that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent; a most frivolous declaration, in the most dignified and sublime of all compositions, if it mean anything else than the promise of a great avenger on the agent of our ruin, to spring from the mother of mankind. More than two

thousand years afterwards the spirit of prophecy began to develop and define that primeval promise ; foretelling its fulfilment in the seed of Abraham, then of Isaac, then of Jacob, then of Judah, and at length of David. And, along with these successive limitations of his lineage in the flesh, were successive revelations of his character, and the constitution of his person, by words and by types, until the waxing adumbration became the burden of song. All the powers of imagination, and depths of emotion, and fountains of tender affection, and intimacies of personal experience, in the trials of life, and succors of grace, and conduct of Providence—the whole inner life of the Hebrews—became a sentiment of mysterious anticipation, which passed over even to the heathen around them, and spread with every dispersion of the Jews, until it imbued the literature of pagans, and became a world-wide expectation. The prophets of Israel availed themselves of this great Messianic idea in the popular mind to arouse, rebuke, console, or encourage the nation, according to circumstances : so that abrupt transitions to it and from it, as well as latent intimations of it, were perfectly natural, in view of this general sentiment among the people, as well as extatic impulse of the seer.

A splendid succession of prophets followed the Psalms of David for the space of five hundred years ; each one revealing a new feature, while rehearsing in the color of his own genius and times what others had uttered ; until the portraiture was finished, four hundred years before the actual advent. And what a sum of special criteria does it embody, by which to test his absolute identity and their true inspiration of God ! It foretells that he will come in lowly condition ; born of a virgin, at Bethlehem ; of the family of David, when it shall have sunk to the lowest depression ;—that a forerunner, in the spirit of Elijah, will herald his entrance on a public ministry ; and a copious effusion of the Holy Ghost will be his great inauguration ; and Galilee of the gentiles the principal place of his beneficent working and teaching ;—that his formal entrance into Jerusalem will be upon an ass, amidst the loud acclamations of a multitude, while the second temple is yet standing to receive him, the recesses of which will ring with hosannas of little children in his praise ;—that his authority will be rejected, his salvation refused, his person despised ; and surrounded by malignant persecutors, betrayed into their hands by his own familiar friend, and that for thirty pieces of silver, he will be devoted, with his own meek submis-

sion, to extreme insult, mockery, and abuse, until his hands and feet are pierced, and his life cut off by their violence; cut off in the midst of malefactors, and for the transgression of others; without a spot of guilt on his own soul, or one taint of iniquity on the whole of his life;—that his murderers will distribute his clothing by lot; and he will be laid in the grave of a rich man at his burial; but not long enough to see corruption in his body, for he will rise from the dead with power, ascend to heaven with a shout of angels; and usher down the glories of a new administration, with a great effusion of the Spirit, upon all classes and conditions of men; and glad tidings will be everywhere proclaimed, the burden of Levitical rites will be abolished, and guilty Jerusalem destroyed;—and all these wonderful and particular things are fixed, in time, precisely, by a computation of weeks and half weeks, five hundred years before they occurred!

What possible ingenuity of unbelief can evade this overwhelming demonstration at the centre of our theme—"more sure," according to Peter, than an audible voice from the throne of heaven? No one can deny that these things, and many others predicted, were exactly fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; and no one will say, without absurdity, that if all the parties concerned in working out the accomplishment had joined together in perfect concert, they could have made so many contingencies work together at the very time and place. But who does not know that they were completed, not only through strange conjunctures, sudden and signal, but in spite of confusion, hostility, ignorance, and counteraction, to the utmost extent of man's perverted will? From the close of the Old Testament prophecy to the coming of Christ, the interval was one of incessant agitation over all the world, and especially Palestine, where not only was the Jewish commonwealth "overturned, and overturned, and overturned," by every change of politics, and the crown of David flung as a bauble from hand to hand of the insolent victors; but schools of arrogant pretension, arose in the bosom of the nation, which depraved the Messianic apprehension of their pious fathers, and would have utterly prevented, without one external disturbance, the manifestation of a Saviour like ours, as the product of his age, or psychological effect of a national sentiment for ages maturing, or, in any sense whatever, a self-evolution, by the operation of causes—like the many false Christs, that so often appeared, in the sequel, to please and punish a morbid expecta-

tion. He came, after all, a surprising fact, a great historical emergency, which the manifold and minute predictions "that went before upon him," could do no more than attest and identify to a reluctant world.

The Great Prophet himself would, of course, mingle the future in his own teaching and preaching. And the companions of his life recorded, with care, not only predictions, which they lived to register beside the accomplishment, but predictions which they left unfulfilled, and sent forth, a liability for all men to seize; with all that was dear and true in their holy convictions, gaged on the occurrence of improbable contingencies. Such was the prophecy of our Lord respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, published by three of the evangelists, wide as the empire, many years before that catastrophe; and which the unbelieving Josephus, and the pagan Tacitus, and the Jewish Talmud itself, were left to confirm or confute according to events. Near forty years before the armies of Vespasian entered Judea, a casual conversation took place at the temple, where the disciples of our Lord, looking with fresh admiration at the huge foundation stones of that magnificent edifice, one of them said to him, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" "Jesus, answering, said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Was it probable, then, that the Roman empire would suffer any power on earth to spoil, with such deletion, the glory of that temple, the pride of the East, and cherished trophy of her own invincible arms?—and still more, that she herself would do it, so pleased of late with the loyal munificence of Herod, and so intent on pleasing a nation, renowned for obstinate courage, and numerous now, even to the banks of the Tiber?—and that in the Augustan age, of magnanimity and taste, of all others, the most averse from vandalic violence to monuments of art, or habitations of the local divinities she conquered? Yet we know it was done, with a vengeance, by the Roman himself, in a freak of exasperation, which even military orders could not prevent. The very name has been transmitted, of the man, Terentius Rufus, who drove a ploughshare through the ground on which the temple was built.

The very caprice of a Roman leader, who advanced, in the meantime, with a powerful army against Jerusalem, when it might have been taken without a battle, and then retreated, and retreated

without a reason, does not escape the eye of this Prophet. (Matt. xxiv. 6.) All the intervening casualties, of any account, are minutely predicted as signs of that dreadful consummation—false Christs, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and fearful sights from heaven, as well as war among the Jews, and persecution of the Christians—any one of which, foretold with similar precision, would have made a god of the most besotted pagan on the earth. And could we conceive that all these were but fortunate conjectures, or astute speculations, on the temper of a turbulent and seditious people, how is it that he would hazard a measure of time for the whole accomplishment?—and such a measure—itself a miracle of foresight—it was to be within the life of a man, at that time in his presence. Compare Matt. xvi. 28 and xxiv. 34. John, his own disciple, did outlive the destruction of Jerusalem; and he is the only evangelist who did not record the prophecy, as he is the only one who could have tinged its terms, with *post eventum* observation. And still more than this, the most improbable thing in the world is expressly predicted as another antecedent: “The gospel must first be published among all nations”—a gospel which was not yet understood by the most intimate and wise of his own disciples, and which, by the direction of his own lips, had been confined to the limits of Judea—a gospel for the world promised by a Jew, and to be spread by the instrumentality of Jews, the very genius of whom was monopoly of religious advantages. Universal promulgation!—the thought of which had never entered the mind of man before—for any system of religion, morals, or philosophy: godlike, the lone idea, without a prophecy to promise it—much more to promise it so soon, while as yet there was not a “mustard seed” of visibility portending it. And yet it came to pass. The empire had been all traversed over, and the remotest regions of the East, in all probability, explored, before the torch of the soldier had touched the temple, or the energy of Titus had completed his trench.

A word was dropped respecting the continuance of the desolation which would follow. “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Never has that city ceased to be so trodden down, as you know, since “the abomination” made it desolate; never did the flaming sword in Eden more effectually bar the fallen progenitors of men from returning to the garden than these potential words have barred the Jew from reinstatement at Jerusalem. Three hundred years

after they had fallen from the Saviour's lips, Julian, with all the resources of the empire in his hands, and the energy of heroic vigor in his soul, and the hatred of apostate conscience in his heart, and the alacrity of a million homeless Jews at his side, dared to countervail this oracle of the Crucified One; and actually attempted to rebuild Jerusalem, and restore the Jews, for one monument, at least, of falsehood among the prophecies of Christianity,—when balls of fire issued from the earth to blast the workmen, and fearful portents interfered on every hand to hinder and deter the impious determination—a fact which all contemporaneous history, civil and ecclesiastical, pagan and Christian, will unite to establish. And call that strange phenomenon anything you please, or call its occurrence at all a sheer fabrication, which even Gibbon would not do, still we find the word of prophecy fulfilled, “quick and powerful,” to the minutest incident of its utterance, and vindicated marvellously, in the naked fact, that a mighty preparation for a mighty work was instantly abandoned, and the last imperial foe was hurried away, from audacious battle with his dead Galilean, to perish at the meridian of life, by the lance of a Persian soldier.

We would gladly pursue the outline of distinguished prophecies, already completed since the ascension of the Saviour, such as the dispersion of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, the rise of Mohammedan fury and delusion—and especially the great event of Antichristian apostasy, minutely foretold in 2 Thess. ii., and so precisely accomplished in the whole history of Papal Rome. It would be worth the space and labor of many an entire lecture, to see how the very objections to Christianity, from its early corruption and rapid degeneracy, prove the divinity of its origin; by the fact, that these things were all foretold, with an exactness of delineation, which nothing but a supernatural inspiration could have dictated. But we have passed our limits; and it remains to attempt a more direct and condensed exhibition of the argument in another lecture.

II.

To say what is required of prophecy, as an argument for the truth of revealed religion, hardly becomes the ignorance of man. The amount of conviction, the manner and means of it, are for Him only to devise, who comprehends our need, and the right education of our fallen and disordered understandings. There is an extravagance of incredulity, in many minds, which it were not worth the cost of other important interests, in the plan of God's moral government, to convince. There would be insult to reason itself, in that redundancy of demonstration, which the unbelief of aversion demands—an unbelief, which, if it were convinced to-day, would be as uncertain as ever to-morrow. And how far the moral evidence should be furnished, to persuade the sincere and earnest man, at every grade of intellectual power, and leave unreasonable incredulity to sink in its own abyss, of wretched iniquity and doubt, we dare not undertake to define. But we venture, on this occasion, to affirm, that there is no conceivable requisition for evidence, on the part of a well-balanced mind, which is not satisfied, with the ample demonstrations of this argument from prophecy.

1. *It is required, that true prophecies claim to be such, when they are first delivered to men:* not a bundle of rhapsodies, which may be labelled poetry, history, or prophecy, according to the fancy of men, or chance of tradition, or advent of some verisimilitude. Let the title be clear. Let the claim be promulged in advance. Let all generations know, that these are predictions, the credit of which is entirely staked on developments in the future, which ten thousand uncertainties hide from the eye of human foreknowledge. Now, this is eminently true of scripture prophecies; as it would be superfluous to prove. Not only do they everywhere profess to anticipate the future, but they often apprise the reader, that they do it for the sake of argument, in order to prove the exclusive claims of this revelation; arming, in this way, all men with an edge of scrutiny against them. How striking the contrast, in this particular, with that significant evasion, with which other vaticinations doff the title, until time shall have decided on the luck of their adventure.

2. *It is required, that these prophecies be so expressed, as to be, in no proper sense, the cause of their own fulfilment.* They must have some meaning, of course, to the anterior student; exciting in him hope, and energy, and comfort, as well as anxious investigation: but they must be sufficiently obscure, in the form of expression, or in regard to the manner and means of their accomplishment, to preclude his own designing and direct exertions from achieving it. Otherwise, free agency might be constrained; the event might follow the prediction, as effect follows the cause; and prophecy would differ, only in the tense, from actual history. This perfection of enigma is peculiar to these inspired predictions: it could never be attained by man's contrivance. The Sibyl leaves, when tossed a little with the wind, were nonsense. The Delphic oracles, when articulate with future contingency, were always ambiguous, and so artfully constructed, that they might be fulfilled in any one of two or more contrary events. How many, like Cræsus, and like Pyrrhus, were deceived, at the most critical moments of life; and destroyed, by the fallacious hope, which those cunning impostures had contrived, to please the votary, in return for his gift, and yet retain the plausibility of truthfulness, under any sort of circumstances in the future. But no such ambiguity is here. Definite and sure, these oracles are always a warrant for the faith of him who trusts them, which will never deceive his honest hope: and yet, no skill of interpretation can write out the precise accomplishment, before its own time. And the only disappointment which they have ever produced, has been inflicted on the presumption, that disregards this divine enigma, so inscrutable to man. The Jews, for instance, familiar with so many predictions clearly realized in their own history, came at length to interpret all prophecy in the light of past fulfilment: and obliterating the plain distinction, between terms of history and symbols of prophecy, their confident exegesis, of the great messianic burden of the Bible, became a tradition of fatal prejudice, to the exercise, alike, of faith, and reason, and sense, when the true completion in its season arrived—a memorable warning for the dogmatism of every age, that would affect to decipher, what God has purposely hidden, for the hand of his own Almighty Providence, to work out, with wonder, to the observation of men.

3. *It is required, that the fulfilment remove all obscurity of sense from the prediction.* While there is a secret mark of iden-

tification, couched among the symbols of prophetic language, that always invites and rewards, without satisfying the ingenuous reader, before the accomplishment—"serving the threefold purpose, of being a blind to the incurious, a trap to the dogmatical, and an exercise of modesty, of patience, and of sagacity, to the wise"—there is always in the true fulfilment, the evolution of a test, which settles forever the solution of the sacred enigma. Look at the prophecies relating to the Saviour of men, and to every kingdom and metropolis of ancient times; to the overthrow of Persia by Macedon; the subsequent division of the Grecian empire, among the successors of Alexander; the spread of the Roman arms, described by Moses and Daniel; and the ultimate dissolution of that stupendous power; all foretold, with a skill of implication, which no sublunary intelligence could unravel, nor even the prophets who delivered them divine, beyond the use of adoring trust in the Providence of God; but which now lies before us, with all the specialties of history to be seen in its folds—completeness and precision of adjustment, among the metaphors, that rival the most graphic details of the chronicle itself.

It is true, indeed, that ignorance may blur, in man's apprehension, the most beautiful economy of God's wisdom. The drapery of symbols may not be rightly understood; the deposition of history may not be faithfully gathered, and fairly collated; the power of prejudice may cloud the most erudite mind with Egyptian darkness; and there may be, at times, in the web of prophecy itself, a complexity of thread, through the long series of futurities, often foretold together, which the best learning and experience are yet too immature to comprehend, as the scheme is but partly unfolded—these, and other considerations, may fully account for the disagreement among interpreters, respecting a few predictions, which have transpired already in events.

4. *It is required that these prophecies be manifold, in order that no chance may account for the completion of all; and no ignorance, or oversight, may jeopard the force of this argument, by the waste to which we have just adverted. Any shrewd observer of the world might venture a prediction of some future event, from the tendency of causes at work in his day, the progress of human development already observed, or even the whimsey of wanton conjecture; and among the myriad occurrences, in every age, it were strange if such adventure of prophecy would not be followed, sometimes, with striking coincidence of facts.*

Varro informs us, that he heard an augur in his day, Vettius Valens, assert, that the twelve vultures which appeared to Romulus, when he stood on the Palatine hill, contending with his brother Remus, respecting the name of the city they had agreed to build on the Tiber, signified twelve centuries, through which the Roman empire was destined to endure ; and history has recorded the fact, that the empire, of which Rome was the centre and capital, was overthrown, almost exactly according to this expository presage, 500 years after it was given.

Again, Seneca sung, (if he be the author of " Medea") the discovery of America, 1400 years before it occurred ; in the following general, but most remarkable language :—

“ ———venient annis
 Secula seris, quibus Oceanus
 Vincula rerum laxit, et ingens
 Pateat tellus, Tiphysque novos
 Detegat orbes ; nec sit terris
 Ultima Thule.’

Again, it is said, that M. de Cazotte predicted, some years before 1787, with much minuteness, to a large company of intelligent persons in Paris, the atrocities of the Reign of Terror in France—telling Condorcet that he would die in prison, of poison, administered by his own hand, which actually happened—predicting, also, the fate of Louis XVI. and his Queen, and persons are yet living, it is said, who heard these utterances distinctly given, before any one of them was yet fulfilled, and while the prophet was laughed at for his pains. It is well known, also, that traditional soothsayings are abundant in many places of Germany, Westphalia in particular, and all along the Rhine, some of which, it is said, have been remarkably accomplished, in the memorable agitations of 1848 and '49. And a learned Professor in Edinburgh has even broached the hypothesis of a physical medium, between certain highly sensitive constitutions, and the near approach of eventful things, in highly excited times.

Yet what are all these scattered facts—most of them so much like guessing in the vagueness of their terms—although a thousand times better attested than they are, and a thousand times remoter from suspicion of being the cause of their own accomplishment, or being shaped by the mouth of tradition, as it suits the course of probabilities—compared with the vast array of particular prophecies in Scripture, not one of which has ever failed of fulfilment

in its time ! Forget not the millions of falsified prediction and augury that are sunk on every side of them, when those “rari in gurgite nantes” are so flippantly proposed !

Not only are the prophecies of inspiration many and various in themselves, but they are, in all important cases, reiterated by many different prophets, at long intervals of separation, in the course of time ; thus making the first announcement, by the paraphrases of succeeding seers, a fixed and inflexible cognition, which no ingenuity of man could torture into correspondence with an ultimate event ; as might have been the case with a single utterance ; and as really is the case with the solitary sights of uninspired prevision.

Nor is it number and repetition alone, which defy the versatility of chance, and privacy of interpretation to enact a tithe of the accomplishment ; but the dignity and importance of their import also—a public concernment, almost always ; which could never achieve its fulfilment in a corner ; embracing in the range of its wonderful extent, all the mighty monarchies of ancient time, the cities, the countries, the kings, the warriors, the people ; Phenicians, Egyptians, Idumeans, Arabians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans, as well as Jews ; and the whole magnitude of middle and modern history besides ; from the ruin of Pagan Rome, and the rise of Mohammedan imposition, to the downfall of Antichrist, and the reign of Millennial glory—all history forecast in this epitome—with a greatness of particulars, which no philosophy of actual history could equal, in the choice : and not one of the particulars ever taking back its gage, to drop from the oracle in convenient oblivion ; not one particular without its own minuteness of specialty, which neither man nor angel can elicit in advance, but which the complete event will recognize to demonstration.

5. *It is required, that these predictions, which would prove a revelation from God, be connected in system, and exhibit a scheme and scope of design, worthy of Him, whose infinite wisdom, elsewhere, always appears in unity of purpose.* If, instead of a few surprising coincidences, of a rival character, picked up, here and there, upon the tide of time, we should find them innumerable more than we have reckoned, and more even than the prophecies of inspiration, yet, if they are all disconnected and aimless, while these are compact, and conspicuous for unity of aim, running through all ages, we might still make good the

demonstration of Divinity on these pages, and on these alone. More difficult would it be, for chance to account for ten related facts in a series, than for ten thousand facts without relation or connection. Nay, more, should we concede, that every plausible response of heathen oracles, and every sagacious or lucky prognostication of any age, were genuine utterances of supernatural knowledge, yet if these predictions of the Bible are the only utterances of the kind, adduced for a particular purpose, and that purpose not only godlike in its meaning, but perfectly unique through all the successions and transmutations of time, the argument stands against all competition. You never reject the testimony of an adequate number of unimpeachable witnesses in court, merely because there may be a multitude of men without, asserting a thousand particular facts, which have no connection with the case on hand, or the point at issue. Why then demur at the result of this converging deposition, which so many voices, throughout so many ages, harmoniously deliver, because forsooth, the world has been replete with other voices, equally mysterious and unearthly, yet all-discordant as the babblers on the plain of Shinar? What boots it the sciolist, when he has gathered the whole magazine of emulous predictions, by pagan augury, tripod, or cave; by the wise politician, the mystical monk, the delirious fanatic, or the mesmeric dreamer; since they are ruled altogether out of court, by the common law of evidence, because they have nothing to say, that is relevant on the suit of man's immortal aspirations—because, without the smallest injury to their pretensions, they cannot witness anything, and much less agree to witness anything—while here is an immense array of perfect agreement, in the most positive declaration that ever was made; a redemption from sin, sorrow, and death, which no imagination of man had ever conceived; and the only religion of facts, doctrines, and morals, which this supernatural attestation was ever employed to establish?

The unity we have here, is not only one of positive testimony, which rival predictions have never attempted, and one of internal concord in which every particular deposes something connected with the great subject of revelation, but one of progressive development, in which a mighty seminal truth is brought forth by each succeeding ray of prophetic announcement, until the manifestation fills earth and heaven with the grandeur of its complete significance. “*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of*

prophecy." He is the grand subject, sum, and centre: there is not a word in this great volume of prophetic wonder which does not relate to Him, in his person, character, or kingdom.

Now, one prophecy such as we have thus far defined, would be sufficient to commend a revelation—would be itself a revelation; and when hundreds of such prophecies on every variety of subject, interesting and important to man, combine, without a contradiction, to challenge our faith, we must concede there is something supernatural in the claim. But when this great variety is all convergent and unique, each particular prediction radiating illustration upon all the rest, each past fulfilment sustaining the expectation of a future, and all, though scattered along scores of centuries in their track, ever pointing to a great refulgent centre, beaming with light, and love, and immortality, for man—who will compute the force of this demonstration, or doubt that the system is entirely from God, omniscient and omnipotent?

Try the cavils and objections of infidelity by the touchstone of this peerless unity.

Is it said, that other well-authenticated instances of successful augury and prophecy, in ancient and in modern times, are so inexplicable, that we may well decline investigating similar mysteries in the Bible? We answer, that, because irregularities appear in every department of nature which cannot be explained, you might just as well decline the study of her laws, that cannot surpass her strange anomalies, either in number or consistency, more than the perfect prophecies of scripture surpass, in variety and system, those casual mysteries of soothsaying which could stand authenticated if the world had taken pains to search them out with the rigor of historical exactness. Far better say, that, because the comet is not traced with satisfaction through its eccentric flight in the abyss of heaven, therefore, we need not watch the planetary orbits, or care to investigate the ordinary movements of our solar system. Is it said, that man's free agency, as a moral creature, is subverted by the notion of such a particular and almighty exercise of Providence as the sure fulfilment of inspired prophecy involves? We answer, that, the freest agency of man is that which acts under the government of laws in the regular administration of a system; and it is the casual and aimless prediction only, which could by irregular accomplishment, infringe upon his freedom. But when you see his destiny involved in the complications of such a system as this, a trans-

cript from the counsels of eternity, so full of grace, for the development of which the world itself is but a platform, and time a handmaid to unroll its resolutions, we might better say, it is freedom to will and act beyond the dictates of nature and reason, than beyond the purview of this influence.

But *the double meaning*, so prevalent in these predictions, we are told, is no better than the ambiguity of pagan oracles. This cavil, besides being logically unfair, is at once confuted by the view of that connection which binds together all ages and all events in one great consummation. Here, "the double sense" can never mean that either of two possible events may fulfil a prophecy, *but that both of them must fulfil it*. Nothing, in fact, more clearly bespeaks the authorship in God himself, than this very manifoldness in the fulfilment of his word, evincing that the true speaker must have had an infinite comprehension and disposal too, of agencies at work in the world, when he could frame a promise or a threat with such expression, as to embrace many similar events (while chiefly referring to but one) which would be effectuated by the most dissimilar means, and in the most diversified and unequal circumstances. Let the objector mark, that the great hypothesis on which we argue is the identity of authorship in prophecy and providence. God only could ordain affinity between the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and that from Babylonish captivity, and that from Syrian cruelty, and that from heathenish darkness, and that from Antichristian despotism; and when we find that one primordial prophecy will include this whole kindred series of events to come, and a later one will make the first of the series when fulfilled an historical basis, for the metaphors with which the remaining mercies are predicted, and for the hope with which they are expected, must we not, so far from stumbling on a doubtfulness in the double sense, perceive that it is the very stamp of God's foreknowledge, as it is the earnest of his own unfailing faithfulness? Who will say, again, that the warning voice of Moses, when he foretold the terrible details of punishment, which would await the apostasy of Israel, was less divinely prophetic, because his word would suit a thousand dispersions of the Jews, which have occurred since it was uttered; or the proud elevation of "the stranger" in their land, either in the yoke of Chaldean, or Syrian, or Roman, or Turkish oppression; or "the tender and delicate woman" eating her own offspring, in the straitness of the siege,

when it was accomplished in the siege of Samaria, and in the siege of Jerusalem, nearly a thousand years asunder, and the first more than a thousand years after the prophet ; or the insult and wrong, to which they would be doomed, when these were done continually, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, to those of Frederick the Great in Prussia ?

Without a thread of system, such oracular skill had been infinitely beyond the forecast of Apollo, that never framed even an equivocation, without appearances of near probability : but when we see it travel down a pathway of development, in every age, grouping sequences, of more and more definite and brilliant attestation ; by which an honest faith is nourished, from the first apprehension of an ancient promise, till the last exultation of joy, when "the mystery of God is finished" and "the headstone is brought forth with shoutings"—its double sense is only double demonstration, that the inspiration of the Almighty must have given it the very words. So thought Lord Bacon : and speaking of these prophecies, considered in their double sense, he says, "They are of the nature of the Author, with whom a thousand years are as one day ; and therefore, they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have a springing and germinant accomplishment, throughout many ages, though the height and fulness of them may refer to one age."

Thus, also, is explained the hyperbole, with which the prophets describe comparatively small events, near to be fulfilled, in terms that seem to be out of all proportion to their importance. It is the splendor of an ultimate event, in the chain of homogeneous benefits, of which the nearer one, however humble, is an earnest and precursor, that suffuses, in this way, the rapt prevision of the seer. Had there been a prophet commissioned a century since, as in the old theocracy, to counsel the governors of Virginia, in times of fear and trouble, and promise them a triumph over French and savage hostilities upon the border, portraying the peace and prosperity which would follow such a vindication—how naturally would the prophet, on the supposition of a divine afflatus, revealing the future, indefinitely, in regard to all events of the same prosperous kind, describe the proximate deliverances predicted for the colony, in a style of magniloquent expression, borrowed from the ulterior glories of this great Republic, in which the nascent commonwealth he came to comfort, would bear a great proportion. Just in this way, was many a temporal mercy

promised to the visible church, under the old dispensation ; the ultimate and crowning mercy under Christ peering on the prophet's soul, with enrapturing and often abrupt captivation, which he himself did not fully understand.

And why should any man of literary taste and culture object to the secondary sense in prophecy, when it is the charm of genius in the earth-born inspirations of epic and dramatic poetry ? Take from the *Æneid* of Virgil a pervading allusion to Augustus Cæsar, and what an insipidity of import is left to the whole design, as well as many a most beautiful passage. Take from the *Divina Commedia* of Dante the political factions of Florence, and what a crude conceit would be many a terrible coruscation. Take from the *Fairy Queen* of Spenser the reign and court of Elizabeth, and what remains to give it soul or immortality ? There is, in short, through all the best creations of human genius, an intense endeavor after that very perfection which infidelity repudiates in the prophecies of celestial inspiration—a double sense—a primary import, which profits and pleases, most of all, because it bears to the understanding a secondary import, on which the whole production rests, as an ultimate basis of unity and meaning, without which the book would never have been written, and would soon cease to be read or understood.

It is this central unity and perfect system, again, which will explain the confinement of prophecy to one nation, and that one comparatively obscure in secular history, undistinguished by arts or arms, commerce or wealth, though seated in the most conspicuous place upon the globe of ancient geography. The gaze of all men must be fixed on this peculiar people, for one thing alone : "To them," said Philo, "was intrusted the prophetic office for all mankind." Had these prophecies been scattered among many different nations, how impossible would it have been to see the beautiful connection and convergent meaning, which give them all their true significance : or had they been imparted to a people renowned for learning, like the Greeks, or political greatness, like the Latins, how much would they have been overlooked and neglected in the groves of the academy, the bustle of senates, and the turmoil of camps. But imparted to one people, whose whole destiny was the conservation of this lone deposit, how comprehensively might all men see the unity and truth of revealed religion, when its light was matured at length for universal promulgation,

and its slowly concentrated sun broke forth, like the gathered lighting of heaven, to shine from one end of the world to the other.

6. *It is required, that these prophecies be commensurate with all time:* the past, the present, and the future, being covered alike with the scope of their full annunciation. However perfectly connected all events may be in this prophetic economy, no experience or learning can ever enable any man to foretell the recurrence of similar events: for this mighty system, whose centre is Christ, has only one cycle for the world to see, and that, the duration of the world itself: so that there is no repetition of the same things, in a series of cycles, as some have vainly imagined; but all is progress, in a line of plainer and plainer development, until time shall be no longer.

You ask for miracles continued. Here they are—without disturbing nature—in the continued accomplishment of ancient prophecy; which will go on to confirm the truth of our holy religion, with new demonstrations, till the end of the world. Nor will these consist in new disclosures, merely, of old attestations, dug from the dust, or read from the hieroglyphic, by Layards, Champollions, and Gliddons; but in mighty deeds, which are yet to be done by the faithful Providence of God—the downfall of Antichrist from his throne of spiritual despotism—the conversion of the Jews from their hardened infidelity—the extension of the gospel over all benighted paganism—the return of peace, and unity, and love to the whole distracted body of the faithful. These are some of the magnificent things which prophecy has promised, to the hope of our day; and all of them, you will say, quite improbable to the anticipations of reason. What, then, must you think of a religion which would venture to promise them—in an open Bible, scattered abroad over mountain and valley, as dew-drops of the morning? Either it has nothing to lose in losing veracity, or it is more than human. Surely, no religion of man would hazard what ours has gained, and possesses, on such obvious uncertainties, for such prospective advantages. Where are all your soothsayers now? Or, have they left a fragment of vaticination on this earth, to bide the trial of a coming accomplishment? Why, like Elijah of old, are we left alone at this altar, to call down this fire, and forecast the future time, through all the salient points, and eventful epochs, that are to fill the remaining volumes of the world's great history? “Lively oracles,” indeed, they are, ever glowing in the heart of piety, ever

gliding in the hand of Providence. Ask me not for living prophets on the very eve of these great changes. We would rather have the ancient—whose expression, like old wine, is all the better for a voyage over many billows of intervening revolution, and half the globe, in the time of its duration. Tell me not that Augustan civilization saw the end of them, and with its searching glance of light put them to silence forever. Precisely then they broke the silence of many centuries, and ceased not their proclamations until the keystone was fixed in the arch, and all remaining time was spanned with its extension.

7. *It is required, that they be philanthropic and benign.* When the Cumæan Sibyl came to Tarquin with her books, which were nine in number, she offered to sell them for a price which the tyrant deemed enormous, and refused. She disappeared immediately, and destroyed three books; and then came back, demanding as much for the remaining six as for the nine. It was again refused, and she retired in wrath to burn three more; and then returned to ask as much for the remaining three as for the whole original number—thus withholding from Rome, and from the world, what the gods had commissioned her to write, because she could not obtain her price in gold. This legend illustrates, far too faintly, the notorious venality and avarice of all heathen oracles. The poor man could never obtain responses from the Delphic Apollo. The rich man was swindled by a hundred frauds, enjoining new lustrations, additional sacrifices, and costlier gifts; and after all, dismissing the tantalized victim without an answer, as often as the case admitted of no safe equivocation. And even when the tripod, or the cave, did respond with its best articulation; and the pillaged votary obtained the most formal and categorical answer to his anxious query; what hope was soothed, what misery assuaged, what virtue strengthened, and what vice reformed? Only the cruel projects of ambition, or the horrid necessities of war and crime, came to those impure retreats for counsel and encouragement.

How different the prophets of the living God. No bribe could buy a Balaam, when filled with the impulse of their true inspiration. Not even a servant to their persons, dared accept a trifling present, from the richest beneficiary, without being blasted with leprosy for life. How calm, and kind, and frank, and dignified, as well as earnest and disinterested! And how pure the morality always inculcated. The primary object of inspired prophecy, was

the publication of absolute and eternal principles of truth and righteousness, as they are centred and sanctioned in the Lord Jesus Christ: and disclosures of futurity were added, because He was future, in respect to incarnation, and because these were needful, in every age, to secure a credit for the lessons of redeeming truth. Like the miracles of Christ, they were twice blessed; they always had a present benefit to work, while founding a solid deposition for the faith of future ages; always some hope to cherish, or sadness to cheer—some oppression to rebuke, or wickedness to warn, while furnishing the latest days, with bulwarks of evidence for the truth of this holy religion—which time was deputed to build out and up, until she herself would find a sepulchre, in some crypt of their deep foundations.

8. *They must, after all, transcend the requisitions of human reason.* We have now gone over, as we think, all the conditions, which man could dictate, for the full persuasion of his mind, that prophecy is divine and supernatural, and that, therefore, the religion it authenticates must be of God, true, and holy, and all important. The claim must be woven on its face, and published in advance—the terms must be, in the main, so purely enigmatical, as to bar any conscious causation of their own accomplishment; and yet significant enough, meanwhile, to answer the present need of faith and hope.—There must be some mark of specialty concealed among the terms, which the fulfilment will recognize, beyond a doubt, wherever there is knowledge enough to read the symbols, and observe aright the facts of history.—There must be great number and variety; so that no chance may account for the completion of all, and no failure of recognition, in some cases, jeopard the utility and force of the whole conclusion. They must be connected in a system, which is worthy of infinite design, in which they have a great scheme to develop; where every particular instance will shed light on every other instance, and the most occult, and indirect, and secondary meaning, may be made the ultimate strength and beauty of the whole. They must always grow in demonstration, and gratify the demand for marvels, in every age, miracle without suspending nature's laws; which they continually work, as new fulfilments of ancient prophecy occur. They must be ever benignant, disinterested and pure, without a single taint of selfishness, or meanness, or corruption in morals. These are your requisitions; and all of them reasonable, considering the high claims of my subject; and

are they not more than met, in the exuberant perfections of inspired prophecy?

It may be, that I have failed, for want of time, or ability, or both, to meet objections rightly, with that ample and adequate solution, which the subject fairly affords. But I am sure, your faith would not be satisfied, if I had succeeded in relieving reason from her whole embarrassment with prophecy: for its very nature implies an immediate communication, of an infinite mind to finite minds, and therefore some incomprehensibility, which, for us to remove, would be the greatest failure that could occur, in such investigation. It would be not to solve a problem, in the way of lodging light in the soul; but to dissolve a link, which connects our theme itself with the source of all light and knowledge. It cannot be from God, and yet circumscribed by man. The only discussion, that dares to tread the whole circumference of its connections, is absurd Neology—which always begs the question, in order to deny it—which would quench the sun, at meridian day, for no other reason, than because it is fixed in heaven, and take a lamp through the universe, because it is portable to “the critical feeling.”

We may not comprehend, how the soul of man is subject to the heavenly afflatus; how the peculiarity of each prophet's genius and taste, should be suffered to tinge the pure revelation of God by his mouth; or how he could faithfully and fully enunciate times and events which he did not himself understand. We may not comprehend, why the centre of prophecy was fixed just where it is, in the progressions of time; why the promise of God to the Fathers, was placed so dimly and distantly before them, and the triumphs of the great accomplishment with us, have been so partial, and slow, and clouded in prospect—a thousand minor embarrassments like these may spring up, which this man and that may answer or not, to his own satisfaction, and that of others. But we answer them all, with the simple averment, that, were they a hundred-fold more embarrassing and dark, they would only confirm the conviction of well-regulated reason, with the crowning demonstration they afford, of God's finger—whose traces cannot be perfectly explained, unless the finite can measure the infinite, or human reason, like the Aeon of Valentinus, in her vain ambition to comprehend the Almighty, should propagate a Demiurge from heaven, whose hand detailed the Jewish prophets, and whose work of perversion, and prophecy, alike, the Christ came

only to destroy. Wicked absurdity, or silly fable, must always be the refuge of that proud wisdom, which doubts the attestation of divinity, because the signet of Omniscience is not altogether like our own; because a part of his ways must be the limit of his condescension; and because he would incite our trust and admiration, through a whole eternity, by the simple and sublime conviction, that "we shall know, if we follow on to know the Lord."



J. F. Sampson

The Authority of the Sacred Canon,

AND

THE INTEGRITY OF THE SACRED TEXT

TWO LECTURES.

BY

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I.

RESPECTED AUDIENCE—

With hearty good-will and real pleasure, and yet not without feelings of sadness, I revisit the scenes of one of the most delightful periods of my life. It was here that I received my first lessons in science from venerated instructors, most of whom have gone to other fields; some of them—alas, how soon and suddenly!—to

“That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns.”

I came here a babe in Christ. The first five years of my new and better life were spent within these classic walls. Sacred hours, and sacred spots, and Christian friends, and youthful associates, are fondly remembered still. I would thank God that, through my brief life, the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places: but I have seen few better days than I have seen amid these scenes and friends of my youth.

Amongst these especially dear were those with whom, when as yet there was here no Ambassador of God, no Sanctuary, no Bible Society, no Sabbath-school,—I might almost say, no Sabbath,—in our lonely dormitory I often met, and spake, and prayed for better days to our beloved Alma Mater. The days came sooner than we had believed. God was with us. The little seed germinated and grew: and watered and fostered by his care, it became a tree with goodly branches and some precious fruit. I rejoice that it still lives and flourishes; and count it one of the most delightful privileges of my life, to return in my maturer, though scarcely realized manhood, and endeavor to contribute something towards helping this tree to strike deeper its roots, to spread wider its branches, and to bear more abundant and yet more precious fruit.

I am called to maintain before you *the authority of the Sacred Canon and the integrity of the Sacred Text*, as part of a

Course of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity. The subject is both copious and difficult, and might well have demanded me to enter immediately on its discussion. But I could not deny myself, and you, I trust, will excuse these brief introductory reminiscences. I proceed now to the duty assigned me.

I propose, then, so to present the history and authority of the Sacred Scriptures, and the history, preservation, and integrity of the text, as to show them to be the Word of God, and Christianity to be divine. In order to make the argument as short, and yet as comprehensive and conclusive as possible, I shall endeavor to maintain a series of propositions, which involve all that is essential to a just view of the subject.

I. My first proposition is, that *the Books of the New Testament are genuine*: that is, they were written, as they profess to have been written, by the Apostles and attendants on the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christianity at our day is a great *fact*, wide-spread over the world. We trace it back through every generation to the days of Augustus Cæsar, and find its origin in a crucified Jew. Tacitus and Suetonius, both reliable historians who flourished in little more than fifty years after the time, give unequivocal testimony on the subject. The former tells us, in his *Annals*,* that "Christus, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator, Pontius Pilate: that he originated a religion† in Judea, which, though checked for a while, broke out again and spread through Judea, and soon extended to Rome: that his followers from him were called *Christians*, and were very numerous at Rome in the reign of Nero (some thirty years after his death): that here they were exceedingly hated as criminal, and yet were subjected by the emperor, in order to avert from himself the infamy of having commanded the city to be set on fire, and to gratify his own wanton cruelty rather than to promote the public welfare, to such grievous and numerous sufferings as to excite the commiseration of the people." The latter, in his *life of Nero*,‡ says, that "the Christians were punished,—a sort of men of a new and magical (or pernicious§) superstition." Upon the testimony of Tacitus, the infidel Gibbon remarks: "The most skeptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact,|| and the integrity of this celebrated pas-

* Tacit. *Annal.* xv. 44.

§ Maleficæ.

† Superstitio.

‡ Sueton. *Nero.* xvi.

|| That is, the persecution of the Christians.

sage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted on the Christians, 'a sect of men who had embraced a new and criminal superstition.' The latter may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts; by the inimitable character of the style of Tacitus; by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud; and by the purport of his narration, which accused the first Christians of the most atrocious crimes, without insinuating that they possessed any miraculous or even magical powers above the rest of mankind." Pliny, the younger, who lived about the same time, while Governor of Pontus and Bithynia (A.D. 107), wrote a letter* to Trajan, the emperor, requesting advice as to the proper manner of proceeding against the Christians. From this letter we learn, that "they were now (some seventy years after Christ) very numerous in those regions, embracing every age and rank and sex, and pervading, not only the cities, but the lesser towns and the open country also: that they were brought before the civil tribunals, and tried for no crime but their Christianity, and punished for their obstinacy if they refused to abjure it: that it appeared from these investigations, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, and sing among themselves a hymn to Christ as God, and to eat a meal in common, but without any disorder; and to bind themselves by a solemn oath (sacramento), not to commit wickedness, but to abstain from theft, and robbery, and adultery, and falsehood, and unfaithfulness; while they steadfastly refused to invoke the gods, and to make supplication before the emperor's image: and that by their influence the temples had become almost forsaken, the sacred solemnities intermitted, and victims went begging for purchasers:"—all which, you cannot but observe, while, like the other passages, it proves the remarkable spread of Christianity and the cruel persecutions of the early Christians, throws not a little light on *the atrocious crimes* of which Gibbon speaks as charged by Tacitus upon them, and on the *pernicious* character which Suetonius ascribes to the *new superstition*.

Now it is every way probable that one who had successfully founded such a society, would, either by his own hands or the hands of his more intimate and chosen disciples, give out his doctrines and precepts in writing. It is every way probable that

* Plin. Ep. b. x. ep. 97.

such writings would be highly valued by all his followers: and that as the sect multiplied and spread, copies of these writings would also be multiplied and spread; and that they would be carefully preserved, and constantly appealed to, as the standard of opinion and practice acknowledged by all of the new persuasion.

Our New Testament Canon contains no book that professes to have been written by Christ. It consists, as you know, of *five Historical Books*, *twenty-one Epistolary*, and *one Prophetical*. Of the Historical Books, *four*, called Gospels, are ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and contain brief histories of the birth, doctrines, works, death, and resurrection of Christ; and the *fifth*, called *the Acts*, and also ascribed to Luke, contains an account of Christ's ascension to heaven, of the early propagation of his principles, and organization of his church by his disciples amongst both Jews and Gentiles, and of the miraculous conversion and call, and subsequent labors of Paul till his imprisonment at Rome. Of the Epistles, *fourteen* are ascribed to Paul; and the remaining *seven*, called *Catholic*, are ascribed *one* to James, *two* to Peter, *three* to John, and *one* to Jude. These were all written on different occasions, to different churches and individuals, and contain further developments of the doctrines and precepts which Christ would have to govern his Church. The only Prophetical Book, *the Revelation*, is ascribed to John, the author of the Gospel and the three Epistles. Of these authors, all were Apostles of Christ, duly commissioned to go forth and teach, and do mighty works in his name, excepting two, Mark and Luke. These, according to the books themselves, and all ancient tradition, were attendants on the Apostles,—or, as the Fathers called them, *apostolical men*, who wrote with the knowledge and approbation of the Apostles.

While, then, none of the books profess to have been written by Christ, all of them are handed down to us as from the Apostles and apostolical men. From what I have already said, it must be admitted that there is no presumption against their genuineness; but the presumption is decidedly in their favor. It is obvious, from the very inspection of the books, that they were written at different times and places, to different churches and individuals, on various doctrinal and practical subjects, just as circumstances called for them. At first, therefore, of course, they were separate, and scattered over different countries, in the possession of the dif-

ferent churches and individuals to whom they were originally sent. The collection of them into one volume was a subsequent work,—upon which we may remark, in passing, the books were, in no degree, dependent for any authority to which they might be justly entitled. All churches, especially those which had been founded by the Apostles, and perhaps had received of their writings, such as those of Rome,* Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Ephesus, Colossæ, Galatia, and all private Christians, who could defray the expense, especially those who had been conversant with the Apostles, would exert themselves to obtain copies of all such writings as were either composed or sanctioned by them, as authoritative exponents of the principles of the great Founder of their faith. In this way, there would soon be found in the hands of different churches and private individuals more or less complete collections of the Sacred Books. Some of the books, we may suppose, would come more slowly into general circulation than others:—such, for example, as were very brief and *comparatively* unimportant; such as were sent to private persons, and therefore were less known; such as were very obscure, and therefore not so much read. And for this very reason that they had at first less circulation, were less known, and consequently less quoted,—as well as for other reasons,—we may suppose that they would afterwards be more or less doubted by churches and private persons, who desired to have only the genuine works of the Apostles and such as were endorsed by them. After due time, however, and after full inquiry, to which the interest that was felt in the books would naturally prompt, the general consent would become settled on the books which ought to be received as genuine: and thus the Canon of the Sacred Books would finally become fixed and acknowledged in the church.—What we have here hypothetically imagined, is abundantly confirmed by a careful examination of the books themselves, and by the statements of those who lived and wrote nearest to the times of the Apostles. The result, early attained, was, that the books which we now have were the genuine works of the Apostles and their attendants who wrote with their sanction.

These prefatory remarks will prepare the way for the evidence which I shall now exhibit of the genuineness of our New Testament Canon. I shall appeal to the same kind of testimony that

* The founders of the churches at Rome and Colossæ are not known. The former certainly, and probably the latter, enjoyed the ministrations of Paul.

we appeal to, in order to establish the genuineness of all other books that have come down to us from antiquity. I shall appeal not to the decisions of General Councils, or to any man, or any set of men, as invested with authority from heaven to declare what books proceeded from Apostles, and what from uninspired men: I expressly deny that there ever was any such council or other human tribunal, invested with authority from God to settle this question, otherwise than by the evidence which may be fairly adduced to prove the genuineness or the spuriousness of all other ancient books. I shall appeal to the marks of genuineness which are found in the books themselves, and to the testimony of those, whether friends or foes, who lived nearest to the times of the writers, and who, therefore, had the best opportunities of knowing what they wrote.

A. I adduce, then, first, *the internal testimony*. Examine the books themselves, and you find

1. The *language* and *style* such as altogether to favor their genuineness. The language clearly shows that they emanated from Jews who spoke Greek, while the difference in style proves beyond all doubt, that they proceeded from different authors.

After the conquests of Alexander the Great, the various dialects of the Greek became, as you know, mingled, and this mixed or common (*κοινή*) dialect, as it was called, was extensively diffused over the East. We have the most satisfactory testimony, especially from Josephus, that many cities in Palestine were, in large part, inhabited by Greeks. Jews too, who were born in foreign parts and spoke Greek, frequently visited the land and city and temple of their fathers. The Herods did no little to innovate Grecian customs; and it would seem, that, while the Greek was the court-language of the Romans in the East, even the Jewish Rabbins were not unfavorable to its use. While, therefore, the Syro-Chaldaic, or Hebrew, as it is called in our New Testament, was the vernacular tongue of the Jews who resided in Palestine, Greek was certainly very extensively spoken as the language of commerce. But the Greek thus learnt, from the intercourse of common life, not from books, and spoken by Jews residing in Palestine, must largely partake of the idiom of their native tongue. From the Roman dominion too over the country, and the extensive and easy intercourse that was then carried on with the East and the different parts of the Roman Empire, we would expect some traces of the Latin and other languages. Such precisely is

the language of the New Testament. It is the common Greek dialect current at the time, of which Attic was the base, largely colored by the Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, which was vernacular to the writers, and exhibiting just such other foreign corruptions as we might expect to find in such writings.*

All acknowledge the diversity of style in the different books. Matthew's style is very different from that of Luke, John's from Paul's, James' from Peter's. The style, too, corresponds strikingly with the education, character, and habits of the several writers, as far as we know them. Matthew and Mark write in the plain, simple style of unpolished men, whose object is truth, not to varnish a tale: John in the simple, but smooth, flowing style of confidence and affection. Luke exhibits more of educational culture; while Paul shows the fire and energy of true genius and strong powers, melted and inspired with the grace of the gospel. James is sententious and ornate, Peter earnest, and Jude vehement.

We have, therefore, in these books, precisely the peculiarities of language and all the diversities of style, which we should have expected from just such authors, living at that period, and in those countries. We discover also

2. Strong marks of genuineness in *the circumstantiality of the narratives, and the multitude of minute allusions to existing customs and relations*, which are found more or less in all the books.

I cannot here, without going into detail, which the occasion does not allow, do more than indicate the nature of the argument. I regret this the more, because it is only by such details that the full strength of the argument can be exhibited.† Suffice it, however, to say, that the writers show an easy and familiar acquaintance with the times, which proves them to be, as the authors of these books profess to have been, contemporaneous with the events. No man after them was sufficiently acquainted with the times to have wrought into his fictitious narrative such multiplied and accurate allusions and statements. They freely give dates, places, persons, circumstances; and refer to the social, civil, religious, political, geographical, and historical relations of the times, with a readiness and profusion which are possible only to contemporaneous authors. There is none of that generality and conflict with the existing relations of the time, as ascertained from other reliable sources, which so often serve to detect and

* See Winer, *Grammatik d. neutest. Sprachidioms*, §§ 1, 2, 3, 4.

† See this well done, Hug's *Introduction to the N. T.* (Fosdick's Translation) § 3, 4, 5.

demonstrate forgeries of later writers. Abounding as the allusions do on almost every page, all our researches into antiquity serve but to illustrate and confirm them.

Now I do not assert that the internal testimony alone could demonstrate the genuineness of all the books. But I do not hesitate to affirm that the books, as a whole, contain as strong internal marks of the age to which they belong, as the book of any other ancient author or authors whatever. We have no contemporary testimony to the history of Herodotus, still less to the works of Homer. But they have strong *internal* testimony, and there is no *external* testimony against them; and hence their antiquity, and the genuineness of the former at least, are now universally admitted. In the case of the book before us, the testimony is stronger and still more decisive. The language is the Greek, of a particular age and region, and all the minute circumstantial allusions are allusions to the relations and customs of times and countries, than which none others are better known to us in ancient history. What single forger of the second century,—and later it would be absurd to suppose,—could have written so many books in so many different styles, so peculiar in their matter, and abounding with so many minute references to the relations of a former period? What combination of men could have done it, and the thing not be known and duly noted in history? How is it that the men of that age allowed themselves to be thus amazingly imposed on? And if it be allowed that they were written in the period to which we refer them, why attribute them to other authors? Who so likely to write them as the followers of Christ? And amongst these, who so properly with the authority which these writers claim for themselves, as those who attended personally on his instructions and ministry, and were by him commissioned to go out and instruct others?

B. I proceed now to lay before you the *external evidence* of the genuineness of these books. Here again I have to regret that I cannot give you *more* and *fuller* quotations from ancient writers, both Christian and infidel, so that you might receive the just impression of the argument. * My time allows me to do little more than present an abstract of the more important testimony.

1. I begin with the testimony of those who lived, wholly or in part, in the very age of the Apostles, and were more or less conversant with them, and, therefore, are commonly called *Apostolical Fathers*. These are *Barnabas*, of Cyprus, frequently men-

tioned in the New Testament as a co-laborer of Paul; *Clement*, who is also mentioned as a fellow-laborer of Paul, afterwards Bishop of Rome; *Hermas*, most probably the same who is saluted by Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans; *Ignatius*, Bishop of Antioch, in Syria, where he is said to have been ordained by Peter; *Polycarp*, a disciple of John, ordained by him Bishop of Smyrna, where he died a martyr; and *Papias*, the companion of Polycarp, and possibly conversant with the Apostle John.

Of these we have only a few writings and fragments preserved. *The Shepherd* of Hermas nearly equals all the rest; but, unfortunately, it is of such a character as allowed him to quote the New Testament but little. Yet in one and another of these we find nearly all the books in our New Testament Canon quoted or alluded to—although generally not by name. The laborious and cautious Dr. Lardner has carefully collected and weighed their statements; * from him I take these results:—In *Barnabas* the allusions are few, and not so clear. *Clement*, of Rome, expressly ascribes 1st Corinthians to Paul, and more or less clearly quotes or alludes to Matthew, Mark, Luke, Romans, 2d Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 1st and 2d Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1st and 2d Peter. *Hermas* alludes to Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1st Corinthians, Ephesians, James, and Revelation. *Ignatius* expressly ascribes Ephesians to Paul, and makes plain allusions to the Gospels of Matthew and John, and probably Luke, to the Acts, Romans, 1st and 2d Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1st Thessalonians, 2d Timothy, 1st Peter, 1st and 3d John. *Polycarp* plainly ascribes Philippians to Paul, and quotes Matthew, Luke, 1st Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1st and 2d Thessalonians; and makes undoubted references to Acts, Romans, 1st and 2d Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1st and 2d Timothy, 1st Peter, 1st John, and probably Hebrews, doubtful ones to Colossians and Jude. *Papias* bears express testimony to Matthew and Mark, quotes 1st Peter, and 1st John, probably refers to Acts, and received Revelation.

I am well aware that a more recent and skeptical criticism has discarded, or questioned, very many of these supposed quotations and allusions. But, after making every deduction that can reasonably be claimed, it remains, that in the brief writings and fragments of these few Apostolical Fathers which have descended

* See his works (Lond. ed.) vol. i. p. 283 seq. iii. p. 99 seq.

to us, we find nearly all the books of our New Testament quoted or alluded to:—not indeed, generally, so as to determine the authors; but so as to show that the books were in existence, and were known and read and appreciated by contemporaneous writers, and those to whom they wrote. Conversant as these writers were with the Apostles, they could not thus have received and used these books, unless they had believed that they were truly from them. Neither would it seem that they *thus* recognized any other books that are not in our Canon.

2. We descend a little later into the second century, and passing by others whose testimony would help us, we examine the writings of *Justin Martyr*, A.D. 140; of *Irenæus*, A.D. 178; of *Clement of Alexandria*, A.D. 194; and of *Tertullian*, A.D. 200. The first of these was a native of Palestine, a man of learning and a traveller. The second was a native of Asia, acquainted with Polycarp, and Bishop of Lyons in Gaul. The third was a learned president of the celebrated catechetical school at Alexandria, in Egypt. The fourth was a presbyter of Carthage, and a man of liberal learning.

Like the Apostolical Fathers who preceded them, none of these have given us catalogues of the Sacred Books. But they make so many statements respecting them and their authors, and so freely quote them and allude to them as sacred and authoritative Scriptures, that we might, with goodly satisfaction, make out the Canon of the New Testament from them alone. I am sorry that I have not time to quote them at length: but I am compelled to content myself with the statement of the substance and the most important points of their testimony. Justin tells us that the *Memoirs or Records of the Apostles and their companions*,—plainly meaning our four Gospels, which only he received,—were read and expounded in the assemblies of Christians for divine worship on the Sabbath day. Irenæus says expressly, that there were but four Gospels,—the very ones that we now have. In divers passages they both quote these, and many other of the Sacred Books. Clement, likewise testifies to the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: refers Acts to Luke; thirteen Epistles to Paul, omitting only Philemon: quotes of the Catholic Epistles all but James, 2 Peter, and 3 John: and ascribes Revelation to John, the Apostle. Tertullian, also, received but the four Gospels, of Matthew and John who, he says, were Apostles, and of Mark and Luke, who were apostolical men: refers Acts

to Luke; thirteen Epistles to Paul, including Philemon, but ascribing Hebrews to Barnabas: and quotes 1 Peter, 1 John, Jude, and Revelation, ascribing the last expressly to the Apostle John. "Visit," says he to those who would exercise a commendable curiosity in matters of their salvation,—“visit the apostolical churches, in which the very chairs of the Apostles still preside; in which their very authentic letters* are recited, sounding forth the voice and representing the face of each one. Is Achaia near you? you have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi and Thessalonica. If you can go to Asia, you have Ephesus, &c.” Putting together their statements, and the statements of others coëval with them, we learn that the books of the New Testament were at this period current in two volumes, called *the Gospels* and *Apostles*; that there were four Gospels universally received, two of them from the Apostles Matthew and John, and two from Mark and Luke, who wrote respectively with the authority of Peter and Paul; that the Acts were written by Luke, and fourteen Epistles by Paul, though Hebrews was doubted by some; that of the seven Catholic Epistles all were known and quoted, excepting that we find no mention of James and 3 John; and that Revelation was received as the work of the Apostle John. I wish you particularly to note, that amongst the books thus early received as genuine, are several of those which we shall presently see were afterwards doubted. Thus Justin Martyr quotes 2 Peter; Irenæus quotes and Clement received 2 John; Justin, Irenæus, Clement and Tertullian, all received Revelation as John's. There were other books now in circulation, some of them written by good men, others falsely ascribed to Apostles: but whilst these were read and sometimes quoted, it does not appear that they were ever received as genuine works of the Apostles or apostolical men, without which they could not have been deemed sacred and canonical. I wish you further to note, that as none of the writers of this period furnish catalogues of the Sacred Books, but only quote them or allude to them as they had occasion to do so, it is manifest, that the omission to quote them or refer to them by no means proves that they did not know and receive them. The wonder rather is, that within one hundred years after the last of the Apostles, though no writer, as far as we know, saw fit to prepare a formal catalogue of the Sacred Books,—a fact which argues a very general

* *Ipsæ authenticæ literæ.*

consent in regard to them,—we yet have, in the remaining writings of only a few authors, the most satisfactory proof of the reception of nearly every one of them as genuine and authoritative. “In the remaining works of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian (though some works of each of them are lost), there are perhaps,” says Dr. Lardner,* “more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages.” He elsewhere† uses nearly the same language of the quotations in Tertullian alone.

For reasons which I have already suggested, it was natural that by this time doubts should be felt and expressed in regard to some of these books. The fact, too, that in some cases, books, which were admitted to be the works of uninspired men, were read in the churches as profitable books, while some, as Revelation, which were admitted to be the genuine works of inspired men, were not read on account of their obscurity or for other reasons, would help to induce doubts where before there had been none, and make it necessary for those who had the learning and the opportunity, to investigate the grounds on which the various books had been received into the churches, and the authority to which they were entitled. This was accordingly done: and there have descended to us some *thirteen* well-authenticated catalogues of the genuine and canonical books, prepared by leading men in the two following centuries.

3. To the substance of these *ancient Catalogues*‡ I now invite your attention.

The *first* is that of an anonymous author, discovered by Muratori, the famous Italian antiquarian, and by him referred to Caius, a Roman presbyter about A.D. 200. Of this we have only an obscure and barbarous Latin translation. It contains all the books except Hebrews, James, and probably 2d Peter and 3d John.

The *second* is that of Origen, a presbyter of Alexandria, who flourished A.D. 230, little more than one hundred years after the

* Works, vol. iii. pp. 106, 7. London Edn.

† Ib. vol. i. p. 435.

‡ For most of these Catalogues, besides the works of Lardner, see Kirchhofer's Quellensammlung z. Geschichte d. Neutest. Canons bis auf Hieronymus, where they, as well as the other testimony adduced in this Lecture, are given in the original.

Apostle John. He was, by general consent, the most learned man of his age; thoroughly studied in Pagan and Christian philosophy and literature; a most voluminous writer, courted by the great, and honored and feared by his enemies. He devoted himself especially to the study of the Sacred Scriptures; and in two passages which Eusebius has preserved,* he has particularly enumerated the books which had been handed down, and were then received, as genuine works of the Apostles and their attendants. He mentions that some doubted the genuineness of 2d Peter, and 2d and 3d John; thinks that Paul dictated Hebrews to some unknown amanuensis, who wrote down the Apostle's thoughts in his own words; and omits James and Jude altogether. But he refers elsewhere in his works to these two Epistles as well known in the churches, though not universally received as genuine: and he would seem himself to have received them all, as he certainly did the remaining books of our Canon.

The *third* catalogue is that of Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, early in the 4th century (A.D. 315). He was a diligent student and a voluminous writer, and is especially famous for a valuable Church History which has descended to us, and to which probably we are more indebted than to any other uninspired book of ancient times. He made it a special subject of inquiry, what books had been received from the times of the Apostles as written by them or with their sanction, and frequently refers to it in his History. For greater distinctness he divides the books, which were in circulation, and more or less read by Christians and churches, into three classes:—1. Those which were universally received as genuine (*ὁμολογουμένα*). 2. Those of which some doubted, though the greater part admitted them (*ἀντιλεγόμενα*). 3. Those which were spurious, i. e. certainly not from the Apostles (*ῥόθα*). Of these last, some were good books, others absurd and impious. In the first class he enumerates all the books of our Canon, excepting James, 2d Peter, 2d and 3d John, Jude, and Revelation,—all which he puts in the second class, excepting Revelation, which he first places in the first class, and afterwards states that some rejected it.†

The *fourth* catalogue is that of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who flourished about the same time with Eusebius. He is distinguished in ecclesiastical history for the part which he took in the great Arian controversy. In a fragment of what is called

* Ecc. Hist. vi. 25.

† Ecc. Hist. iii. 25. comp. iii. 3.

his Festal or Paschal Epistle, which the great majority of the learned world admit to be genuine, he gives a catalogue of the books which had been handed down and believed to be inspired, for the especial and expressed purpose of guarding his readers from being imposed upon by spurious writings. His catalogue coincides, as to the books and authors, entirely with our own.

The *fifth* catalogue is that of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem about the middle of the 4th century (A.D. 340); and the *sixth* is that of the Council of Laodicea, where some thirty or forty bishops of Lydia assembled, likewise in the fourth century, though the exact year cannot be determined.* These catalogues agree with our own, except that they omit Revelation.

The *seventh* is that of Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus (A.D. 368), who, Jerome says, was a man of five languages. His catalogue is the same as ours.

The *eighth* is that of Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantinople, in the latter half of the 4th century; and the *ninth* that of Philastrius, Bishop of Brescia, in Italy, about the same time. Gregory mentions Revelation as doubted; Philastrius omits it, and mentions only thirteen Epistles of Paul, omitting most probably that to the Hebrews, which had been questioned in the Western Church.

The *tenth* catalogue is that of Jerome, who flourished in the latter part of the 4th century, and was the most learned of the Latin Fathers. His life was especially devoted to literary labors on the Sacred Scriptures. Many of his works have descended to us. Amongst these, the most noted is the Roman Vulgate, or Latin translation of the Bible in common use in the Roman Catholic Church. No man in the ancient Church was better qualified to say what books had been received from the hands and times of the apostles. His catalogue agrees exactly with our present Canon. He mentions, indeed, that some disputed the authority of Hebrews, as others did that of Revelation; but says that he himself, *after the custom of the ancient writers*, received both. He also composed a catalogue of illustrious ecclesiastical writers who had preceded him, in which he gives short notices of the several writers of the New Testament, and ascribes to them the several books, as they are now ascribed in our Canon.

The *eleventh* catalogue is that of Ruffinus, a presbyter of

* About A.D. 364.

Aquileia, in Italy, and contemporary with Jerome. Like most of the others, it professes to contain the books which had been handed down as coming from the Apostles, and agrees exactly with our Canon.

The *twelfth* catalogue is that of Augustine, the celebrated Bishop of Hippo, in Africa, and contemporary with Jerome and Ruffinus. Inferior amongst the Latins only to Jerome in learning, he was, in the judgment of Lardner, not inferior to him in good sense. His catalogue agrees in all respects with our own.

The *thirteenth* is that of the third (alias the sixth) Council of Carthage, which met about A.D. 397, and was composed of forty-four African bishops, amongst whom was Augustine. The 47th Canon contains a list of the books of the New Testament, which accords entirely with ours.

To these I might add the catalogue of the unknown author of the works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite; as also that contained in the Synopsis, falsely ascribed to Athanasius; and that in the so called, but misnamed, Apostolical Constitutions. These all, while their real authors and dates are uncertain, are ancient catalogues, though most probably subsequent to those that have been mentioned:—they all agree exactly with our Canon.

Such are the Catalogues which were prepared by learned and distinguished men, who flourished from one hundred to three hundred years after the last of the Apostles. They lived in different countries, at different times, and occupied high places in the Church. They were, therefore, fully competent to declare what books had been received before them, and were received in their own times, as genuine works of the Apostles. Most of them, let it be observed, profess to give the books which had been received from the beginning: and thus we have the testimony of the most distinguished writers of old, who were deeply interested and industriously careful to separate the genuine books from the spurious, and who withal had the best means of doing so—conclusively showing that the books which were received in the ages nearest to the Apostles as genuine, were the very same which we now receive into our Canon. They tell us, indeed, that a few of the books were doubted by some:—that James, 2d Peter, 2d and 3d John, Jude, and Revelation were not admitted by all; and that some doubted whether Paul was the author of Hebrews:—but let it be noted, that the leading of these witnesses carefully state that the *great majority* received them, as *they themselves did* after those who

had preceded them;—and as, I will add, the great majority of the learned have done down to the present day. The doubts which some entertained in relation to some of the books, show conclusively, that they were not received without examination. The great question, as appears from the statements of many of the writers, as well as from the actual results, was, what books were written by the Apostles, and with their sanction, for the guidance of the Church? And though some doubted in regard to some of the books, the great majority were agreed on the whole Canon as we now have it; and in this judgment the most learned and leading men of the times who investigated the subject and have given us the results of their inquiries, themselves concurred. Of the thirteen well-authenticated catalogues which they have furnished us, —to say nothing of the others,—seven agree exactly with our Canon; three omit only Revelation;* whilst of the remaining three, the authors of two are known to have received the books which they omit or note as doubted. Nor do these catalogues, let it be further noticed, contain any books that are not in our present Canon. We have, as far as their evidence goes, all the books that were ever received as genuine by those who lived nearest to the times of the Apostles. If, in any case, a writer of any note quotes other books as sacred or divine,—Origen says, in one place, of the Shepherd of Hermas, “I think it is divinely inspired,”†—it is generally sufficiently manifest from other passages of the same author, that he did not regard them as on an equality with the books of the Sacred Canon, and abundantly so from other writers, if not himself, that the general voice was against them. They were good to be read as the products of minds enlightened and sanctified by the Spirit of God, but not binding, like the books of the Sacred Canon, in matters of faith and practice.

4. In further proof of the genuineness of our New Testament Canon, I appeal to the testimony of several *ancient versions*.

Among these I notice, first, the Old Syrian, commonly called the Peshito Version. This translation of the books of both the Old and New Testaments, was made for the Syrian churches, according to some in the third century, but according to the great majority of critics early in the second, and some distinguished

* Which, however, besides the authors of the Seven, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian, all received, as did the majority then and before them.

† Divinitus inspirata.

authors have even regarded it as a product of the first. It is generally admitted to be a remarkably accurate version. It contains all the books of our present Canon, excepting 2d Peter, 2d and 3d John, Jude, and Revelation. A distinguished critic* contends, with some plausibility, that originally it may have contained all these, especially the last. However this may be, we are struck with the fact, that thus early after the age of the Apostles,—possibly within half a century,—notwithstanding the slow process of transcription, we have in circulation in the churches of Syria, a translation of so complete a collection of the sacred writings. Composed, as the books originally were, in different countries, by different persons, at different times, and addressed for the most part to different churches, and even private individuals, the wonder is, that so complete a collection was so soon made by the translator or translators of this version, and not that a few of the books should be wanting in it. We see proof here, as elsewhere in the early writers, and as we should have expected from the nature of the writings and from the claims of their authors, that the ascertaining of the genuine works of the Apostles and the obtaining of correct copies of them, was a matter of earnest and diligent solicitude with the early Christians and churches. And we observe here, as in the later writers and catalogues which I have adduced, that the books of which we might have expected that there would be less demand, or some delay in the circulation, and finally some hesitancy in the reception, are the very books which appear to have failed, when this early and excellent translation was made, to obtain general circulation and reception in Syria.

The second version which I mention is an old Latin version, commonly called the *Itala*. De Wette,† a skeptical German critic, says, its origin belongs to the earliest times of Christianity. Eichhorn‡ thinks that it was made before the middle of the second century. Augustine refers to it as the best of many Latin translations, of which both he and Jerome speak as circulating in the African and Western churches, at a very early period. Its text became much corrupted by transcription, and Jerome undertook to revise and correct it. Augustine complains equally with him of the corrupt state of its text, and urged upon him to make the revision: but we nowhere find in Jerome or Augustine, both of whom we have seen held to the Canon just as we have it, the

* Hug Introd. N. T. § 65.

† De Wette on the O. T. (Parker) § 48.

‡ Einleitung in d. A. T. ii. § 322.

slightest intimation that this ancient version was deficient in any of the books. Jerome himself subsequently, at the urgency of his friends, prepared a Latin translation of the entire Scriptures. The circulation of this was much opposed by Ruffinus and others, and even feared by Augustine: so that Jerome had to defend both himself and his version from the charges of his opponents. Yet we find no allusion to any such objection to the old Latin versions as being defective in the Canon, and to the completeness of his own as enhancing its relative value. We conclude, therefore, that the old Latin versions which were in circulation in the very first ages of Christianity, embraced all the books which were in the Canon of Jerome and Augustine, which we have seen was the same as ours.

To say nothing of other versions,—as the Coptic, the Sahidic, the Ethiopic, the Gothic, and the Armenian, I mention lastly the Latin version of Jerome himself, which soon obtained general circulation in the West, and, under the name of the Vulgate, which he had applied to the Itala, received finally the authoritative sanction of the Romish Church. Of this it must suffice to say, that it contains all the books of our New Testament Canon, and none others. And in dismissing thus briefly the testimony of the versions, I remark that the extent of their circulation shows how general was the admission, in the ages nearest to the times of the Apostles, that the books which they contained were the genuine works of the Apostles and their attendants.

5. But I have not yet done with the evidence for the genuineness of our New Testament Canon. We derive an important argument in its favor from the *early heretics* and the very *enemies of Christianity*. The Gnostic heretics, who troubled the Church in the very first periods, never questioned the genuineness of the books. They even admitted some to be genuine, the inspiration of which on account of their philosophical views they denied. The early infidels too,—Lucian (A.D. 170), Celsus (A.D. 176), Porphyry (A.D. 270), and Julian (A.D. 361),—all of them acute and educated men, never called in question the genuineness of the sacred books of the Christians. The charges which they bring against the Christians are derived from those books only: the facts and doctrines which they allege to be received by them are contained in the books of our present Canon:—thus clearly proving the identity of the ancient Canon and our own. We might indeed make out from their writings the great leading

facts, and not a few of the doctrines of the New Testament: but whilst they endeavor to explain or to confute them, they never question the genuineness of the books in which they are related. Had the early Christians received other books, such as have come down to us, these had furnished far better grounds of attack, and had certainly not been overlooked by such acute and vigilant adversaries. The fact that they did not thus make them the source of charges against the Christians, proves that they were never received by them as authoritatively expounding their religion.

Thus, my hearers, I think I have established my first proposition, that *the books of the New Testament are genuine*. For the great majority of them, the testimony, as we have seen, for the first four centuries after the age in which their authors lived, is uniform, and clear, and unquestionable. Amongst these, let it be remembered, that the four Gospels stand pre-eminent: the best and most learned of the early Fathers testify again and again that these four, and only these, were to be received as genuine. Respecting a few of the books some doubted: but the great majority, and amongst them those who examined most carefully and were best qualified to judge, received them as genuine. Other books indeed were sometimes read, and quoted, and highly valued by the early Christians:—in what period of the Church has this not been the case?—But they were never referred to by the contemporaries and immediate successors of the Apostles; they were not read in the churches; they were not admitted into the sacred volume; they do not appear in the catalogues; they were not noticed by the enemies of Christianity: they were not alleged by different parties as of authority in their controversies; they were not the subjects of comments, versions, harmonies, and homilies: * all which we have seen was more or less the case with the books of our Canon,—from which, therefore, these are and were properly excluded as of later origin.

These facts conclusively show that the books of our Canon were not received without investigation, and were only received upon satisfactory evidence of their genuineness. The disputed books were those of which, for the most part, we might have anticipated that doubts would arise,—upon grounds, however, of which we ourselves can judge, and which the great body of Christian writers in every age have deemed insufficient. After the middle of the 4th century the genuineness of the books, which some had previ-

* Paley's Evidences, c. ix. § xi.

ously questioned, was universally conceded ; and succeeding ages down to the present day have, with very partial exceptions, acknowledged them all,—and none others. A spirit of skepticism has, indeed, for more than half a century past, pervaded some of the churches on the Continent of Europe, and especially of Germany. The evidences of the genuineness of the Sacred Canon have been sifted anew. But whatever may be the conclusions of some minds more skeptical than conservative or sound, the only and certain result of this ordeal will, we believe, on most minds be to confirm the conclusions of the pious and learned in the 4th century, that whilst the evidence for the genuineness of the books is not in all cases equally strong, yet in no case is that evidence against, but decidedly in favor of each particular book, and therefore that all ought to be received.

I have said that the evidence of the genuineness of these books, is of the same kind as that on which we rely to prove the genuineness of all ancient books. In degree this evidence far exceeds that for the works of any classic author of antiquity. Even the Orations of Cicero or Demosthenes, the histories of Cæsar or Thucydides, the Satires of Horace or the Tragedies of Sophocles, are not sustained by equal testimony, external and internal. The truth is, that the spread of Christianity was unparalleled for rapidity: the demand for the books, which were regarded as expounding the will of its great Founder, was immediate and urgent: they were copied, studied, quoted, translated, commented on, and harmonies and homilies composed on them, in an unprecedented manner: and the consequence is an accumulation of evidence for their genuineness, equalled by that of no other ancient books whatever. We must, therefore, admit the genuineness of these, or assume the impossibility of proving the genuineness of any.

II. My second proposition is, that *the history contained in the New Testament is true history.*

Here again I rely upon the ordinary proofs of the truth of any history whatsoever. My assertion is that, tried by every proper test, the history contained in the New Testament is true history, or there is none true.

1. In the first place, *the matters related were public.*

They took place on the highways and in the cities and villages; on the thronged mountain-side, and the crowded plain, and the frequented sea-shore; in the synagogues and on the

streets; in private houses, and public halls, and temple courts; and in the presence of enemies, as well as of friends. Names, dates, places, and attendant circumstances are freely given. Almost everything, related as said and done, occurred in the presence of several, generally of many witnesses.

2. In the second place, *the witnesses were competent.*

They were eye-witnesses of what they relate, or they got their knowledge from those who were. Two of the Gospels, as we have seen, were written by Apostles who were personal attendants on our Saviour's ministry of which they give an account; the other two and the Acts, by attendants on the ministry of the Apostles, from whom they could learn accurately all the facts, and under whose direction ancient writers constantly affirm that they wrote. Mark was most probably a native of Jerusalem, himself possibly personally conversant, or at least acquainted with those who were personally conversant with much of our Saviour's history, and certainly an attendant on the Apostles Paul and Peter. Luke was, according to the ancient testimony, a native of Antioch and a physician, and a companion of the Apostle Paul. They were all men of sound understanding. Their narratives alone prove this. They do not appear credulous, but slow to believe. We discover no heated enthusiasm or raving fanaticism, but the plain and sober narrative of what the witnesses saw and heard for themselves, or learned from those who did see and hear, and were qualified to tell. Men, who could *write* such narratives, would be admitted as competent witnesses of such facts before any unprejudiced tribunal in the country. They were incompetent indeed to *forge* such narratives, had Jesus Christ never actually lived, and taught, and acted, and died, and rose again: but knowing these matters as facts, they were abundantly competent to testify to them.

3. In the next place, *they were men of integrity.*

This appears, first, from their sacrifices and sufferings in the cause to which they bear testimony. They all gave up their secular callings, and followed Christ, who was hated by the Jews and despised by the Greeks, and whose service promised little worldly emolument, but much tribulation and persecution. They devoted their lives, with much hazard and toil, to publishing this testimony; and some of them probably died on account of it.

Their integrity further appears from the minute details and manifold circumstantial allusions, with which their histories

abound. It is unnecessary for me, even if I had the time, to exhibit a view of these details and allusions. You know that they mention dates, places, persons, and attendant circumstances, with the utmost freedom, and that they make innumerable allusions and statements respecting the existing relations of every kind of the age in which they lived. Such is not the manner of deceivers generally. They carefully avoid such minute details, and such manifold allusions and statements respecting the times of which they write, because they know that these furnish the readiest means of detecting and exposing them. The writers before us show manifestly that they meant no deception, and felt no fear of exposure. The attempt has often been made to find them in contradiction with the times, but never successfully. On the contrary, the more accurate and minute our knowledge of those times, the more have all seeming difficulties of this character vanished.

Their integrity further appears from the remarkable agreement in their testimony, whilst yet there is abundant evidence of no collusion amongst them. The first three of the witnesses, who wrote earliest, are remarkably parallel in the accounts which they give of the life of Christ. The fourth, who wrote later, relates many things not contained in the others, as he also omits much which they related. The agreement is the more striking when we consider, how much Christ did in his brief but active life,* and how nearly the writers relate the same things in the same words. Some have hence supposed that there was manifest collusion amongst them to impose upon the world. But it is enough to answer, without referring to the different countries in which the ancients tell us that they wrote, that the variations are so numerous and the apparent discrepancies so great, that quite as many have been led to reject their testimony as palpably contradictory. The variations, however they may be harmonized, certainly do show that there was no collusion amongst the writers: the agreement, however it may be explained, proves the integrity of the testimony. The authors clearly wrote regardless of conformity or nonconformity to the statements of others. Any three intelligent witnesses, thus concurring in their testimony, and yet so varying as to preclude just suspicion of collusion, would be admitted before any fair tribunal in the country. Any three historians, thus differing, would never be

suspected of collusion ; thus agreeing, would never be rejected as false. Their agreement must be accounted for on other grounds than the supposition of collusion : their differences must be solved by other assumptions than the falsity of the witnesses. Were I to give my own opinion in a case where many have theorized without facts to sustain them, I should say, that the variations occur precisely because the witnesses were independent, and it was so ordered in the providence of God that they might appear to be so ; and that the remarkable agreement in the selection of facts and discourses to be related, and often in the very words, is to be fully and satisfactorily accounted for only by ascribing it to that one and the same Spirit of God, which (as I shall presently endeavor briefly to prove) dwelt in and directed each one, so that at the mouth of two or three duly concurring witnesses, every word might be established.

4. Lastly, *the accounts were published in the same age in which the facts occurred.*

We have already seen that the writers were contemporaneous with the facts which they relate. Their narratives, therefore, must have been published by them while many of their own generation, and many who were cognizant of, if not actors in, the scenes mentioned, were yet alive. According to the ancient tradition these narratives were published, one in Palestine, another in Rome, another in Greece, another in Ephesus, and the fifth possibly at Rome also. From these places,—or wherever else they were published,—it is certain that they rapidly and early spread over the whole Roman empire. And yet we hear not one word of contradiction of their truth from any quarter whatever.

The remarks which I have made apply, in the main, not only to the histories contained in the Gospels and Acts, but also to the historical notices and statements which are contained in most of the other books of the New Testament. I repeat, therefore, that the history in the New Testament is true history, or there is none true. The facts related were public ; the narrators were competent, and men of integrity ; and the accounts were published soon after the matters related took place : they are contradicted by no contemporaneous testimony, but rather confirmed ; and furnish the only solution to the great fact of Christianity, which, all history shows, originated in that age, and has continued ever since. No history can afford better proofs of its truth. By whatever process we set aside this as untrue history, we may set aside all

history as untrue; and give to skepticism universal sway. We shall be allowed to believe that only which we have seen with our own eyes; and we can scarcely credit them, because by this skeptical criticism all others become unworthy of credit, and our own can scarcely be exceptions to so general a law.

Thus, my hearers, have I endeavored to maintain the genuineness of our New Testament Canon, and the credibility of the New Testament history. I have about as much to say on the propositions which yet remain. But I fear that I have already trespassed on your patience, and respectfully request of you another hearing.

II.

RESPECTED AUDITORS—

I THINK I have shown that the New Testament Canon is genuine, and that the New Testament history is true.

III. My third proposition is, *that Christ was divine, and his Apostles inspired, and consequently our New Testament was from God.*

The proof of this proposition, like that of the preceding, involves much that must enter largely into other lectures of this course: and as I introduce it only to give completeness to my own argument, I shall despatch it, as I have done the other, with little more than a brief outline.

Christ claimed to be sent from God, and to be the Son of God: to do the works of God, and to have all power committed into his hands: to be one with the Father; to be entitled to the same honor as the Father; to so represent Him before men, that they who saw him saw the Father; and that as he came from the Father, so he would return to the Father, to enjoy with Him the glory which he had before the world began, and come again to judge the world at the last day. When he was about to leave the world, he still promised to be with his Apostles an all-sufficient help: to give them his Spirit which should guide them into all truth; should receive of the things of Christ and show them to them; and should teach them all things, and bring all things to

their remembrance, whatsoever he had commanded them : and finally, to enable them to do mighty works. Thus qualified, he commissioned them to go forth and proclaim him as the Saviour to the ends of the earth, beginning at Jerusalem.

The Apostles accordingly went forth, and boldly and clearly taught that Christ was indeed the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world : that though he had been crucified, he was now exalted to be Head over all things to the Church : that he was the Creator, the Upholder, the Lord of all : and that he would come again to judge the world. They claimed for themselves to be commissioned by him to teach in his name and to order his kingdom ; and accordingly constantly spoke and wrote and acted as by authority from God.

So much appears plainly from the history contained in the New Testament. Christ claimed to be divine, and promised to inspire his Apostles : the Apostles taught that Christ was divine, and claimed themselves to be inspired. And how were these claims supported ?—According to these histories,

First, *by miracles*, such as no man ever performed without the help and power of God. The blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk ; the insane were restored, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, the sea was calmed,—all promptly and by a word. About such miracles there could be no deception. Most of them were frequently performed, and just as occasion called for them: The blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the insane, the sick, the dead, were all known before and after the healing and restoring power was applied ; and deception was impossible. Now these miracles were wrought by Christ and his Apostles in proof of their respective claims. Christ expressly challenged belief on account of his works, and miraculous powers were the proper signs of an Apostle. Would God thus support impostors in such arrogant pretensions ? They supported their claims,

Secondly, *by their prophecies*, some of which were speedily fulfilled, others are in process of fulfilment to this day. Thus Christ foretold that he should be put to death in Jerusalem ; that he must there first suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes ; that they would condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify him ; that the man who dipped his hands with him in the same dish, should betray him into their power ; that the rest of his disciples would

forsake him that night, and one of them deny him thrice; that he should be crucified; that he would rise again the third day; that he would meet his disciples in Galilee; that after his ascension, the Holy Spirit should descend on them at Jerusalem; that miraculous powers should thenceforth be possessed and exercised by them; that Jerusalem should be besieged and taken, and the Temple utterly destroyed before all then living were dead; that the city should be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and that his gospel should universally spread, and his kingdom triumph over all opposition. Most of these were strikingly fulfilled before that generation passed away; others are in process of glorious accomplishment at the present day.—Of the Apostles few prophecies are recorded: but the Saviour promised that the Spirit, when He came, should show them things to come; and everywhere in the subsequent Scriptures, Acts as well as the Epistles, we find frequent reference to the gift of prophecy as one enjoyed even by some in the Church who were inferior to Apostles. Cases, however, are recorded in which the Apostles did foretell near events which came duly to pass, as well as remote ones, the *full* accomplishment of which remains to be seen.* The certain knowledge of future things is as much a direct gift of God as the power of miracles, and like it would not be bestowed on impostors of such daring pretensions.—In further proof of their claims I plead,

Thirdly, *their doctrines*, so unlike and superior to all the philosophy of the ancients, so becoming the character and promotive of the glory of God, so suited to the spiritual necessities of man. The doctrines of a Triune God, infinitely holy and infinitely perfect; of the creation of all things out of nothing; of the original perfection and subsequent fall of man; of his redemption by the obedience and death of Him who was at once the Son of God and the Son of Man; of the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit, by which alone man can attain again to the lost image of his Maker; of a providence that extends alike to the whole and every, even the minutest part of creation; of a future resurrection, and a universal judgment, and everlasting rewards of blessedness and woe:—these, and others connected with them, constitute a scheme of doctrines far above all the light of nature and all the philosophy of men, suited to all the

* See 2 Thess. ii. 1–12. 1 Tim. iv. 1–3. 2 Peter ii. throughout, and Revelation passim.

solemn exigencies of man's moral character and condition, and glorious to all the perfections of God ;—from whom alone, therefore, they could have originated. In further proof of the justice of their claims I argue,

Fourthly, their *moral code*, which commends itself to the reason and conscience of every sound-minded man. Its essence is supreme love to God, and universal love towards our fellow-men ; self-abasement of the sinner, and glory in the highest to the Creator and Redeemer, and Judge. Virtues are inculcated which the ancients never knew, or even regarded as vices ; vices are condemned which they esteemed to be virtues. The great rule of life is the will of God ; his glory and the creature's good, man's chief end. Such a code, bad men could not have originated, and would not have propagated at such sacrifices and hazard, if at all ; good men would not have falsely ascribed them to God.

I say, therefore, that our Saviour was divine and his Apostles inspired, and consequently our New Testament was from God. It was written by men, or at the dictation and with the approval of men, who gave abundant proof that they spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost : by men who had commission from Christ to establish and order his Church upon the foundation which he had laid, with the broad promise that he was with them to the end of the world, and that what they bound on earth should be bound in heaven, and what they loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. The New Testament, therefore, comes from them to us with the solemn *imprimatur* of God.

IV. My fourth proposition is, *that Christ and his Apostles endorsed the Jewish Canon, as it then existed, as Divine Scriptures : that this Canon was the same as our Old Testament : and consequently, that this also is complete and from God.*

The first part of this proposition, that *the Saviour and his Apostles endorsed the Jewish Canon as it then existed, as Divine Scriptures*, scarcely needs demonstration before this audience. Every reader of the New Testament knows how constantly they make their appeal to the Jewish Scriptures as authoritative and Divine. "I was daily with you," says Christ to those who came to apprehend him, "in the temple teaching, and ye took me not : but *the Scriptures* must be fulfilled."* "Think not that I am come to destroy *the Law or the Prophets* : I am not come to de-

* Mark xiv. 49.

stroy but to fulfil." *—"These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in *the Law of Moses*, and in *the Prophets*, and in *the Psalms* concerning me."† In these and many like passages, the authority of the Scriptures received by the Jews is acknowledged and confirmed: and they are referred to, not only in a general way, *par excellence*, as Divine, but the several divisions of the books, according to the classification prevalent at the time, as we shall presently see, are distinctly mentioned. "All Scripture," says Paul,—*πασα γραφή*, all the parts or books which compose the whole,—“is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”‡ “Prophecy,” says Peter, “came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”§ Here, in like manner, the Apostles endorse all *the Scriptures*, in current use among the Jews, as inspired of God, and consequently possessing Divine authority. So throughout the New Testament: the writers themselves constantly appeal, and they represent Christ as thus appealing to the current Jewish Scriptures as *the Word of God*. The common forms of quotation show the esteem in which they held them: “As it is written;” “Thus saith the Scriptures;” “Thus saith the Lord;” “As the Holy Ghost saith;” “He saith,” &c. While they thus freely appeal to the Jewish Scriptures, they never intimated that these Scriptures contained any which ought not to have been in them, nor that any which should have been in them had been taken away. They charge the Jewish teachers with perverting and setting them aside by their traditions, but never with adding to or taking from the Scriptures themselves. They, therefore, plainly endorse the Jewish Canon as authoritative and complete.

It only remains that I show the truth of the second part of my proposition, that *the Jewish Canon was the same as our Old Testament*, and we are ready for the conclusion, that *this also is complete and from God*.

We have then before us another plain historical inquiry,—What books composed the Jewish Canon at the time of our Saviour and his Apostles? And it devolves on me to prove that they were the very same which compose our present Old Testament Canon. That this was the fact, I argue

* Matt. v. 17.

† Luke xxiv. 44.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

§ 2 Peter i. 21.

1. First, *from the testimony of the New Testament itself.*

Here we find nearly all the books of our Old Testament quoted, or clearly alluded to;* and nothing quoted or alluded to as divine Scripture, which is not contained in it. The only plausible exceptions to this last statement are the mention of the names, Jannes and Jambres, in Paul's 2d Epistle to Timothy, as the names of those who withstood Moses; and of the prophecy of Enoch, and Michael's contest with Satan for the body of Moses, in the Epistle of Jude:—of all which it is enough to say, that it has never been proved that they were cited from any book at all, and that, if they were, it does not follow that the books were cited as divine and canonical. It is sufficient that the matters referred to were facts: and the citation from the books in which they were found, no more proves the canonical authority of these books, unless it can be shown that they belonged to the Jewish Canon at the time,—which no one will affirm,—than Paul's citations from certain writings of Aratus or Cleanthes, Menander, and Epimenides proves them to be of divine authority. An inspired writer may cite or refer to uninspired writings; the writers and compilers of the Old Testament not unfrequently did so:—but such bare citations or references, even when admitted to be such, can only prove the existence of the writings and their truthfulness in the particulars cited or referred to as true. They become proofs of the canonical authority of the writings only when they are cited or referred to as divine Scriptures; or when there is other sufficient proof, that they belonged to the Canon of Scriptures which the inspired writers endorsed as of divine authority. Such is not the character of the alleged citations or references. Even admitting that books were cited or referred to, there is nothing to indicate that they were regarded by the inspired writers as having divine authority; and there is abundant other proof that the Jewish Canon, which they endorsed, contained no such writings. On the other hand, the books of our Old Testament, which are quoted or referred to, are quoted or referred to as divine, in the way that I have already mentioned; or there is abundant other proof that they, as well as the books which are not quoted or referred to, were all contained in the Jewish Canon as endorsed by Christ and his Apostles.—I proceed with this testimony, and adduce,

* The books not cited, according to Eichhorn (Einleitung in d. A. T. § 37), are Judges, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

2. Next, *the testimony of ancient Jewish writers.*

Amongst these Josephus stands pre-eminent. He was born soon after our Saviour's death,—about A.D. 37,—and flourished partly in the age of the Apostles. He was of priestly extraction, carefully educated in the religion and literature of his country; and, at a later period, devoted himself with great assiduity and success to the language and literature of the Greeks. He espoused the cause of his country when invaded by the Romans; but was early taken prisoner, and acted as interpreter for Vespasian and Titus until the conquest of Jerusalem, when he was carried to Rome, and permitted to dwell in the imperial palace. Here he wrote his History of the Jewish War, and his account of the Jewish Antiquities. No man of his age and country was better able to relate the customs and opinions and history of his own people. In his maturer life he wrote a treatise against Apion, an Alexandrian grammarian, who had violently assailed the Jewish nation. In this treatise,* defending the authenticity and credibility of the Jewish Scriptures, he writes as follows:—

“For we have not amongst us myriads of books, discordant and conflicting, but only twenty-two books, containing the history of all (past) time and justly believed to be divine. Of these five belong to Moses, which contain the laws and the tradition of the origin of mankind until his death: this period is little less than three thousand years. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians after Xerxes, the Prophets who were after Moses recorded the events of their times in thirteen books. The four remaining books contain hymns to God, and rules of life for men. From Artaxerxes to our own time everything has been written; but it is not esteemed of equal credit with what preceded, because there has not been an exact succession of Prophets. And it is evident from fact, how we believe in our Scriptures: for through so long a period already elapsed, no one has dared to add anything, or to take from them, or to make alterations; but it is implanted in all Jews, from their very birth, to consider them oracles of God (*θεῶν δόγματα*), and to abide by them, and for them, if need be, cheerfully to die.”

In this important passage of Josephus, we notice, *first*, a division of the books which composed the Jewish Scriptures into three classes. We have already met with the same division in the New Testament:† “All things must be fulfilled which were written in

* B. i. § 8.

† Luke xxiv. 44.

the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning me." We find it about the same time in Philo, a learned Jew of Alexandria (A.D. 41), who, speaking of the Essenes, a Jewish sect, says that there was in every house a sanctuary into which they introduced nothing but "the Laws, and the Oracles which were uttered by the prophets, and the Hymns and other writings by which knowledge and piety increase together and are perfected."* We find it still earlier (B.C. 130–230†) in the preface to the translation of the work entitled *The Wisdom of Sirach*, by his grandson. He several times distinctly mentions the Law, the Prophets, and the other books, which had been diligently studied by his grandfather before he undertook his own work. From all these it is evident, that long before the time of Christ, the Old Testament books constituted a well-known and received Canon amongst the Jews:—in other words, that the Canon of the Old Testament had long been closed, and the books arranged under three definite divisions. The third class would seem at first to have had no distinctive name: but as the other two were specifically and appropriately designated, this class, for the want of an appropriate name, was simply called for distinction's sake, 'the other Scriptures;'—in the time of Christ, 'Psalms,' or, 'Hymns and Practical Books,' from the place which the Psalms held in the division, or from the prevailing character of the books; and afterwards again, as we shall see, simply 'Scriptures,' or 'Holy Scriptures.'‡

We notice, *secondly*, that Josephus mentions the number, though not the names, of the books belonging to each class. Of the Law there were *five*, of the Prophets *thirteen*, and of the Hymns and Practical Books *four*: in all *twenty-two*. Had he given us a list of the books in each class, his testimony would have been complete in itself. But there is little difficulty in showing the identity of the Jewish Canon as thus described with our present Old Testament. *The five books of the Law* were certainly, according to universal consent ancient and modern, the five books of Moses,—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. By Prophets the Jews designated those who were inspired to declare the will of God; and holding firmly that such men wrote all the books of their Canon, *the thirteen books of the*

* De Vit. Contempl. § 3, where it seems plain from the following context that he refers to the received Sacred Scriptures.

† Hävernick places the grandfather B.C. 200–300. Einleitung in d. A. T. § 8.

‡ כְּתוּבִים ἀγιογραφα.

Prophets, combining them as we shall see was common in order to reduce the whole number to that of the letters of their alphabet, must in distinction from the others have been, 1. Joshua, 2. Judges with Ruth, 3. 1st and 2d Samuel 4. 1st and 2d Kings, 5. 1st and 2d Chronicles, 6. Ezra and Nehemiah, 7. Esther, 8. Job, 9. Isaiah, 10. Jeremiah and Lamentations, 11. Ezekiel, 12. Daniel, and 13. the twelve minor Prophets reckoned as one. *The four books of Hymns and Rules of Life* would be Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The coincidence is so complete, that few have ever doubted that Josephus refers to the very books that compose our Old Testament Canon.

We notice, *thirdly*, that Josephus distinctly states that after the time of Artaxerxes, before which all these books had been written, Jewish affairs had been recorded in other books, which, he implies, were duly respected, but says expressly that they were not received on a par with the others, because there was no regular succession of Prophets or inspired men. These books can only be the Apocryphal books, of whose early existence and use, as books of more or less value, we have abundant proof, but whose want of inspired authority is here explicitly affirmed as the belief of the nation. For the remainder of this testimony I shall have use presently.

The conclusion to which we have come of the identity of the Jewish Canon, as described by Josephus, with our own Old Testament, is strongly confirmed by the fact that Philo, to whom I have already referred as a learned Alexandrian Jew, nearly contemporary with Christ, quotes or alludes to nearly all the books now in our Old Testament Canon as Divine Scriptures, while he never makes use of the Apocryphal books, certainly never quotes them as authority.*

3. My next proof of the identity of our Old Testament and the Jewish Canon endorsed by our Saviour and his Apostles, is derived *from the early Christian writers*.

The first whom I adduce is Melito, Bishop of Sardis about A.D. 170, and renowned alike for his piety and his learning. In an Epistle† to Onesimus, his brother, after mentioning his brother's earnest desire and request to have an accurate statement of the ancient books, he says, that he (Melito) had journeyed to the East and to the region where the things were preached and done

* Eichhorn Einleitung in d. A. T. § 26. De Wette on the O. T. (Parker) § 176.

† Preserved by Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. b. iv. c. 26.

(i. e. Palestine), and having accurately ascertained the books of the Old Testament, he subjoined a list and sent it to him. This list is exactly the same as ours, only differing in the order and omitting the book of Esther. A distinguished critic* supposes that this, as well as the book of Nehemiah, was included under the name of Ezra: but inasmuch as the books, when summed up according to Melito's mode of counting them, amount on his list only to twenty-one, and the usual reckoning made twenty-two, it is more probable that Eusebius or his transcriber made an omission in copying off the catalogue,—a like omission to which all admit to have been made in transcribing the list of Origen, which I shall next adduce. I wish you, however, duly to consider this testimony of Melito, given under circumstances so favorable to accuracy on the subject.

Origen flourished, as you will remember, A.D. 230. Of his learning and standing in the early Church, I need not speak again. He spent his life in Egypt and Palestine, and was almost the only Father, besides Jerome, who understood the Hebrew language. His catalogue of the books of the Old Testament has been preserved by Eusebius.† He proposes to give them as the Hebrews had transmitted them, and prefaces his catalogue with the remark, that they were *twenty-two* in number according to the number of letters in their alphabet. He then gives the list of the books both by their Greek and Hebrew names, combining them, as he says, *after the manner of the Jews*, exactly as we have done in making out the testimony of Josephus,—thus showing the correctness of our count in exhibiting the testimony of that distinguished Jew, and the identity of the Jewish Canon as described by him with our own Old Testament. Origen's catalogue also agrees exactly with ours, except that he unites with Jeremiah and his Lamentations what he calls *the Epistle*, and omits the minor Prophets, thus making the number of books only *twenty-one*. What he means by *the Epistle*, critics are not agreed. It is generally conceded, however, that the Apocryphal Epistle of Jeremiah was never admitted by the Jews into their Canon: and it is, therefore, most probable that the Epistle, referred to by Origen, is one incorporated in the book as we now have it.‡ As to the twelve Minor Prophets, always counted as one book and written on one roll, it is, I may say, certain that the omission of them is a mistake of Eu-

* Eichhorn, Einleitung in d. A. T. § 52.

† Euseb. Ecc. Hist. b. vi. c. 25.

‡ See however Hävernick, Einleitung in d. A. T. § 15. Eichhorn, ib. § 54.

sebius or a transcriber, not a defect in Origen's catalogue. They are necessary to make up the whole number *twenty-two*, stated in his prefatory remark: they are found in Ruffinus' translation of this same catalogue and in Hilary's Prologue to the Psalms, which, according to Jerome, was taken mostly from Origen.* they are included in Origen's celebrated work, the Hexapla: he also wrote a Commentary upon them, in twenty-five volumes, which were still extant in the time of Eusebius:† and he quotes them in his works that have come down to us, as of equal authority with the other books of the Old Testament. I will only add, that, at the end of his catalogue, he expressly excludes the books of the Maccabees. He sometimes quotes some of the Apocryphal books of the Old as well as of the New Testament, as sacred: but it is evident from his catalogues and statements found in his works, that, by such epithets, he did not mean to designate them as belonging to the Sacred Canon of Inspired Scriptures, but only as good books proceeding from men whose minds were renewed and enlightened by the Spirit of God.‡

I can only refer to the catalogues of Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, the Council of Laodicea, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, and Amphilochius. They all agree with our Old Testament Canon, except that several of them, after Melito, omit the book of Esther, and, besides, mention Baruch and the Epistle, with Jeremiah, whose prophecies, as we have them, probably include all that these writers meant. All of them reduce the number of books to twenty-two, by combining them after the manner of the Jews so as to accord with the number of the letters in the Hebrew Alphabet; and several of them expressly exclude fewer or more of the Apocryphal books by name,—mentioning however, at the same time, that they were read in the Churches and by private Christians as profitable works, especially for Catechumens. Dismissing these with this brief notice,

I adduce next the more important testimony of Jerome, the most learned, as we have seen, of the Latin Fathers. He spent the latter and principal part of his life in Palestine, diligently prosecuting Biblical Literature; and besides his general attainments, he was well acquainted with Hebrew, and got most of his Hebrew learning from Jewish teachers. He was, therefore, peculiarly qualified to state accurately, the Canon of the Jewish Scriptures,

* Eichhorn, *Einleitung in d. A. T.* § 54.

† Euseb. *Ecc. Hist.* b. vi. c. 36.

‡ Thornwell, *Arguments of Romanists*, &c. letter xv.

as received both by the Jews and by Christians. His works furnish us several Catalogues, all of which agree exactly with our Old Testament Canon. In his famous Prologus Galeatus,* he states that the Hebrews reckoned twenty-two volumes (or books) after the number of letters in their Alphabet. He then enumerates five books of the Law, eight of the Prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa, in all twenty-two:—thus preserving the same general division of the books into three classes, which we have seen was prevalent at and before the time of our Saviour, but arranging the books under the last two classes differently from Josephus, and possibly from the prevalent custom of earlier times,† and following the arrangement of the Jewish Rabbins. The arrangement of the books, however, does not at all affect the testimony for the purpose for which I adduce it. The evidence of Jerome remains incontestable, that the ancient Jewish Canon was identically the same as our present Old Testament Canon. “This prologue,” he continues, “I write as a preface to all the books to be translated by me from the Hebrew into Latin, that we may know that all the books which are not of this number are to be reckoned Apocryphal:”‡ and then especially mentions the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the book of Jesus, the Son of Sirach, commonly called *Ecclesiasticus* or *Wisdom of Sirach*, *Judith*, *Tobit*, and *the Shepherd*, as not in the Canon. In his preface to the books of Solomon, after mentioning the book of Jesus, the son of Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon, he says, that “as the Church read the books of Judith and Tobit and the Maccabees, but did not admit them among its Canonical Scriptures, so also it might read these two books for the edification of the people, but not for establishing the authority of the doctrines of the Church.” He translated, indeed, the books of Judith and Tobit at the desire of his friends; but in the preface to each he brands them as Apocryphal, and not received by the Jews. In the prologue to his translation

*The preface to his Latin translation of the books of Samuel and Kings,—the first that he made. “Hic prologus Scripturarum,” says he, “quasi galeatum principium omnibus libris quos de Hebræo vertimus in Latinum convenire potest, ut scire valeamus quicquid extra hos est inter Apocrypha esse ponendum.”

† See Stuart on the O. T. § 12. Comp. further Lardner, Works, vol. ii. pp. 543–547. Hengstenberg, Beiträge, i. pp. 23 seq. Hävernicks, Einleitung, i. § § 9, 11, 14. Eichhorn, Einleitung, i. § § 7, 8. Jerome also states that some enrolled Ruth and Lamentations among the Hagiographa, and thus, by counting them separately from Judges and Jeremiah respectively, made out *twenty-four* books. So we find them in the Talmud. No particular order of arrangement seems to have universally prevailed.

‡ See the original, note, * above.

of Jeremiah, he says, he does not translate the book of *Baruch*, because it was not in the Hebrew, nor received by the Hebrews: and, for the same reason, in the prologue to his Commentary on Jeremiah, he declines to explain it, as also the *Pseudipigraphal Epistle* of Jeremiah. In the preface to his translation of Daniel, he says that the Jews did not have in their (Hebrew) copies of the book *the Story of Susannah*, nor *the Song of the Three Children* in the furnace, nor *the Fables of Bel* and *the Dragon*, and that Christians were ridiculed for paying so much regard to them.

This testimony of Jerome is as satisfactory as we could desire. The Sacred Canon as received by the Jews in their Hebrew copies, consisted of the very books that make up our Old Testament Canon, and of no others. Other books indeed were read by Christians,—as Josephus says, without mentioning names, that some were by Jews;—and it would appear from some of the catalogues to which I have referred, that some of them (*Baruch* and the *Epistle of Jeremiah*) were very possibly, from ignorance of the Hebrew language and inadvertence to the Jewish custom, admitted into the Canon of the Old Testament. But it is the unequivocal testimony of Jerome, than whom no one was more competent to speak in the case, that none of them were received by the Jews as canonical, and that Christians ought to use them, as generally the churches did use them, like other useful books, only for edification, and not for establishing doctrines.

The last testimony which I shall adduce from the early Christian writers is that of Ruffinus, the contemporary of Jerome, at first his friend but afterwards his enemy. His testimony is brief, but to the purpose. In his explication of the Apostles' Creed, he proposes to enumerate the books, for both the Old and New Testaments, which had been handed down by the Fathers as inspired by the Holy Spirit,—and proceeds: * “Of the Old Testament, in the first place, are the five books of Moses, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, *Deuteronomy*. After these are *Joshua*, the son of *Nun*, and the *Judges*, together with *Ruth*. Next the four books of the kingdoms, which the Hebrews reckon two: the book of the *Remains*, which is called *Chronicles*: and two books of *Ezra*, which by them are reckoned one: and *Esther*. The *Prophets* are *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*; and besides, one book of the twelve *Prophets*. *Job* also, and the *Psalms* of *David*. *Solomon* has left three books to the churches, the *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*,

* Lardner's Works, vol. ii. p. 573.

tes, and the Song of Songs. With these they conclude the number of the books of the Old Testament." He then gives the New Testament precisely as ours, and continues: "These are the volumes which the Fathers have included in the Canon, and out of which they would have us prove the doctrines of our faith." He then adds, that there were other books which were not canonical, but had been called by his forefathers *ecclesiastical*;—mentions such both for the Old and New Testaments; and concludes: "All which they would have to be read in the churches, but not to be alleged by way of authority for proving articles of faith."

Such is the testimony of Ruffinus. "He was," says Dr. Lardner, "a learned man, well acquainted both with the Greek and the Latin writers of the Church, and had travelled. He was born in the western part of the empire: but he was also acquainted with the Christians in Egypt and Palestine, where he had resided a good while." I only add that he combines the books, as others before him had done, after the Jewish manner: and thus the Jewish Canon, as stated by him also, was evidently the same as our Old Testament. It deserves also to be noted that the books, in the order in which he mentions them, may be divided into three classes precisely corresponding with the division of Josephus: 1st, Five of the Law. 2d. Thirteen of the Prophets. 3d. Four of Hymns and Practical Books:—thus farther clearing and confirming the invaluable testimony of that distinguished author.

Thus, I think, it is clearly made out from the testimony of the early Christian writers who have given us catalogues, that the Jewish Canon as endorsed by our Saviour and his Apostles was precisely the same as that of our Old Testament. It appears indeed that other books were read in the churches, and it is possible that some of them even found their way into some of the catalogues. But, even granting that the authors of these catalogues meant other compositions than those now in our Canon, and that, through ignorance of the Hebrew language and of the Jewish custom, they supposed them to belong to the Canon of authoritative Scriptures, the testimony is conclusive, that the books which the ancient Jews received as such, and which ancient Christians who were best informed received as such, were precisely those and only those, which we receive at the present day.

4. But I appeal for further proof of this identity to the ancient direct oriental versions of the Old Testament, and to the universal consent of the Jews of all ages.

"The Syriac Version, called the Peshito," says De Wette,* "seems to be one of the oldest translations of the Bible." Some think that the translation of the Old Testament was made before Christ; but the great majority of critics put it soon after. It adheres closely to the Hebrew text, and embraces all the books, and only the canonical books of our Old Testament.† This testimony from a neighboring country, so mixed up with Jewish affairs in the later periods of their commonwealth, is very important.

But we have also Chaldee Paraphrases or Targums, as they are commonly called, two of which are very ancient, and none of them later than the 9th century. They are generally supposed to have originated in the paraphrastic interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Rabbins, as they were read in the Jewish synagogues. That of Onkelos on the Law and that of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Prophets, according to the Talmudic arrangement mentioned by Jerome, are generally referred to the age of Christ, though some place them before, others somewhat later. These and all the other Targums, embracing each only a portion of the books, but all together embracing all the books except Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel,—which for peculiar reasons‡ were omitted,—contain none other than the books of our Old Testament Canon.

Indeed all Jewish writers from Onkelos to the present time, the Talmudists, the Masorets, the Historians, the Grammarians, the Commentators,—all, with remarkable unanimity, agree in regard to the ancient Jewish Canon, and hold this to be the same as our Old Testament. Christians and Jews have always met here as on a common platform.

5. Finally, the *internal* testimony conspires with the *external*, now adduced, to show the identity of our Old Testament Canon with the authentic Jewish Scriptures endorsed by our Saviour and his Apostles.

* De Wette on the O. T. (Parker) § 64. Comp. Eichhorn, Einleitung, § 248.

† The Syriac Version of the Apocrypha does not belong to this Version. De Wette as above, § 64. Eichhorn, Einleitung, § 252. Hävernicks, Einleitung, § 83.

‡ Hävernicks says, "The reason of this lies no doubt in the scrupulosity of the later Jews, who believed that the Chaldean Version of the two books might afterwards easily be confounded with the original texts, and thus prove injurious to the pure preservation of the latter." Portions of both Ezra and Daniel are written in Chaldee, and Nehemiah was reckoned with Ezra. Kitto's Cyc. Bib. Lit. Art. "Daniel, Book of." Hävernicks, Einleitung in d. A. T. i. § 82.

I can here only indicate the line of evidence which my time does not allow me to pursue.—We can trace through the volume the marks both of stability and of progress in the Hebrew language, precisely correspondent with what we should have expected from our knowledge of the history, habits, and circumstances of the nation. The circumstantial narrations and minute allusions, which pervade the volume, evince the intimate acquaintance of the writers with the relations of the times in which they lived and of which they wrote, and the utter absence alike of all disposition to deceive and of all fear of detection. The doctrines which are taught and the duties which are inculcated consist, as far as reason can judge, with the glory of God and the nature and relations of man; while they form, together with the revelations and institutions which are so peculiar to the volume, the long but requisite preface and introduction to the New Testament, which records their more perfect development and fulfilment. It matters not that we be able to determine the author of each particular book. It is enough that we know the names and ages and characters of the principal authors, and that we have the testimony of Christ and his Apostles, that they all proceeded from men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, constitute a part of the Revelation of God.

Thus, my hearers, have I endeavored to vindicate the claims of our Old and New Testaments, to be the Canon of Divine Truth. I could wish that my time had allowed the fuller presentation of some branches of the evidence, that you might receive its whole and just impression. But I trust that enough has been said to establish the conviction in your minds, that the volume before us comes to us with the marks of truth and the seal of God; and that he who refuses to read, and understand, and believe, must, if he will be consistent, consign all the past to barren skepticism; or deny that man is responsible for his faith, even where God has made known the truth: and, unless all history be a lie, may expect at the last to be confounded for his unbelief.

But I have yet to prove *the integrity of the text* of the sacred Scriptures.

V. My fifth and last proposition, then, is that *the text of the Old and New Testaments has not suffered materially in the transmission, or so as to invalidate, in the slightest degree, its divine and binding authority.*

I readily admit that the text has suffered some. I admit that no miraculous influence has preserved it from errors, which naturally creep into all writings that are frequently copied, however carefully. But I assert that, in the good providence of God, such has been the care and such have been the causes that have operated to preserve the text of the sacred Scriptures, that no such corruption has ever befallen it as at all to destroy its validity, or the binding authority of the truths which it contains. I affirm, that of no ancient writings whatever, is the integrity of the text so demonstrable and unimpeachable. History shows that the sacred Scriptures,—as we should have anticipated from their origin and nature,—have from the beginning been sought, and studied, and copied, and quoted, and compared, and translated, and commented, and discoursed on, as no other books have ever been: and thus we have, at once, the surest guarantee for the preservation of both the Canon and the Text.

I shall first prove the integrity of the text of the Old Testament; and then that of the New.

A. First, then, *the integrity of the text of the Old Testament.*

The proof of this lies in the circumstances which, at least, would seem to render wilful or accidental corruption of the text to any important extent impossible, and in the evidence that no such corruption has in fact ever taken place.

I argue then, *first*, that anterior to the time of Christ, the number of copies in circulation would greatly, if not effectually prevent the corruption of the text.

A copy of the Law and of the subsequent sacred writings was kept deposited in the Temple. This appears from numerous hints in the Scriptures, from the testimony of Josephus, from the custom of ancient nations generally, and from the probability of the thing in itself.* The king of the nation was required to keep a copy of the Law for his own guidance and observance. The priests and magistrates must necessarily have had copies to study, in order to perform aright their various functions. The Law was required to be read to the people every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles. Parents were required to teach it to their children, by the wayside and by the fireside. It stands to reason that the pious portion of the people would desire, and, when it

* Comp. Deut. xxxi. Josh. xxiv. 26. 1 Saml. x. 25. Joseph. Ant. Jud. iii. 1. *δηλοῖ δὲ ἃν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀνακειμένη γραφὴ κ. τ. λ. and v. 1. δηλοῦται διὰ τῶν ἀνακειμένων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γραμμῶν.*

was possible to meet the expense, would actually possess copies of what they believed to be the Law and the Word of God. I know, indeed, that in the days of Josiah, after the long and wicked reign of his grandfather, Manasseh, and the shorter, but no less wicked reign of Amon, his father, the Law would seem to have lain in the Temple a neglected and almost forgotten book;* and in every generation, we may easily believe that the wicked and the unbelieving cared little for the Word of God. But there were never wanting those who feared God and trembled at his word. Even in the reign of wicked Ahab and Jezebel there were seven thousand such in Israel alone, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Amongst all these it is utterly incredible that there were not copies of the sacred Scriptures.

I argue, *secondly*, that after the separation of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (B.C. 975), the mutual jealousy between Israel and Judah, and later between the Jews and Samaritans, would serve to guard the sacred Scriptures.

Notwithstanding the idolatry of Israel, it is clear that they had Priests and Prophets and righteous men amongst them. Where these were, there were always fewer or more copies of the sacred Scriptures. Piety cannot subsist without them. The Samaritans, who succeeded the Israelites in Northern Palestine after they had been carried into captivity, had, as we know, copies of the Law which they cherished. The jealousy, which was strong between Israel and Judah, became still stronger between the Jews and the Samaritans, and was of a religious, as well as a political nature. It is obvious that this jealousy would operate powerfully to guard the portions of the Divine word which they received in common.

I argue, *thirdly*, that the existence of inspired Prophets in Israel and Judah till after the captivity, insured the sound preservation of the sacred text until the prophetic Spirit had departed from the nation.†

It is generally conceded—as it is uniform Jewish tradition, and the substance and position of the book in the sacred volume favors,—that Malachi was the last of the Prophets, about B.C. 400. Until this time there had been a regular succession of

* 2 Kings xxii. 8 seq.

† In the Pirka Aboth, one of the oldest books of the Talmud, and the tract Baba Bathra in the Babylonian Gemara, we find the Jewish tradition that, after Moses and the Elders, the sacred books were watched over by the Prophets.

Prophets, sometimes several at the same period, amongst the covenant people of God. Of many of these we have writings in our Canon : but we hear nothing from them of any effort to corrupt the Word of God. That the Prophets, who had so much zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and who so often came, not only with a word of consolation to the faithful, but with a burden of reproofs and judgments for the wicked and unbelieving, should have lifted no voice of denunciation against the impious corrupters of God's word, if such there had been, is utterly incredible. They often condemn the wicked and pretended Prophets who perverted the message and word of the Lord, and warn the people against them, and appeal to the Law and to the testimony : but we never hear the charge of corrupting the sacred Scriptures, either through remissness or design. I conclude, therefore, that the attempt was never made, and that had it been made, it could never have succeeded.

I argue, *fourthly*, for the integrity of the Old Testament text from the reverence which the Jews are known to have entertained for their sacred books.

Had we no testimony to the fact, we should yet, from the very nature of the case, believe that a people who professed to have Jehovah as their covenant-God, and who regarded their sacred Scriptures as his authoritative word, would never permit these to be wilfully or negligently corrupted so as to invalidate their authority. It would be a violent supposition that any nation, possessing such books, would allow them to be multiplied, or diminished, or changed, except by what was regarded as authority from heaven. But we have satisfactory testimony on the subject. We have already heard Josephus say, "It is evident from fact how we believe in our Scriptures : for through so long a period already elapsed, no one has dared to add anything, or to take from them, or to make alterations ; but it is implanted in all Jews from their very birth to consider them oracles of God, and to abide by them, and for them, if need be, cheerfully to die."* The strength of the expressions of the historian finds justification only in the deep reverence which, we must believe, was entertained by the people for the sacred writings, however much they may have disregarded them in their practice.

But that down to this period—for Josephus, you remember, was contemporary with the Apostles,—the Old Testament Scriptures

* Cont. Apion. i. § 8.

had been transmitted in all due integrity, I argue, *fifthly* and conclusively, from the fact already proven, that Christ and his Apostles constantly appealed to them as authoritative, and consequently endorse them as valid. As the Prophets had done with the false teachers of their day, so Christ reproves the Pharisees and Scribes for setting aside the Word of God by their vain traditions; and the Apostles charge upon false Judaizing teachers in the Christian churches an improper use of the Old Testament institutions: but they never intimate that the Scriptures had been so corrupted, as at all to affect their integrity and Divine authority. On the contrary, they appeal to them, refer to them, and commend others for searching them as the Word of God, that they might prove their claims and the Divine authority for their procedure.

Sixthly. Since the time of Christ, the same scrupulous regard of the Jews for the sacred text has continued to ensure its preservation.

After the Babylonish captivity it had already become common, before the time of Christ, to read in their synagogues on the Sabbath day, and expound both the Law and the Prophets. Of these synagogues, we learn, from the Rabbins, that there were nearly five hundred in Jerusalem, previously to its capture by the Romans. They were also, and had been for some generations, and have continued to be, down to the present day, scattered in all the cities throughout the world, where there were Jews enough to keep them up. In all these the Law and the Prophets have continued to be read, in Manuscripts written with the utmost care, according to the most rigid rules prescribed by their Rabbins, the antiquity of which indeed it is now impossible to determine, but whose minute and punctilious exactness shows the exceeding care which this people have always taken of their sacred records.

Seventhly. This wide-spread circulation of copies, in the Jewish synagogues, added to those which were now extensively found in private hands all over the world, rendered it utterly impossible for any successful combination to be formed, had the disposition or purpose ever been entertained, to corrupt the text of the sacred Scriptures. How has it ever been possible for the Jews or others, from what we know of their history since the day they were scattered from their capital and country, to effect a corruption of the sacred text thus spread over all the world?

Eighthly. The difficulty,—I should rather say, the *impossibility*, has been greatly increased by the translations, commen-

taries, and quotations that were early made of the Old Testament. The Septuagint (Greek) Version had been made several hundred years before Christ, and was early and has continued to be widely circulated. The Syriac Version was extensively used in the Eastern churches. The Greek Versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, also had more or less circulation among both Jews and Christians. The Latin Versions anterior to Jerome, and finally his own, spread over the west, and at last, I may say, over the whole world. Origen and Jerome at least commented on the original Hebrew text, and their works were sought for and read. Commentaries were multiplied by others on the translations, and quotations both from the originals and the Versions were made by these distinguished Fathers and others, far too numerous to allow us for a moment even to dream that the original has been altered, and the translations, and commentaries, and quotations altered so as to conform with it.

Ninthly. From the fifth to the tenth century Jewish doctors, or Masorites as they are commonly called, labored on the text of the Old Testament. They added vowels to the original consonants so as to preserve the traditionary reading, as also accents or signs to mark the punctuation and tone, and to regulate the cantillation of the Scriptures. They numbered the books, the grand and sub-divisions, the verses, the words, the letters. They ascertained the middle sections and the middle verses; they counted how often each word and each letter occurred in each book and in the whole volume; and recorded the results. All this and much else they did, partly useful and partly trifling; but all helping,—though subsequent labors of like kind have not sustained all their enumerations,—to make it, if possible, still more impossible ever to corrupt the Scriptures in the future.

Tenthly. From the time of Christ to the present day, Christians and Jews have held the Old Testament Scriptures in equal veneration. Their common interest in these ancient and sacred records early excited their mutual vigilance and jealousy: and we may have the strongest assurance from the warm controversies that raged between them, from the very first, respecting Christ and his kingdom as the completion and perfection of the Law and the Prophets, that neither would have ever permitted the Scriptures, which both held to be sacred, and which were the only common standard of appeal amongst them, to be corrupted by the other.

Eleventhly. The Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings with each other. From the very origin of the latter, the former had always despised and hated them. From both these we have copies of the Pentateuch,—which were all that the Samaritans ever received. We compare them, and considering the time during which they have been separately transmitted, they remarkably agree. And it is reasonable to believe that the rest of the books, which only the Jews received, have been transmitted with equal care and accuracy.

Lastly. We have numerous manuscripts more or less ancient; the ancient paraphrases, versions, and quotations, have descended to us. We compare all these, and while we find such differences as we should have expected,—unless we had supposed a constant but needless miracle to be wrought,—we discover in fact a wonderful agreement. From these we derive our modern printed text: and we rely upon it, transmitted, and guarded, and corrected by these multiplied means, if not as containing in all cases the very words as they came from inspired men of old, yet at least as faithfully exhibiting the revealed will of God, and, with trifling exceptions, in the very words of the Holy Ghost.

So much, my hearers, for the integrity of the text of the Old Testament. By parallel, but shorter and stronger arguments, I prove,

B. The integrity of the text of the New Testament.

And *first*, the copies were early and far too generally diffused for corruption ever to have been possible.

Let it be remembered that the books of the New Testament were originally in the hands of those who, for the most part, if not without exception, had enjoyed amongst them the ministrations of the Apostles. As these admitted the authority and received the doctrines of the Apostles, they could not only judge of the general agreement of any writing with those doctrines and ministrations, but when such writings came to them duly certified, as the genuine writings of the Apostles always did,* they could have no motive to corrupt them, but would be prompted by every rational and pious consideration to preserve them. We have already seen that they were written in a language which was generally understood; and that, from the desire which naturally pervaded the churches to obtain copies of all the sacred writings, they were early and rapidly spread through the then

* Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 21. Gal. vi. 11. Col. iv. 18. 2 Thess. iii. 17.

known world. Wherever Christianity had found a hold,—and infidelity itself is compelled to admit the unparalleled rapidity of its propagation,—there were more or less complete collections of the sacred books in the possession of the congregations, and often of private individuals. How then was it possible to alter them? What man, or what body of men, shall undertake to collect all these copies, and to induce the Christian world to consent to changes of their sacred books?—Books, which they believed to have been written by men duly approved as inspired of God, and revealing truths on which, amidst much persecution and often the sacrifice of everything in the present life, they reposed, with strong faith, all their glorious and cherished hopes for the life which is to come? The books continued to spread, as Christianity spread, more and more: and in every succeeding age it became still more impossible for evil-disposed men, had they been bold enough to attempt it, to effect any extensive corruption of the sacred text.

Secondly. We have seen that a Syriac and, probably, several Latin versions were early prepared,—the latter embracing all the books and widely circulating in the second century, the former embracing nearly all the books, possibly before the close of the first century, but according to the general opinion early in the second. These were soon succeeded by others which circulated in the South and East and North, but chiefly by that of Jerome in the fourth century, which extended South and West, and finally obtained an authority and a circulation in the Roman Church, which has never been accorded to any other translation. Commentaries upon the different books were early and greatly multiplied. Harmonies of the historical portions were composed; homilies were written and published; quotations abounded in almost every Christian writer, many of whose works have descended to us though the greater part have perished. How, I ask, was it possible for any man or set of men, proposing to alter the original Scriptures, to collect all these with the consent of the Christian world, and alter them so as to make them conform to the altered texts? The undertaking, of all the vain things that vain men have imagined, would have been the most egregiously monstrous,—the very idea is absurd!

Thirdly. Divisions and heresies sprang up in the churches even in the times of the Apostles. Whilst they lived, they themselves and such of their writings as were already in the possession

of the churches, constituted the standard of appeal in every controversy. When they were dead their writings remained the sole authoritative standard, to which all could appeal, and did appeal, with common consent. In succeeding ages the sects multiplied as the Church increased, until at last it was rent in twain,—which division remains to the present day. How could any of these various sects succeed in corrupting the Scriptures, without the speedy detection of the rest? And how could the consent of all be gotten to alter the only common and acknowledged platform of inspired truth?

Fourthly. History is silent as to any such general corruption. It brands with infamy a Marcion who, it says, rejected most and mangled the rest of the writings of the Apostles: but it says not a word of such a daring and preposterous attempt, as the corruption of all the copies of the sacred Scriptures. Could it have been done, and the Christian world not know it? Could it have been known, and the voice of the Christian Church not be raised against it? Could history have been silent here, and not be recreant to her duty? But she is silent;—but silent only because she had nothing to record. The story that she tells all along concerning the Scriptures, is, that they were circulated and used and loved in one form or another so greatly and so universally, that an attempt to corrupt or to destroy them must have created a disturbance and clamor in the Christian world, which would have handed down the names of those who attempted thus to rob the Church of her birthright and all souls of their chart and charter to heaven, as impious rebels against the God of grace, and conspirators with Satan to keep the world enveloped in darkness, and shrouded in the gloom of eternal death! But she knows and tells of no such impiety and madness,—and simply because there was none.

Fifthly. The great facts and doctrines, which were believed to be taught in the New Testament by the different sects in the ancient Church, are still believed to be taught in our New Testament, and are proved by the same texts. Some of these are the great facts and doctrines which the early infidels most violently assailed; and about which there was most controversy in the Church. The passages which contain them, therefore, are the very passages which there was most temptation to alter. But it is obvious that precisely these passages, from their very notoriety and importance to one or the other of the opposing parties, would

be most securely guarded against all corruption. The natural conclusion is, that the whole has been faithfully preserved.

Finally. We have old manuscripts of the New Testament that date back within a few centuries of the Apostles; and hundreds of others of more recent date, and from various countries: we have still, in whole or in part, the more important ancient versions,—the Syriac, the old Italian, the Coptic, the Sahidic, the Vulgate of Jerome, the Ethiopic, the Gothic, the Armenian and other versions. We have quotations in writers of every age and of every nation which Christianity penetrated, so numerous, that were manuscripts and versions all gone, we could easily make out from them alone the great facts and doctrines of Christianity held by believers in every generation: we have commentaries and harmonies and homilies:—I say, we have all these to compare with one another and with our received text; and the comparison shows an agreement amongst them, that demonstrates the correctness of all our other arguments, and undeniably proves the general integrity of our New Testament text.

I return then to the affirmation, that of no books so ancient has the text been so certainly and so well preserved, as that of the books which compose our Old and New Testaments. There are indeed here and there passages, and still oftener clauses, the integrity of which there may be some, perhaps good reason to suspect: and there are hundreds and thousands of minor variations brought to light by a careful comparison of manuscripts, versions, and quotations. But of these the great majority do not affect the sense in the least, and could not, therefore, be expressed in a good translation: and where they do, either a judicious criticism can determine the true reading, or it is unimportant to the Christian system, and generally to the passage itself, which of several readings, that may be about equally sustained, shall be adopted as original. The very means of multiplying the various readings, viz., the great number of documents to be compared, have always furnished so many effectual guards to prevent corruption of the text, and furnish now ample means for correcting it, where correction is needed. It is precisely those books, classic as well as sacred, of which we have fewest manuscripts and other documents, and consequently comparatively few various readings, that the text is most liable to suspicion. On the other hand, the text of those is most certain for which we have the greatest number of documents, especially manuscripts, to com-

pare, and consequently the greatest number of various readings actually occurring.

Thus has Providence, by natural means, and without a miracle, preserved the text of all the sacred Scriptures : and it is vain for skepticism longer to hope to find a cover for its unbelief under the flimsy pretext of its corruption, either accidental or designed. The worst text that could be published on the authority of any Manuscripts, would not alter a single phase of Christianity.

I have now, my hearers, endeavored to show

I. That the books of the New Testament are genuine.

II. That the history contained in the New Testament is true.

III. That, therefore, Christ was Divine and his Apostles inspired, and consequently our New Testament was from God.

IV. That our Old Testament Canon is the same as the ancient Jewish Canon which they used and endorsed ; and consequently that this also was from God.

V. That neither the text of the Old Testament, nor that of the New, has so suffered in the transmission as to invalidate, in the slightest degree, their Divine and binding authority.

If I have succeeded in making these propositions good, then are our sacred Scriptures the Word of God, and Christianity is Divine. The argument for the truth of Christianity derived from the history of her Sacred Books, let it be observed, is in no manner affected by the doubts of some, in ancient and modern times, respecting the genuineness of a few of the books. We may give up all that were anciently doubted, and all which any now can with any reason regard as doubtful, and the substance of Revelation remains the same. Not a single doctrine, or duty, or promise, or prophecy, or type, or important fact would fall from the System. On the basis of the books, which a sober criticism has always admitted to be entirely unquestionable, Christianity stands firm and complete. To demolish it infidelity must show, not that some of the books in the Sacred Canon have been and are doubted, but that all the books, each as well as all together, are forgeries : and it then devolves on her to write the history and explanation of Christianity as a great fact in the world, running back through successive generations to a definite period and a particular people, as well known to us as any other period and people in the past ; as also the history and explanation of Judaism, the great foreshadowing type, reaching far back into antiquity, confirmed by all ancient monuments, and ever steadfastly asserting its origin from God.

Let it be duly considered that the Old Testament was written by different men, during a period of about one thousand years; and the New Testament by different authors, living in the same age, some four hundred years after: and I think it will appear, that the progressive development of the Revelation through so long a period, and by the instrumentality of so many men in succession; the unity and harmony which, notwithstanding, runs through and binds together the whole; and the entire and peculiar correspondence between the Old Testament and the New, forming as they do, a completed system of types and realities, prophecies and fulfilments, promises and curses, doctrines and duties, at once elevated, sublime, pure, and true;—all together constitute an argument for the Divine origin of the Christian religion, as forcible and convincing, as it is unique, in its character. I challenge the production of a similar phenomenon from the whole range of literature ancient and modern, sacred and profane; and demand a satisfactory solution of this on any other hypothesis than that, which maintains that the authors of these books wrote by command of God, and as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

I commend them, therefore, to you as the Law and the Testimony of God. As he gave them, so has he preserved them; and they come down to us freighted with his pure and precious and imperishable truths. Their entrance giveth light and liberty and life. They reclaim the vicious, they establish the righteous; they humble the proud, they exalt the meek; they break the oppressor, they loose the prisoner; they still the avenger, they strengthen the weak. They chasten mirth, they comfort grief; they enlighten life, they conquer death. They expose our iniquity, and provide a ransom; they reveal God's wrath and offer his grace. They proclaim our ruin, and publish a Saviour; they warn us of hell, and point us to heaven. "I testify," therefore, "unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and out of the things which are written in this book." Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

The Character of Jesus Christ,

AN

ARGUMENT FOR THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

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IN a contracted portion of ancient Asia, among a people seldom named by the elegant classics, and then only touched by the satiric thong of Horace and Juvenal, or the caustic sneer of Tacitus; in a country without arts and refinements, and without other letters, certain books have been handed down, originating at distant epochs, and carefully preserved to our day. These writings are partly in the language of the nation, and partly in that of their conquerors. From so obscure an origin, these works have spread over a great part of the earth, and are rapidly passing into every human language. Upon inspection they are found to lay claim to a divine origin; and this claim has been admitted, by numbers increasing with successive ages. In support of these extraordinary pretensions, two classes of argument have been alleged, one from external proof, the other from internal evidences. Of the latter there is one founded upon the singular fact, that the whole volume of doctrine, opinion and precept, in these books, revolves about the centre of an individual personage. Omitting for the present all other points, I invite you to consider the argument in favor of Christianity, derived from the character of Jesus Christ.

My first proposition is, that in the person of Jesus Christ, as presented in the Christian Scriptures, we have a perfect model of moral excellence.

The founder of Christianity stands forth in a character absolutely original and unique. The attempt was never made to trace it to any foregoing exemplar. Neither history nor fiction approach to anything which could serve even as the germ of such a description. It is a quality to which justice is seldom done, perhaps from our extreme familiarity with every trait; but it was doubtless felt by the great inquirers of antiquity, when first summoned into the sublime and winning presence. There are

objects in nature, which previous to all scrutiny or analysis, strike us with the impression, This is unlike all we ever beheld before. Such is the august personality of Christ, while as yet unstudied in its more delicate lineaments. The picture is intensely and sublimely moral. With a reserve almost without a parallel, there is not a touch or color thrown in, to gratify even what might be considered a reasonable curiosity. Hence there is not a syllable respecting the outward figure, countenance, or demeanor of our Lord. Even the intellectual development is left under a veil; while the moral and spiritual representation stands out with the austere simplicity of a sculpture.

Approaching more nearly, we observe that the character of Jesus is not such as would be produced by what is called the Spirit of the Age. In the philosophy of history there is an opinion, common if not prevalent, which refers every commanding personage to the necessary progress of the race. In the judgment of this transcendental school, the man is the product of the juncture, a necessary resultant of forces just concentrated in mature action. That Christ is not such a character, must be obvious at a glance. It was not in subjugated, unlettered Judaism to give birth to such an advent. The effect is too colossal for such a cause. It was not even the felicitous anticipation of an age about to dawn. It is not the embodied genius of any age. The ideal is one which no age of human progress has yet overtaken. We are the more surprised and confounded when we see its matchless proportions emerging from the mists and corruptions of such a period and such a nation. I will go further and assert that the character of Jesus Christ is one which would have been beyond the power of human conception, before its actual appearance.

If we look then more nearly, and inquire what accidental attractions surround the portrait here given, we find the character entirely devoid of the glare which beams from outward circumstance. As if to escape every appendage which belongs to the brilliant personages of human annals, and especially the subjects of fiction in all its forms, Jesus Christ is represented on the stage of simple and ordinary life. There is nothing of secular heroism. Even the platform of the events is a remote corner of ancient civilization, and a condemned province of the Empire. The action, though often great and startling, is within the circle of familiar life. The earthly origin of our Lord is obscure and misapprehended; and he walks among men in humble garb, as the

son of a carpenter, consorting with peasants and fishermen, in the most despised canton of his native tribes. Without possessions, without patronage, without any auxiliary of power or worldly greatness, he nevertheless shines with a lustre which many ages have not dimmed. From the frame of this lowliness, that countenance of moral loveliness looks upon us with a mysterious and imperative fascination. It is manifest that the delineation owes not a single grace to the external charms. If we examine the progress of the unvarnished narrative, we detect no semblance of display. The very suspicion of human glory is precluded from every beholder's mind. Except when some great misery calls for the breaking forth of hidden power, Christ pursues the noiseless tenor of his way in a manner so natural and unobtrusive, that we almost forget the public offices which he is afterwards seen to assume. Retirement and even secrecy cause some of his most wonderful actions.

But coming to that which is positive and essential in the moral image set before us, we are arrested by a trait which predominates over all: it is spotless Innocence. The testimony is of those who knew, that he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He could challenge his most blood-thirsty enemies with the question, Which of you convinceth me of sin? He did no harm, neither was guile found in his lips. A heavenly candor is radiated in every word and action. At the critical point of his last trial, no serious charge was advanced, and none whatever of moral import. False witnesses were sought in vain. The pureness of his character was known by the people, rehearsed by the wife of the procurator, asserted with reiteration by Pilate, avowed by the Roman centurion who stood guard at the cross, and attested by the traitor, when he cried in the temple, I have betrayed the innocent blood. The enemies of Christianity have been too discreet to allege any blemish on the snow-white purity of Jesus. The virtue is immaculate, and has borne the inspection of ages. This is the more deserving of consideration, when we reflect that any age can discern spots upon a surface of alabaster; and that one undeniable delinquency in the character of our Lord would instantly vacate his whole claim to perfection. But it has not been discovered, and it is by an association common to all Christian nations that we connect with this impersonation of innocence the symbols of the lamb and the dove.

But mere innocence may be tame and neutral, or it may be se-

cluded and exempt from trial. The heavenly virtue of the Son of Man was not negative: it broke out into a running stream of well-doing. It was eminent activity. No biography in the world offers us a course of more ceaseless labor; it is a record of unremitting toil, from the outset of his ministry. Though he invited his disciples to rest, he took little for himself; but lived in journeys, healings, teachings, and throngs of men. The glory of the picture is that it is Virtue in action. As little was it a recluse or cloistered virtue. It is easy to be good in aphorisms and in the schools. Jesus gave his lessons in no retreat of Speculation. He philosophized in no Academy, Lyceum, Stoa, or Tusculanum, but in barks, in peasants' cots, on highways, mountains, beside wells, and at tables, among the hum of men. As he taught (and what he taught he practised), he stood side by side with the mass of the people at his toils and in his sorrows; and this, which adds to the difficulty of example, unspeakably enhances its beauty. The greatest elevation of positive activity belongs to the excellence of our Lord's character.

We must, however, contemplate the mode of this activity: it was more than all else *Beneficence*. On a topic which you have read and known from infancy, how can I enlarge without disparaging the memorial of your thoughts? Yet here lies the strength of our argument; for here is infinite benevolence, embodied in palpable action. Selfishness had scarcely been stigmatized by the moralists; and they had spoken of liberality and generosity for the most part in connection with human fame. With Jesus, it was the law of life. The most summary description of his career is, that He went about doing good. To give the proofs of his love would be to read you the four Gospels. The bodies and the souls of men were both his care. With equal sincerity of heart he spoke often and long to the multitude, or aided in the handicraft of his disciples, or hung over the bier of the departed. Are any of his wonders acts of vengeance? Is there one of them which was not a burst of mercy? When was his hand ever lifted in anger? When did his countenance ever wear a scowl? What single sufferer did he ever thrust away? When crowds hemmed him in, some to perplex, some to deride, and some to murder, did he ever decline to teach the inquiring? Who among us can number his benefactions? What book can contain the history of his cures? While he healed, he preached; yea, while he gave truth, he gave life, health, salvation.

How prompt was his beneficence. My son dieth, said a certain nobleman. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. As Love was his great, his new, his last injunction to his disciples, so it was the reigning grace in his treatment of them; the very inspiration of his farewell discourse, and the crowning characteristic of his conversations after being restored to them. Love actuated his itinerancy, on foot, over the rough hills and torrid plains of Palestine, and flowed out to the poor and the dying in streams of relief. It was love that was personified and held up to the view of angels and of God on that "place of skulls" and that cursed cross. All human writings afford no such examples of beneficence.

But even benevolence has its modifications: that of Christ was displayed in singular tenderness and compassion. He taught to rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep. Infinitely was he distant from the affected apathy of the Stoics. He was a son of woman; and how much of tender manhood, of social, of strictly human affection, gushes forth in all the interviews with the family at Bethany, his sadness concerning Lazarus, his condolence, his tears—for "Jesus wept." How he hangs over lepers, cripples, blind men, lunatics and impotent wretches! Behold him at Nain, at Bethesda, at the Last Supper, and acknowledge not merely the good-will which relieves, but the most refined grace in the manner of relieving. So much of the mother and the sister, would in the hands of fictitious genius have degenerated into the soft, the timorous, and the effeminate; but the divine pencil does not thus depict. By the most happy blending of opposites, we observe in the same subject the union of gentleness and force.

There is a tendency to overrate what are called the masculine qualities of our nature; hence the overstrained effort and unnatural paroxysms of epic heroes, and many real soldiers. The great forces which perform their part in the heavenly spaces are silent. Such also is the usual state of true greatness. Our Lord's was such; he did not cry nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. Yet there was a reserve of energy, zeal and holy boldness, which on rare but fit occasions could flash from the inner sanctuary of his mysterious nature. We see almost with surprise the same arm which lifted up the sinking disciple scourging the money-changers in the temple. The same voice which breathed benediction on the poor and simple, is heard uttering woes against

proud learning and hypocritical pretension, and this in the face of threats. It was to the great and powerful of his day that Christ said, O generation of vipers—Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees ! It was to a prince on the throne that he sent, saying, Go ye and tell that fox,—Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Intrepidity is requisite for the publication of unwelcome truth ; and our Saviour sometimes so spake, that not only were his adversaries filled with rage, but “many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” Under his piercing discriminations and high claims, the Jews were indignant and even frantic, so that not content with reviling, they sought to kill him on the spot, and failing of this, obtained their hellish purpose in a more circuitous manner. Yet our Lord went calmly on, as wonderful in his courage as his love.

Though the topic assigned debars me from exhibiting Christ's code of morals, as such, I am bound to allude to one of its qualities, as connected with his life. No ethical system was ever so severe, searching, and spiritual. He denounced the inward thought of evil. He pointed to anger as inchoate murder ; to the two mites as outweighing all the donations of the rich ; and the ejaculation of the publican as heard beyond the longest prayers. He exposed the reigning righteousness of the most learned and sacred clergy as whited sepulchres and washed putrefaction. He claimed the supreme love of God and the entire denial of self. Such was the sternness of his ethical demands. Now the point to which I invite your attention is this, that when our Lord comes to treat with the person of offenders, there never was judge so benign and lenient. To the Samaritan adulteress he makes the most explicit avowal of his mission, amidst the gentlest offers of forgiveness. To another offender, dragged into his presence by pharisaic censors, he breathes the word of clemency, Woman . . . hath no man condemned thee? . . . Neither do I condemn thee : go, sin no more ! To the bosom friend who shamefully denied him, he gives no reproof, but the question, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? more than these? Ah, my brethren, how few of us who claim to be disciples, have been able thus to mingle hatred of the sin, with benignity towards the sinner?

It should be carefully noted by those who sometimes quote our Master against all outward observances of religion, that he was as remarkable for his observance of religious rites as for the ab-

sence of all superstition or formality. To the established usages of the Hebrew ritual, both in the temple and the synagogue, he rendered punctual regard. Again and again his voice was lifted up in social prayer. He rises a great while before day for solitary devotion. He withdraws himself into the wilderness to converse with God. He continues all night in prayer to God. At his baptism, his transfiguration, his agony, and on the cross, he prays.

Now while thus devout, Jesus treats with disgust all the will-worship which passed in that day for religion. Witness the whole sermon on the Mount; the discourse respecting spiritual worship with the woman of Samaria; the unshackled converse with publicans and sinners; the bold refusal of fasts and washings and sabbatic extremes and uncommanded austerities. The voices of the populace tell us, as in echo, how he towered above all superstition, which was really the religion of the world at that day. "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? Behold, why do they on the Sabbath that which is not lawful? Why . . . eat bread with unwashen hands? Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" While there never was a moral teacher so full of true devotion, there never was one so remote from all that is ascetic. The element of penance and self-torture is absent from the New Testament and its Great Subject. And this is a leading charm in this model of humanity.

In common instances of virtue, we find gentleness and humility incompatible with decision, persistency and command: but not so with Christ. He is of all beings the most accessible. In no case does he manifest repulsion or undue reserve. His ear is open to the meanest and most misguided. The cases are too numerous for detail; from the time when, by Jordan, he turns to the two who follow him, saying, "Come and see," to the moment when he walks to Emmaus with Cleopas and his fellow. And as it regards Humility, a virtue missing in every pagan catalogue, he was its first teacher and example. For his mightiest deeds he sought no publicity, but repressed it by command. "See, thou say nothing to any man." "All men," said some, "seek for thee;" but he goes away to his work. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "I am among you as he that serveth." In his only progress of seeming triumph, he enters Jerusalem on the lowliest of beasts; and shortly after, we see him

stooping to wash his disciples' feet. Couple with this the traits of dignity and imperative sovereignty, and the result is amazing. There occurs no moment of misgiving or weakness. From the very beginning his eye is fixed on certainty of success. In no instance does he seek for aid or counsel. His plan is mature and unwavering, and looks to the spiritual conquest of the world, an idea too grand for the most soaring philosophy.

Let me ask you to contemplate our Lord's contempt of what worldly men salute as greatness, in connection with his condescension to the despised. If there were any to whom the edge of his censures were more keenly turned, it was the aspiring, the rich, the learned, and the great. It is the rich man, promising himself ease and pleasure, whom he denounces as a fool; it is the dying beggar whom he transports to heaven. Among the beatitudes the leading welcome is to the poor, while the camel and the needle's eye furnish the symbol of the rich. There is not an approach to any courting of men in power, even for the best ends, but Jesus is eminently and beyond example the friend of the people. Among them were his cherished friends; for never was falsehood more glaring than that which erases Friendship from the virtues of our Redeemer. Over the humiliations of his country he sighed; for equally unjust is the assumption that Christianity repudiates Patriotism. The ordinary griefs of mankind moved his heart. He had compassion on the hungering thousands, as on sheep without a shepherd. In every part of the land he was the instructor of the populace. Over the city where his blood was to be shed, he wept, saying, If thou hadst known! And at another time, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

Joined with this love of his people, and the race, was a quality which merits our closest attention. The cry of patriotism sometimes proceeds from fanaticism and faction, and under the colors of philanthropy we have sometimes discerned the torch and sword. The benevolence of Christ stands free from all taint of what is revolutionary. A single gesture would have raised that whole nation against the Roman; but he uttered no breath against the government. The attempt was made to entrap him, as when they brought him the denarius, but his language was, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's." He refused to be a judge or

a divider. He retired from the multitude who would have hurried him to a throne. His kingdom, as he declared before the representative of Rome, was not of this world.

In regard to worldly training, Jesus of Nazareth belonged to the unlettered peasantry of a land whose only erudition at best was in their religious books. Hence the people exclaimed, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Yet with what authority did he speak, and how did thousands of Israel hang on the oracles of life! Never man spake like this man! Undisciplined in any school of philosophy he uttered a wisdom which has penetrated all nations and revolutionized the world. The striking instances occur to your memory in which amidst the craftiest attempts to inveigle him into contradiction, he escaped by a divine skill, without perplexity, without hesitation, and without an effort. This constellation of excellencies, intellectual and moral, has justly excited the wonder of all observers.

But there remains a crowning glory: this virtue was tried by suffering. The heathen were accustomed to say that a good man struggling with misfortune was a sight worthy of the gods. There never were such sufferings as those of Christ; ending in a death of ignominy, anguish and desertion, which is the holiest theme of our religion, while it is too familiar to your thoughts to need recital. It was under the pressure of pain, ingratitude, injury and insult, that a train of moral graces came into view, which but for this trial would have been unknown, and which have no parallel in Gentile ethics. He is seized by night, and hurried from his devotions, to be mocked at three several tribunals, arrayed in garb of shame, smitten, buffeted, spit upon, calumniated, scourged, and hung between robbers and murderers in the most disgraceful death then known. In all this series of mortifications and insults he is sublimely silent; never opening his lips in answer to the accusations, until he utters a claim which seals his condemnation. And when his brow is pale in death, his only language concerning his murderers is, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!

But here I awake to the presumption of an attempt to reduce the lineaments of such a portrait, and throw aside the pencil in despair. If you would have it in its proper colors of Divinity, go to the narrative of the Gospels. It is no small argument for the excellence of the writings, that all the grandeur of this image is conveyed by simple history. These traits reveal themselves in

life and action ; without eulogium, without reasoning on the case, and without summing up of the principles.

Of this character, then, I may safely say, produce any parallel. If the literature of centuries has given any equal personification of wisdom and goodness, let it be made to appear. Even with this model before the eye for ages, what approach has been made to a similar, not to say a superior, ideal ?

The character of Jesus Christ satisfies every demand of our moral nature. Important as external testimony is in its place and for other ends, here is a point where we require no external testimony. The moral glory of such a character shines by its own self-evidencing light. Here there is an analogy between moral conclusions and judgments of taste. Whatever share the understanding may have in adjusting and presenting the object, the inward faculty judges immediately. Whatever the beautiful object may be, a rose, a Parthenon, or a faultless human countenance, our inward approbation is immediate. Nor are our moral judgments less direct. Here we apply, not bare logic, but the determinations of intuitive reason, the utterances of our sublimest instincts, promptly and unhesitatingly accepting a given character as good or evil. It is on these grounds that we yield our love, upon the perception of excellence, in all the tenderest relations of life. And the decision is all the stronger, quicker, and less fallible, in proportion to the exquisite harmony and united perfection of the object, as light is most undeniable in the effulgence of the sun. The Lord Jesus Christ commands our assent, and overwhelms us into admiration. Here is the great argument, which has carried the citadel of a thousand unlettered hearts, while neither they nor we can fully translate it into the terms of cold logic. So viewed, the representation of Christ in the New Testament is the greatest moral lesson ever given to mankind, infinitely surpassing all the ratiocinations of the schools and all the systematized precepts of ethics ; being virtue reduced to the form of tangible action, and offered to us with the reality of life. I trust, therefore, I may regard the position as maintained, that in the person of Jesus Christ, as presented in the Christian Scriptures, we have a perfect model of moral excellence.

My second proposition is, that this character thus portrayed, is not the result of weakness, enthusiasm or imposture.

Viewed simply as an effort of the human understanding, a representation like this is infinitely beyond the reach of imbecility

and ignorance. We will boldly claim for high moral achievement the greatest intellectual powers. A perfect character is the best and choicest product of constructive skill. No architectural or mechanic wonder shall ever demand a nobler faculty. The depiction of elevated and consistent character has been in every age of literature, a favorite but difficult task of genius. But when the ideal assumes to be morally perfect, what shall we say of the ability required? Who has accomplished it, or even approached it? Look closely at the harmonious and immaculate whole, and then at the age, the nation, and the untutored evangelists, and say, can such an effect spring from the inventions of ignorance and folly? The argument, though simple and needing little development, is irresistible; that sublime personage was never the imagination of feeble minds.

If it be argued that even genius is sometimes overmastered by morbid excitements, I reply, it is inconceivable that this portrait should have proceeded from enthusiasm. As if to give the lie to such a charge, every page exhibits a simplicity without example in other annals. It is fragmentary, and devoid of that rotundity and glow which belong to the works of heat and fusion. The manner of the biography is as surprising as its contents. The most odious assaults on the chief personage are related with coolness. The most astonishing acts of power and marvels of endurance, humility and meekness are related without a syllable of praise. There is not a word of panegyric, and scarcely a word of comment. The vastness and awfulness of the matter stand in contrast with the strongest equanimity and reserve in the expression. Whatever else this may prove, it demonstrates that the writers were neither enthusiasts nor fanatics. Had they been such, it would have somewhere distorted and exaggerated the teaching, somewhere cast a sinister expression or lurid glare on the divine countenance, or somewhere blazed forth in language of intemperance and fury. If the terms can be used without misapprehension, I would say of the gospel history, that it is unrivalled in common sense, well-balanced narrative, and sound judgment. As the character represented rises high above all mists of vagary, so the representation itself repels the thought of enthusiastic excess.

Seeing then that weakness and enthusiasm are excluded, we are shut up (unless we admit the narrative), to the hypothesis of imposture. The argument will then run thus: no such events

ever occurred; the character is an ingenious fiction. Violent as is this supposition, it has had defenders. The difficulty should be inextricable from which a reasoner would leap into such an explanation. The framers of this splendid figment must have been either good men, or bad: in neither case could the result have taken place. No good man could lend himself to so gigantic a falsehood; for that the narrative was meant to be credited, that it lays blood at the doors of a nation, that it involves the dearest interests of myriads, and that it was actually believed as true from the very date of its appearance, are particulars which no sane mind ever doubted. Of all pretensions, the most incredible is that the history of Jesus Christ was invented by virtuous men.

But we find as little relief in ascribing the forgery to bad men: for bad men could neither conceive the character, nor alight on a motive for depicting it. Bad men could not conceive the character. Shall I descend to argue this in detail? Is human nature reduced to this, that for the only consummate image of virtue we are indebted to the fabrication of impostors? Could the sublime ideal, at which we have taken a distant glance, be the offspring of corruption and vice? The thought transcends all powers of credulity, and may be rejected with summary contempt.

As undeniably, bad men would have no motive for such a representation. So costly an invention demands a sufficient reason. Vice was never yet its own reprovcr. Every lineament of this celestial countenance would have frowned on the attempt. Every light and shade of the picture goes to promote a virtue which must be hateful to the false and malignant. The life, the lessons, the death, of Jesus Christ were never given to the world by wicked men. We are driven by irresistible stress of conviction to the judgment, that those who have left us this narrative were simple and honest men, and that they believed what they related.

The more profoundly we examine the case, the fuller must be our persuasion, either that the record of facts is true, or that Christ himself is the impostor. From the latter alternative of the dilemma, every virtuous mind starts back with horror. To state it, is to present its confutation. What remains but that from difficulties, enigmas and absurdities, so varied and inevitable, we return to the solid ground of truth, and admit, as the easiest

and only solution, that the events recorded are matter of actual history?

Having attained to such a conclusion, we find it corroborated from another quarter. The character of the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament presents internal evidence of actuality. It is not a vision or a fancy, but a real existence. There are representations in the guise of history which betray themselves to be fictitious. There are narratives and characters, of which we say, This must have been matter-of-fact. In some of these cases there is room for mistake, but in all the evidence is internal, and that evidence may rise so high as to remove all doubt. If ever there was such a case, it is the one before us. The most powerful demonstration that Jesus is a real person, is that which we receive when the book is open before us. Nor is this wonderful, when we consider that there are laws of sequence and harmony, even in the animal creation, which enable the eye of science to decide that this is a genuine remnant of a once living structure, though in a fossil of ages; and that a fabulous or factitious aggregation of discordant parts. Such sequence and such law there are also in moral action and in character. Their very nature, as indicated not by parts but by the whole, not by fragment but by harmony, not by isolated specimens but by the type of unity, forbid detail or example. For ages, impartial readers have rested in the conclusion, This inimitable character actually lived and died on earth.

Before leaving the contemplation of our principal object, let me add, that the character of Christ has commanded the respect even of enemies. Among many testimonies which might be adduced, it will be sufficient to cite that of the infidel philosopher Rousseau.

"I will confess to you," says he, "that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and so sublime, should be merely the work of a man? Is it possible, that the sacred Personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims!

What profound wisdom in his discourses ! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what truth in his replies ! How great the command over his passions ! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation ? When Plato describes his imaginary good man, loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ : the resemblance was so striking that all the fathers perceived it. What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the son of Mary ! What an infinite disproportion there is between them ! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last ; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a mere sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them into practice ; he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just, before Socrates defined justice ; Leonidas had given up his life for his country, before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty. The Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety. Before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his contemporaries, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only has given us both precept and example ? The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honor to the vilest people on earth. The death of Socrates, peacefully philosophizing among friends, appears the most agreeable that one could wish : that of Jesus, expiring in agonies, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that one could fear. Socrates, indeed, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed the weeping executioner who administered it ; but Jesus, amidst excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelical history a mere fiction ? Indeed, my friend, it bears no marks of fiction. On the contrary, the history of Socrates, which no one presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without obviating it : it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should

agree to write such a history, than that one should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospel; the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

My third proposition is, that consequently, the claims set up by Jesus Christ are worthy of our implicit credence.

It is an inconvenience growing out of the limited field assigned to me, that it is continually trenching upon the domain of other evidences. The claims of Jesus Christ rest on other proofs, the supernatural signatures of his divine legation. But even before a witness or a claimant opens his lips or breaks the seal of his certificate, we may have an antecedent presumption in his favor. We may find it in his reputation, his manner, his very countenance. The claims and assumptions of a great and good man differ from all other claims, and are allowed as soon as they are stated. This is however the very lowest ground which I will take, namely, that the perfection of Christ's character, as appearing in the record, affords precedent reason for crediting his testimony. From this humble step in the flight of arguments, I proceed to assert, that our foregoing conclusions force us to admit the claims set up for himself by this extraordinary Person. So sure as perfect truth cannot lie, or spotless innocence be malignant, or infinite benevolence break forth in ruinous imposture, so surely the demands of our Lord Jesus are entitled to our implicit credence. But here again I necessarily draw near a subject which will be ably treated by other hands, and which I dare only touch for an instant. In all our previous argument, we have viewed the character of Jesus in its bare humanity; we have from the law of the reasoning abstracted this from all that was supernatural and all that was divine. Yet having established the reality and the perfectness of Christ's character, we cannot proceed to the claim founded on this, without including that mysterious element. Always remembering that from these lips, thus endeared to us, nothing but infinite truth can drop, let us inquire what are the particular claims set up by the Redeemer. These may be mentioned, though they cannot be discussed. Among them are these: Jesus Christ claimed to be a perfectly immaculate being; to be a teacher sent from God; to have the authentication of his mission in wonders of supernatural power; to be the subject of prophecies uttered during many ages; to be the Messiah of the old Testa-

ment; to be the great atoning sacrifice and only way of access to God; to be endowed with glories far surpassing manhood; to be an object of worship; to be the incarnate God!

We pause in wonder before such claims; but they are true, they are substantiated; they won the assent of the best men of that age and of succeeding ages. The character of Christ gives credence to the demands, even prior to the external testimony. That however which most concerns my share of the argument, is, that in the portrait of character given in the New Testament, everything is in perfect harmony. The natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine, do not clash. If it were hard to depict a perfect moral image, as human, how surpassingly difficult to blend this with the superhuman and divine! The delicacy, the reserve, the consistent grace, the majesty, with which this is done, transcend expectation. Stupendous miracles are related with a quietude and simplicity such as enhance their glory. Compare with this the ghastly images of pagan gods, and the theophanies of the poets, and you at once apprehend the force of the argument. All that it concerns me here to show, is, that the personality of Christ, as portrayed by the Evangelists, has everything to make it credible, even in respect to its celestial side.

These claims of the Lord Jesus Christ have fought their successful way through every system of opinion, and commanded the grateful belief of multitudes. Other arguments may admit of being presented with more dialectic exactness, in mood and figure, but it is my sincere persuasion, that no argument goes so profoundly to the heart, or so irrefragably reasons down the prejudices of skepticism, as the person of Jesus as it shines out from the evangelical pages. Talk as we may, about the difficulties of this subject, the divine reasonableness of the truth here embodied and personified has carried away captive the minds of successive generations, and is going on conquering and to conquer. Among thousands of thousands of true Christians, every one has been smitten with this ideal, and has in his measure striven to reproduce it. Every one has not merely accepted the precepts of Christ, but imitated the person of Christ: and the Christianity which is in the world, is after certain reflections and refractions, that same light, mirrored forth with manifold variety, according to the subjective differences of various minds; even as the morning sun comes to us in the hues of the mountain, the dancing waves of the sea, the flowers of the field, and innumerable drops

of dew, each vying with the rest to show forth some beam of the great luminary. Such credence have these claims received, that it is the character of Christ which lives again, in each individual believer, and in the body of the Church. Did time permit, I might go further and show, that the civilization of the modern world is a modified effluence from the same centre. The humanity of Christian nations—what is it, but a poor copy of the benignity of Christ? The tendencies to universal amity among nations—what is it but the gradual imitation of the Prince of Peace? The hospitals, infirmaries, and asylums of our day, for the helpless, blind, deaf, lunatic,—what are they, but the life of Christ, to some humble degree, actuating the life of society? And when the process shall be complete; when the last recusant shall give in his allegiance; when all nations shall be connected, and the church and the world have the same boundaries; what shall it be, but the Body of Christ, in which every member shall derive strength and character from the Head!*

* It was at first intended to refer in the margin to the passages of Scripture, on which the allegations of the foregoing discourse are founded: but their number was found to be so great, that citation of chapter and verse would probably defeat the object in view.



Moses L. Hoge

The Success of Christianity,

AN EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN;

WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CELEBRATED
SECONDARY CAUSES" OF MR. GIBBON.

BY

MOSES D. HOGE,

RICHMOND, VA.

I.

MORE than 1800 years ago, amidst the shadows of the night and the gloom of a narrow defile near the city of Jerusalem, there might have been seen the dim outline of a human form, prostrate upon the ground, uttering plaintive cries, and exhibiting evidences of the most overwhelming sorrow.

Presently lights were seen glancing through the foliage, and the heavy tramp of a company of men was heard. A band of soldiers, and others, bearing lanterns and torches and weapons, advanced, and took into custody the mysterious mourner. A little company of friends witnessed the capture, but they had neither the strength nor the courage to attempt a rescue, and seeing him in the keeping of the soldiers, they all forsook him and fled.

The next day a tumultuous crowd darkened the summit of a hill, on which three crosses had been erected. On one of these crosses, the captive of the preceding night was hanging in the agonies of death. But strange prodigies attended that crucifixion. All Nature gave signs of unwonted agitation. The earth, as if instinct with life, shuddered as the crimson drops trickled upon it. It became pervaded by an emotion which seemed to pierce its heart and thrill through its entire frame. Upon its quaking surface the forms of the shrouded dead were revealed to the eyes of the terror-stricken living, while over the opening tombs, the rending rocks, and the parting veil of the Temple, the sun wrapped himself in darkness, and thus pursued his journey.

Nor was the sympathy of nature wholly inarticulate. It found an interpreter in the Centurion, who, convinced by these prodigies of the Divinity of the sufferer, exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God." But strange as it may appear, while this heathen soldier is bearing such noble testimony to the character of the crucified Jesus, his own followers abandon all confidence in him. They *did* hope that he would prove the long-expected Deliverer—the light of Israel, and the salvation of the ends of the earth; but, now they believed themselves to have been cruelly deceived. It

was a bitter disappointment, but there was no help for it. Their fondly cherished hopes must be buried in the tomb in which they believed him to be sealed, the prisoner of death, until the final Judgment.

But soon after, a surprising change took place in the feelings and in the conduct of these timid, disheartened men. Having been scattered, they suddenly rally again, their hopes revive, their confidence is reanimated. They are no longer wavering or fearful; on the contrary, they are decided and courageous. No argument can shake their faith—no terrors can daunt their resolution. Decision—intrepidity—the loftiest heroism characterize the men who a little while ago were appalled at the death of their Leader, and who trembled lest there should be any suspicion of their connection with him. They themselves furnish the explanation of this sudden and otherwise inexplicable change in their views and feelings. They assert that their crucified Lord is *alive*. Everywhere, at all times, in the face of all dangers, they persist in the declaration that they have seen him, conversed with him, and possess the most undeniable proofs that he has risen from the dead. So firmly has this conviction possessed them—so wonderfully does it animate them, that they prepare to traverse their own, and even foreign lands, for the sole purpose of proclaiming salvation through the crucified and risen Jesus.

Whether its earliest heralds were mistaken, or correct in their belief of the resurrection of Christ, is not now a point under discussion. The fact that such was their avowed conviction is all that concerns us at present. That they *did maintain* this doctrine—that they made it the basis of their creed—the theme of their proclamation, is equally admitted by the Christian and the Infidel. Now of the result of these labors we have two accounts—the one furnished by the friends of Christianity, the other by its foes. Both of these concur in two important particulars. They agree in their representations of the wonderfully rapid diffusion of the new faith, and of the feeble and inconsiderable instruments employed in its propagation.

We learn from the writers of the New Testament that the first triumphs of Christianity commenced in Jerusalem—the very city which had clamored for the crucifixion of Christ. A few days after his departure from the world there was an assemblage of disciples amounting to one hundred and twenty in number. In a little more than a week after, three thousand were converted in

Jerusalem under one sermon of the Apostles. This number was in a very short time increased to five thousand. Nor were the labors of the Apostles confined to Jerusalem. They traversed the whole land of Judea with wonderful success in gaining numerous disciples. Even a great company of *Priests* became obedient to the faith. Not to dwell upon particulars, it is sufficient to remark, that before the author of the Acts of the Apostles reaches the 23d chapter of his brief history of the infant church, he asserts that thousands (*μυριαδος*, *myriads*) of the Jews were zealous believers. And before he concludes his narrative, he informs us that the religion of the cross had penetrated Italy and Asia Minor, and had commenced its aggressions even upon the continent of Africa. In less than ten years from the time when Paul went forth on his missionary tour from Antioch, it was said of him and his companions that they had "turned the world upside down."

The Christian Fathers enlarge upon the triumphs of the cross, and dwell with exultation upon the splendid progress of the Gospel from land to land, and from continent to continent. Justin Martyr, who flourished in the beginning of the 2d century, asserted that there was not a nation, either Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wandered in tribes, or lived in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings were not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe, through the name of the crucified Jesus. Tertullian, who lived about half a century later, exclaims, "In whom else have *all nations* believed, but in Christ who lately came?"

In his appeal to the Roman governors, he indulges in this exulting language, "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled all places belonging to you, your cities, islands, castles, towns, councils, the palace, senate and forum, we have left you only your temples." And he adds, that should the Christians withdraw in a body from the Empire, the world would be amazed at the solitude and desolation that would ensue.

Such is the testimony of the friends of Christianity—let us see how far these assertions are sustained by its foes.

About thirty years after the Crucifixion, Rome became the theatre of an imperial villany, which has scarcely a parallel in history. The emperor Nero became the incendiary of his own capital. To escape the odium of such an atrocity, he accused the Christians of having set fire to the city, and visited them with the most inhuman cruelties. Tacitus declares that those who bore

the vulgar appellation of Christians, derived their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of Pilate: that for a while the dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth, and not only spread itself over Judea, but was even introduced into Rome. Now no writer is more carefully guarded in his statements than Tacitus—none more sedulously free from exaggeration, and therefore we know it is no hyperbole in which he indulges, when he speaks of the “*bursting forth*” of the “*superstition*” as he would of the leaping flame of a conflagration, or the headlong rush of a torrent.—Nor would he characterize an inconsiderable number as a “*vast multitude*” within the very walls of the capital of the world. His account of the sudden revival, and triumphant progress of the Gospel, reminds us of the New Testament narrative of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the simultaneous conversion of the thousands of Jerusalem.

The elegant Pliny, governor of the remote provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, bordering upon the Euxine, found these distant regions so filled with Christians, that he addressed a letter to the Emperor Trajan, asking advice as to the proper mode of treating them. He complains that the number of the culprits was so great as to call for serious consultation; he declares that their superstition, as he characterizes it, had seized not only upon the cities, but upon the lesser towns, and open country; that the pagan temples had been almost deserted, the sacred solemnities suspended, and that scarcely any purchasers could be found for the sacrificial victims. Nothing asserted in the Acts of the Apostles more vividly illustrates the triumphant conquests of Christianity than do these statements of the pagan Pliny.

But it is needless to extend this testimony, either of the advocates or opponents of Christianity, with regard to its vast and unparalleled conquests in the primitive ages. It was of rapid growth. It was not slowly evolved from a germ like the Mythology of the ancients, originating in the dim antiquity of some remote and obscure tribe, to be developed and perfected by the accretions of long centuries,—but it sprang into being, and into vigorous maturity, before its enemies had any reason to apprehend its power or the impossibility of its overthrow. Or, to change the figure, it was not like the coral island insensibly emerging during the progress of ages from unknown depths of the ocean, imperceptibly rising above the surface, and expanding into a continent,

but was rather like the sudden vision of some newly-formed orb, springing fresh and glowing from its Maker's hand, and hung up in its symmetry and beauty to shine as a light forever in the firmament of Heaven. Certainly and delightfully true is it that CHRISTIANITY, with its celestial radiance, darted, as the beams of the morning sun from city to city, and from continent to continent, until kindreds, people, tongues, and nations, were blessed by the light, and warmed by the heat into a new and diviner life.

All the testimony which we have on the subject, from whatever source it comes, unites in illustrating the swiftly advancing and victorious march of Christianity to universal dominion. Its progress was signalized by the abolition of the corrupt and cruel institutions of heathenism, and by the establishment of order, harmony, and prosperity, in the place of misrule, dissension, and wretchedness. The bloody altars of superstition were overthrown. The temples of pagan deities were abandoned to solitude and decay. The most hallowed shrines grew mute—or as if smitten with sudden fear, uttered half-audible responses. Solemnly does the choral verse of Milton celebrate these desolations:—

"The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
Runs thro' the arched roof in words deceiving;
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell
Inspires the pale-ey'd priest from the prophetic cell.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered God of Palestine;
And mooned Ashtaroth
Heav'n's queen and Mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine.

* * * *

And sullen Moloch fled
Hath left in shadow dread
His burning idol of all blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
May call their grisly king
In dismal dance about the furnace blue.

* * * *

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green."

* * * *

Thus was the advance of Christianity from zone to zone attested by the overthrow of idol gods and temples. And equally triumphant was it in conflict with *every* opposing force. At first ignored, then despised, then trampled upon by the civil power—it commanded respect—then inspired fear—then displayed its majestic might, and became terrible as an army with banners. It stretched forth its resistless hand, and took to itself the power. It enrobed itself in the imperial purple. The banner of the Cross floated from the dome of the world's capitol, and the triumphant Church placed upon her brow the diadem of the Cæsars. The last page of Eusebius glowingly depicts the blessedness of the reign of Constantine, under whom had been extended the dominion not of pagan but of Christian Rome from the rising sun to the last borders of declining day, while his exulting subjects in chants, and hymns, extolled God the universal King, and gave him glory for the victories of his church.

But when we have asserted and illustrated the simple fact that Christianity did thus rapidly attain to universal diffusion, we have only entered upon the threshold of the subject. If we wonder at the celerity of its propagation, much more will our wonder be excited when we come to contemplate the numerous and formidable obstacles which opposed its progress—when we consider how every earthly influence combined to prevent its extension, how all the prejudices and powers of the world conspired for its annihilation, while there were no visible agencies at all adequate to the production of a result so stupendous, as its advancement from victory to victory, until it achieved the conquest of the world.

There is indeed ONE satisfactory method of accounting for the success of Christianity, viz.: by ascribing it to that power which built the worlds. But setting aside for the present this single method of explaining its triumphs, its success becomes the most inexplicable of all wonders.

Christianity is *now* an existing fact. We can review its history—we can trace its entire career from its origin, through all its struggles and victories, down to the present hour. But were our *stand point* the beginning of the 1st century, instead of the middle of the 19th century of the Christian era, and were we from *that* point of observation required to estimate the probabilities of its success, by all the modes of reasoning known to man, we would be forced to the conclusion that it never could prevail. Our verdict would be that its success would be contrary to all the

laws of mind, to all the experience of the past, to all the relations of cause and effect. There was a time when this *was* the verdict of all who had heard of the pretensions of Christianity, with the exception of a dozen obscure and illiterate individuals in the land of Judea. Even had Christianity commenced its career by adapting itself to the natural passions of the human heart—had it sought to allure men by the proffer of earthly power, wealth and pleasure—had it imposed no restraints and required no sacrifices—had it been advocated by philosophers and orators—had genius, art, and fashion lent it their fascinations—had rank and power afforded it their countenance and support, even then, in a world composed of nations and races so dissimilar in intelligence, tastes, interests, and habits, we could hardly have anticipated its universal prevalence—for when have all mankind agreed in any opinion, or become simultaneously subject to the same influence? Said Celsus, one of the early fathers of skepticism, “A man must be very weak to suppose that Greeks and barbarians can ever unite under the same system of religion!” But we proceed to show that Christianity, so far from possessing such natural attractions and adventitious aids as have been alluded to, commenced its career with pretensions, with demands, with advocates, with prospects, all calculated to excite scorn and opposition—calculated to bring it into direct and fierce collision with all established opinions and venerable institutions—with all the philosophy of the learned, with all the creeds of the superstitious, with all the jealousy of governments, with all the enmity of the natural heart, while the agencies employed for its extension were, to human appearance, not only *feeble*, but *repulsive*, and *despicable*.

The very birth-place of Christianity was inauspicious. The Jewish nation was the most unpopular branch of the human family. Their land was the Bœotia of the world. It was regarded as the native home of fanaticism, bigotry, and detestable superstition. We may learn from Tacitus in what estimation the Jewish people were regarded by their neighbors. He stigmatizes them as a race excessively depraved, prone to lust, and accounting no abomination as unlawful. He declares, that what others deem sacred, they reckon profane, and what others abhor, they freely tolerate. Now, a religion emanating from a people regarded with such aversion by the rest of mankind, would be prejudged and condemned without an investigation.

But how could Christianity originate among the Jews them-

selves? It is true that about the time of the birth of Christ there was among them a very general expectation of the advent of some extraordinary personage, whom their Prophets had denominated Messiah. In glowing terms they had described him as a mighty conqueror who should deliver his people from foreign domination, impart new splendors to the throne of David, and extend over the world the sceptre of universal empire. Hence the Jews, from whom civil independence was now departing, eagerly seized upon such declarations, and giving to them a literal interpretation, revelled in the anticipation of the national supremacy and glory to which their deliverer would exalt them. And although their Prophets had also spoken of the humiliations and woes of their Messiah, they would have readily forgiven him any failure in fulfilling *these* predictions, had he but possessed the power to elevate them to that temporal aggrandizement which they coveted.

But when they saw him enter their capital without pomp or pageantry, surrounded by publicans and fishermen, instead of a splendid retinue of courtiers, followed by the poor, the blind, and the halt—how great was their disappointment and chagrin—how bitter their derision of his kingly pretensions! Nazareth was his reputed home, and Galileans his chosen associates—but Nazareth and Galilean were names of reproach even in Jerusalem. A Nazarene our Messiah! A Galilean our King! No, exclaimed they, this is not he; when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is. Is not this the *carpenter's* son? And above all, when they saw him unresisting and deserted—spat upon, and derided—and then led away to ignominious crucifixion, they regarded this as a fit termination for so miserable an imposture. “AWAY WITH HIM!” “Crucify him.” “Let his memory perish!” And yet—astonishing to relate, and strangely true—multitudes of those who had joined in this cry, and who had witnessed his death on the cross, in a few days after, under the preaching of Peter, an obscure Galilean fisherman, were cut to the heart, and openly—exultingly—professed faith in the crucified Jesus, and became his devoted disciples!

How is this mighty revulsion of feeling, this total change of life, to be accounted for? How came it that the deep-rooted prejudices of thousands were annihilated in a twinkling, or exchanged for admiration and love stronger than death?

These very men had doubtless witnessed many of the wonder-

ful works of Christ—they had been spectators of his affecting death—they had seen the heaving of the rocks, and felt the quaking of the earth, and had been shrouded in the preternatural darkness: and was the preaching of the darkened heavens, and of the bursting tombs, and of the trembling earth, and of the Saviour's dying groans, less eloquent than the preaching of Galilean Peter? Surely not. How, why then, were the Jews *now* convinced? What overpowering spell so suddenly conquered their wilful prejudice, their determined unbelief? Surely here is mystery wholly inexplicable by all natural causes. Was it a mere human power, which thus conquered them? Then it was a human power also, which cleaved the rocks, and shook the earth, and clothed the sun with darkness.

Such was the first triumph of Christianity. But the heralds of the Cross do not confine their labors to Palestine. They visit pagan lands. They proclaim the resurrection of Christ, and the doctrine of salvation through him alone, to the most *barbarous*, and to the most *enlightened* nations of the Gentile world. They seem to make no distinction between savage and civilized people. They evince no preference for any particular field of labor, but visit with equal readiness the most refined and polished cities, and the most benighted and barbarous provinces. They are as confident and courageous in the proudest capital as in the obscurest hamlet. The early champions of the Cross did not hover about the outskirts of civilization, like Cossacks around the camps of disciplined armies, only to make sudden and irregular assaults—and then to flee to the wilds of the desert! It would indeed have been a suspicious circumstance, if Christianity had evinced a preference for the haunts of ignorant and savage tribes, and had it selected *these*, as the theatre of its first aggressions. Untutored and unreflecting men might easily have been made the dupes of an imposture, however base and impudent. But on the contrary—in the words of a venerable divine—"In this respect Christianity stands upon high vantage ground. Its Author first announced himself to an age celebrated in story and immortalized in song. His Apostles travelled over classic ground. They established churches in the land of Euclid, of Aristotle and Longinus; of Demosthenes, Solon, and Lycurgus: of Homer and Pindar, Atticus and Cicero, Sallust and Livy, Horace, Ovid, and Virgil." It was the Augustan age—an age distinguished for its constellation of poets, orators, and statesmen—an age eminent

among all others for its inquisitive researches, its ingenious disquisitions, its vast and varied erudition, its bold speculations, and unfettered freedom of opinion. Not only were Ephesus and Antioch, and other renowned cities of Asia, honored by apostolic labors, but another city—more renowned than all—a city where the merchant found his exchange, the student his university, the artist his studio—the pleasure-loving his paradise, and the wit his admiring audience—the classic capital of the most classic land—*there*, too, the Apostle proclaimed his message, in the hearing of the volatile, ingenious ATHENIANS (those true *Parisians* of antiquity)—and proclaimed it too with just as much confidence and expectation of success, as if, instead of the Areopagus, he had stood in the cottage of some Galilean fisherman ! Nor did his labors terminate until his desire to see ROME also, was gratified,—until Cæsar's household heard from his lips the story of the Cross.

But what popular *doctrines* do the Apostles proclaim, as they journey from city to city, and from province to province, captivating and entrancing one quarter of the globe after another ? How contrary to all that we might anticipate is the answer ! Doctrines *most unpalatable* and *offensive*. The great burden of their proclamation is salvation through the merits of a crucified Jew !

We have already adverted to the estimation in which the Romans held the Hebrew race. And if such was their contempt and aversion toward that whole people—now that they were in the very act of wresting the sceptre from Judah, how could they be induced to acknowledge a plebeian of that nation, as a king, —a plebeian despised and rejected by the vast majority of his own countrymen ?

Had Jesus been still living—had he advanced toward the capital, as an ambitious warrior at the head of a brave army—Romans might have respected him as a gallant foe ; still the temple of Janus would have been thrown open, and mail-clad legions would have marched to meet the invader. But if no greater honor than *this* could have been shown him, how could the Romans, ignorant of prophecy and of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, receive him as a King and Saviour ? Would they not despise him and deride his pretensions, even more than his own countrymen did previous to the day of Pentecost ?

Accustomed as we have ever been to associate the Cross with all that is sacred and venerable, we can have no conception of the disgust which would arise in the Roman mind, at the proposal to

elevate a crucified man to the rank of a Divine Saviour—and withal a crucified *Jew*—a Jew who was born in a stable. What witticisms, what jeers, what scoffs would overwhelm the advocates of such a Divinity. No wonder that a Roman governor should have charged one of them with being “mad.” Should some one in this land assert the Godhead of an Indian who had been hanged upon a gallows, he would not more offend the moral sense of the community, than did this doctrine of the Apostles, the proud and polished people to whom it was addressed.

But what doctrines did the Apostles proclaim which were *not* opposed to the sentiments of the natural heart? It is no compliment to a man to tell him that he is totally depraved, utterly helpless, and justly condemned. It is an impolitic way to attempt to gain adherents to a cause by demanding of them heavy sacrifices, and painful self-denials. And no system of human invention, seeking the suffrages and applauses of the world, would have demanded as its *first* requirement, self-crucifixion, and a renunciation of all that is most dear to the natural heart. Yet such were the exactions of Christianity. It was never offered to men as a speculative creed, intended merely to occupy the intellect,—but it was urged as a rule of action, to control the outer and inner life of man—to regulate not only external conduct, but to prescribe imperative laws for the government of the thoughts, desires, and affections—condemning ambition, avarice, envy, intrigue, carnal ease, sensual indulgence,—and enjoining meekness, temperance, forgiveness, love to God, love to man, love to *enemies*, purity of life, holiness of heart.

Almost every precept of Christianity imposes a restraint, or demands the mortification of some passion or inclination of the heart.

By nature, man is proud and self-sufficient—Christianity declares him to be weak and dependent, and incapable of self-guidance. Though man is naturally obstinate and self-willed, Christianity demands the subjection of every faculty and power to the law of another. Though man is naturally selfish and intent on the gratification of his own wishes, regardless of the happiness of others, Christianity enjoins a philanthropy which is wholly disinterested, it demands a sacrifice of personal ease and interest for the promotion of the good of others, and ordains a charity which shall embrace in its arms the whole family of man. Though man is by nature prone to retaliation under a sense of

wrong—though for the moment revenge is sweet when it is glutted by the destruction of its victim, yet even when the bosom is swelling with rage—when furious passions lash the soul into a tempest, and drown the voice of reason—even then, the clear celestial tones of the gospel are heard, rising above the din of passion, saying, “Peace, be still.” “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.” “If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink !”

When Homer gave to the world his portraiture of the most renowned hero of antiquity—the prominent traits of whose character the great Latin bard has summed up in one nervous line,

“ Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,”

—epithets which might furnish names for four devils—he did not offend the moral sense of his countrymen by such a delineation ; neither was Greek nor Roman admiration of the character of this warrior diminished, even when he is represented as dragging the dead body of his gallant rival—bound to his chariot wheels—three times around the walls of Troy, and that too in the sight of his aged father.

How foreign to all the genius and spirit of the age which witnessed its triumphs, were the teachings of the Gospel. Plain unlettered men, without wealth, or rank, or influence (and with one or two exceptions), without address, or eloquence, went abroad proclaiming doctrines most novel, startling, unpalatable. “A crucified Christ was all their rhetoric,” and yet no doctrines ever promulgated, before or since that day, met with such universal favor—no teachings ever so penetrated and transformed human hearts, none ever gained a popularity so world-wide. But did Christianity obtain its unlimited supremacy over the hearts of men, did it triumph over principalities, did it ascend a throne, and issue its undisputed edicts to the subjugated nations—by forbidding all that corrupt humanity craved, by enjoining all that corrupt humanity was averse to—by waging war of extermination upon every depraved, and therefore cherished, passion, prejudice and propensity ? Leaving out of view the intervention of divine power, here is an enigma to be solved by some more gifted intellect than the world has yet been favored with.

Another obstacle to the progress of Christianity, was its *uncompromising exclusiveness*. It refused to come under the patronage of any other religion. It refused to take any other religion under

its patronage. It would not even enter into a friendly alliance. It would not even make a treaty of peace. It proclaimed eternal warfare upon every other faith. Its Janus was never to be closed while an enemy survived. It demanded the overthrow of every altar and temple of Paganism. Its aim was a total abrogation of all the religious systems of the world. It demanded the utter annihilation of institutions which the revolution of ages had rendered venerable and sacred in the memories of men. Claiming to be the only true religion, it would not receive the false into its embrace. To every proposed affiliation, its genius replied,—what communion hath light with darkness—what concord hath Christ with Belial? It declared to Paganism that its priests were jugglers, and its gods a lie. It declared to Judaism, that its mission had ended—that its glory had departed—that it was now only the worthless scaffold around some completed palace, and as such, fit only to be thrown down. It declared to the sage, that his profoundest speculations were vain janglings. It ranked the Epicurean with the beasts, and the Stoic with the stones of the field. It estimated the wisdom of the Scribe as lighter than vanity. It denounced the sleek and sanctimonious Pharisee as a disguised hypocrite, and rent in fragments the reverend garments whose hem men had stooped to kiss, and exhibited the wearer to the world, as a naked child of the Devil.

Such was the attitude which Christianity assumed toward the time-hallowed systems of the world. Such was the attitude of a novel religion—one which sprung from a subjugated people—whose founder was a carpenter, and whose greatest apostle was a tentmaker.

Far easier is it to change the kings than the gods—the government than the religion of any nation. Did exclusive, uncompromising, all-assuming Christianity adopt the right *policy* for effecting such a change?

Nor are we to suppose that Polytheism had a slight hold upon the affections and prejudices of men. It commended itself to the favor of the sensual by the indulgence it permitted. The fires of unhallowed lust were kindled upon the very altars of Paganism. It commended itself to the imagination of the refined, by the beauty of its mythology. It placed genial household gods beneath every roof. It animated all nature with propitious deities. It gave Naiads to every fountain, and Dryads to every grove. Aurora rode upon the beams of the morning, and Iris

clothed herself in the melting hues of the rainbow. Old ocean obeyed its trident-bearing God—the voices of spirits were heard along its flashing waves, and sportive Nereids gambolled upon its yellow sands.

It commended itself to the taste of the common people by its gorgeously attired priests, its showy temples, its jocund festivals, its stately processions, and brilliant ritual services, rendered more attractive by all the charms derived from an alliance with music, painting, and sculpture. How seemingly hopeless the aggressions of Christianity, without imposing rites, without altars, without sacrifices, or visible gods—and utterly devoid of all external attractions.

How can a religion of faith—a purely spiritual religion, overturn systems venerable for antiquity—deeply entrenched in prejudices of men—endeared by association—upheld by the homage and personal devotion of statesmen and warriors, who felt honored in exchanging the gown and the armor for the sacerdotal vestments, that they might personally assist in the sacred ceremonies? How shall a superstition commending itself to the bosoms and business of men—pervading all the ramifications of social life—interwoven with all the departments of government—under whose auspices Greece had attained her highest heaven of classic renown, under whose favoring smiles Rome had achieved the conquest of the world—how shall a system thus founded, and thus supported, be supplanted by an upstart faith which does not offer one attraction to worldly pride, pleasure, or glory, but which on the contrary, summons its votaries to a life of mortification and self-denial—to obloquy, and the ruin of all earthly prospects,—whose open confession is, “*If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable!*” With prospects like these, what earthly possibility is there of its triumph over the firmly established and fondly cherished institutions of Polytheism? Experience answers—reason, common sense answers, it cannot prevail—it must perish:—nevertheless it did prevail—it did triumph. It scattered Polytheism to the winds—it sent its idols to the moles and the bats—it laid its proudest temples in the dust, and on the ruins of the fallen fabric, it planted the immovable foundations, and reared the eternal pillars of the Christian Church. Is this august structure the work of human hands? A stone-mason can build a wall—but does it therefore follow that he can build a world?

We have now considered the obstacles to the success of Christianity arising from its innate offensiveness to human taste, prejudice, and reason, its failure to meet the exalted expectations of the Jews, the absurdity of its doctrines in the estimation of enlightened Pagans, the startling novelty of its precepts, its want of temporal rewards for its votaries, its unattractive spirituality, its destitution of all such sensuous charms as would captivate the vulgar, its uncompromising exclusiveness, and determined hostility to every other religion, and now it only remains to contemplate its triumph over one other obstacle, viz. over *the active external opposition* which it encountered on all sides—the desperate efforts of its enemies for its overthrow by means of slanderous tongues, and slanderous pens, and the dreadful sword of persecution.

The success of Christianity under *persecution* is a strange, and deeply interesting phenomenon. It would be impossible to specify all the forms of assault to which its enemies resorted. Wherever Christianity appeared, it excited the rage of various classes and orders of men, who opposed it from widely different motives.

Professing to be a universal religion, its proclamations must needs go throughout all the earth, and be heard in the ends of the world. Its voice must mingle with the soft murmur of the Mediterranean waves, and with the hoarse tempests which thunder along the bleak shores of the frozen sea. It must come in contact with every phase of human character, as varied by different climates, degrees of civilization, and forms of government, and hence it must excite an opposition as diversified as the abodes, customs, and interests of mankind. But for the present, leaving this extended field of observation, and confining our attention to the fortunes of Christianity in the Roman Empire alone, we can readily anticipate what a host of foes its aggressions would stir up among that people. Polytheism was the munificent patron both of the fine and mechanic arts. It gave employment to the painter, to the poet, and to the humblest artisan. It gave honor and emolument to the vast retinue of priests and officials in the service of the gods of every shrine and temple. It gave entertainment to the countless multitude in whose minds alternate emotions of awe, pleasure, and exultation, were enkindled by public games, processions, and festivals.

An innumerable sacerdotal throng of Pontifices, Augurs, Vestals,

and Flamens, derived their support from the revenues of the temples, and from the public treasury. But should the doctrines of Christianity prevail, who would believe their venerable lies? Who would make them donation visits? Whence could they obtain bread, the impostures of their craft once exploded? It is not agreeable either to a mercenary politician, or priest, to lose office. As a matter of course, all the satellites, and retainers, and dependants of Paganism would rouse all their energies to resist the inroads of the gospel, which took away at once their credit and their means of subsistence. The common people would be enraged at the loss of their favorite entertainments. The philosophers would gnash their teeth against a system which closed their schools, and rendered their teachings contemptible. The higher classes of society, men of rank and influence, senators and soldiers, men who derived new distinction by officiating at the ceremonials of religion, would indignantly frown upon a faith which mocked at their divinities and solemn mysteries. Kings and magistrates would regard with mingled fear and detestation such an overturning of the religion which was incorporated with the state, which was sustained by proscription and prejudice, which was so interwoven with the civil and military institutions of the country, that no warlike expedition could be ordered, and not even a seat taken in the senate, without accompanying religious ceremonies. Hence Christianity was regarded as *treason* against the state.

We cannot wonder, therefore, at the variety or the virulence of the assaults made upon so restless an agitator. The foulest slanders were verbally circulated, accusing Christians of dark, impure, and bloody rites. The acutest and most brilliant writers employed all their learning and cunning to bring Christianity into contempt. Among others, Celsus, Porphyry, Symmachus, and the Emperor Julian, wrote treatises, fragments of which have come down to us, from which we learn, that although they did not deny the miracles of the gospel record, yet they assailed Christianity with a malignity which rivalled the ingenuity of Spinoza, the wit of Voltaire, and the ribaldry of Paine.

But the final appeal of terrified and tottering Paganism was to the power of the government. The Roman monarchy, the greatest and strongest upon earth, directed all its might toward the overthrow, and if possible the extinction of the Christian Church.

A certain class of writers have indeed endeavored to create the impression that the Roman government was wonderfully liberal

and tolerant toward the religions of other nations. But a closer examination into the best authorities on the subject will lead us to a very different conclusion. It is true that some of the emperors were disposed to be lenient and indulgent. There were intervals during which the Church enjoyed seasons of comparative tranquillity. It is also admitted that *individuals* were permitted to express their sentiments with a great degree of freedom. For example, upon the stage, and in the writings of the satiric poets, the keenest ridicule was directed toward the thieves, murderers, and adulterers, facetiously styled the "Immortal Gods," and winked at, perhaps enjoyed by the magistrates themselves. The caustic irony of Plautus and Terence, the philosophic raillery of Cicero and Lucian might be indulged with impunity. It is also true that when the Romans wished to conciliate a particular people, they did not hesitate to express great reverence for the gods of that people. But Christianity was not the religion of any *nation*—but of a new sect. It was a religion demanding unconditional submission to its requirements, and refusing to enter into coalition with any form of idolatry. Hence, there was no motive, or policy, in treating *it* with conciliation. There was, on the contrary, everything to provoke jealousy and hatred. And when one of the emperors proposed to give Jesus Christ a place among the gods of the nation, the proposal was rejected by the senate.

Moreover, the Romans ascribed their greatness as a people, and the unexampled success of their arms, to the favor of their gods. It was the rhetorical boast of Min. Felix Octavius, that "because of exercising religious discipline in the camp, Rome had stretched her dominions beyond the paths of the sun, and the limits of the ocean." Hence, however theoretically tolerant of other religions there was often a political necessity for the exclusion of foreign rites. It was forbidden by law to pay religious honors to any deity, which had not been recognized by a legislative act. S. Æmilius Paulus, during his consulship, ordered the temples of two foreign deities, not legally recognized, to be destroyed. On several occasions the senate felt itself constrained to exert its power to prevent religious innovations. Livy quotes an eloquent speech of one of the consuls against foreign rites. Dion Cassius has transmitted to us a celebrated oration in which Mæcenus demonstrates to Augustus the danger of tolerating exotic religions, and even under the reign of Tiberius—that enemy of gods and men—the Egyptian ceremonies were prohibited. A Roman jurist

declares it to be a principle of their law, that those who introduced religions of new and doubtful tendency, if men of rank, were to be degraded, if plebeians, were to be punished with death! But of all the forms of faith known to the world, Christianity, for the reasons already mentioned, was most obnoxious to the jealousy of government. It could not be a *religio licita* of the Roman law. Its professors were liable to the charge of high treason. They were stigmatized as *irreligiosi*—*hostes Cæsarum, hostes populi Romani*.

Could any one unacquainted with the true nature of Christianity have foreseen the ominous clouds which were to gather around her, and the tempests of fire and blood which were to burst upon her, during the long night of her affliction, he would have deemed it impossible for her, even to maintain an *existence* upon earth—he would have predicted her speedy and utter annihilation.

In this our happy land, where none (*as yet*) dare lay trammels on freedom of opinion, and where the expression, *persecution for conscience' sake*, is hardly understood—since none have any experience of its meaning—we can form but an inadequate conception of the trials of those whose lives were liable at any moment to be terminated by bloody martyrdom—who in professing the name of Christ, provoked the wrath of principalities and powers—who had to pass by the stake on their way to the communion table. When the world respects the rites and institutions of religion, it is an easy matter to assume the name of Christian. But the profession of Christianity is a very different thing, when the official is seen disentangling the thongs of the knotted lash—when the headsman runs his nail over the keen edge of the gleaming axe—when the torturer stirs the fagots under the red bars of the iron griddle—when the executioner jags the nails, and clanks the spikes which are to mangle while they transfix the hands and feet to the cross—when the hungry lion howls round the amphitheatre—and famished dogs stand ready to gnaw the skulls which roll from the dripping scaffold—ah! then it is a different matter to espouse the cause which exposes its professor to terrors like these. But for the testimony of faithful history, we would not believe that Satanic malice could invent tortures, or that hellish cruelty could have been so unfeeling as to inflict torments, such as Christians of every age and sex were then compelled to suffer. It was not the *terror of death*—but the *DEATH OF TERROR*, which then

affrighted the soul. And if according to the testimony of Lactantius there were instances in which magistrates boasted that during their whole administration they had put no Christians to death, let Lactantius explain the secret of their boast, and inform us what credit is to be given to those who uttered it. He can teach us that there are punishments worse than death—that the most savage executioners are those who have resolved *not* to kill—that the most dreadful of all sufferings are those which are disguised under the name of clemency. “They give orders,” says he, “that strict care be taken of the tortured, that their limbs may be repaired for other racks, and their blood recruited afresh for other punishments!” Knowing that death would be a release to the sufferer, and that it would confer on him the glorious crown of martyrdom, and admit him to the reward of the blessed, “they inflict,” he adds, “the most exquisite pains on the body, and are only solicitous lest the tortured victim should expire!” So great was the variety of the tortures invented for them, that Domitius Ulpianus, a celebrated lawyer, wrote seven books descriptive of the different punishments that Christians ought to have inflicted on them. But if occasional instances occurred in which humane and justice-loving magistrates, yielding to the natural sentiments of pity, were willing, with Trajan, to advise that Christians should not be sought for, and that only such as *were* apprehended should be capitally punished—yet there were no such restraints upon the blind fury of the *populace*, whose appetite for blood was only whetted by each fresh view of the gory scaffold and the crimson sands of the arena.

But why should we dwell upon details which sicken the heart and harrow the feelings? It is sufficient to observe, that thousands upon thousands were the victims of those persecutions, and that the whole power of the Roman Empire, which had been sufficient to subdue the world, was exhausted in the effort to subdue the Church. And here a new phenomenon engages our attention. These persecutions, so far from extinguishing the Christian name and cause, served only to give to both new honors and triumphs. If power smiled upon the Church, it grew—if power frowned upon the Church, it grew still faster, and amidst indescribable terrors advanced with a heroism which could “smile at the drawn dagger, and defy its point.” Amid the dark glooms of persecution, there blazed forth the burning and shining lights of the world. The heroism of the soldier who fights in the pres-

ence of thousands, whose victory is celebrated by a nation's acclamations, or whose fall is hallowed by a nation's tears, is nothing to the heroism which supported the primitive martyrs through long months, and weary years of imprisonment, and which inspired them with a holy serenity when they stood upon the scaffold, surrounded, not by admiring and applauding thousands, but by the hootings and execrations of the infuriated rabble.

Do you wish for the most illustrious examples of unshaken fortitude which the world has known? Then search not for them on the bloody deck or on the embattled field—but go to the deserts to which the saints have been exiled—to the dungeons in which they have been immured—to the funeral piles from which they have ascended in chariots of fire, and there behold displays of true valor, infinitely transcending the bravery of those who seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth, or who rush on death, amid the clangor of trumpets, and the thunder of artillery!

The resignation of the martyr was no sullen stoicism yielding to inevitable necessity. It was not the savage pride of the Indian at the stake, who dies, and makes no sign of inward agony. It was cheerful acquiescence in the will of Providence. It was the deep and beautiful tranquillity of those who believed that to die in the arms of Jesus, was to live forever.

Like the trees which yield their precious gums, only when their sides are gashed—like the palm which lifts its head highest when the greatest weight is laid upon it—like the burning forest, which kindles with fiercer flame just as the tempest beats upon it—so Christianity, under the sword, under the heel, under the storm of persecution only the more mightily prevailed and grew. The good seed of the gospel had been sown over the field of the world, and upon that seed, the blood of martyrs fell like fertilizing showers—while over it the flame of persecution was but a torrid sun, quickening it into luxuriant development, and clothing it with a brighter verdure.

It is not Paul at liberty, but Paul in chains who bears testimony before kings, and as a captive makes converts in Cæsar's household.

The enemies of Wiclif, years after his death, ordered that his remains should be disinterred and scattered. The more effectually to effect this purpose, his ashes were cast into one of the branches of the river Avon, and thus, says old Fuller, "this brook did convey his ashes into the Avon—and the Avon into the Severn—and

the Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean—and so the ashes of Wiclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over.” So too in primitive times, the whirlwind of persecution scattered the good seed wherever there was a soil on which it could fall, and not only did it germinate in rich luxuriance on the banks of fertile rivers, and on the shores of sunny islands, but far away in the distant desert, there was the bloom and fragrance of the rose.

No arguments were so convincing as the patient sufferings of Christians, no miracles so overpowering as their prayers, invoking blessings on the heads of their tormentors.

Do mail-clad soldiers, inured to the atrocities of war, behold a young and beautiful female, possessed of all those charms which poets delight to celebrate, and sculptors to perpetuate, accused of no crime, but that of loving Jesus of Nazareth, do these men of iron mould, behold her driven through the streets of Rome stripped of her modest veil, scourged as she goes, and scarred with hot irons, until she sinks in the arms of death, with murmurs of pity and forgiveness upon her lips, and triumph in her eyes—then these before unmoved and prayerless men kneel down in the streets, and declare that if such are the victories of the Christian faith, they too are the disciples of Jesus, henceforth and forever—and there beside the body of the murdered girl, they swear allegiance to the cause for which she suffered martyrdom.

Does a little boy charged only with loving him who took little children to his arms and to his heart, clasp his hands together as he is fastened to the stake, and sing his infant hymn as the flames kindle around him, and pray to Jesus not to desert him in the fire—there too is a spectacle which makes iron-hearted veterans weep—which causes them to call upon the executioners to prepare the pile for them also—for say they, if a child can die thus exulting and go rejoicing to the skies in a whirlwind of fire—his faith must have come from the skies; let ours be such a death, and our last end like his.

Such was the result. The sword of persecution glancing off from the shield of Christianity, inflicted mortal wounds upon the body of him who drew it, and at last fell broken from the palsied arm which had wielded it.

Such was the triumph of Christianity over its mightiest foe. The Roman power, before which the nations had bowed in subjection, cannot overcome the fishermen of Galilee, but is conquered

by them. Historians have made the success of Alexander in subduing the Persian empire with an army of thirty thousand, the theme of their glowing eulogies—but what was this to the achievements of one little band of Apostles?

Christianity without arms, without allies, without wealth, without influence, without worldly allurements, goes forth from its lowly shed in Bethlehem—seizes upon Jerusalem, overcomes Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria, Rome—overturns idol, altar, and temple—sweeps away the religious formations of centuries—prostrates all enemies in the dust—places its foot upon the neck of persecution—ascends the imperial throne, and gives laws to the subjugated nations. Here is a mystery demanding a solution. Here is an effect, a stupendous effect, produced without any visible agency or discovered natural cause, at all adequate to such a result. Here is a consummation attained in defiance of all the ordinary laws which control the changes of society, in opposition to all the principles which govern the developments of human affairs. Behold the CHRISTIAN CHURCH—a symmetrical edifice—not a heap of building materials—but a structure, well cemented, admirably proportioned, and garnished after the similitude of a palace; exhibiting in all its parts evidences of deep design, and matchless skill, and resistless power. Whose hands reared these walls, yet strengthening, yet rising, waiting only for the capstone, and the accompanying shoutings of a multitude which no man can number? Who is the designer and builder of this temple? The Infidel as well as the Christian is bound to answer this question.

The Christian delights to trace in every polished stone, in every pillar and battlement of this august edifice, the handiwork of a Divine Architect. He clearly sees in all the mighty changes, and revolutions which Christianity has effected upon the earth,

“The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.”

And what is the response of the Infidel? We have it in the words of one who devoted the best powers of his brilliant genius, and the best years of his laborious life to the investigation. GIBBON has professed to solve the mystery of the triumph of Christianity, without the intervention of a God. To his solution infidelity has never suggested an amendment. With what success he has accomplished his undertaking we will proceed to determine.

II.

Were an infidel, possessed of the combined experience and cunning of all other infidels, to devote the best talents of his life to the elaboration of the most successful and irresistible method for bringing Christianity into disrepute, his deliberately matured and perfected plan would doubtless be *to write a history* of some prominent empire of the earlier centuries, in which he would introduce, incidentally, and with apparent respect, an account of the origin and primitive triumphs of Christianity. In the prosecution of his work, we would never find him directly denying the facts of the evangelical narrative, or openly assailing its doctrines, by argument or by ridicule, but contenting himself with placing the facts in such a light as to tempt his readers to question and deride them—avoiding all manifestation of a partisan spirit, and affecting the dignity of a candid and ingenuous inquirer after truth—carefully guarding against the appearance of prejudice and levity, yet under the guise of a grave and respectful witness, perpetually dealing in insinuations and a latent irony, provocative of distrust and merriment in the minds of others—never inventing calumnies, yet adroitly and with seeming reluctance retailing calumnies already invented—presenting in a plausible light the objections of the skeptic, and appending replies less impressive than the cavils—infusing a full measure of the bane, and but a small modicum of the antidote—too sedate to be witty himself, yet possessed of an ingenuity so rare, as to preserve his own gravity, and yet be the cause of wit in other men—never directly stating his own inferences, yet suggesting the train of reasoning which would inevitably lead his readers to make the desired inference for themselves—so cunningly summing up the evidence for and against the credibility of the sacred narrative, as to create an impression of his own impartiality, and at the same time to leave an overwhelming weight in the scale of incredibility—verbally admitting the divine origin of the Christian religion, yet exhausting all the resources of genius and erudition, in making it actually apparent that *secondary*, or merely human instrumentalities, were sufficient to account for all its triumphs! Such would be the most unanswerable, and the most dangerous of all assaults upon the Christian faith.

The author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," brought with him to his task a combination of qualifications such as rarely falls to the lot of any historian. Possessing a mind stored with the choice treasures of ancient and modern learning, a genius singularly patient in research, a memory wonderfully retentive, an industry which never seemed to flag, united to a facility of expression which always rendered his meaning clear, notwithstanding a tendency to a style somewhat elaborate in its structure, and gorgeous in its coloring,—he chose for the exercise of these powers, a theme unrivalled in its dignity, and without a parallel in its dramatic interest. The result of his labors, was a history which for excellence of arrangement, comprehensiveness of design, and vividness of impression, entitles its author to rank among the most eminent historians either of ancient or of modern times. In the prosecution of a design so vast as that of representing by a panoramic view the decline and fall of the greatest power that ever bestrode the world—and then upon its ruins, the rise of new empires, and of a new civilization—events affecting nearly every nation of the earth, and requiring centuries for their enactment—it was impossible for the historian to overlook the influence of one mighty and ever-prominent agent in the development of these great issues. That "pure and humble religion" which he says, "insinuated itself into the minds of men," but which did not, as he states, grow up "in silence and obscurity," until its triumphs were complete, but which on the contrary, from its very birth, and in all places, aroused the passions and obtruded itself upon the notice of men—this new and powerful agitator, must have attracted his attention in every age and field of his investigations. A historian so philosophic in his character, could neither avoid the notice nor the explanation, of so singular a phenomenon. Christianity claimed a divine origin, and professed to owe its extension to a divine power. The historian was compelled, therefore, either to admit these assumptions, or denying them, to assign some satisfactory explanation of an anomaly, which, otherwise, would have remained inexplicable. The first, he does not presume directly to do. He nowhere explicitly denies to Christianity a divine original. On the contrary, to his own question, "By what means did the Christian faith obtain so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth," he replies, "To this inquiry an obvious and satisfactory answer may be returned, that it was

owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the overruling providence of its great Author." Had his inquiry been satisfied with this solution, and had he proceeded to illustrate the wisdom of divine providence in causing all human instrumentalities to subserve his plans for the government of the world, and for the establishment of the Church, then every Christian would have been grateful for the pious efforts of a great writer, making history the worthy vehicle of vindicating the ways of God to men, and of tracing his hand in all the changes which take place in human affairs.

But our historian having exhausted his candor by one admission, immediately proceeds to vitiate the force of that admission, by assigning certain causes merely secondary and human, with which to account for all the triumphs of religion, without the intervention of a God. If these natural causes are of themselves sufficient to solve the enigma, then a recognition of the agency of any *great first cause*, is a work of supererogation—and only confirms the propriety of the advice,

Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus.

Nor is this all. Our author having excluded all supernatural machinery from his drama, proceeds to impugn the characters of the acknowledged actors, and through them, the character of their principles. With a generous regret, accompanied by what would have been a *sigh*, had it not been converted into a *sneer*, he "must leave," as he remarks, "to the theologian, the pleasing task of describing religion arrayed in her native purity," while he himself discharges the more "melancholy duty of the historian, which is to discover the inevitable mixture of corruption, which she contracted during her long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings." And then in his severe and scathing exhibition of the corruptions and superstitions of Christianity in every age, he utterly confounds the boundaries between the Church and the world, makes the former responsible for the impieties of the latter, and imputes the errors of its professors to the imperfections of Christianity itself, which, he gently insinuates, may after all have had its birth in some Theological Utopia, whose golden age coincided with that of Pagan Mythology.

In all the covert and decorously-worded assaults of this writer, there is so little positive assertion, and so much latent insinua-

tion, accompanied with well-dissembled candor, that the difficulty of counteracting his dangerous policy arises not so much from what is boldly expressed as from what is evidently intended, not so much from his own recorded deductions, as from the inferences to which he adroitly leads the mind of his reader. This policy is unquestionably the perfection of infidel art. That brazen, rampant, domineering infidelity, which at once arouses and alarms every innate religious sentiment of the human bosom, and which excites all the enthusiasm of the popular faith, must, in the end, strengthen the cause which it thus rudely aims to overthrow; but that creeping, cringing, cunning thing, which deals in inuendo, and suggestion; which dreads nothing so much as manly, earnest inquiry leading the unbeliever to doubt his own skepticism; which insinuates itself along a tortuous and noiseless way, sensitive, watchful, crafty,

“ With eye of lynx, and ear of stag,
And footfall like the snow—”

this is the infidelity which accomplishes its deadly mission before its presenee is either dreaded or recognized.

It is painfully curious to observe, how a writer so singularly correct and impartial as Mr. Gibbon is, when uninfluenced by prejudice becomes uncandid and unfair the instant that Christianity is made the theme of his discourse. It is a singular psychological fact, that a man so little given to passion or prejudice, so beloved for his social virtues, so eminent for self-control, should, nevertheless, perhaps unconsciously to himself, exhibit to others a mental bias which leads him invariably to represent, at least one subject, through a colored and distorted medium. But however strange, it is no unaccountable phenomenon. There is an influence, not begotten by philosophy, which clarifies even the intellect, where spiritual truth is the object of its perception. There is a spirit which

“ Doth prefer
Above all temples the upright *heart*—”

and which does *not* shed its illuminating power upon the understanding, when man's moral nature is not in unison with the divine. Gibbon does not present the only instance of a mind working vigorously and efficiently, when devoted to other subjects, yet displaying confusion, and strength unprofitably exerted, when

Christianity is the object of its contemplation. If the most convincing evidence of this moral inability to be candid and impartial when an uncongenial theme is the subject of consideration be demanded, we have it in the immediate change of tone and temper which we discover in our author, when he passes from the department of profane to that of ecclesiastical history, from the delineation of the character of a distinguished pagan to that of a distinguished Christian. He can find it in his heart to apologize for the superstition, licentiousness, and cruelties of paganism, but he scans Christianity with a severe and jealous eye. He waxes warm and eloquent in his eulogium of the noble bearing of the heathen soldier, but there is no impassioned burst of enthusiasm in his recital of the touching resignation, and undaunted firmness of the Christian martyr. The devoted allegiance, the all-sacrificing loyalty of the followers of the Roman eagles, fire his heart with admiration, and impart new fervor to his splendid diction, but he is frigid and insensate, or quibbling and querulous when he alludes to the zealous attachment, and death-despising fidelity of the soldiers of the cross. While the exploits of an Alaric, an Attila, a Zengis, or a Tamerlane, awaken all the magic power of his pen, he sees nothing noteworthy in the career of a Paul, a Stephen, an Ignatius, or a Polycarp.

Milman finely says, "The successes of barbarous energy and brute force call forth all the consummate skill of composition: while the moral triumphs of Christian benevolence, the tranquil heroism of endurance, the blameless purity, the contempt of guilty fame, and of honors destructive to the human race, which, had they assumed the proud name of philosophy, would have been blazoned in his brightest words, because they own *religion* as their principle—sink into narrow asceticism. The *glories* of Christianity, in short, touch no chord in the heart of this writer; his imagination remains unkindled; his words, though they maintain their stately and measured march, have become cool, argumentative, and inanimate. Who would obscure one hue of that gorgeous coloring in which Gibbon has invested the dying forms of Paganism, or darken one paragraph in his splendid view of the rise and progress of Mahometanism? But who would not have wished the same justice done to Christianity?"

But in the place of devoting his noble energies to the celebration of the virtues of confessors and martyrs—the *élite* of the earth—he gives his pity or his scorn to these, and reserves his

admiration for those who bounded all their aims and aspirations by the narrow horizon of life—and coming forth in the pomp of a diction that “dazzles to blind,” he seems to cast even the beautiful vesture of truth around sentiments false and dangerous.

With such address, and animated by such a spirit, he proceeds to exhaust the resources of his own gifted mind, and of infidelity itself, in the attempt to set in array such assignable human causes, as may forever obviate the necessity of referring the triumphs of Christianity to any supernatural power, by endeavoring to show that it was propagated in accordance with the ordinary laws which control human affairs, just as other systems and creeds had been, which had attained to great popularity and power among the nations. The spectacle of one enriched with extraordinary abilities, thus prostituting his genius to an undertaking so unworthy of such endowments, reminds us of a celebrated description, some of whose features, at least, we may apply to our distinguished author:—

“He seemed

For dignity composed, and high exploit,
But all was false and hollow: though his tongue
Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason to perplex and clash
Maturest counsel.

Yet he pleased the ear

And with persuasive accents *thus began*.”

“We may be permitted,” says Mr. Gibbon, “though with becoming submission, to ask, not indeed what were the first, but what were the secondary causes of the rapid growth of the Christian church.” And he assigns as the first, “The inflexible, and if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit, which instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses.”

It is conceded that the zeal of the primitive heralds of the Gospel was steadfast, ardent, undaunted by perils, and unconquerable by persecution; but there is not a shadow of a reason for deriving this zeal from a Jewish origin. The early advocates of Christianity belonged, most of them, to the Jewish race—but to ascribe the spirit which imbued them, as soon as they embraced a new faith, to their old principles, is as miserable an absurdity, as it would be to impute the hallowed enthusiasm of modern converts from heathenism, to their previously bigoted and intolerant

zeal for idolatry. The Apostles ascribed their fervor to their confident belief in the resurrection of Christ, and to their warm, constraining, entrancing love for him. But whatever its origin might be, its manifestations were very unamiable in Jewish eyes, for it was directed against Jewish as well as against Gentile prejudices, and was perhaps even more offensive to the Hebrew, than to the Greek or barbarian. The zeal of Peter would indeed impel him to the most active efforts for the salvation of his countrymen, but was it his fiery intolerance which made him so successful in gaining proselytes among them? When he stood in the very city which had witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, and addressed the very men who had enacted that tragedy, and said, "whom *ye* by wicked hands have crucified and slain," did the severity of the charge *frighten* them into faith in the victim of their rage? Or was there such an *attractive* power in this accusation as to bring over thousands of them in a single hour to the Christian standard? To derive such an effect from such a cause as the mere zeal, and above all the *inflexible* and *intolerant* zeal of the Apostle, would be a miserable *non sequitur*. The truth is, that neither the Jews who believed, nor the Jews who rejected, nor the Apostle who preached Christ, ever thought of ascribing such wonderful results to blind and pertinacious zeal. And when the Apostles turned to the Gentiles, although they were still so inflexible in their principles, and so intolerant of error, as to refuse either to accommodate the doctrines they proclaimed to the tastes of their hearers, or to adapt their forms of worship to the cherished preferences of idolaters, yet can it be supposed that this stern and unyielding attitude was calculated to conciliate the people toward whom it was assumed? Such a course was not only impolitic, but offensive to the last degree. Such have never been the tactics of false religions in making aggressions upon any people. Mahomet, indeed, was intolerant when the "Koran, death, or tribute," was his demand, but Mahomet preached at the head of an army, and cut his way through all objections with the edge of the scimitar. There is nothing more surprising in *his* rapid conquests, than in those of Tamerlane or any of the daring military usurpers who have so often changed the fortunes of the Eastern world. But the zeal of the primitive missionaries was not fortified or impelled by any earthly power. And exhibited in a character so unlovely as that represented by our author, without any adventitious aid, it must have disgusted and repelled. And if

the primitive Christians were, as Mr. Gibbon asserts, "not less averse to the business, than to the pleasures of this world"—if they "refused to take any part in the civil administration, or the military defence of the empire"—if they "displayed an indolent and criminal disregard to the public welfare"—if they would not tolerate the most innocent amusements—if, as he declares, "they shut their ears against profane harmony of sounds"—if affecting singularity in personal appearance and habits, they thought it sinful to "shave their beards," or sleep on "downy pillows"—(because Jacob had, some centuries before, reposed his head one night upon a stone,)—if they refused to mingle with the heathen either in the relations of business, or in the walks of social life, how was it possible for them to disseminate their religious opinions? What opportunity could they have enjoyed for making proselytes? What materials could their zeal act upon? How could it expend itself? Thus pent up, and yet raging, it must have consumed only the zealot. But if under such circumstances of grim seclusion, and non-communion, they *did*, nevertheless, by their mere zeal, succeed in proselyting thousands, there must have been some secret power in their zeal transcending the miraculous!

But Mr. Gibbon overlooks one important fact in his argument. He imputes this excessive zeal to the *weaker* party, and makes no allowance for the counteracting zeal with which it would be met by the numerous and formidable sects which, with one accord, bent all their energies not only upon the defeat of Christianity, but upon its destruction. Had Judaism, menaced with the overthrow of its venerable institutions, its splendid ceremonials, its imposing temple service, no conflicting zeal? Had Polytheism with its threatened loss of brilliant honors, and unbounded wealth, and gigantic power, no *resilient* countervailing zeal? Did both fall before the fanatical and intolerant phrensy of a feeble and despised sect?

We have already admitted that the propagation of Christianity was in a great measure instrumentally due to the energetic, persevering labors of its early advocates. But theirs was a "zeal" very different from the blind and mad phrensy which Mr. Gibbon has imputed to them under that name. It was a rational, well-founded zeal, tempered with charity, and attended by a regard for all the proprieties of life. While it was an instrumental cause—one of the subordinate agencies employed by Divine Providence for the extension of his Church, it was in itself an *effect*, produced

by a higher—the highest cause. It was the result of an unalterable conviction of the truth of Christianity, produced by a divine influence upon the minds and hearts of the heralds of salvation. Had it been anything else—above all had it been a mere emanation of senseless bigotry, it would have occasioned evils disastrous to the progress of religion. It would have been regarded only as raving fanaticism, at first amusing, then irritating, then exasperating. Had it been such a zeal as that described by Mr. Gibbon, it would for a time, have produced results exactly the opposite to those ascribed to it, and then being unsustained by any evidence of the truth of the system it advocated, it would of itself, like a fire unreplenished with fuel, have speedily burnt out. When was there ever so ridiculous a thing known, as for a rational man to change his favorite opinions, without any conviction of their erroneousness, merely because he came in contact with a more obstinate man than himself, of a different way of thinking? If headstrong and passionate ardor were sufficient to effect such changes, then, any Hotspur in controversy might obtain the victory over the most logical opponent, who chanced to be less stubborn than his adversary. Would Mr. Gibbon himself have abandoned his infidelity and become a champion for the Christian faith, had he been assailed day by day, by some unavoidable and flaming zealot? If so, it is unfortunate that this expedient was not adopted to secure the services of so accomplished a writer. Indeed he *was* pursued by Mr. Davis, of Oxford University, through all the devious paths of his great history, and by that ardent and pertinacious gentleman attacked on all sides, yet so far was this siege from making a convert of Mr. Gibbon, that, on the contrary, it provoked him to write a vindication of his history, in which he manifests no symptoms of conviction, and no kind regard for Mr. Davis.

Had the Apostles gone forth imbued with the principles, and governed by the policy, which actuated the disciples of Ignatius Loyola, instead of displaying to the world “an inflexible and intolerant zeal,” they would have adapted their teachings to the prejudices, habits, and even passions of their proselytes. They would have permitted them to retain their ancient superstitions, merely grafting upon them certain Christian rites and ceremonies. They would have profited by the credulity of the ignorant, and flattered the independent free-thinking of the educated—they would have been severe only upon the vices of the poor, and ever indulgent to the inclinations of the rich. They would have graduated their mo-

rality to the age, propensity, and rank of their neophytes. They would have imposed no heavy burdens either upon the consciences or callings of men—in a word, they would have made it a very convenient and pleasant matter to bear the Christian yoke. Had they not been penetrated and fired with the most irresistible conviction of their high and solemn mission, they never would have pursued the line of conduct which characterized their whole career, nor would their labors, severe and unremitting as they were, have been crowned with such sublime success, had they not been owned and signally blessed of Heaven. Their zeal was a divinely inspired zeal, and *mighty through God* to the pulling down of strong holds.

The second reason which our author assigns for the rapid propagation of Christianity, is, "The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth." He specifies these favoring circumstances. One of them he declares to be "the universal belief that the end of the world, and the kingdom of Heaven were at hand"—the hourly "expectation of that moment when the globe itself, and all the various races of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their Divine Judge." But from whom could the early Christians have derived such an apprehension of the impending destruction of the world? Not from the Author of Christianity himself, for he, when speaking of the time of Judgment, expressly declares, "Of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in Heaven." Nor could it have been derived from the chief of the Apostles, for his unequivocal language is, "We beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled, neither in spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means." He then proceeds to enumerate certain great events which must occur before the coming of that day—events, which are having their fulfilment even in our own generation. If the Apostle Paul had *no* supernatural insight into futurity, then he *accidentally* predicted a state of affairs which actually existed 1800 years after the prophecy was uttered. But if these coming events were supernaturally revealed to him, then he *could not* have been deluded by the belief of the speedy dissolution of nature, and his statements show how anxious he was to guard others from delusion.

Another of Mr. Gibbon's "weighty circumstances" which he

supposes gave efficacy to the doctrine of a future life, was, the belief that the personal advent of Christ was at hand, (a millennium wholly unlike that which is *still* anticipated, when Christ shall extend his *spiritual* kingdom over all the earth)—“when the saints who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously preserved, would reign on earth until the time appointed for the last and general resurrection.” That such an expectation was in *existence*, is evident from the fact that some of the most eminent writers in the primitive church positively *denied* and *refuted* such a doctrine. But it was never taught by a single Apostle, nor generally received by the Church.

These “weighty circumstances” which Mr. Gibbon would convert into supports for his proposition, are themselves unsupported, and must fall to the ground. And as to the proposition itself, if no divine power attended the proclamation of a future life, what induced such multitudes to believe it? There being *no* associated circumstances arising from the delusions of men to give it efficacy, it was the simple doctrine of a future life, which myriads embraced. *Why* were they overcome by the presentation of this truth? What irresistible influence accompanied its publication? Are we to look back to the first cause assigned by Mr. Gibbon for that mysterious influence? Was it begotten by the “intolerant zeal” of the Apostles? Was this also potent in constraining a whole generation to embrace their revelations respecting futurity?

But our author overlooks some great *obstacles* to the spread of such a doctrine. The first is that the Apostles made this doctrine dependent on the resurrection of the dead.

In an age when the immortality of the *soul* was scarcely believed, no assertion could have been more provocative of ridicule and scorn, than that the *body* which had seen corruption, and returned to its native earth, would be revived, reanimated, and clothed with immortality. It was the annunciation of this doctrine which caused the Apostle to be regarded as a madman by the Roman. And when he visited Athens, whose inhabitants were ever eager “to hear some new thing,” he presented to their minds a novelty *too* strange and startling. When he spoke of Jesus and the resurrection, they characterized him as a “setter forth of strange *gods*.” So vague were their ideas of his meaning, that they seem to have regarded the resurrection (*Αναστασις*) as one divinity, and Jesus as another, and when more fully informed as

to the Apostle's meaning, they turned away in disgust from a tenet so incredible.

What! were they to be told that the bodies which had mouldered and mingled with their kindred dust, and then been dissipated by all the winds of heaven—that the bodies whose very *tombs* had crumbled to atoms, and vanished not only from the sight but from the remembrance of men—were to be raised to life again? Were they to be persuaded that the elements would ever disgorge the particles which they had swallowed up?—that not only the earth, but that the sea should give up its dead? that the forms of those who went down into the fathomless caverns of the deep, in the shock of battle and tempest, would emerge from their hidden chambers, and darken the blue bosom of the ocean as they arose to be judged with those who had slept in the earth? Would the warm pulses of life again throb in the scattered dust of Aristotle? Would Socrates, and Plato, and those ancient sages who had indulged rather in the fond hope, than in the confident belief of a future existence, again stand erect upon the earth, and gaze upon that sun which centuries ago had looked down upon their graves? No, a doctrine so startling and incredible was worthy only of mockery.

But there was another, and far greater obstacle to the prevalence of such a view of a future life as that presented by the Apostles. The *Heaven* which they revealed to the faith of mortals was no such Elysium as that which mythology had delighted to present; no flowery abode of sensual joys and pleasures ministering to the natural tastes and passions of men;—no Paradise where feasting and revelry ruled the hour, where black-eyed Hours reposed in every bower, and whose perfumed air ever vibrated with dulcet melodies, such as Mahomet promised to the faithful (and of which he permitted them to enjoy such large prelibations in this life)—but a world whose element was holiness, one which excluded all but the pure in heart, which did not offer one attraction to the covetous, the ambitious, the licentious, or the revengeful—one which could be attained only by a path narrow, rugged, and difficult of ascent.

Point out to men a heaven where the pleasures of sense may be enjoyed in a more exquisite degree, and enjoyed forever; a heaven to which *Dives* may go with his purple robes and rosy wine; where all the natural inclinations and unhallowed propensities may find unbounded gratification, freed from the restraints

of law and the checks of conscience ;—and men will rivet their eager eyes upon it, and if possible force the gates and scale the ramparts of a paradise so alluring. But discarding the doctrine of a divine influence, what could so change the natural heart of man as to cause it to aspire to the pure spiritual joys of a heaven like that revealed in the gospel? Whence did myriads obtain those tastes which gave them a relish for the hallowed enjoyments and employments of glorified beings? Whence did impure grovelling mortals derive those qualifications which prepared them for the exalted services of a world of purity, for the dignity and the dominion of kings and priests unto God? If such a heaven became attractive to the eyes and hearts of mortals, it was because their eyes were opened, by some divinely exerted power, to the perception of spiritual beauty to which they had been blind before, and their hearts to the reception and love of truths which otherwise had been objects of disgust and aversion.

But Christianity asserted the existence of a Hell. If its picture of heaven was not calculated to engage the affections of mankind, was there anything calculated to gain the *credence* of mankind in its representations of a world of torment and despair?

The ancients indeed prated of a Pluto and Tartarus, but before the publication of Christianity the belief in the future punishment of the vicious had almost become obsolete, not only among the learned, but it was openly denied in the forum in public arguments before the populace. This fact Gibbon admits, and forcibly states. "We are sufficiently acquainted," says he, "with the eminent persons who flourished in the age of Cicero, and of the first Cæsars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be assured that their conduct in this life *was never regulated* by any serious connection of the rewards or punishments of a future state. At the bar and in the senate of Rome the ablest orators were not apprehensive of giving offence to their hearers by exposing that doctrine as an idle and extravagant opinion, *which was rejected with contempt* by every man of a liberal education and understanding." Such being the state of popular feeling, it is evident that before such an article in the Christian creed as the doctrine of a hell, could work upon the fears of men, it must be *believed*. But what is to compel their belief? The assertions of a company of ignorant, despised, itinerant Galileans?

If these humble fishermen had no other means of verifying

their assertions than their bare word, (and what was that worth, when made the vehicle of a most improbable and unwelcome statement?) would it not excite rather the taunts than the terrors of the proud Romans? Would it not exasperate rather than intimidate, when they observed how their deified heroes and sages were consigned to eternal flames, and that too for what they esteemed the most exalted virtues? And if it was true, as Mr. Gibbon asserts, that some of the early Christians were weak and wicked enough, loudly to rejoice in anticipating the torments of unbelievers, what reception would the whole community which witnessed such indecent and savage joy, give to the doctrine and its advocates? But it is notorious that these representations of futurity, improbable, and uncongenial as they were, *did* exert a controlling influence, a commanding power, over the minds and lives of thousands. What natural principle will account for a result so contrary to all that human foresight could predict? Have we not here another mark made by the finger of God?

The *third* cause assigned by Mr. Gibbon is, "the miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church." Had he been pleased to say, the miraculous powers *conferred* on the Church, or *exercised* by the Church, then we could at once throw this reason out of the list, for miraculous power actually possessed, could have come only from God, and this would have been a *primary* and not a "secondary" cause of the success of Christianity. But apprehensive of such an inference, he hastens to throw every possible discredit upon the primitive miracles. With a Hume-like hatred of miracles he insinuates, although he does not assert, that they were the pretences of imposture, and he labors to make this impression on the minds of his readers by a variety of ingenious cavils and cunning suggestions, interspersed with a certain grave irony.

But let us bring the matter to a direct issue. The miracles performed by the Apostles were wrought by the power of God, or they were the legerdmain of cunning and wicked impostors. If they were produced by supernatural power, then they were real, and demonstrate Christianity to be of divine origin. If they were the impostures of men, could they have possibly escaped detection and exposure? If any one chooses to answer this question by asserting that simulated miracles have been employed successfully in imposing upon the credulity of men, as in the case of the pagan priests who made dupes of the multitude by their

lying wonders, we reply that there is no parallelism in the two cases. Pious frauds have never been successful except when they have been resorted to by a religion already in power, and when exhibited to the unenlightened multitude, already predisposed in their favor, and willing to be deceived. There is no analogy between such shams and the miracles of Christ and his Apostles. They went unattended by confederates, often alone, and always were surrounded by those whose prejudices were adverse, and not favorable. Their miracles were submitted to the scrutiny of envy, interest, wounded pride, and all the acumen which the most enlightened and skeptical nation in the world could bring to the investigation.

It is evident, then, that mere pretension to miraculous power would have been a suicidal policy: it would have been exposed and rebuked; it would have overwhelmed the already despised Apostles with ignominy; it would have annihilated the prospects of the infant Church. It has always been a ruinous policy when resorted to in enlightened communities, even when a powerful confederacy has been formed among the parties interested, to give them support and credit among the people. In the celebrated case of the alleged miracles at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, many circumstances conspired to give them the greatest possible *éclat* in the community. The memory of the Abbé was held in profound and affectionate veneration by the people. All the power of the adroit and influential Jansenists was concentrated in the attempt to give these miracles credit, and that too among persons prepossessed in their favor. And yet how simple a matter to suppress them! By order of the government, the tomb of the saint to whom these miracles were ascribed, was concealed by a wall, and then—the performance was ended! Soon after a placard was attached to the wall, on which was written the witty French couplet:—

De par le roy defense a Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu,

“By order of the King, God is prohibited from working any more miracles in this place.” The most stupid man could see the point of this epigram, for if these miracles were genuine, how could a brick-mason shut out Deity? But thereafter the ashes of the Abbé rested in peace, evermore. He could not work miracles through a wall.

After the most careful analysis of Mr. Gibbon's long disserta-

tion in support of his third "cause," we can discover but two propositions, with an *inference*, which he only hints at, but evidently hopes his readers will draw from the premises which he furnishes them. 1. If genuine miracles had been wrought by the early heralds of Christianity, men must have been convinced of its superior claims. 2. Miraculous powers were asserted by the primitive Church, but never really possessed. *Insinuated inference*—therefore, the Church grew because of the popular delusion that it was endowed with such power. A very unwarrantable and absurd conclusion, indeed, but such is the character and climax of our author's logic. We rest satisfied with another, and very different conclusion of the whole matter—that if the miracles of the primitive Church were *real*, they should have no place among Mr. Gibbon's assigned secondary causes; if they were false, they would have resulted in the extinction, and not in the extension of the Church.

We come now to the *fourth* of the enumerated causes—"the pure and austere morals of the Christians," which our author very properly ranks among the influences which gained for Christianity the respect of mankind. But the pleasure we experience from such an admission on the part of an adversary, is instantly checked when we find that in immediate connection with this concession, he retails the foul slander of their enemies, "that the Christians allured into their party the most atrocious criminals, who, as soon as they were touched by a sense of remorse, were easily persuaded to wash away in the water of baptism, the guilt of their past conduct, for which the temples of their gods refused to grant them any expiation." Mr. Gibbon condemns this calumny, and declares that it was a reproach suggested by the ignorance or malice of infidelity. Why then does he introduce it? How could he have been so unguarded as to jeopard his reputation for cautious prudence, as well as for candor, by resorting to a method of defamation *so common*, and so easily detected? It is an old and vulgar device to assail character by volunteering some malicious scandal, with the hope that it will make its impression, although the retailer of the libel attempts to screen his own character by disavowing all belief in it? And is it not easy to discover his motive when he adds in the same vein of pretended vindication, that "after the example of their divine Master, the missionaries of the gospel disdained not the society of men, and *especially of women*, oppressed by the consciousness, and very often by the effects of their

vices." The design of these insinuations, in such a connection, is obvious. As he could not deny the superior virtues of the Christians—affording as they do so powerful an argument for the truth of religion—he attempts to divert our attention from the elevated source of these virtues, by assigning low and ignoble causes for their existence, and by retailing calumnies calculated to diminish our estimate of their purity.

This habit of suggesting the malignant charges of others calculated to make an impression upon the memory, and to be associated with recollection of whatsoever things are lovely, pure, and of good report, we conceive to be one of the most criminal, and at the same time dangerous artifices of this historian. Were this of unfrequent occurrence, we might regard it as accidental, or fail to notice it altogether; but so perpetually does it recur, that whenever he makes any admission complimentary to the virtues of the early Christians, we *expect*, before the paragraph closes, to find something calculated to mar or defile the chaste image which had arisen in the mind.

While it is true that the proclamation of salvation through Christ, was freely made to all men, it is *not* true that the Apostles devoted themselves mainly to the reformation of the weak, the illiterate, or the abandoned.

They preached the same gospel, and its provisions were as necessary, to Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy counsellor, as to the wretched publican, to Dionysius, an Athenian judge, as to Bartimeus, the highway beggar, to Damaris, an honorable woman, as to Magdalen the sinner, to the treasurer of queen Candace as to the thief on the cross, to king Agrippa as to the jailer at Philippi. And if men whose crimes had been great, smitten with corresponding remorse, found in the provisions of the gospel a solace which they vainly sought in the institutions of Paganism, then this but invests the gospel with new glories. That single word, *UTTERMOST*, in one of the promises of the sacred Scriptures, has infused hope and joy into many a despairing heart. Terrible indeed are the scourges of a guilty conscience—fierce, burning, agonizing are the pangs of remorse. Men of old were tormented by demons, but what foul fiend ever tormented the soul like the demon-king, *remorse*? What are all the pleasures, the honors, the distinctions, the riches of the world, what is all the sympathy of friends, what all the endearments of love, to a soul racked with remorse? It permits no rest to the wounded spirit. It has made the unsus-

pected man come forth and charge himself with crimes whose burden was too heavy to bear. It has compelled the judge to come down from the bench and take the place of the prisoner at the bar. It has made men prefer death—with all that lies beyond death—to a life maddened by invisible stings. It has driven men to rush unbidden on eternity, under the persuasion that its flames would be more tolerable than present anguish—that hell would prove a refuge, and damnation a release. Remorse cannot find any “expiation in the temples of the gods”—it defies all the consolations of earth, and mocks at their attempts to minister ease to the stricken despairing soul. To *its* victims the gospel alone can whisper comfort. It has a promise for the worst of men. The greatest criminals, when aroused to a sense of their guilt, are of all others, in greatest need of the consolations of the gospel. No wonder that such should avail themselves of a solace which Paganism could not offer. Ancient annals tell us of the restless anxiety which distracted Tiberius, of the phantoms of horror which haunted Caracalla, of the fearful visions which murdered the sleep of Nero—and other criminals of equal guilt, but less notoriety, have had their terrors too, which Paganism could not assuage. But no case was ever beyond the reach of “salvation to the uttermost.” There were converts from among debased and double-dyed transgressors. But Christianity did not go to the dens of infamy, and to the jakes of debauchery for her recruits. She found them chiefly among honest, industrious, virtuous poor. She never made selections among classes or characters. She uttered her voice in the streets, and her address was, “to you, *O men*, I call.”

But our author does not represent the virtues and the private lives of *any* class of Christians in an attractive light. Had the peculiarities of character, and of the habits of the primitive believers been such as he depicts, their exhibition would rather have extinguished than kindled the admiration of the world. In illustrating this view of his subject, Mr. Gibbon, according to custom, throws in so many dark hints and satirical comments, as quite to neutralize his admission with regard to the pure and blameless lives of the primitive Christians, and almost to stultify his own assignment of it as a cause of the diffusion of Christianity. He ascribes their exemplary deportment to most unworthy motives. He accounts for the sanctity of their lives by the smallness of their number, by the vigilant *espionage* which they exercised over each other, and by their desire to keep up the reputation of

their sect in the eyes of the world. In a word, he surmises that they abstained from sin rather through fear of detection than from love to virtue, and maintained their religious consistency from motives of policy and sectarian ambition.

In our author's sardonic merriment over their self-denial, their deadness to the allurements of sensual pleasure, their morbid tenderness of conscience, their immaculate chastity, their whimsical marriage rites, their occasional frailties, their spiritual pride, their aversion to business as well as to the amusements of society, —we have ample evidence of the inward derision and contempt which possessed him when he penned that acknowledgment of the pure and austere morals of the primitive Christians. It would be difficult to find in the writings of any infidel, condensed in so small a space, more disparaging reflections, bitter mockery, and derisive scorn, than Gibbon exhibits in his dissertation on the virtues of the infant Church. It is Mephistophiles grinning behind a grave-looking mask.

The *fifth*, and last cause which this historian assigns for the wide diffusion of Christianity, is what he calls "the union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an increasing and independent state in the heart of the Roman empire." Alas, that there should have been so little union in the Christian republic in any age. Even before the death of the Apostles there were numerous heresies, schisms, and divisions. If among the discordant voices of the first century there were multitudes heard exclaiming, I am for Paul, and I am for Cephas, and I for Apollos, so in all subsequent ages the Church has been vocal with the party watchwords of interminable sects arrayed under the banners of rival leaders. There has indeed been a delightful fellowship and bond of union among all evangelical believers, formed by their attachment to a common Saviour, but how could Gibbon seriously have ascribed to any organized confederation those rapid and unparalleled conquests of Christianity, which were achieved, according to his own showing, a hundred and fifty years before any such federative union was formed? Let us observe his own statement of the matter. "The societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman empire were united only by the ties of faith and charity. *Independence and equality* formed the basis of their internal constitution." And then forgetting that he had made "the discipline" of the Church one of the great causes of its extension, in his zeal to

introduce something to its disparagement, he adds, "*The want of discipline* was supplied by the occasional assistance of the *prophets*, who were called to that function without distinction of age, of sex, or of natural abilities, and who as often as they felt the divine impulse poured forth the effusions of the spirit in the assembly of the faithful." But it is not the discipline, but the alleged federative union of the Church which now occupies our attention. What is his own testimony on the subject? "Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic; and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly." "Such was the mild and equal constitution by which the Christians were governed *more than a hundred years after the death of the Apostles*. But before one *half century* had elapsed, the gospel had spread not only throughout the Roman empire, but even to Parthia and India. It was not," says Mr. Gibbon, until "towards the end of the *second century* that the churches adopted the useful institutions of provincial synods," borrowing the idea, as he supposes, from the Amphictyon council, the Achæan league, or the Ionian assemblies. *After* this organization, "the Catholic church soon assumed the form and acquired the strength of a great federative republic." Now we need not consult Tacitus, or any pagan historian, we need not turn to church history, or to the sacred Scriptures themselves—we need only refer to Gibbon as our authority to be informed that the most splendid triumphs of Christianity were witnessed before any such federative union was formed, and yet he assigns this union as one cause of the rapid growth of the Christian Church! He is equally mistaken too when he refers this rapid increase to the strict discipline maintained in the Church. This might be effectual, to some extent, in retaining the members already within its fold, but how could the fear of ecclesiastical censures draw strangers and heathen into the pale of the Church? And even with regard to those who were already in connection with it, is it probable that the fear of ecclesiastical censures would be as powerful in keeping them within its fold as the fear of the racks and flames of persecution would be in driving them out of that fold?

These are the five famous natural or "secondary causes" of Mr. Gibbon, by which he seeks to explain the wonderful promulgation of the gospel independent of any supernatural agency. Some of these

assigned causes are wholly irrelevant; others are valid so far as they prove that Christianity was *greatly favored* by such circumstances, and such human agencies as God chose to make use of in establishing his Church; (for no believer in the Great Author of Christianity, doubts either that he adapted it to the world, or that he prepared the world by providential arrangements for its reception—compelling even “secondary causes” to further the great and glorious purposes of his grace;) but no candid man, with the simple facts of the case before him can be satisfied that Mr. Gibbon, with all his labored array of human instrumentalities has been able to solve *that mystery* of a church without worldly influence, wealth, learning, rank, or power, represented by men ignoble and despised—declaring open war upon all the vanities, vices, selfish interests, cherished propensities and deep-rooted superstitions of the world—yet triumphing over prejudice, argument, eloquence, philosophy, established religion, the sword of persecution, and finally clothing itself with the glory and the honor, the dominion and the power!

But make a single admission. Ascribe these victories to the superintendence and to the imparted aid of the Omniscient and Omnipotent, and then all wonder ceases—all mystery vanishes. Indeed, willing or unwilling, we are forced to this conclusion. There are no principles or causes of production and change in the worlds of spirit and of matter, which are not either natural or supernatural; but having seen that the former is insufficient to explain the phenomenon before us, we are forced back upon the supernatural.

Many of the causes enumerated by Mr. Gibbon were in fact *effects*—effects produced by a cause which it did not suit his purpose to recognize, and his method of explaining the creation of the Christian Church resembles the ancient Mythology which represented the earth as resting upon the back of a tortoise, but which did not inform us what supported the tortoise. Says Hume, “when we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other.” Here then is the great incontrovertible fact of a religion triumphant over a thousand obstacles, any one of which would seem sufficient to arrest its progress. To refer such an effect to a human cause, and above all to such feeble and inadequate causes, as infidelity with its best ingenuity has been able to assign, is certainly a shocking violation of the principle of the great skeptic. The *disproportion* is mon-

strous. A church resting upon its spire would be a novelty in architecture, but it would have as stable a foundation as that which infidelity gives to Christianity. Regarding the Christian church as an edifice whose maker and builder is God, we delight to contemplate the lofty spire springing *from* the temple, and pointing to heaven, to remind us of the Almighty architect. The divine influence to which the Christian ascribes the success of Christianity is sufficient to account for every anomaly, and adequate to the production of every effect. Sustained and developed by omnipotent power, we can see how Christianity, at first appearing as a twinkling star, surrounded by clouds and thickest glooms, should nevertheless increase in magnitude and splendor, and cleaving the surrounding veil of darkness shine forth as the meridian sun. Urged on by the hand that moves the worlds, it can understand how the greatest results were accomplished by the feeblest instrumentalities—we see that the selection of humble fishermen as the heralds of salvation, instead of men of rank, and genius, and eloquence, was because “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence,” and that the power might be seen to be of God. Plain men convinced by the miracles which they saw Christ perform of the truth of his doctrine, and able to convince others of the same truths, by the miracles which they wrought—with love to God and love to men throbbing in every pulsation of their hearts, and sending the thrill of a diviner life through every limb, impelling them to all daring, never flagging action—men thus inflamed and thus nerved, went forth into the field of the world, and sowed the good seed which has never perished, and from which thousands in all generations have reaped the harvest of life everlasting.

The *primary* cause of the success of Christianity was the operation of the Divine Spirit on the minds and hearts of men, giving to them spiritual perception—subduing their opposition to the truth, and endowing them with the expulsive and impulsive power of a new affection. “Tarry ye,” said our Saviour to his disciples, “in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.” This was doubtless a trying command to men in their situation, certain of the resurrection of their Lord, assured that his kingdom would one day fill the earth with its

glory, and knowing that the salvation of the race depended upon the reception of the gospel offer. With such tidings to communicate, with such a glorious King to proclaim, they must have longed to advance, at once, to the prosecution of their work—but the time had not yet come. A new and peculiar influence must descend from heaven and rest upon them ere they could be qualified for the undertaking. As the statue of Memnon on the shores of the sea stood tuneless and mute, until the rays of the morning sun gilded its brow, so these heralds of the gospel had neither gifts nor tongues for their sublime proclamation until the light and fire from heaven should descend upon their heads, illuminating and kindling them, and causing them in turn to illuminate and kindle others. But baptized by this heaven-descended influence, though ignorant, they became wise, though weak, they became resistless, though timid, they became animated with a courage, which nothing in life or death could daunt. By this supernatural agency, they were endowed not only with the gift of tongues, but with the power of working miracles. And now their most extraordinary successes are no longer inexplicable. What though they are obscure, unlettered men, standing perchance in the presence of rank and power, what is to prevent them from elevating the humble cross, and challenging the admiration and love of beholders for a crucified Saviour, while they bear in their hands the credentials of heaven, and by signs and mighty wonders are able to display to the senses and inmost convictions of men the evidences of an Omnipotent and present God, bearing miraculous testimony to the truth and importance of their doctrine? What is there longer unaccountable in the success of Christianity, the moment that the Son of the lowly Virgin is demonstrated to be the Son of God, and when his poor, unlettered, timid followers, are seen to be girded with strength from on high? What is to prevent the triumph of doctrines which exhibit the impress of the same Almighty hand which has left its autograph on every leaf of the Book of Nature? Should all other miracles be blotted from record, this miracle of the swift and universal spread of Christianity would remain a monument of its celestial lineage, immovable as the everlasting hills.

And to the same power which gave to Christianity its first victories, must we ascribe its *preservation* in the world during so many centuries, and its present existence, power, and progress. There was a period—we need not now trace the path which led to it—when all that was pure, and spiritual, and divine, in Chris-

tianity seemed to have been swallowed up, and buried under a mass of dead forms and living corruptions—when superstition and ignorance brooded over the earth as darkness did upon the face of the deep when the earth was without form, and void. But Christianity, though disastrously eclipsed, had not been utterly extinguished. Deep beneath the smouldering ashes a brand from the altar lay buried. It was glowing unseen, like the internal fires which are smothered in the deep abysses of the volcano, presently to burst forth and shoot up their flames to the empyrean. Through all the dark ages the religious element was working, and though misdirected, as in the case of the Crusades, it was not annihilated. The word of God, though bound, was not utterly silent, and even when its whisper was heard, the still small voice was glorified. There were not wanting even in the bosom of the apostate Church, witnesses for the truth as it is in Jesus. Claudius of Turin, in the 9th century, and Peter of Bruys, Arnold of Brescia, in the 12th century, Pierre Valdo, Wiclif, Jerome of Prague, Anselm of Canterbury, and Savonarola, in later times, all testified against the abuses which had corrupted the Church, and above all the Vaudois formed a long-continued chain of witnesses for the truth, holding up the cardinal doctrines of the gospel even as the Alpine mountains which they inhabited lifted up their summits above the plains to be bathed in the pure sun-light of heaven. The Waldenses nestling in the valleys of Piedmont, holding fast to their integrity, served God in ancient purity of worship, and never bowed the knee to Baal; and even when the sword of the persecuting foe smote among them, they were not destroyed, but when scattered, went forth into all parts of Europe sowing the good seed of the word of life. It was the noble heroism of this band which inspired that immortal sonnet of Milton, so truly descriptive of their wrongs, and of the fruit of their sufferings.

“AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our Fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones
Forget not; in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow

O'er all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
 The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
 A hundred-fold, who having learn'd the way
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

When at last the light of the Reformation blazed forth, it was evidently kindled by the same spirit which came down in tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost. It was not by might, nor by human power, that the Reformation was accomplished.

Various temporal princes resisted Rome, but one after another (to use the fine metaphors of D'Aubigné) they broke in pieces at the base of the mighty colossus they undertook to overthrow. Learning too awoke and came to the rescue, but learning became subsidized, and kissed the feet of the power it attempted to dethrone. At last the apostate church undertook to correct its own abuses, but corruption could not purify corruption, nor could the festering wound originate its own cure. But finally the regenerative power which erected the church of the 1st century on the ruins of Polytheism, built up its demolished walls on the ruins of Babylon. The divine oracles, so long imprisoned, again spoke forth, and the word was life and light. Pure Christianity revived. Old things passed away and all things became new.

Since the glorious era of the Reformation, Christianity has illustrated her indestructibility by coming forth unscathed from the assaults of other foes. Even under its noon-tide radiance, and in the enjoyment of the richest blessings which the gospel has communicated to the world, there has arisen an order of men whose hearts are filled with rancorous hatred to its doctrines, and who have exerted all their powers in the attempt to dislodge its truths from the memories and affections of their fellows. Casting aside the old weapons of force, the assault has been not upon the bodies, but upon the minds of men.* In this campaign Infidelity has marshalled all its hosts, it has sent forth its ponderous tomes of grave scholastic argument, it has come forth arrayed in the imposing garb of philosophy. It has assumed to itself all the panoply of science. It has mingled its dogmas with the voice of

* Some years ago, the author of this Lecture found some remarks on the various guises and atrocities of Infidelity (as he thinks), in a newspaper or magazine. Being pleased with their animation he carelessly copied, or rather made a running paraphrase of them, never expecting to use the paper. The general drift of these remarks he has endeavored to give above. Were it in his power he would quote them accurately, and doubtless in a more condensed and striking form.

history. It has infused its poison into the fountains of literature. It has blended its notes with the sweet cadences of poetry. It has chanted its blasphemies in softest strains of music. It has crept into every house in the garb of fiction. It has shot forth the polished arrows of satire, and decked itself with the charms of wit and sentiment. It has borrowed the livery of heaven, and transformed itself into an angel of light. It has pretended to be the only true friend and ally of freedom. It has spread its lures for the feet of the aged, and stolen with velvet tread into the chambers of youth and innocence. Since the era of the Reformation, it has joined hands as did Polytheism of old with persecuting power. It has again drawn the sword, and kindled the fagot, and quarried the prison, and set in order its implements of cruelty. It has thundered its denunciations against the heralds of the gospel, and armed its myrmidons against the followers of the meek and lowly Lamb. It has abolished the temples of the Most High, attempted to raze the foundations of the Church, and to overwhelm in a tempest of fire and blood, all who professed to be followers of the crucified Redeemer. And still the Church survives, God being her refuge and strength, and very present help in time of trouble.

There is another and very different illustration of the "success" of Christianity, to which we would fain advert, viz. to its instrumentality in relieving human wants and woes, its amelioration of the wrongs and evils of society, the solace it brings to the wounded spirit, and its happy influence on the temporal prospects of men. Wherever it has gone it has rebuked oppression, repressed violence, and compelled vice, abashed, to skulk in darkness. It has given to us, as a nation, the free institutions which command the admiration and excite the hopes of the down-trodden in all lands. It has given to Christendom the power which it now exercises over the destiny of the whole world. While Infidelity is like the molten lava which, spouting up from the infernal depths of the volcano, overwhelming vineyards and human habitations in its fiery sweep, then settles down upon the blackened ruins, hardening itself to stone—Christianity descends like the gentle dews of Heaven, steals through the silent valleys, diffusing fertility and fragrance as it goes, causing the dry land to become springs of water and the desert to blossom as the rose, while before it sighing and sorrow flee away, and in its train come thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

The author of that admirable little work entitled "The Bible True," remarks, that "there are two effects produced by the word of God on the hearts of those who embrace it, which are peculiar to revelation. One is elevated purity. This effect is not confined to the virtuous part of mankind, but is witnessed also in the desperate, and outrageous, and lawless, who are brought under its power. Men fierce as wild beasts, as cruel as death, and ungovernable as the storm, have often felt its purifying power. This has been the case from the first. An early Christian writer says, "Give me a man of a passionate, abusive, headstrong disposition; with a few only of the words of God, I will make him gentle as a lamb. Give me a greedy, avaricious, tenacious wretch; and I will teach him to distribute his riches with an unsparing hand. Give me a cruel and blood-thirsty monster; and all his rage shall be exchanged to true benignity. Give me a man addicted to injustice, full of ignorance, and immersed in wickedness; he shall soon become just, prudent, and innocent."

Such was the testimony of one who witnessed the power of Christianity in the primitive age. Let us content ourselves with a single illustration of its influence in modern times, as exhibited in the following narrative extracted from an annual report of the Bible Society, issued some years ago.

"In 1787, the ship *Bounty* sailed from England to the Pacific in quest of young bread-fruit trees to be replanted in the West Indies. On her way home the crew mutinied, placed the master and eighteen others in a frail open boat, with scanty provisions, and committed them to the mercy of the ocean. Strange to tell, that boat accomplished a voyage of more than 4,000 miles and reached England in safety. The mutineers, twenty-five in number, set sail for some island in the Pacific. They quarrelled and separated. About half of the whole number were captured by an English vessel-of-war, carried home and hung in irons. Nine of these desperadoes went to Tahiti, took on board nineteen natives, seven men and twelve women, and sailed for some uninhabited island in the ocean. They found one, Pitcairn's Island. Shortly after landing, the Tahitian men murdered five of the mutineers, upon which the twelve women rose at night and killed their seven countrymen. Of the four remaining mutineers, one invented a distillery, and becoming delirious leaped from a cliff into the sea and was lost. Another was shot for attempting to destroy his messmates. Of the two then left, one died a natural death, and the other, named

John Adams, alone survived. Here their hiding-place was undisturbed until 1814, when it was visited, as also in 1825. Strange alterations had taken place. The number of inhabitants had increased to seventy. There was no debauchery amongst them. Good order prevailed. Filial affection and brotherly love pervaded the entire society. The blessing of God was invoked on every meal. Prayer was offered every morning, noon and evening. The laws of civilized society were in force. The rights of property were respected. A simple and pure morality was prevalent. How was this? What had made the change? Had vice wrought its own cure? Had there been some good principles combined with the mutiny and murder, the heathenism and devilish passions, which this gang had been guilty of? No. These evils never work their own cure, except by consuming, like a fire, their own materials. The cause of the change was this. Adams had saved, hid and preserved a Bible, and when his comrades were dead, he studied it, embraced its promises, believed God's testimony concerning his Son, was converted, read and taught its truths to his family and neighbors, and God blessed his word to their conversion also. That very Bible is now in this country. It is a small volume, printed in 1765. The salt sea and the salt tears of old Adams have taken away its gloss and dimmed its print; but it contains God's testimony of Jesus. That was the secret of its power. The worm has eaten it through and through. But the glad tidings to sinners can still be read in it. That Bible has travelled round the globe, has been the means of reforming a whole community of outlaws, and still lives to proclaim its divine Original and its life-giving power. When Adams was brought to his death-bed, he was old in years, but strong in faith. The friends of the old salt collected around him and asked: 'Well, John, what cheer?' 'Land ahead!' was his characteristic reply. After a few days they again gathered around him and said: 'Well, John, how now?' He replied: 'Rounding the point into the harbor.' At last he lay upon his dying pillow, and his relations were standing all around in tears, and yet in hope. One said: 'Brother, how now?' 'Let go the anchor,' was his dying exclamation, and he fell asleep."

Having taken this general but extended view of the rise, progress, and effects of Christianity, we may be permitted, in conclusion, to cast a single glance toward the future.

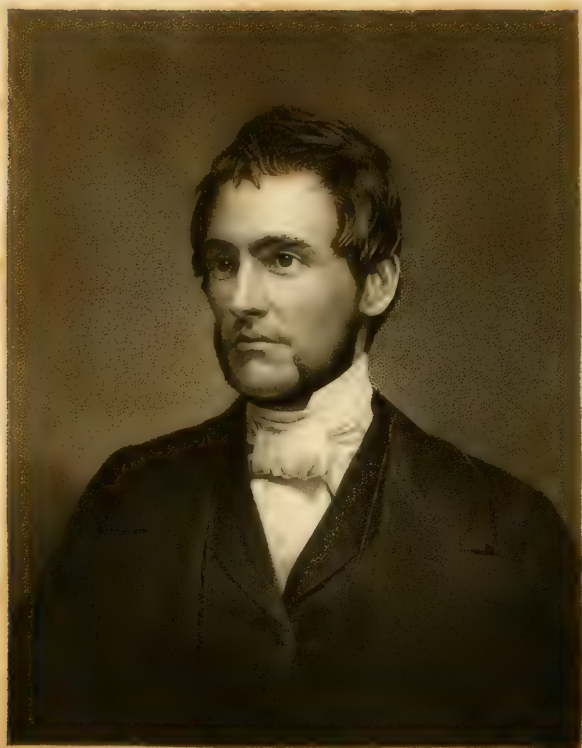
We have seen enough to convince us that our holy religion is

indestructible in its nature, possessing within itself no elements of decay, but the principle of immortality. The shield of God is spread over it, and the bosses of that buckler are eternal truth and power. There let infidelity hurl its darts until with nerveless, withered, wasted arm, it abandons the contest, with the confession that such assaults are more idle than casting straws against the impenetrable scales of Leviathan. Its past history gives the bright presage of its future victories. Amidst all the revolutions of ages, amidst all the desolations of time, amidst all the changing, vanishing creeds and institutions of the world, Christianity still survives; and rises to the view as beautiful and glorious, as on the day when arrayed in its primal loveliness, it came down from Heaven to redeem and regenerate the earth. "Serapis fell with Thebes, Baal with Babylon, Apollo with Delphi, and Jupiter with the capitol, but Christianity has often beheld the demolition of her sacred temples without being convulsed by their fall." It derives its vitality from Him who only hath immortality, and its shrine is not material walls, but the living heart of the good man. When its temples have been overthrown, and its disciples compelled to flee the haunts of civilized life, its hymns have charmed the solitude of the desert, its prayers have hallowed the damp walls of the dungeon, its sacraments have been celebrated in the dens of the earth, its most illustrious triumphs have been witnessed upon scaffolds, its brightest glories have blazed forth from the funeral piles of its martyrs. Other creeds have been like the clouds, for a time piled up in dizzy heights and bathed in the golden beams of the sun, while Christianity, like the sun itself, shines undimmed and unwasted, with none of its original glory obscured. Every day its expansive power becomes increasingly manifest. Its missionaries now traverse all lands, dare all climates, and tempt all seas.

With each returning Sabbath the praises of its exalted Author are murmured from ten thousand tongues; the strain is caught up from church to church, and from land to land, until the music goes echoing round the world.

And can we for a moment believe, that a religion so benign, so adapted in its provisions to the necessities and woes of the world, teaching sweet lessons of resignation under present sorrow, inspiring such joyous anticipations of future blessedness, can ever perish? No—these celestial hopes whose untiring wings waft the soul above all that is terrestrial, these sublime aspirations, whose

angel fingers point to the illimitable sky, and cheer the spirit with the foretaste of a destiny full of glory, honor, immortality, eternal life—oh no—these can never perish—they are heaven-born and indestructible. They can never be supplanted by a sullen, cheerless infidelity, which submits because it must, to inexorable fate—which has no prospects, but a cold, bleak world around, and a rayless eternity beyond—whose best discovery is, *a grave without a resurrection, and a world without a God.*



J. Moore

Inspiration of the Scriptures :

MORELL'S THEORY DISCUSSED AND REFUTED.

BY

THE REV. T. V. MOORE,

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HAS God spoken in an authenticated form to man? is one of the most momentous questions that man can ask or answer. If he has not, then a thousand demands of duty and of destiny crowd upon us for solution. What am I? Whence am I? Whither am I bound? Why am I here? What relation has my here to my hereafter? and kindred queries, rise clamorous and pressing upon the soul. We bend over the cradle to learn the mystery of our origin, but no note of intelligence comes from the little unconscious one that nestles there. We strain our gaze into the gloom of the grave to unravel the problem of our destiny, and ask "if a man die, shall he live again?" but no reply comes up from the voiceless dwelling of the worm, the clod, and the coffin. We turn to the living multitude, the rushing tide of men, and ask, what is truth? What is duty? What is happiness? What is safety? and there come up to us the infinite voices of a Babel confusion. The philosopher says it is here; the poet says it is here; the Brahmin says it is with me; the Gnostic says it is with me; the Academy and the Porch, the stern Stoic and the courtly Epicurean all cry that the light has come only to them; the Moslem points to the pale gleam of the Crescent and the Jew to the red glare of Sinai; the idealist and the materialist, the mystic and the sensationalist, the skeptic and the traditionalist, the eclectic and the indifferentist, all affirm that they only have the true voice of reason, and the true theory of existence. If then, there is no utterance from the eternal verity, who shall tell us what is the truth amidst this chaotic din of multitudinous voices? If there is no spear of Ithuriel, who shall disenchant for us the lurking spirit of falsity, and give us a test to distinguish the true from the untrue? If there is no clue to this tangled thicket, who shall thread the thorny labyrinth, and pluck for us the fruit of the tree of life? Alas! if we are left to ourselves, with our purblind vision, our flickering light, and our faltering step, the mournful

fate of those who have preceded us, relying on the same aids, warns us of what must be our inevitable destiny.

If God has not spoken to man, why did he give him the cruel capacity for such questions as these? If he meant to doom him to the brute's uncertainty, why did he not give him the precious boon of the brute's blank ignorance and content? Why did he furnish light for the eye, sound for the ear, fragrance and food for their respective organs, and a supply for every rightful demand that rises in our nature, but this highest, deepest, most momentous want of the soul?

But has he thus left us? Can it be, that he who preserves man and beast, who feeds the callow young of the sparrow, and hears the lions' whelps when they cry, has forsaken his noblest, greatest work, precisely at that point where it was most important that the law of supply existing below it, should continue to act? Has he left his crowning creature in the crowning purpose and need of his existence, as the ostrich leaves her egg in the lone and trackless desert, without parental oversight and bereft of parental supply? No! The deepest instincts of our nature, the widest generalizations of our experience, and the calmest conjectures of our reason unite in saying, it cannot be; God must have spoken; and if his words can but be recognized in the thousand-voiced din of this earthly Babel, we shall learn the truth to be believed and the duty to be performed.

If then he has spoken, the query arises, is it in a form accessible to all, the high and low, the ignorant and learned, the weak of mind as well as the mighty? And is it in a form sufficiently reliable to be made trustworthy to all who have access to it? These questions are equivalent to the inquiry, is such a thing possible to the human soul as the inspiration of the Almighty? If so, can its results be made certainly available to any other mind than that which originally receives it? This throws open to us the whole question of inspiration, its psychological possibility, its nature, its extent, and its existence as a fact in the writings of the Old and New Testament.

The views of those who have written on this wide question vary from the extreme of credulity and word-worship on the one side, to the extreme of skepticism and man-worship on the other. But they may all be thrown into two grand categories; they who affirm in some form, the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible, and they who in form or substance deny it. Of those who affirm

it, some content with J. D. Michaelis, and a few writers of the Socinian school, that some portions of the canonical Scriptures are thus inspired and some are not. Others, with Calamy, Haldane, and Gaussen,* in their otherwise excellent works on this subject, contend for the theory of verbal dictation, affirming that the canonical writers were the mere amanuenses of the Holy Ghost, writing just the very words that they were directed to write, and directed always to write the very words which they did write; a theory, however, which when defined and explained as they hold it, is found to be rather an unfortunate and extravagant statement of the truth, than an assertion of positive error. Others again, with Twisten, Smith, Dick, Parry, Wilson, Henderson, Chalmers, and the great body of Protestant theologians, hold, that whilst we need not and cannot affirm that the writers were mere scribes, recording with mechanical accuracy the mere and *ipsissima verba* dictated to them by the Holy Spirit, so that the subjective state of mind of Matthew in recording the fact that Christ was born in Bethlehem, was precisely the same with that of Micah in predicting it; yet that in every case there was such an influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the writers as infallibly to direct them what to say and what to omit, so that we should have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as far as was necessary to the main object of the Bible; and that whilst the very words were not in every case dictated to the writers, yet such an influence of the Spirit extended to the words selected, as to prevent the use of any that would express an error or an untruth. Of those who deny the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, some take the old ground of imposture and fraud, with the French school; others like Priestley and the low rationalistic party, admit the substantial truth of the facts, and veracity of the writers, but deny any divine influence to them, and assert either that the facts are not miraculous, or the record not correct; others, with Strauss, make the entire book a bundle of myths, ranking it with the legends of all ancient nations concerning the heroic ages of their history; whilst others, with Schleiermacher, admit an inspiration, but deny that it is either miraculous, infallible or peculiar to these writers.

The old theory of imposture is now abandoned by nearly all intelligent skeptics, and left to the mere *canaille* of infidelity. It

* Gaussen has recently disclaimed this theory, and indeed condemned it as mischievous. See D'Aubigné's *Authority of God*, p. 267.

is seen that it fails to account for the admitted facts of the case, to furnish any satisfactory explanation of the conduct of these men, or to account for the existence and influence of Christianity and the Bible as existing facts in human history. It is felt that these men must have been earnest, true, and sincere, to account for their impress on the world's life, by any of the ordinary laws of human nature; whilst to affirm any other laws, would be to allege a miracle for which there was no proof, to set aside miracles for which there was proof; and therefore to admit a miracle more incredible than those that were rejected. But modern criticism will take a further step than this, and admit that these writers were the actual recipients of a real divine enlightenment, but will deny that they were so enlightened as to be the infallible expounders of truth and duty, or that their writings can be called inspired in any other sense than the word may be loosely and inaccurately applied to the writings of any great, earnest and enlightened men, who have been the subjects of an *afflatus* of genius. This we believe to be essentially the view presented by Carlyle in his essay on Voltaire, and Sartor Resartus, book iii. ch. 7; by Bailey, Leigh Hunt, the Westminster Review, and other organs of literary skepticism or free thinking on religious subjects in our own day.

We have thought it best in an exercise like the present, not to attempt a discussion of the whole subject, which must be little better than a meagre epitome of the common-places of apologetical theology; but to refer you to the works already named for a full treatment of the whole theme, and grapple directly with what is the most prevalent form of error on this subject at present in the minds of educated and literary men. Happily for our purpose, we have this theory set forth in a detailed and scientific form, which gives us something tangible and definite to encounter. Mr. Morell, who gained no small reputation by his History of Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century, has published a Philosophy of Religion, in which he presents this theory in the most formal and elaborate manner, and sets up for it the most able and successful defence that we have seen in our language. As the alternative is confessedly between this theory and the old one of plenary inspiration, the overthrow of the one will be the admitted establishment of the other.

We propose then to subject to a detailed and critical examination, Mr. Morell's Theory of Inspiration, as set forth in his Philosophy of Religion.

His theory of Inspiration is based on his psychology, but yet may be described in terms sufficiently explicit, without entering into the details of his system of intellectual philosophy. Adopting the division of the mental operations naturalized in our language by Coleridge, under the terms Reason and Understanding, or as Mr. M. prefers to designate them, the Intuitional and the Logical Consciousness, he affirms inspiration to be exclusively a phenomenon of the pure reason. It is simply an elevation of the intuitive power to a clearer perception of spiritual truth than could ordinarily be attained, but not an influence extending to the reasoning faculties of the writers so as to insure accuracy of premises or conclusion; nor to their memories, securing accuracy of recollection; nor to their judgments, ensuring a proper selection of facts and opinions; nor to their writing of these views, reasonings or recollections, ensuring a fair, truthful and infallible record: that this inspiration is not generically different from that which poets and other men of genius enjoy, or from a high degree of personal holiness; that in no proper sense can the phrase be applied to the Bible so as to assert it to be an infallible rule of faith and practice; that the writers of Scripture do not claim any such inspiration for their writings; nor is any such consistent with the nature of the human mind. Such is the theory which he advances as the only rational hypothesis, and as that which is gradually taking its place in the opinions of the literary and philosophical world. Let us first look at the arguments on which he rests it, and then at the positive evidence against it.

It is affirmed that inspiration being a state of the mind, it is impossible that a book can be inspired any more than that a book can reason or feel.

At first sight this would seem to be a mere quibble and play upon words, but the prominence given to it by Mr. M., especially in his chapter on Revelation, shows that he regards it as presenting a plain impossibility in the way of the common theory. But, in spite of the value which he evidently attaches to it, it is obviously equivalent to the allegation, that because genius is an attribute of the mind, therefore there can be no such thing as a work of genius; or because imagination and reasoning are operations of the mind, therefore there can be no work of poetry or logic. Granting for the present, that the inspiration of the canonical writers was not generically different from that of the poet or the philosopher, it will at least follow, that they are governed by

the same laws. Now it is certain, that there is no impossibility in giving a record of the mental operations of the poet and the philosopher, which shall be a fair and reliable transcript of the subjective states of mind existing in each particular case, and which shall be rightfully termed poetry and philosophy. Now, if the inspired mind perceives spiritual truth, as the poet and philosopher perceive poetic and philosophical truth, why should that be impossible in the one case, which is possible in the other? Why should the power that produced the inspiration be supposed incapable of extending to the record, and securing a faithful transcript? This is a power which even a man possesses in regard to his fellow, why should it be denied to God? If one man may suggest thoughts to the mind of another, may induce him to record them in his own language, and may superintend that record so as to secure a faithful representation of these thoughts in words, why should the same power be denied to that God who created man and gave him all his power? It would surely be possible for God to cause a human mind to perceive a perfect system of mathematical truth. It would also be possible for him so to influence that mind, that it would make a correct record of this system in mathematical language. Such a record would then be an infallible arbiter to which an appeal could be carried in every case of disputed mathematics. Why is the same process impossible as to religious truth?

It is said with an air of triumph in reply to this, that such a record of religious truth would be no revelation to a mind that was not raised to the same level of spiritual intuitions. Granted, but would it not be a revelation to one that was? The revealed system of mathematical truth would not be a revelation to one who had no mathematical perceptions, but would it not be to one who had? So that even were it true, that the inspired writers recorded nothing but that which could be comprehended only by one who was capable of like spiritual intuitions, still it would be true that to such an one the record might be an infallible transcript of the subjective state of the inspired writer.

But it is not true, that either the value or the comprehension of every part of this record, is limited to minds capable of like spiritual intuitions, any more than it is true that the value and comprehension of every part of Newton's *Principia* are limited to minds capable of the same mathematical perceptions. There are many scientific truths which ordinary minds could never have dis-

covered, but which they readily comprehend when discovered, as Columbus has shown with his memorable egg. So there are many things which the unaided human mind could never have originated in regard to spiritual and eternal realities, or if originated, could never have verified, but which, when once stated in language, are clearly and readily comprehended.

We do not as yet affirm, that the Scriptures are verbally inspired, because of the inspiration of the writers, but we do affirm that there is nothing impossible in such a declaration of facts. As an executive proclamation may be declared authoritative because of the authority of him that issued it; as a will may be called testamentary because of the devisory powers vested in the testator; as a book may be called mathematical because of the thoughts which a mathematical mind has embodied in it; so may the Scriptures in the same sense be called inspired, because they set forth in true and faithful manifestation the mental and spiritual state of their inspired writers.

This preliminary difficulty being removed, we meet Mr. M. on the ground where, after all, the issue must be decided, the contents of the book itself. He affirms that these contents contradict the theory of plenary, verbal inspiration, and demand the one under discussion.

It is said that if the Bible had come from God in this plenary sense, it would have been given in a more perfect and finished form, and not in that fragmentary and successive manner, in pursuance of which, most of its books seem to have been forced into existence by the exigencies of existing circumstances, rather than as the result of a settled plan for revealing a complete system of religious truth.

We ask in return, has not the earth come forth from the immediate hand of God? Why then are not its materials arranged with greater regularity? Why are its rocks not located according to a perfect system of geology, its flora according to a perfect system of botany, and its animals according to a perfect system of zoology? If there are reasons of convenience to man requiring such an arrangement of God's material revelation of himself, may not the same arrangements be required in the spiritual revelation of the same great Nature? And if these arrangements do not blot out the mighty sign-manual of Jehovah in the enduring rocks, the waving forests, and the roaming tribes of living things, or cause us to doubt their immediate issue from his hand, why

should they have this effect in the unfoldings of himself in his word? If he built not the mighty masonry of the Alps according to any of the five orders of architecture, and channelled not the rolling rush of the Amazon according to the rules of the engineer, why should we demand that a yet more wonderful revelation of himself should come forth, Minerva-like, in the hard, polished and inflexible panoply of a rigid methodical science?

If it be replied that the objection is rather to the successive and gradual development in fragments of this alleged revelation, than to its want of scientific arrangement, then we answer this by another question. Does not the geologist tell us that the earth passed through many stages of existence, countless ages before it was fitted for man in its present form? Is it not passing through such changes now? Does this gradual and successive unfolding of its states militate against its origin immediately from the hand of God? Why then should the same fact prove that the Bible in the same plenary sense cannot be the product of the immediate hand of Jehovah?

If it be objected to this analogy, that the revelation of God adduced is one that was made in blind unconscious matter, and not in living and conscious spirits, we meet the evasion from another direction. Those with whom we argue now, assert that God is in human history, and that aside from and beyond the agency of man, there is a direct and immediate exertion of the Divine finger in unfolding its great principles and results. Now has not the Bible, as to the point objected to, come forth precisely according to the unfoldings of human history? Has it not a clearness of arrangement, an unity of purpose, and a completeness of parts, that cannot yet be affirmed of that history? If then we contend that in like wise, above and beyond the human impulses and agencies engaged in the production of the Bible, there was a Divine power specially directing and determining, to the last jot and tittle, its form and structure, shall the fact which does not disprove such an interposition in the world's history, disprove it in the Scriptures?

But we go further and affirm, that this state of facts was more imperatively demanded in the case of the Scriptures than in any of the others. Why was God made manifest in the flesh? Obviously because the great purposes designed to be effected in and for the human race by the incarnation, demanded that the Divine should be manifested through the human, and not through the

angelic, or any new form of created personal existence. Now the very same necessities demanded likewise that the revelation of the Divine to man in thought, emotion and word, should be made through human minds and human hearts. And that it may come in contact with human nature at all its points, it must not be made through but one man, or one class of men, but through such a variety of men as would enable the Divine afflatus to breathe through the whole gamut of human sympathy, emotion and character, from the lowliest fisherman of Galilee, and the humblest herdsman of Tekoah, to the loftiest sage of Egypt, the sublimest bard of Judea, and the subtlest logician of the school of Gamaliel. And the same reasons that made it needful that he who was "God over all, blessed forever," should manifest himself in human form in the "seed of David," made it also necessary that the revelation of the same God in word, should be through this same wondrous Hebrew race. Were the human race all moulded in precisely the same matrix of character, thought, emotion and external position, this objection to the Bible as coming directly from the hand of God, might possibly lie. But with all the varieties and inequalities of human condition, it is as absurd as to challenge the Divine origin of the wondrous vesture of atmosphere that wraps the round earth, because at one time it lies thin and cold on the mountain top, at another dense and heavy in the valley; at one time hangs red and fiery over the far-stretching desert, at another cool and transparent over the dewy landscape of spring; and at one time sleeps softly and pulselessly in the still calm, and at another rushes wildly and fearfully in the terrible hurricane. Variety marks God's handiwork in nature, and cannot therefore disprove it in revelation.

The defective morality of the Old Testament is objected to its plenary inspiration.

If this means that the standard of actual attainment in practical ethics was lower under the Old Testament than under the New, we concede it, but this fact does not touch the question of the inspiration of these books. They record the precise facts of the case with infallible accuracy, and on the correctness of this record we can rely, for the very reason that it is an inspired document. If however the objection means that the standard of requisition was lower, we meet it with an emphatic denial. Christ gave no moral law that was not found in the Old Testament, and corrected nothing of what was said in the old time but

the corrupt glosses and traditions of the fathers. The evil conduct of Noah and David are recorded in warning and condemnation in the Old Testament precisely as we have that of Judas and Peter in the New. And in regard to acts and customs which are there approved, such as are not and ought not to be permitted now, we affirm that under the particular circumstances of the case, they were perfectly consistent with the immutable principles of morality. The Levirate law, the law of the avenger of blood, the water of jealousy, the *judicial* rule of the *lex talionis*, and similar institutions, had their origin in that partly nomadic and imperfect state of social life from which the Hebrew tribes sprang, and were sanctioned and regulated because it was better to allow them temporarily to exist than violently to abolish them; and existing by consent of society and permission of God, they violated no principle of morality. The spoiling of the Egyptians, the extermination of the Canaanites, and similar acts, were done by the command of God; were right then, and if commanded by God would not be wrong now. The rights of life and property are not absolute in man, but only contingent on the will of God, and he may take them away, either by a pestilence and a whirlwind, or by the squadrons of an invading army. Men in such cases are but the executioners, and surely it will not be denied that the right to dispose of human life and property according to his will, is vested in the Creator and Sovereign of all, in the highest and most absolute sense. In all this then there is nothing that contradicts a plenary verbal inspiration.

The inconsistency of the Bible with the results of modern scientific research is also objected.

There is usually much inattention or much disingenuousness evinced in pressing this argument. It is affirmed with great triumph that the writers of the Bible were ignorant of many of the facts of natural science, and hence have used language in regard to the phenomena of the physical world to which they attached conceptions scientifically incorrect. This is deemed sufficient to prove that they did not possess a plenary inspiration. We grant that these writers often used language to which they may have attached notions in their own minds, which, owing to their ignorance of natural science, were scientifically false. But we affirm that this language, when fairly interpreted, does not assert these scientific errors, and that, as we shall subsequently show, their remarkable preservation from the declaration of scientific

error is one of the most signal indications of the superintending inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Nor is this peculiar to the language that refers to natural phenomena. The writers of Scripture often used language the real and full signification of which they did not and could not understand. The Apostle Peter directly affirms this fact when he states (1 Pet. i. 10-12) that after the ancient prophets wrote their prophecies they sat down reverently to study their meaning, "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow: unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven." When Malachi declared that Elijah must come, we cannot suppose that he thought of John the Baptist. And when David declared "they parted my garments among them, and on my vesture did they cast lots," we cannot believe that he saw the gambling of the Roman soldiers on Calvary. But in these and similar cases, the writers used language attaching certain conceptions to it, which we now see, not only fairly bears another signification, but was actually designed to have such a meaning, and hence we give it that interpretation. So we affirm that in precise accordance with this general principle which runs through the whole Bible, Moses, Job, Joshua and David used language referring to natural phenomena, to which they attached conceptions corresponding with the cosmogony and astronomy of the age; but we contend that in no case have they been allowed to assert the truth of these scientific misconceptions. They either used language that is susceptible of an interpretation conformable to the truth, or they used the popular forms of speech that describe things as they seem to be, and not as they are.

We are flippantly told that Joshua talks of the sun standing still; that David speaks of a Hades, which he supposed to be under the earth; that Paul speaks of a third Heaven which he supposed to be just beyond the stellar dome; and that all the writers on the work of redemption speak of the earth as possessing an importance which astronomy shows it does not possess in the universe.

But we ask the objector, does not every treatise on practical astronomy speak of the sun rising, and setting, and crossing the line of the equinox, when in strictness these things are not so? But is any one ever deceived? Is not this use of language an abso-

lute necessity unless we would talk nonsense or confusion? And whatever David thought, does he anywhere assert that Hades is under the earth? Does he ever do more than use language intelligible to his contemporaries? And does Paul anywhere assert that Heaven is a mere third story in the great ascending circles of the creation? If then, to show those to whom he wrote that he meant, not the atmospheric or stellar Heaven, but the Paradise of God, he used the common designation, the third Heavens, did he affirm any proposition that Lord Rosse's telescope shows to be untrue? And when the Scripture doctrine of redemption gives the earth an importance of position that is not assigned to it by astronomy, does it follow that these representations are mutually contradictory? Does not history give to Thermopylæ, Actium and Waterloo an importance that geography does not? But are these representations, though both correct, in any real contradiction? Would not any man be called a fool who would question the statements of history as to the stupendous influence that the scenes there enacted have had on the world's destiny, because these spots are not as large as many a gentleman's plantation? When, therefore, the Bible asserts that the earth is the very Thermopylæ of the universe, shall this same objection be flaunted in our faces, as a mark of superior wisdom and scientific culture?

Suppose a fragment were found in some writer anterior to the age of Hesiod, asserting that the sky which hung over the north pole was not upheld by the walls of a crystal sphere as some contended, but was suspended over the void of empty space, and that the earth itself was self-poised over nothing, would not such a passage be triumphantly adduced by the scholar as a most amazing anticipation of astronomical science in later times? And yet when we find in a writer older than the very language of Greece, the sublime couplet,

"He spreadeth the north over the empty space,
And hangeth the earth upon nothing:"*

such a fragment is skipped over with a contemptuous fling at Hebrew cosmogony.

The same unfairness appears in the objections drawn from geology. The Bible nowhere affirms that the matter of the world is but six thousand years old. On the contrary, when it speaks of the earth as compared with the race of man that lives upon it,

* Job xxvi. 7.

it represents the one as the fitting type of that high and solitary One who is from everlasting to everlasting, while the other is as the grass which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up, and in the evening is cut down and withereth. It simply affirms of the Heavens and the earth that in the beginning they were created by God. Does geology contradict this? It also affirms that about six thousand years ago, the earth received in six days substantially its present arrangement, from a pre-existent state of chaotic confusion, and it describes this sublime scene with graphic and dramatic beauty, as it would have appeared to a spectator standing on the earth and gazing on these mighty changes as they went forward. Does geology contradict this, or show it to be impossible? It asserts that some four thousand years ago there was an universal deluge of waters, miraculously and judicially spread over the earth. Now even if the flood-marks that were once pointed out as traces of the deluge, may be explained on other grounds, is there anything in geological researches that contradicts the testimony of history and tradition in regard to this great and awful fact? Does geology do anything more than leave it an open question? Whilst then we admire this young Titan of the sciences as it upheaves the foundations of the earth, and shows us the mighty corner-stones of its structure; and whilst we are grateful to it for its contributions to natural and even remotely to revealed theology; yet when it leaves its pickaxe and hammer among the rocks, and attempts on some Pelion or Ossa of gigantic speculation to scale the battlements of God's own council chamber, and impeach the fidelity of a record with which it has legitimately nothing to do, we must meet it with the stern words that came to the startled Emir of Uz, from the dark throat of the storm—

“ Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?
 Gird up now thy loins like a man;
 I will put questions to thee, and do thou inform me.
 Where wast thou when I founded the earth?
 Declare, if thou hast knowledge!
 Who then fixed the measure of it? For thou knowest!
 Who stretched the line upon it?
 Upon what are its foundations settled?
 Or who laid its corner-stone?
 When the morning stars sang together,
 And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
 Who shut up the sea with doors
 In its bursting forth as from the womb?
 When I made the cloud its garment,

And swathed it in thick darkness?
 I measured out for it my limits,
 And fixed its bars and doors;
 And said, thus far shalt thou come, but no further,
 And here shall thy proud waves be stayed !”*

Whilst we know the dignified and reverent response that will be made by the truly philosophical geologist to this sublime challenge; whilst we rejoice to meet in the Bucklands, the Pye Smiths, the Millers, and the Hitchcocks, men not more eminent for their love of God's works than their reverence for God's word; and whilst we freely acquit this noble science of any antagonism or hostility to revelation honestly interpreted, yet we also know that the stern rebuke it conveys is richly deserved by the sciolist and the smatterer, who ignorant or forgetful of the legitimate province of human science betakes himself to world-building and world-dreaming about “the natural history of creation.”

We cannot go into any farther detail in meeting this class of objections, having said enough to indicate the general principles on which all the alleged discrepancies of scientific truth with revelation, may be fully and fairly met and set aside. When the Bible is fairly interpreted, there is no such discrepancy with any established fact of science. The fancies of interpreters and the fancies of philosophers may conflict, but fancies are not facts, and neither science nor revelation should be held accountable for the follies of their friends. God speaking in his works, can never contradict God speaking in his word, and we need give ourselves no anxiety about any possible inconsistency between the two utterances. The watchful and hostile jealousy with which science has sometimes been regarded by good men, as something fraught with possible danger to the truth of revelation, is as impolitic as it is unreasonable. Let the students of each explore their own department without any jealous or suspicious reference to the other, and their results in the end, when clearly reached, will be found as perfectly consistent as the laws of astronomy and the facts of geology; like them, the one is of heaven and the other of earth, but both the interpreters of him who has made both heaven and earth.

We do not affirm that everything in the Bible is true, but we do affirm that everything which the Bible says to be true, is true. We do not affirm that all the opinions set forth, and all the acts

* Job xxxviii, 1-11. Barnes' translation.

recorded there are right ; but we do affirm that these opinions were held and these acts done, precisely as they are represented. We do not affirm that Moses understood geology, David the Copernican system, or Paul the categories and predicables of logic ; but we do affirm that neither Moses nor David have declared anything to be scientifically true, which is scientifically false ; and that if Paul sometimes reaches his conclusion by one gigantic bound, instead of climbing the slow ladder of an authorized syllogism, he yet never reaches a conclusion that is untrue, or asserts a premise that is untenable. And if the grinders of Kant's categories say that they cannot understand some of Paul's reasonings, and that they seem to them palpably illogical, we have only to remind them of the gruff response of the old literary Leviathan to a similar objection, "Sir, I am bound to furnish you with arguments, not brains."

It is affirmed that the writers of the Bible do not claim such a power as we ascribe to them. If by this is meant, that each writer does not in express and formal terms always announce, that he is commissioned to write by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we grant it. Suppose that they had made this constant reiteration of plenary authority, would it not then have been objected, that this anxious solicitude to assert these pretensions implied a secret conviction that there was too much ground to question them ? Is not this uneasy assertion of divine authority, such as we see in the Koran or the book of Mormon, one of the recognized marks of imposture ? If this feature had been found in the Bible as the objection demands, would not the philosophic eye have detected in it the want of that grand and lofty indifference, that feeling of the self-evidencing character of their claims, that is the characteristic of all true power and all divine impulse ? Does every message of a President or a King contain a formal statement of the right by which he thus speaks ? Does every act and record of a legislature contain the commissions and certificates of election by virtue of which its members enact laws ? Does every paper of an ambassador contain a formal assertion of his plenipotentiary powers ? Would not such a thing be either suspicious or ridiculous ? Why then is it demanded of the writers of the Bible ?

Do you say that it is unreasonable to ask you to receive these books as authoritative, without some authentication of their authority ? We grant it ; but reply that it is equally unreasonable to

demand this particular form of authentication, and be satisfied with no other, when it is freely dispensed with in analogous cases. Let the authority of a man to write, speak or act, be distinctly recognized and sanctioned by those competent to decide on his qualifications, and whether he asserts it or not, we are bound to admit it on the endorsement of these competent judges. If then these writers have sometimes asserted positively that they were speaking the very words of God, using such formulas as "thus saith the Lord," &c.; if, in other cases, they have asserted it impliedly by the awful authority they claim for the words they utter, and the terrible sanctions they assert as belonging to them; if, in other cases, an authentication was given them by those whose circumstances enabled them to decide upon the proofs of their commission; if the entire volume was regarded by them as the work of the Holy Ghost, and designated by specific titles, such as the oracles of God, the Scriptures, &c. &c., the absence of this formal claim in each particular case, cannot be held to disprove the alleged inspiration of the Spirit. That the marks above named are found in all the canonical books, is fully shown in any ordinary treatise on the Canon of Scripture.

But if the absence of a formal claim to a verbal inspiration be an argument against its existence, a similar omission as to any other kind of inspiration must be equally conclusive against its existence. Now it so happens, that the writers of the Scriptures in no instance claim any such inspiration as Mr. M. refers to them, nor is it even pretended, that they have ever done so. If then this alleged absence of claim (which we do not admit) disproved the verbal theory, much more must it disprove the one brought in its place, for the wildest dreamer has never pretended, that the writers of the Scriptures claimed to be simply enlightened as to their intuitive consciousness. This objection then, if it proves anything, proves too much, for it strikes Mr. M.'s theory even more fatally than it does that of plenary verbal inspiration.

But the most extraordinary position taken by M. Morell is, that the primitive church did not regard these books as verbally inspired. This is a marvellous assertion in the direct view of the very superstition with which many in the primitive church regarded the mere words of the Scripture; the mysteries that they often found in the very letters of Holy Writ, and the controversies that existed as to the right of some books to be admitted into the Canon. We cannot enter into the proof of this position in detail,

but must be content with referring to sources where that proof is spread out at length. Dr. Rudelbach, a German, has collected the testimonies to this point with great industry and patience. And to those to whom this work is not accessible, we may recommend Paley's *Evidences*, Lardner's *Credibility*; Daillé on the *Fathers*, book 2, chap. 2; Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, book 2, ch. 3, rule 14; Bingham's *Antiquities*, book 14, ch. 3; or Whitby's *Prefaces* in his *Commentary on the New Testament*. In any of these, enough will be found to show that this assertion is grossly incorrect.

Such then is the defence that is set up for this theory of inspiration, which after all is not so much a defence as an attack. It is remarkable, that in accordance with the ancient tactics on this question, the only plea set up for the new theory is an assault upon the old, as if the overthrow of the one was the necessary establishment of the other. As then we have seen these objections to be unfounded, the old theory remains unharmed, whilst the new one, by its own chosen mode of warfare, is defeated. Here then we might pause, but that the truth may be triumphantly vindicated, we shall take a new position and pass from the attitude of defence to that of attack. We turn now to the positive evidence against this theory.

The first objection we urge against this theory is, that it is a mere figment, invented without any reference to the facts to be explained, or the phenomena to be elucidated.

Sidney Smith once wittily objected to reading a book before reviewing it, because it had such a tendency to prejudice a man. One would be almost disposed to think that Mr. M. had taken the advice of the laughter-loving Canon of St. Paul's. He undertakes to describe the subjective condition of inspired men, and yet not once does he refer to the account given by these men themselves of their state of mind. He professes to furnish a theory that shall explain all the facts of the case, yet never once alludes to those facts in constructing this theory. He assumes a certain psychology, and because he cannot find in its ordinary workings such a phenomenon as verbal inspiration, he denies its existence, in the very face of the reiterated affirmation that this is not one of the ordinary, but one of the extraordinary, phases of the human soul. He forms his theory and then tells us that if the facts are not conformable to it, they ought to be, and gives himself no further trouble with them. This mode of procedure in constructing

any hypothesis is unphilosophical, but in framing a theory on facts so unique and solemn as these, it is unpardonable.

But it is not only constructed without reference to the facts to be explained, but also in direct inconsistency with them.

It asserts that inspiration belongs to the writers of Scripture, but not to the Scripture itself. This assertion is flatly contradicted in the account given by the writers themselves of the matter. 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Here it is asserted that the writing is inspired, and not simply the writers, and a writing can be inspired only by a verbal inspiration. The *theopneusty* is affirmed of the Scripture and not of the writers. If it be asked what is meant by this theopneusty, or inspiration of God, we are answered in 2 Pet. i. 21, "Holy men of God *spake* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The words of Scripture then were the result of the action of the Holy Ghost on the minds of the writers, and therefore, the subjects of inspiration. To place this beyond all question, the same Apostle asserts (1 Pet. i. 10-12), that these men did not always know the full significance of the words they were directed to use, but searched into their meaning, because these words were intended rather for a later age of the Church than for that which first received them. And this language is sanctioned by our Lord himself when he affirms, Matt. xxii. 43, that David spake by the Holy Ghost when inditing the Psalms; and extended to the whole Jewish Canon, when he appeals to the Scriptures on every question concerning truth and duty, stating that they cannot be broken (John x. 34, 35); that they are an infallible tribunal of appeal in every question as to God's will (Matt. xix. 4-6; John v. 39), thus sanctioning the doctrine of the Jewish Church as to these writings, that they are truly the word of God. And this verbal inspiration is affirmed by our Lord yet more emphatically, when we find him at times basing important arguments on the mere and apparently casual use of a word, as in the case of the doctrine of the resurrection. Matt. xxii. 32. It is also implied, where he directs the Jews to search the Scriptures, as a perfect standard of truth, and declares that whilst heaven and earth shall pass away, not one jot or tittle of them shall ever pass away unfulfilled. These strong affirmations it must be noted were made not of the mental state of the writers, but of their writings, thus endorsing the claim set up for these writings as the word of God,

the oracles of God, and the writings that stood apart and sacred from all others as the infallible standard of truth and duty. This high claim was extended from the Old Testament to the New by Peter, when he classed the writings of Paul with the other Scriptures, 2 Pet. iii. 16. How far this divine superintendence and authority extended, is explained by Paul when he says, 1 Cor. ii. 13, "Which things we speak not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" and also, 1 Thess. ii. 13, "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." And lest this should be referred to his oral rather than his written instructions, he expressly affirms in 2 Cor. x. 11, and 2 Thess. ii. 15, that they are of equal authority. When, therefore, it is affirmed that all Scripture is inspired; that the very words are taught by the Holy Ghost; when Paul explains in what sense he uses this language, as to his own writings, and Peter extends this sense to all the rest, by classifying Paul's writings with "the other Scriptures," can there be a more audacious misstatement than that which alleges that these men do not claim for their writings the plenary verbal inspiration of the Holy Ghost?

This theory is contradicted by the authority which these writers claim for their writings.

A clear and broad distinction is made between these and all other writings, declaring the one to be the word of man, the other the word of God. Many of them prefix to their statements the formula, "thus saith the Lord," which, if it means anything, must mean that the words they were about to utter, were not theirs, but God's. Hence they claim the most awful authority for everything that they say, and demand our unconditional belief under the most terrific penalties. They say, "We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us," 1 John iv. 6; "We *command* you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 6; "He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God," 1 Thess. ii. 13. If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed. Here is an authority the most fearful known to men, claimed to challenge belief. Belief is the assent of the mind to a proposition. A proposition must be set forth in words. To demand belief, therefore, under sanctions so terrible, is to claim an authority for their words which can only be explained on the theory of their plenary verbal inspiration.

This theory is contradicted by the specific promises of Christ made to his disciples.

Every man who has a new discovery in science to announce to the world, takes care to secure such a vehicle of transmission as shall, with all possible accuracy, declare precisely what his discoveries are. Every government which has any great transaction to proclaim, whether it be a law, a treaty, or an amnesty on specified conditions, uses great care in securing correctness in its records, that these records may clearly and certainly set forth the precise facts which are necessary to be known, in a form that will be trustworthy and reliable. Were a government to be careless on this point, it would be justly chargeable with a gross and criminal indifference to the interests and rights of its subjects. It was justly regarded as one of the most atrocious marks of tyranny and injustice in a Roman emperor, that he enacted laws and caused them to be hung up so high on pillars that no one could with certainty and distinctness make out their precise requisitions.

Now if it be true that there are great discoveries of life and immortality to be brought to light in the gospel, is it credible that no special arrangements would be made to secure the record of these discoveries in language that will not deceive or mislead? If the government of God has laws to proclaim, treaties of reconciliation to propose, and amnesties of pardon on certain conditions to offer, would it not be a refinement of cruelty beyond that of Caligula, to require us to conform to these high transactions on peril of eternal penalties, and yet make no arrangements by which we should certainly know what they were? Would it not be monstrous to suppose that these awful utterances of the Eternal voices were flung forth to the winds, with less care to secure the certain accuracy of their record than was given to the leaves that came forth from the cave of the Cumæan Sibyl? The supposition is incredible, yet it is the precise supposition required by the theory under discussion. But what are the facts of the case? Did Jesus Christ, after such unspeakable toil and agony to work out a plan of salvation for man, make no arrangements for its secure record and transmission to those for whom it was intended? Did he do even less than Caligula, who at least caused his enactments to be written? Did he treat this most wondrous of all the productions of creative might, as the ostrich treats her egg, leaving its preservation to the oversight of mere chance? No! He

promised a specific divine assistance in communicating this religion to men. "The Holy Ghost shall teach you what you ought to say." "The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things." "He shall guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come." Luke xii. 12; John xiv. 26; xvi. 13; xv. 26, 27, &c. In these and kindred passages, Christ promises to the disciples, (1.) That the Holy Ghost should be given to them. (2.) That he would suggest to them the very words they must utter, so that even premeditation was not necessary. (3.) That as conversations were to be stated which no ordinary memory could retain, and facts announced which no ordinary sagacity could predict, their minds should be certified as to the past, the present, and the future. (4.) That as the result of this, their words were deserving of the most unquestioning faith as infallibly true.

Now we care not how you limit this promise, still it explains the nature of inspiration in a way that overthrows this theory. Even if limited to the specific case in reference to which it was made, it affirms the extension of inspiration to the very words of the inspired men, giving those words a divine, and therefore, an infallible authority. This is in direct contradiction of the theory under discussion.

But to suppose its limitation to one specific case, is to stultify our Lord in the arrangements he made for the promulgation of his laws, and the extension of his kingdom; as well as to charge him with the most heartless indifference to those for whom he showed the highest possible regard and interest, in the highest possible way. It would be to suppose the giving of divine aid when his followers needed it least, and withholding it when they needed it most. It would be to suppose that they had this inspiration when they were speaking to a few Jews with the tongue, and that they had it not when they were speaking to the whole world in the most distant generations, by the pen. It would be to suppose that this divine influence was extended to their words when nothing depended upon those words but their acquittal before some petty tribunal, but was withdrawn when the belief or unbelief of these words was to determine the salvation of unborn millions. These suppositions being preposterous and incredible, the promises of our Lord most distinctly guarantee the verbal inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the promulgation of his religion,

and therefore in the Scriptures, its promulgation to the whole world.

Another fact that stands in contradiction of this theory is, the remarkable freedom of these men from the errors incident to their age.

Had they all been men of the same generation and the same country, so that mutual understanding might be supposed ; had they been disciples of the same school, trained under the same influences, or even all been men of a high degree of mental culture, this remarkable fact might more readily be explained. But the reverse of these are the facts. They were men of every grade, both of intellect and culture, from the sage who was versed in all the lore of Egypt, and the orator who studied at the feet of Gamaliel, to the lowly herdsman of Tekoa, and the unlettered fisherman of Galilee. They were found in every part of the civilized world, from the templed margin of the solemn Nile, to the shady banks of the lordly Euphrates ; from the lonely sands of Arabia, and the rocky deserts of Judea, to the metropolitan splendors of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth and Rome. They were trained under every school of belief, from the dreamy pantheism of Central Asia, and the gigantic astrologies of Egypt, to the gorgeous polytheism of Greece, and the godless epicureanism of Rome. They run through fifty generations of the human race, from the sage who wrote, and the bard who sung, six hundred years before Lycurgus gave his laws, or Homer tuned his lyre, to the lonely exile of Patmos, who saw the splendid sunset of the Augustan day of Roman literature and art. They give us every species of composition, from those daring lyrics that seem written to the awful notes of the whirlwind or the terrible crash of the thunder, to the most jejune genealogies and the most iron-jointed chain-work of argument. They allude incidentally to every department of Nature, from Arcturus and Orion, to the lilies of the field.

Now why do we find these writers agreeing with each other so wonderfully that no fair mind has, as some of the first intellects of the world believe, ever yet detected a contradiction ? Why have they given us a philosophy sublimer than Plato's, and an ethics purer than Aristotle's ? And why do they so strangely escape the errors of their day ? Why have they not given us such theogonies and cosmogonies as Hesiod, Ovid and Lucretius ; such pantheism as the Greeks ; such astrology as the Egyptians ;

or such wild, monstrous and incredible tales as we have gravely recorded in the Natural Histories of Aristotle and the elder Pliny? Why have these fifty men, writing during the fifteen hundred years that cover the four great monarchies, and the splendid eras of Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Grecian and Roman civilization, and appearing, most of them at least, in an obscure and trampled province, yet been kept from mere scientific error, as no fifty writers of the same period have been, even though you select them from the most learned and lofty intellects of the age?

If it be said that it was the nature of the subjects on which they wrote, that preserved them from error and puerility, then we place the fifty fathers of the Christian church beside the fifty writers of the Scripture, and ask why the nature of the subjects did not preserve them from such mistakes? Read Tertullian's ascription of feeling and understanding to plants; Augustine's vehement and scornful denunciation of the allegation that there were antipodes; Ambrose's opinion that the sun drew up water to cool and refresh himself in his extreme heat; and countless errors in history, geography, philology and criticism; and tell us why these fifty men, writing during fifteen hundred years, were exempted from the errors into which the fifty Christian fathers fell, writing, with the Scriptures in their hands, during less than five hundred years?

If it be said that it was because of the darkness that settled on the world after the waning of the Roman glory, we meet this evasion by an *exemplum crucis*. We have apocryphal writings that date back so near to the apostolic age that some have contended for their canonical authority. There are gospels, acts, and epistles which are evident imitations of those found in the New Testament canon, and which were obviously written by those who believed in Christianity as a religion from God. If then there was no special influence exerted on the New Testament writers to preserve them from error, they were in precisely the position of the writers of these apocryphal productions, and liable to the same errors. Indeed, when we remember that the apocryphal writers had the advantage of having the books of the New Testament before them, and that from the nature of the case they who would attempt such a task must have had as much intellectual culture as the simple and unlettered fishermen of Galilee, we would naturally expect a greater exemption from error in the apocryphal than in the canonical Scriptures. But

what do we find to be the fact? Take for example the Gospel of the Nazarenes, which some learned men suppose to be alluded to by Paul in the epistle to the Galatians, and what do we find in it? Instead of the sweet child-like simplicity of the genuine gospels, we have all the preposterous absurdity and anile silliness that marked the Jewish mind at that period. We have it said that our Lord declared that his mother took him by a hair of his head and carried him to Mount Tabor; that the rich man who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life on receiving Christ's answer, scratched his head and was displeased; that the mother of Christ was the Holy Ghost; that the Holy Ghost was waiting for Christ during the time of the prophets, and similar absurdities. In the gospel of our Saviour's Infancy we have yet more absurd and insufferable puerilities. We are told of the swaddling clothes of the infant Jesus driving out devils from a possessed woman, in the shapes of crows and serpents; of the water in which he was washed curing a leper; of a young man changed into a mule by witchcraft who was restored by the simple word of Mary to Christ; of Satan appearing in the form of a dragon and emitting fiery coals at the sight of Christ's swaddling cloth; of the boy Jesus making clay birds which could fly, eat and drink; miraculously mending the bad carpentry of his father; and changing his playmates into kids, with a great variety of silly stories equally absurd and incredible. Compare these wretched fables with the genuine gospels, and tell us what caused the amazing differences, if the theory of Mr. Morell be true?

But we have also an epistle ascribed to Barnabas, which although thought by many not to be his work, is yet very ancient, reaching nearly if not quite to the apostolic age, and hence sharing the general influences which affected the apostolic writings, if we deny their plenary inspiration. Let us look at a few paragraphs from this alleged epistle of Barnabas.

"Abraham received the mystery of three letters. For the Scripture says, that Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his house. But what therefore was the mystery that was made known to him? Mark first the eighteen, and next the three hundred. For the numeral letters of ten and eight, are I H. And these denote Jesus. And because the cross was that by which we were to find grace, therefore he adds, three hundred; the note of which is T (the figure of his cross).

Wherefore by two letters, he signified Jesus, and by the third his cross." § 9.

"But why did Moses say 'ye shall not eat of the swine, neither the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the crow, nor any fish that has not a scale upon him?' I answer that in the spiritual sense, he comprehended three doctrines. Now the sow he forbade them to eat; meaning thus much: thou shalt not join thyself to such persons as are like unto swine, who, whilst they live in pleasure, forget their God, but when any want pinches them, then they know the Lord; as the sow when she is full, knows not her master, but when she is hungry, she makes a noise, and being again fed is silent. Neither, saith he, shalt thou eat the lamprey, nor the polypus, nor the cuttle-fish, that is, thou shalt not be like such men, who are altogether wicked and adjudged to death. For so these fishes are alone accursed, and wallow in the mire, nor swim as other fishes, but tumble in the dirt at the bottom of the deep. Neither shalt thou eat of the hyena, that is, be an adulterer; because that creature every year changes its kind, and is sometimes male and sometimes female. For which cause, also, he justly hated the weasel, to the end that they should not be like such persons who commit wickedness with their mouths; because that animal conceives with its mouth."

"Therefore David took aright the knowledge of his threefold command, saying in like manner: 'blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly,' (Ps. i. 1,) as the fishes before mentioned in the bottom of the deep in darkness; nor stood in the way of sinners; as they that seem to fear the Lord, but yet sin, as the sow. And hath not sat in the seat of the scorers, as those birds who sit and watch that they may devour. Here you have the law concerning meat fully set forth, and according to the true knowledge of it." § 10.

"But why might they eat those that clave the hoof? because the righteous liveth in this present world, but his expectation is fixed upon the other." § 10.

Compare these puerile conceits, and exploded fables with the high and manly views of Paul on the same subject, and tell us what makes the difference? Why has the one fallen into scientific as well as exegetical errors, and the other not? According to the verbal theory, the reason is plain, but according to the one under discussion, this is utterly inexplicable. The quotations from Barnabas, strike it with a double edge, for they prove first, the pro-

found and even superstitious reverence which the primitive church had for the very words of Scripture, as inspired receptacles of revealed truth, a thing denied by Mr. Morell: and they show in the second place, that men who were not of the number of these canonical writers, though their very companions and co-laborers, were yet liable to all the errors of their age; a fact which proves that this remarkable exemption from error can only be accounted for by supposing precisely such an influence of the Holy Ghost, as this theory denies.

Another fact which contradicts this theory, is, the admitted limitation of these higher phenomena of inspiration, to these fifty writers.

If these phenomena be generically the same with the actings of the intuitional consciousness, or with a high degree of sanctification, why have they appeared in so few? Surely if inspiration be only an intensification and clarification of the pure reason, we may naturally look for it wherever that reason has been largely developed, and directed to the subject of religion. Now it cannot for a moment be doubted that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, had a larger development, and a more scientific culture of the intuitive faculty than Asaph and Amos, Mark and James. Why then, are not their writings on the subject of religion equally true and authoritative? And why have these phenomena ceased with these men? By the terms of this new philosophy, the intuitional consciousness of the human race is constantly developing and working itself to a higher range and a clearer vision. Why then has it failed to produce these phenomena, which, according to this theory, are identical with its development? Bacon, Newton, and Kant had, if this theory of progressive development be true, necessarily, a larger and clearer unfolding of this consciousness than some of these writers; why were not they as fully inspired? If they were, where is the proof of the fact, either in their claims, their writings, or their influence? If they were not, the theory breaks helplessly down.

Another fact that conflicts with this theory, is, the wonderful beauty and power of these writings.

Here are the compositions of plain unlettered men and women, which as mere literary productions, have stood peerless and unattainable, in their strange power to touch and move the human heart. It is an inexplicable fact to this theory, that a Deborah, an Amos and a Mary, have, whilst under the power of this high affla-

tus, produced some of the finest poetic effusions in ancient literature. But this fact, difficult as it is, gives way before another which is more hopelessly inexplicable. It is that mysterious *power* which these words possess. Even Coleridge, in his attempt to unsettle the common theory, confesses that the Bible meets him further down in his nature, and speaks deeper to his heart than any other book. This is a fact that has again and again been felt. There are times in a man's history, when these words seem to blaze with such a depth of significance, that we tremble with awe, or thrill with gladness, at the unutterable things that glow and stretch away behind them. They seem like apertures through which we see the awful light of eternity. This is not the fancy of a few heated enthusiasts, but the recorded testimony of some of the calmest, loftiest, and purest minds of our race. Nor is it a mere literary phenomenon, for it is felt by the Caffre woman in the bush, and the toiling artisan in the workshop, as deeply as by the mystic dreamer of Kubla Khan, or the lofty Jansenist of Port Royal. They all testify with one voice, that as they gaze upon these words, there are periods when they seem to open up a shaft of light, which at one time is all flashing with the brightness of Heaven, and at another, all red with the glare of Hell. How can this fact, as a mere psychological phenomenon, be explained? If it be true that Jehovah has in very deed enshrined himself in these wonderful words, unfolding a gleam of the awful Shekinah to the unveiled and disenchanted spirit, we can understand this strange and mysterious power. If these books be as some wondrous wind-harp, or some Memnonian sculpture, from whose depths the breath of God's mouth, and the light of God's presence evoke this strange melody, we can comprehend to some extent, the secret of its entrancing strains. But if, as this theory teaches, there is no such indwelling of the Godhead in these writings; and no such breathing of God's Spirit through these words, this fact stands before us, in the phenomena of mind, an inscrutable and inexplicable mystery.

A kindred fact to these, is the amazing effect that these writings have had on human society.

Without referring to the history of the past, it is sufficient to point to the map of the world, and advert to the fact, that wherever you find greatness, growth and power, civil rights, and civil liberty, national prosperity and national happiness, there you will find a free and open Bible; and wherever you find the Bible

restrained or entirely absent, even though the institutions of Christianity are existing and acting, there you will find in the same proportion the absence of these social and national characteristics. Mere natural causes cannot explain this fact. The same old and solemn river still flows past Memphis and Thebes; the same sapphire sky yet hangs over Babylon and Bagdad; and the same tall mountains look down like giant watchers on the plains where the Persian, the Greek, the Roman and the Turk erected the gorgeous memorials of their majesty and might. But the glory has departed. And whither? It is found precisely in those lands where the Bible goes freely and broadly forth. And though these lands should be but a misty isle in the ocean, or a continent sleeping but a few years since in the silence of a primeval forest, yet with an open Bible in their habitations, these hardy Anglo-Saxons shall wield the destinies of the world. Now if it be true, that these writings, like the Ark of God, contain the shrined Shekinah, the very light of Almightyness, we can understand their power, and marvel not that they have evoked such mighty results in human history, for we see that these results are to be referred to the Anglo-Saxon Bible, rather than to the Anglo-Saxon blood. But if not, we cannot see why other books, written by men in no apparent respect the inferiors of many of these, and discussing the same great truths, should yet produce an effect so circumscribed and shallow compared with them; and we stand before this fact, bewildered and confounded in astonishment.

Another objection to this theory is, that it destroys the authority of the Bible, and thus destroys its influence, and tends to defeat its great purpose in the world.

We are aware that the argument from consequences is not always a valid one, but neither is it always invalid. "You say," replied Rousseau to one of his antagonists, "that the truth can do no harm. I know it, and for that reason, do I know that your opinion is an error." Nor was the brilliant Frenchman wrong in this acute response. Truth can do no harm, but falsehood may; and if we see that a position or theory inevitably tends to do harm, we may fairly urge this as, at least, a presumption of its error.

If the Bible is not an inspired rule of faith and practice, we are, of course, not bound to believe and do what it enjoins, any further than we are to obey the writings of any other wise and good men. What restraint then have we for the masses? What spell that

can curb their wild and lawless passions? If their blind reasonings lead them to agrarianism, socialism, revolution or anarchy, what word of man shall be mighty enough to arrest them in their rush of ruin? Must not the voice of reason be drowned in the roar of revolution?

Germany furnishes us a case exactly in point. Strauss, in his life of Jesus, labored most earnestly to inculcate essentially this theory, and succeeded in giving it a wide prevalence in all classes of society. He denied that the Bible was the inspired word of God, and its teachings authoritative. The dragon's teeth were thus sown broadcast over the land, the fell harvest soon showed its bristling array, in the terrible scenes of 1848. When these popular uprisings began to startle the world, the learned professor began to recoil from the consequences of his theory. He found that he had unchained the tiger, and sought to coax and wheedle him back to his cage. He therefore traversed the villages of his native Swabia, striving to undo the dreadful work he had wrought in the minds of the peasantry. These efforts have been published in what he terms his *Theologico-Political Discourses*, and in them he thus addresses the peasantry. "It is not for you that I wrote the life of Jesus. Let this work alone, it will impart doubts which you have not now. You have better things to read. Study, especially, precepts like these: Blessed are the pure in heart! Blessed are the merciful!" But who reasons most logically, if this theory be true, the peasant or the philosopher? The peasant, undoubtedly; for it would be hard to prove to him, that what is a truth to him, is a lie to his neighbor; that he is bound by a book which does not bind the philosopher; and that he is in duty bound to revere and obey a religion which the philosopher recommends only as a substitute for the police officer and the constable. Hence he claims the same freedom with the philosopher, and refuses to pinion himself with a politic falsehood.

Nor is the sweep of this theory limited to the simple peasant. If the Bible be not an infallible standard of belief and practice, then the philosopher has no basis of certitude as to anything that is not a matter of direct sensation or consciousness. God, Heaven, Hell, Eternity, Judgment, Resurrection, and all the unseen and the spiritual, are shrouded in voiceless and terrible uncertainty. The state of facts declared by these writers of the Bible, may be the true one, but we have no more absolute certainty of it than we have of the opinions of Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato or Epicu-

rus. These men may have been inspired, but we have no proof of the fact on which we can rely. And even if they were inspired, that inspiration in their minds avails nothing to us, unless we are sure that we have a certain and reliable record of the truths perceived by them in this inspired state. They may have truly received the word from God, but this is of little avail to us, unless we know that they have as truly transmitted it to us. Hence, if this be all the inspiration they possessed, however valuable it may have been to them, it is of little value to us, and can only serve to tantalize us with the knowledge that these few men have been favored with a light from heaven, whilst the rest of mankind have been left only to that amount of this light which they, in their imperfect and undirected judgment, have been able to transmit. We are yet without any distinct utterance on which we can rely to tell us what we must certainly believe, and what we must necessarily do.

It is replied to this by Mr. Morell and the modern philosophy, that the only and the sufficient basis of certitude, is the dictates of the universal consciousness of the human race. We ask what are these dictates? Where are they recorded? Who are their reporters? And who shall tell us which reporter is the most trustworthy? The old Egyptian and Chaldaic teachings were overturned by Pythagoras; he is set aside by the Porch and the Academy in their multitudinous ramifications; they by the Gnostics and Neo-Platonists; they by the Schoolmen; they by the Cartesians; they by Leibnitz and Wolf: they by Locke and Hume; they by Kant; he by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Strauss, Cousin, &c. &c., and they by the next avatar of the philosophic spirit, the arrival of which has not yet been telegraphed. In this chase of phantoms, what shall we believe? May not the next morning newspaper that gives us the price of stocks and cotton, also inform us of the appearance of some new philosopher whose teachings shall supplant all his predecessors, and leave us bankrupt in our faith? What shall we trust? Jesus we know, and Paul we know, and can discover the truth if they have taught it. We also know that Augustine and Luther, and the great mass of theologians, have taught essentially the same things. If then the Bible be the standard of truth, we know what to believe; if not, we are launched on a shoreless and fathomless ocean, without landmark, or pilot, or chart or compass, while the waters are covered with darkness.

But if the general suffrage of the enlightened consciousness of the human race be, as this philosophy avers, the ultimate basis of certitude, and therefore the last tribunal of appeal, we can of course carry this question there for decision. If this basis be valid for other matters of opinion, much more must it be for this which is under discussion. It is alleged by this theory, that inspiration is nothing but the elevation and illumination of this intuitive consciousness to the perception of spiritual truth. Of course then, if there is any case which we may safely refer to this chosen tribunal, it is the present, an alleged phenomenon of its own nature. And if there is any expression of this consciousness on which we can rely, it is found in the prevailing opinions of the Christian Church, in the bosom of which these phenomena of inspiration are confessedly found. What then is the testimony of the Christian consciousness on this point. Does it recognize these high functions which are alleged to belong to it? We but record a notorious fact in ecclesiastical history, when we say that its response to this appeal is in direct and emphatic contradiction of the averments of this theory. It positively denies that among its phenomena are included those of inspiration. This question is not one that is sprung upon the consciousness of the Church, now for the first time, but one which has been before her in various forms for centuries. And although this precise form of a theory to be substituted for that of verbal inspiration may not have been previously presented, yet all that is essential to it has been before the Church for many generations, and received the most emphatic condemnation and rejection. Every student of the history of Christian doctrine knows, that from Theodore of Mopsuesta down to the last nine days' wonder in the Fatherland, those who have held any views denying the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, have been regarded as heretics and enemies of the truth. The researches of such men as Lardner, Whitby, and Rudelbach, especially the latter, have established it beyond contradiction, that true or false, the verbal theory has always been that of the Christian Church. Surely then, if there was ever a point on which the purified consciousness of humanity has pronounced, and on which its decisions can be ascertained, it is the one now before us. Hence, when philosophy appeals from the written word, to this collective consciousness, on a point so clearly within its jurisdiction, and so long before its consideration, the appellant must abide by the decisions of the chosen arbiter. Now

as the distinct affirmation of the Christian consciousness, for many generations is, that inspiration is not among its phenomena, we allege that, as an *argumentum ad hominem*, this decision is absolutely fatal to the theory under discussion.

If then this theory of inspiration is a mere arbitrary figment, invented to remove some difficulties that are more imaginary than real; if it has been formed not only without reference to the facts to be explained by it, but in direct contradiction of them; if it removes us from one difficulty by plunging us into others tenfold more embarrassing; if it relieves the reason of man at the expense of the righteousness of God; if it takes from us our only lamp of guidance in the vale of tears, and then tells us to find the path to heaven by our own purblind vision, when false lights are gleaming and gliding all around us; if it teaches that God has taken less care to ensure the accurate publication of his laws and amnesties, than the most negligent and tyrannical government on earth has done of theirs; if it teaches that he has required us to believe the truth under the most terrific penalties, and yet has made no certain provision that what is offered to our belief is the truth; if it teaches that effects the most extraordinary have been produced by causes the most ordinary and inadequate; if it destroys the reverence that men have for the Bible, neutralizes its authority over them, and leads them to neglect and disobey its injunctions, thus defeating the very end of its production, and charging its author with folly; if it is ignored at the very tribunal to which it has carried its final appeal; then we are at liberty to reject it as false, and cling to the honored faith of our fathers; the faith that cheered them in sorrow, that nerved them in danger, and that upheld them in death, that this blessed Book is indeed the word of the living God, and that in listening to its wondrous tidings, we are listening to the voice of the Eternal and the Almighty, inasmuch as "all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God," and given because "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

It is with joy then, that we find this last, and in some respects, most powerful effort to overturn our old and cherished faith, as empty and weak as those that have gone before it. Philosophy and human wisdom may neglect this light from Heaven, and walk by the sparks of their own kindling, but this light can never be put out, even though these proud wanderers should have it at God's hand to lie down at last in sorrow and gloom.

Life lies before you, young man, all gleaming and flashing in the light of your early hopes, like a summer sea. But bright though it seem in the silvery sheen of its far-off beauty, it is a place where many a sunken rock and many a treacherous quicksand have made shipwreck of immortal hopes. And calm though its polished surface may sleep, without a ripple or a shade, it shall yet be overhung to you by the darkness of the night, and the wildness of the tempest. And oh ! if in these lonely and perilous scenes of your voyage, you were left without a landmark or a beacon, how sad and fearful were your lot. But blessed be God ! you are not. Far up on the rock of ages, there streams a light from the Eternal Word, the light that David saw and rejoiced ; the light that Paul saw and took courage ; the light that has guided the ten thousand times ten thousand, that have already reached the happy isles of the blest. There it stands, the Pharos of this dark and stormy scene, with a flame that was kindled in heaven, and that comes down to us reflected from many a glorious image of prophet, apostle and martyr. Many a rash and wicked spirit has sought to put out this light, and on the pinion of a reckless daring, has furiously dashed itself against it, but has only fallen stunned and blackened in the surf below. Many a storm of hate and fury, has dashed wildly against it, covering it for a time with spray, but when the fiercest shock has spent its rage, and the proud waves rolled all shivered and sullenly back, the beacon has still gleamed on high and clear above the raging waters. Another storm is now dashing against it ; and another cloud of mist is flung around it, but when these also have expended their might, the rock and the beacon shall be unharmed still. " We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." When this promised time shall have come, when the dappling dawn shall have broadened and brightened into the perfect day, then, and not until then, shall the light of this sure beacon pale before the brightness of that day, whose morning is Heaven, and whose noontide is eternity. But until then, in spite of the false lights that flash upon our track, and gleam fitfully from billow to billow, our steady gaze and our earnest heed shall be to this sure word of prophecy, and the motto we shall ever unfurl to the winds, shall be, "*the Bible, the Bible, the light-house of the world.*"



Geo Miller.

The Nature of Christianity,

AS SHOWN TO BE

A PERFECT AND FINAL SYSTEM OF FAITH AND PRACTICE,
AND NOT A FORM IN TRANSITU TO A HIGHER
AND MORE COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE RELIGIOUS IDEA.

BY

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THERE is a tendency in modern science to the doctrine of developments. Anatomists believe that a skull is a developed vertebra, and botanists that a flower is a developed leaf-bud ; and the tendencies of science might be expected to intrude upon religion.

The tendency of science to find a development in religion is assisted by the fact that religion *is* developed. Heaven, and (if our ideas are realized) the Millennium, are developments of Christianity. They develop its facts, for heaven and the Millennium *are* developed facts of Christianity. They develop its knowledge, for now we see through a glass darkly, but in heaven face to face. They develop its methods, for they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know him from the least to the greatest.

We are not blind therefore to acknowledged progress in religion. The infidel schemes we would oppose will sufficiently define themselves in the progress of our discussion.

Development may be of two kinds, in the inventions of man or in the revelations of God, and these two might adequately divide our subject. The "religious idea" might be man's idea, and then Christianity is *in transitu* from one mythology to another. Or the "religious idea" may be God's inspiration, and then Christianity may be a step *in transitu* in the development of revealed religion. This is the division which we had first agreed upon, but it clears the way to another which is fuller, more easily remembered, and more strikingly in unison with facts in general.

All possible developments are in three forms.

First, there is a development of *art* : as for example, the steam-engine has been developed from the toy of Hero.

Secondly, there is a development in *nature* : as for example, the oak is a development from the germ of the acorn.

And thirdly, there is a development of *science* : as for example, the Copernican system has been developed from the spheres of the Greek astrologers.

Each of these forms of development has been imagined by different infidels as obtaining in Christianity.

I. First, they have imagined a *developed invention*, and adopted the theory that Christianity is a myth developed and cultivated from the ancient fables.

Whether it is a fable or no broadly, or as a general question, will not come up under this head, for that would be taking the work of all our colleagues. The whole circle of the "Evidences" would be contained under such a division; nor if it be a fable, whether it is developed and cultivated, for that we would be perfectly willing to acknowledge. What we are concerned in is the proof of the theory derived from the theory itself; or the meeting of the idea that Christianity is a cultivated mythology, as it is rendered plausible by the likelihoods in the very idea of the developments proposed.

Now a skull is thought to be a developed vertebra from its likeness to that out of which it is thought to be developed. A flower is thought to be a developed leaf-bud, because it is like a leaf-bud. It has its parts and properties. And the grand method of maintaining a development of faiths is, that Christianity is like its predecessors, and that we can see in Boodhism and the fables of the Greeks, the shapes and patterns out of which its principles have been derived.

Let us pursue this method in the instance of the gospel.

Suppose the question to be deliberately asked, how I know that Jehovah is better than Jupiter, or Christianity any different theology from the myths of ancient religion?

The first feeling is one of indignation. But part of this is unquestionably prejudice; and let us place ourselves in an avenue of approach where as much of this as possible shall be done away, and where the classic veil that hides us from the past shall be penetrated, and we enter among the men and women of the old worship.

Let us go up a street of Pompeii.

Here is a bakery. Across over the way is a drinking shop, and the steps worn by the feet of the inebriates. Above was an apothecary, and in his shop the pots and vials that he used in his craft. On the street are the ruts of the carriage-way, and in the yard of a house a well grooved by the rope as it rubbed incessantly on the marble twenty centuries ago.

These sights break a spell; and instead of the toga'd Latin,

half fabulous like the books of his own religion, we see actual men—pictures and carved work and pans and lanterns, thrift and taste and poverty thoughts and frailties like our own.

We go up the street, then, and on a corner lot is a temple to Jupiter.

We see it in its home relation. The baker and the apothecary built it for a want like ours. And as we look at it in its actual intention through the Ides and Kalends of the year as a resort for the townspeople, and as a place to which tottering old men and widowed matrons went for the consolations of religion, it begins to steal over us as an arrangement like the others: here, if anywhere, we can indulge the skepticism that religion is a progress, and the question actually presses, why is not here the leaf-bud? Why are not here the likenesses on which philosophers rely? Why was not this a preparation? And why is not Christianity, too, an achievement of the mind working itself clear toward a higher and more mature religion?

Now it so happens that the objections you instantly propose, are the most startling analogies on which the suggestion could depend.

1. Your first attitude is mere resistance. In the inert moment of hearing the plan, you are perfectly tranquil, and when you analyze your feelings, it is one of mere assurance. This skepticism does not ruffle you. You have not the slightest idea of its plausibleness. And if you had, a certain jealous terror would hurriedly close all the avenues to any infidel opinion.

But unfortunately this is a family tendency. The religions of mankind deal in the profoundest confidences. The Mohammedan nourished in Islam, is awe-struck at the teachings of the Christian. The Romanist in the shadow of the church, rejects with scorn the faith of the Reformers. And this temple in the street shows on its gorgeous front the intensity of the feeling that inspired its architectural designs.

See the columns. Observe the capitals how exquisitely they are wrought.

The faculties of men are not stimulated without an object. And the patience of the labor shows a resoluteness of will and a warmth of principle and purpose unequalled in Christian lands.

2. You may say theirs was an ignorant age. But how easily might the infidel contradict it.

When we wish to polish our styles, or to frame the thinking of our universities upon a generous model, we go back to the idola-

ters. We defer to them in every point. We leave Shakspeare and Milton, and take Homer. We leave Fox and Pitt and Chatham, and take Demosthenes. We study a dead language. We incur the reproach of inutility to get back to the thinking of that early period.

Our artists tell us that the "Apollo" dug up within our own century is perfectly inimitable. And we who have no experience in the art, are constantly surprised at the coolness with which they consent to the opinion, that the antique is hardly to be attained to by any modern application.

Here is an age then living upon the achievements of another. Our students ripen their minds by the pabulum of ancient wit. And when Kant and Hegel are mouldering in their tombs, we have no reason to be sure that Plato will not still be safe, and will not still be reaching to the centuries the volumes of his sense and eloquence.

3. But the philosophers, you instantly reply, were the ancient skeptics, and it is a favorite method of Christianity to condemn the temples by the admission of the grave and learned. But how would it answer in the instance of Christianity herself?

When the lighter literature of the time had floated off, Hume and Gibbon and the more learned of the German school, Descartes and Leibnitz, and in our own time Carlyle and even Macaulay might be gleaned from to undermine the gospel. And it might be said, See; whenever a mind rose above the level of the multitude, he descried the sophistries, and whereas a cultivated form might be less exposed to such a defection, Christianity would still furnish enough to give it the likeness of being a cultivated fable.

The heathen are in the hand of enemies. The ancient books have been studied to brace up the gospel. Let our literature be committed to the skeptics, and what might they not glean from it of infidel confession.

4. But you say, the vices of the heathen are the grave evidence against their system. Then there we encounter the vices of the Christians. Del Monte and Cæsar Borgia and the laxer of the Popes would stand side by side with Apollo and the goddesses. And in the church herself the infamy of the cloisters would hold, for a cultivated religion, a proportionate grade with the obscenities of the temple.

Seneca tells us,* vices were not a part of their religion. And

* *De Vita Beata*, ch. 26, § 5-6. See also Karsten *Phil. Vett. Reliquie*, vol. 1, p. 43 et seq.

looking upon Christianity as she was, a future mythologue might find in her persecutions and bloody wars enough to characterize her as having a likeness with the idolaters.

5. But you say Paganism is a perfect labyrinth. There is no order in its myths, and it is an intellectual impossibility to embrace it as a system. It has gods and demigods. We have hardly fancied one, before it is confounded with another. They trace themselves alike. We have hardly gotten an origin for Jove, before it is laid claim to in the theology of Bacchus; and in the endless confusion of traits and influences and clashings in the arrangement of their empire, we find a practical confession that it is not a system to be believed.

But, for a cultivated religion, there are some contrarieties with us.

My neighbor near me conceives of Christ as a man. I conceive of him as a God. Let our writings go to a stranger, and you have no idea of the confusion they will cause. We will not pursue this subject. You can easily see how to a future antiquarian perseverance and its opposite, eternal punishment and its opposite, regeneration in its different methods, Pelagianism and the doctrine of depravity, would present a chaos of belief impervious to any system.

6. Your next attack is against the puerilities of the heathen. You say, their myths are so gross as to be hopelessly incredible, and there is a carnality about their worship in its images and bloody sacrifices, that renders it easy to dismiss it as monstrous and absurd.

But now (with reverence be it spoken; for we would bring out the fair weight of the infidel scheme) is there a due simplicity in the doctrine of the gospel?

What are we to think of the Trinity? What are we to think of atonement and a bloody crucifixion? What are we to think of Jesus and an incarnation of the Holy One? How are we to judge of miracles like that of Jonah or the one of Gadara; or of prophecies like this, "When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt?" What are we to think of morals where Jesus creates wine, or Moses licenses divorce and encourages polygamy?

The method of induction, and the whole sweep of the modern sciences, help in this species of skepticism. Men have gotten to expect simplicity, and to beat at the gates of the future with a satisfaction in nothing else. Nature when rifled of her secrets,

gives them to us in simple laws, and men have grown to be confident of her that she has not told us the reality till she sends it to us in a plain response, orderly and regular like her own designs.

And if there be a God, plain, a *lumen albus*, without the coloring of cross or Trinity, is it not likely that that is the idea, and that we are to stand yet on the basis of law, and to be judged by a simple government according to the deeds done in the body?

This is fascinating.

And remembering, moreover, that our cumbrous faith is a legacy from the days of our fathers, and that when we cross the sea, the Boodhist and the Mussulman have the same faith in their hereditary doctrines, we are considerably shaken, and the avatars of the East and the incarnation of our own divinity seem a sister company, and seem to waive their rights all of them before a simpler theism.

Thus then we have in considerable order, and with a plainness that will be advantageous to the truth, a sketch of the reasoning on which this first scheme of development depends: we have a right in the outset to know what specifically is the *point* that the infidel values in the considerations that have been given.

Here is a series of facts constituting a series of resemblances. Does he depend upon the facts, or does he depend upon the resemblances?

1. He cannot depend upon the facts.

1st. It is a harmless fact that Christians believe the gospel. That Boodhists believe and Mussulmans is the resemblance. That we believe is a harmless and nowise discreditable fact.

2d. It is a harmless fact that the ignorant believe or the learned, as the case may be. The gospel offers itself to all, and that any believe is only a token that it fulfils its mission.

3d. That the learned disbelieve is harmless. "Not many wise, not many mighty," is a text of Scripture. That Zeno and Socrates disbelieved is the analogy. That Gibbon disbelieved is in full consistency with the truth of Scripture.

4th. It is a harmless fact that Christianity should be contaminated with vice; and,

5th. That it should be confused with heresy; for both these are consistent. That cannot be charged against a system that would disprove it if it were not the case. If Christianity distinctly affirms that Christians will be wicked and Christendom vexed and divided, the fact free of the analogy would only be consistent if it was as it is found to be.

6th. It is a harmless fact that the gospel is not simple.

And this we place on the foundation that the infidel is deceived in his notion of a God.

God is never simple.

Simplicity has two lodging-places, a place in the truth and a place in the mind by which it is apprehended. The truth is always simple. But the mind from the feebleness of its powers prevents that simplicity from being manifest.

To this category belongs the Deity. He is simple. And the Trinity makes him simple. But how it operates to complete the unity of the Godhead we are utterly unable to conceive.

But can the infidel conceive other things?

The feeling of plausibleness that started in your mind was due to the idea that a simplicity was just before you.

The idea seemed easy. Give us only a soul, or according to Varro a simple spirit of the universe, and our idea is complete, for then we have a simple King, a rewarder and punisher of all our actions.

This is your system. But why were the ancients perplexed by it?

You object to a Trinity, but how do you explain the mystery of the creation?

The Deity is infinite. The creation is finite. The creation is the history of the Deity. The creation had a beginning. The Deity had no beginning. An eternity, therefore, before he offered to create, he was without a government, and without an active history.

This so perplexed the ancients that they deified matter, or at least denied the period of its creation, and held that it had existed from the eternity of God.

Again, you object to a Redemption. But how do you simplify ordinary justice? Where are its punishments? Virtue is dethroned and vice elevated. Is this simple?

The ancients were so pressed by it as to invent metempsychosis, and by the stages of a transmigration to bury in a cloud what they could not solve by an immediate government. But this is not simple. And if we are to have any expedient, why not take the good one, and if we have no King simple in act and immediate in purpose, why not take the one that is revealed by Jesus Christ reconciling the world through the gospel?

You are stumbled by the Incarnation.

But can you explain any of the subsistences of the creature?

Why does that pillar stand? It stands by an energy residing in it of the Almighty. Dismiss that energy and it falls, and it falls so as to seem nothing but energy. Then actually what is it? The ancients solved the difficulty by inventing Pantheism. And can any one explain how a thing can be nothing in such a sense that it vanishes when energy is withdrawn, and yet be distinguished in its essence from the essence of the energy itself?

The infidel objects to Imputation.

But can he account for sin?

The ancients invented Platonism. In laboring for a simple God they were embarrassed by the presence of calamity, and rather than ascribe pestilences and vices to the same divinity they invented two, and defended the simplicity of one by adding the complexity of another.

Here then we have been miserably deceived. There is no fresh theism such as we imagined, but an old, exploded fantasy.

And taking our Christianity, on which all nature looks down with evidence, which explains sin and accounts for pain and suffering, which arranges life, and takes up again the ravelled thread of justice and providential things, we are to compare it, not with reason or some simple form imprinted in its beauty on the soul, but with the ghastly and forbidding shapes of ancient and exploded superstition.

2. But next as to the resemblances: is not the resemblance of Christianity to so many mythologies an evidence that it is one of them?

We confess that it is.

If the Copernican system has been preceded by fifty astronomies, the *prima facie* evidence is, without waiting much for analogies, that it is false like the rest. If the world were to entertain a hundred metaphysics, and the last were now to be brought forward, the *prima facie* evidence would be that it would be only temporary. But here are some things obviously in our favor.

First, such likenesses are inevitable. If man discovered a true metaphysics, its analogies would be in the nature of things. Map out all your consciousness, and the map would be dimmed, and dimmed by likeness. False systems would claim your facts, and did you do it by inspiration, analogies would confuse your map, and men could hardly receive from you a true philosophy.

That which assails all truth can hardly be fatal to anything.

Take the Copernican system. It has all species of analogy with the plan of Tycho Brahe.

Both considered motion. Both classified and connected motion. Both established periodicity : both calculated periods. Both advocated truth, however one had mixed it with ignorance and error. And yet are we to abandon Copernicus on the faith of the analogies? Both had mysteries. Both had ignorant friends, and both learned enemies. And yet who believes in a transition? Who is waiting for another system to be found? and does not take Copernicus as a last revealer of those laws in the frame of nature?

It is true, analogy is powerful.

I am timorous about doubting Christ, but I cross the sea, and I find a Turk as timorous about questioning Mohammed. It impresses me. I go to a Boodhist, and ask him for a miracle. I go to a Christian, and ask him for a miracle, and they at this particular age are neither ready; they point me to the past. I go to Plato, and he laughs at the temples; I go to Hobbes and Spinoza, and they laugh at the churches, and this impresses me. The only question is, what are our arguments? Are they multiplied enough? And are we able to heap them up sufficiently against the opposing likelihood?

Physicians tell us that jellies and concentrated essences are not good for the nourishment of the system. Food to be good must be coarse. Lions to be strong must hunt their prey. And the mind to be vigorous must not stumble upon truth, but dig for it in a period of study.

So it is in regard to our probation. Error is an ore of truth, and analogy is the law that holds its ingredients together. It is healthy for us to forge out our faith. And though the "evidences" are literally of every sort, prophecy, miracle, fact and testimony, yet we are not to receive them like the devils, who believe and tremble, but like inquiring men; and the difficulties that disturb shall be edifying in their influence on the mind.

II. It is time, however, that we should notice the second species of development which is that of nature, that Christianity is a step in the onward development of something that exists in fact, but in a very immature condition.

We can illustrate by facts in its own origin. Adam received the message, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

This was the religion of the time. But how germinal it was is seen in the fact that subsequent developments have entirely relieved

it, and the very persons that received the message, are exalted higher than before their iniquity occurred.

So of the protevangelium. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," was the gospel of its time. And Christians might be ready to confess that it imparted few ideas, and some of these imperfect and distorted in their reception by the people.

The same is true of the system of Abraham. It noticed little a hereafter. It was crude and dark: and the apostles themselves confessed that it was a bondage under the rudiments of the world.

Now what are we to say of the like in Christianity? We are no judges. We are living in the system. The men of the time cannot detect the crudities of their own opinion. The argument from simplicity is wasted: for the simple threat "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," was a simpler information for practice, than all the light and all the precept of our superior religion.

This is an interesting idea. The protevangelium, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" put Adam in a simpler state than us, for without the complexities of Christianity, he learned only that out of the sins that were beginning to reign, and out of the evils that were beginning to afflict him, the offspring of the woman was to appear for his deliverance.

Now the theory may be advanced. Christianity is germinating yet. It is the mere embryo of a sublimer manifestation. And our zeal in considering it as perfect may only be the fondness of the misguided Hebrew who would rest in the shadows of the law, rather than embrace the substance of the gospel.

It would seem a natural way of replying to this theory to take up the doctrines of the cross, and show that they are final in their nature. So under the head of invention we might have *denied* development, and showed that Christianity reached back from the beginning, and could not historically have been derived from myths. But this, and more that we could have done in showing that myths were derived from Christianity, would have involved us in controversy, and called up a multitude of questions, that we could not have despatched in the limits of our lecture.

We are driven, therefore, to a shorter method.

We say, grant there may be a development.

Literalists believe that Christ is personally to reign. It is a harmless doctrine in contrast with infidelity, and no one would

implicate the two, lest pious persons should believe in the first and be harassed by connections with the other. But if Christ come, that is a developed Christianity. Personal interviews with men would develop our intelligence, and free intercourse for ages would bring out wonders, and fill, as it will be in heaven, all our minds with believing admiration.

It is better therefore to meet the idea of development not with an iron-bound denial, but an appeal to the nature of things showing that the most glorious development of light must be only a kindling of the twilight of the gospel.

Naturalists have imagined that the world was in a state of progress. They imagine the nebular hypothesis that all things existed originally in a state of vapor, and that by a series of changes, some of which have been calculated, central masses and concentric rings, and finally revolving planets have resulted from the principles of nature.

Attributing to matter further powers to vivify and improve itself, they have skeptically imagined a progression by which germs and motions and finally plants and life have been successively evolved from this ceaselessly improving materiality.

Now this will illustrate the instance of religion.

If matter be developed in the manner stated, it must either be by God or by a system in itself. If it be by God, then it must be truthfully, or if it be by matter, then eminently it must be truthfully by some order. The vapor out of which the universe is to evolve must be singularly instinct with a truthfulness to its whole design.

Now this we claim in respect to religion. If it is a development of a series of phenomena, these phenomena must be continually facts. If a leaf-bud is to generate a flower it must be instinct with the flower at the beginning. If a chaos is to evolve a world it must be instinct with the world; and so of religion. If it is a series of developments, whether they are of God or something else, the moulds or patterns of the whole must be in it from the beginning.

Now the doctrine of development carried to the undermining of Christianity would make Christianity singular among things.

There is a certain order in growth. The solid parts are first attended to. The gneiss and granite of the hills have been laid, so we are to understand, before the marble. The spine and the blood-vessels appear in the earliest orders of the creatures; the

root and the leaf-stem, in the gigantic ferns. And so in religion, the essential root, Christ reconciling the world by his death appears in the earliest ova, if you prefer to speak so, of the Christian religion.

Then now another principle. Things develop themselves till their parts at last are thoroughly identified. The fossil megalosaurus has a distinct eye and a distinct shoulder; and so, rising in the scale, a lion or a man has distinct organs that have come at last to be identified, and in respect to which it is impossible to entertain a doubt however much the species might be elevated. The stars revealed themselves to the Chaldees in the distinctest motions. Astronomy was in its crudest state, and yet some facts were *settled*. And if you ask me how, I answer by intuitive perception. The facts stared at them from the skies, and the mind seized on them as her own, and has retained them as her perpetual possession. We can illustrate by the system of Copernicus; a thousand crudities had prevailed, but the facts finally fell into their places like type into a form, and now it would be just as impossible to shake the conviction of astronomers as the conviction of a child about his plainest verity.

How much then can the infidel assail us, if he will grant us two facts, first, that as nature develops, her improvements sink steadily in structural importance, and therefore her prime things are present in the beginning; and, secondly, that as she develops, her parts successively identify themselves, and that by discoveries of the mind as certain as if the whole were there?

We pretermit, therefore, the argument that there will be no other revelation, and suffer the infidel to indulge the highest hopes of future light. We only say that the development attained already, binds him down to a sufficient gospel.

The statement that Christ died and rose again, never can be developed into a doctrine that he never descended from the Father. The statement that he died for our sins according to the Scriptures, never can be developed into a naked Deism. The statement, that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, never can be developed into the statement that it is as it was meant to be. And the statement that he that believeth on Christ hath everlasting life, never can merge itself into some after-faith resting our hope upon mere obedience to the law.

We pass on next to the third head.

III. The third species of development is a development under which Christianity is regarded as a form in transitu to a higher development of religious knowledge.

This is the species of Morell.

Morell's metaphysics as a separate introduction to the case need not trouble us, for we can admit them all and still show its utter impracticability.

This perhaps were the better way.

It is the part of a logician to deny only what is necessary of an adversary's system. And as this, which is essentially German, is spreading among men, it is best perhaps to stand clear, and not let our argument depend upon anything fundamental in a favorite psychology.

We may say a few things, however.

First, we object to the very elements of Morell's system. The "logical consciousness," and "the intuitional consciousness," as an analysis of our thinking,* are a solecism. Logical conceptions are as much intuitional as the conceptions of their subject matter. Reasoning is a series of intuitions; and when we affirm the relation between truths we as much appeal to an intuitional power as when we see justice or see beauty in the facts around us. We quarrel, therefore, with the division; but we would be sorry to implicate with that a belief in Christianity.

Again, we object to a second step. Religion, we are told, in its essence is a feeling of dependence.† Now religion is a broad state. We might as well say it was patriotism or a motherly affection. We might as well say it was giving of alms or shouldering a burden. We might as well say it was love or hatred. If we might narrow it down to any fact, we might call it knowledge.

Knowledge, in its broadest sense, includes our tastes and the notitiæ of conscience. What a blind man cannot see is part of our knowledge; and what a painter appreciates in beauty and proportion above an ordinary eye is part of his knowledge; and so also is our cognizance of light, and our appreciation of excellence of character. In this sense religion's essence is in knowledge, if you will allow that term to be inseparable from one accompanying fact: I mean attendant emotion.

So faith is a low stage of knowledge. Obedience springs from knowledge. Love and penitence flow from knowledge. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye

* Philos. of Religion, Am. Ed chs. 1 & 2.

† Ib. ch. 3.

seeth thee. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Again, we object strongly to the idea of revelation as a heightened consciousness.* Morell in his apparently candid division of historic facts and conscious intuitions, ignores a third species of truth which does not come out either under the added head of 'logical constructions.'† 'Logical constructions' he defines to be the formal stating of our material intuitions. Now there is something more than this. There are doctrinal revelations. Historic facts he alleges could be gotten by an eye-witness, and then nothing more would be necessary to write the Scriptures than a heightened conscious intuition. But there is a third thing required—doctrinal fact. Who *explained* the historic fact? Who clustered about Christ a system of atoning life? Who told us what he was? This is not history but exposition, and could appear no more upon the face of the crucifixion, than it could be stirred up within us by our interior consciousness. There is a *tertium quid*, therefore, that Morell has not noticed. His logical construction is a mere expounding of our intuitions, and the doctrine of a Trinity could as poorly spring up in that way, as sights and odours without the instrument of sense.

Again, we object to the idea that inspiration depends upon piety,‡ and strange to say, this we refute consistently with the theory of Morell.

Piety is but one intuition.

There is an intuition of justice, an intuition of power, an intuition of truth, generally. Balaam had intuitions that were anything but intuitions of piety. Grant that inspiration were all intuition, there are a thousand intuitions that unite besides the intuition of moral excellence. If piety were all our intuition, the most pious men would be the most doctrinally intelligent. Abraham would be more doctrinally intelligent than we, and a pious slave necessarily more so than his master; which is so far from being the case, that the most learned doctrinal disquisitions have been of those who had no piety at all.

Again, we object to a new organon.§ Bacon's method is as old as the creation. It is like the brain, congenital. Adam used it in naming the beasts. The Baconian method is the instinctive organon of children. The office of Bacon, like a lecturer upon the

* Philos. Relig. chs. 5 & 6. † Ib. p. 211. ‡ Ib. ch. 6 et al. § Ib. p. 201.

brain, was to show the instrument, though the instrument existed since the earliest generalization.

But though these things are serious as respects other errors, yet as to the doctrine of development we would concede them all.

What does the skeptic argue for? 1. Is it historic fact* that is to develop?—that we concede, but the facts of the past cannot be altered by the facts of the future.

2. Is it intuitional consciousness?† What is that? If Morell asserts that it is piety, we agree again, for piety is certainly to develop. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.”

What is it though? Is it doctrinal intelligence? That also we acknowledge: and if it means actual informations, we claim the usual rules. Systems grow from the foundations upward. Two and two will be four in the highest regions of analysis. God will be in Christ reconciling the world to himself, when the highest millennial light shall have dawned upon the mind.

3. Nothing therefore is left to Morell but logical‡ development, which he confesses is the fruit of intuition. We ask nothing but that intuition shall really be intuitive, and settle upon truths as truths that are possessed already in the system. The electrician, for example, believes polarity, whatever discoveries may be added. The astronomer has settled upon periods. The mathematician, as we have seen, is convinced of his arithmetic. And so give us the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and we will gladly go on unto perfection.

And it is interesting to see how little this view is affected by anything we concede to the psychologist.

Give him his organon.

If a new organon is discovered, it will improve religion. We agree that it will clear it. It will not add to its distinctive truths: though here we need not stickle with the infidel. His great attack is against the fundamentals of the faith, and these his organon would spare. The old organon has spared them in every science.

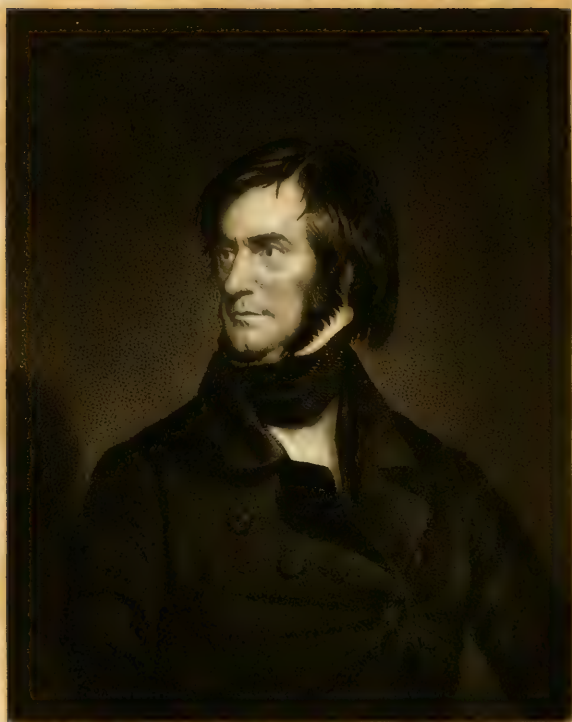
So on the other hand, we are not afraid of the idea that if intuitional and doctrinal religion are the same, and the first is identical with piety, that as the intuitional improves, religion will again be benefited—if you please, developed—that is, cleared in the out-

* Philos. Relig. p. 211.

† Ib.

‡ Ib.

line of its truth, and filled out in its doctrinal proportions ; for what is this asserting than that intelligence and piety united will see more of the truth than where there is less of either. We believe intelligence and piety are to be revered. But if it is not so, that will be an excellent man who has them growing up in him proportionally together, and that will be a glorious age, when awakened light shall be one with extraordinary piety.



R. J. Bucknitch

The General Internal Evidence of Christianity.

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I.

1. As far as we have any knowledge of the past history of our race, independently of the information derived from the volume commonly called the Word of God, portions of that race have always been in possession of portions of that volume. In it are contained by far the most ancient records of mankind. It has preserved for us all that we know of the history of our race, during at least the earlier half of its supposed existence upon earth. In it alone are found any precise ideas of the origin of our race, or any clear and comprehensive statements of its general career and destiny. And it alone furnishes us with complete, categorical, and unalterable directions for the universal guidance of human conduct. For nearly eighteen centuries it has existed in its present form; and the whole of it, as long as it has thus existed—and every part of it, as each part was successively produced, through succeeding generations, from the remotest antiquity—has been accepted by continually increasing numbers of the human race, as the Word of God. At present, it is so accepted by most civilized nations, and in the popular belief of the most enlightened half of the human family.

2. The existence amongst men of a belief in the being of God, has been, perhaps, more general than any other human belief. In what manner it originated, and upon what grounds it has been so universally propagated, are questions upon which men have chosen to dispute; but the fact itself does not admit of being disputed. Upon the hypothesis of what is called natural religion, most questions touching the origin and propagation of this belief, do indeed admit of being solved; for as soon as we allow that religion is natural to man, it follows that it is natural for him to believe in the objects about which religion essentially concerns itself, and therefore in God. Upon the hypothesis of revealed religion, everything is clear at once; since the creation of man by God, with a nature capable of receiving the knowledge of him,

and power to retain, even though it might deface that knowledge : and then the communication of that knowledge by God to man ; explain in the clearest manner, the origin and permanence of a belief so remarkable. Upon any other hypothesis but one of these two, it seems extremely difficult, if not indeed utterly impossible, to account for the existence of any idea of God in the minds of men—much less for the universal prevalence of a belief in his being, and our dependence on him, and accountability to him. The existence of the facts is of immense significance. Our ability to explain them, in some good degree, upon the ground of natural religion—as commonly so called—is a great step taken. Our ability to clear them up perfectly, upon the ground of revealed religion, is a far higher and more important step. Our inability to explain them at all, upon any other ground, seems to conclude the whole matter. It is under the full impression of this utter impotency of infidelity in all its forms, to explain the most common and fundamental of all our religious ideas, and to account for the most universal of our religious beliefs—that passing over the great, but obscure domain of natural religion, we are allowed to come into the presence of a revealed God.

3. The authenticity and the uncorrupted preservation of every part of this volume, are distinct questions, and of fundamental importance. They belong to the domain of another lecture in this course. Upon the first of those questions, it may be observed in general, that the Bible, though in many important senses a single book, is in reality made up of many separate books—each one of which is in fact, and was historically, a distinct treatise. These treatises were composed by a considerable number of different persons, and many centuries elapsed between the composition of the first and the last of them. Who wrote these various treatises—at what times and under what circumstances—how and when they were gathered successively together—distributed under certain general classifications—and at last brought into the condition of a single volume, containing in absolute completeness all the separate parts, and containing nothing else ;—all these are questions, which, so far as they are not settled by the writers themselves, and by the contents of their treatises, have been completely determined by discussions, which, during many centuries, have attended these oracles across the track of ages. Upon the second of the two questions embraced under this head, it may also be stated, in general, that with regard to the text of the Old

Testament scriptures, the state of the whole matter as between the Jews and the Christians; and with regard to the text of the New Testament, the state of the whole matter as between the various Christian sects from the very beginning; and with regard to the text of both testaments, the state of the whole matter as between the receivers and the rejecters of divine revelation—has put the question of the purity of the entire text, and its perfect preservation, in a light extraordinarily clear—and has accumulated an amount of evidence, decisive, out of all comparison touching any other book in the world. So far as these points are important to the present discussion, they must be accepted as settled; and the more numerous and the more difficult they may be supposed to have been, the more important do they become, after being successfully determined, to the argument which is to follow.

4. The authority of this book is a question not necessarily connected with either of the foregoing questions; though it is usually treated as if it were absolutely dependent on both of them. To human reason, its authority might, in many respects, be absolute, even if we knew nothing of its authors—its origin or its preservation; for even in that case it might obviously contain the most precious truth—set in the clearest light. In the same manner and upon similar conditions, its moral influence might be decisive, so far as the influence of what is good and what is beautiful is capable, of itself, of leading captive such souls as ours. And it is undeniable that the gentler, the purer, and the higher classes of human spirits are deeply and permanently affected by the contents of this marvellous book, contemplated only in the manner just stated, in proportion as those contents become familiar to them. Upon such grounds the Christian may well challenge the attention, and claim the reverence of mankind—for a volume capable of producing such effects, in such a manner: but they are so much lower than other grounds on which its authority is asserted, that he does not much insist on these. It is upon the ground of God's absolute authority, that we claim for this book the universal reception and obedience of mankind. We say God has spoken it. It is the direct product of God's intelligence—the immediate utterance of God's authority: as completely so as if we saw and heard him. Its truth is thus ascertained with an infinite certainty, and proclaimed with an infinite authority: and men are, therefore, under an infinite obligation to know, to believe,

and to obey it. Our faith stands, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. God is infinitely true, and infinitely exalted; so that his communications to us have an infinite authority.

5. Still further. It is by the inspiration and the revelation of God, that the contents of this volume are placed on grounds upon which it claims to be an infallible guide to the faith and obedience of men: just as the veracity and the majesty of God are the final basis of its reception. Precisely as our infinite obligation to receive it at all rests on the latter basis—so our infinite security in receiving it as an infallible guide rests on the former: the manner of its being ascertained to us, as the word of God, being the chief element in one case, and the fact that it is his word in the other. I use both words, inspiration and revelation—for, to me, they convey ideas substantially distinct—yet both of them indispensable. Amongst things known, or that might be known, God has inspired men to record here, such as we are to receive with a divine faith: and amongst things unknown, and incapable of being known, by means merely human, God has revealed some to his servants, and inspired them to record them, as thus revealed. Thus revealed and thus inspired, divine in its infinite sanctions, and divine in its infinite certainty, the word of God comes to us with the simple and sublime utterance—believe and live! A ground and a rule at once of absolute assurance and absolute completeness in all our beliefs and all our obedience, bestowed on us by God. All that we knew, and all that of ourselves we could know, touching our duty and our destiny, has been set before us in a new and a clear light, and with divine authority; while that which, of ourselves, we never could have known, is communicated to us by God, as to its matter with divine authority, and as to its manner with divine certainty. Those ultimate truths upon which all our duties rest—many of which as applicable to our fallen condition we had never known, and many others, in our blindness and perverseness, had greatly obscured—are cleared up with a light from heaven itself; and then between every one and all the duties which flow from it, the authority of God is interposed—thus doubly confirming, establishing, and enforcing all.

6. Upon the supposition that men are not naturally corrupt, averse to what is spiritually good, and incredulous of what is spiritually true, it is not possible to conceive that they should avoid the immediate recognition and joyful reception of such a

communication from God. Yet we see that they everywhere resist, evade, pervert and reject it. It is needful incessantly, not only to instruct them in the faith it reveals, and the duties it enforces—and to recall their forgetful thoughts to the hopes it inspires and the ruin it denounces; but even to array before them the proofs that a message has reached them from above. Of this last description is the particular duty required of me, at this time; and all these preliminary statements, are designed to open the way, and advance us upon a clear and firm position, for its discharge. The question assigned to me, in the programme of this course of lectures, involves a most important and difficult portion of the proofs to which I have just alluded. What is the nature and amount of the evidence afforded us, entirely or mainly, by the Bible itself, that it is the Word of God, in the sense of all the statements I have hitherto made? In what manner can we deduce this grand conclusion from considerations drawn from the contemplation of the contents of the Bible, considered absolutely—or considered relatively to all we know of God, of the universe, and of ourselves? What, in short, is the general nature of that proof for the divine authority of the Scriptures, commonly, though somewhat vaguely called, the internal evidence? In treating this great point I shall omit many things which will be found in most publications which expressly discuss the subject; insert some, which, as far as I know, have been generally overlooked; and distribute the whole in such an order, as appears to me to give to each separate consideration its just weight—and to the whole, taken together, the force of a connected argument. Of course, nothing can be amplified in such a performance as this; and the whole can be considered only an outline—which ought to be complete, so far as its own general conception extends, but every part of which is capable of indefinite expansion and illustration.

II.

1. They tell us, on the threshold, that it is not competent for us to prove that God has spoken to us—much less to prove this by any considerations connected with the message itself—until we have first proved that God exists; and, moreover, that we must prove this latter point, not only previously to, but independently of, the former. I could have wished that a separate lecture on the

being and attributes of God had formed a part of this course ; not only as by this means greater completeness would have been given to the whole ; but especially because, in our day, there is a growing infidelity, much of which wickedly baptizes itself into the name of Christ, the fundamental error of which attacks the separate, personal existence of God. As there is none, I may the more properly clear this particular objection—though avoiding, as I needs must, the general argument. To that end, suppose I were to make the same challenge to an argument designed to prove from the work of creation, that the universe has a divine author : and demand that the existence of God, be first and independently proved—before any one shall attempt to prove, that all created things are his handy-work ? Suppose, again, I should interpose a similar challenge, to an argument purporting to prove the existence of God, as the ruler of the universe—or the judge and final rewarder of men, or their merciful benefactor—either from considerations drawn from the general order of nature, or the universal course of providence, or the adaptation of man to the universe ? Is it not obvious that the objection applies in the same manner, and nearly to the same extent, in one case as in another ? They first deny that we can prove the existence of God by any argument, *a priori*. Independently of that, there is his work within us ; and this also they deny. Independently of these two, there is no way in which we can know anything of God, except by the external manifestations he makes of himself. If he had made but one kind of external manifestation of himself—that would be a way, whether of works, or providence, or word, to know him : but if he makes many external manifestations of himself, each is a way as real as any other, and to those capable of comprehending it, as conclusive, both that he is, and what he is. It might just as well be said that the course of providence affords no proof of the being of God, but only an elucidation of his character, after his being had been previously and independently proved. And the same thing might be said of the works of God. We have no more idea—perhaps not so much—how God ought to make a world, or how he ought to govern it—than how he ought to speak to it. In this case, therefore, the word of God may be as real and as legitimate a source of proof of his existence, as either his works or his providence can be : since it is just as certain that if God has spoken, there is a God, as it is that if God creates, or God rules, there is a God :

and it cannot be pretended that it is more difficult to deduce anything whatever concerning God, from a full revelation of himself by words, than by works, or by providence. It is very manifest that a demand that we shall prove the existence of God, previous to and independent of any particular manifestation of himself—might be made with equal propriety of every successive and every conceivable manifestation of himself: the end of which is, that in proving God's existence, we must be deprived of all the manifestations of that existence—that is, in effect, of all the sources of knowledge of his existence—until the existence itself is first proved. This is a round-about, and very silly way to atheism. For let it be considered, that so far as we are concerned, it is the very same thing to say, there is no God at all, as to say God has made no manifestation of himself to us. And again, upon the supposition of our own intelligent existence, which cannot well be denied, it is impossible for us to conceive, that God should not manifest himself to us, if he exists at all: since we know nothing more certainly than that activity is an attribute of all existence that rises above the condition of inert matter; and that it becomes more intense, more exalted, and more comprehensive, with the increasing dignity and power of the existence itself: so that the non-manifestation, to intelligent existences, of an infinite, almighty, and all-pervading activity, is an inconceivable absurdity. And still further, upon the supposition of our having any certain knowledge of anything whatever, which cannot well be denied; the probability at once becomes violent in favor of the existence, and by consequence the manifestation of God. For the most certain thing known to us, is that we do not individually occupy the entire universe—and that exterior to ourselves, there is much beside, and independent of us. It is impossible, in the nature of the case, for us to know, that in that universe exterior to us, one of the things may not be God: so that the non-existence of God is a proposition, which, even if it were true, is wholly incapable of being proved. In such a state of the question—even supposing the probabilities to be capable of being exactly balanced—when considered *a priori*, which is by no means the case—the very slightest presumption which could arise in favor of that which may be proved, at once inclines the scale against that which in its own nature cannot be proved. And, therefore, as there is an utter impossibility of proving the non-existence of God, and very many methods of rendering the fact

of his existence probable, there would, in the case supposed, arise immediately the violent probability already stated. For the purposes of the present argument, therefore, there is manifestly no such necessity, as that which is so constantly urged by infidels, and so generally conceded by Christians: a demand on one side and a concession on the other, equally absurd, and in their result atheistical. For us, let it be supposed, there is a God:—then the question would be, is this his word? Or let it be supposed, for the moment, undetermined whether there is a God or not:—then the question would be in such a position that any proof that this is the word of a God, would in like manner prove that there must be a God. Either way, the question remains the same—do these Scriptures commend themselves to us as a revelation from an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable being? If they do not, there may still be such a being. If they do, there must, of necessity, so far as we are concerned, be such a being.

2. Upon the supposition that there is any God at all, there is no antecedent improbability that he would make a revelation of himself to his rational creatures. On the contrary, as every manifestation of himself is in some sort a revelation of himself, and it has already been shown that it is inconceivable that he and intelligent creatures should exist together without his making manifestations of himself to them; the question would naturally be, rather as to the manner and extent, than the fact of a divine revelation, taking the word in its largest sense. In that sense natural religion, as it is conceived of even by those who reject revealed religion, is an exalted revelation of God. But when we consider the weakness and blindness of our faculties, and the deadness of our moral perceptions, in our present condition, estimating that condition alike by the general history of our race, and the inward experience of each individual person; it is, perhaps, more rational to conclude that the great truths and the profound ideas with which natural religion furnishes us, are more probably the grand outlines which the race has preserved of an outward and primeval revelation, than the discoveries we have made of God, in any subordinate manner, by means of any other kind of manifestation of himself. If to this we add the extraordinary depth and power of our religious nature, even in its most perverted state—and the longing after God,—even false gods—which constitutes the most distinctive peculiarity of man; we cannot easily suppose that great violence is done to the character of God by presuming that

just in such a state of case, there is an infinite probability that he both could and would speak words of instruction, and warning, and comfort to his children—erring, and yet striving to know him. Moreover, we are to remember, that even upon the supposition of atheism, we are not delivered from the violent probability of existing in a future state, and the certainty that so existing we may be eternally degraded and miserable. For atheism being supposed, it is nevertheless certain that we exist here—though no God exists; and it is equally certain, that our race, taken as a whole, is both degraded and miserable—we ourselves being judges. It is, therefore, not only impossible to show that we will not exist hereafter, but it is infinitely probable that we shall—whether there is any God or not; and it is, also, absolutely certain, that so existing, we may be eternally undone. Seeing all this to be so—if we will now suppose that there is a God—an immense probability immediately arises, that he cannot look with indifference upon such a posture of affairs. If we pass into the domain of the great truths of natural religion, the presumption becomes overpowering. And after we have possessed ourselves of such ideas of God, of ourselves, and of all things relating both to him and to ourselves, as the Bible delivers to us—it being, for this argument, perfectly immaterial where the Bible got those ideas; the human mind cannot well resist the conviction, that such a God, in such a contingency, will interpose effectually. I presume, it will hardly be denied, that a perfect and permanent revelation is a possible, and might be an effectual mode of interposition. It is that mode which purports to have been adopted: it is that which—to say no more, the human mind has rested on—as not only probable, but actual. From that point of view, this is the highest testimony which is capable of being given. It is the testimony of human reason—I may add of human nature—to the antecedent probability of a divine revelation.

3. Let us approach more nearly to this wondrous book, and observe in a somewhat general way what its effects upon the human race have been, and what it is in itself. It has made the circuit of the world. Human society, in every stage of development, under every form of administration, and composed of every race of men, has been exhibited to us, with and without the knowledge which this book imparts, with and without the influence it exerts. The results which have been reached on the one hand and on the other, involve the entire mass of human experi-

ence. From the depths of an unknown antiquity its strange accents become audible to man ; and along the entire course of all the generations as they pass, those accents have never been hushed. As an element in the destiny of man, nothing else is more capable of being estimated. Undeniably the influence it has exerted has been immense, and most beneficent. Undeniably that influence has been immense and beneficent, in proportion as it has been simple, absolute and undisturbed. The institutions of Moses have more deeply impressed the human race, than all other institutions except those of Christ ; and the doctrine and precepts which Moses as the servant, and Christ as the Son of God, have delivered to men, are beyond all doubt the most efficacious and the most benign inheritance which man has received. Peace and freedom, and knowledge and civilization, have flourished the most under the shadow of those institutions ; and all that is true, and beautiful, and good has sprung up the most profusely with that doctrine and those precepts. This day, after a struggle so protracted and so vehement—if we will estimate the results of so many centuries and so many conflicts, in their broadest aspect, we shall behold these marvellous oracles sustaining and adorning every institution and every attainment that blesses the earth most richly ; we shall find them affording the chief solace to man under all that crushes and degrades him ; and we shall see them utterly banished or utterly perverted, only where man has lost all hope, or is struggling with despair. This is the great conclusion ; and it is one which cannot be overlooked in any discussion of the origin and authority of this book. But if we will consider more particularly certain remarkable details, the light thrown upon the present argument will appear only the more surprising. As, one by one, the portions of this volume were bestowed upon man, each in its turn was efficacious to produce the particular effect intended by it ;—and then capable, also, of entering into the general mass that went before or that followed after, and of uniting with it in the production of new and more general effects ; and this process, everywhere else unprecedented, was enacted very many times, through very many centuries. Again, as each part was added, the clearness, the abundance, and the overwhelming force of the external evidence, with which it was marshalled in its progress from heaven, bore a remarkable proportion to the amount of the lively oracles already existing ; that evidence being immense in proportion as the portions of the Bible existing were few, and

gradually diminishing as the portions gradually accumulated; until the whole was complete, and extraordinary manifestations of God almost ceased with the last revelation from God. More than that, they who received these communications from God, with simple faith, as they were successively bestowed on them, found the smallest portions of them sufficient as a means of grace and salvation, while no more existed for them: but when the whole had been completed, and the very uttermost part had been bestowed on them, who had received all the rest, and had found the smallest part sufficient—that glorious whole, became forthwith a sealed book in the matter of grace and salvation to those who rejected and crucified the giver of it all! Thus in the very mode of its production we are warned, that these very internal evidences which we seek, are for us, the grand and enduring proof; and that there is a power connected in some mysterious manner with the oracle itself, which being found gives vitality to all, or being lost leaves behind only such influences as belong to the truth of itself.

4. As we enter somewhat more into the contents of the Scriptures, seeking for proof of their origin, we are struck at once with the miraculous character of the pretensions everywhere set up throughout the whole volume, and the multiplied forms in which a divine power is claimed to be exercised. There is one aspect in which this whole department of proof constitutes the subject of another lecture. The reality of the working of miracles, as a fact historically proved, together with the significance of that fact, and its conclusive value in establishing the divine mission of those who performed them, and by consequence, the divine truth of their message. All that falls into another discourse. But there is another aspect of the subject which appertains to this argument. Upon the supposition, that a divine revelation is made, the most obvious proof of the divine mission of him who makes it is, that he should work miracles; as, indeed, the Scripture declares that “signs and wonders and mighty deeds” are the appropriate evidence of a messenger from God. Now what we have to notice is, how from the beginning, this great necessity is silently accepted by the writers of holy Scripture—and how abounding is the proof thus furnished by them, that, of a truth, God was with them—with them, too, in this divine plenitude, not merely as using this miraculous power as a general proof, but in the very method of its use, illustrating as well the nature and object as the reality

of their mission. So remarkable and so comprehensive is this miraculous method, that every attribute of God, and every one of his revealed purposes, and multitudes of the most precious truths taught to us, might be set in a clear light, and distinctly enforced by the miracles recorded in his holy word; so that besides their value as divine interpositions for a collateral but fundamental end, they constitute besides, a full revelation of himself. And again, a careful consideration will show, that all the miracles recorded in the Scriptures have a general bearing upon the great scope of the Scriptures themselves, and are in unison with the grand conception running through them all. They are all miracles subordinate to one stupendous miracle, most glorious of all—the miracle of God incarnate to save sinners! And in this manner they constitute a divine and perpetual commentary upon the plan of salvation. Now upon the supposition of no God, and by consequence no revelation, I would fain know how these glorious ideas, in this exalted concatenation, and marvellous fulness and familiarity, get into the minds of these particular men, and no other men in the universe? And upon the supposition of a God, and an attempt to test the claims of a supposed revelation upon its own subject matter, I would fain know how such things are possible to a succession of minds left to their ordinary operations?

5. Next, perhaps, to what has just been suggested, the most obvious peculiarity of the Bible is the confident claim of its writers to the possession of prophetic knowledge. This subject, in the fundamental nature of it, constitutes, like the subject of miracles, the field of a separate lecture in this course; that is, the demonstration of the fact, that the Scriptures abound with true prophecies, and the illustration and significance and value of that fact, in establishing their divine origin. In their most general bearing even, the argument from miracles, and that from prophecy, belong to the general subject of internal evidence; but their full and separate treatment, precludes the propriety in relation to the latter, as I have before stated in regard to the former, of anything more than an incidental notice here. Considered in this manner, the whole subject of prophecy as it presents itself throughout the Scriptures, and as it is interwoven with almost every portion of them, gives to them a character most striking and exalted. As it is impossible for us to conceive how the future can develop itself before our unaided faculties in a manner similar to that in which the past is present to our minds; so it is

equally inconceivable how we could entirely conceal the past as the whole future is concealed, so as to exhibit the same ignorance of all we do know, as of all we do not know. But the cognitions of God, as to all the future and all the past, are precisely of the same nature. And, therefore, while that fact establishes his omniscience, and by consequence his Godhead, it renders it inconceivable to us, that he should converse freely and familiarly with us, and not exhibit, in general, the same familiarity with all the future, as with all the past. As far as we can comprehend, this is one of the exigencies of an extended revelation from God—one of its absolute conditions. And we find the writers of the Bible accepting in its fulness this controlling truth; and the inherent power of it is exhibited throughout its pages. Not to insist only on their express prophecies, of which the number is so great, and the character so remarkable, all that they say, and all that they do, is said and done as fully in the sense of what is to come as in the sense of what is already gone. It is to be observed, at the same time, that all this sublime familiarity with all that is in profound darkness to the most exalted human intelligence, is exhibited in such a manner as neither to take away the contingency of second causes, nor to interfere with the freedom of human actions, nor to put it in the power of devils or wicked men to defeat what is declared beforehand, nor to diminish the grounds or the necessity of a perpetual faith on the part of the children of God. And we must add, that the whole compass of this prophetic intelligence, which pervades the Scriptures, whether it manifests itself in direct predictions, or whether it animates the types, and symbols, and ceremonies, or whether it impregnates the general current of the divine word, all terminates in the same ruling conception and all struggles towards the same infinite object. Salvation for lost sinners, and the person, the work, and the glory of their divine Redeemer—these are the ideas which control all the rest. Surely, in the general compass and intimate structure of the Scriptures, considered from this point of view, there is a depth of knowledge of that which man knows not, and there is an awful skill in the manner of its use, and there is, at once, an infinite breadth and an intense concentration of superhuman conceptions to a superhuman end, the whole of which is utterly beyond anything of which we feel ourselves to be capable. It is the high and fair, as well as the irresistible conclusion of human reason, that this is not our work.

6. There is another and a distinct mode in which the vast intelligence which pervades the Bible is so manifested, that from the successive points reached by the human race, it may be subjected to an estimate more and more rigorous. What is here alluded to will be clearly perceived from this statement, namely, that the general tenor of the Bible, as well as all its special assertions, exactly accord with what the profoundest learning shows to be the actual state of the universe, as well as with what the deepest and largest experience establishes, as the actual course of nature. The sum of all human experience as to the results of all human conduct, may be found better expressed in many of the earliest portions of this book, than we are able to express them now, after so many additional centuries of progress and observation; and the results of all knowledge, in every department of our researches into the state of the universe, are assumed as already clear and known, thousands of years before our researches commenced. Whoever wrote this book, knew more than we know now on these mysterious subjects, and knew it distinctly, when we knew nothing. And they have used their surprising knowledge in such a manner, that we are only able to perceive they had it, as we ourselves gradually attain some insight into the same vast subjects; and they have uttered it in that form which seems to imply continually, and which indeed very often openly declares, that it is not their personal cognitions which they are uttering, but the intimations of a divine intelligence, the whole extent of which is not comprehended by themselves. All this is infinitely remarkable. And yet it will be most deeply felt to be true by those who are the most conversant with the progress of human knowledge, taken in its very widest sense. In the whole circle of the sciences, every department of human investigation, in its first stages, has been alleged to contain positive evidence of the mistakes or misstatements of the Bible; and the instances are not rare, in which this precocious rejoicing against the truth, has been met by unhappy attempts on the part of the friends of God's word, to make it accord with the false teachings of infidel and pretentious philosophy. In the end, when patient research had elicited the whole truth, and calm reason had reduced all the results to their true order and value, the ignorant infidel was found to have perverted nature, and the ignorant Christian to have misconstrued God; and without one single exception, the final and perfect conclusion has been to con-

firm and exalt the all-pervading intelligence of the written word ! How wild would be the scream of the infidel philosophers, if, from the whole sum of human experience, or the whole range of human investigation, they could extort one clear, established, and deliberate contradiction of these strange oracles, which have come down to us from the remotest, and, as they would have us believe, amongst the least enlightened ages !—Now it has been held that the adaptation of man to the universe in which he dwells, and of which he forms so small a part, is so exact and astonishing, as to afford a powerful argument for the being of God ; and this is conceded by most of those who reject the Scriptures. But it appears to me, that the same argument assumes its most powerful and comprehensive form, when it shows, as it easily can, that the adaptation of the Bible, in the general sense herein signified, both to man and to the universe, is far more precise and complete, than the adaptation of man and the universe to each other.

7. There is one more suggestion, founded upon the general consideration of the contents of the Bible, too important to be omitted. The fact that there is a divine superintendence over all human affairs, and that this superintendence is infinite in its power and moral in its character, is one of those universal beliefs of the human race, which, like the belief in the mere existence of God, seems almost as natural to man, as his physical, his rational, or his moral conformation. There is no great difficulty in deducing this belief in a clear and rational manner, as one of the necessary and ultimate truths, of what is called natural religion ; and this has been commonly done, even by those who had not the advantage of a divine revelation, or who rejected it. Now the suggestion here is this, namely, that the silent but sublime order, movement, and control of all things, which we observe, which we believe in, and which we call providence, perfectly accords, both as to its reality and its course, with the statements and the principles of the Word of God, in which its cause, its development and its end, are perfectly explained. The moral government of the world, as exhibited in the whole course of history, and as stated in the Scriptures, appears to be precisely identical. God's providence and his word set forth precisely the same system of things. Those eternal truths which underlie his providence, are fully expounded only in his word. Those principles of government which control the one, are explained in the

other. The same difficulties, the same exceptions, belong to both. The same remedies are resorted to in both. The same progress, the same development, occur in both. Now, however simple and universal may be the belief in this providence, it is only after long and large observation that we are able to deduce, from innumerable examples, scattered over many ages, and exhibiting the most multiplied conditions, the general laws which regulate its course. This is the real difficulty; and its solution involves the whole mass of human experience, and all the powers of human reason. In attempting this, we stand upon an elevation from which we look back upon the entire course of human events, and with the entire labors of the human mind poured out to aid us: and after all we succeed but doubtfully in our task. Then we turn to these oracles, and we find men in the earliest ages of the world—without any of those helps which constitute the greater part of our strength—uttering our profoundest conclusions, as simple verities, most familiar to them;—clearing up our doubts and difficulties, and correcting our errors, even without an effort; and explaining to us, not only the facts whose significance was often so obscure, and the nature of those laws whose very existence it had cost us so much to establish, but also the grand system and design, into which these facts and laws enter as means to an end. They look forward, thousands of years, and see most clearly, what we can only perceive most dimly, as we look back over the same track of time. And what they see so clearly, and we so dimly, are things, which so far as we can comprehend, we could not have seen at all, if we had been placed at the beginning, instead of the end, of those long ages, whose events are the very elements of all our conclusions. The only possible explanation seems to be the one which they constantly offer to us. Their miraculous power, their prophetic knowledge, their vast intelligence touching the condition of the universe, and now their profound acquaintance with the principles of its moral administration; all—all is divine. They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. This explains all.

8. If we enter now somewhat more into particulars, we shall find this volume to consist of sixty-six separate books, one of which (the book of Psalms) contains no less than one hundred and fifty distinct compositions; and, probably, if we were to analyze the contents of the entire volume, we should find that it contains many hundreds of perfectly distinct and separate treatises,

having no other connection with each other than that they treat of the same general matters, or were composed by the same persons. These various compositions occupied a period of fifteen or sixteen centuries in their production; and profess to cover, historically and prophetically, the whole period of man's existence upon this earth. They embrace every kind of writing, every sort of information, and every imaginable subject. History, government, laws, institutions, manners, customs, opinions, education, morals, religion, philosophy, discourses of every description, poetry in all its departments, biography, epistolary correspondence, everything from the most familiar discourse up to the most abstract and sublime meditations; the whole circle of the sciences furnishes nothing that is not alluded to—the utmost compass of human society and human interests exhibits nothing that is not in some way brought to notice, and every aspect under which human nature has ever presented itself is distinctly stated and considered. The principal persons who were engaged in the composition of these various treatises, may, perhaps, be stated at about thirty; but the number would be greatly increased by adding all who produced portions embraced now under more general divisions. These authors were from every rank in life. Dictators, kings, rulers in a free commonwealth, judges, magistrates, lawgivers, generals, priests, private citizens, scholars, artisans, farmers, shepherds, soldiers, fishermen, tax-gatherers; and they appear to have been persons of every sort of temperament from the most gentle to the most perverse, and of every sort of endowment from the most exalted to the most unpretending, and of every time of life from earliest manhood to extreme old age, and of every grade of attainment from unlettered simplicity to boundless knowledge, and of every condition from the deepest wretchedness up to the most consummate human felicity. Yet all these men, through all these centuries, treating of all these subjects, so wrote, that although they have been subjected to the fiercest scrutiny during more than seventeen centuries since the last of them died, it has been found impossible to detect the smallest solecism in the entire productions of all of them put together, or the smallest discrepancy of fact, of principle, or even of opinion of any one of them from any other throughout their voluminous writings. Every one agrees in all things with every one of the rest. Still more, every one agrees with all that has since been discovered of the condition of the universe, of the course of nature, and of the order of Providence.

And further still, every one seems to have been endowed with those sublime gifts, that awful intelligence, and that superhuman insight, which are fully expressed by saying they were inspired, and which are utterly incomprehensible if they were not. It may be said without hesitation, that if any one of the more extended treatises which compose the Bible, had existed alone, and had not claimed to be divine, it would have immortalized any age or race that produced it. And it is absolutely certain, that if the whole were now totally lost, the whole human family combined could not reproduce it if left to themselves.

9. Taking another step towards the interior of our subject, we find upon every attempt to make ourselves acquainted with the contents of the Bible, a deeper and deeper impression that it is wholly different from all other books. If we peruse any portion of it, in connection with any portion of any other book, we are struck with something about it, though we may not be exactly aware what it is, which places it so entirely by itself, that no part of it can be incorporated with any other book, nor can any part of any other book be incorporated with it, without our being able, instantly, to perceive the vast difference. The more we enlarge the compass of this impression, and endeavor to take in the whole spirit which pervades the Bible, in like manner as a general spirit pervades every other book; the more fixed becomes our conviction, that this is immeasurably different from everything else. All this difference is on the side of the Bible; it is a difference which exalts while it isolates it. There is a gravity, a concentration, a weight in all its utterances, and at the same time a solemnity, an earnestness, and a pathos; a profound manifestation, that he who speaks has a transcendent right to be heard, and that he who hearkens has an immense interest in giving heed; a way of putting everything, a significance in everything that is put, a power pervading the whole; and as the result of all, an impression upon us, wholly different from that produced by anything else; and which the deeper and more habitual it becomes, is the more favorable to it, and, in all respects, the more beneficial to ourselves. It is in the nature of a kind of general testimony of the human soul, vague, perhaps, and instinctive, of its recognition of the felt presence of a divine intelligence, not fully comprehended, but yet really perceived. As we advance from this wide view to a more intimate, yet still general consideration, no matter where we begin or what we take up, the former impression is not only sus-

tained, but deepened. If we will carefully examine the ceremonial system of the ancient dispensation, which, perhaps, of all parts of the Bible men might be inclined to consider the most barren for us; we shall find a monument of skill and power, which, considered as a mere human device, is wholly inexplicable. If we will consider the book of Psalms, what infidel critics tell us it is, namely, only a compilation of the religious odes of a rude people; it becomes at once an incomprehensible marvel how such a people, using so narrow a speech, and in compositions so evanescent, should have succeeded in combining the expression of the most abstract and exalted truths with the whole range of our religious emotions, in a manner which all the rest of mankind, before and since, have been unable to approach. If we will study what we call the Ten Commandments, and reflect that the very earliest lawgiver of our race, in the very dawn of knowledge, has succeeded in reducing to four general propositions the summary of all our duty to God, and to six others the summary of all our duty to each other; and that he has done this in such a manner that both the temporal and spiritual interests of mankind, from his day to ours, may be exactly measured by their adherence to, or their rejection of his simple and sublime definitions (not only,—but so as, in fact,) in some sort to exhaust the two most difficult parts of knowledge, namely, that which teaches us the practical direction of our own conduct and that which regulates the public administration of human society;—we shall perhaps not err very much if we believe his explicit declaration, that it was not he, but God, who made this summary. And if, passing from the Old Testament into the New, we study deeply the central object of that whole book—Jesus of Nazareth—and get an adequate idea of his person, his character, and his work as set forth throughout all the Scriptures; I do not see but that it is far more rational to admit, with all the writers of the book, that the entire conception they all had of the Son of God, was divinely communicated to them, than to suppose that any one of them could have originated and developed such a conception, much less that all of them could have wrought upon that glorious composition, each in a manner working out what the rest had left unfinished, and that the perfect work should have been what we now behold it. The entire idea of Jesus of Nazareth, taken as a whole, is as much superhuman as the alleged manner of his birth; and the working out of that idea is as miraculous as the incarnation. The subject matter of his

instructions, too, is as great a wonder as the mighty signs with which he enforced them. Considering Christ as a mere man, and remembering who and what he was as such—the Lord's Prayer as a model of all devotion, and the sermon on the mount as a model of all discourse, both uttered like all his instructions, off-hand, and as the occasion arose, are infinitely more difficult of satisfactory explanation than any alleged interposition of God, in the manner, and for the ends stated in the Scriptures. And the very manner of his instruction has in it that which, as much by its unapproachable difficulties as by its amazing power, stamps it as superhuman. Let any man attempt to speak in parables; nay, to produce one single parable; nay, to find one, out of the Bible, in the whole compass of human literature; nay, to compare what are so called, in other parts of the Bible, few as they are even there, with those uttered habitually, incessantly, by Christ. Those great, simple, luminous, and yet wholly inimitable expositions, not of duties merely, or mainly even, but of fundamental, and most generally of before unknown or unregarded truths, whose habitual use constituted the distinctive peculiarity of Christ's manner, and was felt by those around him to impart to it a character and a power altogether divine. Well and truly might they say, "Never man spake like this man." Clear and faithful was that testimony, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

10. The writers of this volume contemplated from another point of view, are worthy of a most careful study. They furnish, in their own persons, not only the first, but the most faithfully developed examples, of what the system they have given to us really is, and what it can do. As this is true of the whole of them, we may illustrate the point by the example of that class of them, which is the latest, and perhaps the most familiar to us—the Apostles of the Lord Jesus. Now it is needless to urge that these men must have sincerely believed all they have told us, to be true, and must have been thoroughly in earnest in all they did: because all this if not unmistakably certain of itself, is, at least, not often questioned. What I insist on is, not only that it is infinitely more rational to receive the whole matter precisely as they state it, than to suppose they might have been under the influence of some strange delusion; but that, taking human nature as it is, there is an utter impossibility that the state of case exhibited by them, ever should have occurred or been so ex-

hibited, except upon the supposition that their statements are absolutely true; while, on the other hand, supposing them to be true, everything is not only fully accounted for, but natural, and in a manner inevitable. It is as inconsistent with the operations of the human mind and the exercises of the human soul, that a deluded person should speak and act as they have done, as it is that an open impostor should have done so. The manner in which a man who believes he is under a divine influence—but really is not—speaks and acts, is as radically different from that in which one speaks and acts, who really is under such an influence, as the manner of one is who merely pretends to speak and act as taught of God. Delusion is as distinct from reality as imposture is; and to deny this, is not only to outrage our own intimate perception of truth, and unsettle the foundations of knowledge, but is, in fact, to render atheism the only refuge from superstition. On the other hand, the possibility of a divine influence upon the mind and heart of man, is just as supposable as the possibility of a divine influence upon his body, or upon any other part of the physical universe; and the reality of its occurrence is as capable of being established, by its own distinctive proofs, in the one case as in the other; and the supposition of its presence will explain and establish, or will confute and overthrow, an alleged state of facts in the one case as completely as in the other; for in point of ultimate truth we know no more about the nature of matter than of spirit, nor any more of God's fundamental action—whether direct or indirect—with the former than with the latter. Taking the whole case precisely as it stands, the simple verity of the alleged facts, in the case of any one of the Apostles, is the only supposition that does not leave the whole subject in appalling darkness; and, when we add, one after another, all the individual cases distinctly recorded and explained in the Scriptures as illustrating the nature and operation of the religious system therein revealed, any other supposition becomes transcendently absurd. A succession of impostors, or a succession of fanatics could neither be, nor do, nor say, after the manner set forth in the Bible. The inward experience which those writers develop, was beyond being feigned, nay, even beyond being imagined; so that its bare statement verifies its actual occurrence. The manner of its occurrence, as stated by themselves, is the only comprehensible mode in which it could have occurred, and is fully sufficient to account for it. The truth

which regulated and sustained those wondrous exercises, was wholly beyond the bounds of merely human knowledge, and is moreover, of itself, when known, wholly incompetent to produce such results; so that its revelation to them, and its being attended by the power of God, constitute the very heart of the case. And their own conduct, both before and after God's alleged dealings with them in a way of enlightening, regenerating and inspiring them, together with all the other outward facts of the whole case, as made in the Bible, constitute one perpetual and illustrious commentary on the divine truth revealed, the divine Spirit revealing it, and the divine Saviour therein revealed. The purest and wisest of mankind have sighed for the feeblest rays of that light, which these impostors or fanatics poured forth so gloriously; and which they used, in their mad profusion, only to establish a system, for which, in this world, they suffered the loss of all things, and which reveals for the world to come, nothing more certainly, than that all their delusions will be extinguished in endless night, and all their impostures be visited with the curse of God! It is easier for an enlightened mind to reject the system of the universe explained to us by philosophers, and to believe, that its great laws so painfully discovered by them are only preconceptions of their own minds, and its sublime order and power so clearly illustrated by those laws, nothing more than grand exhibitions of some of the possibilities of things; than for a renewed heart to reject the system of divine grace, of which the Apostles of the Lord are the greatest and last inspired teachers, and to believe that the clear and precious truth they have revealed, is not real in itself, divine in its origin, and infinite in its eternal sanctions.

11. We may now consider the contents of the Bible in a more systematic manner—especially as they explain the actual condition of our race, as they account for it, and as they propose a remedy for it. They declare our present estate to be one both of sin and misery; an estate of alienation from God and rebellion against him, in which we lie under his wrath and curse. They add, that the danger of our condition is equal to its corruption and its wretchedness, and reveal in the clearest manner a future and endless state of being, in which we are exposed to infinite woe. According to their teachings, sin is the original cause of all suffering and sorrow; and it is of its very nature to become more and more aggravated continually, and therefore to produce

greater and greater misery forever ; and it is of the very nature of God to hate and to punish all sin, precisely in proportion to its demerits—that is, in a manner infinitely just. But remarkable as all this account is, two particulars are added, if possible more remarkable still. The first is, that this was not the original condition of our race, but that we were created at first in the image of God and enjoyed his favor ; a glorious and blessed condition which was forfeited and lost by sin. The second is, that God in his infinite mercy has provided for us a complete salvation from sin and misery, both in this world and the next, and that it is the object of the Scriptures to bring to light the life and immortality offered to us in this new form. In one word, we have lost the image of God in which we were created ; we must recover it, or perish ; here is a perfect mode of recovery, revealed from heaven. I repeat that all this is infinitely remarkable. There is no part of it whose bare conception can be accounted for so naturally—if indeed at all—as by admitting its simple verity ; no part of it within the reach of our knowledge, which the mere statement of would not show to be false, if indeed it was false. But, perhaps, the most remarkable part of the whole case is that the moment these wonderful declarations are made known to us, we perceive in the facts they contain a perfect explanation of the profoundest movements of our own inner life, and a complete solution of all the moral phenomena exhibited by our race. So far as the range of our personal knowledge extends, we see ourselves and all men to be precisely in the condition which the Scriptures describe ; yet neither they nor we comprehended exactly what that condition was, until the depths of our own natures were thus explored for us. And beyond the range of our absolute knowledge, both in the dim past and the unknown future, these revelations of our origin and destiny, these solemn accounts of our fall and recovery, come to us in a way which accords with our deepest instincts, our saddest experience, our profoundest necessities, our most exalted aspirations, and our most ardent hopes. We desire to be happy, and yet are miserable. We see the excellence and the beauty of goodness, and yet live in sin. We feel that we were once better off ; not always as we now are ; not willing to be so forever. Even while we love and practice what is evil, we feel that our sins are a burden and our pollution a shame unto us. The ruins of a better nature are still visible in the wreck which we have become, and the germ of a new and glorious life seems still

to exist amidst the death which reigns within us. Though we shun and dread God, we sigh as we think of his lost image. Weak, and blind, and impotent, and perverse, and corrupt as we are, there still lingers in us a sense of God's infinite excellence and God's infinite love. Now I am not pretending to argue how much of this, or any of it, is in us in a state of nature wholly destitute of all knowledge of a divine revelation; but I am arguing that the revelation we have received, finds or makes these impressions within us, to this argument it is wholly immaterial which, and that they furnish the highest and most conclusive evidence of which the case admits, that the revealed facts to which they are so strangely responsive, are true. If they are true, there is an end of the argument; for it is demonstrably certain their discovery and statement must have been superhuman. And now we must observe how absolute and crushing the proof becomes, upon the admission that any one single human soul was ever restored, truly and actually, to the lost image of God, according to that general system revealed in the Bible, and which purports to be able thus to restore all souls. We must absolutely deny that one single case ever occurred; or we must absolutely admit the divine origin of the Scriptures. One single well-defined footprint, on the strand of a desolate continent, might prove that a man had been there, as conclusively as if all the other men in the world were to testify that they saw him there. Nay, how fierce would be the infidel joy and triumph, if the smallest fragment of a human skeleton could be discovered in one of those strata of the earth's crust, which geologists choose to call pre-Adamite?

12. We may penetrate still more deeply into our own nature, and into the remedy proposed for its recovery, in order to perceive the special relevancy, as we have already seen the general agreement, of the one to the other. The Scriptures do not intimate that God proposes to create absolutely, and for the first time, a religious nature in us. On the other hand, the deepest, the most enduring, and the most pervading part of man's nature, even in his fallen state, is the religious part of it. He will do without everything, sooner than without a religion; his religious capabilities can be more exalted and more perverted than all his other capabilities combined; and his whole history is more impressed and controlled by the development of religious ideas than all others united. A sense of our dependence and of our accountability, is

the deepest and the most universal moral sentiment that finds lodgment in the soul of man. Our capacity to perceive that there exists in things, that distinction which we express by saying some are true and some are false, is the foundation of our rational nature and of our ability to obtain knowledge; while our capacity to perceive that there exists in things that further distinction which we express by saying that some are good and some are bad, is the foundation of our moral nature, and of our ability to obtain happiness. Truth, which it is natural to man to perceive, to seek, and to love, is our only guide and rule, in the one case and in the other. In our fallen state, we do not lose our capacity to perceive that such distinctions really exist, for then we should be no longer either rational or moral creatures; but what we lose is the capacity to perceive with clearness and certainty what particular things are true, and to choose with constancy and fervor the particular things that are good; and this by reason of our rational and moral nature, and especially the latter, having become depraved. Now the whole plan of recovery revealed in the Scriptures, assumes as existing in man, this precise state of case, and addresses itself to it. This is our present spiritual condition as clearly exhibited by our researches into our own souls, and by our observation of all other human beings; and this is the condition which the Bible explicitly declares to be that for which it has revealed a perfect remedy. To regenerate this fallen and depraved nature, is its great design. Its grand, central idea is a divine Saviour, redeeming a race of rational, moral, dependent, accountable, and alas! fallen and depraved creatures. It declares our dependence, and points us to our creator and benefactor. It proclaims our accountability, and reveals to us our eternal lawgiver and judge. It recognizes our rational faculties, and addresses to them ten thousand arguments, ten thousand proofs. It exalts our moral capabilities and spreads before us every good and pure and glorious thing that heaven itself can furnish, and every fearful evil that even hell unfolds. It declares with intense precision all the greatness, and the guiltiness of our sins, and sets before us in the divine Word, a perfect rule, at once, of our duty and our condemnation. And then, in the infinite grace of God, and his infinite compassion for creatures at once so ruined, so depraved, and so helpless, and yet so capacious of his exalted service and his eternal enjoyment, he crowns all by the unspeakable gift of his only-begotten Son.

The grand problem of the universe, the awful paradox of the Scriptures themselves, God's hatred of sin and God's love for sinners, is solved on Calvary! And men can comprehend all this, and all that is involved in it, and believe that God is not in it all?

13. The exact manner in which the Bible proposes to accomplish our salvation, to apply the remedy it reveals for our recovery, personally to men, is the next point to which the argument conducts us, in its inward movement. The general proposition of the Scriptures is, that man is in a fallen and ruined condition, by reason of the introduction of sin into the world: the particular mode of his ruin is, that he has lost the image of God in which he was created, and incurred all the effects and consequences of that loss. The most general statement of the remedy proposed is, that he must be restored to the lost image of God. In a more particular manner it is set forth, that the infinite beneficence of God, is the particular attribute of his nature that prompts the whole divine movement to save sinners, and that essentially pervades it all. The eternal love of God the Father, is at the basis of our personal salvation. The incarnation, obedience and sacrifice of the Son, are the practical outworking of that divine love. The Holy Ghost, in his entire work upon our hearts, accomplishes in us the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption proclaimed in the Scriptures. Those Scriptures are the efficacious instrumentality used by the Holy Ghost in the entire work wrought in us. Summarily, this is the mode of recovery, both in itself, and in its application to us, which these Scriptures proclaim to be divine in its origin and its efficacy. Assuredly it is a remedy which involves in it, and which makes full account of, the nature of man as we know it to be, and the nature of God as the Bible reveals that nature to us. As far as we can comprehend, we are out of the reach of any remedy, except one which shall act upon our rational and moral nature, by means of truth. And yet there is no truth known to us, except in the Bible, that has any tendency even, to recover us; and the truth there made known to us, cannot do it, except as it is connected with the love of the Father, the sacrifice of the Son, and the work of the Spirit. This truth, and no other, can do it: and this can do it, precisely in the relations pointed out in the Bible, and not otherwise. And those relations involve not only God's purpose, and the mode of accomplishing it, namely, the exercise of his infinite beneficence and that through the particular

plan of salvation revealed: but also, the very mode in which God exists, in an ineffable union of three persons, in one divine essence, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost uniting in the infinite grace which saves sinners, and in the work whereby that is effected. Concerning this remedy and the mode of its application, the Scriptures add two associated, but very distinct propositions, upon both of which they continually insist. The first is, that this is a true, an efficacious, and a divine method of restoring fallen and depraved men to the lost image of God. The second is, that there is no other method of doing this, that is either true, efficacious, or divine. And upon these two propositions they appeal to the universal experience of the human race. And we accept the appeal, and hesitate not to pronounce it absolutely conclusive and overwhelming. Whoever rejects this mode of recovery, no matter what other mode he may substitute, proves the universal truth of the second proposition, to wit, that there is no other effectual mode; for he does not recover the lost image of God, but remains in the pollution, and under the curse of sin. Nothing concerning the human race is more indubitable, than that a pure heart and a pure life are not natural to man, and are not attainable by any method ever attempted except that revealed in the Word of God. On the other hand, whoever accepts the mode of recovery pointed out in that Word, establishes the universal truth of the first proposition, to wit, that this is an effectual mode, for whoever is born again, is restored to the lost image of God, and is pure in heart and life, precisely in proportion to the simplicity and the fervor of his faith in Christ Jesus. And this also, is the sum of all human testimony that bears upon the point: the sum of all outward testimony to the lives of Christ's true followers; the sum of all the inward testimony of their own hearts. Unitedly, the proof covers the whole of human experience, and establishes—if that experience can establish anything at all—that sinners must perish without the Bible, but that, by means of it, they may be saved. Unless, therefore, men are both lost and saved, whether God will or not, which it is mere folly as well as blasphemy to suppose; the Bible must be attended with divine efficiency and divine authority.

14. Let us carry this a little deeper. The light which reveals all things else, also makes itself manifest. He who is blind, neither sees the light, nor that which the light reveals. But if there were in the light a power to restore sight to the blind, or if

it could be so used as to produce that effect, the blind thus restored, could then know that there was light before he saw it, and that it revealed to such as had sight all that he now beholds. Surely the Scriptures teach with sufficient plainness the moral blindness of men in their natural state; and just as plainly their ability to see light in the light of God, when he has opened their eyes and shown them wondrous things out of his word. It is scarcely less dishonoring to Christ, than it is absurd in itself, for us to argue in such a manner as to favor the impression, that the state of our own minds and hearts has very little to do with the effects which God's truth produces upon us. So far otherwise is the fact, that every divine truth, however it may appear to the natural man to be foolishness, is, to the renewed heart, not only clear in what it reveals, but clear, also, in that it is itself revealed. Clear in that it is revealed; for Christ's sheep know his voice and follow him, but the voice of strangers they do not know. Clear also as to what is revealed; for they who obey the commandment of God have his express promise, that they shall know the doctrine whether it be of him. Spiritual discernment is as real an endowment of the new creature as any other; and a sense that our sins are pardoned, may be shed abroad in our hearts, most truly and divinely, and in perfect consonance with every law of our being. The assurance that God is our God, though grounded in a different manner, may be as well and as thoroughly grounded as the assurance that our earthly father is our father. Can a man go in and out, with his parent or his child, for years together, and still remain in doubt whose accents they are which fall upon his heart, and whose presence it is that blesses him? And is there nothing in the voice of the Saviour of sinners, and nothing in his presence to beget within us any deep convictions, any profound assurance? The denial of unregenerate men, that they experience any inward conviction of the divine truth of God's word, or that they see in the blessed Lord either form or comeliness, is proof only that the carnal heart is not subject to the law of God, and that men given over to strong delusion may believe lies, that they may be damned. Practically, our security against religious error and delusion is found to lie, not in the superiority of our faculties, nor in the extent or thoroughness of our general attainments even on religious subjects, but in the soundness and vitality of our faith, that is, in the thoroughness of our union with Christ; and, by consequence, the completeness of our restoration to the

image of God. How often does the true believer smile at infidel cavils, which once seemed to him most formidable, or turn away with pity or disgust from suggestions of unbelief, which, however powerful they may have once appeared, now seem to be only wicked or absurd? The inward process by which such effects are produced is analogous to that which occurs to every human mind as it becomes deeply imbued with the truths of any department of knowledge: only in the latter case men are naturally competent to begin and carry on the work of themselves, while in the former they must be subject to a supernatural change at its inception, and to a divine power during its progress. Still an analogy exists. For even by culture such a change is wrought in us, that we perceive at once that any new truth does or does not belong to any part of knowledge with which we are familiar, and are able to assign to it its position and value. The soul which is renewed at all, is renewed by that Spirit which has inspired all revealed truth; and is renewed by the instrumentality of that very truth so revealed, and which is to constitute the nourishment of its new life. Upon these conditions, it is impossible but that the human soul should find in the Word of God a perpetual and self-evidencing light; and that in very near proportion to its own deliverance from sin. Taking our nature as it is, all this is in exact accordance with what is obliged to occur if the Scriptures be true. But it is precisely what does occur, and that continually, supposing that they who say they believe the Word of God, tell the truth when they say so. It is inevitable, therefore, that the Scriptures must be true, or all who say they believe they are true, must be liars. Which latter supposition, besides being wholly incredible, is incapable of being established, even if it were true, seeing that no man can know what passes in another's heart better than himself.

15. Another step taken in the same general direction brings us, face to face, with the great question of the testimony of the Holy Ghost, as that question is stated in the Scriptures, and as it is exhibited in the experience of the human soul. Taking the argument drawn from the declarations of God's word on one hand, and the inner life of man on the other, it exhibits three very distinct stages, at each of which it appears to be conclusive; and at the close of all three, overwhelming. In the first place, the Scriptures represent to us with the greatest precision the actual state of the human soul; and then call upon us to examine ourselves

carefully and habitually, and see if its representations are not precisely true: and this is done concerning every state of every soul, from the darkest and deepest pollution, up through every shade of change, to that peace which passeth all understanding. What we assert is, that all this is done with invariable accuracy, and that the doing of it involves a superhuman insight into the nature and operations of the human soul. In the second place, they declare to us the effects which each particular divine truth, and also the whole taken together, are fitted to produce, and when received into the soul, actually do produce upon every one of those infinitely varied states, and upon the soul itself when in any one of them. And then, also, they call upon us to make trial, and see if these things are not so. And as often as we make the trial, we find that they are so; and that herein is a superhuman power, as before a superhuman insight in these divine oracles, or in some mysterious way, along with them. Of these two points, what this occasion allowed, has been already said. But there is a third; for the Scriptures plainly assert the existence and operation of a distinct and divine agent, even the Holy Ghost, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, which Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Of the three that bear record both in heaven and upon earth, we are expressly assured that the Spirit is one. This is the Spirit of life, by whose work it is, that spiritual life is imparted to us: the Spirit of truth, whose office it is to lead us into all truth: the Holy Spirit, who, in the development of that new life, and through that blessed truth, and by his own divine light and power, makes us holy, and thus fits us for the service and enjoyment of God. Because we are the sons of God, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. Sent forth as our Comforter—his testimony is of Jesus Christ—and the crowning proof to us of his glorification at the right hand of God. This is one of the incontrovertible points of the mystery of godliness—that God who was manifest in the flesh—is justified in the Spirit. It is he, by whose inspiration all Scripture was given—whose testimony is explicitly of Jesus Christ, who is the sum of all revelation, and whose finished work in us, is the very final cause of our salvation;—it is he that beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God; children of God in his work—through that truth—by that Saviour. Such is the exalted height to which the Scriptures carry this doctrine; and they exhort all true believers to seek for, and to cherish this

earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption. But for the purposes of this argument, there is no occasion to discuss the point exclusively at so high a level. According to the declarations of God, if the Bible is his word, there is a true and real sense in which Jesus Christ is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and in which the Spirit of God is poured out upon all flesh ; and the testimony of all Scripture is, that this light of God is not different from, but is coincident with the light which shines in his holy word ; and that this Spirit of God is poured out, not in disregard, but in confirmation of that word of life. Now, according to the universal faith of the church of Christ, every part of the effectual calling of his disciples is by the Word and Spirit of God ;—and even those who never truly become his disciples, are subject to many common operations of the Spirit under the truth communicated to them. But upon the theory of the Bible, all these operations thus produced, prove the glorification of Jesus ;—and, by inevitable consequence, the divine authority of his mission, and the divine truth of his word ! It is the fact that such an agent as the Spirit bears any testimony whatever to the souls of men, rather than the particular character of the testimony borne to each individual person, which, upon the conditions stated, makes the proof so crushing. If there be such a witness, and if he testifies at all, it is immaterial to the argument whether the result of his dealings with our souls is despair or peace, agony or glory. Every work of the Spirit, therefore, is a testimony to the divine word ; and every new testimony which the Spirit adds to his own work accomplished, or his own pleadings rejected, is a new proof accumulated. When we consider the universality of the influences of the Spirit, general and special, under the gospel dispensation, and the intimate nature of the proof by which their existence in us is ascertained, to wit, our own personal consciousness, it is impossible to estimate the magnitude of the folly and guilt which lead men to persist in their obstinate unbelief, and their voluntary ignorance of God.

16. There is another view, wider perhaps, if not so intense, of these revelations of God, which lies too immediately in the general course we are taking, to be overlooked. The great truths which are peculiar to the Bible, and which distinguish the system it inculcates from every other, are all universal truths, worthy, not only of universal acceptance, but capable of universal application. The Jewish people, on the other hand, through whom we

have received these truths, were the most peculiar people that ever existed as a separate community; the very last people from the midst of whom we should expect to obtain a spiritual code, fitted for the human race, and a moral teacher qualified in all respects to regenerate mankind. Yet out of the bosom of this people have come the Bible and the Saviour; he, one of themselves; it, their very civil code, and the very cause of all their national peculiarities. Yet he, and it, and the salvation which he wrought out, and it proclaims, are divinely fitted to become, and assuredly predestinated to become, the Bible, the salvation, and the Saviour of all the kindreds of the earth! By a development as wonderful as it is glorious, each Jewish peculiarity is found to contain the germ of some all-pervading truth. From the heart of a system which seen by itself, and considered as final, seems to be the narrowest of all, springs forth another system, capacious as the race of mankind, and boundless as their eternal being. The mode in which the system of the Old Testament emerges into the system of the New, is as marvellous as the contents of either of the two. To the Jew, the idea of a brotherhood, perfect but strictly Jewish, expands for the Christian, into a brotherhood still more tender and intimate, which embraces the whole family of man. To the Jew, the idea of a glorious God ruling over men from the very height of heaven, to the Christian becomes the idea of that same infinite God, made manifest in the flesh, and becoming God with us. The law came by Moses, and the open vision by the prophets; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Yet so came, that of all the law and all the prophets, he destroyed nothing, but fulfilled, accomplished, supplemented all, and made all glorious in its grace and in its truth. Whosoever is descended from Abraham, comes to be translated into, whosoever is born of the Spirit; and every promise to the seed of the father of the faithful terminates in the Saviour of the world, and inures to the benefit of every penitent sinner. Whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved: this is the sublime consummation. Suited to all—open to all—the Word of the God of all—able to save the souls of all! Every barrier of race, and clime, and condition, is broken over: every national and every individual peculiarity falls to the ground: the book of God becomes also the book of the human race. No nation had ever abandoned its own religion to receive that of another people; but now all nations embrace, instead of their own, the religion, which at first seemed

only suited to the most peculiar of all people, but which, when fully manifested of God, may satisfy and supply, while it may redeem and sanctify every soul of man! In accomplishing this great development, this divine transformation, the Son of God came to his own, and his own received him not. Their insane cry was, we have no king but Cæsar;—not Christ, but Barabbas: let his blood be upon us, and upon our children! It was a fearful part of the great scheme to be wrought out for the redemption of man: and God took them at their word. Peeled, scattered, and sifted throughout the world—the curse of that innocent blood has cleaved to them, and rulers, fiercer than Cæsar, have robbed and murdered them. Jerusalem, after eighteen centuries of desolation, is still trodden down; and Israel still awaits in stubborn grief, that fulness of the Gentiles, until which, blindness in part is happened to her. Yet how signal is God's mercy, that even in circumstances of such atrocious guilt, that blindness of Israel should be only in part; and what a marvel of divine wisdom is the use which God has made of his ancient people in all their wanderings—to the furtherance of the great design they had set about to frustrate? They have attested in every land, and through every age, the precious and fundamental truths, accepted by them as revealed in their own Scriptures. They have, in like manner, by their miraculous preservation, carried everywhere the report of those glorious truths they rejected, and illustrated in some degree their nature and their power. And they have continually confirmed, in their wondrous estate, the reality of those predictions, and the force of those promises, yet unfulfilled, which constitute so large a part of the oracles of God. Standing upon such an elevation, and surveying such prodigious proofs, the unbelief of the present age is not a whit less surprising than that of those who personally beheld the glory of the Word made flesh, even as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.

17. The fact is never to be lost sight of, that the religious system developed in the Scriptures—that system which in its perfect form we call the religion of Jesus—professes to be, not a doctrine merely, but also a power, a paramount and irresistible moral power. It claims to be the power of God unto salvation; and upon that ground challenges the judgment of mankind. From the very first, it has aimed at the exclusion of all error, the removal of all evil, the extirpation of all sin. From the point we have reached, we are able to estimate this force, as it has been

exerted through many centuries and in an immense variety of positions; and to determine, with accuracy, both its nature and its effects, both its interior organization, and its outward operation. Let us begin with the latter.—We have seen this religion of Jesus in conflict with Judaism, after the glory had passed from Moses to Messiah: the struggle of a real with a ceremonial righteousness: the idea of God in types and symbols, perishing before the idea of God incarnate. We have seen it in conflict with ancient heathenism: all the gods enshrined in the Pantheon, and all the gods supported and adored by the triumphant Cæsars, lords many and gods many, dethroned by the true and living God. We have seen it in conflict with the false prophet of Mecca: the fierce, licentious and warlike religion of the East, after a struggle so protracted and so vehement, withering away before our eyes, even as this pure, gentle, and peaceful system culminates more gloriously. We have seen it in conflict with the Man of Sin: the Bride of the Lord pining for twelve hundred and sixty years under the rank and ferocious apostasy of the middle ages, meek and undismayed through centuries of despair, victorious at last, only because the very gates of hell could not prevail against her. We have seen it in conflict with every form of error from within, and every mode of opposition from without: superstition, heresy, idolatry, skepticism, oppression, persecution, seduction, corruption, everywhere confronting all, everywhere resisting all, precisely in proportion to its own vital purity, as determined by the open Bible which it has borne aloft throughout the earth.—And now, in these last days, one wide and universal conflict is waged with every error and every sin, throughout the whole world: and the banner which is the emblem of divine love, still rises higher and higher, and floats more and more broadly over the host of the redeemed: and still from the undaunted array, the loud battle-cry of centuries is lifted up more audibly, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men! In how many aspects, and through how many ages, has the same sublime spectacle been exhibited! God manifest in the flesh, redeeming, reclaiming, reconquering rebellious man! Truth united with goodness, subduing, saving sinners! Grace abounding, grace triumphant! As we survey this ceaseless, and as it might seem, endless struggle, there is one truth constantly obvious, one conception infinitely remarkable, which, justly weighed, ought to be decisive. It is of the nature of all human passions to subside,

at last. All human excitements pass away. All human interests decay. All human institutions perish. What is great and good, along with what is little and vile, hastens to a common oblivion—is swept into an undistinguished ruin. New passions, new excitements, new interests, new institutions, follow each other ceaselessly, each springing up from the decaying mass of the old, which return no more forever. There is no restored empire amongst men. There is no restored philosophy, that has ever risen from the dead to lead men captive a second time. There is no restored superstition, that has ever recovered a lost dominion over the human soul. How immeasurably different from this universal law of all human things, has been the force which has manifested itself throughout the whole career of Christianity? With an unutterable tenacity, its divine truths cleave to man, and stimulate him more and more. With a divine vigor they recur and recur again. With an immortal freshness, they recover from every stroke, and shake off every incumbrance, and purge themselves anew, from generation to generation. One immense portion of the work of God's church in the world, has been to recover portions of her own heritage wrested from her by violence, and to teach, a second time, nations and races amongst whom her memorial had been obscured, or utterly put out. And that which happens to nothing else, is that in which her main hope and strength lie; the continual revival in her own bosom, of her own primeval spirit, the constant recurrence of the living power, through which all her conquests have been won. This grand peculiarity, and all the wonderful effects which flow from it, the one and the other distinguishing the Christian religion from all human things, admits only of that explanation which the Scriptures themselves give. It is Immanuel! God is with us! This explains all!

18. And now, as to the intimate nature of this divine power, with which the religion of Jesus claims to be pregnant. The Bible exhibits to us a most wonderful climax with relation to this subject. In the first place, it reveals to us, absolutely, the spiritual system of the universe, with particular reference to our own position in that vast and glorious system. In it, and nowhere else, we are clearly instructed in the nature, the attributes, and the purposes of God; the origin, the nature, and the destiny of man; our relations to time and earth, to God and eternity. In the second place, the Scriptures, declaring our present fallen and

depraved condition, have not left us to deduce for ourselves, a spiritual system for the regulation of our faith and practice, from the sublime truths thus revealed to us by God. But they set before us in the clearest manner, and as deduced by God himself, all the beliefs and all the conduct, which become such creatures as we are, occupying such a position, in such a system, and possessing such a revelation. In the third place, they do not leave us, even there, without all further guidance and support, to receive and obey these divine teachings, and live; or reject them and perish. They superadd an unspeakable gift, a Saviour, not only revealed to us, but bestowed on us. Not a teacher only, not a guide, a pattern, a benefactor, a friend, only; but a divine Saviour from our sins. Surely the wildest urgency could demand no more! Ultimate and fundamental truth, all revealed: all faith, and all practice infallibly deduced therefrom, and set before us: an almighty Saviour superadded! But God has given more. In the fourth place, to crown all, a divine and infinite agent, the Holy Ghost, covenanted in the blood of Jesus Christ, is revealed to us, as the potential author, at once of our salvation, and of the whole revelation by which it is promoted. The eternal Spirit, who inspired the Word of God, who applies to us the salvation of Christ, and who inclines and enables us to believe and obey, is, so to speak, the vicar of Jesus Christ, in this sublime work of reconstructing the moral universe. Now, according to the theory of divine revelation, this climax exhibits to us, some idea of that living power which the Scriptures proclaim. If we consider, in their order, the stages of this climax, we may also have some idea of the manner in which and the extent to which the human soul is influenced by that power. Those great and fundamental truths which lie at the foundation of revealed religion, are accepted in a certain sense, by the great mass of men, in all countries in which the gospel has had free course; and the result is manifest in the great superiority of all nations and races, which are even nominally Christian, over all others. As we rise a step higher and observe those portions of our race, which make some serious endeavor to regulate their lives by the general precepts of the Christian religion, we shall perceive a still more marked amelioration of the moral, and it may be added, the intellectual condition of man. At the next elevation, we pass to that condition, in which men openly profess to obey the Lord Jesus, and look to him as the fountain of their blessings and the

end of their hopes ; and here we observe a still more decided advance upon the natural, and, but for the gospel of God, the universal condition of our race. All these are stages through which multitudes of individual persons scattered through all ages and races, and through which, also, many communities, as such, have passed. They are degrees in our convictions, phases in our spiritual progress, points of development in our religious life. But the crowning work is the power of the Holy Ghost within us ; and as that is experienced in the fulness of its divine efficacy, whether in an individual, a generation, or a race, there is exhibited the consummation, at once, of the work of grace, and of the overwhelming demonstration. In whatever sense moral truth, resting on the veracity of God and enforced by his infinite majesty, can affect the human understanding ; in whatever degree the human soul can be influenced by motives, or impressed with the idea of responsibility, or controlled by the sense of duty, all directed to objects which are infinite and eternal ; whatever efficacy abides in the work of a divine Saviour crucified for us, and thereby made to us, the power of God and the wisdom of God ; whatever reality is found in that new, and spiritual life, unto which men are born again, by the demonstration and the power of the Holy Ghost : just to the whole extent of all these sublime forces, set to work and sustained by the unsearchable riches of divine grace, is it possible for us to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ, and to be filled with all the fulness of God !

19. Here then we reach a point where the argument terminates, as an outward one, upon the certainty of our knowledge ; and as an inward one, upon the truth of our consciousness. If the knowledge of anything exterior to ourselves can be said to be certain, then it is certain that multitudes of human beings have been born again ; for there is no other fact outward as to us, established by an amount of testimony so great, so various, and so conclusive. But if men have been born again, then it is certain that the Bible is true and is divine ; for in it alone is that great fact developed to mankind, and through it alone is there provided for us a power adequate to that supernatural change. Again, if human consciousness is true, and its testimony faithful as to what passes within us, then, also, it is certain that multitudes of men have been born again. For we cannot know anything whatever concerning our inner life, more certainly than we can know

whether or not we are spiritually dead. But, as it has been already shown, if men have been born again, then the Bible is true and divine. If, however, we cannot be certain of anything exterior to ourselves, nor yet certain of anything that passes within us, then it is wholly immaterial, and wholly incapable of being determined, whether the Bible, or anything else, be either true or false; or, indeed, whether there is such a distinction in things as we call true and false; or, in short, whether even our state of mental uncertainty is itself real. We are, upon this hypothesis, reduced to a condition of utter imbecility. Upon whatever principle man is held to be, either rational or accountable, it can be shown, that if anything is certain, it is certain that the Scriptures are true and of divine authority. If every principle upon which man's rational and moral nature can be vindicated, is overturned, everything after that ceases to be of any more consequence to us than to the beasts that perish. So the most rigorous logic conducts us to the grand result which all experience has established, that in the degree we trust God, we exalt man; and in the degree we reject God, we debase man. And there we may safely leave the argument.

III.

1. I have now endeavored, in a simple and direct manner, under many successive propositions, all tending to one general and certain conclusion, to trace the course of an argument whose result seems to me to be absolute and unavoidable. What we know concerning ourselves—what we know of God, of the order of providence, of the course of nature, and of the state of the universe, appears to be absolutely inconsistent with the idea, that the contents of the volume which we call the Holy Scriptures could possibly have been of less than divine origin. On the other hand, those contents, whether considered absolutely, or considered relatively, to our knowledge on all the great topics just alluded to, seem, beyond all question, to have sprung, as they profess to have sprung, from the bosom of God, and to be invested with infinite claims upon our faith and obedience. The question at issue is one of awful solemnity and terrible magnitude. Our happiness in this world, and our blessedness throughout eternity, are involved in our making a right decision of it, and then in acting rightly upon that decision. If we reject God, we are undone. But it is

of little worth, that we accept him in name, and take no heed to his commands; nay, even that our minds perceive his truth, while our hearts turn away from him.

2. It is by these very Scriptures that we are first and chiefly taught how to know God, and how to accept of him. Then let us take his blessed revelation into our hands, and, if the image may be endured, let us feel, even as he who is blind feels the person and the face, until, by little and little, the conviction grows into his soul, that the lineaments are lovely, and then that they are familiar, and at last that they are most precious. Thus, if we will begin, even in our blindness, to handle the Word of Life, it will grow upon us with a gentle and yet mighty power, until our very weakness is made strength, and our very darkness made light. Let us sit down at the feet of Jesus and learn of him. Though his words be strange to us at first, they will, more and more, find a lodgment and a response within us. They alone, but they fully, can divide between the very joints and marrow—the very soul and spirit of man. That lone, wayfaring man, may appear to us without form or comeliness; and his solemn and tender words may sound strange to us amidst the din of life. Nevertheless, let us turn and follow him. As we walk by his side, we shall see above that crown of thorns a diadem of eternal glory; we shall feel those words, which once we understood not, burn within us, as though celestial fire had fallen upon our souls; his favor will become life unto us,—his loving-kindness better than life! O taste and see that the Lord is good!

3. Nay, is it not wise and comely in us to go deeply into an inquiry upon which there is for us so much at stake? Let us then open our minds freely to the instructions of this marvellous record. Let us examine carefully its wondrous statements. It professes to contain the true solution of all those immense problems over which our spirit lingers so anxiously; those terrible paradoxes before which our highest reason has so often recoiled. It comes to us with the acclamations of many generations, and proclaiming itself a messenger from heaven. This much, at least, we are sure of, that if it can teach us what it professes to reveal, it can teach us what none besides ever knew, or if they knew, ever revealed. Let us then calmly, but earnestly, scrutinize its claims, and master its contents. At first, it may seem hard to be understood. A new method is opened before us, and new matter continually rises to view. Many things incomprehensible, many wonderful,

many we can hardly credit, many we are ready to cavil over, many we feel prepared to reject, many almost hateful to us. Still there arises a strange fascination from it, and a marvellous power seems to be somehow involved in it. Let us not strive against that fascination, nor resist that power. If they are of the earth, they will soon show themselves earthy; if they are from the Lord of glory, they can conduct us nowhere but to light and peace. Let us examine once more even that which we comprehend the most fully; there is more in it than we have yet observed, something forever new, something forever beyond what we had yet noticed. If it were wholly of man, a small part of the labor we have bestowed upon it, would have made us perfectly master of it all; would have exposed to us perhaps many weaknesses, many errors; would have, assuredly, elevated us to something like a level with its noblest portions. Let us be just to ourselves, and to it. Let us confess that the more familiar we become with its exalted spirit, the more clearly do we perceive the immense distance at which it is elevated above us. Let us acknowledge that if we are wise unto salvation, it is in its wisdom we have become so; and that we have found at last that which is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, even thy word, O Lord, which is settled in heaven, forever! Paul, when he exclaimed in the midst of the sublimest meditations, that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ; and Simon Peter, when answering for the twelve, he told the Lord, that because he had the words of eternal life, they were sure he was the Christ, the Son of the living God; and the woman of Sychar at Jacob's well, when Jesus told her, I am he, and she believed, because he knew all her outward and all her inner life: all gave utterance, in different forms, to the common experience of the human soul, and to various aspects of the grand principle on which its conviction rests, that God's word is truth.

4. A final step brings us to the bottom of a subject so full of grandeur in itself, and of such fearful import to fallen men. Let us take that step, and receive into our hearts this heaven-descended truth. Let us uncover the depths of our inward being before its searching light and its mighty power. Let us open widely to it, those strange hearts so full, at the same moment, of weakness and of strength, so desperately wicked, and yet capacious of eternal life. Our profoundest desire is, for inward peace, and yet we are the victims of a ceaseless inward struggle.

Our deepest conviction is that we are impure, and yet we shrink with horror from the thought of abiding so forever. There are necessities in our hearts which nothing human can supply; passions, which nothing human can either satisfy or control; desires, which nothing human can either subdue or gratify; powers, which nothing human can either adequately excite or occupy. And oh! there are sorrows, deep sorrows, which will not be assuaged; wounds, which, if the balm that is in Gilead cannot heal, must fester forevermore; sins far beyond the reach of all skill but that of the great physician of souls. Will you risk that skill, my brother? Will you ask him to remember Calvary, and then to pity you? This is his proposal, which has gone out into all the world, and the sound thereof to every creature: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. And this is the response of that innumerable company, who received his truth in the love of it: Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, forever and ever."

5. No doubt it is the duty of all the disciples of Christ to use their utmost endeavors to spread the everlasting gospel over the earth, and, by every means in their power, enforce its claims upon every creature. Nor, indeed, is it possible for them to avoid feeling the deepest interest in this great labor of love. Still, however, we must not imagine that their interest, or, if the expression is allowable, the interest of their master, in the result, bears any assignable proportion to that of those who are ready, in their daring wickedness, or childish ignorance, to despise the communications of God's grace. Nor must we allow ourselves to suppose, for a moment, that the smallest uncertainty as to the grand event—much less the least danger to the cause of God's truth—or the ultimate triumph of Christ's kingdom, can arise from all the folly, the ignorance, the unbelief, and the impiety of all who reject the divine Redeemer. Whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, yet shall they be made to know assuredly that God has sent his messengers into their midst. The word that has gone forth out of the mouth of God shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases, and shall prosper in that whereto he sent it. Heaven and earth

may pass away ; but not one jot nor one tittle of all that God has uttered shall pass away, till all is fulfilled. The stone which was cut out without hands, shall not only break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold, but shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder !



B. N. Smith

Popular Objections to Christianity,

BY

BY B. M. SMITH,

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CHRISTIANITY has been the object of a varied and ceaseless, though futile opposition. Ruthless persecutions marked its early history. It grew strong under oppression. The flattering caresses of power, and the wealth and honors of the world were lavished, to corrupt its faith and form. Its vitality survived the taint. Intestine wars, which consume the vigor of other institutions, revived its energies and purified its principles. Religious controversies, intrinsically deplorable, served to define more clearly the boundaries of truth ; and persecutions, fiercer than pagan, to distinguish its adherents. As a purer Christianity was emerging from the convulsions and revolutions of the sixteenth century, it encountered a form of opposition, professedly based on the principles avowed by the Reformers. With them, Deists renounced the bondage of superstition for the dictates of reason, and abjured the dogmas of Popery, for the authority of God. But, affirming that the teachings of natural opposed those of revealed religion, they boldly denied its claims, questioned its principles and attacked its evidences. They conducted the assault with seriousness, dignity and, at least, the semblance of reasoning. It was repelled with solemn earnestness, unassuming boldness, candor and generosity. If one party, with no personal concern in the result, had nothing to hope from success, but the honors of victory, and the other, confident in the power and permanence of divine truth, nothing to fear from defeat, but temporary dishonor, both seemed duly sensible that the solemn interests of the divine prerogative, man's duty here and destiny hereafter, were suspended on the issue.

A later stage of the deistical controversy presented a different aspect. If not convinced, intelligent and candid infidels had felt forced, by the irrefragable proofs of Christianity, to retire from the contest. The field was occupied by a desperate and distracted squadron of vulgar sciolists, content with an endless repetition of repelled attacks. The world saw, in the bold sophisms, the reck-

less assertions, the scurrilous abuse and drivelling wit of Paine, the degeneracy of his class, and the hopeless efforts of men, whose success had been the greatest curse, and whose defeat, the greatest blessing to mankind.

Meanwhile Christianity, released from the obligation to defend its existence, assumed its proper position and exerted its inherent energies. Constitutionally aggressive, it was not satisfied that the violence of the assault had ceased, and the activity of opponents subsided in the calm of indifference; but demanded a cordial embrace of its principles and a cheerful submission to its precepts. In religious relations, constitutionally exclusive, it was not enough that men ceased to swear by Mahomet and sacrifice to Juggernaut, cast their idols to moles and bats, or abandoned the worship of four-footed beasts and creeping things; they must also avow the doctrines, and practise the duties taught by the lowly Nazarene.

The zeal with which these claims have been urged, and the energy with which they have been prosecuted, have aroused the slumbering foe. Infidelity has revived the contest, in our generation, under a new policy, and one imposing on the advocates of Christianity new obligations to vigilance and effort. Our opponents now aim to weaken the efficiency of a system they despair of defeating, and, in the manner of retreating armies, to impede a progress they are unable to prevent. On the one hand, under the guise of friendship, proposing to elucidate the mysteries of Revelation, by bungling efforts, they make intricacies more perplexing. Thus we have metaphysicians, who, in explaining the mode of divine existence, obliterate all traces of a personal divinity in the lamina of Pantheism; theologians, who by the absurdities of transcendentalism, have eviscerated the moral power of the Saviour's life and doctrine, and the benefits of his atonement; and moralists, who in sentimental whinings, have stripped the divine character of the attributes of holiness and justice. On the other hand, taught by experience the futility of marshalling their forces for a general conflict, on whose issue the whole cause might depend, our opponents have posted them in detachments, armed with the weapons of a defensive, but annoying warfare. Old objections are revived or new devised. They seek not to destroy our reverence for Revelation, as a whole, by the arraignment of the Bible as a falsehood, but by an adroit exhibition of the alleged falsehoods of the Bible, they

aim to sap our confidence in its parts. Such a policy, though advantageous to them, involves us in much embarrassment. It is easy to object, and impudence or ignorance may propound, in a few words, questions, which ingenuity and learning may require pages to answer. In the course of eighteen centuries, countless objections have been started, as well the produce of curiosity, timidity, and candor, as of stupidity, arrogance, and malice. Many of them, though repeatedly confuted, are pertinaciously reiterated; for new books find new readers, and the old poison may prove efficient by repeated doses, or find subjects for its power unprovided with the antidote. With the more general diffusion of knowledge, the evil as well as the good has been disseminated. Skeptical opinions, which were once to be found only in the heavy folio or voluminous octavo, accessible to the learned, are now embodied in the essays of newspapers and diatribes of reviews, insinuated in novels or interwoven in amusing tales. They thus become entrenched in the fastnesses of popular incredulity, or sustain the strongholds of popular apathy and indifference. The farmer, mechanic, day-laborer, apprentice, and school-boy, learn objections to particular parts of the Bible, enough to engender doubts and cavils as to all, and hinder the workings of a true faith.

Such then, is the present aspect of opposition to Christianity. It is very evident, that the contest of our generation, must be more difficult, because more manifold, more perplexing, because more desultory, and more prolonged, because ultimate success is suspended on surmounting unnumbered obstacles, neither alone important, the greater part even trivial, but presenting an aggregate of imposing consequence.

I. Our way will be prepared for a particular examination of objections, and some repetition avoided, by a few preliminary remarks, connected with the general subject.

1. Since infidels, who reject the Christian, and Deists, who reject all revelation, receive in common with us, the truths of Natural Religion, as of divine origin, objections to Christianity are properly answered, by showing that they are equally pertinent to the religion of nature. Indeed, irrespective of the distinctness, with which the scheme of natural religion may be avowed, if men only allow that God is the Author of nature or natural governor of the world, whenever we find the same sort of difficulties common to Christianity and the course of nature, they cannot, on account of

such difficulties, deny that the former has come from God, unless they also deny that the world has come from God, and exchange Deism for Atheism.

2. The existence of objections against Christianity, even when we are incapable of providing satisfactory answers and explanations, in every case, is no argument against its claims.

(1.) Reason has been given to guide us to the knowledge of truth, and we may feel assured that God reveals nothing contradictory of its clear and proper deductions. But reason cannot devise schemes of Providence or systems of Revelation. There are many things in the constitution of nature, which we had never invented, and which are very different, when discovered, from what we might have previously expected. Now they are known, our reason judges and approves of them. Thus in the adaptation of one part of this constitution to another, we find, that the young of mammiferous animals being provided with suitable nourishment by the parent, may be produced at any season, while those of graminivorous animals, are ordinarily produced only at certain and suitable seasons. The sun's powers are said to be chemical, luminiferous, and calorific, and these are respectively strongest when most needed; the first, for germinating in the spring, the second for nutriment, in early summer, the last for maturing, in late summer and early autumn. As reason may thus be led to approve what it could not devise, in the course of nature, so, on a due examination and care, it may be led to approve, what it could not have devised in Revelation.

(2.) Moreover, there are many truths of natural and moral science, to which, before experience and observation, we might have objected as incredible, unreasonable or inconsistent with the divine attributes. Thus brutes without reason, act with more sagacity and foresight than man, in some cases, even involving life. The Copernican theory was once rejected by thousands on what they believed the irrefragable evidence of their senses, though now it is generally received. We now believe the light to be independent of the sun, which we are told is a dark body. We know that volcanoes and earthquakes, pestilence and famine, overwhelm in ruin, or sweep, as with a besom of destruction, many fair portions of earth, and that millions of infants are doomed to pain, suffering and untimely death. These and other strange and surprising facts in the course of nature, might, as matters of a revelation, have appeared liable to objections. Of the truth of those

which are matters of science, discovery, observation, and scientific investigation have satisfied us. Of the consistency of others with divine wisdom and benevolence, we feel satisfactory assurances. The grounds of this satisfaction, we are not called to state at large. It may be said, however, that the present scheme is one of imperfect development, and that we are ignorant and incapable of understanding all the reasons and modes of divine government, and hence, what, as isolated facts, now surprise and confound us, may, when seen with perfected faculties, as parts of one great plan, not only satisfy our doubts, but elicit our admiration. Now seeing that liableness to objections in the course of nature, may be removed, it is equally credible that liableness to objections in the scheme of Revelation may be removed. Satisfied by evidence, that the one is from God, we see that objections which might have existed because it contained things different from our expectations, would have been frivolous and invalid. Thus the divine origin of Christianity being sustained by reliable evidences, objections to its matter even grave and important, founded on our conceptions, ought not to impair our confidence in its truth, as they may, for aught we know, be as susceptible of refutation as the others.

(3.) As we could not know before experience, what would be the course of nature, it is presumable from analogy, as well as the nature of Revelation, which purposes to enlighten us, that we could not know beforehand, what it ought or ought not to contain, how it ought to be expressed, figuratively or plainly, obscurely or clearly, and by what and what kind of evidence it ought to be presented. We may sit in judgment on man, the laws and modes of whose existence we can apprehend and appreciate, and of some things in human science, we can, in advance, affirm what will or will not be. But, of God's ways in the natural and moral world, we are incompetent judges, except in so far as he has provided materials. We may say in the matters of science, that such planets exist as Mars and Venus, but we cannot say, that in the "mighty annular space" between two planets, no other exists. Of parts of the universe we can say, "here are the monuments of divine power and wisdom," but of others we cannot say, "here God has never wrought; here he never will; no planet ever moved, and none will ever, no system will ever be arranged in these vast regions of space," till we shall have winged our flight over the boundless area of immensity, or traversed in one moment of time, the immeasurable cycles of an eternity from everlasting to everlasting.

So in matters of religion, we may assert what God has taught us in the works of his hands, and by the methods of his providence ; but of other things, as the statements of Revelation, of which natural religion furnishes us with nothing similar, we dare not deny or affirm, as to say, "this is contrary to justice," or "this to mercy," or "this to reason," till we have fully compassed the nature and character of that God who is "unsearchable in his judgments," and "whose ways are past finding out."

(4.) These views are very much strengthened, when we bear in mind, that the Christian revelation is not only a republication of the religion of nature, but is a religion of sinners. It teaches men that they are rebels against God, haters of the light of truth, evil-doers, and, as such, exposed to the just and severe indignation of God. Such a revelation must be displeasing to men, and supposing it to be true, and in the particulars mentioned, its teachings correspond with those of natural religion, men, as criminals, are incapable of sitting in judgment on the procedures of their sovereign. Hence besides an abatement from the force of objections, because of man's natural repugnance to the scheme, such as it is, there must be an abatement on the grounds of this moral incompetency, as we have seen there must be on account of the intellectual incapacity to decide on the character of a revelation.

It seems thus, on the whole, evident, that the existence of objections against Christianity forms no argument against its claims.

II. Whatever may formerly have been the relative consequence of objections to the scheme and objections to the evidences of Christianity, we feel assured, that in the present aspects of the opposition to its claims, the former are by no means matters of trivial importance, if indeed they do not rank with the latter, as hindrances to their acknowledgment. Were the divine origin of Christianity to be decided, only on the principles of sound reasoning, we might safely rest the decision on the force of its evidences ; and these shown to be irrefragable, all objections, based on its alleged internal improbabilities, might be summarily met, by the proof of our incompetency to decide what a revelation ought to contain. But all men are not logicians, or at least, do not always reason logically, and hence it becomes important to give to the popular objections against Christianity, a particular consideration.

Under other circumstances, a detailed examination of all noticeable objections might be both practicable and profitable. But this is obviously inconsistent with our prescribed limits. Nor is it

absolutely necessary to our purpose. Such an examination of some of the most important, may furnish to the minds of candid and impartial persons, satisfactory assurances that none of them present adequate reasons for the neglect or rejection of the Christian scheme.

1. Objections to the evidences of Christianity constitute a prominent feature in the opposition to its claims. The most important of these, having, according to the syllabus of this course, been already fully discussed, either as special topics, or as falling within the scope of other lectures, require no farther attention. Since, however, the alleged insufficiency of some, or all of these evidences, to establish the truth of Christianity, has been sometimes adduced as a positive argument against its claims, it may neither be impertinent to our own general purpose, nor involve any material repetition, to give to this general objection to the evidences, a brief consideration.

(1.) In a matter, whose decision is sustained by several distinct proofs, the real deficiency of one does not necessarily invalidate the others. Thus could a proposition, subversive of the evidence of miracles, be sustained, our confidence in that afforded by other sources is not impaired. The character of Christianity as a system of moral truth and the effects of the truth would remain, and the prophecies recorded in the Bible, whose fulfilment is attested by history, would not be erased.

(2.) The alleged insufficiency of one or all of the evidences may not be owing to anything intrinsic. The impairing of any sense, will, of course, impair the force of evidence addressed to us through its medium. So defects of mental culture, as to knowledge or discipline, or obliquity of moral nature, may greatly impair the power of evidence, which, fairly presented, might be convincing. This is daily exemplified in respect of the moral and physical interests of men, and its pertinency to this subject is readily apprehended, by all who have observed, how much passion, pride and prejudice affect the human mind, in matters of religion.

(3.) Supposing that, on examination of the proofs in favor of Christianity, we are left in some doubt of their sufficiency to establish its claims, we are not thereby justified in its rejection, or even a suspension of our investigation. For our doubting itself implies some degree of evidence in favor of that, of which we doubt. Even when evidences, for and against a proposition, so

balance, that one set destroys the force of the other, as ground for a conclusion, yet there is more evidence for either side, than for thoughts or views, rising in the mind without any cause which may be assigned. That the evidences for Christianity do not produce conviction, is not therefore equivalent to saying, there is no evidence. There being some, it matters not how little, considering the importance of the interests at stake, that others of equal or greater general intelligence, reading and ability with ourselves, have decided favorably on these claims, so far from being justified in their dismissal, we should rather suspect some flaw in our course of reasoning, or some inaccuracy in our supposed facts, and earnestly seek more light. For there are numberless instances in our daily life, when we form decisions on very impeachable evidences of correctness, and engage in important enterprises, where the probabilities of success are very faint. The experience of others, their opinions, and our reasonings and deductions from supposed facts, received on doubtful testimony, are often relied on, though our liableness to deception, the uncertainties of all future events and that of our living among them, together with contrary experiences, opinions and observations, may, and often do raise, not only some, but great doubts of the propriety of our decisions. Thus we are compelled to act on probabilities. So, while God has very clearly marked the path of duty in Revelation, he has left us, as in other subjects of a moral nature, to ascertain that he has thus marked it, by the use of our reason, framing a judgment on the probabilities presented.

(4.) That the alleged insufficiency of evidence may be a groundless complaint, and want of conviction be ascribable to want of due attention in using the means, is made highly presumable, by this consideration: that the evidences in favor of the truths of natural religion, though patent to all, in the works of creation and providence, have not so extensively or permanently impressed the minds of men, as those in favor of revealed. This has been true, even although the propagation of its truths has not been resisted by virulent and cruel persecution, nor opposed so strongly by the natural dispositions of men. As God has not made these evidences irresistible, which would have been a virtual annulling of free agency, but has required us to exercise our reasoning and moral faculties, in order to an understanding and conviction of truth, we rightly ascribe this failure to receive the instructions of natural religion, to a want of proper attention. So, as God has not made the

evidences of Christianity irresistible, and for the same reason, we may justly ascribe the want of conviction, to a failure of diligence and serious attention, and not necessarily to a want of evidence, sufficient to secure our assent to its propositions.

(5.) The alleged insufficiency of some of these evidences may be ascribed to a neglect of others. It has been well observed, that the evidences of Christianity may have been constituted such as they are, as a part of some men's trial, or state of probation. This is consistent with the divine method in respect of other important moral subjects. We are exposed to temptations to do wrong, and furnished with incentives to do right, and resistance to one and concurrence with the other, are left to our choice, for which we are responsible. A studious and serious effort in pursuit of what is probably our duty, renders the path of virtue easier, and a yielding to the dictates of passion or suggestions of indolence, facilitates the progress of evil. Thus any evidences of Christianity appearing doubtful to any, even to a very great degree, affords temptation to its summary rejection, or gives opportunity for the virtuous exercise of our faculties. And as some men, perhaps inclined by the unpalatable truths of the Bible, to rejection, or failing, by indolence or carelessness, to examine the subject seriously and patiently, do not obtain evidence sufficient for conviction, they must blame themselves and not the divine dispensation under which they live, which, in this, as other things, commends itself to our enlightened reason and sober judgment.

(6.) However insufficient the evidences of Christianity may, for any reason, appear to some, yet on a fair and impartial estimate of the acknowledged facts in the case, it is far easier and more logical, to account for the origin of the system, on the hypothesis of a divine Revelation, than on that of human invention and imposture. If the Christian be esteemed credulous and superstitious, in receiving as divine, what the light of nature, the revelations of science and human experience have more and more confirmed, the infidel defies reason, by a creed of contradictions to its teachings, and disgraces Faith by a subscription to paradoxes, more preposterous than prophecy and more marvellous than miracles. The infidel must believe that predictions, with which history, written by neither Jews nor Christians, affords numerous striking coincidences, were merely shrewd guesses, and these, for the most part, guesses of men as devoid of political sagacity as, by the infidel's theory, of moral principle. As a specimen of such

predictions take one of the earliest, fullest and most minute, that respecting the fate of the Jews. It was foretold that they should be dispersed among all nations, be a proverb and a bye-word, and their sufferings and persecutions, involving various improbable and minute events, are detailed with the scrupulous exactness of an annalist. History has returned a most uncompromisingly accurate fulfilment. Unprecedented and paradoxical has been the fate of this people. Without temple or altar, a king, a priest or a prophet, unchanging they have endured all change, and remain to our day, distinct, in the practice of the religious rites received by their fathers. Other races have melted away or been merged into each other, in spite of every effort to prevent such a fate, while they have remained separate, with every effort to denationalize them. The infidel must believe that from a comparatively rude and uncultivated people, a horde of untutored shepherds, but just escaped from a cruel and oppressive bondage, without philosophy, science, or literature, we have obtained the only clear and consistent account of the origin of the world, the most sublime and rational, and only worthy views of the Divine Being and attributes, and the purest principles of law, for regulating his worship, and the duties and relations of mankind. He must believe, that men were found among the Jews, capable of instructing the world in these great truths, while the enlightened nations of antiquity, though justly celebrated for affording models of eloquence, poetry, statuary, and architecture, as well as sound principles of natural and moral science, have, in their highest stages of advancement, provided mankind with the most silly legends, puerile traditions and absurd theories on the world's origin and the first principles of religion. As to the New Testament, the infidel must believe, that a few obscure, ignorant, illiterate fishermen, "the scum of a nation, itself the scum of the world," so imposed on the senses of men, including foes as well as friends, that their "cunningly devised" tricks were acknowledged to be the most astounding miracles, the witnesses only differing in opinion of the power by which they were wrought, whether derived from heaven or hell. Or if it be contended, that the narratives of the New Testament were composed at a later period than that assigned by Christian writers, then must the infidel believe an absurdity still greater. For by rigid investigation into their literary history, these narratives are brought within thirty or forty years of the period whose wonders they detail; and with

numberless minute circumstances of times, places and persons, forming salient points for detection, were exposed to the rigid criticisms of a most malignant and inveterate opposition. Yet with accessible testimonies, in some cases as reliable as the senses, in all, removed but one step from their certainties, by which these narratives might have been branded as the fables of fools or the forgeries of knaves, mankind perversely determined to believe them to be true, and after centuries of laborious effort, by the most minute criticism, this most wonderful literary forgery has not only survived, unscathed, all attacks made upon it, but been transmitted to our day, with accumulating evidences of its genuineness and authenticity.

And since the authorship of the New Testament cannot be traced to any hand, competent, humanly speaking, to such a work, whether the infidel assigns it to one set of impostors or another, he must believe, that they have portrayed a character faultless and unique as a portrait, beyond all precedent pictures of the imagination, the most self-consistent and natural as a living example, without a duplicate in all the histories of fact or the fancies of fiction. He must believe, that not only one, but four persons were found competent to the wonderful feat of representing their hero in actual life, and while so differing from each other, as to avoid all well-grounded suspicion of collusion, they have evinced the same originality of invention, heavenly purity of thought and child-like simplicity of style, and have made their Master, in the sublimity and pathos of his instructions, purity and beauty of his life, and patience and dignity of his sufferings, speak and act in a manner unprecedented and inimitable. He must believe, that they succeeded in weaving into the web of his history, paragraphs not more wonderful for their avowals of divine origin, than for their susceptibility of a translation "without the loss of a thought or a grace" into the language of every nation; and while their congruities have been so firmly and consistently knit together that no material discrepancy has ever rewarded the most diligent scrutiny, yet the whole has been prepared with so little marks of design, that these congruities are often only apparent on the most careful study. He must believe that the early propagators of Christianity, with no assignable motive, and often against every assignable motive, persevered in imposing an astounding fraud on the world, and cheerfully braved contempt, persecution, infamy and exile, the scourge, the prison, and the

cross, to maintain their unprofitable falsehoods. He must believe, that bigoted as they previously were to the Jew's religion, as then popularly understood, they underwent all these dangers to destroy not only it, but every other; that without arms, wealth, or political power, they succeeded in establishing a system, which contrary to all precedents in the history of religion, transcended all natural, national or linguistic boundaries, and yet survives all disasters, defeats, and defections. He must believe that, such was the constancy of these conspirators against truth, among thousands, not one could be found, even of those who abjured the faith, who ever exposed the fraud or unfolded the secrets of this moral machinery which "turned the world upside down." He must believe, that with all their villainy they preached sincerity, that charity was taught by bigots, and holiness by impostors, and to all their inconsistencies, they added that of practising what they inculcated. Finally, must the infidel believe, that impostors, by the combined power of pure doctrines, precepts and practices, have fastened on the best part of the world, a system, more powerful in motives than all law, more efficient in energies than all enterprise, and more enduring in result than all human institutions. Surely such a faith is a definition of the blindest credulity.

2. There is a large number of objections arising from the misconceptions or misunderstandings of pardonable or culpable ignorance, perversions of the plain meaning or misapprehensions of the scope of particular parts of the Scriptures, and the malignity of self-conceited scoffers, swelled with the pride of a little learning and vain-glorious of its display. Such are readily set aside by the corrections of knowledge, and a careful and candid estimate of the declarations of the Scriptures. We present, in a summary manner, a few specimens, the facility of whose confutation may be predicated of all of the classes they represent.

It has been often asserted, that the ark could not hold its alleged contents. Its dimensions were 450 feet in length, 75 in breadth, and 45 in depth, by modern calculation, of a capacity equal to 32,000 tons, equivalent to that of sixteen large ships of war. Eight persons, 250 pair of quadrupeds, to which number the various species of such animals has been reduced, a fewer number of birds, with all the rest of the living contents, and sufficient provision for a year, might surely find space in a vessel, which would have contained twelve or fifteen thousand men and provisions for eighteen months.

The Scriptures are accused of containing many very indelicate passages. But when we bear in mind that they profess to detail facts, that the opinions of men vary, in different ages, respecting what is indelicate, and that the record in the Bible does not excite in our minds, as that of novels and romances may, any corresponding sinful emotions, but on the contrary, is calculated to produce an opposite influence, no great weight can be attached to this objection.

The curses and imprecations of the Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament, are adduced as inconsistent with the character of a work proceeding from God. Not to urge, that by a legitimate rendering of such passages, the expressions now appearing in an imperative mood, would lose their objectionable features in the future tense, it may be replied, that God, as a righteous judge, might delegate to his inspired servants, his acknowledged prerogative of calling down on his enemies the curses to which they may have rendered themselves obnoxious.

Philosophers so called, sneeringly remind us, that there were doubtless rainbows before the Flood, and hence Moses' statement, "I do set my bow in the cloud," implying its first appearance, is a most unfortunate blunder. But a tyro in Hebrew will inform us, that "*I appoint* my bow," is as lawful a translation, and thus relieve the philosophers of their kind concern for Moses.

Pretended antiquarians having identified no bricks from the tower of Babel, assure us, that Moses' narrative of its erection, is to be classed with the fabulous legends of the old world. We might simply ask for some valid reason for discrediting the Pentateuch. Strabo and Herodotus, however, have furnished some memoranda of the existence in Chaldea, of a tower called Belus, having walks upon it, along which two chariots could drive abreast.

Various mistakes, contradictions and inconsistencies have been industriously culled from the pages of inspiration, and triumphantly paraded as conclusive vouchers for the human origin of the Bible. That a book, whose most modern parts are nearly eighteen centuries old,—written in languages, of which one has been dead for 2500 years, describing a very ancient people, of dissimilar customs from ours, and of very peculiar history ;—and which has passed through many hands, and been often copied, should present no literal and verbal inaccuracies, would indeed argue a miraculous preservation. But what is the amount of all

the alleged inaccuracies? Their historical and rhetorical effects do not alter a material fact of history, or modify a rule of good writing, and their moral have never influenced the nature of a doctrine or the character of a precept. The Hebrews and Greeks used letters in computation. It so happens that the numeral value of very similar letters was often different. Thus 40 and 400, 2 and 20, 4 and 200 are pairs of examples of this, in the Hebrew, and 3 and 6 in the Greek. This simple fact resolves a number of alleged contradictions and errors, since the mistake of a transcriber, in the matter of a line, one fiftieth of an inch long, might produce a considerable error in numbers. The accounts of John and Mark respecting our Saviour's crucifixion are different. John says it took place at the sixth hour, Mark says the third. Both might have used the letter whose numeral value is 6, and the copyist of Mark may have made it a 3.

Sometimes one writer gives the round number, and another, more accurately, furnishes the additional fractional number. One says our Saviour's transfiguration occurred "about eight days after." Another says it was "after six days." The former included the preceding and subsequent day.

A contradiction in different narrations of the same event is often easily reconciled by a little care in comparing the passages. Moses makes Jacob's family which went to Egypt sixty-six, or, adding Jacob, Joseph and his two sons, seventy. Stephen, in Acts vii. 14, states the number of the family at seventy-five. Now it will be observed, that Moses expressly excepts the wives of Jacob's sons, and gives "sixty-six" as the number of his descendants who *went* with him. Stephen says Joseph "sent for his father Jacob and all his kindred, seventy-five souls." In this were the sixty-six actual descendants of Jacob, and the nine wives of his sons, then living with him, who, as part of "*his kindred*," make up seventy-five. Thus, passages, once contradictory (apparently), are evinced to be *critically* correspondent.

The kings of the Jews often commenced their reigns during those of their fathers, or other predecessors, and sometimes one writer dates from the collegiate, and another from the sole succession. In genealogies, apparent errors are removed by the well-known facts, that one person sometimes had two names,—as to this day we speak of Cicero by the name of Tully,—sometimes the same name belonged to two persons, and names often appear with various spellings, by translations into other languages, or by

errors of copyists. The genealogy of our Saviour is twice given; but that of Luke is evidently a tracing of his lineage through his mother. He is said to have been as "was supposed, the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli," &c. Now the words "the son" before Heli, are supplied by the translators, and might as well have been, "the son-in-law." The custom of the Jews was to keep registers, and from them the evangelists doubtless compiled the genealogy. Other explanations of the phraseology here used have been given, but all coincide in the very natural and easy resolution of the difficulty, by adopting this as the register of Mary's ancestry.

Thus we see how readily the Scriptures may be relieved from the many petty objections, of which fair specimens have been presented. There are some indeed too trivial for notice, such as the sneer on Moses for using the third person in speaking of himself, of which Cæsar was notoriously guilty,—and the celebrated sophism, that contradictions are inferable when one writer omits what another relates, of which the abridgers of Dion Cassius furnish samples. For these contributions to the rules of writing and interpreting history, the world is indebted to the author of the "Age of Reason;" whether the discovery was original, we do not undertake to say.

3. One of the most prolific themes of a declamatory denunciation of Christianity is furnished by the existence of mysteries. The doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Divine Decree are cited as special illustrations of this objection.

(1.) Mystery is properly opposed to explanation. The inspired volume is not necessarily precluded from containing mysteries, of whose existence it may be a part of inspiration to inform us. The sacred writers have nowhere professed to explain everything connected with the divine nature and economy. God's plan of redemption was called a mystery, because not fully explained, though a matter of inspiration, of which a record was made. We readily concede that the mysteries of the Bible are "great," and many things are presented which we cannot fully comprehend.

(2.) But while above reason, these mysteries are not necessarily inconsistent with reason. By the very nature of the case, this is more than we can assert, since reason has been furnished with no materials for forming an opinion. Thus the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation arise from our ignorance of the mode of divine existence, and that of the Decree from our igno-

rance of the mode of the divine government of free agents. To a school-boy Newton's philosophy may be above reason, but cannot be said to be opposed to his reason, for on account of ignorance and immaturity his reason cannot be exercised on its principles.

(3.) The constitution and course of things in this world, not only raise a presumption that mysteries might be expected in a divine revelation, but ought to reconcile us to their existence. In the words of the inspired penman, "God doeth great things, which we cannot comprehend. Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds? Can any understand their spreadings, or the noise of his tabernacle? Who hath laid the measures of the earth, or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail? Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? Dost thou know the wondrous works of Him, who is perfect in knowledge?"* Our daily and important duties, labors, studies, relaxation, nourishment, rest, motion, pain and pleasure, are all connected with most intricate and perplexing mysteries. We know the laws of motion, but of its real nature are profoundly ignorant. The formation of our bodies, the process of vegetation, the combination of instinct with brute forms, or of mind with human, the power of a wound to inflict pain, the odor of plants, the nature of chemical combinations, the structure of a worm, the tint of a violet, the painting of a rose, the source of an aerolite, the origin of an earthquake, and hundreds of similar subjects, are full of inexplicable wonders. What is heat? light? electricity? magnetism? If gravitation binds planets to a centre, what binds the centre to its place? We can know something of the habits of various animals, but who knows how those habits are formed? How, in the vast numbers of the irrational creation is knowledge imparted and obtained? Why does the sensitive plant recoil at our touch? Why does the graft perpetuate its kind, and not that of the stock on which it feeds? Why do plants seek the light, the sun-flower, more devotional than man, ever bow towards his god, as he makes

* From chaps. 37th and 38th of Job.

the circuit of the heavens? Of all the wonders of nature, man is the greatest. We can describe his frame, with its muscles and veins, arteries and blood, bones and flesh, but what gives motion and power to them all? Who has touched the quick, and searched out the hiding-place of animal life? And when all nature has been explored, let us question the explorer. What is mind? whence its being? when and how united with the body? Is it modified matter, or is matter modified thought? Does it ever cease to think, even in sleep? Why cannot it end its own operations? Is not then its essence thought? Does it know in what its essence consists? Where does it reside? In the brain? the chest? or the whole body? anywhere? nowhere? And what doubt and perplexity hang over every act and emotion of this most mysterious, most consummately curious work of an Almighty God! Who can stop his own breath, or check the throbbing of his heart? Who can explain the motion of a finger, or the opening of the eye? "Man," says one, "essaying to know his nature, resembles a kitten first brought before a mirror. It jumps over it and behind it, frisks and twists and turns, vainly striving to reach the fair illusion, till at length in weary despair," it demurely retires from that most mysterious enigma, the image of itself.

Yet who doubts the existence of the natural world, and that of himself, or the facts adverted to, however wonderful, because they involve mysteries?

He, indeed, who rejects any doctrine of Revelation or Revealed Religion itself, on account of mysteries, must, to be consistent, cease all mental and physical efforts, till satisfied, by explanations, of the mysteries involved in these efforts. The farmer must cease to sow, the mechanic to labor, and the philosopher to reason, till they fully comprehend the inexplicable wonders of the earth, the body, and the mind. We must, too, reject all natural religion. Is the Trinity incomprehensible? The omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, yea, self-existence of a great First Cause, are no less so. Who, by searching, can find out God? who can understand the Almighty to perfection? who can grasp the idea of an existence from everlasting to everlasting? who can comprehend an omnipresence, co-extensive with immensity, an omniscience, co-incident with every event, past, present, and future, intimate with myriads of agencies, multiplied by myriads of creatures, and an omnipotence, controlling the mighty evolutions of the physical

universe, and the yet mightier, more complicated, as well as subtle powers of the moral, in all their vast influences, in all worlds, through time and eternity?

The difficulties of the divine decree ultimately resolve themselves into the insoluble mystery, that God's purposes are accomplished, and yet free agency remains unimpaired. But the mystery is not a teaching peculiar to the Bible. If we believe there is a God, we believe he acts by design or plan, that is, decrees or purposes to act as he does. For the evidences of such design furnish the conclusive proofs of his existence. But such design, includes the mutual adaptations of all the parts of individuals, multiplied by those of a number of individuals, and these by those of the species, and these by those of a genus: and then again, the whole are multiplied by the adaptations of the whole material universe in the relations of its myriads. Connected with this vast number, in which each minute motion of the minutest insect is to be contemplated, in its relations to all the rest of the world, this design includes all mental and moral agencies and causes, of all intelligent beings of earth, so that a thought or a word, even of the humblest child, or the feeble moan of an unconscious infancy, forms an element in the production of remote results. Now the harmonious relations of all this vast and complicated system of material and immaterial, rational and irrational creation, are perpetuated in entire consistency with free agency. To disconnect any part, the least, of this wondrous design, from the great First Cause, is to destroy the proofs of his Being, since it would no longer be his design. But can there be a greater mystery than the coexistence of such design and free-agency? This is the problem common to the Revelation of the Bible and the Revelation of Nature. Indeed the blank and cheerless postulates of Atheism cannot escape the charge of mystery. What more wonderful than a creation full of design without a designer, laws of matter without a lawgiver, or a world of rational beings, ever seeking a God, where there is no God? What so wonderful as chance making all things, when it cannot build a cabin. In short, if belief is to be repelled by mysteries, there is no prospect of rest to ourselves, short of stark pyrrhonism, a negation of all belief, the belief that we do not believe, the conviction that we do not exist. These "awful and gigantic shadows" will probably never be entirely cleared, either from the book of Revelation or that of Nature. A Newton's genius cannot explore those of the

one, nor an angel's those of the other. Both may "desire to look into them," but in the effort to sound the abyss, are lost in unfathomable depths. While no doctrine suspends its instructions, and no precept its duties, on the comprehension of mysteries, let us desist, alike from vain speculation and wicked cavils, and "believe and wonder, love and adore."

4. Objections to the divine origin of the Scriptures, based on their alleged contradictions of morality, in the conduct of God himself, or of persons acting by his authority, deserve a brief notice.

(1.) God's treatment of Pharaoh, according to the Mosaic account, is regarded as an infringement of the principles of justice, in that he hardened Pharaoh's heart and then destroyed him for impenitence. Attending to the order of the narrative, we find that Pharaoh first hardened his own heart, by rejecting God's authority. God's previous revelation to Moses, that he would harden the heart of Pharaoh, could not, of course, influence him, and indeed, may be no more than an intimation of his purpose to set before him the admonitions and warnings, by which God knew he would harden himself. This was not their necessary effect. But remembering that Pharaoh had rejected the divine message and aggravated his previous impiety, God was justified in his punishment, and selecting his own method, he made sin its own punishment. Men now meet the same result by persevering in evil courses.

(2.) As to the immorality recorded of God's servants or the instruments selected to accomplish his purposes, a few general principles will cover all important cases. The sacred writers are responsible for the facts they record and not the character of those facts, and their simplicity and impartiality in recording the faults as well as virtues of their heroes, should commend their credibility. The cruelties, perfidies, and barbarities of the age, delineated in the history of the Jews, are relieved by instances of generosity, kindness, and pity, seldom found in the history of other nations of the same period. While the Mosaic code presents enactments of great severity, it must be remembered, that it was drawn for a people on the verge of civilization, and withal, has furnished to the world, some of the best and most enduring principles of wise government. We may briefly notice, some particular instances of immorality, alleged to have been countenanced by God. Though guilty of murder and adultery, we are told that David is pronounced a "man after God's heart." But this was said of him in comparison with Saul, as to his official conduct and station. His

sins are mentioned with marked disapproval, and met a severe punishment. Rahab's faith in the divine promise and her concealment of the spies, and the "fear of God" evinced by the Hebrew midwives, and not the deception of the one case and the evasions and prevarications of the other, are mentioned with approbation. Ehud and Jael were both guilty of treachery and perhaps deceit—certainly of murder. They were instruments of God, for delivering the Israelites from oppression. The conduct of the former is merely stated, and the approval of that of the latter, by the prophetess Deborah, is restricted to the act of destroying a tyrant. God may have commissioned each as his agent, and left them, as he does and often has done, to select their methods of service. Such examples are not propounded for imitation, unless we were placed in circumstances of similarly extraordinary character.

(3.) There are several cases, in which conduct deemed immoral, is expressly averred to have been authorized by God. Thus the judgments on Korah and his company, on idolaters, on the forty-two *little* children, and on the various heathen nations of Canaan, are cited. God was the head of the Jewish nation, and idolatry or other sins were punished by him, with marked severity, in vindication of his prerogative and for preserving the purity of his truth and worship. Korah and his company perished for a wilful, presumptuous, and daring act of disobedience. The "forty-two *little* children," may have been, by as proper a translation, *youths*, and in this event, knew better than to revile God in the person of his inspired messenger. Accepting the translation of *little* children, it was a punishment on the parents, and like God's judgments of a similar character in our day, must be resolved into the exercise of his divine sovereignty.

The various nations of Canaan were intruders on the soil of the promised land, and besides were deservedly objects of divine displeasure. We are told that so great were their iniquities, the land was ready to vomit them forth as the stomach rejects a deadly poison. We acknowledge the righteousness, notwithstanding the severity, of the punishment of sin under every government. God often employs earthquakes and volcanoes, hurricanes, pestilence, and famine, and as in this case, bloody and destructive wars, to execute his purposed judgments. The Jews were the instruments of his hand, and only in part. They are often reminded of his extraordinary interventions in their behalf, and the "stars in their

courses," the fierce insect and the hail were commissioned to aid in driving out the nations whose iniquities were full.

5. We are told that it is inconsistent with the character of God to punish his frail creatures, eternally, for a few sins committed in this world.

Deists have acknowledged that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments forms a valuable incentive to virtue and preventive of vice. The enhancement of the sanction, by investing the reward and punishment with the attribute of eternity, ought not, of itself, to form an objection. But since the alleged disproportion of sin and its punishment is the gist of the difficulty, it may be remarked: (1.) That equally disproportionate is virtue and its reward, to which none object. (2.) That if it be said, virtue brings its own reward, and being intrinsically a source of happiness, must perpetuate that happiness indefinitely, so may sin, by its nature, ever remove the sinner farther from God, which will be one chief element of his misery, and thus perpetuate that misery indefinitely. (3.) That according to the constitution of nature, comparatively unimportant acts or trifling words are often followed by a train of evils lasting as life, and enduring through generations. (4.) And after all, we are by no means competent to decide on the merit or demerit of conduct, whose consequences we cannot calculate—whose motives are unknown and the rules of whose approval or condemnation, none but a God of infinite wisdom and holiness can properly establish. To these considerations, may be added the well-known fact, that whencesoever derived, the idea of such punishment did not appear repugnant to the moral sentiments of the heathen Greeks and Romans, in whose mythologies we find it incorporated and illustrated in the well-known fables of Sisyphus and Tantalus.

6. Those who affect a peculiarly proper estimate of human "Progress" and "Development," in a free inquiry after truth, speak contemptuously and disparagingly of what they term a "stereotyped" Revelation—or revelation in a book, as calculated to cramp man's powers and bind us, of this enlightened period, to the antiquated dogmas of a primitive and unpolished age of the world.

(1.) Moral truth is, in its nature, permanent, and its principles are immutable and perpetually applicable. As to the recorded facts of the Bible, the progress of knowledge is affording increasing evidence of their accuracy, and the investigations and dis-

coveries of science, are strengthening the conviction, that the voice of nature confirms the utterances of that of Revelation. In the intellectual character of Bible truth, we discover depths in which giants may swim, as well as shoals where infants may wade. In the natural world, most of those truths, important for man's daily business, are comparatively plain; yet there are materials, on which his powers of discovery and invention may be exercised with no assignable limit. So the Scriptures, while affording readily, all truth that is material and essential, cast up, as it were, on the surface, present a sufficient compass for the most vigorous and extensive researches of the human mind, in unlocking and unfolding the treasures of divine wisdom. It is not probable, that any truth essential to man's physical necessities, remains undiscerned, in the volume of nature, or any essential to his spiritual, in that of Revelation; yet many, highly important for the confirmation and proper elucidation of truths already discerned, may yet be discovered in both: and the book of Revelation, as well as nature, may yet be sufficient to employ the most exalted intellect, even in the extreme "progress of development."

(2.) We know that without "books" as a means of perpetuating and diffusing thought, man would be little better than a savage. It is, surely, very accordant with this actual state of the world, that Revelation should be communicated as other valuable truth. It is very credible, that he who has given a Revelation, would adapt it to all ages and states of the world, and if true, the sooner it be made permanent the better.

7. The Mosaic account of the creation and fall of man, or the origin of evil, has been the theme of much cavil, sneering and ridicule.

(1.) The vindication of Scripture from the charge of inconsistency with the truths of science, especially as they affect the account of creation, having fallen into other hands, in the course of these Lectures, we pass over the subject with one remark. We may safely abide the decisions of competent and impartial judges, on a comparison of this account with the various absurd cosmogonies and puerile stories of other writers, whether ancient or modern.

(2.) The division of the creative process into periods, finds a beautiful and striking analogy in that course of nature, according to which, we discover a certain system or order, prevalent in all

the works of God. That God is said to have rested on the seventh day, is one of scores of instances in which the sacred writers accommodate to our finite faculties, their representations of the mode of divine thinking, speaking, and acting. Objections to such representations have been made, on the ground that they are debasing to God, who is thus made subject to our passions and infirmities. But those who make them can find no better mode of presenting intelligent views of the divine nature and attributes, and the explanation given ought to relieve this and all similar passages, of all liableness to any other than absurd criticism.

That man was created full-grown in body, and not an infant or a child, is not only consistent with all else of the divine work, but commends itself as highly proper; and that he was not left an overgrown child in intellect, is at once, agreeable to the analogy of the physical perfection of the universe, and suitable to the duties on which he was required immediately to enter.

(3.) The origin of evil is the dread mystery of time, the "abyss into which nearly all theological difficulties at last disembody themselves," the enigma compared with which, and without which, all other enigmas are trifles. The Scripture account of this, both as to mode and fact, is the great stumbling-block of skepticism.

A few words as to the agents in this awful drama, are sufficient. He who could create a world, could endow the serpent with speech, and subject it to the influence of a spiritual being. How the animal previously moved, or with what physical changes it was affected after the Fall, are useless questions. That it was peculiarly doomed, in the curse which fell on all creation, is accordant with analogy, in that the irresponsible instruments or agents in man's sin, often suffer more than others, the penalties of his guilt. The permission to Satan to tempt Adam, no more involves God in his sin, than does the existence of a state of trial in this world, implicate its author in the evils which it may or does occasion. Of all tests, that submitted to man was the fairest. There was the least temptation, counterbalanced by the heaviest penalty. So far as we can know, had man been constituted impeccable, or subjected to no test of obedience, there had been no way in which he could have evinced virtuous principle. Angels are the only other intelligent creatures of whom we have any account, and as they sinned, we infer they were

also put upon a probation. Man was either constituted as alleged, and fell, or constituted a sinner, which no consistent deist will aver. It becomes those who object to the Scripture representation, to show some other mode of constituting a free agent, competent to divine power and consistent with the divine wisdom; and this cannot be done till man can measure omnipotence and compass infinity.

There are other difficulties connected with this subject, which lie back of Revelation, and whose solution is involved in that of a mystery already mentioned,—God's government of free agents, so that his decree does not impair their freedom, nor affect their responsibility. Thus, why is there any evil? Did God predetermine it? Was his purpose or plan frustrated or fulfilled by its entrance? How is man responsible for what he was created to perform? The answer to these, and many other similar questions, easily asked, has been given. Our reason has no materials for the decision. These matters are above it. Our province is to vindicate what God has revealed, by showing its congruity with the discoveries and teachings of reason, exercised on the constitution and course of nature. Here are found evidences of man's fall and its consequences, palpable to its perceptions: and here are held forth hopes of a possible remedy, though reason, unprovided with the means of accurate knowledge, may fail to designate the precise character of that remedy.

Along with abundant indications of a primitive beauty and goodness in the natural world, there are equally clear indications, that the beautiful and the good have been marred and defaced. In the midst of order we observe disorder. Seasons, suns and systems, the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, are governed by wise and fixed laws. Yet storm and tempest, plague and pestilence, desolated shores, vast and arid deserts, rock-bound coasts, shipwreck and hurricane, proclaim this earth to be the object and scene of some potent curse. The extinction of the generator is the price of reproduction. The existence of the offspring is often purchased by the death of the parent. Adversity is the fruit of prosperity. As each day closes in the darkness of night, so ruin and decay, with effacing fingers, follow loveliness and health. We seem to tread on the withered leaves of a departed life. Though the world is filled with the monuments of divine power and wisdom, they are monuments in ruins. Though we are surrounded with proofs of creative energy and consum-

mate skill, Death stalks forth among them, the king of terrors, the inexorable tyrant and great destroyer, and after marking all that is man's with his withering touch, prepared to lay man himself under the dust of the ruins among which he has lived.

In the moral world, we behold scenes mournfully analogous. We see man, the object of a benevolence that never tires in bestowing the bounties of a providence which never fails. He is endowed with faculties, which, unclouded by prejudice, undebased by vice and undegraded by ignorance, testify for God, lighten the path of duty, and constitute him, in the lowest stages of moral existence, a religious being. Yet he evinces a constant proclivity to evil. His reason disordered, understanding darkened, imagination polluted and taste depraved, he no longer delights in the beautiful and the good. He becomes an alien from God. Acknowledging the goodness of the law written on his heart, he perversely violates its precepts. God's name becomes his bye-word, and God's nature his abhorrence. He is subject to pain. As his body has become a machinery of torture, his mind becomes a fountain of woe. His plans are crossed and his prospects blighted. However explained, he feels that God opposes him. Rarely "amidst the darkest fears and deepest jealousies" has he discarded from his religion the idea of a benevolent being, and invested his divinity with the terrific attributes of inveterate malignity and cruelty, yet so much has fear prevailed over hope, that he has worshipped the devil. Fearing, but not trusting, he ceases to pray for favor and deprecates wrath. He feels that though a depository of great power, he is watched, curbed and restrained. His very liberty becomes his ruin. For he has not only separated from God, but divided himself. Now accusing and now excusing, his thoughts alternately darken hope and mitigate despair, neither the light of the one ever totally extinguished, nor the horrors of the other totally relieved. He is guilty of what he condemns. He fails to perform what he approves. He begins to seek God, and ends in a vain conceit of his virtue. In dreams of vanity he flatters himself that he is pure, and wakes to loathe his pollution. He lies amidst the ruins of the world, like a rock in the débris of some mighty precipice, in whose rugged and misshapen form you can trace the lineaments of its origin. So man is separated from his God. A gulf wide as eternity and deep as perdition divides them. Well did Pascal write, "What a chimera is man,—what a chaos of contradictions! A judge of all things, yet a worm of earth; the depository of truth, yet a med-

ley of uncertainties; the glory and scandal of the universe. If he exalt himself, I humble him. If he humble himself, I exalt him, and press him with his own inconsistencies till he comprehends himself to be an incomprehensible monster."

This view of man as an individual, presents a type of the condition of the race. Now amiable instincts and generous impulses furnish scenes of domestic happiness, social peace, political security and general prosperity. Benevolence feeds the hungry poor, comforts the distressed and alleviates the severities of adversity. Anon, conjugal affection degenerates into idolatry, or is drowned in selfishness. Parental tenderness becomes foolish weakness, or is extinguished by overbearing tyranny. Filial confidence softens into servility or dies in ingratitude. The covenants of friendship conceal crime and perpetuate villainy, or are sundered by treachery. The institutions of religion dwindle to trifling superstitions, or become the engines of spiritual despotism, and the cloaks of hypocrisy. Liberty waxes into licentiousness, order wanes to anarchy, and government turns into oppression. The exactions of avarice take the place of benevolence, the assumptions of arrogance succeed the condescensions of humility, and "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless millions mourn." Angels weep, and hell rejoices.

But amidst all these disasters in the natural and moral world, both furnish evidences of tendencies to reconstruction. Science and art with their thousand hands are ministering to the disorders of nature and rebuilding this dilapidated temple with its own ruins. They convert poison into medicine, and of rivers and seas, which divided men, make highways of commerce. From the disembowelled earth are drawn the mighty wrecks of long forgotten convulsions, to furnish fuel and light, the implements of husbandry and machinery, which increase the fertility and remedy the defects of nature, and materials to adorn and beautify this renovated structure of man's dwelling-place. The ice-bound streams of the north become mines of wealth, and the burning sands and sickening fens of the tropics, furnish refreshing fruits and abundant food. The mighty agencies, which in nature's laboratory, rend rocks, burst mountains and ingulph cities, are trained by man, to bring nations together and erect the vast marts of commerce. He not only disarms the lightning of its terrors, but subjects it to the purposes of his interest and pleasure.

In a total ruin all is desolation. But God has not deserted man. He has not suffered all the impressions of his hatred to evil and

delight in goodness to be effaced from the human heart. The setting sun tinges with his departing rays the fleecy cloud and the mountain top, showing he has not set forever, and auspicious of a morning. So, though God has for a time forsaken the moral world, he has left behind him a train of light. Man still yearns for something better. He may be in a prison house of punishment, but it is one of discipline, not entirely of vengeance. His history is a history of sin and error, but a history too, of struggles for conformity to the light left to guide his path. Failed he has, most memorably and miserably, yet that he struggles, proves that all is not lost.

Now all this accords with Revelation. Open this book, and what man has learned, slowly and laboriously, from the observations and experiences of six thousand years, read by his reason, is here unfolded in a few sentences. God's curse fell on Adam, and on the earth, though sinless, for man's sake. It fell on all mankind, and the sufferings of infancy, pain, disease, travail and sorrow, the train closed by death, man's greatest evil, have been our sad inheritance. Whether men call this "imputation," or, sneering at the term, prefer some other, the facts of the record, thus attested by the deductions of reason from those of human history, remain unimpeachable. Prejudice may storm, but cannot overthrow them. It is useless to argue against them, sinful to cavil at them, absurd and puerile to ridicule them.

Here too is the promise of a remedy, intimated to man in the very hour of his curse; and the earnest expectation of the creature, the natural world, though with the moral, groaning and travailing, as in the throes of some mighty agony, seems, by the deductions of the same reason, awaiting the promised manifestation of the sons of God, and ardently longing for a deliverance from the long and grievous bondage of corruption.*

Attested thus, by the state of things in which we live, this brief but pregnant passage in the third chapter of Genesis, instead of sinking into a contemptible *myth*, or a baseless imposture, rises in all the grandeur, sublimity and power of a most stupendous truth, entitled to our confidence for its lineaments of inspiration, as to our veneration for its attributes of antiquity.

8. Some object to Christianity on account of the particular

* For the train of thought in the last two or three paragraphs, and for a few expressions, I acknowledge my obligations to the very ingenious and interesting work of Mr. McCosh "On Divine Government," in which the views here presented are ably and fully set forth.

remedy of the gospel. It might be supposed that a candid and impartial objector to Revelation on account of its doctrine of man's ruin, would find some relief to the difficulty in the provision of a remedy. But either by reason of ignorance of its nature, or wilful blindness to the truth, the scheme of redemption has been the subject of severe criticism.

(1.) As in respect of all doctrines, for whose discovery we are indebted to Revelation, it is peculiarly true of this, that antecedently to such Revelation, men could not be competent judges. They could form no opinion on the nature of a remedial scheme, the necessity for the particular agency of a Mediator, his character or offices.

(2.) It is also obvious, that the incarnation, resurrection, the combination of human and divine agency in the Saviour's sufferings, and their duration as too long or too short, and similar topics, are above our comprehension, and objections applicable to such, are as absurd, as the objections of a child, to the plans, principles and dealings of a father, while yet too young to appreciate or comprehend them.

(3.) Of such objections to the gospel remedy as are legitimate subjects of our discussion, we offer a few specimens, with summary replies.

The manner in which the remedy has been prepared, has been criticised, as presenting God reduced to the necessity of using a long series of intricate means to bring it about.

As to the facts of this scheme having been gradually and slowly developed, connected with human agencies, in the way of cause and effect, we well know that this accords with the course of nature. Vegetables and animal bodies grow by degrees. The mind increases in power. One series of means subserves another, and so the whole course of nature is progressive. Thus has the scheme of Redemption been developed. But its efficiency was not postponed to its full enactment, for its blessings flowed to man before, as well as after, the incarnation of the Son of God.

The system of a Mediator and a mediation is alleged to be irrational. Now it has been seen, that by the findings of observation and experience, there is, at least, a presumption raised, that some remedial system might be provided for man's spiritual as for his physical disabilities. And pursuing our reading of nature farther, though never discovering, because the book never contained it, that such a remedy would be effected by a Mediator, yet

we can see, now it has been published in God's other volume, that it is not discordant with the lessons of nature. We owe our birth, nurture, physical, mental and moral culture, to the various mediating agents, by which God has communicated such blessings to men. A reflecting mind may extend this illustration almost indefinitely. And if God, in his visible government, thus uses such agencies, it is at least credible, that he might adopt the principle in his spiritual government. There is certainly everything other than objectionable, in the idea, that as God has, by such agencies, provided for remedying the defects and neutralizing or removing the evils of this present disordered world, furnishing means of relief from calamities, as pain, disease, and the like, which men had induced by negligence, perversity, or stupidity; by a similar kind of agency he tenders the means of deliverance from that, which, to a sober and well-balanced mind, must appear the greatest of evils, sin and its consequences. This is surely a pleasing and amiable view of the Divine Being, that he should select his Son to effect a purpose so replete with blessings to man and glory to God.

The sacrifice of the innocent Son of God, in the place of the insignificant inhabitants of this little planet, is alleged to be unworthy of a just God, and that he should be as well pleased with the sufferings of the innocent as the guilty, is declared contradictory to the dictates of reason. The objections here presented are connected with each other and with one great fact, the death of Christ, in such a manner; that to avoid repetition they may be considered somewhat together.

The Scriptures represent the death of Christ, in the light of a sacrifice, in which he, in his mediatorial character and united nature, as a Priest, offers his human nature as a victim. Whether of human or divine origin, sacrifices are of very ancient date. Either with or without prayers, confessions and thanksgivings, they have constituted, in some form, a prominent part of the religious worship of all nations, who had a religion. If of human origin, there can be no objection to the Christian scheme as requiring a sacrifice, any more than to others. If of divine, this scheme then accords, in this principle, with the earliest lessons of primitive religion imparted to man. In either case, the objection applies to all religions, and if valid in one, is valid in all, and leaves us with none.

The involuntary suffering of an innocent being without ade-

quate cause is wrong, and though, were such a being rational, the wrong is aggravated, yet the principle of justice is infringed by the sufferings of any such, rational or irrational. The Deist might, on this view, well object to the sacrifices of the heathen, which inflicted suffering on innocent brutes, with no adequate cause. But the suffering inflicted on a voluntary victim is not injurious, and conflicts with no principle of justice. Jesus Christ was a voluntary victim, and as those sacrifices of brutes directed under the Old Testament economy were typical of His, and ordered by God, there was an adequate cause for the suffering. Thus the Scripture doctrine of sacrifice is not liable to cavil, however that of any other religious system may be.

Though relatively insignificant in enlarged views of God's intelligent universe, yet since man has formed, confessedly, an object of great interest to his Creator, in this world, there can be no force in an objection to a scheme, because it represents him as an object of a more intense interest, in so grave a matter as his spiritual and eternal welfare. Especially is this reasonable, when we connect with it, the inspired assurance, that the transactions in which this interest for man have been evinced, are designed, and will ultimately prove, to be contributive, in a most eminent degree, to declare the divine glory. Among other manifestations, we are assured, that these transactions display alike the evil of sin, God's hatred to it, and his love to sinners, and our reason leaves us in no doubt, that all this has been effected in a more clear and efficient method, by so much as the dignity and value of the sacrifice have been greater. While too, we see that in the course of nature, the innocent often suffer for the guilty, and that this principle is of very common and extensive prevalence in human government, as in the well-known laws of suretyship, we can have no valid occasion for objecting, that in view of honoring the divine law and sustaining inviolate, the principles of the divine government, God should accept the sufferings of the innocent instead of the guilty, as equally adequate to satisfying the claims of justice.

Finally, it is querulously asked, why all this array of means? Why may not sinful men be at once forgiven, and made holy and happy? Such questions are easily asked, and on superficial views of the divine character and government, not easily answered. It is very useless for us to speculate on the physical possibilities of omnipotence. By reason and Revelation alike, we are taught to

believe, that the perfection of the divine being involves the harmony of the divine attributes. God is a moral governor. We feel persuaded, that as such, he must govern by just and holy laws; and that his government, as well as every other and more than every other, forfeits our confidence if the laws are not executed. But as all men are sinners, justice requires their punishment. As no one can rightly estimate the heinousness of any one sin, or the importance of any one particular vindication of the law, we are compelled to assent to the righteousness of a principle, more or less acknowledged in human governments, that, "he who offends in one point is guilty of all"—that is, obnoxious to punishment. Violated law must be honored. The subsequent obedience of the transgressor cannot atone for the crime, nor can suffering alone repair the injury inflicted by disobedience. But man fails to obey. His sufferings, consistent with his happiness are ineffectual. The law violated is that of infinite holiness, of the supreme ruler. That offences are aggravated by considerations of the relations of the party offending to the party offended, is too plain to need an illustration. But beyond the highest disproportion between any man and any earthly power, that between man and God stretches with an infinite extent. Man's suffering then, to meet the just demands of a violated law of God, must involve his utter and hopeless ruin. If then sin be forgiven as proposed, the justice and holiness of God are dethroned, the harmony of the divine attributes is destroyed, and the moral power of the divine government impaired. Hence the necessity for this "array of means." Hence the necessity, in order that man may be forgiven, be made holy and happy, that a way be devised to satisfy divine justice. Now in the gospel scheme, mercy and truth are met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Justice and holiness shine most conspicuously on that cross, where God spared not his Son, innocent as he was, when he took the sinner's place; while there too, fall with his blood, the richer drops of divine mercy and compassion. The justice here illustrated is sterner than, if every sinner had died without mercy, and the mercy richer, than had every sinner been pardoned without justice. Mercy is unfolded, in God's so loving the world, that he gave his Son, and justice, in that no other than the costly blood of the incarnate Son of God could appease its holy wrath. Mercy secures the transfer of the sinner's guilt to his surety, while justice rigidly

exacts from the surety the full price of the sinner's pardon. Mercy providing a complete righteousness for the sinner,

—"Takes the robe the Saviour wrought,
And casts it all around,"

while justice

—"All God's vengeance pours
Upon the Saviour's head."

Mercy inclines the ear of God to the prayer of the penitent, pleading in the Saviour's name, while justice awakens the sword of divine anger against him who was God's equal. In fine, mercy, rich, free and full, appears in forgiving millions of sins, and justice, holy, strict and inexorable in refusing pardon for the least without the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. Equally conspicuous are the divine wisdom and power. Man lost beyond all hope and all remedy, by his own efforts, afforded an object of pity to holy beings. Angels may well be supposed to have beheld the scene with feelings of mingled compassion and wonder. To restore the race to favor consistently with justice, no scheme ever imagined by man was competent, none within the reach of less than omnipotence could avail. Not only must the divine attributes be harmonized, but man's nature must be renovated. In the gospel, the latter is effected, as well as the former. Not only was the law of God honored and his justice satisfied, by the Saviour's sufferings and obedience, but the gift of a renewing, sanctifying spirit was procured. By his agency man is made "willing in the day of God's power." Convinced of sin, he is led to repentance and faith. He is new created. Old things pass away. His corrupt propensities and his inveterate depravity, are gradually destroyed, his rebellion subdued, and his nature averse to holiness, renewed and sanctified and made fit for the holy employments of a glorious abode.

"'Twas great to speak this world from naught,
'Twas greater to redeem."

Thus in a word, do we discover in the gospel plan the divine attributes harmoniously co-operating. Wisdom to devise, power to execute, justice to punish, mercy to forgive, equally conspicuous with the holiness which is intolerant of sin, the love which delights in the sinner's salvation, the truth which binds to the fulfilment of threatening, and the goodness which inclines to the performance of promises. Man is raised from the dregs of pollution and the

verge of perdition, to the eternal purity and unfailing security of heavenly happiness. Earth is filled with the blessings and Heaven with the glories of this great redemption.

"Oh the sweet wonders of that cross
Where God the Saviour loved and died,
Her richest life my spirit draws
From his dear wounds and bleeding side."

9. The limited publication of Christianity, and its limited prevalence and power as consequences of this, have frequently been urged as inconsistent with its divine origin and its claims to be regarded as a necessary and universal blessing.

(1.) If Christianity be tendered to us, accompanied by reliable evidence, the deprivation of others, no more mars its purity, than invalidates its evidences. Moreover we are incompetent judges of the divine procedure. Apparent inconsistencies in human governments, as we have had occasion to see as to God's natural government of the world, are often removed by more accurate and extensive information. So may it be, that there are valid reasons for a state of things, apparently inconsistent with God's power, wisdom or benevolence or all.

(2.) Indeed none will require the universal reception of Christianity, as either an evidence of its divine origin or an argument for its purity; for where it has been fully published, it has not been universally received, and unless free agency were destroyed by an enforcement of its claims, in the present state of things, we see no reason to expect such a reception. This conceded, whether a minority or majority have received it, is not very material. But we have reason to believe, that a much larger number will ultimately appear to have been benefited than the objection intimates. The present and the past generations of men, may constitute a minority of the whole race. What are yet to be the effects of Christianity we know not. Probably they will exceed all former experience. When then, to Christian adults, we add the vast millions of infants interested in the atoning blood of Christ and the healing power of the divine Spirit, it is possible, a vast majority of the human family will have been found participants in the blessings of the gospel.

And, after all, it remains to be seen whether the causes of the alleged "*inconsistency*" are intrinsic evils of the Christian scheme.

(3.) Admitting that a formal and particular publication of re-

vealed religion was limited to one nation under the old dispensation, and has been generally restricted to a few, under the new, we ourselves may see a propriety and justice in both cases. We have abundant reason for believing, that sufficiently full disclosures of the divine will were made to our first parents and to Noah and his family. That men not liking to retain the knowledge of God, lost, by perversity and negligence, the advantages of revealed truth, may be read in the progressions of every system of idolatry, as well as in the inspired record. Now, God deals with his creatures as moral agents, and provides neither irresistible evidences nor means for preserving to them the knowledge of his will. Because of this tendency to apostasy and deterioration, on the principle already indicated, he selected one nation as the depository of his truth, and by restrictive laws and peculiar institutions, separated it from the permanent taint of that idolatry, to which in common with other nations, it ever manifested a proclivity.

As to the Christian dispensation, God was pleased to leave to man a discovery of its necessity, by an experience of his moral destitution, and when the Gospel was promulgated, we can easily see that it was not only consistent with the divine procedure, in other things, but was better calculated to preserve the purity of the system, and promote sincerity in its advocates, that it should meet opposition and be subjected to a rigid scrutiny. By too sudden a change from paganism to Christianity, universally occurring, there would have been danger of a fatal and general corruption of the system, while the tests of sincerity withdrawn, there might have been a fearful prevalence of hypocrisy. We reason from facts. At a later period, when the civil power was substituted for the pulpit, and earthly rewards for eternal, these results followed; and that to such extent, that all are accustomed to regard the primitive, as the age of the greatest Christian purity, from whose history we derive our lessons of the true nature and power of the gospel.

(4.) It may be true, that the Christian religion does not secure the perfection of its followers, in moral character, while on earth, nor has it preserved among them entire unity of opinion. Many of its professed votaries, including ministers, have disgraced human nature, as well as Christianity by immoral lives, and the exhibition of cruel and persecuting tempers, while the wars waged, professedly in behalf of religion, have been distinguished for ferocity and cru-

elty. But objections founded on these statements lose all their force, when the statements themselves are rightly considered.

Though taught that, at death, believers are made perfect in holiness, yet the general tone of Scripture doctrine, precept and biography prove that the production of a comparative holiness is the extent of power on individuals, claimed for the Christian system in this world; and that it rather aims to carry us through a state of discipline, preparatory and subservient to one of perfection in heaven, where we shall no more see through a glass darkly, or know in part, but shall see God and be made like him.

The divisions of Christians are no more, nor more important, than reasoning from other things, we might presume. Laws and constitutions, though carefully drawn by the wisest men, education, medicine, agriculture, natural and moral science, and even mathematics, are all subjects, on which either as to their principles, modes of exhibition or application, great diversity of opinion exists. And it is observable, that the acrimony, zeal, and pertinacity which are evinced by sectaries, are usually in the direct ratio of the general importance of a subject, or the inverse ratio of that of its specialities. But no one pretends that division or controversy imply that its subject is one of doubt or uncertainty, or that any system is responsible for the variety of opinions of which it is the occasion. This is more frequently owing to the influence of extrinsic causes. There is more agreement among Christians on the fundamental propositions of Christianity, than can be found among the adherents of any other system of moral truth.

But divisions on some subjects are ascribed to a want of clearness in the Scriptures. The Trinity, infant baptism, observance of Sunday, and the constitution and powers of the church, are specimens of such subjects. It will ordinarily be found, that these differences are ascribable to defects in plans of study, or power of reasoning, or the influences of education or prejudices, or all combined. It is admitted, that all subjects are not revealed with the same clearness. On no fundamental topic is there any want, and yet the deliverances of Scripture on these, are not all in the same mode. We find that the causes of difference mentioned, out of the question, very few who evince a right apprehension of the acknowledged and plain truths of Scripture, fail to agree on such subjects as the doctrine of the Trinity and the observance of Sunday. God has endowed us with faculties and furnished us with facilities for collecting the scattered rays of truth, on all important

topics, and by scattering them on some, has evinced his wisdom, as thereby a more diligent study of the whole is secured. On those of less importance, the differences involve the rejection or uncertainty of nothing essential to the spiritual character of the system.

No cause ought to be judged by its corruptions and abuses. Immoralities of Christians cannot be charged on the system, till shown to proceed from its principles. But the purity of these principles is admitted in the charge, for Christians are criticised as much or more, for want of conformity to the peculiar precepts of their own religion, as those common to it and the religion of nature.

If persecution were of the spirit of Christianity, where this most prevails that would most abound. But the reverse is notoriously true. Religious wars have uniformly resulted from the acts and motives of unchristian men, and history attests, that those ministers or others, who have become tyrants over the souls and bodies of their fellows, erected stakes and gibbets, founded the infernal dungeons and contrived the cruel racks of the Inquisition, in other respects, forfeited all claim to be regarded as Christians. Isolated instances may be found, when under the influence of evil examples and depraved public sentiment, or driven by oppression, men of undoubted Christian principle, have turned aside from rectitude in these respects, but persecution, and every harsh and cruel mode of propagating Christianity, have ever been condemned by those, who in every age, have enjoyed the best reputation as Christians; and the Bible not only does not teach, but most expressly denounces such practices. Our Saviour's admonition of the effect of his doctrine in producing divisions and hatreds among the nearest friends, was a candid prediction of the harsh reception it would find in the world. Peculiar duties, as the agents of heaven in destroying idolaters, were delegated to the Jews; but no precept of the Old Testament can be adduced to show, that they were ever instructed to propagate their faith, by any other than the methods used for propagating all truth, rational conviction and persuasion. As to the imputations on the character of the Christian ministry, without indelicate boasting, we may challenge the world to produce a body, which, as such, presents a greater number of serious, self-denying, laborious, and upright men than may be found in the protestant clergy of the United States. And it deserves to be mentioned, that in respect of the moral character and influence of the Christian Church and ministry, both are to be

regarded as something other than the Christian scheme, especially in countries, where by the unnatural alliance of Church and State, the true genius of Christianity has been mournfully marred.

It must be admitted by candid and intelligent men, that the tone of morality has ever been higher in Christian, than in Mohammedan and Pagan lands, and of Christian lands, higher in those, where the principles of Christianity have been most extensively diffused. Though practical religion may have been corrupted in later times, the lives of primitive Christians, when temptations to hypocrisy were few, and to apostasy, many, were monuments of their faith in the estimate of enemies. Then, as now, Christians were not inmates of jails, and victims for gibbets, as evil-doers. It must be admitted, that Christianity provides better for those classes, which most need moral benefits, than any other system; for while philosophy neglected the poor, and after ages of speculation and scores of schools, and sects, and systems had passed away, the multitude still lay neglected and degraded, Christianity has succeeded in enlightening the illiterate, comforting the distressed, and in healing the maladies, easing the burdens, and enlarging the enjoyments of men in every grade of penury and sorrow, of all nations, ages, and circumstances. It must be admitted, that it has won trophies of its moral power from people of every color, clime, and condition. The Moor, the Hindoo, the Chinese, and the Hottentot, the deluded victims of imposture, and the degraded servants of apostasy and superstition, have been released from their bonds of ignorance and vice, by its influence; and from hovels, dungeons, and manacles, have issued the songs of praise, inspired by its promises.

To the whole of this objection, that Christianity has been of limited publication, prevalence and power, three considerations may be offered in reply, which, at least, greatly impair its force.

(1.) Men who never hear the gospel are not injured by its publication to others. God accepts or condemns men according to what they have, and not according to what they have not. They will be judged by the law written on their hearts, and not by the gospel they never knew. True, by reason of man's wilful blindness and perversity, that law conducts none to heaven, and as ignorance is no reason why men should not learn, or others teach them, so moral darkness is no reason they should not seek the light, and Christians endeavor to impart it. But the misery of

their condition is not that *we* have the gospel, but that they have not improved the light they had.

(2.) And when it is still urged, that the gospel has not been given to them as well as to us, it must be conceded, that judging by the constitution of nature, we had little reason to expect anything otherwise.

The advantages of soil, climate, commerce and civilization, are very unequally distributed. As no two persons can be found exactly alike in physical constitution, so no two individuals possess precisely the same privileges; but we find an endless variety in respect of physical form and strength, learning, taste and temper. A survey of the world will show, that the greatest blessings are possessed by the few. Now as God has been under no obligation to confer like blessings on all, or certain blessings on any, his distinguishing some men with advantages, does not impeach the divine justice or benevolence in withholding them from others. These last are not less favored than had the others received nothing. No more was God obliged to confer the benefits of revelation on any persons whatever, since all were undeserving, unless it be contended that he had made man at first without the knowledge necessary to fulfil the end of his being, which, of course, no consistent deist will aver. And as in the former case, so in this, those from whom the gospel has been withheld are not less favored than had others not received it. Indeed, the divine provision for man's spiritual welfare, seems conducted on the principle by which that for his temporal welfare has been made. God has provided in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms a great variety of medicines, and has furnished the vast storehouse of nature with materials for the various useful arts, which contribute to our safety, convenience and comfort. He has also endowed us with the physical and mental faculties by which we may make these provisions available. Yet we find that in his providence, long periods have elapsed before some very important remedies and valuable discoveries in the sciences and arts have become known to man. Thousands are still unaffected by them. Owing to indolence and ignorance, prejudice and passion, it has often been only after long labor, unsuccessful experiments, contempt, disputes, divisions, controversies, doubts and rejections, that some of them have obtained reception and success. Many who greatly need them, cannot be brought to appreciate them. To millions they are never offered. Others again derive no benefit from them

on account of some circumstances which countervail their effects. In short, we thus see that these provisions are neither certain, perfect, nor universal. So has been the course of Providence in respect of a revelation. And yet in one aspect, our illustration fails. Christianity has not been left hidden for man's discovery or invention. Though not published to every successive apostate generation, and, for reasons already offered, a particular mode of revelation was adopted, yet from the earliest ages, the knowledge of its material truths has been in the world. Before the Saviour came, men were taught to believe on him who was promised, and since he appeared, the gospel has been offered, at various periods, to a great part of the world's population, not, it is true, in every century, but in the course of the eighteen which have elapsed, and especially during the first and second. If its prevalence and power have been limited, man and not its author is blamable, and this is peculiarly true in our day and country.

(3.) If our recurrence to the constitution of nature be deemed unfair, because the interests affected are by no means equal to those of religion, or if it be said that the provisions for man's temporal welfare are scattered very generally in some sort, we may furnish in the case of natural religion a consideration which fully relieves us of all pressure from such allegations. We have seen that however published, by its evidences being everywhere patent, in the providence of God, its prevalence has been less extensive than that of revealed religion. We mean the prevalence of those truths which constitute its claims to be called a religion. Its power has been far less exemplified. Scarcely a dozen deists have ever agreed fully on its principles. None have fully illustrated them by consistent lives. Hypocrisy is as glaring in its votaries, as in professed Christians. Some have doubted whether any traces of it could be found in the world but for Christianity. Certainly, and it deserves remark, since the Christian era, its developments in other than Christian lands, have been very limited. Its temples adorn no cities. It has neither ministers nor altars, nor rites, nor ordinances, nor worship. Heaven, earth and sea may proclaim with voiceless eloquence, "The hand that made us is divine," but man makes no response. Natural creation may be vocal with harmonies of praise, but man's voice is unheard in the swelling anthem. What has mere natural religion ever done? The trophies of its triumphs are yet to be seen in reformed societies, happy families, patient, meek, humble and peaceable men

and women. Husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants are yet to be found, who have learned their duties from its precepts, and practised them under its sanctions. On the greatest of all topics in any religion, it is silent. By no suggestions of reason, no analogies of nature, no records of experience, no monuments of earth, blackened and withered by the curse of God, no pealing thunder, no convulsions of the elements, no smiling landscape, no blushing beauties of spring, brilliant glories of summer, or sombre shades of autumn, in short, by no voice from heaven, earth or air, has it ever taught how God could be just and yet the sinner saved. In no dungeon of despair has it cast a ray of hope. In no hovel of poverty has it left a crumb of comfort. In no scene of sorrow has it mingled its joys. No widow's heart has ever welcomed its consolations. No orphan's tears have been dried by its hands. Athwart no dark and gloomy tomb of infancy have its beams been shed. From no bed of pain and weakness, disease and death, have been heard the accents of its peace, or the notes of its triumphs. No portals of perdition have been closed by its power. No heaven of glory opened to its voice. If Christianity is to be despised and neglected as limited and feeble, much more must the boasted religion of nature be discarded, and from the toils and dangers of a fatherless world, he must launch forth on the dread Unknown of Futurity, without rudder or compass, pilot or sail, in the frail and foundering wreck of Atheism.

We conclude, 1. That as on those topics, which are common to the course of nature and Revelation, objections to the latter are often relieved by showing that they apply to the former, we are justified in receiving Revelation, even although objections derived from other sources, as the apparent contradictions of science or our fallible apprehensions of the contents of the Bible, may still exist. For as we receive the course of nature to be from God, notwithstanding the existence of some very grave difficulties, on the general evidence afforded us, so we may believe Revelation credible. And as in the natural world, the same faculties of investigation and the same phenomena, from which great discoveries have been made and great objections removed, have been long possessed by men before such results were attained, so it is credible, that as time rolls on, existing difficulties in Revelation, may give way to the investigations which may yet be made. This has actually occurred in time past. We should

then, on the whole, very modestly urge objections, and very cautiously permit them to influence our minds.

2. That while the existence of difficulties is acknowledged, yet there is such an *appearance* of truth in Christianity, and all the objections are counterbalanced by such strong evidences in its favor, we ought rather to suspect such difficulties are removable, than the contrary, and be urged to diligence in prosecuting our inquiries. True or false, Christianity must possess some inherent vitality. It has survived the rise and fall of numberless other systems, as well as numberless disasters, affecting itself. That appearance of truth has secured for it the suffrages of some of the acutest minds, the most profound reasoners, and the most splendid geniuses of the world. A system claiming as adherents, such men as Milton and Bacon, Locke and Newton, Pascal and Leibnitz, Chalmers and Edwards, and still sustained by the best men, other than its professed advocates, ought, were no objections to its matter capable of clear resolution, to obtain our favorable regard. And since all leading objections of this class are confutable, it is but little to ask, that we give it a fair, full, and impartial hearing.

3. Sound religious knowledge should be carefully imparted to the young. Infidelity is doubtless often more of the heart than of the head. After all the evidences have been accumulated and all objections confuted, still the greatest of all difficulties remains. It lies back of reason. Christianity is the foe of sin, which the heart is loving. The natural heart opposes it. But if the mind be uninformed, darkened by error and blinded by prejudice, the avenues to the heart are closed. Let these be kept open by a sound and thorough exhibition of the truth of the gospel scheme, and then may we hope successfully to approach the heart, and by the word of God and the Spirit of his power, subdue its opposition, resist its proclivity to evil, and renew its nature. We do not decry any kind of learning. But however enlightened on other subjects, he knows nothing commensurate with the responsibilities or destinies of man, who is not wise to salvation. The wisdom which is here taught, is alone permanent, pure, and eternally productive. The "fear of the Lord" is its beginning; to know Him, love him, and see him as he is, its glorious consummation.

4. Let the blessed results of Christian faith evinced in the lives and deaths of its true professors, be contrasted with the unfruitful works of that darkness which is unrelieved by a ray from

heaven. Let the generous and expansive love, the zealous and untiring benevolent labors, and the self-denying and devoted faithfulness of the Christian be compared with the selfish and contracted tempers, the fierce and vindictive passions, and the degrading sensuality or deceitful dealings of the best of heathen. Above all, let the peace, security, and triumph, of the feeblest of the feeblest sex in the feeblest hours of human frailty, under the appalling approaches of man's most terrible enemy, be set against the dim uncertainies, the gloomy forebodings and often, fearful premonitions of despair, which have signalized the dying hours of the caviller and skeptic, and with all objections to his faith, reason compels the exclamation, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

The Ethnological Objection :
THE UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

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THERE are few more striking scenes in ancient history than the appearance of Paul on Mars Hill, before an audience of Athenians. As a mere spectacle, and irrespective of any interest attaching to it deeper than an incident in the past, it is impressive, and indeed sublime. Before him stretched one of the most magnificent landscapes on which the sun has ever shone. At his feet lay the city of Pericles and Phidias, a gem of loveliness, on which art had lavished the perfection of her most exquisite development, and which nature had set in the glittering beauty of forest, river, and sea, shading off its distant bordering with the more rugged grandeur of Pentelicus and Hymettus. Around him gathered the sneering Epicurean, the stern Stoic, the phlegmatic Academician, the cunning priest, the mercurial citizen, jealous of the glory of his peerless metropolis, and the motley rabble who thronged to the Areopagus, eager to hear anything new, and ready to break out into the fiercest rage, if that novelty should prove unpalatable to their whims, their prejudices, or their passions. Confronting that restless, excitable, and glaring crowd, stood a solitary individual, not heralded by national glory or personal fame, an unknown, unfriended man, from an obscure and despised nation, who came to fling down the gauntlet to superstitions venerable with an undated antiquity, gorgeous with all that art could create in the very home of her most exquisite perfection, and fortified, at once, by the passions of the many and the interests of the few; a man, who came to do more than Socrates had ever dared or Plato had ever done; who came to tell the Athenians that they were ignorant on the very subject where they considered themselves specially intelligent, and mistaken on the very points where they were most haughtily confident; and who came to demand their renunciation of the sublime teachings of their renowned schools, and their entire submission to the teachings of an unknown and crucified Jew. There is something in the intrepid heroism of such a position that makes it one of the most striking scenes in ancient history.

But it has elements of deeper interest than this. It was the Christianity of the East confronting the philosophy and civilization of the West; the reason of man encountering the revelation of God; the opening passage at arms of that great contest between science, falsely so called, and the truth as it is in Jesus; a contest which has been continually renewed from that day to this, with each new phase of a godless and faithless rationalism. How suggestive and instructive was the encounter! On the one side we see a quiet and unpretending, but fearless and trusting spirit, too confident of its strength to lose its calm heroism, and too conscious of its weakness to forget its lowly humility, with no parade of learning and no display of power; on the other side, a proud, sneering, and conceited spirit inflated with a confidence in its own powers, and despising the presumptuous babbler who had never traversed the shades of the Academy or learned the language of the Porch. Yet when eighteen hundred years have passed, the subtleties and logomachies of the Epicurean and the Stoic are forgotten, whilst the loftiest minds and the purest hearts of the race are bending with admiring reverence over the pages of this babbler of the Areopagus. The philosophies of Zeno and Epicurus, Plato and Aristotle, have been thrown aside as antiquated and obsolete, whilst the Christianity of Paul, to the last letter of its teaching is, this day, sustaining the faith and brightening the hope of millions.

It becomes therefore a matter of instructive interest to examine what were the doctrines deemed essential to be maintained by Paul in this encounter. Occupying a position of such extreme delicacy and danger, he would peril neither his cause nor his person by the gratuitous assertion of doubtful or irrelevant propositions. Before an audience of Athenians and philosophers, whom his whole discourse shows he was anxious to conciliate and convert, he would adduce nothing but the most essential and fundamental truths pertaining to Christianity, truths so vital as to require him to stake his cause on their successful defence. What then are these doctrines? He was speaking to a nation of polytheists, a people who had tenanted every rock and river, every mountain and plain with their innumerable deities, and who, in the thronging multitudes of their gods and demigods, demons and heroes, had lost sight of the one great unseen, unchangeable, but to them, unknown Jehovah. Hence with an elegance of exordium, whose tact, beauty, and courtesy, are almost unequalled in

the history of ancient eloquence, he assails the fundamental position of polytheism, and asserts the existence, the attributes, the sovereignty and the claims of the one, great God.

But he was also addressing a people who regarded themselves as *αἰοζῳοὶ*, sprung from the sacred soil of Attica, underived and independent of all other families of mankind. But in direct contradiction to a theory suggested by their pride, and cherished by their philosophy, Pauls deems it essential to Christianity to assert that the unity of the divine involved the unity of the human, that the oneness of the source from which the race of man came forth, found its proper counterpart in the oneness of that race itself, and that the ethnological distribution of that race was not a matter of random chance, but of specific divine appointment and direction. "God that made the world and all things therein hath made of *one blood* all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." Acts xvii. 26. Here then in the very first encounter of Christianity with human philosophy, its great expounder asserts as essential doctrines in its teachings, that all men have been derived from a single source, having a unity of blood-relationship, which implies a unity of origin; and that the geographical distribution of the various nations or families of men, and the epochs of their history, are not matters of chance, or undirected general law, but of specific divine appointment.

The mere fact that a man of such consummate tact and courtesy as Paul, deemed it necessary to assert the unity of the human race among a people who held its diversity by claiming for themselves a separate origin on the soil, is a proof that he regarded it as essential to Christianity. The studied adaptation of his discourse to Athenian customs and forms of thought proves, that if this doctrine so offensive to the pride of that jealous and scornful people, could have been suppressed or explained away, it would have been done, that no unnecessary obstacle might be thrown in their way to the reception of Christianity. But side by side with the unity of the divine nature does he place the unity of the human race as a truth correlative, supplementary, and equally essential to the Christian system.

The reason of this juxtaposition and of the stress laid on this doctrine, is involved in the subsequent parts of his discourse. He there glances at the dealings of God with the human race in the

past, present and future, showing in those dealings the unity of a mighty purpose that binds all the race in one common destiny to its one common God, the twofold aspects of which destiny in their terrible contrasts of weal and of woe, shall be unfolded in the dread scenes of a common resurrection and a common judgment. But his epistles explain more fully the earnestness and prominence bestowed on this doctrine. The theory of sin and redemption which Paul believed to underlie the entire system of Christianity, reposes in its last analysis on the unity of the human race.

This is distinctly and emphatically asserted in the fifth chapter of Romans, where the parallel is run at length between the fall of the race in Adam and its redemption in Christ. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men." "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 12, 19. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." "The first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 47. As Adam is the natural head of all that sin, and all that die, so Christ is the spiritual head of all that are saved from the guilt of that sin, and the sting of that death. The universal headship of the one finds its proper and only counterpart in the universal headship of the other. The salvation in Christ runs parallel with the depravity that is traced to Adam, and if we cut off any portion of the human race from its connection with Adam, we thereby cut it off from its connection with Christ, and all the hopes that are garnered up in his atoning work. If we close to any nation on earth the pathway that leads to Eden, all stained though it be with blood, and all blistered though it be with tears, we by that act close to them the more precious pathway that leads to Calvary, and deny them the boon of those gushing streams that come forth from the cross to wash away the dark and sorrowful traces of sin that lie all along the highway of human history. This question, therefore, is not one of mere idle speculation, but one whose relations are entwined with all that is most precious and vital to Christianity.

The effort to evade the force of these considerations by affirming that the Bible speaks only of the historic races, is one that demands little attention, until it is shown that the non-historic races neither sin, nor die, nor have any capacity of sharing salva-

tion in Christ. If depravity and death are the peculiar heritage of the superior races, and a title to heaven a thing dependent on the hue of the cuticle and the texture of the hair, then we may assert the original diversity of the race, without impeaching the Bible. But if in Adam all sin and die who do sin and die, and in Christ all are made alive who are made alive, then this evasion of the manifest teachings of the Bible is to stultify Moses and to falsify Paul. That Moses must have known of the existence of the colored races, is evident from the pictures on the tombs in Egypt, dating back, it is alleged, beyond his period, and distinctly portraying these races as we find them now. Yet he tells us that Adam was the first man created; that Eve was the mother of all living; that the Ethiopic and Egyptian races were descended from Noah through Cush and Mizraim; and that the divided nations of the earth are the sons of Adam. And that the physical characteristics of the Cushite or Ethiopian were what they are now, is proven by the aphorism alluding to his skin. The same doctrine is endorsed by our Lord when he enforces monogamy by the original unity of the race in Adam and Eve, and when to fulfil the prophecies concerning Ethiopia, the distant nations, and the isles of the sea, he commanded his disciples to go forth into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*. And we cannot think it wholly devoid of significance that the man who was chosen to aid our Lord in bearing his cross to the bloody hill was Simon of Cyrene, an African; and that one of the earliest converts to Christianity was an eunuch of the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia.

Hence the right of these non-historic races to the salvation of Christ has been clearly recognized by Christ and his apostles, and this recognition brings after it the implication that they are descended from Adam, by the express teaching of Paul. We challenge the right to offer the salvation that is in Christ to any creature not descended from Adam, any more than to brutes on the one hand and devils on the other. It is restricted by Paul to the sons of Adam, so that whoever proves himself a son of Adam, thereby proves his right to this salvation; and *vice versa*, whoever proves by the fact that he is saved, that he has a right to this salvation, thereby proves his descent from Adam. The doctrine, therefore, of the unity of the human race is one that is essential to Christianity as Paul taught it, and hence vital to the divine origin of the Bible.

But we are told by some who call themselves ethnologists, that science has exploded this dogma, and shown that this descent of all men from Adam is impossible, and hence that we must abandon this ground, if not abandon Christianity itself. Now if it be true that the unity of the race is demonstrated to be an impossibility, we must acknowledge ourselves to be in a perplexity at least, if not an inextricable difficulty. But the wonder arises how this infant science, which has scarcely left its leading strings should be able so soon to pronounce with such dogmatic certainty on the possibilities and impossibilities of five or six thousand years ago. The very word impossibility is falling out of the vocabulary of science, since the alleged impossibilities of one year are becoming the tritest actualities of the next. When, therefore, we find this beardless science, in any of its advocates, pronouncing so dogmatically on this high and solemn question, we are ready to infer that it has not only the bold confidence of youth, but also some of its rash presumption. This inference is strengthened by the fact that so many of the first scholars of the world, who have been studying these topics for years, have been unable to perceive this impossibility, and continue to maintain this exploded doctrine. Were the question to be decided by the authority of great names, we would be perfectly contented to place the two classes in juxtaposition, and allow the decision to fall where the lustre of scientific fame is brightest and broadest. But as this could decide nothing absolutely, we are willing to come to closer quarters, and grapple with the ethnological objection directly, and we meet the averment that the specific and original unity of the human race is impossible with a flat and emphatic denial.

We wish our position here to be distinctly understood. We believe that the question of the exact origin of the different varieties of the human race is one of history rather than of physical science. Hence the real and decisive points on which it rests are first: Has the Bible definitely pronounced on this subject? and, secondly, Is the Bible inspired of God, and therefore a reliable history of facts? Both these points we believe to have been clearly proved, and hence the whole weight of the Christian evidences must be set aside before the unity of the race can be demonstrated to be untrue. It is however alleged as an objection to these evidences that science has shown this unity to be impossible. All therefore that we are bound by the laws of disputation to do, is to make out a simple case of possibility, and the whole weight of the

Bible as a positive testimony on the point remains unimpaired. We are not bound to show how the varieties of the race have actually arisen, or what are the causes now or formerly at work to generate them; for this is the proper province of science, and not of theology. If however we should be able to show by admitted facts and principles of science that it is not only possible but probable that the varieties of the race have had a common origin, in a single pair, we pass beyond the absolute necessities of our position of defence, and construct an independent argument in favor of the scriptural record, the value of which will be in precise proportion to the strength of the probability we may be able to establish. With this explanation of the exact position we occupy, we are willing to meet the ethnological objection on its own chosen ground, as a matter of simple science.

As man possesses a physical constitution precisely analogous to that of the lower animals, it is perfectly fair for us to argue from the laws and capabilities of the one, to the laws and capabilities of the other. If then we shall find on examining the lower tribes that they have a tendency to assume the same diversities of appearance that we see in the different families of man, in cases where they are known to have had the same original parentage; if we find a test of common origin always co-existing with these diversities also existing in the different varieties of men; if we find constant and variable causes producing the changes in the lower tribes of the same origin, which we see in the races of men, we will of course not be at liberty to infer that as to the one, which we know would be untrue as to the other. We propose then to show by an induction of particulars, from the most recent and authentic sources, that there is nothing in the diversities of physical feature appearing among men, which the law of variation, as it is found to exist in other departments of animal life, as well as in the natural history of man, does not permit to consist with origin from a single and common source; and hence nothing in these diversities which renders it impossible for all the families of man to have descended from a single original pair, according to the teachings of the Bible.

When we take up this question as one of Natural History, it amounts simply to this: Are the diversities appearing among men, as to their physical or intellectual peculiarities such as to prove that they are different species, having different origins, or only such as to prove that they are different varieties of the same species, having the same origin?

The word species is often loosely used to mean any class of individuals possessing characteristics in common. In zoology, however, it has a fixed and definite sense. This sense is not an arbitrary invention in the nomenclature of science, but a permanent fact ordained in the very constitution of organic life. A species is simply a tribe of living things descended originally from the same common parentage. The fact that puts them in the same species, is, descent from the same original stock. Now, as this fact cannot always be ascertained historically, Nature (by which term in this discourse we always mean the God of Nature) has left a mark by which this can always be ascertained. This mark is the power of permanent reproduction. Like always produces like, and not unlike. That, therefore, which proves the descent of the offspring from the parentage, is the power of producing and perpetuating an offspring in all essential respects similar to that parentage.

That this is not a position assumed for the sake of maintaining our argument might be shown at any length by reference to acknowledged authorities in science. Two of the latest and highest in the departments bearing on this question will suffice. Dr. Latham, President of the Ethnological Society of London, and confessedly one of the first Ethnologists of the age, in his book on the Natural History of the Varieties of Man, just issued, sums up the principles and facts of this science in a series of aphorisms, three of which we will quote. "XXII. A protoplast is an organized individual capable (either singly or as one of a pair) of propagating individuals, itself having been propagated by no such individual or pair." XXVI. "A species is a class of individuals, each of which is hypothetically considered to be the descendant of the same protoplast, or of the same pair of protoplasts." XXVII. "A multiplicity of protoplasts for a single species is a contradiction in terms. If two or more such individuals (or pairs), as like as the two Dromios, were the several protoplasts to several classes of organized beings (the present members being as like each other as their ancestors were) the phenomenon would be, the existence in Nature of more than one undistinguishable species, not the existence of more than one protoplast to a single species." Pp. 563-4. London, 1851.

Sir C. Lyell in his *Elements of Geology* has presented the same views drawn from his department of science. In the thirty-seventh chapter of this work he sums up the conclusions which

he regards as established by geology on this question, the sixth of which is as follows: "From these considerations it appears that species have a real existence in nature, and that each was endowed, at the time of its creation, with the attributes and organization by which it is now distinguished." Seventh Edition, p. 585. His other conclusions are in precise accordance with those which we shall now present in regard to species and varieties.

There are two great facts that characterize the actions of nature in regard to the different families of living things: the one is the great flexibility and adaptability of the law of resemblance within certain limits; the other is, the rigid, inflexible permanence of that law beyond these limits. The final causes of these facts or laws will be obvious on a moment's reflection.

The first law is essential to the very existence and advancement of human society. The earth contains many varieties of climate, soil, and surface, and the precise physical constitution adapted to one place would be very unsuitable to another. Hence, either the more useful races of animals and plants must be confined to their original locality; or a new creation must take place whenever a new country is to be settled; or there must be in organic life a power of adaptation by which it shall conform to the new circumstances in which the possessors of it may be placed. The necessities of man, however, demand that certain animals and plants should be domesticated, and trained to the various uses for which they may be needed, and that they be capable of transportation with him in his various migrations. Now, if the peculiarities of each species were unchangeable, domesticity and migration would be impossible. The dog, the horse, the sheep, and the hog, must remain in their original wildness, and the many useful varieties of these important races be unknown. The plants, fruits, and grains, must be confined to the countries to which they were indigenous, and be incapable of improvement by cultivation. The incentives and rewards of human industry and skill, arising from the wonderful improvements that may be made by cultivation, and acting so powerfully upon the civilization and advancement of the world, would be wholly wanting. Therefore, to accomplish the obvious purposes of God in peopling the earth, there must be this *nisus formativus* in organic life, by which the various tribes of living things may be adapted to the circumstances of their position and the wants

of man, and by which a stimulus may be given to the active and inventive faculties of social and civilized life. It is this fact, or tendency in organic life, which gives rise to those endless varieties of different species which we find everywhere existing, especially in the more settled and advanced states of society.

But the second law is equally important. If this capability of variation were unlimited, the peculiarities of each species must at last be wholly obliterated. If the different species could amalgamate without limit, and produce new species partaking of the characteristics of both races thus commingled, in process of time the existing species must become hopelessly confounded, the peculiarities that fit them for their various positions in the scale of living things be lost, and the earth become a scene of organic confusion. Indeed, had this law not been always in existence, the various species of domestic animals, at least, would long since have disappeared and become completely blended into some strange and nondescript monstrosity, as wild as a sick man's dream. To prevent such a calamity nature has set up an impassable barrier between the different species, so as to prevent their permanent intermixture. It is this fact that establishes the conditions of hybridity. A hybrid individual may be produced between two different species but never a hybrid species, for the hybrid is barren, and cannot perpetuate its kind. And although, in two or perhaps three cases (those of the buffalo and cow, the China and common goose, and some species of ducks), where the species are nearly related, the power of reproduction exists in the hybrid, it is so feeble as not to extend beyond the second or third generation. The race becomes extinct, and hence the hybrid is incapable of establishing a new species. Recent anatomical investigations show that an actual barrier is produced in the hybrid making the power of propagation impossible. And universal observation shows that there is between different species an invincible repugnance to union, so that death is often the result of attempts to bring them together. No new species then can be produced by art or accident, for the attempt to produce it will always end in barrenness. The law of organic life is, that each creature shall propagate its own kind and not any other. It is also a significant indication of the strength of this law, that mules, or hybrid plants and animals, very rarely occur in a wild state. They are usually the result of domesticity or specific culture, in which the action of nature is forced by man, and in such

cases her displeasure is evinced by the sterility of the unnatural product. Were it necessary, we could give a page of hybrids between different species, which, in spite of every effort to the contrary, have been found absolutely sterile. The fact, then, that hybrid individuals are barren, and hence, that hybrid species or races can never be formed, furnishes us with a clear and certain criterion of species and varieties. If we find the power of permanent reproduction existing between any two classes, we know that they are only varieties, and belong to the same species. If they belong to the same species we infer that they had the same origin, for we have seen that the production of a new species is impossible.

The application of these views to the question before us is obvious. We know that the different races of men freely and permanently amalgamate. This phenomenon has frequently been seen, and new races possessing the power of permanent reproduction have frequently been formed, and are now in actual process of formation. The fertility of the mixed races of men, therefore, proves them to belong to the same species; and, unless man be an exception to all other races of living things, or unless there is specific historical testimony to establish the contrary, proves that these races have had a common and a single origin.

The most strenuous attack that has ever been made on this long-established doctrine of natural history, has been by Dr. Morton of Philadelphia. In an essay on the hybridity of animals in its relation to the unity of the human races, he affirms that hybrid races, with the power of permanent reproduction, are capable of being formed; and hence that this is not the criterion to determine separate species. He brings together an imposing array of alleged facts to sustain this position. But this array has not imposed on Dr. Bachman, however it may have on Dr. Morton. With a far wider knowledge of both the science and the literature of the subject than even his learned and we may now add, his lamented opponent, Dr. Bachman has taken up these facts *seriatim*, and shown with the clearness of demonstration, that some of his statements are not authentic; that others are disproved by positive countervailing testimony; that others are so vague and indefinite as to establish nothing with certainty; that others prove the very position which he attacks; and that in no case has it been proven that a hybrid race or species has been produced or perpetuated. This is done with a searching thorough-

ness and minuteness of refutation that leaves literally no ground for the theory to rest upon, and establishes the sterility of hybrids and the impossibility of hybrid races beyond all successful contradiction.

The views that Professor Agassiz has recently thrown out, are only in partial conflict with this general doctrine, and hence need not be examined in this immediate connection.

Here then we might rest the argument for the unity of the races, as an established point of natural history, and demand proof that man was an exception to the rest of the animated creation. But we are willing to waive this advantage, and investigate those difficulties that lie in our path, which however do not press peculiarly on our position.

The great difficulty in the way of admitting the unity of the human race, is the number and marked character of the existing varieties. It is alleged that these varieties are so broad, so permanent, and so ancient, that we are forced to the conclusion that the different families had different origins. Let us then examine the law of varieties as it exists in the other forms of organic life, and ascertain whether it leads us to this conclusion. If we find that no such widely-marked and permanent varieties appear in them, this difficulty will be formidable to the theory of unity. But if we find in tribes that are known to belong to the same species and to have had the same origin, varieties appearing as broadly marked, and as indelible as those of the human race—varieties which when once produced put on the permanence of species in their characteristics,—then it will follow that the existence of similar varieties, similarly marked, in the human race, can be no valid proof of either diversity of species or diversity of origin.

We have already remarked that it is a law of Nature that varieties be produced within the same species, and that to this beneficent law we owe much of the comfort and improvement of our race. These varieties are sometimes accidental, originating without any known cause. A striking instance of this law of accidental origin is found in the otter breed of sheep. In 1791 one ewe, on the farm of Seth Wright, in Massachusetts, gave birth to a male lamb, which, without any known cause, had a longer body and shorter legs than the rest of the breed, with the fore-legs crooked. This peculiar form rendering it unable to leap fences, it was resolved if possible to propagate this accidental variety. This was accordingly done, and the breed received its name

from the resemblance of its bodily form to that of the otter. A race of swine with solid hoofs arose in Hungary, in the same way, and recently the same singular variety has made its appearance along the banks of the Red river in our own country, without any assignable cause.

But varieties are more frequently formed from causes acting uniformly and regularly, such as climate, food, habit of life, etc., in the states of wildness and domesticity. Whilst we are unable to say what the precise mode of action is, the general fact is clear, that where animals are subjected to any new circumstances such as these, there is an instant effort in Nature to accommodate herself to these circumstances, and if there is sufficient constitutional energy to endure this struggle, the result is a change in the physical peculiarities which are adapted to the change in the outward circumstances. This is the great law of compensation that runs through all organic life, and is one of the most mysterious and beautiful in the economy of Nature. It is the great analogue to the adaptive susceptibilities of the social world, which illustrates the wonderful correspondences that we find running through all the manifestations of that dread and glorious mystery—LIFE.

It is difficult to trace our domestic animals to their original stocks, owing to the remoteness of the period of their subjugation by man. The original types, in many cases, seem to have disappeared, the necessity for their continued existence no longer remaining. The oxen, horses, goats, etc. which we now find wild, are more frequently derivations from the domesticated varieties, than types from which those varieties were originally derived. But the transition from domesticity to wildness furnishes us with a standard by which to judge of the changes effected in the contrary transition; and although it is doubtful whether the original type is ever entirely restored in such cases, yet we have, at least, an illustration of the law of variations, and the tendency in organic life to put on new characteristics when subjected to new influences.

Happily for our purpose we have a series of authentic experiments, made on a scale sufficiently extended to afford us the finest possible illustration of this great law. The Spaniards, when they discovered this country, found none of the domestic animals existing here which were used in Europe. They were accordingly introduced, and escaping and straying from their owners, they have run wild in our vast forests for several centuries. The result has

been the obliteration of the characteristics of the domesticated animals, and a reappearance of some of the typical marks of the wild state; and a generation of new and striking characteristics in accommodation to these new circumstances.

The wild hog of our forests bears a striking likeness to the wild boar of the old world. The hog of the high mountains of Paramos resembles the wild boar of France. Instead of being covered with bristles, however, as the domestic breed from which they sprang, they have a thick fur, often crisp, and sometimes an under-coat of wool. Instead of being generally white or spotted, they are uniformly black, except in some warmer regions, where they are red, like the young pecari. The anatomical structure has changed, adapting itself to the new habits of the animal, in an elongation of the snout, a vaulting of the forehead, a lengthening of the hind legs, and in the case of those left on the island of Cubagua, a monstrous elongation of the toes to half a span.

The ox has undergone the same changes. In some of the provinces of South America a variety has been produced called "pelones," having a very rare and fine fur. In other provinces a variety is produced with an entirely naked skin, like the dog of Mexico or of Guinea. In Colombia, owing to the immense size of farms and other causes, the practice of milking was laid aside, and the result has been that the secretion of milk in the cows is, like the same function in other animals of this class, only an occasional phenomenon, and confined strictly to the period of suckling the calf. As soon as the calf is removed, the milk ceases to flow, as in the case of other mammals.

The same changes have taken place in other animals. The wild dog of the Pampas never barks as the domestic animal does, but howls like the wolf; whilst the wild-cat has in like manner lost the habit of caterwauling. The wild horse of the higher plains of South America becomes covered with a long, shaggy fur, and is of an uniform chestnut-color. The sheep of the Central Cordilleras, if not shorn, produces a thick, matted, woolly fleece, which gradually breaks off in shaggy tufts, and leaves underneath a short, fine hair, shining and smooth, like that of the goat, and the wool never reappears. The goat has lost her large teats, and produces two or three kids annually. The same changes have been produced in geese and gallinaceous fowls. A variety has sprung up, called rumpless fowls, which want from one to six of the caudal vertebræ.

The same varieties have sprung up in other parts of the world. The fat-tailed sheep of Tartary loses its posterior mass of fat, when removed to the Steppes of Siberia, whose scant and bitter herbage is less favorable to the secretion of adipose matter. The African sheep has become large like a goat, and exchanged its wool for hair. The Wallachian sheep has put on large, perpendicular, spiral horns, and in like manner become clothed with hair. Some also have four, and even six horns. The wild horses of eastern Siberia have the same anatomical differences from the tame ones that we noticed in the case of the swine; and culture, climate, and other causes, have produced the widest varieties—from the little, shaggy pony of the Shetlands, that scrambles up the Highland crags like a goat, to the gigantic steed of Flanders, or the Conestoga of Pennsylvania, which will sometimes drag a load of four tons on the level ground. Whether the dog and the wolf are of the same species, is a question about which there is some difference of opinion among naturalists; but there is a very general agreement that all varieties of the dog must be referred to one species. Between these there is the widest difference—from the gigantic St. Bernard that will carry a frozen traveller to the convent, the shaggy Newfoundland with his webbed feet and his aquatic habits, and the scentless and almost tongueless greyhound; to the little lap-dog that nestles in a lady's arms, the nosing foxhound whose scent is almost a miracle, the ratting terrier, and the naked Mexican dog that has an additional toe. The cow presents the most diverse varieties—from the little Surat ox, not larger than a dog, to the humped and long-eared Brahmin cow, and the gigantic prize ox that will weigh two tons. The domesticated fowls and pigeons have assumed varieties enough to fill a page, some of them of the most diverse character, varying from the largest size to the most dwarfish, and possessing every peculiarity compatible with the preservation of the species, in the feathers, the form, the wattles, and the psychological traits and habits.

From this brief summary of facts, which might be indefinitely extended, we may infer the law of variation in animal life, as to its extent. Within the limits of the preservation of the type of the species, the widest variations may occur in anatomical structure; in external properties, in the color of the skin, in the color and texture of the hair, in the features, and in the psychological habits; and these peculiarities once produced may pass into permanent

varieties, which shall assume all the indelibility of species. And this remarkable fact may be observed, that the nearer the animal approaches to man in its associations and habits, the wider the range of variation. The dog, who is man's companion and imitator, more nearly than any other animal,—who hunts with him in the forest, watches with him over the flock, lies down by his fireside, and shares his food,—has, perhaps the widest range of variety. So the roots and grains that are most used by man have the most varieties. The potato has more than one hundred varieties; and Dr. Bachman relates that he saw at one warehouse, more than one hundred kinds of wheat. The fact then stands broadly out, that the widest varieties may occur among animals that are known to belong to the same species. Hence, when we come to man himself, and find varieties existing that are widely different from each other, we see in the range and extent of these varieties nothing which this law of variation in the lower tribes declares to be at variance with the position that these races all belong to the same species and possess the same origin.

But the law of variation we find as clearly marked in its permanence, as we have found it in its extent. The general fact is, that varieties, when once formed, never return to their original type, if left to themselves. They may be changed into new varieties, by being subjected to new circumstances; but if left alone, they will perpetuate their own characteristics, and not those from which they have departed. The motto of nature is *nulla vestigia retrorsum*. The stream never flows backward to the fountain. The variety may have been produced by accident; but once produced, it puts on the unyielding tenacity of a species. It may pass into a new variety, but this will rarely if ever be the exact type of the original species. Some varieties of the dog have been in existence for centuries, and their precise origin is lost in the past. These varieties have necessarily assumed all the tenacious permanence of species, to have maintained for so many years a distinct existence. The final cause of the permanence of varieties is identical with that of the permanence of species. The same beneficent reasons which demand that the valuable properties of a species should not be lost by the extinction or amalgamation of that species, also require that, when a variety has been called forth by peculiar circumstances, that variety should be permanent.

If, therefore, we find that the varieties of the human race remain permanent, although the climatic or other influences under which

we find them may be changed; if we find that the black, red, and white races continue to propagate their peculiarities, although their original geographical positions should be exchanged, we find in this fact nothing which is at variance with the law of varieties, as we have just found it to exist in the lower tribes.

Having thus learned the law of variation, within the limit of species, as to the lower families of animated nature, we turn to the varieties of the human race, and inquire whether there is anything in them, as to their extent or permanence, inconsistent with unity of origin and unity of species.

When we come to examine these varieties in detail, we find them to be neither so many, nor so great, as we find them in other animals confessedly of the same species, and of the same parentage. The difference between the fairest Caucasian and the sootiest African, is not nearly so great as that between the little, shaggy, Shetland pony, and the gigantic dray-horse of London; or between the soft and silky lap-dog, and the majestic St. Bernard. The differences we have already noted between the oxen, hogs, horses and goats that run wild in our forests, and the breeds from which they are known to have sprung, are far greater than we find between any two races of men on earth.

It is by means of the number, importance, and permanence of the resemblance between individuals; and, also, by the fact of their capability to unite and produce fertile progeny, that we are enabled to class them in the same species. This is the rule adopted as to all other departments of natural history, and hence the rule that should govern us here. Now, when we examine the various races of men, we find that they agree among themselves and differ from all other animals in many marked characteristics. They resemble each other in the number, the length, the position, the growth, and the shedding of the teeth; in the shortness of the lower jaw, and the obliteration, at a very early period of embryonic existence, of all trace of the original separation between the maxillary and intermaxillary bones; in the number of bones in the skeleton; in an erect stature; in the articulation of the head with the spinal column by the middle of its basis; in the possession of two hands, and they of the most exquisite mechanism; in a smooth skin, and the head covered with hair; in the number and arrangement of the muscles, the digestive and other organs; in the great development of the cerebral hemispheres, and the size of the brain compared with the nerves connected with it; in the organs of

speech, and the power of singing and laughing; in being omnivorous and using cooked food, and therefore fire; in the capability of inhabiting all climates; in a long infancy, slow growth, and late puberty; in a peculiar structure of the physical constitution of the female, in the incurvation of the *sacrum* and *os coccygis*, and consequent forward direction of the organs connected with them; in the period of gestation; in the number of young at a birth; in the times and seasons of procreation; in liability to the same diseases, the same parasitical insects and worms; and above all, in the possession of mental, moral and religious faculties, which make them subjects of the government of God, and responsible to his law, as well as capable of organized society, and the various phenomena of civilization. Now if these momentous resemblances and peculiarities do not classify the human races into one species, how can a case of species ever be made out? If all these essential resemblances, together with the capability of blending the different races and producing fertile varieties, do not prove unity of species, and, therefore, by the admitted rules of natural history, unity of origin, what conceivable facts could establish it?

But if the varieties of the human race were much more widely marked than we see them, there would be in this no insuperable objection to their original and specific unity. The same general reasons that require varieties to exist in organic life at all, demand a wider margin for them in man than in any other animal. His range of being is wider; his circumstances and necessities more varied and numerous; his destinies higher in the event of obedience, and lower in the event of disobedience, to the laws under which he is placed; his capabilities of self-culture are more expansive, that a stronger stimulus might be applied to his active powers, and hence, as a correlative fact, his liability to degeneracy, if that culture be neglected, is proportionally wide in its range; and his entire position as the responsible head of the creation demands a broader scope for change to the better, and hence by possibility to the worse, than any other animal on earth. We would therefore naturally expect a wider variation in all those characteristics that are affected by the outward circumstances in which he is placed. He inhabits every climate—from the frozen snows of the Arctics, where the reindeer perishes with cold, to the burning sands of Sahara, and the steaming jungles of the Carnatic. He subsists on every species of food—from the dripping blubber and train-oil of the Esquimaux, to the cooling fruits and simple cereals of the naked

dweller in the tropics. He adopts every mode of life—from that of the lean and hungry hunter who scours the forest and plain for his daily food, or the wandering herdsman who tends his vast flocks by day and by night on the boundless Steppe and beneath the silent stars that looked down on the Chaldean shepherds, to the peaceful tiller of the soil, the moiling artisan of the shop, and the luxurious inmate of the princely mansion. He is subjected to the extremes of civilization and barbarism—influences the most potent, as facts before our eyes demonstrate, where a few families are left for a generation or two in ignorance, isolation and poverty; and influences which cannot to any very great extent be brought to bear on the lower tribes. If then we should find the varieties of the human races broader and more indelible than those of other animals, we would find nothing, in this fact, which the causes just alluded to would not have led us to anticipate. That we do not find them much wider than they really are, is the result of that principle of resistance to external agencies with which, for obvious reasons, man as a cosmopolite has been endowed, a principle which whilst it resists the tendency to assume changes, gives a corresponding permanence to changes that are assumed, whatever be the cause of that assumption.

But, great as these influences are, we are by no means certain that yet greater may not have existed in a former age of our world's history. That the climate of different portions of the earth's surface is not now what it once was, is rendered almost certain by some of the earth's geological records. And that some of these changes of climate have taken place since the creation of man, is also a fact of high probability. Whatever was the extent of the Noachic deluge, the physical conditions that affect the human race must have been seriously modified by it. The longevity of the antediluvians, and other facts testified both by Scripture and tradition, would seem to indicate that some change occurred either in the physical constitution of the race, or the outward conditions affecting it, at that time. And although we do not believe that the human race was created in a state of infantile imperfection in any respect, or that the pliancy of individual infancy can be predicated of the early stages of the human race, yet there may have been a quicker susceptibility in forming varieties, and a stronger tenacity in retaining them then, than we find in after periods of its history. When a colony of men are separated from a parent stock, and lay the foundations of a nation, there is a stronger

tendency to assume distinctive features, growing out of their new circumstances than we find at a later period of their existence. National peculiarities, both physical and intellectual, may then be acquired in a few years which will continue for many generations. Hence, if in the early and forming stages of the human race, we should suppose a similar tendency to assume distinctive characteristics, stronger than we find at a later period, because the circumstances were necessarily different, there is nothing in this which the soundest philosophy would contradict.

But it by no means follows that no more potent agency was at work in these early ages of our history, than those which now exist in our nature, and are called out by the circumstances which demand their action. Assuming the agency of Divine Providence in the destinies of nations, the same reasons that required a dispersion of men, and the confusion of their tongues at Babel, would also seem to require their separation by physical features as broad and indelible as the distinctions of language. If then there was even an extraordinary operation of divine agencies tending to produce diversity of physical features, as the Bible assures us there was to produce diversity of languages; if these original diversities were propagated and made permanent, by the isolation and restrictive intermarriage of the respective families thus separated; and if the general purposes of God, and destinies of the race, were to be advanced by nations separated in their features as well as their language, there is nothing unscriptural or unreasonable in the hypothesis that thus some of these widest diversities may have originated. Hence, if we should be unable to state historically the precise origin of all these varieties; if there should be no known causes operating at present to produce new races, more than to produce new languages; if existing causes should be clearly ascertained to be insufficient to account for the appearance of the different races of men so early as we find them noticed in history—there would be nothing in this state of facts to shake the doctrine of the original unity of these races. If we must assert an interposition of divine power, as our opponents contend, the rules of hypothesis require us not to assume a higher cause or interposition if a lower is sufficient to explain the effect. Now, if instead of admitting, as they assert, a creative interposition of God, calling these varieties into existence from nonentity, we simply assert a directive interposition, causing different families already in existence to assume certain peculiarities which should be permanent, our hypothesis, presenting

a lower, yet a sufficient cause, is obviously the more philosophical and reasonable. Hence, were it clearly proven (which it has not been), that existing causes, or natural causes once acting more powerfully than they do at present, could not explain these effects, then, on the supposition that our race is a fallen one, and that great problems of ontology are slowly evolving in its various families; and that, like the river that went out from Eden, this mighty stream of life, though originally one, has been separated into great heads, each of which has itself become a broad river, and gone forth to compass the earth—the position that this separation and division, like that of Babel, was caused by specific divine interpositions no longer needed and no longer exerted, is, of the two demanded, the more reasonable, philosophical, and Scriptural.

But whilst we believe this hypothesis to be a legitimate one in the discussion, should existing causes be demonstrated inadequate to account for the varieties, we need not take any special advantage of it. It has not been demonstrated that these causes are insufficient, but on the contrary many facts exist which tend to prove the opposite position. The law of variations, which we saw existing in the lower tribes, is found to exist in the human constitution, as clearly as in the other departments of animal life. Permanent causes are in constant operation, and accidental peculiarities arise, from both of which sources varieties appear whose characters are deep and permanent.

It is impossible for us, in the present state of our physiological knowledge, to explain the precise mode in which changes are produced in the physical constitution, by a change of geographical location. But the fact is, that there is in the constitution of man a tendency, such as we saw in that of the lower tribes, to put on certain changes of color, hair, form, etc., when removed from one climate and locality to another, or when subjected to any great change of social habits. Whether the external condition of these changes be the chemical solar rays; the altitude or depression of the general level; the difference of geological formations; the varying agencies of magnetism and electricity; atmospheric peculiarities; miasmatic exhalations from vegetable or mineral matter; difference of soils; proximity to the ocean; variety of food, habits of life and exposure—all of which perhaps at times come in play—or other causes yet more occult—there can be no question about the fact that such causes are at work. The general fact is, that when the other physical conditions are the same, tribes living

nearest the equator and level of the sea are marked with the darkest skin, and the crispest hair. Thus, we make a gradual ascent from the jetty negro of the line to the olive-colored Arab, the brown Moor, the swarthy Italian, the dusky Spaniard, the dark-skinned Frenchman, the ruddy Englishman, and the pallid Scandinavian. When we reach the Arctic regions we find a dark tint reappearing, owing probably to the intensity of the summer's sun, the exposure of the natives, and the blackening effect of the winter's smoke in their dim and greasy burrows. When the white races are transferred to a tropical climate, there is a gradual darkening of the complexion and crisping of the hair. There is not so immediate and perceptible a change in the removal of the dark races to a cooler climate, because this deposition of a coloring pigment in the *rete mucosum* is a positive peculiarity; and the law of varieties, as we have ascertained it, is, that these peculiarities once produced become tenacious and permanent, even though the original condition of their production should be changed. The white races are more immediately affected because their color is a negative peculiarity, and hence more readily affected by the action of positive agencies. Dough may readily be changed into bread by subjecting it to heat, but bread cannot so readily be changed into dough by reversing the process—yet no man would from this fact affirm that a lump of dough and a loaf of bread may not have had the same origin. But even on these races a bleaching effect is seen after the lapse of a considerable time. The negroes of this country, where the race has been unmixed, are undoubtedly lighter in color than their kinsmen in Africa. And the Gipsies, in spite of their exposure and nomade habits, have gradually assumed a lighter tint in the cooler parts of Europe. So in the opposite direction Bishop Heber declares that three centuries of residence in India have made the Portuguese nearly as black as the Caffres.

These agencies we find acting independently of any relations of race. Races that are known historically to have had the same origin, by exposure to these influences have assumed every shade of color, and the other peculiarities that are supposed to indicate a distinct origin in the different varieties. The children of Abraham are found of every hue, from the ruddy tints of the Polish and German, through the dusky hue of the Moorish and Syrian, to the jetty melanism of the black Jews of India. The American nations vary—from the fair tribes of the upper Orinoco, mentioned

by Humboldt, to the chocolate-colored Charruas, and the black races of California, mentioned by Dr. Morton. The great Arian race includes the Affghan, Kurd, Armenian, and Indo-European of the fairest complexion, and the Hindoo, whose skin rivals in jettness that of the negro. And the Hindoos themselves present every variety of complexion—from the fair-skinned Rajpoot, whose cheek is fanned by the cool breezes of the Himmalayas, to the swart coolies, and the coal-black fishermen, who swarm on the burning banks of the Hoogly. The Chinese Mongolians—compared among themselves, and also with the same race in adjacent countries—present the same results. The African races display the same varieties—from the red Fúlahs and the yellow Bushmen, to the genuine negro of Guinea, and the broad-faced Hottentot of the southern plains. Many of the Caffres are stated by Professor Lichtenstein to be as light-colored as the Portuguese. The Gallas, a large and powerful race that inhabit northeastern Africa, and the Haüran people of Central Soudan, have physical features resembling those of the negroes, whilst their language and history indicate a Shemitish origin. A tribe also of the Berber Tuaryk—that have long been isolated in the oasis Wadreag, an island of green, in the great African desert—have not only assumed the black hue which we find in many Arabs, but even the features and hair of the negro race. This has resulted, as the history of the tribe proves, not from any intermixture of races,—a result against which their haughty pride of blood were a sufficient guarantee,—but from the physical causes that glow and sweep over those oceans of burning sand. A similar fact is mentioned by Mr. Buckingham in regard to an Arab family of the Haüran, all of whom, except the father, had negro features and hair, although it was matter of proof that no negro blood had ever mingled with that of the family. Mr. B. referred it to that tropical sultriness that broods over the valley of the Jordan, giving the tribes of that region flatter features, darker skins, and coarser hair, than others of the same family.

If we are asked what it is in the climate that produces these peculiarities, we cannot tell, any more than we can tell what it is in the climate of Africa that has made the hog black, stripped the sheep of its wool and clothed it with black hair, caused the hog and dog to lose their hair and have nothing but a black, oily skin, and made the feathers and bones of a variety of the gallinaceous fowl to become black, whilst its skin and wattles are purple. We

know too little of the mysterious chemistry of the great laboratory of nature to say how these changes are wrought ; but the facts—that they are going on in the lower tribes before our eyes, and that they have occurred and are now occurring in tribes that are known to have had a foreign origin—prove that the existence of such diversities, where we are ignorant of their rise, cannot prove a diversity of origin in the races where they appear.

But aside from these general causes, which act uniformly and universally, there are particular agencies at work, whose action produces varieties of the most permanent kind. Prichard suggests that the races of men as to their physical characteristics, fall into three general types, found respectively in the savage and hunting tribes, the nomadic and pastoral races, and the nations that are subjected to the influences of civilization. The first have a form of skull called prognathous, indicated by a forward prolongation of the jaws, and other features ; the second, a pyramidal form of skull with a broad face ; and the third, an oval or elliptical skull. When a race passes from the one mode of life to the other, there is a corresponding change in its physical features. Thus the Turks, since their encampment on the Bosphorus, have exchanged the Tartar peculiarities for those of the Europeans ; and the negroes, during their residence in this country, have undergone a decided change of skull and physical conformation.

Other races are arising from intermixtures of existing ones. The Griquas in southern Africa have arisen from a union of the Dutch boors of the Cape with the aboriginal Hottentots, and are now a clearly-marked and permanent variety. The Cafusos in Brazil have sprung from a mixture of the native Indian race with the negroes. These varieties, though of such recent origin, have all the tenacity of other and older races. Even accidental features and malformations may be long transmitted in particular cases. A peculiar nose, mouth, or chin, will often pass through several generations of a family. A striking illustration of this is presented in the celebrated porcupine family of England, the members of which, for several generations, had their bodies covered with bony excrescences, like the quills of a porcupine, which were yearly shed, and yearly renewed. Although they intermarried with those who had no such peculiarity, yet so tenacious is nature of a property which has once appeared, that this singular kind of cuticle did not disappear for several generations. Mr. Poinsett also testifies to the existence of a spotted race of men in Mexico, a

whole regiment of whom he saw, that is known to have arisen from a mixture of Spanish and Indian blood.

Albinism is a further illustration of this law. It occurs in man, and the lower animals, without any known cause, and in the healthiest individuals. Its phenomena in the lower animals prove that it is not to be regarded as among the morbid manifestations of the physical system, but a mere accidental variety. An Albino rabbit, commonly called the English rabbit, has spread all over this country, without any variation or tendency to disease. White mice, rats, racoons, and ferrets, are also in existence. In the human races, negro as well as others, Albinoes appear who are prolific and healthy to an extent which proves, that if they were isolated and mated together, there would be an Albino race of men, as we have of rabbits and other animals. Had any of these accidental peculiarities been isolated, we would have had races of men differing from the rest more widely than any we now see, which would yet not have warranted an inference that they had an independent creation. If then these greater differences would not have warranted the inference that the diverse races were of diverse origins, it is hard to see how smaller differences can demand a conclusion which would not have been warranted by the greater.

But when we examine these diversities more closely, we find the argument drawn from them against the unity of the race to be hopelessly encumbered. If they prove anything in regard to the origin of the races, they prove too much, for they would prove fifty races as readily as five. There is no one feature that can be fixed upon as a test of species. Color, hair, form of skull, etc., all exist in their widest variety among those who are known to belong to the same race, and run into each other by shades so gradual that it is impossible to draw any clear line of demarcation. Hence scarcely any two great writers on this subject have been able to agree as to the number of races—some making but three; some five; whilst some make twelve or fifteen. No dividing line can be drawn. But if such a line could be drawn clearly, it would carry confusion, as to the doctrine of species, into every department of natural history. There are as wide and permanent varieties of cows, hogs, dogs, etc., known to have sprung from the same origin, as we find in the human races; and if, for these reasons, we insist on different species of men, we must, also, on different species of these animals. This, however, would bring utter and

hopeless confusion into every department of natural history, and disregard those clear and impassable marks, which nature has placed, to distinguish one species from another. As a question then of mere natural history, the unity of the human race is clearly the doctrine of science. Unity of species infers unity of origin, by consent of nearly all great naturalists. Unity of species is indicated by the power of mutual and permanent reproduction, and is perfectly consistent with wide and tenacious varieties. As therefore the human races have this power of mutual and permanent reproduction, and as their varieties are neither as many nor as great as we find in the lower tribes of the same species, nor as we see accidentally appearing as sporadic cases in different races of men, we are at liberty to infer their original unity of species, and hence their original unity of origin.

The only other objections presenting any difficulty are those drawn from the distribution of the races, and their isolation in countries and islands that are separated by wide and formidable barriers. Our limits will not allow us to go at length into this branch of the subject; nor is it necessary, for, after all, it is only an *argumentum ad ignorantiam*. That we are unable to state with historical precision how America and the Polynesian Islands were peopled, is the natural result of the remoteness of the period when the migration occurred; and what is known cannot be set aside by unanswered queries about what is unknown. The utmost that can be demanded of us is, to suggest a possible mode by which these migrations might have occurred; and if there be any such possibility, the objection falls, for it assumes an impossibility as the only ground on which it can rest.

Dr. Pickering affirms that it appears "on zoological grounds that the human family is foreign to the American Continent." How then they came here is not a question we are bound to answer more than those with whom we argue.

That there may have been a connection by land across Bhering's Straits in former times, is a fact that the geological indications of the region, and changes now going on, render, at least, not at all impossible. But even if this were not the case, the drifting of Japanese and Polynesian canoes, with their bewildered mariners, to lands many hundred miles—in one instance fifteen hundred from their starting-place, suggests the mode in which the Pacific islands, and then the American continent, may have been peopled. And when to this we add, that the traces of a higher

civilization in ancient times, which are found in Central America, indicate the probability of superior skill and facilities in navigation among these early nations, the likelihood of such a migration, either by accident or design, becomes yet more probable. That there were nomade rovers of the sea—who passed from island to island, with their wives and domestic animals, just as the wandering races of the desert pass from oasis to oasis, and from pasturage to pasturage, on land—is a fact by no means improbable. And that some of these Bedouins of the ocean may have been driven to distant shores by the great westwardly currents of the Pacific, is a supposition which the facts already alluded to render highly probable. If it be said that all this is only an appeal to our ignorance, we answer, that so is the objection to which we reply, and the one appeal is surely as fair as the other. The objection demands an impossibility which these suppositions show does not exist in the case, and hence as an argument against our position it must fall.

These conjectures are greatly strengthened by the fact, that all tradition and history point to Central Asia as the cradle of the human race. There we find what is confessedly the most perfect type of physical feature and development, whether we term it the Caucasian, the Circassian, or the Iranian race; and as we trace the natural channels of population, we find, except where civilization has interposed, a steady deterioration until we find the physiological extremes almost to coincide with the geographical, in the Negro of Africa, the Australian of Polynesia, and the Esquimaux of America. Another fact that bears irresistibly in the same direction is, that this same spot is the native country of nearly all the animals, grains, vegetables, and fruits, that have accompanied man in all his wanderings. It is the native country of rice, wheat, maize, the vine, and nearly all of the products of the earth that man has used for his food. There also we find in their wild state, the ass, goat, sheep, cow, horse, dog, hog, cat, camel, etc., the companions and servants of man the earth over. And as we trace these animals in their dispersions, we find them assuming the same variations of form and appearance that we find in the human races, nearly in exact proportion to the nearness of their association and companionship with man. There are the same Asiatic pointings in the affinities and resemblances of language. The science of comparative glottology is yet in its infancy, but sufficient advance has been made to show the most remarkable

relations ; and as the evidence is positive, it is reliable as far as it goes, to render it probable that all existing languages have had, to some extent, a common origin. Inasmuch, then, as the dispersion of the families of the earth from a single spot, is neither impossible nor improbable ; as tradition points to a locality in Asia as that spot ; as we find in that locality what seem to be the primitive types of man, and the animals and vegetables he has domesticated,—we submit that there is nothing in the present distribution or isolation of the races, to set aside the evidence of natural history already given, that these races belong to the same species and have had the same origin.

But the most signal indication that could perhaps be given of the strength of the argument we have thus been developing, is, the recent position of Professor Agassiz, as detailed in two essays in the *Christian Examiner*. Perceiving the unanswerable mass of evidence in favor of the specific identity of the races of men, he takes a new position, and whilst admitting an unity of species, he asserts a diversity of origin. He endeavors to establish in his first article the preliminary position, that there are certain definite zoological provinces, the fauna and flora in each of which must have been created in the province itself, and not distributed thither by migration from a central point. He then maintains that each province has its own race of men, which could not have come from a single pair, but must have been created each in the province where we find it. These positions he thinks fully consistent with the Bible, which he affirms only gives the origin and history of the white race, and alludes to none other.

This is a clear abandonment of the old position on this question, and a concession of the unanswerable grounds on which the specific unity of the race has been established. The attack has been shifted to a point further back, and one which can only be properly reached by historical testimony. But we apprehend that this new position, which is however not original with, or peculiar to Professor Agassiz, will soon yield as completely to the truth as the old one, and that this great and solemn question will be one of the ruled cases in science.

His views when analyzed resolve themselves into the following positions, namely : (1.) That animals are geographically distributed in distinct and separate zoological provinces ; (2.) That they are so isolated in these provinces as to make it impossible that they could have come forth from a common centre ; (3.) That they

must therefore have been separately created in these provinces; (4.) That man is found distributed in the same provinces; (5.) That therefore like the fauna and flora of these provinces, each race must have been created in the locality it occupies, and could not possibly have been distributed from a common centre, or originated from a single pair. The weakness of his general position may be perceived, when it is thus drawn out in logical method; and it will be seen at a glance that the conclusion rests on a chain of assumptions, any one of which being disproved, the chain is broken, and the conclusion falls to the ground. Let us then test the strength of these successive links, and see whether his theories rest on facts, or his facts warrant his conclusions.

It might seem presumptuous in us to challenge such high authority as that of Agassiz, who is confessedly the Neptune of modern zoology: but we may venture to suggest that the presumption is in the other direction—that even Neptune himself could not be allowed to sway his trident over the domains of other authorities; and that a man may be a peerless ichthyologist who is neither a profound logician nor a safe interpreter; and as he has discarded all authority in taking his position, he will be the last to demand a submission to his own mere authority, however great it may be. We shall therefore freely canvass his views, whilst, at the same time, we cheerfully recognize his eminence as a naturalist, and the manly reverence with which he speaks of the Bible and what he deems to be its teachings.

His preliminary position is, that animals are geographically distributed in separate provinces, in which the same species appears in different provinces and in different parts of the same province, at intervals that preclude the hypothesis of a common origin, and demand that of a separate creation. There is nothing in this position that necessarily infringes on any Bible truth or assertion, and our sole objection to it is, that there is no sufficient difficulty that demands it as a hypothesis, and no sufficient evidence that sustains it as a fact. The simple question to which it is at last resolved, is, whether the geographical distribution of animals may be accounted for by natural agencies dispersing them from a common centre, or whether a miracle must be assumed to account for it; and if so, whether the only miracle that meets the case, is that of a separate creation of the inhabitants of each separate province.

We are not prepared to deny that there are great zoological

centres, each having its surrounding province whose fauna and flora are peculiar, but the sense in which this is true does not avail the new theory, and the sense in which it asserts these provinces is one in which they do not exist. The sense in which this is true, is, that there are different regions of the earth whose species are distinct and peculiar, or whose varieties are so marked as to indicate the action of local and provincial agencies. In this sense however it is of no avail to support the position that unity of species may consist with diversity of origin, for the species are diverse, and the varieties indicative of local action alone, and not separate creation. The sense in which the theory asserts such provinces, is that in which the species are the same; but so far as they are the same, the provinces are the same, and not different. And if the few facts on which the theory rests were multiplied to such an extent as to make all the species of all the provinces the same, it is plain that there would be no distinct provinces at all, and the theory must perish by the very completeness of its success. Its entire force then depends on the confounding of these two facts, which are totally distinct. Had exactly the same species been found in all the provinces there would have been no provinces, except in regard to the topographical lines of separation; and had the species of all the provinces been different, it would not have availed in this argument, where the species of the races is conceded to be the same. Let us then examine whether there are these broad and clear lines of topographical separation. It is obvious that no such lines exist, from the fact that no two naturalists have been able to agree in their identification. The provinces overlap and interpenetrate one another to such an extent as to show that the cause is to be sought, not in the creation of separate races, but in the action of local and physical causes on races already created.

The same species we grant occurs in very different localities; but in almost every case, in such localities alone as could be reached by ordinary migration. Thus we know that the domestic animals have been spread. When America was discovered none of them were found here but the dog, whose use for draught in the polar regions suggests the reason and mode of his introduction in that direction. The lion, tiger, elephant, etc., are found in Asia and Africa, but not in America, Australia or Polynesia, in the same climates, because they are separated from these regions by barriers impassable to them, and man has no motive to in-

troduce them by artificial means. The vermin that accompany man, as his scavengers—such as rats, mice, cockroaches, flies, fleas, etc.—are never found in newly-discovered islands until after they have been visited by ships; showing the mode of their introduction. Certain provinces are found equally or more favorable to certain animals than those in which man first discovered them: if then each species was created in the locality it occupies, why were not these localities peopled with them? Why was not the camel created in Northern Africa, the reindeer in Iceland, the horse in Flanders, and the hog in Berkshire, where they are found so admirably to thrive; and where we know that they have been artificially introduced? These questions are unanswerable on this theory.

But facts show that animals are distributed precisely in the way which is denied by this theory. Dr. Bachman gives some curious and forcible illustrations of this point. The opossum occurs in the warmer parts of North America, west of the Hudson, but in no case east of it, for it is unable to swim, and dreads the cold too much to pass round the head-waters of this stream, or cross it on the ice. The gofer is found on the southern bank of the Savannah, but not on the northern, with precisely the same soil and food, because it cannot swim. The soft-shelled turtle is found in all the streams and lakes connected with the Mississippi, even to the Mohawk and Hudson, but in none south of these until we reach the Savannah, because it travels only by water, and the streams on that part of the Atlantic slope do not connect with the northern or western waters. No eels were found in Lake Erie until the opening of the Erie canal, which gave them an inlet; they are now plenty. The red fox, which is an arctic animal, was only found as low as Pennsylvania forty years ago, then it appeared in Virginia, then in the Carolinas, and now it is more common than the gray fox. The latter, which is a southern animal, has, in like manner, migrated north until it has reached Canada. These facts show conclusively that such migrations are going on, and suggest the most easy and natural means to account for the geographical distribution of animals. The same process is going on in regard to vegetables and plants, for whose distribution, as they have not the power of voluntary locomotion, nature has furnished the most elaborate provision. Some seeds are furnished with wings to be carried by the wind; others with hooks to fasten upon the passing animal and thus be transported;

others are carried by water thousands of miles, as tropical productions have been stranded by the Gulf Stream on the shores of Iceland; whilst others are carried in the stomachs of birds and beasts many leagues from their native locality. No sooner does the coral reef become capable of sustaining vegetable life than it is supplied by some of these seed-carriers of nature. Facts on this point exist by the hundred. What conceivable need then exists for the hypothesis of a new creation, when we see the same species repeated in new localities?

The only difficulty that remains is, the occurrence of arctic plants and animals in the Alpine regions, cut off from their natural kindred. But it curiously happens that in the same review that contains the essay we are answering, there is a complete solution to this difficulty, unconsciously suggested by Professor Agassiz himself, when speaking on a different subject. He explains some of the phenomena of Lake Superior by reference to the glacial theory. Now whilst we do not pronounce on this theory, yet with its great defender, an objection which may be answered by it, will surely not be pressed. If then the bowlders and deeply worn furrows of the lake region may be explained by this theory, we ask, where is the difficulty of giving the same account of the existence of these Alpine fauna and flora? As the glacial sea receded to the pole, the arctic animals and plants that co-existed with it, would naturally remain on these Alpine heights, which were congenial to them, since they would have no inducements to change their locality. Hence where this recession of the ice-line left them isolated on these arctic islands, they would of course remain and propagate just as their kindred which receded with the glaciers to the pole. Hence, there is nothing in this requiring a new creation of lynxes, marmots, and chamois, in the regions where they are now found.

Hence if we concede the existence of clearly-marked zoological provinces, as contended for by Professor Agassiz, the facts that they run into one another by insensible gradations, that migrations are going on from one region to another, that arrangements for this mode of distribution are now in operation, suggest the likelihood that the same arrangements existed in former times, and actually effected the distribution which we find. The very same principle that requires us to suppose that the geological distribution of rocks was made by natural causes such as we now see in operation, demands that we should hold the same suppo-

sition in regard to the zoological distribution of animals. The fact on which Prof. A. seems greatly to rely that the later fossils of some of these provinces, such as New Holland, have the same peculiarities that we find in existing species, really proves nothing, but that the same or similar causes were acting in these localities then that are acting now, and determines nothing as to the precise nature of the causes themselves, whether natural or supernatural, creative or merely adaptive. The fact that we find dogs in Africa with a naked skin does not prove that dogs were created there without hair, for the same thing happens to dogs that are removed there with their natural coat. It only proves that whenever and however these dogs came there, they were subjected to the same influences that are now in operation. Thus it is also with the peculiarities of the later fossils, to which Prof. A. alludes. The same causes which will explain the distribution of existing tribes, will account for the distribution of similar tribes at any former geological epoch. But even were this not the fact, we cannot argue from the conditions of things before the creation of man to that after his creation, for with the appearance of man began the era of moral government and general law, and ceased the era of creation. The earth being designed as the dwelling-place and kingdom of man, the mode of creation at the beginning of his epoch would likely have reference to his position and wants. We may add to this, that if the recently announced discovery of a fossil kangaroo in New England be authenticated, the whole force of this argument is at once destroyed, and it is proven that the animals now peculiar to New Holland, were once distributed more widely over the earth. But even if it were demonstrated that these causes, in any conceivable mode of their operation, are insufficient to account for the effects, it will not follow that a separate creation in each locality is demanded as the only alternative. Some extraordinary agency must be supposed; but is this the only one? If a miracle must be assumed, may it not as readily have been in the distribution of these races to their present localities, as in their creation within them? Does not universal observation show that direct creation is usually the last expedient resorted to, in the attainment of any end? Now what is there to demand it as the only alternative here? We submit then that there is nothing in the distribution of animals requiring a miracle at all; and that if any such unusual interposition of divine power was needed, it is much more likely to have been in

the distribution of races already created, than in their separate and distinct creation. But we repeat it, that there is nothing in this hypothesis of separate zoological centres of creation that conflicts with the Bible in the slightest, and it might fully be admitted without affecting a single utterance of revelation. We only object to its strength because of the tremendous conclusion we are asked to hang upon it.

But suppose these three links of the chain mended, the fourth breaks with the weight that is hung upon it. Grant that there are distinct zoological provinces; that they are so isolated from each other that their fauna and flora could not have come forth from a common centre; and that a separate creation in each province is the only mode of overcoming the difficulty,—we find that the races of men are not co-extensive and identical with these alleged zoological provinces.

One would think, from the confidence with which the learned Professor asserts the identity in the two cases, that not only the zoological provinces were clearly made out, but the limits of the races also plainly and universally ascertained. But there is no point in natural history more undetermined than this. Some make but three races, others five, others eleven, others still more; but the most remarkable fact is, that Professor Agassiz does not positively determine this point *himself*. He enumerates about a dozen zoological provinces, but not more than half that number of races. Why this significant silence? If his theory is really true, why did he not tell us what the races are, that inhabit these provinces? We shall perhaps see the reason as we examine the relations of the two distributions. This examination our limits will only allow us to make in one or two of these provinces which he has mapped out.

His first province is the arctic, with the Samoyedes, the Laplanders, and the Esquimaux. But can any one suppose that an animal so helpless as man, so destitute of natural covering, protection, and food, could originate in the bleak and inhospitable regions of the pole, where he could obtain neither clothing, fire, nor food? If we suppose him to have originated in a warmer region, and migrated thither, with his acquired knowledge and habits, these difficulties vanish; but if we suppose him created, a naked, shivering Troglodyte, amidst the eternal snows, we must pile miracle on miracle to account for his continued existence. But even if this difficulty were overcome, the Esquimaux of

America are as widely separate from the arctic races of Asia, in distance, difficulty of communication, and physical features, as the latter are from the adjacent tribes of the Mongolians, or the former from the northern tribes of Indians. Why not make an Asian arctic, and an American arctic, on the same grounds that a distinction is drawn between the southern arctic and the northern Mongolian? There is absolutely no ground in the one case that does not exist as broadly in the other. The Malay race he assigns to a natural zoological province; but what it is, he does not inform us. It cannot be limited to his tropical Asiatic province, for it extends through Polynesia to Western America, by the testimony of the most accurate observers, even those who deny the original unity of the races. The same difficulty exists in the provinces of New Holland and Africa. The Tasmanian and Alforian races of the New Holland province differ far more widely than the Malay and the Mongolian: and we have shown that Africa presents the widest extremes of variety, with every intermediate shade, from the fair races of Abyssinia to the genuine Dahomey negro. But when we come to the American provinces, the theory breaks utterly and hopelessly down. He makes four such provinces; one east, and one west of the Rocky Mountains; one in tropical America, and one in temperate South America. But where are the four races corresponding to them? Do not all recognize the same physical type in all our aboriginal tribes? Has even Professor Agassiz dissented from this? How then can the facts be cut up to fit the theory? But if we had the four races that have been created on this continent, what will we do with the Patagonians? The same questions might be asked in regard to the Papuan, Feejee, and other races, which though clearly and strongly marked cannot be referred to any distinct or definite zoological provinces.

It is abundantly evident from this brief enumeration of facts that there is no such coincidence in the geographical distribution of the races and that of the plants and animals, such as is asserted by this theory. But suppose all these difficulties removed, and yet the last step could not legitimately be taken. If the races and zoological provinces were identical, that fact clearly could not prove that each race was created in its province. All that it could prove would be, that the human races, and the fauna and flora of each province, were subjected to the same or similar influences, giving them this identity of limitation. What these influences

were, would not be determined by this coincidence of boundary, and would therefore remain matter for further investigation. Whether they were natural or supernatural would not be determined by such identity of circumscription. And if we must assume a supernatural agency, it by no means follows, that creation is the only one. The divine power might as readily have been exerted in causing these peculiarities, or in distributing these races, as in their direct creation; and if we must assert its interposition to account for the varieties, we have at least the same right to affirm the smaller and more ordinary exercise of it, that he has to affirm the greater and more extraordinary.

The fact on which he lays so much stress, that climatic conditions are not exactly coincident with the various races, will prove that climatic conditions are not the only agencies at work in producing these varieties; and nothing more. What these other agencies are, and whether distinct creation is the only conceivable one, is wholly undetermined by this fact. His remark, that the adaptations of man to his various localities must have been intentional, is true; but it does not follow from this that separate creation of each race was the only way in which this intention could be carried into effect. We grant that these adaptations were intentional, and simply affirm that they were brought about by an original susceptibility to such adaptations impressed by God on man's physical constitution; and that the same reasons for its existence at first require its existence now, and undoubted facts prove that it actually does exist. Designing man to be a cosmopolite, and to subdue the earth, he impressed him with this susceptibility, and the result is, the varieties we find in the races of the world. So far then is this designed adaptation of man to the various localities in which he is found, from proving that the varieties were separately created, it is the very fact that makes this supposition unnecessary.

We thus find this chain of assumptions to break at every link. Whilst there are zoological provinces, they are not such as to forbid their occupance by natural and existing causes; or if supernatural agency were required it is not necessitated to be in the form of creation; and if these points were reached, they would not avail us, for the races of men are not identical with these provinces; and if they were, this identity would be explicable by that adaptive susceptibility of the human constitution to conform itself to the varying conditions in which it is placed, with which

man as the destined conqueror of the earth has been furnished; and if some direct and unusual interposition of divine power must be supposed, it was much more likely to be in producing these varieties from a race already existing than in calling new ones into existence. Hence in every part of this new theory we find it more completely untenable than the old one.

There are other proofs of the original unity of the human race, the full presentation of which would exceed our limits, and hence we can only glance at them in concluding. One of these is drawn from the relations that modern philology has detected among the languages of the earth. Dr. Young has applied the mathematical calculus of probabilities to this subject, and declares the result to be, that if eight words in any two languages are found to coincide in sound and significance, the probabilities are one hundred thousand to one, that they were drawn from the same parent language; and that if the coincidences are found in more than eight cases it rises to little less than an absolute certainty. Whether this application of the doctrine of probabilities be perfectly satisfactory or not to every mind, it at least shows that a small number of coincident words compared with the entire vocabulary will be sufficient to establish an original connection between different languages. Now the researches of the most eminent scholars, after much perplexity and overthrow of former opinions, have at last reduced the more than two thousand languages of the earth to a few families, and established between these families the most undoubted affiliation. This affiliation is supported not by a few words whose similarity could be accounted for by the imitation of natural sounds, or the necessary use of the same organs of articulation, but by adjectives, nouns, pronouns, numerals, and verbs, whose sounds are perfectly arbitrary, and have no conceivable resemblance to the things they are designed to represent. This resemblance is found not only in the sounds of words, but also in their grammatical forms. Declensions and cases of nouns, conjugations of verbs with their apparatus of voices, augments and reduplications, are found, like perfect skeletons of a former organism, embedded in the languages of the most distant countries. Sometimes, as has been shown recently in regard to our American Indian languages, the most minute resemblances may exist in grammatical forms between many dialects, that have scarcely a word in common. The bony skeleton remains, whilst the more perishable fleshly integuments of mere sounds have perished.

From these facts such scholars as A. von Humboldt, Merian, Klaproth, F. Schlegel, Herder, and others, have inferred that all existing languages are derivations from one original tongue now lost. The American languages were for some time considered exceptions to this broad generalization, but the researches of Mr. Galatin, and the more recent investigations of Mr. Schoolcraft, have shown that they in like manner contain these conglomerate remains of ancient speech that indicate their connection with the same original tongue. Thus that tendency to the ascertainment of a unity in diversity, which is characteristic of all other science, is equally evinced in the young and interesting science of comparative philology.

But a second fact yet more remarkable has been made probable by the same researches. It is alleged not only that these various languages must have been separated from one another or from an original speech, but that this separation was caused by some sudden and violent disruption, the evidence of which remains in the relations of these languages as distinctly set forth as the proof of the breaking of the strata of the crust of the earth by some former convulsion is seen in the broken edges of corresponding rocks that stand facing each other on opposite sides of some chasm. This is the opinion not of mere credulous bibliolators, but even of those who reject the history of the confusion of tongues in Genesis, as an oriental fiction, like Herder, and of such scholars as Sharon Turner, Abel Remusat, and Niebuhr. These men affirm that the differences between these languages are not such as would have been produced by the slow and gradual separation of a people from natural causes, but such as indicate a sudden and violent disruption of their social relations. Whether this disruption was the dispersion of Babel cannot be made out from these fossils of ancient thought, but this result of philology at least presents a most remarkable and startling corroboration, from an unexpected quarter, of the facts related in Genesis.

The bearing of these facts on the question before us, is obvious. Were the families of man diverse races, sprung from diverse origins, we would expect, in a thing so artificial and conventional as speech, to find this diversity clearly marked, and no trace of a common origin, either in grammatical forms, or in the signification attached to particular words; and we would also expect to find the most ancient languages the most rude and simple in their structure. On the contrary, we find the most marvellous resem-

blances in form and signification ; and also the most ancient languages to be often the most artificial and philosophical in their grammatical forms ; and also the repetition of these peculiarities of structure and signification in languages that are separated geographically by the widest barriers. These facts can be explained only on the hypothesis that these languages have had a common source, and that they are the conglomerate fragments of a formation which now exists only in these imbedded crystals, whose fracture and form tell the tale of their common origin and their former connection. This then involves necessarily the conclusion that these diverse families were once united in one common head, and are the offspring of one common parentage, who used this primeval and now disintegrated language.

The mode in which Prof. Agassiz attempts to evade the force of this argument is a most remarkable specimen of logic. He dismisses it with somewhat of a sneer, and deems its force broken by the simple remark, that it is as natural for men to talk as it is for dogs to bark, or asses to bray, and that one bird does not learn its song from another ; and hence we could not from the phenomena of language infer unity of origin. Now, if one bird does not learn its song from another, does this prove that one human being does not learn its language from another ? And aside from the fact that it is not natural for dogs to bark, as they never do it in their wild state, is there no difference between an inarticulate cry and the use of a set of conventional sounds to designate certain thoughts ? Does not the one imply previous arrangement and agreement, where the sounds are the same, whilst the other does not ? If we argued man's original unity from his instinctive cries, it were pertinent to refer us to the instinctive cries of animals ; but when, from the fact that the same or similar colloocations of syllabic sounds are applied by different races to the same natural objects, we argue that there must have been a previous agreement that these sounds should designate these objects, the reference to the braying of asses, etc., looks really like trifling.

Another proof of the original unity of the families of mankind may be drawn from their ancient traditions. Mr. R. W. Mackay, of the modern English school of rationalism, has published a book called the Progress of the Intellect, which has all the dulness of learning without any of its profundity, and all the malice of wit without any of its keenness. In this book he endeavors to serve up all the religions of the earth into a sort of *olla-podrida*, with

Paganism and Nihilism for spice and sweetening, and enough of Christianity to act, if possible, as salt. The savory dish thus produced, we have no disposition to deal out at any length. But there is one respect in which his efforts are not wholly useless. Gathering together with no small industry the religious traditions of different nations, he has furnished corroborations of the Scriptural record, which infidelity would have rejected, had they been presented by a Gale, a Bryant, or a Faber, as mere credulous fancies. He admits the universal tradition that points to central Asia as the home and cradle of the human race. He also presents the chaos; the darkness that covered the face of the great deep; the brooding of the Spirit of God upon the surface of the waters; the myths and traditions of various nations alluding to a primeval creation of light; the unfolding of the firmament; the order of the six days' creation and the rest of the Sabbath; the primitive innocence of man; his location in the garden of Eden; the rivers and trees of Paradise; the agency of the woman and serpent in the Fall; the sacredness of the number seven; the flood, with the ark, olive branch and dove; the expectation of a Messiah; the reign of righteousness on the earth; and of a final conflagration.

How can these facts be fairly explained? When the traveller in France finds in all its provinces traditions and representations of one man, sometimes coarse and rude, at other times exquisite and accurate, yet all retaining those lineaments that seem burnt into the memory of her people—are not these facts as absolutely decisive of the existence of Napoleon as if he actually saw the great Corsican? Were any man to attempt seriously to prove that Napoleon was only a myth, and these traditional memorials but symbols of the French ideas of glory, having no origin in some original and common fact, would he not be regarded as little better than an idiot? Yet why should that be insane fatuity in modern history, which is profound wisdom in ancient? Why should this reasoning make a man a fool when exercised about things that are well known, and a philosopher when exercised about things that are but little known? If these universal and minute memorials of Napoleon would prove his existence, at least, if we had no other evidence, must not these wide, uniform and clear traditions of early facts in the world's history prove that they also existed? Must there not have been an original ground-work of historical fact to support traditions so uniform and striking? It is not necessary to our present purpose to prove that the precise facts recorded

in Genesis are the originals from which these copies were made, although this we might show to be probable, independent of any proof drawn from the divine origin of the Bible. All that we need is simply the obvious and necessary admission that these copies must have had originals; and that these originals were the same general facts. That nations who have never had any connection in their early history should have happened to invent so many traditions so nearly alike, is, on the doctrine of probabilities, to the last degree improbable, if not wholly impossible. The most natural and rational explanation surely is, that these traditions are the old household memories of the primeval homestead, yet lingering around the scattered family, which, though sometimes clear as the recollections of the child who has tarried at the parental hearth until its scenes and teachings are written indelibly on his memory, and at others, crude and vague as the dreaming reminiscences of him who was torn away in the tenderness of undeveloped childhood, yet all point back and converge in a common family, and a common home, to which we may trace these wandering tribes of the children of men.

Not less conclusive, did our space permit its full development, is the psychological argument for the unity of the race. The great mystery in the nature of man is SIN. Like the bottomless gulf in the Roman Forum, it is a fathomless abyss whose origin none can explain, and whose yawning greediness nothing can fill but the immolation of the noblest and best that has ever borne the form of our common nature. It is this strange and fearful fact that sets man apart from all other earthly creatures in a mournful isolation of experience and history. When we go down into the depths of the human soul and search the chamber of its records for the story of this monstrous birth, we are met at the very threshold by Conscience, at once the hoary chronicler of the past, and the terrible prophet of the future, which gives us the clue to this mystery. It points us to the soiled and shattered fragments of noble powers and high affections, which once stood up in kingly erectness, each on its pedestal and throne in the human soul. It traces out in these noble ruins the record of some fearful convulsion in the past, that cast down and shivered these old and beautiful occupants of this stately Pantheon of thought and affection. It tells us that man is not what he once was, but is fallen, and has become a guilty and godless thing. Telling us thus of a fall, it tells us of an ancient unity, of a time when man was one

in the unfallen past, as he is one in the fallen present, just as unanswerably as the columns and capitals of the silent temple of the sun, tell us of a time when it once stood in the unity of a queenly and faultless symmetry beneath the cloudless skies of Palmyra. Now, these tellings of conscience are heard in every branch of the scattered family of man. The same sad proofs of brotherhood in sin and sorrow, of common parentage and common fall, of depravity transmitted by universal and hereditary taint, meet us in every race. The same wail of remorseful sorrow comes up in mysterious plaint from all; the same mournful memories of primeval purity now soiled and dishonored; the same gleaming visions of an Eden innocence that has faded away, leaving only these mute longings after its unforgotten brightness; the same dire and terrific phantoms of guilt that come forth to awe and affright; the same deep yearnings after the unseen and the eternal in the soul's deepest stirrings; and the same sublime hopes that shoot upward to the "high and terrible crystal,"—are found alike in every race of every hue. The unspeakable gift of Christ and him crucified, is as wide in its efficacy as these mournful symptoms of malady. The lofty intellects of a Pascal and a Newton, do not grasp it with a keener relish and a deeper sympathy than the besotted Caffre in the lonely wilds of Africa, or the crouching Pariah in the steaming jungles of India. The Cross is that wondrous talisman that calls forth from every adventitious guise the universal manhood and brotherhood of the races. And when the lowliest African is "born again," in that heavenly birth that links into a new and holier unity the fallen descendants of the first Adam, he is found to exult with as pure a gladness as the honored heir of the proudest and noblest blood. O! it is this blessed fact that stands in lofty and indignant rebuke of that cold and cruel philosophy that would wrest from the humble and the oppressed the only boon that is beyond the grasp of an unfeeling avarice. And this whole class of facts, pointing back as it does so unerringly, to some great spiritual disruption in the psychological history of our race, proves that there was once a time and place in the history of that race when they were one in that primeval and unfallen brightness from which they have so sadly and widely lapsed.

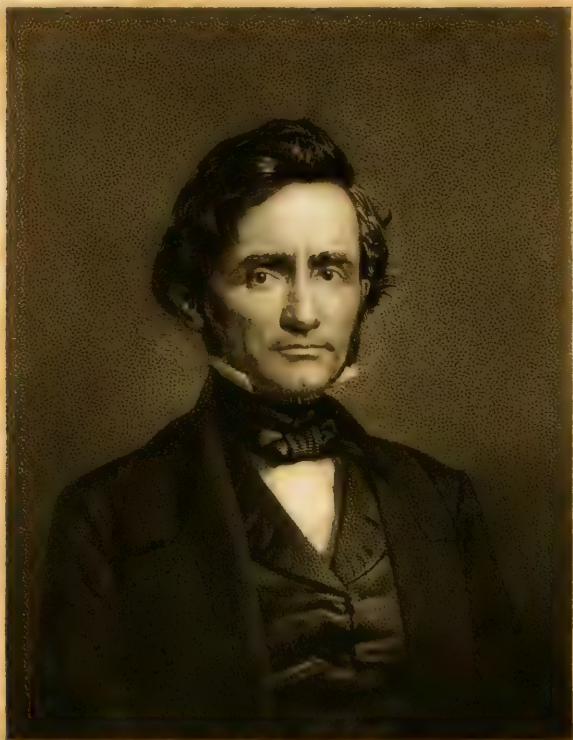
And now shall we give up this great truth of the universal brotherhood of man, around which throng such masses of evidence, because of the few flippant questions which a finical philosophy may think unanswered? Shall this mighty thought that

thrilled even a Roman audience, in the memorable words of Terence, this thought that has fired the hearts of the martyr spirits of the world in their weary toils for an erring race, this thought that underlies the whole enterprise of Christian missions, that brought Jesus Christ from heaven and carried Paul to the ends of the earth, be abandoned because one man's skin and hair do not resemble another's? Shall the trifling points of difference that exist between the races of men be allowed to prove that as to the human species, which they are not allowed to prove as to any other species of living things? Shall the pictures of black races on Egyptian tombs be held to prove their separate creation, when the fact that other races, equally distinct in all their peculiarities, are there found depicted, is not held to prove the same thing in regard to them? Is there not something unspeakably cruel and heartless in thus cutting loose these hopeless and unfortunate races from all the sympathies of a common brotherhood in the family of man; in robbing them of the most priceless blessings that are left them in their barbarism, a birthright in Adam and a hope in Christ; and making their very degradation, which should move our sympathies to act for their relief, the pretext for a fresh outrage the most monstrous and atrocious? Rob these feeble and helpless nations of their beautiful lands where they repose in happy indolence; rob them of their gold and silver and gems that they have gathered from their rivers and mountains; rob them of their little worldly substance and their humble homes; for these things affect not their highest rights, and their loss may be repaired: but oh! rob them not of their parentage in a common ancestry, the only fact that is left to encourage us to labor for their elevation; rob them of everything else, but rob them not at least of hope; and consign them not in their neglect and misfortune to that hopeless orphanage of degradation, which, by cutting them off from their heritage in the blood that flows from Adam, must also cut them off from that richer heritage which they may obtain in the blood that flows from Christ. Tell us not that these results are not necessary to the position we are opposing, when even an Agassiz, with all his high moral feeling, scruples not, as the consequence of his doctrine, to denounce those noble and expansive charities that would girdle the earth with Christian churches as mere "mock philanthropy," and idle efforts to contravene the settled arrangements of Providence.

No. We will not give up yet the great truth of the common

brotherhood of humanity ; we will not disown our hapless, unfortunate brother because he has become a wandering outcast ; we will not abandon the hopes we cherish that these scattered families shall yet be restored to some of the homestead privileges which they have forgotten. These prodigal wanderers shall yet hear a voice that shall awaken the memories of a blessed home that is lost, and shall kindle the hopes of a more blessed home that is to be found. The dreams of an unforgetten Eden shall yet be embodied in the better paradise of the future, when they shall come from the north and the south, the east and the west, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. The cannibal Zealander shall come blending in the harmlessness of the dove before the cross ; the fierce Malay, the wild Camanche, the gigantic Patagonian, and the gentle islander of the sea, shall all come together at the feet of Jesus, with hearts that shall throb and thrill with the clasping love of a common origin, a common trust and a common destiny. The grovelling Bushman, the squalid Esquimaux, and the crouching Hindoo, shall arise from the dust of their degradation, and stand forth in the lofty erectness of a manhood in Christ Jesus. The sublime dreamings of Plato, the rapt numbers of the Sibyl, the vague longings of philosophy, the high visions of poetry, and above all, the magnificent pictures of revelation, the exulting strains of Isaiah as he gazed on the gorgeous future, the deep sympathies of Paul as he felt the throes of the travailing earth that mutely longed for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the higher, grander gazings of the lonely seer of Patmos as he saw the gatherings to the great day of God Almighty, and heard the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunders, and the voice of a great multitude, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,—all these shall be fully and gloriously realized in that future when the scattered and divided nations shall be gathered into the glorious sonship of God, and the unity that links them to Adam in one direction, shall receive its bright counterpart and fulfilment in the noble unity that links them to Christ in the other. It is because we believe the unity in the one direction to be the condition of the unity in the other, that we so earnestly contend for it. And it is because we believe that this cold, heartless, Cain-like theory, that would discard the brotherhood of the unfortunate and degraded because of their misfortune, must cripple the energies of those who labor for this magnificent hope of the future, that we lift up against it a protest

so earnest and emphatic. And it is because we know that this selfish monopoly of the blood of Adam shall melt away before the blaze of this future Sabbath of the earth, that we now so confidently predict its overthrow, and anticipate the time when it shall not only be believed that God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the whole earth, but when in the fusing brightness of these Sabbatic scenes of the future, the touching and beautiful prayer of Christ shall receive its broadest and grandest fulfilment, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be ONE, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Even so, amen, and amen.



A. L. Titcomb.

L. W. Green

The Harmony of Revelation and Natural Science;

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO GEOLOGY.

TWO LECTURES.

BY

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I.

GENERAL SPIRIT OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY—MIRACLES—RECENT ORIGIN OF MAN—AND THE FINAL CONFLAGRATION.

THE spirit of infidelity is not the spirit of true philosophy—intellectual, physical or moral. Doubt is to the mind what hunger is to the body—the stimulus which nature, or the God of nature, has provided to incite and prepare us for the enjoyment of healthy nutriment—but it is not that very nutriment itself. *Habitual skepticism* is intellectual disease—the *atrophy* of mind, the ordinary cause, the invariable symptom of mental inanition, or ill-digested knowledge—and bears the same relation to that calm love of truth, and scrutiny of evidence, which characterizes all large and healthy understandings, that the insane and insatiable craving of some dyspeptic patient, after stimulants and trash, bears to the discriminating relish and healthy appetite which belong to every vigorous and well-developed human frame. To doubt may be “the beginning of philosophy;” but devout and assured faith in God and nature—this is its glorious and triumphant consummation. Hence, of all those mighty men who have stood foremost in every department of inquiry—have enlarged the boundaries of knowledge—have fathomed the depths of the human understanding—unveiled the mysteries of nature—penetrated the infinitudes of space, or mastering the whole wide domain of matter and of mind, have given new laws to guide our investigations in either—your Bacon, your Locke, your Newton, Leibnitz, Des Cartes, Euler, Kepler, Tycho Brache—of all those mighty men of old, who tower before us, there, upon the page of history, in their colossal grandeur and gigantic strength, high above all their fellows, the luminaries of their own age, and of all succeeding generations—*scarce one* has been *an unbeliever*. “I had rather believe all the fables of the Legend, the Shaster and the Koran,” exclaims Lord Bacon, “than that this universal frame is without

a mind." And, in his "Advancement of Learning," "A little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline a man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

On the contrary, there is a sympathy deep, intense, all-pervading—a harmony profound, stupendous, universal, between the revelations of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science, in the broadest range and the boldest grasp of its largest and most comprehensive generalizations—in the whole spirit, tone and temper of its legitimate inquiries—in that attitude of devout humility and conscious ignorance, yet of erect and fearless, of hopeful and even confident attention, with which she stands in the great temple of nature, and traces each "Footprint" of the Almighty, whether amidst the infinitude of space or amidst the depths of a past eternity—the chronicles of extinct races, or the wreck of departed worlds.

If the Creator of the universe be, indeed, an intelligent and moral agent—infinite in wisdom and goodness, as boundless in his power—then, besides the physical universe around us, there is *another*, of rational and moral beings, of correspondent extent, variety and grandeur.

Now let any one appropriate, if he can, at a single glance of thought, all that our modern astronomy has discovered—the universe of greatness above us, which the telescope has revealed, and the descending universe of littleness, which the microscope has made known—let him accept her boldest assertions as indubitable truths, and follow onward in her most adventurous speculations, till the fevered brain grows dizzy, and the strained intellect bewildered, as whirling by suns and systems, as they rise, in rapid and dazzling succession, in ever-enlarging magnitude and increasing splendor around, he strives to picture to his imagination that lapse of ages and those intervals of space for which arithmetic has no formula, and language no expression, and the mind of man, in its boldest efforts, *no approximate conception*. Then let him turn to the Bible, and in the revelations there will he find the parallel and exact counterpart of all which, in the grandeur of the material creation, has most awed and subdued, most enlarged and exalted, his conceptions. Will he not find here, too, the march and the movement of a high moral administration—the progressive evolution of one stupendous system, coëval with all ages, and coëxtensive with all worlds—the

omnipresent majesty of one supreme and all-pervading legislation, binding together, as in one bond of sympathy, the remotest parts of this great moral universe—system after system of intelligent existences—angels and archangels, and cherubim and seraphim, rising one above another, in ever-ascending progression, indefinitely high, until at last the eye of inspiration is dimmed with excessive radiance, and the telescope of revelation rests upon those upper Intelligences—those mysterious and nameless “*Powers in heavenly places,*” for which earth presents no analogies, and language has no titles—yet *unto them “is made known through Christ the manifold wisdom of God?”*

And now, when he learns that the whole family in heaven look with intensest sympathy upon our fallen race; that the Great Father of *all* has so loved the world that he sent his own Son upon an errand of infinite compassion to redeem it—that he who was mighty to save, “*travailed in the greatness of his strength,*” and all the attributes of the Godhead were summoned and concentrated here, as for some high achievement; while he contemplates with adoring wonder this amazing condescension, will he not find an analogy, at least, if not an adequate illustration, in the ways of him who, though he has garnished the heavens by his power, and called forth the stars by number, hath given to Saturn his girdle of light, and to the sun his diadem of fire—yet hath stooped to gild the insect’s wing, and to pencil the hues of the lowliest floweret of the valley; nay, hath not disdained to lavish *all* the resources of his infinite wisdom, his boundless benevolence, and Almighty power, in moulding the minutest portion of the minutest member of one of those invisible animalculæ, whose teeming myriads live, and revel, and die *unseen*, amidst the sweets and fragrance of a single flower. Doth God care for the flower of the field?—and will he not care for you, oh ye of little faith?

Did it become him thus to concentrate all the attributes of the Godhead, and lavish all the resources of omnipotence on such as these, and is it inconsistent with the dignity of his exalted nature that he should stoop to redeem a whole lost world of immortal spirits?

Again, long centuries before Herschell handled a telescope, or Newton had studied the laws of the planetary motions, or Cuvier had touched a fossil bone, or Hume had reasoned upon the permanency of a course of nature; while all those astounding facts

of the cognate sciences, astronomy and geology, which have thrown such startling light upon the history of our own, and perhaps all other globes, lay buried deep beneath the huge strata, where they had been chronicled for ages, or lost amidst the unfathomed depths of space; a Galilean fisherman has furnished us with a broad outline of modern science; distinctly stated the fundamental sophism of that atheistic metaphysic, which constitutes the basis of all the infidelity of modern times, and given to it the very refutation which is offered by the most distinguished geologists of our day. In the last days, according to the apostle (2 Pet. ch. iii.), shall arise a new form of infidelity. The objector shall take his stand upon the invariable operation of nature's laws, and immutable succession of nature's phenomena: "In the last days shall come scoffers, saying, where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things *remain* as they *were* from the beginning of the creation?" To this the apostle answers, in language precisely corresponding with that of our scientific geologist, and capable, with a very slight and legitimate modification, of including all his most important principles: "The present condition of our globe is not the first, and shall not be its final state. Our present continents were once submerged beneath the ocean, from which 'εξ ὕδατος' they at length arose, were then swept by a terrific deluge, and having thus passed through successive catastrophes, are yet reserved for another and more fearful visitation,—'*Reserved unto fire.*'" But think not that this destruction spoken of will be *annihilation*; it will be *purification* rather. The former condition of our globe adapted it for the abode of irrational animals only; the last great crisis in its history, prepared it for the higher order of rational and moral agents. The next will be another step in the ascending series of God's providential arrangements, and instead of a habitation for imperfect fallen beings, it will be the theatre of a glorious moral manifestation, the blissful abode of holy, happy intelligences. "Nevertheless, *we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*"

Indeed, the whole tone and tendency of our modern geology, *when rightly understood*, is intensely and profoundly Christian. It furnishes by far the most conclusive of all arguments for the existence of a God; explodes the atheistic theory of an infinite series of beings; and thus dispels the last remaining doubt that might otherwise have thrown its shadow over the soul of man.

It refutes the only plausible objection that has ever been devised against the miraculous evidence of the Gospel History (Hume's celebrated argument against miracles); for it *lives amidst the innumerable miracles* of ages past, and reads and *acknowledges* their record, engraven indelibly upon the everlasting rocks. Its spirit, rightly understood, is the spirit of awe and reverence. It places us at once, amidst the infinitude of ages and the immensity of space; it tells of catastrophes long since past, and of other catastrophes yet to come; of stupendous powers, even now at work all around us, far surpassing our conception, which have left the traces of their agency deep on the whole face of nature; in the huge mountains they have heaped up, the valleys they have hollowed out; in the masses of dislocated strata, torn from their native beds, and dashed together in wild confusion; or twisted and bent in all directions from their horizontal position, as if held fast by some Titanic hand, and writhing amidst the agonies of some terrible convulsion.

Amidst the wild play of these terrific powers, the mighty succession of these incalculable ages, she traces the steady march of *one vast and comprehensive plan*; and the direct interposition, often repeated and distinctly visible, of the same almighty power, which originated the whole design at first, and still presides over every movement of the complicated machinery. *The theology of natural science*, then, is in perfect harmony with *the theology of the Bible*. She starts with *one instinctive principle, one intuitive conviction*, of the invariable connection between a CAUSE and its *appropriate effect*; and by the light of this single principle, she deciphers the hieroglyphics of dynasties long entombed, and penetrates the mysteries of the celestial motions, and rises, step by step, with irresistible demonstration, to a *First Great Cause*, that can exist, without absorbing all subordinate causes into his own mysterious being, and operate without merging all inferior agency in his own inscrutable omnipotence. But she bears along with her another principle, alike immediate, universal, irresistible, coëval with the origin of the race, coëxtensive with the globe, inseparable from the constitution of our nature—the intuitive conviction of the *relation between right and wrong*, that there is a moral element in man, and a moral law in the universe, that the *highest power and the highest right are at one, and both* are enthroned, supreme over all worlds.

And now that almighty power and infinite holiness are en-

throned together, let natural science accumulate her facts and multiply her demonstrations. Let Astronomy enlarge each world into a system, and each system into a universe of suns, pouring their blazing radiance over our midnight skies, with their attendant planets, sweeping over orbits of illimitable extent. Let Geology transform each individual of its extinct races into a separate species; and each species into the representative of an era; and expand each era over incalculable ages. Let the eye of man be kindled up with seraphic vision, and the intellect of man be moulded to the stature of tall archangels, that he may stand upon some high eminence in the upper skies, and looking abroad over the immensity around him, may discover new systems of worlds, which no telescope as yet has brought within the scope of human vision; and from that new and untrodden field of observation, gather fresh evidences of the existence of a God, and fresh illustrations of all his attributes; yet would the Christian welcome joyfully, and appropriate each successive revelation. For at each step, in the onward progress of this high argument, as fact was piled on fact, and illustration on illustration, and this ethereal intelligence, kindling with the grandeur of his theme, bore every understanding and every will along upon the rapid tide of a resistless and overwhelming demonstration, still, as the earth faded from our view, and nought but immensity and eternity was there around us, would not the reverence, and solemnity, and breathless awe of eternity rest upon our spirits? Nay, could that audacious dream of ancient and modern impiety be realized, and the mystery, that ever from of old, has shrouded the invisible and eternal one from human gaze, be *all laid* bare, and we be introduced into the presence-chamber of the Most High, and stand face to face with God; would we not find *there too*, enthroned above all worlds, eternal justice and almighty power? and beneath the broad blaze of that omniscient eye, and with all our sins upon us, would not the language of nature be the echo of that voice, which startled the patriarch of old, when in visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, "A Spirit passed before his face, and the hair of his head stood up," and a voice was heard amidst the stillness of the midnight, "Shall *mortal man* be just with God? *A man with his maker!*" And the awe-struck patriarch exclaimed, "*How shall man be just with God? For he is not a man* as I am, that I should enter into judgment with him; neither is there a day's-man betwixt us, that he might lay his hand upon

us both." Such, then, is the theology of natural science. Such the utmost goal of her most magnificent discoveries, and proudest demonstrations. They "shut us up" absolutely to the "faith." They serve as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, in whom alone, "God can be just, and justify the ungodly."

We have thus presented a brief and rapid view of that mutual harmony which prevails between the discoveries of science and the revelations of the Bible, in their broad outline, their general tone and spirit, their tendency and ultimate results.

That amidst this general harmony there should nevertheless arise apparent discrepancies and real difficulties, difficulties more easy to be discovered than to be solved, lies *manifestly* in the nature of the case, and will surprise no one who remembers those strange and inexplicable anomalies that present themselves in the phenomena of nature; those irregularities in the movements of the universe that seem to threaten its destruction; those perturbations from unseen causes in the orbits of our planets; those huge chasms in the order of the creation, where its progress seems to be suddenly arrested, its harmony interrupted, its best established analogies *all defiled*; yet that, in every instance, unwavering confidence in the very harmony thus apparently violated, has suggested the *true solution*; and the solution, when attained, has confirmed the harmony; thus, by progressive approximation, establishing the *scientific assurance* that *each apparent* anomaly will hereafter be merged in some higher law, and the difficulties which our ignorance has suggested will be removed, *as heretofore*, by our advancing knowledge. It is manifestly impossible, that *any human* theory should be able to embrace and harmonize all the phenomena of the physical or moral universe, for the human mind is finite; and the scheme of the universe, devised by an infinite intelligence, if not absolutely infinite, like its author, is yet vast, beyond all powers of conception; including all worlds and all systems, with their myriad inhabitants, and their manifold relations; stretching over the whole infinitude of space, and eternity of duration. Hence, the very advance in science which solves one difficulty, often discovers many more to be solved; for our ignorance and our knowledge seem to be inseparable correlatives; the opposite poles of the same mysterious potency; and every enlargement of the *boundaries of the known*, is a correspondent extension of the *vast and limitless unknown*. Let him, therefore, declaim against apparent difficulties in the Bible, whose theory

can comprehend and explain all the mysteries in the phenomena of nature, and in the existence and character of the God of nature! For, let it not be forgotten, that if the Bible be from God, then there is not only a probability, but a certainty, that it will be liable to *the same objections*, and from *the same causes*, which are urged against his existence, and his character—his natural government and his moral legislation. That mysterious and incomprehensible eternity of God, without a beginning and without an end, present through all time, yet without relation to time! That omnipresence of God, pervading all space, yet bearing no relation to it—intensely present in *the totality* of his attributes in the most distant portions of his universe, at once, at every moment in time, and every point in space! That invisible and fearful moral government of his, the unchangeable enemy of sin, encompassing us on every side, with its terrible instances of moral retribution here, and premonitions of still more fearful punishments hereafter! That absolute sovereignty in the distribution of his favors amongst men, guided by infinite wisdom doubtless, yet according to a law which baffles our scrutiny, and heeds not our murmurs! Let any man consider for a moment what are the ordinary objections against divine revelation, and he will find that they are principally aimed at the being, or character, or government of God, as revealed in the works of nature—and amount to this, that the Bible is *the book of God*, the transcript of his wisdom, holiness and justice, imbued with his spirit, and overshadowed by the awful majesty of his mysterious being. The most fearful tendency of scientific skepticism, metaphysical and physical, in modern times, *has been and is*, to deny the existence of a personal God, and by necessary consequence, the reality of all moral distinctions, and all moral obligation. The transcendental pantheist does not aim his blows at Christianity exclusively or mainly, but at the existence of a Deity, distinct from the universe which he has made; and of a moral government distinct from the blind agency of natural law. He, *even*, patronizes Christianity, and honors Christ as the "*Divine Man*," the latest and most wonderful manifestation of the infinite in the finite. The school of Lamarck, Oken, and other advocates of the development hypothesis, only touch Christianity as they may be supposed to sap our faith in the existence of God, or the natural immortality of the soul of man. The celebrated argument of Hume against the miracles of the Bible, is equally conclusive against the miracles of creation, and all the

miracles of geology ; and its fundamental principle is accordingly applied (in his treatise on the natural history of religion) to annihilate our belief in the existence of a God. And what is still more to our purpose here, it will be found in the course of our discussion, that the most serious geological objection against the truth of the Bible is based upon a similar assumption. Indeed, we feel assured that *all* objections against the Bible, theoretical or practical, whether *uttered* by philosophy, or indistinctly *felt* in common life, are based upon the vague, almost unconscious impression, that "*There is no God ;*" and could we produce upon the minds of men the profound and abiding conviction of *his existence* and *his presence*, of the awful majesty that overshadows us, the omniscient eye that rests upon us, the infinite holiness that encompasses us on every side, all the illusions of skepticism would spontaneously vanish. Hence, the great difficulty *in practical life* is not to lead men to believe the miracles of the gospel, but that still more stupendous miracle, which by day and night is around us everywhere, of an omnipresent Creator, and an invisible and fearful moral government ; *and in philosophy*, to disenchant mankind of that fond imagination of *a law* without an *intelligent legislator*, and A COURSE OF NATURE independent of an AUTHOR OF NATURE.

The multitude of objections against Christianity—the variety of the sources from which they are derived—the earnestness, ingenuity and confidence with which they have been urged—the learning, eloquence and genius by which they have been sustained, have led many to conclude without the labor of investigation, that a book against which so many objections had been urged, is one of suspicious and objectionable character, and of *doubtful authority* at best. As well might it be contended, that the granite ramparts of some rock-bound coast, which, for eighteen successive centuries, have hurled back the billows that dashed in impotent fury at their feet, are of *doubtful durability and strength*. Far from being legitimate occasion of alarm to the Christian, or idle exultation to the unbeliever, they really constitute an independent and most powerful argument for its divine original. For, if the Bible be from God, then it is divine and perfect truth, and cannot possibly harmonize with erroneous or defective views on any subjects which it treats ; and *must, therefore*, from the very necessity of the case, meet new objections from each new phase of human science, in all its revolutions, necessarily imper-

fect still. Now Christianity comes forth before the world with high pretensions. She presents a broad front to every assailant. As a theory of God and man, of time and eternity, and of the universe itself, it sweeps a stupendous circle of thought—stretches over the whole wide field of human knowledge—touches upon all the varied phenomena of the intellectual, moral and physical creation—embraces, in historical narrative and prophetic delineation, the whole history of *the world as God's world*, and of the *human race as one in origin* and destiny, through a period of more than three thousand years, from the earliest patriarchal ages to the Roman emperors, and thence to the end of time—thus presenting an *almost infinitude* of points, where it can be confronted with the matured results of human investigation in every department of inquiry. *With all this*, she comes before the world, and demands universal belief and universal obedience. She courts investigation—she invites scrutiny—she challenges discussion—she throws down her gauntlet of defiance to every antagonist—and, *in every age*, a thousand foes have leaped forward to mingle in the assault. They come from every quarter, and of every character—each hoary superstition, each beardless science. They wield every weapon of refined or barbarous warfare, drawn from the domain of history or fiction, of imagination or of fact. They dig into the bowels of the earth, and hew the granite mountain—they explore the unfathomed depths of space—search the sepulchres of buried nations—decipher hieroglyphical inscriptions in temples, pyramids and tombs—study the fabulous genealogies, and fabulous astronomies of races whose sublime progenitors, according to their own account, must have been contemporaries of the Saurian tribes of an earlier world.

There is not a false religion upon earth that could bear the test of such a scrutiny for a single year—that would not vanish instantaneously before the light of a single science. *The telescope and microscope* alone would suffice to overthrow all the ancient religions of Farther Asia. That the sacred Scriptures should have come forth not only unharmed, but victorious from all the conflicts of eighteen centuries; that not one of their fifty writers has ever uttered or suggested an opinion contrary to any of those facts which the lapse of twenty-three hundred years has revealed; that each new discovery in science—each fact drawn forth from pyramid or pillar, from sepulchre or coin, from mutilated monument or half-defaced inscription, should only serve to throw new

light upon their meaning, and add new evidence to their credibility, is, perhaps, the completest specimen which the whole range of human learning has yet afforded of the truth of a theory established by millions of independent harmonies; and mounting up, in their combined and multiple result, to billions of probabilities in its favor, with absolutely nothing to the contrary.

The history of these objections against Christianity would be, indeed, her proudest vindication. Geology herself, in all her cycles, does not present more curious specimens of extinct species, than these successive infidel objections, long buried and forgotten beneath the huge masses of argument and learning, with which consecrated genius has overwhelmed and preserved them—at once their monument and sepulchre. First, it was objected, against the genuineness of the sacred records—"That we have not the very works of the evangelists and apostles themselves." Sacred learning has distinctly proven that these identical writings existed, and were read in public assemblies throughout the civilized world, during the first century—were quoted by numerous writers, their immediate successors, during the three succeeding centuries, in such profusion, that the whole New Testament, in every essential fact and doctrine, might be reconstructed from the quotations by these various authors; thus presenting a larger amount of testimony, to this single book, in the course of three centuries, than could be gathered, *from all the writers, of all centuries*, in behalf of the Greek and Roman classics, *all combined*. It was then objected, against their "*uncorrupted preservation*," "That they had been transmitted, through many centuries, by means of various manuscripts, written by different hands; and that Mill, and other critics, had discovered a corresponding number of various readings, casting thus a serious doubt over the integrity and authority of the received text." The most profound investigations of modern times have proven that all these doubtful readings are really of slight importance; and, even were each admitted, or the passages in which they occur all stricken from the Bible, not one essential doctrine of our faith would be, in the slightest degree, affected; and the great fabric of sacred truth would remain as complete in its proportions, its symmetry and strength, as some vast cathedral, from whose strong foundation, or lofty dome, the hand of folly, or the lapse of time, had crumbled the minutest portion of the cement, which

served to unite, but did not constitute, the massive marble of which the building was composed.

Driven by successive defeats from the sure *terra firma* of historical testimony, infidelity took refuge amidst the hieroglyphics of Egypt and the astronomy of the Hindoos. Bailly proved, to his own satisfaction, from the record of eclipses amongst the Hindoos, that the existence of man upon earth was many thousand years earlier than the Mosaic history would allow; and this whimsical vagary of a visionary man, though hooted out of France by the wit of Voltaire and the science of D'Alembert, was long an established article of faith amongst the enlightened infidels of England, Scotland and America. Mathematical demonstration and historic testimony have since combined to show that these eclipses were calculated *clumsily*, backwards, for ages that were past, and cannot be dated so early as the commencement of the Christian era. Some French savans, attached to Napoleon's army, during the expedition into Egypt, discovered mysterious zodiacs, at Denderah and Esneh. Though unable to decipher the hieroglyphics with certainty, one thing was indisputable—that the zodiacs were constructed at the lowest, 17,000, probably 18,000, years ago; and the writer well remembers how his boyish faith was shaken by the bold assertions and contemptuous sneers of the Edinburgh Review, against all who hesitated to receive their ocular utterance, founded, as they said, upon mathematical demonstration. Champollion and his co-laborers have read the inscription, and find that it belongs to the age of Tiberius Cæsar. Comparative anatomy, meantime, had become, through the genius of Cuvier, an important field of investigation, and presented many striking examples of analogical resemblance between the structure of man and that of other animated beings. Professor Oken, descending, one day, the Hartz mountains, beheld the "beautiful blanched skull of a hind. I picked it up—regarded it intensely," says he—"the thing was done." "Since that time, the skull has been regarded as a vertebral column." Rapidly, over all Europe, and throughout all scientific circles, spread the bold hypothesis that the skull is but a development of the spine; part of that other more comprehensive theory of development which represents man—intellectual, moral, immortal man—as the development of the brute—itself the development of some monad, or mollusc, which has been smitten into life by

the action of electricity upon a gelatinous monad.* This vertebral portion of a brutal theory, sprung from the skull of a beast, long since emptied of its brains, had passed, "like a flood of lightning," through his *disorganized brain*; and he, very naturally concluded that *all human intelligence* is the result of an

* It has recently been asserted, with great confidence, that "There is no connection between Oken's discovery of the hind's skull and the development theory. *All that Oken inferred from the skull is now ESTABLISHED TRUTH.*"

Our only reply is contained in the following quotations, which express the views of three individuals of at least respectable acquirements in several departments of Natural Science: Sir David Brewster, Agazziz and Hugh Miller.

"The facts and reasonings contained in this chapter," says Brewster, as quoted and endorsed by Agazziz, "will, we doubt not, SHAKE TO ITS VERY BASE THE BOLD THEORY OF PROFESSOR OKEN, which had been so generally received abroad, and which is beginning to find supporters, even among the solid thinkers of our own country. In the *Isis* of 1818, Professor Lorenz Oken has given the following account of the hypothesis, to which we allude. 'In August, 1806,' says he, 'I made a journey over the Hartz. I slid down through the wood on the south side, and straight before me, at my very feet, lay a most beautiful blanché skull of a hind. I picked it up, turned it round, regarded it intensely, the thing was done. It is a vertebral column, struck me, like a flood of lightning, 'to the marrow and bone;' and, since that time, the skull has been regarded as a vertebral column.' This remarkable hypothesis was at first received with enthusiasm by the naturalists of Germany, and, among others, by Agazziz, who, from grounds not of a geological kind, HAS MORE RECENTLY REJECTED IT. Whatever support this hypothesis might have expected from geology, has been struck from beneath it by this remarkable chapter (4th) of Mr. Miller's work: and though anatomists may for awhile maintain it, under the influence of so high an authority as Professor Owen, we are much mistaken if it ever forms a part of the creed of the geologist. Mr. Miller has, indeed, by a most skilful examination of the heads of the earliest vertebrata, known to geologists, proved that the hypothesis derives no support from the structure which they exhibit; and Agazziz has, *even upon general principles, rejected it as untenable.*" (Memoir of Hugh Miller. By Louis Agazziz. Page 29-30, incorporating Dr. Brewster's Review in the North British.) The chapter on "Footprints," to which Dr. Brewster here refers, is entitled, "Cerebral Development of the earlier vertebrata;" and treats this theory of Oken throughout as only one form of the more general "Development Hypothesis." Indeed, one can scarcely comprehend how there should be "No connection between a theory of Cerebral Development and the Development Theory."

"According to Professor Oken," proceeds Dr. Brewster, "one of the ablest supporters of the development theory, 'there are two kinds of generation in the world: the creation proper, and the generation that is sequent thereupon; or the original and secondary generation. Consequently no organism has been created of larger size than an infusorial point. No organism is, or ever has been created, which is not microscopic. Whatever is large has not been created, but *developed*. Man has not been created, but developed.' Hence, it follows that during the great geological period, when race after race was destroyed, and new forms of life called into being, 'Nature had been pregnant with the human race;' and that immortal, intellectual man, is but the development of the brute." (Memoir, p. 27.) Of this general hypothesis, Oken's theory of Cerebral Development is but the specific exemplification. "When we find it urged by at least one eminent assertor of the *Development Hypothesis*—Professor Oken—that light was the main agent in the development of nerve—that the nerves ranged in pairs, in turn developed the vertebrae, each vertebra being but 'the periphery or envelope of a pair of nerves;' and that the nerves of those four senses of smell, sight, taste and hearing, which, according to the Professor, 'make up the head,' originated the four cranial vertebrae, which constitute the skull, it becomes us to test the central idea (elsewhere called 'the ideal exemplar'), thus converted into a sort of historic myth by the realities of actual history. What, then, let us inquire, is the real history of the cerebral development of the vertebrata, as recorded in the rocks of the earlier geologic periods?" (Footprints, p. 64.)

And again (on page 94), as the result of the whole discussion. "But while we find

electric spark passed through an unorganized gelatinous monad. It has been well remarked, by an able writer, that the strongest argument in favor of this theory is, that any human being should ever have been found willing to adopt, much more to assert with eagerness, this high relationship to the ourang-outang and ape. Congeniality of sympathies may prove community of origin.

"A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Hooted from the earth, the development hypothesis took refuge amidst the distant nebulae of the further heavens. Driven thence by Lord Rosse's telescope, it returned again to the earth; and the last sad record of its tragic fate assures us that, hemmed and jammed in, at last, between granite pyramids and huge masses of old red sandstone, it was shivered to atoms by a blow from the stone hammer of a Caledonian quarrier: and, of all its prodigious "*Creations*," now, no "*Vestiges*" remain.

It will now be perceived how intimate is the relation of these general remarks to that particular discussion which is our design, hereafter, to prosecute. Christianity does not present herself to-day before the scientific world to seek its patronage or propitiate its favor. She stands not before us as a discredited witness, to bolster up a doubtful reputation; but as a witness whose evidence has been tested, for eighteen centuries, in a thousand ways—that has been followed, scrutinized, confronted at every point—subjected to every torture which power could inflict, or ingenious cross-examination could devise yet *always vindicated*; and, in proportion to the severity of that ordeal through which she has passed, and the multitude of the tests previously endured, is the antecedent probability in her favor. She comes *not* as a trembling culprit, on trial for her life; but as a queen, with the long train of her attendant evidences,—prophetical, historical, miraculous—and the hosts of her conquered and captive foes, to vindicate her fair fame, establish her title to the crown, and claim

place in that geological history, in which every character is an organism for the 'ideal exemplar' of Professor Owen, we find *no* place in it for the vertebræ-developed skull of Professor Oken. The true genealogy of the head runs in an entirely different line. The nerves of the cerebral senses *did not*, we find, originate cerebral vertebræ, seeing that the heads of the first and second geologic periods had their cerebral nerves, but not their cerebral vertebræ; and that what are regarded as cerebral vertebræ, appear, for the first time, not in the early fishes, but in the reptiles of the coal formation. The line of succession, through the fish, indicated by the continental assessor of the development hypothesis, is a line cut off."

The "Ideal Exemplar," the ARCHETYPAL CONCEPTION IN THE DIVINE MIND, is one thing, the self-developing power of nature is totally different.

universal dominion. The question is not, then, at the present day, when any single science is arrayed against Christianity, whether, *with our existing knowledge of the facts of this solitary science*, there be not an equipoise of evidence, or even a preponderance of argument, against that view which harmonizes with the Bible history. But, whether there be such an overwhelming preponderance in favor of the opposite opinion as will neutralize that whole long array of cumulative evidences, external and internal, historical, miraculous, prophetic, upon which the credibility of the gospel is established?

And here it would be an easy, and, perhaps, in a purely polemical discussion, a legitimate procedure, to plead to the jurisdiction of these sciences—to deny their authority as judges—their competency as witnesses—*because of their immature age and discordant testimony*. We might say to these discordant sciences, “Settle your own disputes;” to these juvenile sciences, “Tarry at Jericho till your beards be grown.” We might array system against system, and theory against theory, which have arisen in the geologic world in rapid and brilliant succession, each as arrogant, as impious, and as transient as its predecessors; and show that the same changes are in progress *now*; that, upon many questions of fundamental importance in this discussion, the ablest geologists are arrayed against each other. That each new decade of the last half-century has produced its new facts, and the corresponding modification of existing theories, until the same writer is found, not only in opposition to other, but, both as to facts and theory, in contradiction with himself; and, having thus thrown suspicion upon the science itself, conclude that the objections which it offers are to be treated with indifference, as irrelevant or premature. But such is not our method. Of Mosaical cosmogonies, and Fairholme geologies, and aspects of the universe, with their pre-Adamic Adams, we know little. To what particular geologic formation they belong, would be, perhaps, a curious question to a serious thinker. Perhaps they might be considered as examples and illustrations of that peculiar order of “progressive degradation,” which Hugh Miller has recently described, with that keen wit of his, and keener logic—all whose features are twisted awry, as by some strange dislocation, with one great *central eye*, fixed intensely upon some ancient commentary; another *lateral*, and turned asquint towards geology. We are willing to receive truth, from whatever quarter. Amidst

much doubtful and audacious speculation, there are, in geology, many ascertained and indubitable facts. Amongst these, we are ready to acknowledge a pre-existing condition of our globe, as evidenced by successive species of animated beings, whose remains are found imbedded in successive strata, beneath the surface of the earth. And yet, even a candid inquirer may surely ask, in a discussion such as this, where many disputed questions are connected, directly or remotely, with our subject—Amidst this conflict of opinions, what shall I believe? You seek to take my feet from off the rock of ages, and now, while the ground shifts perpetually beneath me, as with the quiverings of an earthquake, or the heavings of internal fires, where shall I stand? When doctors disagree, whom shall I follow? Shall I follow Buckland, in his “*Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*,” supported by Cuvier, De Luc, Dolomien, and other distinguished geologists, when he supposes that he has discovered indubitable traces of the historic, Mosaical deluge; or Buckland, in his “*Bridgewater Treatise*,” where he seems, at least, to modify his views? Shall I follow Hugh Miller, when, in his “*Old Red Sandstone*,” he discovers “that the ichthyolites of the *lower* old red sandstone were of comparatively small size, while those of the upper Old Red were of great bulk;” that the “system began with an age of dwarfs, and ended with an age of giants?” Or shall I follow him in his “*Foot-Prints*,” where, at the very base of the system, he “*discovers one of the most colossal of its giants*,” and instead of an ascending order of progressive development, asserts a descending order of progressive degradation? Shall I follow the “*Catastrophists*,” or the “*Uniformitarians*,”—those who see, everywhere, the evidence of terrible convulsions, that shook and rent the earth, and ages of tempests that heaved the ancient ocean; or those who deny all great catastrophes, and assert the absolute uniformity of the course of nature, through all geological cycles? In regard to the change of climate, apparent on our globe, shall I adopt the astronomic, or geologic theory? Concerning the origin of our vast mountain ranges, shall I adopt the ordinary theory of scientific geologists, of a *sudden* upheaval by some great paroxysm of nature? Or that asserted by Mr. Lyell, of slow and gradual elevation, through centuries of comparative repose? In regard to the *central heat* of the earth, now no longer disputed, or disputable, shall I adopt the theory of La Place and Herschell, and all the bolder theorists, concerning a great ocean of internal fire,

not many miles below the surface, and deepening in intensity as you approach the centre? Or the chemical theory of Lyell and Sir Humphrey Davy, which attributes all to the combination and decomposition of various elements, beneath the influence of some great subterranean current of electricity, the earth itself being as one vast voltaic pile? Shall I agree with those who consider geology and astronomy as *parts of one great comprehensive science*, each the necessary complement of the other, and both under the guidance of wide-extending cosmical laws, which operate, if not similarly, at least analogously, throughout the visible universe? Or shall I, with Mr. Lyell, divorce these cognate sciences, and build up geology upon the basis of its own peculiar and independent phenomena? Or, lastly, shall I follow Mr. Lyell, when he asserts the *absolute uniformity of the course of nature*;—or when he *denies this uniformity*, and acknowledges, in the creation of man, the direct interposition of an extraordinary power, superior to all the agencies either before or since existing in nature, and really divine? Or, finally, shall I follow him into that logical catastrophe into which he plunges, through horror of the physical; when, startled by the absurdity of a *uniformity which is not uniform*, he seeks to relieve the difficulty by asserting, with laudable impartiality, an *extraordinary agency which is not extraordinary*; and then with true grammatical precision, deducing from this double negative, a single affirmative—in attempting to reconcile the two annihilates both?

But however great the diversity of sentiment upon these and other questions bearing directly and indirectly upon the Christian argument, on one point, at least, ALL MEN ARE AGREED: *there is not a geological theory extant which would not be overthrown, and the whole science revolutionized, by the discovery of a single new and extraordinary fact.*

This is not the language of a foe, but of its wisest, most judicious, and most competent defenders. Witness the last utterance from the geologic oracle (Miller's "Foot-Prints," page 313): "It (geology) furnishes us with no clue by which to unravel the unapproachable mysteries of creation; these mysteries belong to the wondrous Creator, and to him only. We attempt to theorize upon them, and to reduce them to law, and all nature rises up against us in our presumptuous rebellion. A stray splinter of cone-bearing wood—a fish's skull or tooth—the vertebra of a rep-

tile—the humerus of a bird—the jaw of a quadruped—*all—any* of these things, weak and insignificant as they may seem, become in such a quarrel, too strong for us and our theory—the puny fragment in the grasp of truth forms as irresistible a weapon as the dry bone did in that of Samson of old; and our slaughtered sophisms lie, piled up, ‘heaps upon heaps,’ before it.” Is it possible, then, that such a theory, which would thus be annihilated by a single fact, within the limits of its own appropriate domain—which would be brained by the humerus of a sparrow, or the tooth of a fish—shall be allowed to exercise so despotic a control beyond it as to annihilate the whole array of evidence in favor of the Bible, *within us* and *without*—to erase the mighty footsteps of the gospel, as she has gone abroad over the world, to sanctify and to bless—to hush the voice of conscience—to stifle the sense of guilt—to quench the hopes of immortality? Should such a theory seek to contradict our consciousness—to reverse the principles of morals—deny the great facts of civil and sacred history, and overthrow the foundations of our faith—without the slightest hesitation, we would reject the theory, and hold to the fact; clasp the Bible to our hearts, and reject geology! Such *would be* our conclusion, on the broadest principles of the inductive philosophy—which ever prefers the well-known, familiar, indubitable fact, whether of outward observation or inward consciousness, and the direct, immediate, intuitive convictions of the mind, before all the plausibilities of ingenious hypothesis, based upon remote or doubtful or complicated facts, and subtle ratiocinations. But we do not believe that the *ascertained facts* or *received principles* of geology do thus contradict the Bible; on the contrary, we are convinced that they have done important service to the cause of theology, both natural and revealed; and furnished to each some of its most conclusive arguments and sublimest illustrations.

The first coincidence which we shall notice between the teachings of geology and the revelations of the Bible, is upon a vital and fundamental question in the historical Evidences of Christianity —“ *The Possibility and Credibility of Miracles.*” GEOL-
OGY HAS UTTERLY ANNIHILATED HUME’S CELEBRATED ARGU-
MENT AGAINST THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE.

The Bible asserts the occasional interposition of divine and supernatural power for moral purposes in the ordinary course of physical events. This, infidelity, in all its forms, denies and de

rides. The atheist denies the existence of such a power, and asserts an infinite series of successive beings. The pantheist asserts a progressive development from the lowest gelatinous monad to the highest animated existence, through the *spontaneous agency of natural causes*. The deist acknowledges the existence of this power, but denies his immediate agency in the universe, which he has created.

To all these geology replies by pointing to the same great series of wonderful discoveries. To the atheist, she says—"I have followed up your 'Eternal Series' for six thousand years, and there it abruptly terminates." To the pantheist, she says, "I have followed up your 'Ascending Series of Progressive Development,' and find it contradicted by ALL THE FACTS. I find a giant, where you had asserted a dwarf; and in my lowest strata, examples of a high organization." She points to the MYRIAD MIRACLES recorded indelibly upon the "everlasting rocks," and says to the deist: "These are the 'foot-prints' of the Creator, whose existence you admit, and whose direct agency you deny. Each new formation, and each animated species, whose remains are perpetuated there, is cumulative evidence of the miracle which brought it into being." To all she says, in the language of her latest, and one of her most gifted advocates: "What say you to the relics that stand out, in such bold relief, from the rocks beside us, in their character, as the results of MIRACLE? The perished tribes and races which they represent, *all began* to exist. There is no truth which science can more conclusively demonstrate than that they *all had a beginning*. The infidel, who, in this late age of the world, would attempt falling back upon the fiction of 'An Infinite Series,' would be laughed to scorn. THEY ALL BEGAN to be. But how? No true geologist holds to the 'Development Hypothesis.' It is resigned to sciologists and smatterers; and there is but one other alternative. They began to be through THE MIRACLE OF CREATION. Through the evidence furnished by these rocks, we are shut down to the belief in miracle. Hume is at length answered by the severe truths of the stony science." ("*Foot-Prints*," by Hugh Miller, p. 301, 302.) Such is the language of one who is rapidly assuming the first position amongst contemporary geologists; and for whom Brewster, and Buckland, and Lyell, and Murchison, and Agazziz, have all expressed the profoundest admiration. Such is, without exception, the language of scientific geologists in our day.

This theory of Hume was revived during the year 1815 in the Edinburgh Review, the same journal which had patronized the dreams of Bailly, long after the wit of Voltaire and the science of D'Alembert had hooted them from France, and had deduced such prodigious conclusions from the zodiacs of Denderah and Ezneh. But scarce three years had passed away before the progress of geological science forced that infallible dictator in literature and science *openly to retract and refute its own superficial infidelity*. Our limits will authorize a brief extract only from the Edinburgh Review (No. 104). "The recent discoveries in geology lead IRRESISTIBLY to another observation. It is one of still greater importance; for it seems to us to be FATAL TO THE THEORY (Hume's) which we have presumed to call a misconception of the uniformity of causation, as signifying *an unalterable sequence of causes and effects*. Those who have read neither Cuvier nor Lyell, are yet aware that the human race did not exist from all eternity. Certain strata have been identified with the period of man's first appearance. We cannot do better than quote from Dr. Pritchard's excellent book (Natural History of Man), his comment, and application of this fact. 'Mankind had a beginning; since we can look back to the period when the surface on which they live began to exist. We have only to go back in imagination to that age to represent to ourselves that, at a certain time, there existed nothing on this globe but unformed elements; and that, in the next period, there had begun to move, and breathe in a particular spot, a human creature; and we shall already have admitted, perhaps, the *most astonishing miracle* recorded in the whole compass of the sacred writings.' No greater changes," continues the reviewer, "can be well imagined, in the ordinary sequence of cause and effect, such as constituted the laws of nature as they had been previously established, than took place on the day when man was, for the first time, seen amongst the creatures of the earth."

Even Mr. Lyell, whose fundamental tenet is, "The absolute uniformity of the course of nature, through all geologic epochs,"—the continued agency of the same causes, "*the same both in kind and degree*" in "the organic and inorganic world,"—recoils from the legitimate results of his own favorite principle, when he comes to man;—and acknowledges here, "a real departure from the antecedent course of physical events;" "an anomalous deviation from the previously established order of things;" "a peculiar

and unprecedented agency, long after other parts of the animate and inanimate world existed ; which affords ground for concluding that THE EXPERIENCE, DURING THOUSANDS OF AGES, OF ALL THE EVENTS WHICH MAY HAPPEN ON THIS GLOBE, would not enable a philosopher to speculate, with confidence, concerning future contingencies." This "anomalous deviation from the established order of things," he attributes, on the next page, to a "moral source"—"*new relations between the material and moral worlds*"—"circumstances not of a physical, but a moral nature." (See "*Principles of Geology*," p. 257-260.)

Here, then, we have the triumph of Christianity—complete—decisive—final—irreversible ; and on the field selected by her adversaries. The whole vast array of Christian Evidences, historical, prophetic, miraculous, remains untouched ; with nothing to resist their combined and overwhelming power. And we might leave the subject here. The centre is broken ; the rest is an affair of the wings ; the skirmishing of outposts, when the citadel has been carried ; the pattering of small arms, when the strong battery has been silenced, and the heavy artillery spiked.

And it might serve perhaps to quiet the anxious fears of timid Christians, trembling for their faith, to know that all this has been conclusively accomplished through the discoveries of geology.

Nor ought we to omit in this rapid sketch all notice of another stronghold of infidelity, where she took refuge long amidst the mists and obscurity of distant ages ; and from which she has been irrecoverably driven by the discoveries of geology. I allude to the supposed inaccuracy of the Bible in regard to—

2d. The recent origin of man. All ancient history, except the Bible, terminates, as you trace it upwards, in an age of fabulous mythology, where all looms large in the distance, all is exaggeration, and all is prodigy. Years are exaggerated into centuries ; centuries into thousands of years, or incalculable ages ; warrior chieftains expand into heroes, heroes into demi-gods, and demi-gods, at last, are converted into gods. Thus, excited imagination and national vanity have combined, in all ancient chronicles, to multiply the numbers and extend the duration of successive dynasties, and give to the founders of various nations an indefinite antiquity, which is lost in the dimness of the past, and allies them in lineage, and in the era of their existence, with the immortal gods themselves. The Bible alone, with the calm sobriety and

dignity of truth, comes forward with its simple narrative of men and of events, without apology and without exaggeration, giving minutely names and dates, the period of the birth and death of successive individuals; and as the result of the most accurate examination of her records, it appears that the existence of man upon the earth cannot extend much beyond a period of six thousand years. At this all infidelity stands aghast, and contemptuously exclaims, "The Bible is contradicted by all human records, by astronomical calculations, by zodiacs, still remaining; by that strong conviction of the human bosom, which leads all men, spontaneously, to attribute an indefinitely long duration to the present condition of the world." We have already shown how mathematical and astronomical science had combined to refute one part of this objection; and how an improved knowledge of hieroglyphics had swept away another. But to all of them geology has offered a direct and decisive contradiction, and a confirmation as decisive of the sacred record.

"I need not dwell," says Mr. Lyell, "on the proofs of the low antiquity of our species; for it is not controverted by any experienced geologist; indeed the real difficulty consists in tracing back the signs of man's existence upon earth—to that comparatively recent period, when species now his contemporaries began greatly to predominate." "From the concurrent testimony of history and tradition we learn that portions of Europe, now the most fertile, and most completely subjected to the dominion of man, were less than three thousand years ago, covered with forests, and the abode of wild beasts. The archives of nature are in perfect accordance with historical records." (*Principles of Geology*, p. 249, 250.) Cuvier, having reached the same conclusion by a minute and careful examination of a vast variety of geological facts enumerated in his "Essays on the Theory of the Earth," remarks: "This result is one of the best established, and least attended to, in rational zoology; and it is so much the more valuable, as it connects natural and civil history together in one uninterrupted series." Thus fades into dim oblivion—never to reappear—this once celebrated objection of a philosophic infidelity.

It is a remarkable fact, that wherever the assaults of infidelity have been most confident and most contemptuous, with the loudest flourish of trumpets, and the boldest tones of defiance, *there* the progress of scientific inquiry has most completely unmasked her pretensions, and confirmed the credibility of the sacred

Scriptures. Especially is this true in regard to that permanent topic of infidel derision,

“THE FINAL CONFLAGRATION.”

Whatever may be our theory of the earth's “Internal Heat,” whether we believe in a great ocean of central fire, increasing, as we descend, to an intensity of heat far surpassing that of melted iron, with Sir W. Herschell, and all the bolder theorists; or attribute all the phenomena, with Lyell and Sir Humphrey Davy, to the influence of chemical agencies—to the combination and decomposition of various elements, beneath the constant play of subterranean currents of electricity, the earth being as one vast voltaic pile; whether we consider geology and astronomy as complementary parts of one great, comprehensive science, founded upon wide cosmical relations; and observe the numerous analogies between our own sun, and planet, and the other central suns and planetary worlds around us, with the modern followers of La Place and Herschell; or with Mr. Lyell, divorce these cognate sciences, and eschewing these wider analogies, build up geology upon the basis of its own independent and separate phenomena; *on any theory, and with any process of investigation, the facts remain the same*; and the conclusion, not the result of doubtful disputation, but of scientific, and almost irresistible deduction, is openly proclaimed by every competent authority, and Mr. Lyell with the rest: *that the termination of our present system by a terrific conflagration, is an extremely probable, according to Mr. Lyell, AN INEVITABLE CATASTROPHE.* The facts on which this conclusion has been based, are so numerous, so various in their character, and derived from quarters so different and remote, that it would be impossible to enumerate them all within the limits assigned to this whole discussion. They are derived from mines, from artesian wells; from earthquakes and volcanoes; from hot springs, from the elevation of mountain ranges, the overflow of igneous rocks, covering vast regions of the earth; and taking a wider range, look to the condition of other worlds, to the moon, the sun, the planetary globes, the comets, and the fixed stars.

We must confine ourselves to the statement of results generally admitted.

“The observation made by Arago in 1821 that the *deepest artesian wells are the warmest*, threw great light,” says Humboldt,

"on the origin of Thermal springs; and *on the establishment of the law, that terrestrial heat increases with increasing depth.*" A vast variety of experiments have since been made with the greatest precision by distinguished philosophers in the mines of various regions of the globe—in France, England, Switzerland, Peru, Saxony, and Mexico, and with the same general result. The average ratio of increase as you descend from the surface to the centre, is (over all measured distances) about 1° Fahrenheit to 44 or 54 feet. "If this increase can be reduced to arithmetical relations, it will follow, that a stratum of granite would be in a state of fusion at a depth of nearly twenty-one geographical miles, or between four and five times the elevation of the Himalaya Mountains, and the water from the hot springs between Porto Cabello and Nueva Valencia, at 205·5° of temperature, would issue from a source 7140 feet, or above two miles in depth." (*Cos.* vol. i. 174–221. See *Lyell*, v. ii. 433, 434.) This calculation proceeds on the supposition of a progressive increase of heat in the unobserved depths of the earth, a theory adopted by the great majority of modern philosophers.

But this internal heat, FROM WHATEVER SOURCE DERIVED, reaches to vast and unfathomable depths, and is of universal extent, far beneath the outer surface of our globe. TO THIS, HOWEVER GENERATED, are attributed all the great changes in the condition of the earth; those huge mountain ranges, the Alps, the Appenines, the Pyrenees, the Himalaya, the Ural, the Alleghany, and the Andes; those Thermal springs of unvarying temperature, which burst from the ground, in every climate, and on every continent; those igneous rocks, once in a state of manifest fusion, which underlie all our more superficial strata, and burst upward from the depths below, deluging whole regions many hundred thousand square miles in extent, till the earth is covered "many hundred feet in depth" beneath the fiery inundation, and its whole "surface roughened, and mottled by these Plutonic masses, as thickly as the skin of the leopard by its spots." (*Foot-Prints*, p. 312.)

The magnificent extent and terrific energy of this internal power—if not infinite—at any rate absolutely immeasurable and irresistible—is manifested in those mountain ranges of 4000 miles in extent (as the Andes), where a solitary giant, Cotopaxi, lifts his head 19,000 feet above the level of the ocean; the flames from his crater rising full half a mile above his summit, and the

scoria, and huge rocks thrown out by his explosions, and scattered over many leagues around, "WOULD FORM, WERE THEY HEAPED TOGETHER, A COLOSSAL MOUNTAIN." (*Humboldt's Researches*, i. 115-125.) It will assist us to form some approximate conception of the illimitable energy employed in these stupendous upheavals; to contemplate a slight elevation over a comparatively limited area, which has been reduced by Mr. Lyell within the compass of human calculation. In the year 1822, an extent of country in Chili equal, perhaps, to one hundred thousand square miles, was elevated by a single earthquake *three feet* (not 19,000) on an average, and Mr. Lyell gives us in the following words the result of his calculations: "The whole thickness of rock between the subterranean foci of volcanic action and the surface of Chili MAY BE MANY MILES OR LEAGUES DEEP. Say that the thickness was *only two miles, even then* the mass which changed place and rose three feet, being 200,000 cubic miles in volume, *must have exceeded in weight* 363 MILLION PYRAMIDS." (Vol. ii. 305, 306.) He adds immediately, "It would require seventeen centuries and a half before the river Ganges could bear down from the continent into the sea, a mass equal to that gained by the Chilian earthquake." A pyramid presents some definite object to our conception. Three hundred and sixty-three millions are but one million daily for a year. When, however, we begin to calculate the mass thrown out in only two of those overflows of igneous traps—those, namely, in Hindostan and Southern Africa, covering an area, double in extent, and on an average, 200 feet in thickness;—our pyramids are multiplied by 145,200,000,000—and arithmetical numbers become the vague symbols of a power which transcends imagination. But when we attempt to calculate the amount of force necessary to heave up those mountain masses, varying from 3000 to 25,000 feet in height, and stretching over several thousand miles in extent; when we seek to pile Vesuvius upon Etna, and Etna upon Atlas, and Atlas upon Cotopaxi, and this upon Chimborazo, and Chimborazo on the loftiest of the Himalaya, we are lost amidst magnitudes which arithmetic indeed might calculate, and language might imperfectly express, but the human mind is totally unable to comprehend.

What shall we say of those earthquakes which not merely shake the largest mountains to their base, and engulf whole cities with their myriad inhabitants, but rock the solid globe from continent to continent, and heave the deep ocean from its bed; as that

of Lisbon in 1755, which was felt from Lapland to Martinique in the West Indies, and from Greenland across the continent to Africa; while the sea rose from fifteen to sixty feet on different coasts, and the land rose and fell in rapid undulations, as if tossed by the billows of an agitated ocean. (*Lyell*, vol. ii. p. 266-268.) In the second volume of the "Principles," commencing with the 254th page, we have the record of a terrific eruption of lava from Skaptár Jokul, one of the volcanoes of Iceland. We have not room for the startling details, and can give only the general results. The lava rushed from the volcano in two different streams, and in opposite directions, varying in width from one mile to fifteen, and in depth from 100 feet to 600, as it chanced to flow between the high rocky banks of the Skaptar river, or meeting with obstacles in its course, expanded over wide alluvial plains, and formed broad burning lakes, fifteen miles in breadth, and 100 feet in depth. The length of the stream was in one direction forty miles, in the other fifty. It has been calculated that this mass of lava would have covered an area of 1800 square miles to the depth of 150 feet, or 6000 square miles to a depth of near forty feet, producing, of course, a corresponding vacancy beneath the surface. Two thousand of these eruptions occur, as Mr. L. supposes, during each century; and in view of these and other equally important facts, he announces the deliberate conviction, that "*vacuities must also arise from the subtraction of the matter poured out by volcanoes, and from the contraction of argillaceous masses by subterranean heat; and the foundations having been thus weakened, THE EARTH'S CRUST SHAKEN AND RENT BY REITERATED CONVULSIONS, MUST, IN THE COURSE OF TIME, FALL IN.*" (P. 478.)

Indeed, if that theory be true which was propounded by Sir Humphrey Davy, and adopted by Mr. Lyell, that the earth is a great "voltaic pile," carrying on a perpetual process of combination and decomposition, and thus feeding perpetually its own inward fires; and if, as he asserts, the water of the sea resolved into its component elements, oxygen and hydrogen (p. 454-456), and even the atmospheric air (p. 460) rushing in upon these volcanic foci, be the principal sources of their tremendous energy, then, when that great predicted day of conflagration shall arrive, and air, and earth, and sea shall be on fire, the sublime and terrible catastrophe will be but the result of laws and agencies intensified and variously combined, which are now in operation all around

us; "the earth's crust shattered and rent by reiterated concussions, falling in;" the atmospheric air, and the waters of the agitated ocean, rushing into the yawning chasm, and feeding the fury of the flames, which they are unable to extinguish; and well may Mr. Lyell exclaim (vol. ii. 451), quoting the words, and sharing the wonder of Pliny, "*It is the greatest of all miracles, that a single day should pass WITHOUT AN UNIVERSAL CONFLAGRATION.*"*

Such are the conclusions which we are forced to draw, when we confine our attention to phenomena, visible upon, and beneath the surface of our globe. But there is, in our day, a bolder and more comprehensive philosophy; which considers geology and astronomy as branches of one great science; and our earth, not as an isolated world, but as the member of a vast family of worlds, bound together by one common relationship, and under the control, at every stage of their onward development, of great cosmical laws; and when we come thus to connect the phenomena of this, our globe, with the mysterious changes going on, even now, in the universe above us, and the evidence of past revolutions which the telescope affords, our astonishment, which we had shared before, with Pliny, is converted into a loftier and holier emotion; of awed sublimity and devout and reverential adoration. In the sun, in the moon, in the planets, in the comets, and in the distant stars, are evidences, manifold and more clear, in proportion as we can better examine them, of mysterious and portentous changes, springing in all human probability (as their ordinary phenomena indisputably do) from the same inscrutable forces which have produced similar revolutions on our earth. The sublimest portion of our modern astronomy is that which is devoted to the study and elucidation of these extraordinary phenomena. Here too, it may be said, as was said before, that whatever may be the theory, the facts and the legitimate conclusion, are the same.

* The words of Mr. Lyell are so remarkable, and so distinctly to our purpose that the reader will be pleased to find them in the following quotation. (*Principles of Geology*, vol. ii. p. 451.) "When we consider the combustible nature of the elements of the earth, so far as they are known to us; the facility with which their compounds may be decomposed and enter into new combinations; the quantity of heat which they evolve during these processes: when we recollect the expansive power of steam, and that water itself is composed of two gases which, by their union, produce intense heat; when we call to mind the number of explosive and detonating compounds, which have been already discovered; we may be allowed to share the astonishment of Pliny, that a single day should pass without a general conflagration: 'Excedit profecto, omnia miracula, ullum diem fuisse, quo non cuncta conflarent.' —*Hist. Mundi*, Lib. ii. c. 107."

The moon, which, from its near vicinity, is best known of all the heavenly bodies, has been daguerreotyped; and the relation of its various regions, perhaps, more distinctly apprehended than that of the several portions of our own larger world. It is—on the only side exposed to human observation—an extinct volcano; with its giant mountains, its abrupt precipices, its deep and cavernous abysses; a world, in preparation, probably, to be inhabited. (“*Outlines*,” p. 151.)

In those dark spots upon the disk of our sun, whose diameter is sometimes equal to six diameters of the earth, and whose enormous extent must be measured in square miles, by millions, astronomers believe that we see the dark body of the sun laid bare through openings in the bright clouds that environ and illuminate it; and that this agitation in its luminous strata, is occasioned by some mysterious energy, analogous at least, if not similar, to that whose agency has been observed in the moon and upon the earth. “*Herschell's Outlines*,” p. 225–30. “*Planetary System*,” 320–37. “*Nichol's Solar System*,” p. 120–32.

Prodigious revolutions in the luminous atmospheres of the sun are no longer matter of visionary speculation, but, says one of our most eminent contemporary astronomers, “*an absolute fact*.”

The present century has witnessed the successive discoveries of several extraordinary bodies, and under circumstances as extraordinary as the bodies thus discovered. As in the case of the planet Neptune, so in that of the “Asteroids.” *The search and the discovery* were preceded and directed by the hypothetical assumption, based upon broad and bold analogies. As in the case of Neptune, the distance had been previously calculated, the quarter of the heavens pointed out, the telescope directed to the spot—the star discovered. That there is SOME LAW, in regard to the inter-planetary distances, as in every other department of creation, could hardly be doubted by any devout or any philosophical mind. Now it was long since discovered that this *law* was apparently suspended, and the harmony of the universe interrupted in the amazing interval between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. More than two hundred years ago, with that strong faith in the analogies of nature which characterizes all real genius, and when wisely directed, leads to all philosophical discovery, Old Kepler had predicted the future discovery of a planet, in this apparently unoccupied space. Long derided as the daring

speculation of a great, but visionary mind, the discovery of Uranus, by re-establishing the interrupted harmony, directed the minds of astronomers to the old prediction of Kepler, and to the search after the undiscovered world. Three years had scarcely passed after the discovery of Uranus, when in 1784, the Baron De Zach computed the distance and the period of the now generally suspected planet. In 1800, a congress of astronomers met, and gravely discussed, and ultimately adopted the apparently chimerical enterprise of discovering a world, whose existence was announced by faith alone in the harmonies of nature. On the first day of January, 1801, the telescope, directed to the appointed spot, discovered the star, and justified the calculation, both as to distance, and actual period. But as to magnitude. Ceres—the newly-discovered star—was 163 miles, at most 1000, in diameter. Soon, another was discovered. Then came the boldest hypothesis; and based upon it, the boldest prediction recorded in the annals of human science. Olbers suggested the opinion, that these diminutive asteroids were fragments of a larger world, long since exploded; and predicted the discovery of many other fragments, in a particular portion of the heavens—at the point of mutual intersection of their orbits. The very suggestion of such an hypothesis, and its wide acceptance by philosophers, would be sufficient for our argument. It involves *a fact and a supposition*. *The fact* is the existence of actual forces in our earth, analogous to those required by the hypothesis, in the exploded planet. *The supposition* relates to the existence of similar forces in other worlds. *Without the reality here, the supposition there* WOULD BE INCREDIBLY ABSURD. But the test of an hypothesis is its conformity to the facts. Telescope after telescope was directed to the spot which the hypothesis indicated. Asteroid after asteroid twinkled visibly in the vault of heaven, until fourteen, with constantly recurring new additions, were discovered. “The theory of Olbers,” writes Prof. Mitchell, in 1848 (*two years after the discovery of Iris*), “receives new accessions of strength from the discovery of every new asteroid.” SIX HAVE BEEN ADDED SINCE. “The same theory,” says Prof. Loomis, “would lead us to anticipate the discovery of numerous other fragments;” and adds in a P. S., “Since the preceding was in type, it has been announced that a new asteroid was discovered, May 11th, at the Naples Observatory.” “Whatever may be thought of such a speculation as a *physical hypothesis*,” writes Sir J. Herschel, in

1849, "this conclusion has been verified to a considerable extent, AS A MATTER OF FACT, by subsequent discovery—the result of careful and minute examination undertaken with that express object."* As to the supposed impossibility, or incredibility of such an event, the following language of Prof. Loomis of New York, may be considered as expressing the general views of the scientific world. "No doubt, then," speaking of the division of Biela's comet into two distinct parts, "no doubt, then, Biela has been separated into two parts. *When, and how?* Was it caused by an explosion arising from some internal force? *Forces of this kind we see in operation in our own globe*, ejecting liquid mountains from the bowels of the earth. The surface of our moon bears marks of similar agency. The sun appears agitated by powerful forces, perhaps the expansion of gaseous substances; and it has been conjectured that a planet was once split into numerous fragments. If we knew that Biela's comet was a solid body, WE MIGHT EASILY SUPPOSE IT TO HAVE BEEN DIVIDED BY SOME FORCE SIMILAR TO VOLCANIC AGENCY." "*History of Astronomy*," p. 105-6.†

* See "Edinburgh Encyclopedia." An article by Sir David Brewster, "*Astronomy*," chap. i. sec. x. "Plan. and Stellar Worlds," Lecture 7th. "Outlines," p. 297—Prof. Alexander, "Asteroids and Comets." *Astron. Journal*, No. 23. Dr. B. A. Gould, in *Silliman's Journal*, 2d Series, vol. vi. p. 28-36.

† In regard to the doubts which have been recently expressed, respecting the common origin of the asteroids—doubts founded on the want of coincidence between the nodes of Iris and Hygeia, and those of the other asteroids—we are permitted to insert the following extract from a letter, written to a common friend, by a gentleman of the greatest eminence, as a mathematician and a physical philosopher, in one of our eastern Institutions.

"August 1st, 1851.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have long since learned to attach to scientific theories only the value of *means to attain ends*—ideas to suggest, and guide research, the scaffolding to erect a building, rather than the building itself. And therefore do I hold my faith in them, free to vary, *ad infinitum*.

"Yet it must be admitted that the coincidences, or analogies, amongst the asteroids establish a *very great probability* of their common origin.

"They all (Irene and Hygeia included) APPROXIMATE to a common point of intersection in orbits; and what is *strange*, this region of condensation is also intersected by the orbit of Halley's comet! The orbit of Hygeia does not vary so much from the near position of the orbits of the asteroids (especially at their point of nearest approach) as some of them vary from each other, or as in my opinion, to require the abandonment of the hypothesis of Olbers."

Indeed, the objection, in its greatest force, seems to involve its own refutation; for the thing objected against, as fatal to the theory, is in reality, essential to its truth; viz. "If these bodies are fragments of a larger planet, this explosion must have taken place at a very remote epoch." ("*Hist. Astr.*" p. 69.)

Surely, if such an occurrence did take place, it was at a period indefinitely remote; at an early stage of its development as a planet. But what would be thought of an objection against any terrestrial revolution (say, the close of the Silurian era), "that such a result could not have taken place WITHIN A MILLION OF YEARS." "*A million of years*," may bewilder unthinking minds; but, unless all our astronomy

Here then we have *two fragments* of a cometary world, a comet divided into "two distinct and separate comets," and "the two parts bound together, by some inscrutable bond, continuing their swift journey through space" in orbits precisely parallel, and with constant changes in their luminous condition. Similar changes—only on a scale more magnificent, and with far greater rapidity—have been witnessed in Halley's comet, which is seen to undergo "singular and capricious changes, with great rapidity;" pouring forth vast volumes of flame suddenly, beneath the gaze of the telescope, of which Struve says; recording such a phenomenon—"THE FLAME WAS WONDERFUL. *It resembled A RAY OF FIRE shot out from the nucleus, as from some engine of artillery!*" One hundred and thirty years before the birth of Christ, a comet (the same perhaps) was seen to blaze up in the sky, and SURPASS THE SUN IN BRIGHTNESS. ("Pl. and Stel. Worlds," p. 227.) We might hesitate to believe these extraordinary accounts of changes in the celestial worlds—the birth of a new star of extraordinary brilliancy, recorded by the Greek astronomer, Hipparchus, and others still more wonderful in the Chinese records, had not modern observation swept completely, and conclusively away, the fabled "immutability of the starry spheres;" and proven that *all above, around, beneath*, to the remotest parts of the visible creation, is motion—progress—incessant change; new suns bursting with sudden and startling brilliancy upon our skies; suns, long observed, fading utterly away, and other suns, passing (as Sirius, for instance, from the "Red Dog star," of ancient times, to the beautiful white orb of our day) through astonishing revolutions, in the quantity and the color of their light. When the astronomer beholds these astounding changes;—comets dividing into separate fragments, and kindling into vivid conflagration beneath the very gaze of his telescope;—one star robbed, in the period of a few passing weeks, of half its former radiance;—another growing gradually into five-fold brightness;—another bursting instantaneously forth with surpassing lustre, and shining on for months with declining light, until it

and geology be the idlest illusions (and if so, the whole argument is abandoned), MILLIONS, whether applied to our estimates of distance, in time or space, are not very overpowering numbers to the modern astronomer, or geologist. *One period of our sun's revolution around its central sun, has been estimated at eighteen hundred million of years (Maedler).* One million would bear to this, the relation of a single year, to the whole Christian era! And this single revolution of our sun, what proportion does it bear to eternity? The eternity past; or the eternity to come? And who shall say, that he has not already made one, or many such revolutions?

gradually fades away, having passed through all the "changes of a dying conflagration," he is forced to exclaim. "What mean these mighty revolutions, where all had appeared so permanent and stable?" He has proposed his theory, and we believe it to be extremely probable. But whatever be the theory, the fact remains indisputable.

"*Mutability*," is written on *all created things*, GOD ONLY IS THE ETERNAL AND UNCHANGING ONE ! And the voice which comes to us from those worlds of light, as they kindle and fade away, is but the deep chorus to the majestic and solemn melody of that old Hebrew poet, as he sang of old, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest ; and they *shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up ; and they shall be changed ;* but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." (See especially, "*Humboldt's Cosmos*," vol. iii. p. 151-182. On "New Stars.")

II.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

LET us now approach the first chapter of Genesis, against which so many and such contradictory objections have been urged; and here, if I mistake not, we shall find, "instead of a conflict," the same surprising, and "corroborative harmony," between the discoveries of modern science and the revelations of the Bible, which we have already met in the preceding part of this discussion.

VERSE 1.—The first verse is now universally admitted to contain the simple annunciation of God as THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE. The second describes the condition of the earth when God began to prepare it immediately for the abode of man. The third records the first of those successive acts of Almighty Power by which this chaotic mass was reduced to order, and made a fit habitation for its destined inhabitants.

That the initial act recorded in the third verse is subsequent to that chaotic condition of the globe, of which the second speaks, will be readily and universally conceded. That the second is subsequent in the order of time, as well as of the narrative, to that act of creation recorded in the first, is equally apparent. That the earth was not a chaos until after its first creation, it surely requires no argument to prove. That this chaos existed before it was reduced to order, is palpably self-evident. The first verse then stands apart—a simple and sublime record, in general terms, of the creation of the heavens and the earth. WITH THE SECOND COMMENCES THE SPECIFIC HISTORY of our globe at the period immediately antecedent to the creation of man. This is no new interpretation forced upon us by the recent discoveries of geology, but is naturally suggested, nay, imperatively demanded by the whole analogy of Scripture; which always presupposes, and

often asserts, the existence of other intelligences, in other worlds, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," on witnessing the birth-day of this new creation. It is the *earliest interpretation*, based upon this analogy, and adopted by Justin Martyr, Basil, Origen, Theodoret, and Augustine. It is implied, in the words of Calvin, and Bishop Patrick; and is distinctly asserted by Buckland, Chalmers, Wardlaw, and other distinguished orthodox divines of modern times.

"Neither the first verse, nor the first half of the second," says Chalmers (*Nat. Theol.* vol. i. p. 251), "forms any part of the narrative of the first day's operations—the whole forming a preparatory sentence, disclosing to us the initial act of creation at some remote and undefined period, and the chaotic state of the world at the commencement of those successive acts of creative power, by which, out of rude and undigested materials, the present harmony of nature was ushered into being. Between the initial act and the details of Genesis, the world, for aught we know, might have been the theatre of many revolutions, the traces of which geology may still investigate." (See *Buckland*, p. 25.) In the first verse, then, we have simply the assertion of one omnipotent, intelligent First Cause; in opposition to atheism, pantheism, and polytheism. And in this, the Bible history is sustained by the history recorded on the rocks. That there was a "beginning," and not an eternal series of beings, is proven by geology against the atheist. That the whole progress of the universe has been guided, in all its parts, by a supreme Intelligence, and not by the blind agency of natural law, is established by each new epoch in geologic history, which demanded the interference of a higher power amidst the sequences of nature. That this presiding intelligence is *One*, Dr. Buckland has conclusively established, from that unity of design, which pervades all the creations, and all the events of these successive geologic cycles.

VERSE 2.—The first verse having asserted the original creation of all things by almighty power, the second describes the subsequent condition of our globe immediately antecedent to the introduction of man, and the preparation of the earth as an abode for himself and the contemporary species. It was a chaos—"emptiness and desolation"—demanding to be modified anew, and peopled with new inhabitants. Now, such precisely is the doctrine of geology. She tells us of four great geologic epochs (with their subordinate divisions) each distinguished by its own peculiar fossil animals; separated

by impassable barriers; and terminated by terrific catastrophes, which buried the myriads of living beings in one common sepulchre, and left the earth a chaos.

So terrible and so universal has been this destruction of animated beings, and so wide their diffusion over the earth, that one of our most recent writers, distinguished alike for accuracy of knowledge and sobriety of judgment, has asserted, "that, probably not a particle of matter exists on the surface of the earth that has not at some time formed part of a living being." (*Mrs. Somerville, Phys. Geography*, p. 31.) The strata containing similar fossils, are called "a Formation;" and each "Formation" indicates a decisive crisis, "an entirely new era in the earth's history." (*Agazziz*, p. 185.) Between these formations, there are sometimes huge chasms in geologic history, where the records of creation are, for indefinite ages, a blank. "An immense geologic cycle elapsed between the secondary strata and the tertiary. The old creation (in the secondary strata) had *nothing* in common with the existing order of things. Amidst the myriad of beings that inhabited the earth and the ocean during the secondary fossiliferous epochs, *scarcely one* (*Agazziz* says "*none*") is to be found in the tertiary. Two planets could hardly differ more in their natural productions." (*Mrs. S.*, p. 24.) "Upwards of eight hundred extinct species of animals have been described as belonging to the *earliest*, or protozoic and silurian period; and of these only about one hundred are found in the overlying (*Devonian*) series, while but fifteen are common to the whole palæozoic period; AND NOT ONE EXTENDS BEYOND IT." (*M. de Verneuil, Ansted, and H. Miller. Old Red Sandstone*, p. 216.) *All—all obliterated!* Describing one of these scenes of death and desolation, one of our most celebrated geologists says: "The fish bed of the upper Ludlow rock abounds more in osseous remains than an ancient burying-ground. The stratum, over wide areas, seems an almost continuous layer of matted bones, jaws, teeth, spines, scales, palatal plates, and shagreen-like prickles, all massed together, so that the bed when 'first discovered, conveyed the impression,' says Mr. Murchison, 'that it contained a triturated heap of black beetles.' Thus, ere *our history begins* (the history of the old red sandstone), the existences of two great systems, the Cambrian and Silurian, had passed into extinction, with the exception of what *seem* a few connecting links, exclusively molluscs. The exuvie of at least four platforms lay entombed, furlong below

furlong, amid the gray, mouldering mudstones, the consolidated clays, and the concretionary limestones, that underlay the ancient ocean of the old red sandstone. The earth had already become a vast sepulchre, to a depth beneath the bed of the sea, equal to at least twice the height of Ben Nevis, over its surface." (*O. Red Sandstone*, p. 216, 217.)

Passing on towards our own era, we find that of all the fossil fishes from the silurian to *the end of the tertiary* period, only a solitary species has been preserved or re-created. Nay, the highest living zoological authority asserts, that during all this period, covering the whole range of fossiliferous strata, and fossil remains there "are no incontestable traces of any species of animals now living." (*Agaz*, p. 204.)

This total and universal destruction of successive races—burying them by myriads in the same strata—piling them high above each other, hundreds of feet in thickness—and often amidst the contortions and writhings of the death-agony—has been attributed by the great majority of geologists to some sudden and terrible catastrophe, occasioned by some inexplicable revolution in the economy of our planet—extinguishing former races, and preparing an abode for those who should succeed them, and **ULTIMATELY FOR MAN**. Such is the general doctrine of our most eminent geologists; assumed as a geological axiom, in all their writings, or deduced as an immediate and irresistible conclusion from all the facts, indeed from the fundamental principles of the science.

"The first scene in the tempest," writes Hugh Miller, "opens amidst the confusion and turmoil of the hurricane; amid thunders and lightnings—the shouts of the seamen, and the wild dash of the billows. The history of the period represented by the old red sandstone, *seems to have opened in a similar manner*."

"At this period of our history, some terrible catastrophe involved in sudden destruction the fish of an area, at least a hundred miles from boundary to boundary, perhaps much more ("10,000 square miles in extent," next page). The same platform in Orkney, as at Cromarty, is strewn thick with remains, which exhibit, unequivocally, the marks of violent death. The figures are contorted, contracted, curved; the tail, in many instances, is bent round to the head; the spines stick out, the fins are spread to the full, as in fish that die in convulsions. The attitudes of all the Ichthyolites on this platform are attitudes of fear, anger, and pain. The remains, too, seem to have suffered

nothing from the after attacks of predaceous fishes. None such seem to have survived. The record is one of destruction, at once widely spread, and total." (*O. R. Sandstone*, p. 221, 222.)

There is, indeed, a theory which denies ALL CATASTROPHES in general, and, of course, the particular catastrophe that wrapped a former world in chaotic ruin; which asserts an absolute uniformity of the course of nature; the operation of the same causes, in the same combination, and with the same intensity of action, through all geologic eras, and in the human period; the gradual and quiet extinction of animated species to be succeeded by other species, formed by successively repeated acts of creative power. We shall not arrest the course of our argument to consider this theory in all its contradictions; but remark, in passing, first, while seeking to avoid occasional catastrophes in the destruction of extinct species, it demands a perpetuated miracle in the ever-recurring act of creating new species to occupy their places. Second, it is contradicted by all those examples of contemporaneous races simultaneously destroyed, buried hundreds of species together, deep in the same formation, never to reappear. Of the 800 species belonging to the palæozoic period, why did not *one* extend beyond it? Of all the fossil inhabitants of a former world, through all its successive eras, why has not one survived? Why this total change in the species that inhabit our globe since the deposit of our most recent strata? Is it that Infinite wisdom has adapted the new inhabitants to the altered condition of the earth? Then is that condition TRULY ALTERED. Altered! and yet all that constitutes the condition of a globe—the powers that operate upon its surface, and in its bosom, in their character, their combination, and their intensity—unchanged!

This leads us, indeed, to the true and very obvious conclusion: "Every radical revolution in the condition of a globe demands a correspondent change in the species that inhabit it; and CONVERSELY, every decisive change in the character of its species, indicates some attendant change in the condition of a globe."

Man could not have lived in that *former world*. He was not adapted to it. It was not prepared for him.

"A partially consolidated planet, tempested by frequent earthquakes of such terrible potency, that those of the historic ages would be but mere ripples on the earth's surface in comparison, could be no proper home for a creature so constituted. Fishes and reptiles were the proper inhabitants of our planet during

the earth-tempests. That prolonged ages of these tempests did exist, and that they gradually settled down until the state of things became comparatively fixed and stable, few geologists will be disposed to deny. The evidence which supports this special theory of the development of our planet in its capabilities as a scene of organized and sentient being, seems palpable at every step. Look, first, at those graywacke rocks, and after marking how, in one place, the strata have been upturned on their edges for miles together; and how, in another, the plutonic rock has risen molten from below—pass on to the old red sandstone, and examine its significant platforms of violent death, its faults, displacements, and dislocations; see, next, in the coal-measures, those evidences of sinking and ever-sinking strata, for thousands of feet together; mark, in the oolite, those vast overlying masses of trap, stretching athwart the landscape far as the eye can reach; observe carefully how the signs of convulsion and catastrophe gradually lessen as we descend to the times of the tertiary, though even in these ages of the mammiferous quadruped, the earth must have had its oft-recurring ague-fits of frightful intensity; and then, on closing the survey, consider how exceedingly partial and unfrequent these earth-tempests have become in the recent periods. There is a tract of country in Hindostan that contains nearly as many square miles as all Great Britain, *covered to the depth of hundreds of feet by one vast overflow of trap*. A tract similarly overflowed, which exceeds in area all England, occurs in Southern Africa. THE EARTH'S SURFACE IS ROUGHENED WITH SUCH, MOTTLED AS THICKLY BY THE PLUTONIC MASSES AS THE SKIN OF THE LEOPARD BY ITS SPOTS. What could man have done on the globe at a time when such outbursts were comparatively common occurrences? What could he have done, where Edinburgh now stands, during that overflow of trap porphyry, of which the Pentland range forms but a fragment—or that outburst of greenstone, of which but a portion remains in the dark, ponderous coping of Salisbury craigs—or when the thick floor of rock, on which the city stands, was broken up, like the ice of an arctic sea, during a tempest in spring; and laid on edge, from where it leans against the Castle Hill, to beyond the quarries at Joppa? When the earth became a fit habitat for reptiles and birds, reptiles and birds were produced; with the dawn of a more stable and mature state of things, the sagacious quadruped was ushered in; and last of all, when man's house was fully prepared for him—when the data

on which it is his nature to reason and calculate, had become fixed and certain, the reasoning and calculating brain was moulded by the creative finger—and man became a living soul. Such seems to be the reading of the wondrous inscription, chiselled deep in the rocks." (*Foot-Prints*, p. 212, 213.) In perfect harmony with this, is the language of Agazziz, when, having traced the series of animated beings from the earliest palæozoic period to the age of man, he rejects the development hypothesis, and says: "The link by which they are connected, is of a higher and immaterial nature; and their connection is to be sought in the view of the Creator himself, whose aim in forming the earth, in allowing it to undergo the successive changes which geology has pointed out, and in creating successively the different orders of animals, was to introduce man upon the surface of our globe. Man is the end towards which all the animal creation has tended, from the first appearance of the first palæozoic fishes." (*Zoology*, p. 206.) Such, then, were the terrific agencies, and such the universal desolation, which preceded and introduced the fourth and last great geologic epoch, called by Agazziz, "THE REIGN OF MAN." "The present epoch succeeds to, BUT IS NOT A CONTINUATION OF THE TERTIARY. These two epochs are separated by a great geological event, traces of which we see everywhere around us." (P. 204.) This great geological event, we are told, destroyed all species of animals, marine and terrestrial; and left the earth and sea *a total desolation, to be repopled by a new creative act.*

And here our argument would seem to be conclusive; all geological eras, and the eternal counsels of Omnipotence have prepared the earth, at length, for the appearance of man. The last great catastrophe has swept away all former species, has introduced a new economy, and adapted the globe to man and his contemporary species. And now, shall this lord of the new creation enter immediately upon his predestined inheritance, along with the inferior animals that are to be his contemporaries? The Bible says, they were created *simultaneously*; or with a brief interval, of which human science can take no cognizance. And precisely here, infidelity joins issue with the Mosaic history, and denies the truth of the record. "We have no evidence," it is objected, "of the existence of man along with any extinct species of animals. But there is evidence, that many species—now his contemporaries—have lived, and are buried along with species now extinct; therefore, these animals must have existed before the

human era, and cannot have been created, as Moses asserts, along with man."

The answer is threefold ; and is perfectly conclusive. 1st. The evidence *asserted, is purely negative* ; and it is, at once, dangerous, and extremely unphilosophical, to array the want of evidence in one department, against positive, and overwhelming testimony in another. May not future discoveries supply this want of evidence ?

2d. The objection is founded on an assumption, now refuted, and generally abandoned, that NO EXTINCT ANIMAL HAS EVER BEEN *contemporary with man*. The bird dodo is of a species now extinct, yet, during the earlier voyages of the Dutch navigators to the East Indies, existed in great numbers ; and Humboldt speaks of it as, "a species of large animals (now extinct) of which thousands existed but three centuries ago." (*Cosmos*, p. 362.) The bones of the mammoth are found mingled with those of the horse, deer, &c., and never with those of man ; and yet, it is generally admitted to have been contemporaneous with man. And, almost at the very period when we write, geology has furnished the positive testimony, which was suggested above, as the possible result of farther investigation. "At the meeting of the American Association (in 1850) Prof. Chase, of Brown University, exhibited some huge bones of the *Dinornis*," and "intimated that these gigantic birds (ten or twelve feet high, and attributed by Prof. Owen, to the age of the New Red Sandstone) had probably *become extinct through the agency of man*." In answer to an objection raised by Prof. Agazziz, "*That we have no geological evidence of the existence of man with extinct species of animals*," Mr. Mantell replied, "THAT SUCH EVIDENCE HAD BEEN RECENTLY DISCOVERED. Bones of this character had been recently found, by his brother, in the bed of a stream, in some loose sand, where evidently was once the channel of a river. Digging down, he found evidence of extinct fires ; and in these charred places were found bones of this character, *together with human bones* ; those of a dog ; the remains of shell-fish, and fragments of egg-shells, curved in the contrary direction, by the action of fire. *The reason for believing the animal to have been contemporaneous with man, was, that the bones presented a white appearance, which can only be produced by burning the bones while they contain animal matter*." (*Annual of Scientific Discovery*," 1850, p. 279, 280. See for a

fuller account, and the same conclusion, Humboldt's *Cosmos*, vol. i. p. 361, 362.)

3d. In regard to the earlier formations, the primary, secondary, and tertiary, down to the close of the Pliocene era, which immediately preceded the present geographical distribution of our seas, continents and rivers, and prepared for the introduction of man, there is, and can be, no diversity of opinion. *No animal now in being, existed during that immense period antecedent to the creation of man.* The question, therefore, concerns only the so-called Pleistocene, or Newer Pliocene era; during which (it is contended) and before the creation of man, these extinct animals existed *along with some of our present species.* Here, however, it must be admitted by every candid geologist, and felt by every intelligent student of the science, that all our reasonings become extremely vague and uncertain, and partake the nature of the "*vicious circle.*" They prove the age of the formation, from the bones which it contains; and the age of the bones from the era of the formation. "Thus, at Puzzuoli, near Naples," says Mr. Lyell, "marine strata are seen containing fragments of sculpture, pottery, and remains of buildings, together with innumerable shells of the same species, as those now inhabiting the Mediterranean. Their emergence can be proven to have taken place *since the beginning of the sixteenth century.*" Of course they belong to the human era; "But the hills," he proceeds, "at the feet of which these strata have been deposited, are formed of horizontal strata of the Newer Pliocene era." Why? "Because the marine shells are of living species, and *yet are not accompanied by any remains of man.*" (*Elements of Geology*, p. 170.) Again, "Near Stockholm when the canal was dug, horizontal beds of sand, loam, and marl were passed through, in some of which the same peculiar assemblage of testacea which now live in the Baltic, were found. Mingled with these, at various depths, were detected various works of art, and some vessels, built before the introduction of iron." These, of course, are of the historic era. "There are, however, in the neighborhood of these formations, others, *precisely similar, in mineral composition, and testaceous remains*, in which no vestige of human art has been seen. So that we must regard them as Newer Pliocene formations" (p. 171). "All conchologists are agreed, that the shells of the deposits above mentioned, are nearly all, perhaps all, absolutely identical with those now peopling the contiguous

ocean" (p. 171). Yet these shells themselves, belonging to species now existing in the contiguous ocean, and the bones of other existing animals, found with them, are decided to belong to the Pleistocene era; because the formation itself is previously assumed to have been Pleistocene. Here, the age of the remains is decided by the age of the formation. But the same formation in the same immediate vicinity, with no other characteristic distinction, "in mineral composition and testaceous remains, absolutely the same," is decided to belong to the human era, because they contain human remains. Here, the age of the formation is decided by the known age of the (human) remains. Having thus ascertained the age of these strata, from the presence of man and his coexisting species, marine and terrestrial, would it not be more rational, to retain this position, once reached from *certain data*; and to draw the conclusion, that the remains of animals, whose era is otherwise unknown, but which are found in strata, in all respects similar to those which are certainly contemporary with man, have been likewise contemporary with the same strata, and thus contemporary with man? Here we proceed on *certain data*, and positive evidence. In the other process, the evidence is wholly negative ("If we may depend on negative evidence," says Mr. L., in drawing his conclusions), and the assumed fact extremely doubtful.

Leaving these doubtful speculations, and returning to established truth. It is acknowledged that the catastrophe which terminated the Pliocene era, and prepared the way for man, and his contemporary species, destroyed all previously existing beings; and *then*, the question simply is, "Whether the earth thus prepared for new inhabitants, was peopled AT ONCE, WITH ITS DESTINED POPULATION?" Or, "Whether the creation of man was delayed, for indefinite centuries, after the completion of the abode, which all geological cycles had been preparing for him?" It is, in fact, only another form of the question, "Whether the various contemporary species have been created TOGETHER, after the extinction of their predecessors?" Or, according to Mr. Lyell's hypothesis, "There has been a continuous process, from day to day, and year to year, of gradual extinction of old species, throughout all geologic eras; and, moving on parallel with it, side by side, the continuous exercise of creative power in the production of new species?" That is, "Whether we shall acknowledge A SINGLE MIRACULOUS CREATION, at the commencement of each new era;

or, perpetually recurring miracles through the whole range of time?" To adopt the latter proposition is, either to ANNIHILATE "A COURSE OF NATURE," by supposing another *course of miraculous agency*, moving on contemporaneously with it, and superior to it; or, to destroy all miraculous creation by reducing extraordinary interpositions to ordinary events; or, rather, it is, in attempting to reconcile the two (*a course of nature, and a course of supernatural miracles*), to annihilate both; to assert a "course of nature," which is not "the course of nature;" and, "an extraordinary agency," which, after all, is "ordinary."*

* The whole three volumes of "The Principles of Geology," by Mr. Lyell, are, but the defence, the illustration, and the varied application, of the doctrine of "the absolute uniformity of the course of nature, through all geologic epochs." Preface, page 9th, he gives it, as the express design of the "Preliminary essay," in the first book, to prove, "That the forces, now operating upon, and beneath the earth's surface, may be THE SAME both in kind and in degree, with those, which at remote epochs, have worked out geological revolutions; the ancient and present fluctuations in the ORGANIC and INORGANIC WORLD, belonging to ONE CONTINUOUS AND UNIFORM SERIES OF EVENTS." Let us remark, "the forces are THE SAME in kind and degree," and include "the organic and inorganic world." Again, vol. i. p. 116, "During the ages contemplated in geology, there has never been any interruption to the same uniform laws of change." On page 130, he denies and derides "any extraordinary deviations from the known 'course of nature.'" And on p. 118, with great simplicity, argues against any increase of the frequency, or intensity of earthquakes; that if such increase should ever occur, or ever have occurred, it must inevitably produce that very chaotic condition which the Bible asserts—as the result of the "earth-tempests" of H. Miller, and "the turbulent conditions of our planet whilst stratification was in progress, and the activity of volcanic agents, then frequent and intense," described by Buckland (p. 103).

"Now should one or two only of these convulsions happen in a century, it would be consistent with the order of events experienced by the Chilians from the earliest times. But," proceeds the writer, with imperturbable gravity, "but, if the whole of them were to occur within the next hundred years, the entire district must be depopulated, scarcely any plants or animals could survive; and the surface would be ONE CONFUSED HEAP OF RUIN AND DESOLATION!" That is, would present precisely that scene of "ruin and desolation," which all ancient strata exhibit, and which the Bible expressly asserts!

But, if there be this "uniform and continuous series, without any interruption, in the organic as well as inorganic world," then, what shall we say of man? Is he one term in this "uniform and continuous series," this established "course of nature?" To this, Mr. Lyell replies (p. 256), "The course of nature remains evidently unchanged," "with the exception only of man's presence." "It is not, however, intended that a real departure from the antecedent course of physical events cannot be traced in the introduction of man," or "that the agency of man did not constitute an ANOMALOUS DEVIATION FROM THE PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF THINGS" (p. 257, 258).

Here then, we have "one continuous and uniform series of events," in which "there never has been any interruption;" and yet, "a departure from the antecedent course of physical events." "An anomalous deviation from the previously established order of things;" and yet, again, no "extraordinary deviation from the known course of nature;" and still farther (p. 259), "Had he previously presumed to dogmatize, respecting the absolute uniformity of the order of nature, he would undoubtedly be checked, by witnessing this new and unexpected event," "this peculiar and unprecedented agency," "this anomalous deviation from the established order," which "affords ground for concluding that the experience, DURING THOUSANDS OF AGES, OF ALL THE EVENTS which may happen on this globe, would not enable a philosopher

Let us now proceed to consider the history of this new creation.

VERSES 3, and 4.—These contain the first day's work, in connection with the fourth day's work, recorded in the passage, from the 14th verse to the 18th, both included.

The difficulty which spontaneously presents itself to every mind in connection with these verses, is briefly and clearly expressed by the German rationalist, in his commentary on the passage. "When God," says Rosenmüller, "began to arrange this

to speculate with confidence concerning future contingencies." A continuous series, from which there is a departure! A uniformity, which is not uniform! An established order, from which there is an anomalous deviation! Such is the system. First, it asserts an uninterrupted uniformity in the course of nature, through all geological epochs. Then, it acknowledges the intervention of a peculiar, and "moral source of temporary derangement," a supernatural agency, in the creation of man and other animals. Then reasserts the abandoned, and interrupted uniformity, once more.

How shall we reconcile these *apparent contradictions*? By including *both*, says Mr. Lyell, *the creation of species* by supernatural power; and their extinction by the ordinary agencies of nature, in the same "economy of nature." Let us "imagine the successive creation of species to constitute, like their gradual extinction, a REGULAR PART OF THE ECONOMY OF NATURE." (*Principles*, vol. iii. p. 234.)

Now, the "creation of species," as here employed, means the exercise of an extraordinary power, different from, and superior to the course of nature;—for Mr. Lyell denies the transmutation of species, and rejects the development hypothesis in all its forms. Besides that ordinary course of nature, then, which extinguishes existing species, there is, in "the economy of nature," another agency, superior to it, yet moving on parallel with it, through all geologic eras, and even now, calling successive species into existence, by creative power, from day to day, or as he hypothetically suggests, from year to year (page 238). To the objection, "that no one has ever ascertained the existence of any new species created, during all the centuries of our epoch," he replies that "the objection may seem plausible;" and proceeds to show that these new species may come into being by "annual birth," and depart by "annual death," and yet be unobserved by men. (Vol. iii. p. 235-239.) Here then, is one "course of nature," to destroy, and another, in the "same economy," to create. Which is 'THE COURSE OF NATURE'?

Here is a power called creative—in other words, supernatural, or miraculous; yet in perpetual ordinary operation. A perpetual miracle ceases to be a miracle at all. The extraordinary agency, is, after all, ordinary. Again, it is worth the observation, that this creative power belongs, STRANGELY ENOUGH, TO THE "SAME ECONOMY OF NATURE," with any other power; and its agency is sustained by the same subterfuge which was employed by the older atheists, and modern pantheists, and advocates of the development hypothesis. "To the natural objection that the earth does not now produce men, lions, &c. (or any new species), Epicurus answers, We are backward in admitting it, for the reason, that it happens in retired places, and never falls under our view," &c. "It is far from being certain," says the author of the *Vestiges*, "that the primitive imparting of life and form to inorganic elements, is not a *fact of our times*." (See *Foot-Prints*, p. 282, 283.) "Periods of much greater duration" (says Mr. L.), "must elapse before it would be possible to authenticate the first appearance of one of the larger plants, and animals, assuming the annual birth and death of one species" (p. 239).

Such is the theory, then, with its manifold contradictions, its atheistic tendencies, and its appeal to the same undiscovered facts, upon which, the advocates of atheistic and pantheistic views have always fallen back;—that is, arrayed against the simple statement of the Bible, concerning the simultaneous creation, by Almighty power, of ALL THE CONTEMPORARY SPECIES, AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR ERA. See a total annihilation of this theory of gradual extinction of species, in Sir R. Murchison's recent address—"Proc. Royal Soc., March 7th, 1851." Between the youngest of the primary, and the oldest of the secondary strata, there is not one species in common. "An entirely new creation had succeeded to universal decay and death."

formless matter, it seemed first of all necessary, that the light of day should dispel the ancient darkness, in which all things had been enveloped. Men, in the early ages of the world, could easily believe that light did not proceed from the sun ; but was of a FLUID NATURE, since, even when the sun was obscured with clouds, they could perceive all things, brightened with light." That there should be different methods of reconciling this brief narrative of events, so distant in time, and so obscurely revealed, to the different scientific views of men, is not more astonishing than are the various theories devised for the purpose of harmonizing the complicated, and apparently contradictory facts in any department of human science. The defect is not in nature, or in revelation, but in man. Dr. Buckland has proposed the following method. "The interpretation here proposed seems to solve the difficulty, which would otherwise attend the statement of the appearance of light upon the first day, while the sun, moon and stars are not made to appear until the fourth. If we suppose all the heavenly bodies and the earth to have been *created* at the indefinitely distant time, designated by the word 'beginning;' and that the darkness described on the evening of the first day, was temporary darkness, produced by the accumulation of vapors "on the face of the deep;" an incipient dispersion of these vapors may have readmitted light to the earth on the first day, whilst the exciting cause of light was still obscured ; and the further purification of the atmosphere on the fourth day, may have caused the sun, and moon and stars to reappear in the firmament of heaven, to assume their new relations to the newly-modified earth, and to the human race." (*Geol.* p. 33, 34.) This theory is not only ingenious, but natural and obvious ; and must have suggested itself to any scientific mind as one of the possible solutions of a difficulty which lies patent to the most superficial reader. It has been adopted by, perhaps, the major part of apologists for the Bible ; and may be found more or less ably developed with various modifications, additions, verbal alterations, and learned criticisms in many modern treatises and commentaries, of which that by Bush is probably (on this subject) the best, and most generally accessible. So that it lies within the reach of every candid inquirer, and need not delay us here with its prolonged consideration. In its defence, thus much at least may be confidently affirmed. It must, in all fairness, be acknowledged that the inspired narrative neither expressly asserts nor necessarily implies that the darkness of chaos was eternal. Neither

does the phrase, "Let there be light," nor the immediately subsequent appearance of light amidst the chaotic darkness deny its antecedent existence, more than the bursting of light upon the midnight darkness now at the divine command, or even the dawn of day in the ordinary course of nature could be supposed to disprove the reality of the previous day. In one case, as in the other, the darkness may have been temporary. The geologist may well assert the existence of light during that long period which PRECEDED the chaotic condition of our planet on the same principle which asserts the antecedent existence of animated beings, for these animated beings have organs of vision constructed on the same optical principles with our own. (*Buckland*, vol. i. p. 134-136.) BUT DURING THAT CHAOTIC CONDITION THE EVIDENCE WHOLLY FAILS, AND ALONG WITH IT THE ARGUMENT, for there is then neither animal nor organ; and may not the same mysterious circumstances in the early economy of our planet, which led to the destruction of all animated beings by causes inscrutable to us, have so affected the condition of our atmosphere by causes not more inexplicable, as to overload it with vapors impenetrable by light, or alter its chemical constitution, or otherwise modify those unknown circumstances which are necessary to the evolution and the manifestation of that still mysterious influence, to which, though ignorant of its nature, we give the name of light? Similar reasoning may be legitimately applied to the words, "Let there be lights," or "luminaries," or "light-bearers," in the 14th verse.

The principal difficulty in this interpretation will be found by many minds in the words of the 16th verse, "GOD MADE two great luminaries." "The text may imply," says Dr. Buckland, "that these bodies were then PREPARED AND APPOINTED to certain offices of high importance to mankind, 'to give light upon the earth;' 'to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years.'"

"The original word for 'MADE,'" says another advocate of this interpretation, Mr. Bush, "is not the same as that which is rendered 'CREATED.' It is a term frequently employed to signify CONSTITUTED, APPOINTED, set for a particular purpose or use. And these luminaries though actually called into existence previously, were henceforth, by their rising and setting, to be the VISIBLE MEANS of producing this separation, or succession," viz., of light and darkness. day and night. But here the DIFFICULTY

WILL RECUR: "There is a difference, clearly, between the mere appointment to an office and the PHYSICAL ADAPTATION to that especial service." Here it is perfectly manifest that the writer speaks not of mere official appointment, but of physical adaptation. The sun and moon had ceased to be "the visible" lights of heaven. They now became such; whether by a change in their own physical condition, or in the constitution of our atmosphere, is not asserted in the text. Again, the same Hebrew word which, in this interpretation, is rendered "appointed" or "constituted," is employed, in its ordinary sense, in the same narration, verse 7th, "And God made the firmament," where it is surely applied to a remodification, at least, of pre-existing materials, and their physical adaptation to new purposes. To assume that the same word is used in different senses in the same narrative, on the same general subject, and in a similar connection, can only be justified by the most stringent necessity. Yet even this difficulty is by no means greater than those which attend many physical hypotheses now generally adopted; AND THIS MAY BE HELD, AS THEY ARE, CONDITIONALLY—as a possible solution, until one more satisfactory may be providentially suggested.

But what if the solution so laboriously sought lies palpably on the surface? What if the objection contains its own confutation, and suggests, nay, employs the very words of that modern theory of light which is now generally adopted by philosophers?

What if the temporary darkness and subsequent reillumination of our sun be (according to our profoundest astronomers) not only a possible, but an extremely probable event, rendered probable by MANY SIMILAR OCCURRENCES in the heavens, recorded within the last three hundred years, and by some even now transpiring under the scrutiny of our telescopes! What if the great names of La Place and Argelander, of Herschell and Humboldt, are arrayed, on astronomical principles, decisively in favor of this view?

What if the greatest physical philosophers of our day have advanced still farther, and not only announced this *variability* of our sun's light, but ITS ACTUAL VARIATION IN PAST TIME AS EXTREMELY PROBABLE? And finally, what if they have from geological phenomena identified one period of its obscurity with that great geological event which terminated the tertiary epoch, and immediately preceded the present distribution of our land and water—our oceans, rivers, and continents?

NOW THE ASSERTIONS IMPLIED IN THESE SUCCESSIVE QUESTIONS CONTAIN THE SIMPLE STATEMENT OF HISTORIC FACTS. The evidence we proceed immediately to adduce; and it will appear, that every proposition which can be fairly educed from the most literal interpretation of the Mosaic record, is in perfect, and indeed surprising harmony, with the latest and even the boldest theories of modern science. According to the most literal interpretation, the following three propositions may be considered as involved in the sacred narrative:—

First. That light is wholly independent of the sun. According to the objection, its phenomena result from the movements of a “SUBTLE FLUID.”

Second. The sun is not self-luminous, but is a “lightbearer” only; *φῶστης* in the Greek translation, “Maor” in the original Hebrew; the place or body where the light is concentrated, as clearly distinguished in the original from the light itself, as the lamp, or the lamp-post, from the light which they “bear.”

Third. The sun has not always been thus a “great luminary” or “lightbearer,” but at the period of the last re-organization of our system from the ruins of chaos, experienced (whether, for the first time, or after a temporary obscuration, is not asserted) that physical change in the constitution of his mass, on which depends the evolution of light and heat—the photiferous, or light-giving power.

1st. Light is wholly independent of the sun. Whatever may be our theory of light, the “molecular,” or the “undulatory,” or whether we have any theory at all, the same great facts are indisputably true. The unknown cause of our visual sensations, to which we give the name of light, as if it were some separate material substance, is, within all known distances, *universally diffused*. It is not confined to the sun, or the direct radiation, or the reflection of his rays, but is developed almost illimitably from all the objects around us, through human instrumentality, by mechanical friction, by chemical combination. It is present in the most distant nebulae of the farther heavens; it bursts from the bowels of the earth in volcanic eruptions; it pervades the profoundest depths of the ocean, where flowers of variegated and brilliant hues are known to grow, and fish to dwell amidst circumstances that would be as midnight darkness to our eyes. It appears highly probable from recent discoveries,” says Dr. Buckland, “that light is not a material substance, but only an effect of un-

dulations of ether ; that this infinitely subtle and elastic ether pervades all space, and even the interior of all bodies ; so long as it remains at rest, there is total darkness ; when it is put into a peculiar state of vibration, the sensation of light is produced ; this vibration may be excited by various causes, by the sun, by the stars, by electricity, combustion, &c. If, then, light be not a substance, but only a series of vibrations of ether, that is, an effect produced on a subtle fluid by the excitement of one or many extraneous causes, it can hardly be said, nor is it said in Gen. i. 3, to have been *created*, though it may be literally said to be called into action." (P. 35.)

It is apparent, then, that the philosophy of Moses is infinitely superior to that of his German assailant in regard to the true nature of light, and its relation to the sun.

IS THIS COINCIDENCE WHOLLY FORTUITOUS between the teachings of our latest philosophy and those of an author who wrote more than three thousand years ago, and upon a point where the doctrines of both are in direct antagonism to the natural conclusions of the learned and unlearned, derived from all the ordinary phenomena ? Or is it a "corroborative harmony ?"

2d. The body of the sun is not self-luminous, but a "light-bearer ;" not itself intrinsically light, but illuminated by a luminous atmosphere, or strata of luminous matter, by which this dark body is surrounded.

Since the observations of Dr. Wilson and the elder Herschell upon the sun's spots, this is generally conceded. The idea of dark bodies revolving around the sun, is long since exploded. "But what are the spots?" asks Sir John Herschell. "Many fanciful notions have been broached upon this subject, *but only one seems to have any degree of physical probability*, viz., that they are the dark, or, at least, comparatively dark, solid body of the sun itself, laid bare to our view by those immense fluctuations in the luminous regions of its atmosphere, to which it appears to be subject." (" *Outlines of Astronomy*," p. 223.)

"The sun," says Nicholl, the gifted professor of astronomy in Glasgow University, "the sun consists mainly of a dark mass, like the body of the earth and other planetary globes ; which is surrounded by two atmospheres, of enormous depths, the one nearest him being, like our own, cloudy and dense ; while the loftier stratum consists of those dazzling, phosphorescent zephyrs, that bestow

light and heat on so many surrounding spheres." (*Planetary System*," p. 325, new Ed.)

3d. That the sun has not been uniformly thus a great "light-bearer," but after a *temporary obscuration* probably, was re-illuminated at the commencement of our present economy. "No more is light inherent in the sun," says Nicholl, "than in Tycho's vanished star; and as with it and other orbs, the time may come when he shall cease to be required to shine." (P. 341.) Sir J. Herschell having discovered that a large and brilliant star, called ALPHA ORIONIS, had sustained in the course of six weeks a loss of nearly half its light, remarks, "This phenomenon cannot fail to awaken attention, and revive those speculations which were first put forth by my father, Sir W. Herschell, respecting the possibility of a CHANGE IN THE LUSTRE OF OUR SUN ITSELF. If there be really a community of nature between the sun and the fixed stars, every proof that we obtain of the extensive prevalence of such periodical changes in those remote bodies, adds to the probability of finding something of the kind nearer home." (*Proceedings Royal Ast. Soc.*" Jan. 1840.) "The question cannot fail to suggest itself here," says Nicholl, "WHETHER THE SUN IS NOW as he ever will be, or only IN ONE STATE OR EPOCH OF HIS EFFICACY, as the radiant source of light and heat? The *new star* in Cassiopeia, seen by Tycho, for instance, indicated some great *change* in the light and heat of an orb. *That star never moved from its place*; and during its course, from extreme brilliancy to apparent extinction, the color of its light altered, *passing through the hues of a dying conflagration*. Many other stars have altered slowly in magnitude, also preserving rigorous inviolability of place; and some, as Sirius, have changed color; this star having turned from the fixed Dog-star of old times, red and fiery as Mars, into the brilliantly white orb now adorning our skies. Is it not likely, then, that the intrinsic energies to whose development these phenomena must be owing, ACT ALSO IN OUR SUN, *that he also may pass through phases, filling up myriads of centuries, once, perhaps, shining upon Uranus, with a lustre as burning as that which now dazzles Mercury?*" (*Solar System*," p. 130, 131.) It would be difficult to present within the limited space assigned to this discussion, even a small portion of that evidence upon which these suggestions have been based. They bring us, at once, amidst the sublimest and most startling discoveries of our modern astronomy, to the contemplation of stupendous changes, past, present, and

future, which have occurred, which are occurring, which may be legitimately anticipated in the remoter heavens. They link together in harmonious union those two great sciences, astronomy and geology, as complemental portions of one, still sublimer and more comprehensive science; and show us, that, while this earth has been the theatre of many revolutions in its progressive preparation for its destined occupants, the same great law of change and progress pervades the universe around, and revolutions still more magnificent by agencies equally terrific and irresistible, have marked the history of those upper worlds.

For the sake of simplicity and distinctness, we shall present all that our limits will allow, in the form of separate and successive propositions.

1st. Many suns once shining in our heavens, have since, within the knowledge and the memory of man, become, at least for an uncalculated period, apparently extinct; HAVE WHOLLY CEASED TO SHINE. Others have varied greatly in their light, in its intensity, and color; gradually or suddenly increased, diminished, or totally suspended. And these startling revolutions, once derided as the exaggerations of ignorance or superstition, are now amongst the established facts of astronomical science, and the familiar objects of contemporary observation.*

* "THERE ARE MANY WELL-AUTHENTICATED CASES of the disappearance of old stars, whose places had been fixed with a degree of certainty not to be doubted. In October, 1781. Sir William Herschell observed a star, No. 55, in Flamsted's Catalogue, in the Constellation Hercules. In 1790, the same star was observed by the same astronomer, but since that time, no search has been able to detect it. The stars named 80 and 81, in the same constellation, both of the fourth magnitude, have likewise disappeared. In May, 1828, Sir John Herschell missed the star numbered 42, in the Constellation Virgo, which has never since been seen. Examples might be multiplied, but it is unnecessary. In these cases, the stars have been lost entirely—no return has ever been marked," (*Mitchell's "Planetary and Stellar Worlds,"* p. 294, 295.) The variable star, in the neck of the whale, called "Mira Ceti," changes from the second magnitude to the eleventh, and *sometimes* VANISHES ALTOGETHER. In the 173 years, during which we have reports of the magnitude of the beautiful star, "*Eta of Argo*," it has undergone from eight to nine oscillations, in the augmentation and diminution of its light. It has increased from the fourth to the first magnitude, and from 1838 to 1850, has remained equal in brilliancy to Canopus—probably superior—and almost equal to Sirius. (*See Humboldt's "Cosmos,"* vol. iii. p. 151-182.) For a complete list of new and of "variable stars," and most important conclusions (derived from these astonishing phenomena) regarding THE CHANGES PAST AND FUTURE, IN THE CONDITION OF OUR OWN SUN AND THE OTHER *fixed* stars. Especially, p. 164 and 181.

"The star Eta of Argus," says Sir J. Herschell, "has always hitherto been regarded as a star of the second magnitude; and I never had reason to suppose it variable. In November of 1837, I saw it as usual. Judge of my surprise to find, on the 16th of December, that it had SUDDENLY become a star of the first magnitude, and almost equal to Rigel. It continued to increase. Rigel is now not to be compared with it; it exceeds Arcturus, and is very near equal to Alpha Centauri, being at the moment I write, the fourth star in the heavens, in the order of brightness."

2d. Many suns, once obscured for longer or shorter periods—for days, or centuries—have been re-illuminated; while others, which once shone with a faint and feeble light, have been kindled up into ten-fold brilliancy, which they still retain.

3d. The period of obscuration is decided by causes, whose agency is sometimes regular; sometimes totally incalculable; varying from the duration of a few hours, in calculated cases, to one hundred years in some, to three hundred years, *probably*, in others; and in others again (unless the obscuration be final), extending over many centuries; or (to use the strong language of Humboldt, "*Cosmos*," vol. iii. p. 164) "IN THE GREAT MAJORITY," over "*extremely long, and therefore unmeasured, and PROBABLY UNDETERMINABLE PERIODS.*"*

For conclusions similar to those of Humboldt, derived from the same phenomena, see "*Outlines of Astron.*," p. 527, and "*Astron. Observations*," p. 351; by Sir J. Herschell, as quoted under "Propos." 6th and 7th, hereafter.

* More than two thousand years ago, the celebrated Greek astronomer Hipparchus was astonished by the sudden bursting forth of a brilliant star in a region on the heavens where none, before, existed. In 1572, 1604, 1607, and recently in 1848, similar occurrences took place, the latter being less remarkable than the preceding, for the exceeding brilliancy of the star. Twenty-one instances are enumerated by Humboldt ("*Cosmos*," vol. iii. p. 155-160) of a correspondent character. That of 1572, called "Tycho's Star," because observed by the great Danish astronomer, was the most remarkable. It burst forth instantaneously in the full blaze of its brightness. The very peasants paused to gaze with astonishment upon the wonderful stranger in the skies. It surpassed Jupiter in brilliancy, and was visible in the broad light of day. It gradually changed from white to yellow-reddish, became faintly blue, then disappeared from the heavens, and has never since been seen. Herschell supposes that it may be identical with the stars seen in 945 and 1264, and thus that the period of its obscuration is a little more than three hundred years. (See Tycho Brahe's own account of its sudden discovery, and *variations*. "*Cosmos*," vol. iii. p. 152, 153.) The period of variability in the star χ Cygni, is about 100 years. In the great majority of these cases, the stars have disappeared, during a period, varying from 250 to 1600 years, and are either finally extinguished, as La Place supposes, or have vast and incalculable periods of alternate darkness, and reillumination, according to the theory of Humboldt. This latter writer supposes with Herschell, in his "*Astron. Observations*," that VARIABILITY, and not UNIFORMITY, in the quantity of light, is the COMMON CHARACTER OF SUNS. "We are led," says he, "by analogy, to infer that, AS THE FIXED STARS UNIVERSALLY have not merely an apparent but a real motion of their own, so their surfaces or luminous atmospheres are generally subject to those changes (*in their 'light-process'*), which recur, in the great majority, in *extremely long, and therefore unmeasured, and probably undeterminable periods*; or which, IN A FEW, recur without being periodical, as it were by a sudden revolution, either for a shorter or a longer time." (Vol. iii. p. 164.) That all this is equally true of our sun, as one of the fixed stars, see p. 180. In regard to a subsequent re-illumination of a sun whose light has thus disappeared, he says: "What we no longer see is not necessarily annihilated. It is merely the transition of matter into new forms—into combinations which are subject to new processes. DARK COSMICAL BODIES MAY, BY A RENEWED PROCESS OF LIGHT, again become luminous." That such a body, which had lost its light for centuries, and perhaps myriads of years, may be re-illuminated (as was our sun), and shine on again as it did before, is practically proven by a star now shining in our sky, called 34 Cygnus. It appeared, for the first time since the commencement of astronomical records, in the year 1600, and still remains a star of the sixth magnitude. Was it first created in 1600? Or was it only invisible till then? Had it been always invisible? Or like the stars of

4th. These changes, whether partial or entire, cannot be rationally attributed; ARE NOT, BY OUR GREAT PHILOSOPHERS LA PLACE, HERSCHELL, HUMBOLDT, OR ANY OF THAT CLASS OF THINKERS, EVER ATTRIBUTED, to gradual change of position, nearer, or more remote. They remain uniformly stationary, and in almost every case (*with only three exceptions*) these new stars blazed forth at once with unequalled brilliancy, as stars of the first magnitude. "The appearance of the star of 1572 was so sudden, that Tycho Brache, the celebrated Danish astronomer, returning one evening from his laboratory to his dwelling-house, was surprised to find a group of country people gazing at a star, *which he was sure did not exist* (VISIBLY) HALF AN HOUR BEFORE." (*Outlines of Astronomy*," p. 526, by Sir J. Herschell.)*

5th. OUR SUN IS ONE OF THESE FIXED STARS; and whatever is ascertained as certainly true of them as to their constitution and general history, may be assumed *à priori* as probable in regard to him. The phenomena upon his surface; the vast extent and probable origin of his spots—fifty thousand miles in diameter, and generated by "the play of sudden and tremendous forces within his atmospheres;" "the surging and bursting of those atmospheres"† themselves; the certainty of these changes in his state, and their "undoubted and intimate connection with the supply of light and heat to our globe,"‡ indicate the presence of agencies which identify him in character and destiny with the great central suns of other systems. Again, those extraordinary changes in the climate of our globe, so great that the fossil remains of the remotest north are said to indicate a tropical atmosphere; so sudden, that the animals of an earlier era have been arrested where they stood, and embalmed in perpetual ice;—these indubitable changes have directed the attention of our most emi-

Flamsted's Catalogue, observed by the Herschell's, had it disappeared for a season, to reappear in its appointed time? If the latter be the reasonable supposition, THEN IT FURNISHES, "MUTATO NOMINE," THE HISTORY OF OUR SUN.

*—"Those stars," says La Place, "that have become invisible, after having surpassed the brilliancy of Jupiter, have not changed their place during the time of their being visible." "The luminous process in them has simply ceased," adds Humboldt, and in confirmation of this view, further urges (page 161). "The circumstance, that almost all these new stars burst forth *at once* with extreme brilliancy, as stars of the first magnitude, and even with STILL STRONGER SCINTILLATION, and that they do not appear, at least to the naked eye, to INCREASE GRADUALLY in brightness." The theory of "cosmical clouds," intercepting for centuries, the light of these distant bodies, is now abandoned, and Herschell unites with La Place, and Humboldt, and Nicholl, and his own distinguished father, in recognizing an actual change in the light and heat of the fixed stars.

† Nicholl's *Plan. Sys.*, p. 326.

‡ Herschell's *Astron.*, p. 228.

nent astronomers to a cause connected with *variations in the light and heat of our sun*. Speaking of the "singular and surprising alterations of brightness in the southern star," called Eta of Argos, Sir John Herschell says, "All at once, in the beginning of 1838, it suddenly increased in lustre, so as to surpass all the stars of the first class in magnitude, except Sirius and Canopus, and Alpha Centauri, which last star it nearly equalled. Thence it again diminished (but this time not below the first magnitude) until April, 1843, when it had again increased so as to surpass Canopus, and nearly equal Sirius in splendor." "Here we have," he proceeds, "a star fitfully variable to an astonishing extent, and whose fluctuations (previously noticed by him) are spread over centuries, apparently in no settled period, and with no regularity of progression. What origin can we ascribe to these sudden flashes and relapses? What conclusions are we to draw as to the comfort and habitability of a system, depending for its supply of light and heat on so uncertain a source? Speculations of this kind can hardly be termed visionary, when we consider that we are compelled to admit a community of nature between the fixed stars and our own sun; and when we reflect that geology testifies to the fact of extensive changes having taken place at epochs of the most remote antiquity in the climate and temperature of our globe—changes difficult to reconcile with the operation of secondary causes, such as a different distribution of sea and land, but which would find an easy and natural explanation in a slow variation of the supply of light and heat afforded primarily by the sun himself." (*Outlines*," p. 527, 528.) Here, then, we find that the greatest astronomer of this age asserts the indisputable "community of nature between our own sun and the fixed stars;" and from the "surprising and singular" changes in even one of them, deduces the strong probability of analogous changes in the sun. Then turning to the surface of our earth, and the organic remains beneath the surface, he finds in the geologic monuments a practical confirmation of the views to which astronomy had led him. The conclusion thus attained from two independent sciences, and doubly confirmed by their harmonious combination in one astonishing result, gives direct and important confirmation to the Mosaic record. It tells us that our sun is, in astronomic phrase, "a variable star," and as such, liable to all those changes which have been noticed amongst them; and if the Bible says "this variable star once lost for a season its light-giving power," As-

tronomy replies, "It is extremely probable that such an event may have occurred; for every degree and kind of variation, from a slight diminution of light to total extinction, from a slow and gradual increase to a sudden outburst of unparalleled magnificence, has been witnessed already within the brief space, and with the imperfect instruments, of three short centuries of observation. Such a change, moreover, in the light and heat of our sun would '*naturally and easily explain*' the otherwise inexplicable phenomena which Geology has recorded, but in vain attempted to elucidate." (See to the same purpose, "*Cosmos*," vol. iii. p. 181. *Mrs. Somerville's "Connection of the Physical Sciences*," p. 407. *Nicholl's "Planetary System*," p. 341, *Note*.)

Eth. Astronomy has gone farther still in confirmation of the Bible; and not only asserted the possibility and probability of such an obscuration of our sun, but combining these phenomena in the sun and the fixed stars with those observed upon the earth, has asserted such an event as an actual occurrence; and proceeding to ascertain its geologic epoch, has identified it with that great geologic event which (according to Mr. Agazziz) terminated the tertiary period—destroyed all previously existing animated beings, and introduced the FOURTH GREAT ERA—THE REIGN OF MAN. It is to this era of darkness, and consequently universal ice, when the light and heat of our sun were together withdrawn, that Mr. Herschell alludes in the following decisive passage:—"I cannot otherwise understand" (*without a general "change of climate"*) alternations of heat and cold so extensive as at one period to have clothed high northern latitudes with a more than tropical luxuriance of vegetation, at another to have buried vast tracts of Middle Europe, now enjoying a genial climate, and smiling with fertility, under a glacier crust of enormous thickness. Such changes seem to point to causes more powerful than the mere local distribution of land and water (according to Mr. Lyell's views) can well be supposed to have been. In the slow secular variations of our supply of light and heat from the sun, WHICH, IN THE IMMENSITY OF TIME PAST, MAY HAVE GONE TO ANY EXTENT, AND SUCCEEDED EACH OTHER IN ANY ORDER, without violating the analogy of sidereal phenomena which we know to have taken place, we have A CAUSE, not indeed established as a fact, but readily admissible as something beyond a bare possibility, *fully adequate to the utmost requirements of geology*. A change of half a magnitude in the lustre of the sun regarded as a fixed star, spread over successive

geological epochs, now progressive—now receding—now stationary—is what no astronomer would now hesitate to admit as a perfectly reasonable, and not improbable supposition.” (*Astronomical Observations*,” p. 351. 1847.) These views, suggested first by La Place and Herschell (Sir William), and thus developed and applied by Sir John in 1847, have entered since into the general mind, and received the approbation of the most eminent men of science. “The probably great physical similarity in the process of light in all self-luminous stars (in the central body of our own planetary system, and in the distant suns or fixed stars), has long and justly directed attention to the importance and significance which attach to the periodical or non-periodical variation in the light of the stars in reference to the varying temperature which our earth has derived in the course of thousands of years from the radiation of the sun. Supposing that our sun has passed through only a very few of those variations in intensity of light and heat, either in an increasing or decreasing ratio (AND WHY SHOULD IT DIFFER FROM OTHER SUNS?), such a change—such a weakening or augmentation of its light-process, may account for far greater and more fearful results for our own planet than any required for the explanation of all geognostic relations and ancient telluric revolutions.” (*Cosmos*,” vol. iii. p. 181, 182.) It will here be seen, that both Herschell and Humboldt connect the explanation of these geological facts with changes in the light and heat of the sun;—that these changes may have been “TO ANY EXTENT, AND IN ANY ORDER,” for, exclaims Humboldt, “*Why should it differ from other suns?*”—that HERE IS “A CAUSE,” not otherwise “*established as a fact*,” but the only cause known, and “*fully adequate*” to the effect; and the supposition of which, every astronomer must admit to be both “reasonable and not improbable.” The era of the change, or last obscurity, is the glacier period of Agazziz—the chaotic period of Moses. “A PERIOD OF UNIVERSAL DARKNESS AND UNIVERSAL DEATH,” says the one; “A PERIOD OF UNIVERSAL DEATH, AND UNIVERSAL COLD, AND ICE ALMOST UNIVERSAL,” responds the other. “A temporary cessation of the sun’s radiant light and heat *considered as a fixed star*,” says Moses. “THEIR LUMINOUS SURFACES ARE GENERALLY subject to those changes at extremely long, probably undeterminable periods;” and “Why should he differ from other suns?” replies Humboldt. “From ‘Tycho’s star,’ which has not shone during almost three hundred years? From Kepler’s star

of 1604, for two centuries and a half totally obscured? From the star 34 Cygnus, which, after being obscured since the earliest records of astronomy, 'through unmeasured periods,' was re-illuminated two hundred and fifty years ago, and still shines on a star of the sixth magnitude in the heavens; an indisputable instance of a sun for centuries, totally extinguished, and already entered, once more, on a new career of light?"

7th. Should any one doubt the certainty of the conclusion (in regard to the supposed connection between these geological and astronomical phenomena), derived by these distinguished philosophers from the facts and the principles above adduced; let it be remarked, that this does not even impair, much less can it neutralize, the force of our reasoning. For the doubt affects, not the general facts and principles (THESE ARE ASSUMED AS INDISPUTABLE), BUT THEIR APPLICATION; VIZ. to explain phenomena which some may suppose to be capable of a plausible explanation (though none can say it is completely satisfactory) on other grounds. But if there be the slightest probability in their hypothesis, then it all enures to the advantage of the Christian argument; and is another instance of corroborative harmony, where ignorance had asserted absolute contradiction.

Is it said, "These are but the bold conjectures of adventurous and daring minds, pushing their speculations into a region where all is uncertainty, at best." The objection proceeds from ignorance, but we answer—1st. What is it that has thus become so suddenly uncertain? Is it, "that our sun is one of the fixed stars, and the fixed stars are suns? That these suns are subject to prodigious changes—vast in extent and duration—passing from dazzling brilliancy to dimness, and ultimate invisibility, now fading utterly away, after being seen for centuries; now blazing up instantaneously, and continuing to shine for ages? That these changes are sometimes regular, at others irregular; some observed and known to return after calculated intervals; others, extending over periods so vast as to elude human observation and baffle human scrutiny, and that *this is the common character of suns?*" Now if all this be uncertain, then astronomy is all an illusion, and the telescope an instrument of falsehood and of folly. But how can such an illusion shake the firm foundations of our faith?

2d. When science has spent her centuries of laborious investigation, and at last comes forth with the highest speculations of

her highest minds, and religion accepts her theory as probable, and appropriates her speculation, shall she then recoil from her own conclusions, and renounce her sublimest theories of nature, because they are found to coincide with the revelations of the God of nature? Is not their harmony a mutual confirmation?

3d. Is it an argument against the credibility of Moses, that, after three thousand years of physical inquiry, and with all the improved instruments of modern times; the theory, the speculation, THE CONJECTURE, IF YOU PLEASE, which is most probable, which appears most consistent with all the ascertained phenomena, is precisely that which furnishes, if true, the most instructive commentary on his ancient narrative?

Let us briefly review the argument. The objection has been taken not from the ribald ignorance of Paine, but from the calm, cool, contemptuous irony of German learning, as it smiles from its sublime and serene elevation, upon the simple credulity of "THE EARLY AGES." It objects,

1st. That according to Moses, light appears to be "OF A FLUID NATURE." We have shown that the "undulatory" or "wave-theory" of light, sustained as it is, by the experiments of Prof. Airy, and the reasoning of Herschell, and confirmed by the investigations of our own Prof. Henry, is now the accepted theory amongst scientific men. That "light is produced by a series of vibrations of a *subtle fluid*."

2d. That, originally, "it does not proceed from the sun." We have shown that it is wholly independent of the sun, that it "pervades all space, and even the interior of all bodies;" and wherever any of the various circumstances exist, which are capable of producing these "*peculiar vibrations*," there *light exists*.

3d. We have shown that the sun is not light, but "a light-bearer." Himself a dark body, receiving light from the same "luminous atmosphere" which illuminates our earth.

4th. That the unknown agencies necessary to the development of light in our own sun, and the other fixed stars, are variable, indefinitely, both in intensity and duration; their light alternately increasing and diminishing; suspended altogether and afterwards revived; and these changes extended over periods of calculable, and others of uncalculated length.

5th. The Bible records one of these, which occurred six thousand years ago. Astronomy, *many precisely similar*, within the last three hundred years.

6th. Astronomy sees, even now, in the "luminous atmospheres" of the sun, traces of the agency of tremendous forces, which lay bare its dark surface for many hundred thousand square miles in extent, and operate upon a scale of magnificence, to which terrestrial phenomena present no parallel. "The play of sudden, tremendous, and evanescent forces, either connected with the solid body of the sun, or generated within his atmospheres, and made apparent by the surging and bursting of those atmospheres, has become," says Nicholl, "AN ABSOLUTE FACT."

7th. The earth, too, is one of those astronomic worlds; and geology has discovered evidences of variations in her climate, precisely corresponding to these supposed variations in the sun, that is, just such a change in her temperature, as those changes in the sun's light and heat would naturally and necessarily produce; and the last great change thus asserted by geology, is said to have terminated the former geologic era, and prepared the earth for man. It corresponds of course with the Mosaic chaos; and we need hardly say, that such a revolution in the condition of the sun, would necessarily involve the most terrific consequences to our world.

Thus have we passed in rapid review many of the most wonderful discoveries, and loftiest speculations of modern science, and have everywhere found that the progress of knowledge has converted the infidel objection into a real harmony. Did our limits permit, it would be easy to point out other coincidences equally remarkable, and to answer other plausible objections. But, if these greater difficulties (by many supposed to be insuperable) have been really removed, then the subordinate objections will spontaneously disappear. We cannot more appropriately conclude this prolonged discussion than by quoting the following striking and just remarks of an eloquent contemporary writer: "There is, then, no physical error in the Scriptures, and this great fact becomes always more admirable in proportion as it is more closely contemplated. Never will you find a single sentence in opposition to the just notions which science has imparted to us, concerning the form of our globe, its magnitude, and its geology, upon the void, and upon space, upon the planets and their masses, their courses, their dimensions, or their influences, upon the suns which people the depths of space, upon their number, their nature, their immensity. You shall not find one

of the authors of the Bible, who has in speaking of the visible world, let fall from his pen one only of those sentences which in other books contradict the reality of facts; none who makes the heavens a firmament, as do the Seventy—St. Jerome, and all the Fathers of the church; none who makes the world, as Plato did, an intelligent animal; none who reduces everything below to the four physical elements of the ancients; not one who has spoken of the mountains as Mahomet did, of the cosmogony as Buffon, of the antipodes as Lucretius, as Plutarch, as Pliny, as Lactantius, as St. Augustine, as the Pope Zachary. When the Scriptures speak of the form of the earth they make it **A GLOBE**. When they speak of the position of this globe in the bosom of the universe, **THEY SUSPEND IT UPON NOTHING**. When they speak of its age, not only do they put its creation as well as that of the heavens, in the “beginning,” that is, before the ages which they cannot or will not number; but they are also careful to place it before the breaking up of chaos and the creation of man, the creation of angels, of archangels, of principalities and powers; their trial; the fall of some, and their ruin, the perseverance of others, and their glory. When they speak of the heavens, they employ to designate and to define them the most philosophic and the most elegant expression, an expression which the Greeks, in the Septuagint translation, the Latin Vulgate, and *all* the Christian Fathers in their discourses, have pretended to improve, and which they have distorted, because it seemed to them, *opposed to the science of their day*. The heavens in the Bible are “**THE EXPANSE**,” they are the vacant space, or ether, or immensity, and not the “**FIRMAMENTUM**,” of Jerome, nor the “*στερέωμα*,” of the Alexandrian interpreters, nor the *eighth heaven*, *firm*, *solid*, *crystalline and incorruptible*, of Aristotle and of all the ancients. And although the Hebrew term so remarkable, recurs seventeen times in the Old Testament, and the Seventy have rendered it seventeen times, by “*στερέωμα*” (firmament), never have the Scriptures in the New Testament used this expression of the Greek interpreters in this sense. When they speak of the *air*, the *gravity of which* was unknown before Galileo, they tell us that at the creation “God gave to the **AIR ITS WEIGHT**, and to the waters, their just measure” (Job xxviii. 25). When they speak of the light, they present it to us as an element independent of the sun, and as anterior by three epochs, to the period in which that luminary was formed. When they speak of the interior state of our globe,

they teach us that while its surface gives us bread, **BENEATH, IT IS ON FIRE** (Job xxviii. 5). When they speak of the mountains, they distinguish them as primary and secondary, they represent them as *being born*, they make them *rise*, they make them melt like wax; they abase the valleys; they speak as a geological poet of our day would do. "The mountains were lifted up (elevated), O Lord; the valleys were abased (*Hebrew*, "*descended*"), in the place which thou hadst assigned them." (Ps. civ. 8.) ("*Gaussen, Theopneusty*," p. 144, 148.) Let the Christian, therefore, never fear the scrutiny of science. The word and the works of God must ever be in harmony. True theology is the interpretation of his word: real science is the interpretation of his works. In both the divine record is unerring truth. *In both, alike, the human interpretation not only is liable to error, BUT MUST OFTEN BE DEFECTIVE.*

Let these considerations check, at once, the audacity of skeptical philosophy, and the intolerance of religious bigotry. Let religion continue, as she has ever been, the patroness of science, and science will remain the handmaid of religion. The edicts of the Pope have not stopped the revolutions of the earth in its orbit, nor the philosophy of Hume erased from our geological strata their innumerable miracles. Geology will still date the termination of her old formations from the *extinct species* they contain, and the commencement of the newer from the period, when "a creation entirely new had succeeded universal decay and death;" though some modern Epicurus should dream of new species springing into life "in retired places." The earth will still be heaved by its volcanic fires, the moon still present her ragged edges and her shattered front, to human observation; stars will still blaze into sudden brightness, and pass away into invisibility; **THE MIGHTY REVOLUTIONS, ABOVE, AROUND, BENEATH US,** will still move on in their sublime and mysterious progress, towards their destined consummation, though man in his ignorance should still exclaim, "Since the Fathers fell asleep all things remain as they were from the beginning of the creation." Nature will still remain with her unfathomable mysteries, and God with his infinite and incomprehensible perfections, and man with his boundless aspirations, his deathless hopes, his inextinguishable conscience, his rational and immortal nature. The ransient theories of a day,

time will destroy : BUT TRUTH AND RIGHT ARE IMPERISHABLE AND ETERNAL.

NOTE.—In preparing these discourses for the press, the author has been under the necessity of choosing between the total omission of one topic, and such an abbreviation of the whole, as would have been injurious to each portion separately, and marred the *combined impression of them all*. He has, with some hesitation, chosen the latter alternative, and omitted the discussion in regard to the "Mosaic DELUGE." This is the less regretted, as the belief of *other deluges past and to come*, is now a part of the settled geologic creed, and therefore leaves that particular historical deluge within its own appropriate sphere of historical evidence. How *complete, decisive, UNIVERSAL*, is that historical testimony, no well-informed man, needs, at this day, to learn.



S. Robinson

The Difficulties of Infidelity.

BY

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the credulity which humbly receives and believes the truth ; and glorying in their own imagined Pyrrhonism ; they are given over—not to the utter incredulity which can believe nothing, but on the contrary, to the incorrigible and stupid credulity which can “believe a lie.”

It is the most remarkable feature of this description of infidelity, that there is ascribed to it the very absurdities which it has ever been the fashion of infidelity to charge upon believers of the “truth as it is in Jesus ;” insomuch that one unacquainted with the authorship of this portion of Scripture, might well mistake it for the *jeu d’esprit* of some ingenious philosophical essayist retorting upon modern skeptics, in cutting satire, their own charges. And while those passages suggest very obviously the particular points of attack against infidelity, they suggest no less obviously, as the general method of warfare, the plan of holding the advocates of infidelity responsible for some *positive* system of faith ; and then demanding that they show the consistency of this system with itself, with right reason, and with truth. Instead of confining themselves to a mere defence of their stronghold, the advocates of Christianity should often by a bold and vigorous sally, assail the enemy in his lurking-place, and seek to drive him from his “refuge of lies,” with utter and hopeless discomfiture.

The disadvantages of acting merely on the defensive for Christianity, are twofold. In the first place, it relieves infidelity from its just responsibility to the laws of logical consistency. It allows to infidels the comparatively easy task of pulling down, without ever being called upon to build up. But more especially, is this method of acting entirely on the defensive unfortunate, in that it gives currency to the very erroneous notion that Christianity is peculiar for the difficulties that attend faith in its doctrines. And the young and unwary, puzzled by the suggestion of mysteries and difficulties in *the* faith, which in childhood they have received upon trust, and captivated by the affectation of superior shrewdness and wisdom, with which infidelity sneers at the mysteries of this faith, are seduced from their steadfastness and led on step by step, at length make shipwreck of their *hope*.

It is true, the very title “*Infidelity*” by which we characterize generally the various forms of opposition to Christianity, indicates something merely *negative*. But the denial of the truth of Christianity is uniformly connected with some system or other of faith with which Christianity is supposed to conflict. Even were it not

so, has it ever been shown that by any law of reason, or by any appointment of God, one class of philosophers have it as their peculiar office to pull down and to destroy, without ever building up? If there is any obligation on the more learned portion of men to enlighten their fellows, that obligation lies no less upon those who reject than upon those who receive Christianity. It is not therefore enough to prove Christianity unworthy the credence of men. Especially is this not enough on the part of those who have set themselves up as professedly "the wise"—as a class claiming to be *the* philosophers, and the peculiar guardians of the mental and moral interests of mankind.

Adopting the method here suggested by the Apostle, of holding infidelity responsible for the reasonableness and consistency of the faith for the world which it will substitute instead of Christianity—and pursuing the general tenor of the topics of animadversion suggested in his view of the origin and tendencies of infidelity, I propose to consider :

I. The difficulties of infidelity in devising a system of theology, which shall answer the inquiries and meet the wants of man's spiritual nature.

II. The difficulties of infidelity in devising a system of ethics which shall be of purity, force and obligation sufficient to restrain and guide man as a social being, and render possible the existence of civilized society.

III. The difficulties of infidelity as a logical system—in its application of the laws of evidence to the question of the credibility of the gospel; and in constructing any theory on which to account for the phenomena of the present existence of the gospel records and the religion founded upon them, faith in which theory does not involve the most preposterous credulity.

These views of the subject comprehend generally the great aspects of the question of religion—as a question of theology, what man shall believe of God—as a question of ethics, what man shall practise toward man—as an existing phenomenon which man, as a philosopher, desires to account for. And these three aspects of the question embrace particularly the very points on which infidelity, both ancient and modern, has assailed Christianity. The substance of the objections to Christianity relates to the unreasonableness of the gospel theology, the impracticability of the gospel ethics, and the insufficiency, or logical inconsistency, of the gospel evidences. The method of argument here proposed

assumes, that if the gospel theology is unworthy of the faith of men, then—since some religious faith is necessary to man—infidelity should not only demonstrate the unworthiness of this creed, but supply mankind with a more worthy in its stead. If the gospel ethics are impracticable, infidelity should not only demonstrate this, but also—since society must have some system—devise a more practical ethics in its stead. If the records of the Christian faith and the church founded upon them, have not, as they profess to have, their origin in the inspiration of God, and their preservation by the providence of God, then infidelity should not only demonstrate the negative of this, but give the world some reasonable account of so remarkable a phenomena,—admitted on all hands to exist.

Lest, however, the justness of this assumption may not at once be clear to the apprehension of any, it may not be improper here to illustrate the true state of the question—especially in regard to the first and second topics proposed, viz.: The obligation resting on those who reject Christianity, to provide some better theology and ethics for the guidance of mankind.

Man is by nature a religious creature, and therefore must have a faith and worship of some fashion. Whether reasoning *à priori* from the nature of man, or reasoning from an induction of facts in the history of the race, we arrive with *equal* certainty at the conclusion that man must have a religion. It is a truth, patent upon the very surface of human nature, that all men have a perception of moral distinction; that they judge of actions not only as wise and unwise, but as right and wrong; that they have a feeling of complacency in view of right actions, and of ill-desert in view of the wrong. This being a matter of consciousness, needs no other proof than the statement of it, in order to be believed and understood. This being the case, men will be led to *suspect*, if not logically to *infer* the existence of a Supreme Being, who in some manner shall reward the good and punish the evil—and thus is derived the idea of retribution. The point is not made here, by any means, that by logical necessity the existence of a principle of conscience leads to the conclusion that there is a God. This is not necessary to the argument. It is asserted only that the impression of a judge of moral actions within the breast of man, will very naturally suggest the *fear* of a Judge above. The whisperings of the conscience, if they convince not the understanding, will yet impress the imagination with at least a dim

conception of some supreme power. In exact accordance with this reasoning is the fact that such an impression, constituting a religion of some fashion, is found wherever man is found. To this fact historians of all ages, and philosophers of all sects bear concurrent testimony. The Scythian, the Indian, the Gaul, the German, the Briton, as well as the more enlightened Greek and Roman of ancient times, conceived of a God the Judge, and of a future existence. So in like manner the most uncivilized of modern nations, alike with those who are enlightened, agree in the common belief of a God,—and, in some fashion or other, of a retribution. Ancient philosophers of all schools—Plato, Cicero, Aristotle and Seneca unite in testifying that this was the most ancient and universal belief of all ancient nations. And the modern skeptical philosophers with equal unanimity declare their belief, that in the nature of *the* case man must have a faith. “Man,” says Shaftsbury, “is born to religion.” “Man,” says Bolingbroke, “is a religious as well as a social creature; made to know and adore his Creator, to discover and obey his will.” “If,” says Adam Smith, the friend of Mr. Hume, “if we consult our natural sentiments we are apt to fear that vice is worthy of punishment. The doctrines of revelation coincide in every respect with the original anticipations of nature.”

Now in this admitted necessity of some religion for mankind arises the first of the difficulties of infidelity. It is clear that a mere negative of the gospel—nay, even a demonstration of the absurdity of the gospel, by no means finishes this question. The solemn fact of retribution, lying far back in human consciousness, is affected by no preliminary hypothesis as to the truth of Christianity. The elements of that hell from which the gospel proposes to rescue men, lie back beyond the question of the gospel, which proposes only to be a remedy for an evil known to exist among the children of men. What then, though we have proved the gospel to be a fable? Still human existence is no fable;—nor are its fears of retribution a fable. What though we have proven the improbability of the Gospel Judgment to come? We have still not quieted the anxieties and the dread which guilt ever generates in the soul; nor have we done anything to check that flow of sorrow which human experience avers must ever follow after guilt. If man “dieth not as the brute dieth”—if, as reason would lead us to suspect, the life that now is, constitutes but the infancy of an eternal manhood in the life which is to

come—if human nature in any or all of its essential attributes is to inhabit eternity—then most clearly the duty of philosophers is not fully discharged to their race, even when they have demolished the entire fabric of Christianity, or exposed what they believe to be the shallow empiricism of the gospel prescription for the spiritual malady of the race. The hell which symbolizes that malady is no invention of the gospel theology. It exists logically anterior to the coming of the gospel, and would still exist even though the memory of the gospel were blotted from the earth. However you may jeer at the empiricism which professes to control the stealthy tread of “the pestilence that walketh in darkness;” yet when your jeers have told with their fullest effect, in overwhelming with contempt the quackery, they have done nothing toward staying the march of the destroyer, or protecting you from its deadly breath. And so the jeer, the sarcasm, the contempt, the sophistry,—nay, though it be the argument—which destroys all faith in the gospel, affects not in the least the question of retribution for sin, whose existence is an admitted fact, independent of the remedy for it. The gospel professes to come only as a heaven-devised remedy for the malady of conscious guilt, and proclaims its author as the heaven-descended physician, able to rescue from a death whose hand is already felt by every soul that feels at all, to be paralyzing all the energies of the spiritual existence. If the skepticism which scoffs at the gospel, have found another and a better remedy for the known and felt calamity of our race, then the shafts of its wit are well and wisely aimed. If it have found some “other name under heaven given amongst men whereby they may be saved”—then it is all well enough. Yet let the votaries of skepticism remember that by the necessity of the case, a mere barren negation, however plausible, will not meet the case. It satisfies no yearning of the human heart. It stills not those wailings of terror and dread, which sin causes ever to echo in the chambers of the soul. It can soothe no trouble of the conscience, for it covers not up the dread vision of retribution which gleams upon every reflective spirit.

Why then shall skepticism waste its energies to destroy the hopes of the gospel, which, even though illusive, can possibly do no injury to a race already doomed and hopeless? Why, in the mere wantonness of conscious logical strength, dash in pieces the beautiful creation of fancy, when as yet reason has nothing more

substantial to substitute in its stead? Though the vision of distant water, which oft delights the fancy of the famishing emigrant over the great western desert, be but a mere optical illusion; yet if he is beyond all hope of any real slaking of his burning thirst, the illusion is harmless as it is delightful. Grant then that the landscape of lake, or running stream and overhanging shade which gleams a paradise before his enraptured sight, is all the trick of the deceptive *mirage* which will ever recede before him and vanish at last into thin air; still it is no high act of benevolence to inflict upon his eager though jaded spirit a display of your superior knowledge of meteorology in demonstrating that all is false and unreal. If there is yet hope for him—if in some other quarter you have found a spring—nay, even a stagnant pool, at which the intense cravings of his thirst may be satiated; then indeed spare not;—in mercy to him dash in pieces the vain deception, that he waste not his little remaining energy in pursuit of a phantom. But if you have no other hope to set before him, and his doom is inevitable, then in mercy let him go on undeceived. As nature fails—as one after another the springs of life dry up, let the beautiful illusion still feast his imagination; as reason now totters on her throne and the wild dreams of delirium rush thick upon him, let them be pleasant dreams of bliss;—let him lave his soul in the cooling delusion, till the eye, glazed in death, heed no longer the glare of the fiery sun; and the cries of his thirsty appetite have been hushed forever. Why come to torment him with your prosy disquisitions of the reflection and refraction of the atmosphere, as though begrudging him the single moment of bliss which relieves the inevitable horrors of his condition? As well should a physician, in order to settle a difference of opinion between himself and a dying patient, undertake by an *ante-mortem* demonstration, by the scalpel, to correct the error of his patient, and establish his own superior judgment in the diagnosis of disease.

It is not unimportant to have multiplied illustrations on this topic; since this not only is the hinge on which this controversy in great part turns, but the faith of thousands has become unsettled, from this very error of supposing it enough to discredit Christianity, that difficulties may be suggested in regard to it.

If then man must have a religion, and if, in the opinion of skepticism, Christianity is not the system to meet his wants, let skepticism devise some other scheme. Has this been done? It is

not intended here to argue in the abstract, the question of the possibility or impossibility of any satisfactory scheme of religion independent of a revelation; but simply as a matter of fact and history to reason from what *has been done*. If, after having employed the highest powers of a long line of philosophers, embracing the most gifted of the race, during a period of five thousand years, the problem of a religion for mankind has not yet been solved, it is very safe to infer that it cannot be done. I propose therefore to take a comprehensive and summary view of the answers which have been given by the most enlightened of those who have not known, or knowing, have rejected Christianity, to the inquiries which the spiritual constitution of man naturally prompts him to make in regard to his relation to God, and his own future destiny.

The question, "What is man to believe concerning God?" and "What duty does God require of man?" is one which, in the nature of the case, must interest every human being, who has ever reflected at all. A rational being with the mementoes of the evanescence of his present existence everywhere around him, and with the sense of ill-desert for wrong-doing ever within him, must naturally ask, whither am I going? Is the present life all of my existence? and shall this thinking, feeling principle within me perish with the body? or reaches it onward to another life? If so, then what is the nature of that life to come? What relation has this present to the future life? Shall that be a life of joy or sorrow? or shall it be a mere abstract existence incapable of any of the sensations of pain or pleasure that belong to the present? Does the relation I sustain to the being who hath made all things—and of whom I conceive, not only as a Maker and a Father, but as a Judge—affect the question of my future life? If so, is he favorable or hostile to my happiness? If not favorable, how may he be appeased? and on what conditions will he pass over guilt? To all such questions the gospel offers a full and direct answer, in terms which the most ignorant may comprehend. Its answer in general is—the Judge has made known his will and declared the terms of pardon. An atonement for sin has been made, by which is furnished a reason for which he can without derogating from that purity and justice, which you ascribe to him, regard with favor even creatures who have sinned. There is a future life, to which the present is but a preparatory state, and, in that life, eternal joy or eternal sorrow shall be the destiny of every

man, according as he may have received or rejected the offer of mercy.

Now to this answer infidelity demurs on various grounds ; either that there *could* have been no such revelation from heaven, or if so, there is no sufficient evidence that it has been made ; for however strong the testimony in behalf of the Bible as a revelation, it is still insufficient to counterpoise the anterior improbability that such a revelation should be made, the incredibleness of its statement of facts, and the insuperable difficulties which reason finds attending its doctrines.

We turn then, for a more rational and satisfactory answer to the inquiries of the human soul, to the teachings of philosophy, and in order to deal fairly and candidly with the system of skepticism, select only from the purest and noblest of its teachers. Let us, in imagination, then, follow some earnest and thoughtful inquirer in search of a religion which shall satisfy the wants of his nature, resolved in the spirit of a true eclecticism to gather from the best lights of every age.

It has been a favorite topic of declamation with our skeptics to exhibit the lofty heights of theoretical and practical religion to which the ancients attained without the aid of Christianity, as an evidence of what may be done in the way of choosing a religion of nature for men. Voltaire goes so far as to claim for ancient philosophy, not only the glory of originating a theory of religion superior in some respects to Christ's, but speaks in most complimentary terms of the pagan religion of antiquity as "containing a morality common to all men of all ages and places ; and festivals which were no more than times of rejoicing, which could do no injury to mankind or to the morality of their votaries." It will be but fair then to allow our inquirer the advantage of the light to be obtained from the ancient as well as the modern philosophy.

Let our inquirer turn first then to the ancients with the inquiry, "What of God?" Tradition back to the remotest time instructs him that there is such a being to be revered. He is not now however in search of tradition, but of the clearer and more profound views of the most philosophic thinkers. "God," answers Pythagoras, "is the Universal Mind diffused through all nature ; and the human soul but a spark stricken off from him as the great source of life." "God," answers Anaxagoras (and the answer is delivered amid the plaudits of his age), "is the Infinite Mind, which planned the motion and order of all things." "God,"

says Plato, "is the Maker and Father of the universe." But if now the inquirer proceed a step farther and ask, what is the nature of God? the relation in which God stands to us his creatures? all is vague and obscure. Socrates, who speaks most intelligibly of all concerning the care and providence of God, seems to conceive of him as a mere superior God, with hosts of inferiors through whom he administers human affairs. Plato seems to limit his omnipotence, and to ascribe a co-ordinate and co-extensive jurisdiction to an Infinite Spirit of evil, while the various schools represent God as hardly a personal Being at all, but a mere *principle* pervading the universe.

In answer to the still more practical inquiry, Does God exercise a providence over the affairs of men?—a question which according to Cicero, lies at the foundation of all religion—the utterances of ancient philosophy are still more vague and confused. Setting aside the scoffing of Epicurus, who banished God from any concern with the world which he has made, Cicero himself, who had the advantage of all previous speculations, and who wrote a treatise of the nature of God, regards the question of a Providence as a matter yet unadjudicated. And even Pliny laughs at the absurdity of supposing, that Divinity should take upon himself so troublesome a ministry as the care of human affairs. Among those even who maintained the doctrine of a Providence, as Epictetus informs us, it was a matter of high dispute, whether his care extended only to heavenly things, or also to things pertaining to this earth; and even those who held the latter opinion contended for nothing farther than a providence over generals, without extending to individuals. According to the Stoics—the most virtuous and intelligent of all the sects—God himself, in the exercise of this providence, is governed by an iron Fate, or Destiny, which controls his actions.

In reference to the immortality and future destiny of the soul, nothing can be more uncertain and contradictory than the utterances of the most enlightened writers of antiquity. The notion of the immortality of the soul, which they confessed to have been the most ancient and universal belief of mankind—so far from becoming more definite and certain, with the advance of philosophy, was really obscured if not entirely subverted. Whole schools, as the Cynics and the Epicureans, held that the soul died with the body; and of those who talked most sublimely of the immortality of the soul, the larger portion founded their faith on the assump-

tion that the soul being an emanation from Divinity, and a portion of the general soul of the world, shall therefore not perish but be "re-absorbed," as Seneca expressed it, "into the ancient elements." The very position on which Plato mainly founds his celebrated argument, destroys in effect this personal existence of the soul after death—"Of necessity," says he, "the soul is an un-generated, and therefore an immortal thing." Socrates, notwithstanding his elevated and consoling speculation of the nature of the soul, declares as the result of all his reflections, "whether a better state follows the present is known only to God." Cicero, who, in spite of the affectation peculiar to the new Academy—which eschewed all positive opinion—speaks with something of the confidence of a philosopher in his learned treatises on this subject, yet in familiar letters to friends expresses himself doubtfully and inconsistently—oftimes declaring death to be the end of all things. Seneca, who undertook the task of administering to the world consolation in sorrow, has no higher consolation to offer at the death of a friend, than the poor sophism—"aut beatus aut nullus."

In short, the noblest utterances of ancient philosophy on the whole subject of God, and man's relation to God and a future state, so far from enlightening and confirming the popular faith, surrounded the conception of God with an obscurity, which in effect tended to banish the idea from the popular mind. While they seemed to admit the existence of such a Being, they at the same time banished him from all direct practical control of the affairs of man. Those of them who have made themselves immortal by their philosophical demonstrations of the immortality of the soul, in effect obscured and subverted the popular faith in this doctrine. On the subject of a future retribution, the very same authors promulgated the most opposite opinions. Nay, Plato himself, the great expounder of the theory of retribution, absolutely rejected this notion as a practical faith for the people merely on the ground of political inexpediency.

Such then are the elements of the great results of ancient teaching, out of which must be framed a system of faith, which shall meet the wants of humanity, in lieu of the system of the gospel which infidelity proposes to reject. Is there anything here which a true philosopher would be willing to substitute in the popular mind, for the sublime and simple faith of the gospel, which teaches one God, a Father and Ruler—one Saviour—God manifest in the

flesh—one Divine Spirit which moves upon the soul—one kind Providence which numbers even the hairs of our head—a life after the death of the body which shall rectify the inequalities of the life that now is;—and a hope of abiding in his “presence where there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand where there are pleasures for evermore.”

Nay, the ancient philosophers themselves were far from desiring to substitute their own speculations for the faith of the masses, even absurd and inconsistent as they held that faith to be. They universally answered the question, “How is God to be worshipped?” by referring men to the religion of their country, their oracles and priests. Many of the most eminent of them, as Plato, purposely veiled their instructions in an obscurity impenetrable to ordinary thinkers. Cicero held it to be absolutely unlawful to declare the mysteries of the Supreme God to the vulgar. And however just might have been their views of religion, this could not in the nature of the case have furnished mankind with a religion. It might easily be shown, if time permitted, that a religious faith can never found itself on mere speculations, however just. The teacher of religion must teach “*by authority*, and not as the scribes.” Having no authority to enforce their instructions, the people at large concerned themselves little about their profound speculations. Some authority from heaven is essential to enforce the attention of men. It is evident, moreover, that the mere reasonings of philosophy, however just, cannot offer no practical ground of religious consolation and hope. They may amuse the light-hearted students of the Academy, but not console the sorrow-stricken and conscience-stricken inhabitant of a world of sin. The spirit disappointed with the vanities of life—the heart broken at the sepulchre of some heart-idol—the soul filled with dismay at the stern approach of death, are not in a frame to follow out the subtleties of philosophy, and comprehend the certainty of its conclusions, however just.

Many of the ancient philosophers themselves, as if conscious of this difficulty, never referred inquirers who asked after instruction in practical religion, to their own disquisitions. Cicero enjoined upon every man to worship God according to the religion of his country. Plato, in the Republic, declares that, what God Supreme is, and how he is to be worshipped, is best left to the Oracle at Delphos.

Indeed, so far from aiming to recover the masses from the super-

stitutions of this popular idolatry, the ancient philosophers, with singular insincerity, encouraged their superstitions. It is a notorious fact, that in the contest between Christianity and idolatry, the philosophers were the principal supporters of Paganism. They prostituted their genius and learning to make idolatry in all its forms respectable. They allegorized the monstrous fables of the poets so as to give them a semi-philosophic currency. Indeed, they hesitate not to defend even the stupid animal worship of Egypt, as containing under an obscure veil the highest wisdom. With such proofs before them of the insincerity of their great intellectual leaders, no wonder the masses of the people should treat their speculations with contempt. Nor was this want of confidence in the speculations of philosophy peculiar to the masses of the people. To say nothing of the professed skeptics, the new Academy, embracing Cicero himself, held nothing to be certain—nothing to be positively affirmed. Without any of the affectation of the new Academy, Socrates, with true humility, affirmed: "This only I know, that I know nothing." All intelligent men complained of the uncertainty of all knowledge. Diodorus Siculus openly charged the Greek philosophy with leading mankind into perpetual doubt even in regard to the plainest truth. It is needless to add that in this state of the case, no sincere inquirer could look to this quarter for light in the great matter of religion.

Having thus seen that the ante-Christian philosophers, notwithstanding the frequent reference to them in such a tone of triumph, offer no relief to the difficulties of infidelity in devising a religion for mankind, we now inquire whether the *anti*-Christian philosophers of modern times, though having the advantage of the labors of their predecessors, as well as of much light borrowed from Christianity itself, have yet, after near 2,000 years, devised any system of instruction for those who inquire what man is to believe concerning God—what duty God requires, and what destiny has in store for man? And both because this investigation must be very brief, as well as because it is our purpose to allow infidelity the advantage of exhibiting only its most enlightened and illustrious efforts of reason, I shall confine this view to a few of the most remarkable schools of philosophy since the revival of learning. What then have those who rejected Christianity as the religion for human nature proposed to substitute in its stead?

If there be any more rational theory of religion to be found on which the soul of man in its natural eagerness to know something,

of its relation to the universe and its destiny may stay itself, it ought certainly to be found here.

Lord Herbert, with whom the list commences, admits fully the absolute necessity of a religion for men; and having rejected the Christian notion of a revelation from God as unnecessary, boldly undertakes to construct a system in its stead. That there is a God who is to be worshipped with acts of piety and virtue; that there are sins for which if men would be pardoned they must repent; and that there are rewards and punishments in a future life;—are the articles of faith, which do in his view constitute a creed for a universal religion—sufficient for all the wants of the human soul. I cite this creed not only as that which comes historically first in the series of modern infidelity, and is therefore important; but because also it is in itself a full admission of the theory of the whole subject by which it is proposed here to test infidelity, to wit: that some faith is necessary for man, and that the philosophy which rejects Christianity, is to be held justly responsible to furnish man with a religion in its stead. In regard to this creed there is time here only to observe, first, that it is liable to all the objections which lie against Christianity as a system of dogmatism: secondly, that it is too vague and indefinite to answer any practical purpose for the great mass of men: thirdly, that it is impossible to *prove* the certainty of its articles, and therefore it rests on the ground of mere authority—and that the authority of Herbert, which is at least no higher than that of Christ—though Christ be shown to be a mere man—and lastly, because the creed has been in part, if not utterly repudiated, by the greater lights who have succeeded Lord Herbert in the work of enlightening the world by philosophy. Passing by this mongrel creed which has been rejected alike by Christians and philosophers, imagine now a man of ordinary intelligence, setting out most devoutly to consult the several oracles of philosophy which have been set up since that period for the guidance of men, asking, what is God? What is man's relation to him? What is to be man's destiny after the death of the body. Applying first to Bolingbroke, he is told to believe "that there is one supreme all-perfect Being—the eternal—the original cause of all things and of almighty power. But we must not ascribe to him any moral attributes, or deduce moral obligations from those attributes; or be guilty of the blasphemy of talking of imitating him. That this God made the world at first, and established the laws of the system, but now

has no more concern with its affairs—except so far perhaps as relates to collective bodies. As to the soul and its destiny—the soul is not distinct from the body, and therefore perishes with it. While it is of great use to believe the impression of immortality and of rewards and punishments hereafter—yet the whole thing is a fiction. That finally Reason discovers to man a law of nature founded in the human system and clear to all mankind.” But lest the inquirer shall be too curious, he is gravely informed not to expect too much. “Theists concur in ascribing to God all possible perfections; *yet they will always differ when they descend into any detail, and pretend to be particular about them, as they have always differed in their notions of those perfections.* Thus the only answer given is in substance, that there is a God of *all possible perfection*, but what those perfections are, is a question of detail about which philosophers differ. That men ought to believe, as men, and as a matter of expediency, that the soul is immortal, and that there are pains or pleasures in store for it hereafter, while as philosophers, they must perceive that this faith is mere humbug. From Shaftsbury such an inquirer would soon turn aside, deterred on the one hand by his tone of dogmatic contempt, and on the other by his declaration that all religious faith, beyond belief in the existence of God, is unnecessary. Nor will he be disposed to tarry long among the disciples of the school of French materialism, who denying “angel or spirit”—under the influence of a philosophy which makes matter the source and origin of all thought—with Voltaire doubts the existence of God himself, and utterly repudiates immortality for man—or with D’Alembert declares a God *unnecessary*. From such philosophy he shrinks back, as doing violence to the noblest impulses and instincts of his nature.

Imagine then an ordinary, though sincere and earnest mind, coming at length upon the “bristling formulas of the absolute” among the lofty-soaring idealists of modern Germany, where he finds a whole empire concentrated upon the investigation of three problems—The existence of God and his nature—The universe—The freedom and destiny of the human soul. He inquires first of Kant, and receives for answer in substance—Man has a conception of God—yet scientifically speaking, this conception cannot be regarded as anything else than the generalizing power of our own reason personified. Of course, he inquires here no further; for though he still feels eager for light on the subject of God and

the soul, he is dismissed to consult the "categorical imperative." and while he is assured that the answer of that oracle will declare to him the three truths—the existence of God, the liberty of man, And the immortality of the soul—yet no light whatever dawns upon his conscience, as to how from this existence of a God and the immortality of the soul to infer his relation to God as happy or unhappy forever. He turns now to Fichte: "You ask of God," says the philosopher, we have no conception of him save as the subject of thought, conceived of as absolute; all that we see in looking out upon the universe is the reflex of our own activity—the objectified laws of our own being. The "I" is the only object in the universe. "Self" is the absolute principle of all philosophy. "I" am the Creator of the universe. "I make it to realize my own self-development. The *thinking of the mind* is the active existence of God; so that man and God are identical. I then am God." With what horror will our plain inquirer turn from this—to him at least—unintelligible jargon? We may well imagine him to exclaim, "Is philosophy thus after attaining its sublimest heights, recurring again to the monstrous idolatry of ancient Paganism?"—"Changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man?" "I," a man—am God? "The thinking mind is his active existence?" Then the philosopher who thinks thus sublimely is the highest of all developments of God! Nay, is not this conception worse than the ancient Paganism? For though that made man God, yet it chose the highest conception and attribute of man. In Jupiter it worshipped power—in Apollo, manly strength and beauty—in Venus the concentrated charms of woman! But we, after the advance of so many ages of improvement, must worship as our highest form of God, a little pipe-smoking high-Dutch philosopher! In contempt he turns next to Schelling as the antagonist of Fichte and of more "spiritual" views. Here he is told that before and independent of the existence of the world, God is the undeveloped, impersonal, absolute essence from which all things proceed, but tending to personality in the production of the universe. Still more puzzled, he turns to Hegel and is told, "God is a mere process, ever unfolding, realizing himself in the human consciousness. God is the dialectic process of thought. In another aspect God is nature coming to self-consciousness—the absolute idea. Hence he exists only in knowledge. Therefore he can exist only in man. Or by another process assuming the truth which is ob-

vious, that "something and nothing are the same"—then God is nothing. Our inquirer, though still more puzzled, has at last this consolation, that here at length are two philosophers for once infinitely near an agreement. Rousseau complained that he found no two philosophers ever to agree, but that each one constituted a sect to himself. Here, however, are two between whom the difference is "the mere ghost of a departed quantity." One works out the conclusion, that the very highest development of God is a high-Dutch philosopher—the other decides, in infinitely close approximation to this, that God is nothing at all.

Or perhaps, now attracted by the imposing title of Eclecticism assumed by the more modern French philosophy, and imagining that here is truth in the grand collection of all the good things of all systems, he turns toward this quarter his inquiries, and in answer to the question, what we are to believe concerning God? he is told that God is the spontaneous Reason, the first and last principle of all things. Reason is literally a universal revelation. It is the mediator between God and man. It is the very "word made flesh." God thus everywhere present, returns to self-consciousness in man. In short, the divine nature is a simple Pantheism. I need not refer to other instances of the French school; for whatever variations and controversies the various sects may have had among themselves, all alike are characterized by their scoffs at all veneration for a personal Divine Being—and by their rejection of almost every idea of spiritual duty—and by substituting the mere vague idea of nature for the living God. Though the revolutions in French philosophy have been both as numerous and as remarkable as the revolutions of French politics, the results of them have been as far from promoting real truth, as have the political revolutions of promoting real personal and civil freedom.

Or if he turn away in disgust from these highest developments of philosophy in Europe, and seek with fond hope some light from the more practical labors of American thinkers—here too, to his surprise, he finds among those "professing themselves to be wise" the same dim and indefinite conceptions of the whole subject. In their effort to relieve Christianity—for which they profess the highest regard—from the incumbrances of superstition, they have gone from step to step in the work of improving their systems of "Rational Christianity" until, with singular diversity of view, they have propounded a jargon of strange conceits concerning God and the soul of man, which has all the wildness and extrav-

agance of the German which it imitates, without any of the dialectic acuteness and profuse learning which saves the German from utter contempt.

We make our inquiry of this oracle for some comprehensible and consistent truth concerning God with the less confidence, for that some of its priests give us notice in advance that in their esteem "consistency is *no* jewel;"—nor do they give in to the vulgar delusion that to make one's self understood is at all praiseworthy. "A foolish consistency," says Mr. Emerson, "is the hobgoblin of little minds. With consistency a great soul has nothing to do." "To be *great* is to be *misunderstood*. Socrates, Jesus, and Luther, were all misunderstood." Accordingly we find these marks of greatness in all their utterances concerning God and the duty man owes to God. An emasculated Christian philosophy, falsely so called, pipes ever in romance of "God in the air,"—in the hills—in the canvass and pencil of the painter. Whether God is a personal being, or the mere substratum of all things, seems not yet "understood." As to any duty which we owe to God, or with what affections of heart we shall worship,—these are obsolete ideas. "Purity of heart and the law of gravitation will yet be found to be identical." As to worship—"All nature is a temple of worship; and he who produceth any phenomena in nature is a true worshipper of God. "Laborare est orare." Work is worship. "All true work is sacred; in all true work, *were it but true hand labor*, there is something of divineness."* The world had heard before of the "dignity of labor;" and orators and poets had in figures of speech ascribed a sort of divinity to the labor of man, when contemplating it as harnessing up the lightning to run an express over continents; or as annihilating time and space by the agency of steam; or even in compelling the earth, by her mysterious processes, to yield the fruits which fill man's garners. But it will hardly be a doctrine "understood," much less felt to be in accordance with the feelings of a sincere inquirer after God, that mere bodily, or even mental toil, is the fittest worship he can offer the Creator and Father of all. Nor will such a man be likely to perceive the "consistency" of holding that "labor is worship" with the fact, that while indeed labor not only elevates and dignifies man, and supplies the wants of the needy, yet it is labor also, which moulds the false keys, and forges the false bill, and fills the world with base and

* Carlyle.

deceitful wares ;—no very acceptable acts of worship surely, to a God of purity and justice.

But whilst the developments of modern skepticism have been chiefly in the direction of a transcendentalism which professes to seek only more “spiritual” views ; and claims to have published a new and improved edition of Christianity, far more profound and spiritual than the old ; there has grown up side by side with this form of infidelity, another form more dangerous because more congenial with the tendencies of the age, and more palpable to the perception and comprehension of ordinary men. As a consequence of the remarkable extensions of the facts of physical science and of the applications of powerful and far-reaching generalizations to these facts when discovered, certain impulsive and ill-balanced minds, as in all periods of great mental excitement, seized with a wild fanaticism of science, and overleaping the barriers which reason and nature have set to limit the progress of human knowledge, have devised a sort of *Religion of Science*, in the character of whose Divinity the physical sciences are very strongly represented. One of these sects renders its religious homage to a God who appears to be conceived of, as an Almighty inventor and machinist, who having devised and put in motion a mere physical universe, has retired to a distance ; and as from some infinite eminence, contemplates with eternal complacency the smoothly moving wheel-work. Another sect, advancing as they suppose a degree or two higher, seem to conceive of God as of some great self-absorbed mathematical professor, forever establishing the great laws of physics, and superintending their practical operation in the physical universe. Whilst a third sect, holding it to be by no means a sufficiently exalted and sublime view of the nature of Divinity, to attribute to him any present concern with such trifles, conceive of him, as having merely acted at first in some past eternity, and glorified himself in giving its first impulse to the laws of nature, and then retired to await the *development* of these laws in the production of the physical universe ;—as some ancient capitalist having invested his means in productive stocks, retires at his ease to contemplate with ever-increasing pleasure the development of an ever-accumulating wealth. All these views alike banish God practically from the universe. They with mock reverence exalt him to a throne ;—but it is a throne shorn of its glory in a solitary and silent eternity. They profess most piously to believe in

God's existence, while the attributes of the existence which they ascribe to him, make it practically no existence at all. So far as relates to the character of that Being in whom man as a moral creature feels any interest;—so far as concerns Religion in the sense of something that is to enlighten the understanding, relieve the conscience, and elevate the moral nature;—this philosophy is literally “without God in the world.” Indeed, teaching as it does that man himself is but the higher “development” of mere animalism;—that originating at first in some fortuitous chemical experiment in which electric currents passing through matter have somehow organized an *animalculum*;—that thence starting in an infinite progress of transmigration, the *animalculum* becomes first a reptile—then the reptile a four-footed beast—and then the four-footed beast an ape—then the ape a man—then the man an Aristotle, a Bacon, a Laplace or a Newton;—this philosophy needs no God for its man in this life, nor any immortality for him in a life to come.

But let this suffice. It would be wearisome to detail the almost infinite catalogue of systems of minor note,—and profitless as wearisome. Nor need we care to exercise the privilege which the laws of war would justify, and in imitation of infidelity when attacking Christianity, array against our adversaries the fooleries of every insignificant skeptical sect that has burlesqued the name of infidelity. We have so far, in this search for a theory of religion to substitute for Christianity, endeavored to give infidelity the advantage of its best and highest efforts, unembarrassed by the follies of confessed failures. And notwithstanding this, the very mention of anything like *unity* as essential to any article of religion, is the keenest satire on skepticism. We have a right to demand, however, what creed can be gathered from this mass of opinions? If we are to select one, which is the true one? If we become Eclectics and select from all, on what principle make the selection? who is able to do it? We have a right to ask the question—and from us, it comes with infinite force and emphasis. Who is right, of all these innumerable sects of philosophy? How is the world to believe you, before you have first made at least some show of agreement among yourselves? Christians have drawn out the teachings of their religion into *creeds*—logical and consistent articles of faith—and with all their apparent diversity of opinion on other topics they at least must be admitted to agree on the fundamental points—of God—His relation to man—and

the destiny of the human soul. Let us see then in brief what sort of a creed on these vital topics we can glean from the philosophy on which infidelity relies instead of inspiration. Volney, the priest of Philosophism, pretended in imitation of Christians to form into a catechism the articles of infidel belief. We but follow a high example, therefore, in the endeavor to condense into this form the opinions which we have been considering.

QUES. "What is God?" ANS. God is a name, the idea to be attached to which is not yet definitely determined. Our wisest teachers differ;—some holding that it denotes a mere *power* which first gave impulse to the universe; others regard the word as the name of a spirit that pervades all nature; others again as a mere logical symbol for the abstract and indefinite, ego—the infinity of the "I-hood."

Q. "Is not God then a Personal Being?" ANS. There have been those, both among the ancients and the moderns, who have so held. But as the light of modern philosophy has guided men into higher regions of speculation, this notion is becoming obsolete and left to the unscientific and superstitious vulgar—yet it must be confessed that some of our wisest men have earnestly held it.

Q. Does God concern himself with human affairs? ANS. This is a matter of speculative opinion. Some of our greatest teachers have held that *chance* directs all things. Others hold that *Fate* and *Destiny* rule the universe. Many, however, have argued most ingeniously for a rational jurisdiction of Providence. Of this class again, some hold the Providence to extend only to great affairs, while others contend that if Providence control not the small affairs, He cannot possibly control the greater. Some conceive of this jurisdiction as exercised personally, but most of the modern great men regard it unphilosophical to hold to any Providence, exercised in any other manner than through the agency of laws established from the very first.

Q. What of the human soul and its existence after this life? ANS. This is a merely speculative matter concerning which wise men must necessarily differ. The simplest theory on this subject, and that which is attended with the least difficulty, is *that there is no soul*. In this opinion, too, men of the most opposite philosophy, as the Materialists and Transcendentalists, seem in effect to agree. Another view of the subject perhaps equally simple, is that the question itself is one beyond the pale of true Philosophy. Thus one of our great lights has said, "The moment the doctrine

of immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen. No inspired man ever condescends to these evidences.”* Yet it must be admitted that the most refined and subtle of the doctors in past times have taught that man has a soul, and that this soul is *perhaps* immortal. As to the relation of the future to the present, there is no certain opinion—nor can there be, owing to the uncertainty as to the nature of the soul. The prevailing tendency of opinion, however, is at present in an opposite direction from the views of the last age. Then the soul was conceived of as but the central point of acuteness and sensibility in a congeries of organs; its impulses of good and evil, were supposed to be secretions of the ganglia and the brain; and Cabanis demonstrated by the scalpel the process by which the vibrations of the nervous system were transformed into thought and emotion. At present the inclination of philosophy is rather to regard the term “*soul*” as a figure of speech—the representative of a popular “myth,” and though spoken of by the world at large as a real existence, the term as used by the more eminent philosophers denotes the mere allegorical drapery of an imaginary idea!

Such would be a specimen of the modern catechism of reason. Perhaps however the very conception of such a formula will be treated with disdain, as an antiquated and obsolete fashion of giving expression to religious faith; as restraining free inquiry in an age of “progress;” and as tending to trammel and embarrass the efforts of reason to enlighten mankind. If then we may not require of Infidelity such a “Confession of Faith”—drawn out into formal propositions from its sources of knowledge,—we may at least ask for the “Bible” of reason. Imagine then, that,—in a manner analogous to the collection into one volume of the writings of some thirty different authors of different eras, which Christians reverence as the revelation from God and the source of all their formulas of Faith, we have collected into one volume the theological teachings of the several philosophers who have united in rejecting Christianity. And in order to give Infidelity every possible advantage in the comparison, and the least possible embarrassment on the score of consistency, we will not demand of it any “Old Testament” in writings of an ancient era of civilization. Give us a “New Testament” embracing the modern golden era of philosophy;—a volume for the guidance of the world in theology embracing only the last and highest results of the speculations of a thousand

* Emerson.

years. Such a volume would have the doctors of the earlier English and French schools of philosophy for its "Evangelists;" the exploits of the French revolutionary *savans* for its "Acts of the Apostles;"—the disquisitions of the German idealists and rationalists for its "Epistles"—and the mystic visions of French and American Eclectic transcendentalists for its final "Revelation." Provide us with such a volume, and we are then placed upon a just footing for a comparison between the revelation of faith and the revelation of reason. Skeptical criticism has made itself extremely busy with microscopic search after the "*discrepancies*" between the several writers of the Christian volume. But let skeptical criticism now try its ingenuity in finding the "*coincidences*" between the several writers of this "Bible" of reason. Let it reconcile Herbert declaring the existence of a personal God, possessed of moral attributes which are the grounds of all religion, with Bolingbroke denying the possibility of knowing their attributes, or with Voltaire doubting God's very existence, or D'Alembert asserting that God is unnecessary. Let it seek for the coincidences between Shaftesbury proclaiming the existence of a personal God as a first and necessary truth, and Spinoza declaring God to be simply the substratum of all existence; or Fichte denying any active existence of a God beyond the limits of the human soul; or Hegel announcing God is nothing; or Cousin answering God is everything! Let it harmonize the schools which teach a Providence and an immortality, with the schools which repudiate a Providence and proclaim death to be an eternal sleep! If the canons of judgment which skepticism has applied to the investigation of Christianity be just, then the application of these canons to the system of unbelief must be equally just. Tried by the rule that truth is unity and ever consistent with itself, what is the world to think of a theology that both affirms and denies absolutely the existence of God; that affirms now his personal, and now an impersonal existence; that affirms and denies the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and that both affirms and denies every point relating to either the responsibility or the great end and purpose of the present life?

If these several pictures shall have the air of a caricature, the philosophers themselves are to blame for it. Their opinions are fairly stated; and if a mere juxtaposition of their several opinions expose the absurdity of them, it but exposes at the same time the effrontery of the men who would set up their discordant opinions in

opposition to the sublime unity of that wonderful volume, which though embracing the writings of men of every variety of character, genius and acquirement, living in every different historical era through a period of fifteen hundred years, yet all teach the same God—the same providence of God—the same method of securing God's favor—the same theory of the human soul, and the same immortal destiny of the soul after the present life.

Well said Rousseau of his infidel brethren, "I have consulted our philosophers—I have read their books—I have examined their opinions. I find them all proud, positive and dogmatic, even in their pretended skepticism;—knowing everything and proving nothing, and ridiculing one another. If you count the number of them, each one is reduced to himself; they never unite but to dispute."

We have confined the argument as to the ability of Infidelity to devise a theology for the world, to *what has yet been done*. It might easily be shown if time permitted, that this is in the nature of the case *the best that can be done*. The infinite confusion of opinions which has been exhibited, arises not from the mere idiosyncrasies of individual minds, who, in spite of a true philosophy, have run into these errors and contradictions in the application of the system. They are, all of them, the natural and logical result of the very first principles of Infidelity; and are the conclusions at which variously constituted minds must arrive by logical necessity, when once they have adopted the peculiar stand-point from which Infidelity views the philosophy of religion. The fundamental controversy between the advocates and the impugnors of revelation is as to the nature of the inquiry concerning religion. Is religion a question of *fact* or a question of *reason*? Christianity regards religion as a matter of fact; its doctrines, as revealed facts; its evidences the occurrence of facts, which combine with the character of the truths revealed to prove its promulgators to have been God-sent men authorized of God to declare his will. Every form of philosophic unbelief, on the contrary, proceeds upon the assumption, in some form or other, that religion is a question of reason—resting upon the axioms and deductions of the understanding, or upon the spontaneous impressions and impulses of the human soul. Thus says Mr. Emerson in a tone of complaint: "The position men have given to Jesus is a position of authority. The Faith that stands upon authority is not Faith." Now viewing the whole matter of religion from this wrong stand-point, no other

consequence can follow than the endless contradictions and absurdities here presented. For in all these antichristian systems alike, there is the omission of one of the fundamental elements of humanity in the very first announcement of the conditions of the problem of humanity ; and as a matter of course all the subsequent processes of reasoning, however just and ingenious, are unavailing to work out any definite and satisfactory conclusion. To use a simple and familiar illustration, the equations given are less than the unknown quantities whose values it is the object of the reasoning to educe. Hence, however various the starting-points of the several modern methods of metaphysical research : whether, as one school declares, the starting-point be the material, finite universe ; or, as another declares, the finite conscious self ; or, as a third, the infinite absolute :—however diverse the fashion of reasoning, whether empirical transcendental, ideal subjective, ideal objective, or ideal absolute ; and however wide and bridgeless the gulf between the resulting systems of the universe, constructed in these several methods ;—all of them alike having failed to recognize one of the fundamental elements of the problem, of necessity fail to meet the practical wants of man,—as a being instinctively conscious of his relation to some judge supreme, and of ill-desert in that relation. And in no portion of human history is there to be found a more forcible evidence of the fact that “ they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,” than in that portion which details the successive and contradictory phases, and the worse than Babel confusion of tongues of modern speculative philosophy ;—all growing chiefly out of the refusal of all parties alike to admit a revelation from God as one of the *objective phenomena*, and the felt want of some such revelation as one of the *subjective facts* of human nature. It will not fail to suggest itself as a singular fact to any reflective student, on a survey of the whole field of speculative philosophy, all covered now with the wrecks of a hundred exploded systems ; that any one of the various methods of constructing a theorem of the universe—whether the materialistic, the ideal, or the absolute,—might have satisfactorily explained all the phenomena of the universe, if the *fact* of a Christian revelation had in good faith been admitted as one of the original elements of such theory, and had been allowed its just influence in modifying the theory in the progress of its construction. With the admission of this fact, and the light cast by it upon the spiritual nature and destiny of man, almost any form

even of the earlier English or French materialism would have been adequate to account for all the phenomena of humanity and of the universe. With this fact and its consequences fully admitted, it matters very little whether we adopt as a stand-point "the me" (subjective self) of Fichte, or the "not-me" (objective nature) of Schelling, or the absolute idealism of Hegel, in our philosophical system. In either case the light derived, and the limitations imposed by this admission of an objective revelation and a corresponding subjective spiritual element in humanity, would furnish an infallible preservative against the extravagances into which all these methods have hitherto run. And the practical differences between the theories would be analogous to the difference between the undulatory and the radiating theories of light; either of them accounting for the phenomena. Indeed the most striking of all the arguments for the "necessity of a divine revelation" might be drawn from a review of the modern speculative philosophy and the clear exhibition of the need of such a revelation, to supply a missing element in every problem of the universe yet constructed. And we say it is but a proof that the mind of man is not "naturally subject to the law of God," that this lack of an essential element in the problem has not been observed and admitted; notwithstanding all the failures hitherto to solve the problem of the universe. It is held to be the sublimest of all the results of modern physical science, that in our age, the astronomer in his study should have established by abstract calculations the existence of a planet which hitherto had eluded the keen scrutiny of a thousand telescopes; and that he should have handed over to the astronomer in the observatory a *search-warrant* describing the very time when, and the place where, the skulking planet must be found; when and where it accordingly was found. And yet nothing can be simpler than the process by which this sublime discovery was reached. It was but the consequence of a prior discovery of an error in the results which should have expressed exactly the measurement of the orbit of a known planet; an inference hence, that since the process of calculation is indubitably just and its details correct—there is some element missing from the original data: hence the suggestion of the disturbing influence of some unknown planet; and hence the calculation of its place, and consequently its discovery. Why is it that precisely analogous errors in the projection of the orbit of humanity, have not long since suggested the existence of another element, overlooked in the very data on

which the whole theory is based? Why so obstinately close the eyes to the suggestion, that in the construction of the intellectual universe, Reason may not be a solitary planet moving through immensity around the great central mind, but that Faith also may, as another planet, move perhaps through the same region of the universe, and her orbit so cross that of the sister planet, or have some point of contact with it, as to render the projection of the orbit of the one impossible, without calculating the influence of the other?

It is no remedy for these errors to admit a religion of nature merely, for this is still to assert the principle that religion is not a question of *fact*, but of *reason* alone. It is no remedy either to admit revelation in part as subsidiary to reason. For experience demonstrates most clearly that however the votaries of the religion of reason may profess or even feel deep respect for the Christian revelation; or may even admit revelation at some later stage of the argument as a modifying influence in the system, and as ancillary to the work of reason; the result will in the end be the same, as though no reference at all has been had to religion as a question of fact. Step by step the votaries of a "rational Christianity" will be driven, first to Deism, then to Pantheism or Atheism. For of necessity a Christianity that consents to utter its voice only in obedience to what may claim to be reason, is of no higher force than the power which controls it. It dwindles therefore, first, into a mere hypothetical and visionary system, which can afford no solid ground of hope and comfort to the soul. Nothing then is more natural than that to a mind so disappointed in the results of its faith, revelation shall seem to be a mere excrescence on natural religion. For a like reason natural religion shall by the same process become to such a mind a system of mere empiricism, feeble in its arguments, unsatisfactory in its proofs, earthly and grovelling in its sanctions. The God of this religion, having first dwindled into an object within the reach of human reason, shall soon be degraded to the level of humanity; and finally as an unworthy and unnecessary conception,—by a higher philosophy, be banished from the universe. Hence the entirely fruitless results of all the speculations in theology which have assumed religion to be merely a question of reason during the past three centuries. The world has been kept ever astir with the "movement" of a "progressive" theology of reason, and encouraged by most confident assurances of the speedy construction of a system which

shall be adapted to the more advanced stage of humanity. There has indeed been "movement" enough. With an energy and power of genius never before witnessed, men have set themselves to reinvestigate first truths, and construct a moral system of the universe. There has been "progress," but it has been progress forever in a circle. The latest results of Infidelity in all its forms are approximating more and more to the first results of the Infidelity of the age immediately succeeding the revival of learning. And as now we trace the philosophical history of the last three hundred years, we but perform a voyage of circumnavigation. As some traveller who having toiled over mountains and seas, through sandy deserts and tangled wilderness, ever keeping his face to the east, finds himself at last precisely at the spot whence he set out, only approaching from an opposite point of the compass, so our progress over the realms of modern skeptical philosophy. We set out with Spinoza—that God is the universe, and end with Strauss—that the universe is God.

Here then, in short, are the theological difficulties of Infidelity. Such is the constitution of man, that he must have a positive faith. If Christianity as a system of faith be held either insufficient or defective, it behooves those who hold it such to make a better provision for the wants of the world. In this provision there should be at least a reasonable degree of unity and consistency. But you have exhibited nothing but a congeries of opinions, boldly announced indeed and obstinately defended, yet all contradictory and equally worthless. Truth is unity—truth is ever consistent with itself. But you have never yet united in a single article of faith. Each successive speculation destroys that which preceded it. You claim *progress*, and ever hold out hopes of a glorious goal to be reached—yet march in solemn procession ever in a circle and leave your followers at last, just where you found them—with no God to worship—no retribution to fear—no immortality to hope for—and not a single inquiry of their spiritual nature answered.

II. The ethical difficulties of Infidelity may be discussed within much narrower limits. They are of such a character as to be obvious upon a mere suggestion even to minds little accustomed to abstract reasoning. And the relation of this to the former branch of the argument is so intimate, as to be rather in the nature of a corollary from it. At the same time this view of the subject is in many respects more important than the former,

especially from the fact that the necessity of morality to the social existence of man is far more generally appreciated by the mass of men—and the subject appeals more directly to their present and obvious interests. It will be necessary however to confine this branch of the subject to a mere outline and illustration by way of specimen of the argument.

We deem it unnecessary to go into an argument here to prove, that the Infidelity which rejects Christianity, and consequently the moral system of Christianity, is to be justly held responsible to supply some other system of morals for the government of men. All the reasons which have been exhibited already in establishing the obligation of Infidelity to furnish the world with a religious faith, apply here with still more palpable force. Nor is it needful to prove that some moral system, of higher sanctions than the mere penalties of civil and social law, is essential to the very existence of men together in a state of society ; for this point is fully admitted by all enlightened skeptics—and were it not, the sad experience of the world would attest it beyond dispute.

From the very nature of the principles of morals—as arising out of the conviction of the relation of man to a Supreme Being—it is obvious that the view of the creed, of skepticism on the subject of God and man's relation to God as before presented, is utterly incompatible with any higher law of morals, than that which appeals to the mere selfishness of men. Without the firm conviction of the existence of a moral Ruler—which conviction as we have seen, is impossible under any of the skeptical systems of philosophy—there can be no such things as *moral laws*, except in the most vague and metaphorical sense. Every man under this system is responsible to his own mind only—if responsible at all—for the moral character of his actions. And therefore the only guarantee which society can have against the graspings of his selfishness—the prompting of his lusts, or the impulses of his passions, save so far as his actions are done in open day, is in the fear he may have of his own mind. But why shall he fear himself, if a reasonable prospect of impunity from the vengeance of law offers, and a strong temptation of immense present advantage? He need fear no self-remorse ; for Infidelity has relieved him from any fear of an avenging Judge, and conscience having now neither law to appeal to, nor Judge to threaten with, must of necessity dwindle into a mere blind instinct, whose cowardly

shudderings are as unmeaning and as little to be regarded, as the twitchings of a shattered nervous system.

As to anything like positive *virtue*, in any sense higher than mere temporary expediency, it is obviously impossible under any pure form of the skeptical theology. There is neither room for the play of any of its emotions in the soul; nor any standard for the test of its character; nor any motive to the performance of its appropriate actions; nor any support in the trials which it must undergo in the accomplishment of them. Once mankind generally have begun to doubt or to deny the existence of a moral Ruler and a future state, then all that cultivation of the moral taste which the received notions of man's relation to God necessarily tends to promote, must soon be abandoned. All reverence for humanity is destroyed. All motive to heroic actions is taken away. All deeds of disinterested kindness, all aspirations of a lofty and self-sacrificing Patriotism cease to form part of the history of the race. The tale of romantic chivalry shall be superseded by the narrative of successful trading; the tale of devoted love, by the handbook of the art of seducing; all political science shall be reduced to a question of physical power; morality becomes a mere question of profit and loss—and the account with conscience may be kept by day-book and ledger. There being no other protection between each man and danger, than a law which can guard only against open acts, and which can condemn only for deeds of guilt *proven* to have been done, each man becomes fearful and suspicious of his fellow; this constant fear and suspicion begets cowardice; and cowardice begets cruelty. The struggle of mere brute force for the mastery now begins, and continues, till the "last man" shall remain alone on all the earth. We have not the space here to develop fully the logical connection between the skepticism which banishes the idea of a Providence and retribution from among men, and the utter destruction of human society. If however any one fail to perceive at once the connection, he needs only to pursue his own reflections a short space, to find that the conception of a God and a future existence underlies the whole field of those human impulses and human sympathies which connect man with man in society.

It is very true that these results have not very extensively followed the speculations of skepticism hitherto. The reason why they have not however is the restraint still held over men, by that revelation which infidelity has professed to despise. Men are more

easily led astray in matters of speculative opinion than in matters relating to their practical welfare in the present life. Hence many who have adopted the theory of skepticism as a theology have been very slow to adopt the system of practical morality which necessarily flows from it. And thus a great portion of men act in the teeth of their creed; and while they join in the cry against the theology of the gospel, think it best to let the world abide by the morality of the gospel.

But we have not to rely merely on logical deductions to prove that the theology of modern infidelity must lead to a subversion of all ethical principles. These deductions have been made for us in many cases by the skeptics themselves. And all that is needful to the exhibition of the ethical difficulties of infidelity, is a reference to the moral principles which it has formally announced. Mr. Hobbes, in perfect consistency with his Theology, utterly repudiates the common distinction between right and wrong, as incompatible with the view of man as a creature of sensation, to whom such ideas must be mere phantoms. While Spinoza, from the very opposite section of philosophy, affirms the same conclusion, on the score that God being the universal substance, all that happens must so happen by the energy of this substance, and therefore there can be no room for the distinction between right and wrong in actions which all alike have their origin in God. So in later times the French successors of Hobbes—Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert—preached the morality which Robespierre, Danton, and Marat practised. Denying any moral distinction in actions, Diderot claimed for every man the right to do as he pleases, and to choose according to the instincts of his nature. Volney, in full consistency with the theological system of the whole materialistic school, held self-preservation to be at once the ground and the end of all morality—that to be right which ministers pleasure and prolongs life—that to be wrong which inflicts pain or shortens life. So reverting again to the opposite school of idealism—Fichte affirms that holiness and sin are only seemingly such, because of our peculiar constitution, and holiness and sin are mere pictures of the brain having no inherent, absolute nature. Schelling subverts all moral obligation, by the dogma that everything, as by a blind fatality, must develop itself precisely as it is developed. In the system of Hegel which deifies the thinking principle in man, or that of Cousin with its divine humanity, there is in the nature of the case no room for the ordinary conception of morals; for why should a

divine humanity dread sin or strive after rectitude? From these specimens we may see that so far as concerns what we may term the systems of pure and positive infidelity, both material and ideal, the subversion of all moral distinctions is not left to mere inference. The deductions are boldly made; and taking them as so made, we defy the ingenuity of man to devise a society which could exist a year under their practical development.

The more practical English freethinkers had the ingenuity to save—or at least making a show of saving—the principles of morals, while they aimed to subvert the theology of Christianity. In the true spirit of his philosophy Mr. Hume merely *doubted*, in regard to morals. The greater portion of the English skeptics, as if to avoid the ethical difficulties of their less practical brethren, have been inclined to elevate natural, as they depreciated revealed religion; and thereby, as they imagined, preserve the sanctions of morality harmless. Thus Herbert, Bolingbroke, and Shaftsbury, while decrying the Christian theology, yet claimed to be the devotees of a religion of nature, and pre-eminently the instructors of mankind in the principles of morality. But the same suggestions which we have made above as to the intrinsic feebleness of a mere natural religion, apply in all their force to the morality which has its foundation alone in the reasonings of natural religion. If religion—any religion which is adapted to the actual state of man and his wants—must be a question of *fact*, rather than of *reason*, then also the moral principles which shall guide men aright in the matter of duty, must have a like positive ground in order to give them efficiency. As a religious faith which has no other ground than the speculative reasonings of men, is not adequate to comfort and sustain the soul in the hour of darkness and affliction, because it is not of authority and is not positive—nay more, because its ground cannot be comprehended by the great mass of men; so neither can a practical morality, which is merely inferential, and depending for its development upon the subtle reasoning of mere “scribes,” be of positive obligation sufficient to restrain the passions of men in the hour of temptation—nor serve as an ever-present, authoritative guide to the conscience, in its practical judgments of the every-day actions of life. Just as the merely natural religion has ever a tendency to evaporate into subtle hypothesis and dreamy sentiment, so the morality which derives its sanctions and its energy from natural religion alone, is ever prone to lose its seat as judge in the court of conscience; and descend to the arena

of debate with reason, as to its authority ; and finally be hooted out by the passions, as a disagreeable and impertinent intruder. To illustrate by a single case, the vagueness of the morality,—Bolingbroke sums up all practical ethics in this rule : “ So regulate your appetites as will conduce to the exercise of your reason, the health of your body and the pleasures of your senses, all taken and considered together ; for herein all true happiness consists.” Imagine now the philosopher to come in contact with some creature of ignorance, passion, and proclivity to vice. The sage reproves his vices and discourses in lofty strains of the *pleasures* of virtue. But pleasure to any man depends much upon his tastes. Imagine the devotee of sin to reply—“ My lord, your *tastes* and mine differ—and you know there is no disputing about taste, you pursue what is the path of pleasure to you in the pursuits of speculative philosophy, I not having either your genius, education or peculiar turn of mind, pursue what I conceive to be the ‘ pleasure of my senses’ in a reasonable and healthy indulgence of what you are pleased to term vices.” Is not the question finished ? Unless there be motives to virtue clear enough to be comprehended by every capacity, and strong enough to over-ride the strength of passion—and of certainty far beyond the reasoning of a mere philosopher, there can be no such thing practically as morality for the great mass of men.

Another recourse of infidelity to relieve the system from its ethical difficulties—one very common with the popular infidelity of our own day—is the method of separating the theology of the gospel from the morality of the gospel, and while rejecting the former to eulogize and recommend the latter. Some distinguished skeptics have attempted to select out and reduce into system the moral precepts of Jesus, throwing all else in the gospel aside as worthless. If however the view which has been taken of all morals as founded upon man’s relation to God and a future life is correct, this method of infidelity is peculiarly absurd. The morality of Jesus without the theology of Jesus, is but “ the play of Hamlet with the character of Hamlet omitted.” If the theology of Jesus is wrong, his morality is groundless. It has no authority save the mere name of a mere man, who on this supposition, claimed to be what he was not—it is a morality inconsistent with itself and with reason. Surely skepticism must be reduced to a great strait, that it should resort to such a device. It is a plagiarism of a rare

fashion, that first renders an author's views worthless and absurd, and then steals them from him !

These mere suggestions must suffice as an illustration of this branch of the subject. The sum of the whole matter as to the difficulties of infidelity in this view, is that practically it leaves the world without morals, and therefore without the means of social existence. For however some of its advocates talk of moral duty as derived from the light of nature and the deductions of reasoning ; however others may extol morality and offer to patronize even the strict system of the gospel, yet infidelity as a system has and can have no principles of ethics which can be comprehended. It has neither the foundation nor superstructure for the guidance and enforcement of practical duty. As in its theology it either denies or doubts of a personal and moral God of providence ; denies or doubts any true immortality of the soul ; denies or doubts a future retribution of happiness for the good, and misery for the wicked ; so it practically excludes God from all its theories of ethics—one resolves all morality into self-love ; another into what is useful to society ; another declares that to be right which he thinks right. There is no personal duty which some one of them does not impugn ; no bond of human society which some one does not burst asunder. Having effaced the distinctions between good and evil, and dug up the very foundations of morals, they give over society to the weak and blind guardianship of civil law—as its only protection against all the selfish interests, and all the base passions which belong to an uncultivated and unrestrained humanity.

III. The logical difficulties of infidelity, which yet remain to be considered, are so numerous and so various in their character, that anything beyond a mere indication of their general character, is impracticable within our present circumscribed limits. This is the less to be regretted, since on this branch of the subject, the simple suggestion of the points in their proper order and classification will exhibit the full force of the general argument.

Adhering to the definition of infidelity as comprising all forms of speculative belief which reject the Christian Revelation, the logical difficulties that pertain to it might be classified under three general heads, as relating to the three general forms of unbelief—the Atheistical, the Pantheistical, and the Deistical. Our argument confines itself mainly to the last. For the logical difficulties of Atheism are in themselves so obvious and so insuperable, as to have created a very general doubt in later times whether, except

in the case of partial insanity, any man can be an absolute Atheist. The difficulties that meet the theory of an uncaused and ungoverned universe at the first outset, and which follow it with increasing power through every stage of its reasoning, render this scheme possible of belief only to minds "already given over to strong delusion to believe a lie." The sum of the improbabilities in this creed—according to the almost universal admission that every effect must have a cause—is absolutely infinite at the very outset. The marks of design in every physical phenomenon that meets the eye—the hand, the ear, the heart—every member of every living body that exists—indicating that it has been formed by some wise designer—are all so many individual protests against the Atheist's creed, that all is the work of *chance*, or of a blind unintelligent necessity. Yet the sum of these innumerable phenomena is by no means the exponent of the degree of improbability that arises against this system. For each individual member, of each individual creature, having certain fixed relations to each other member, of proportion, harmony, and fitness, becomes (to use a mathematical form of expressing it) only the root of a power, whose index is the number of such members of each creature that exists; and therefore the true expression for the degree of improbability, at this stage of the argument, is the sum of all the members of the innumerable living existences of the natural world, raised to a power whose index is the expression, for the number of organs in each individual of all the infinite number. Nay, this expresses not yet the degree of improbability—for each of these individual existences has a relation to the system of which it forms a part; which relation is just as unlikely to have been determined by chance, as that by chance, any member of any individual creature should have been formed as it is; and therefore the expression for the degree of improbability at this stage of the argument is again to be multiplied by the infinite improbability, that in any other way than by a designing mind the relation of infinite parts to an infinite whole could have been so nicely adjusted; since one chance mistake in the happening of its construction must have destroyed all this harmony of relation. And now while the mind is yet laboring under the stupendous difficulties which the ordinary visible world thus heaps upon any theory that denies a first designing cause; astronomy comes in to multiply the already inconceivable sum of improbabilities, not merely by the number of other worlds in the systems to which

this world stands related, and then by the imagined number of systems, but by the products arising from the multiplication of the number of worlds into the number of the relations of each, and that by the product of the number of systems into the number of the relations of each. In like manner, the microscope opening up a new world in each minute particle of this world as seen by it, comes in with its discoveries to swell the infinities which already express the chances against Atheism, by multiplying all these again into the product of the infinite number of the individuals within reach of the microscope, by the number of the relations of each to its system, and of each to each other! An intelligent reception of absolute Atheism is impossible.

The Pantheistic systems of unbelief—alike those which are constructed after the subjective ("me"), the objective (not-me), or in the logical process (ideal absolute) theories, avoid the difficulties of the older and more matter-of-fact systems of Atheism only by keeping out of the reach of ordinary earthly reasonings. While soaring in their Ixionic flight, they rise beyond the reach, when having suffered the Ixionic fall, they sink beneath the contempt, of common sense thinkers; and have therefore generally passed unanswered as to their religious difficulties. It is obvious that all the modern Pantheistic systems, denying in substance, any intelligent personal First Cause instead of removing out of the way, only manage to roll forward the stone, over which Atheism falls and is broken, a step or two farther into the dark. If the thinking "I," is the only God, whence then the material universe? If the "not-I" or the external universe, be God, whence the distinctive "I?" Or if God be the logical process ever developing,—by what twist in that process does thought develop matter? It is unphilosophical to assume the existence of any material universe at all;—then it is at least philosophical to ask: How came unphilosophical minds by the notion, that there is such a material universe? If the world do not exist as a phenomenon, yet the *notion that it does exist* is indisputably a phenomenon, at least to us who think so. If Pantheism, by disputing the premises, may avoid the obligation to suggest a first cause for the existence of the world, it cannot avoid the obligation to suggest a first cause for the very generally prevailing notion that there is a world.

It is more important, however, to complete our view of the subject, that we invite your attention more particularly to the difficulties of that form of infidelity which aims directly to subvert, and

overthrow Christianity, by attacking the evidences of its Divine authority. This brings us to notice, in conclusion, the logical difficulties of Deism, as exhibited in its assaults upon Christianity. This branch of the subject naturally divides itself into three topics: the logic of the skeptical criticism as applied to the authenticity and credibility of the gospel records; the logic of the skeptical arguments against the subject matter of those records; and the logical absurdity of the theories on which skepticism proposes to account for the resultant phenomenon of those records; namely an existing Christianity in the world.

In reference to the criticism whereby skepticism has attempted to impeach the veracity of the sacred writings, which is a primary question on the whole subject, we have room for a single illustration. It is a question which cannot fail to occur to any reader of those commentators who have impugned the veracity of the sacred authors; why is skepticism so much more hostile to these than to any other authors of the same age in history? As narrators of facts, as historical witnesses, wherein is Tacitus superior to Luke, or Livy to Matthew? As authors on the philosophy of religion, why shall Cicero "*De natura Deorum*," be treated with respect and even reverence; while Paul "*De justificatione*," is thrown in disgrace out of the circle of ancient philosophers? As beautiful philosophical "reminiscences," why shall Xenophon's account of the last conversations and the death of his master Socrates, call down the applause of the schools, while John's account of the last discourses and the death of his master Jesus be classed with the reveries of fanaticism, and turned from with contempt? If the works of Tacitus, Livy, Cicero, and Xenophon, are known to be authentic, from the method of their transmission to us, and by reason of an accumulation of proofs in their favor, from external facts of all sorts and internal confirmations—far more so Luke and Matthew, Paul and John. If it be said that Matthew relates incredible events—so does Livy. If Paul deals in dark speculations about religion, so does Cicero. If John was a blind and devoted partisan of the persecuted Jesus, so was Xenophon of the persecuted Socrates. Where then is the logical consistency of that criticism, which, when it sweeps off at one stroke these writers of the New Testament, does not at once make a "*tabula rasa*" of every page of ancient history?

The same general remark will apply to that microscopic criticism which has paraded before the world its discoveries of the

discrepancies between the sacred writers. Laying hold of a series of biographies of the life and actions of Christ by four different writers—biographies remarkable for their minuteness of detail—relating chiefly the events of three years—describing the journeys, the public discourses, the private intercourse, the table-talk of an individual—this criticism discovers and parades in triumph—one as evidence of “forgery,” another as evidence of designed fable—that one evangelist affirms a certain event to have occurred at the *sixth* hour, while the other affirms it was the *ninth*; that one says, Mary anointed the Saviour’s *feet*, another, that she anointed his *head*; that one quotes as the inscription on the cross, “*This is the King of the Jews,*” while the other quotes it, “*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.*” These instances of such criticism are not selected out for their insignificance, with a view to caricature, but are taken at random, as a fair average specimen of the “discrepancies” which the combined skeptical acuteness of the vulgar Paines and the accomplished Strauss’s have been able to discover in the sacred writings. Now we do not aver that minute criticism is in its nature illogical; nor even that such “discrepancies” may not furnish logical grounds for invalidating the testimony of these historians. But we have a right to aver, that if this criticism is just as against the credibility of these historians, and therefore renders it probable that the whole story is a fable—then it is equally just as against any other historians, and renders equally probable the fabulous character of all discrepant writers. Let the critics of this school only be consistent. Because Clarendon affirms that Strafford was condemned on Friday and executed the same day, while Burnet affirms he was condemned on Friday and executed on the following Monday,—let it be declared to be the logical inference that both these histories are forgeries, or at best but allegorical myths of the excited revolutionary era in England; and that Strafford was no real personage at all, but a mere *nebulous idea*, which, after long revolving in the English mind, gradually *condensed* into a solid conception in the legends of Clarendon and Burnet. We remember to have heard two veterans of the American Revolution, discussing some movement of American troops in the battle of Yorktown, in which battle both though then very young were actors. One spoke of the peculiar movement, as being yet fresh in mind as the events of yesterday, and that it occurred just “*after dinner*,” the other, who claimed to retain a no less vivid impression of the events of that memora-

ble day, persisted in affirming that the movement in question occurred immediately "*after breakfast*." Now according to the critical laws which skepticism applies to the Scriptures, the logical inference would be a grave doubt, as to whether such a battle ever occurred; and whether Washington and Cornwallis were not mere "mythical" ideas, which, floating in the minds of the American people in that "heroic" and legendary age—representing, perhaps, the conception of a great national deliverance and a great national desolation—had at length taken definite forms in the minds of these old men. So of many other aspects of this criticism—what shall be said of the popular skeptical canons for the testing of prophecies by comparison with the record of their fulfilment? Hear the grave announcement of Dr. Strauss: "Wherever we find a narrative which recounts the accomplishment of a long-expected event, a *strong suspicion* must arise that the narrative owes its origin to the pre-existent belief that the event would be accomplished!" That is, when reduced to its simplest expression—events which are expected are less likely to happen, than those which are unexpected—therefore the narration of the occurrence of any event which was expected must be held to be suspicious. In fact the whole canon of the recent infidel tests of genuineness, may be summed up in two rules. 1. If the accounts of two evangelists agree exactly, neither can be real history, for they obviously both borrowed the story from some current fable. 2. If they differ in any particular, both are false—for two contradictory reports must obviously be untrue. Nor is this criticism very sparing in the application of its canon. Matthew's report of the sermon on the Mount is affirmed to be spurious because it contains more than Luke's; and Luke's is of course unworthy of reliance, because it contains less than Matthew's!

We must hasten on, however, to make at least a passing observation on the second point suggested; the application of the skeptical logic to the subject matter of these records. The first peculiarity which will strike the student of the infidel arguments on this point has reference to the connection between the credibility of the record and the subject matter of the record. When we have pressed the point, as above, of the *credibility* of the sacred historians, especially their obvious equality, in this respect, with any profane historians of the corresponding period, the reply ever is—that the events recorded by the sacred historians are in themselves incredible, and *therefore* the relators of them are unworthy of

credit. When, however, under this second head we would press the force of the testimony in favor of the miraculous occurrence, we are met with grave *doubts* as to the *credibility* of the witnesses. Now these two questions are most clearly altogether distinct, and that is a singular logic which admits of such shifts to save a point. It is but re-enacting in the trial of his gospel, the trial which Jesus himself had at the tribunals of his country—being tried on one charge, and found guilty on another. Not a whit less was it a mockery of justice, to try him in the Sanhedrim for the crime of blasphemy, and then condemn him before Pilate for the crime of sedition; than it is a mockery of logic thus to shift ever the issue—when after finding by no power of device of subtlety aught evil to say against the absolute integrity of the witness, to condemn him for the extraordinary character of the event which he attests—or when as philosophers debating the extraordinary event which he relates, to re-indict the witness in the teeth of his former verdict of acquittal, for bearing false testimony. Does not every man see that the character of the witness for veracity is one thing; and the nature of the event to which he testifies is altogether another thing? Yet on this very confounding of issues has modern Deism erected, in large part, its accusations against the gospel.

A very similar logical inconsistency runs through most of the deistical argument on the whole subject of the relation of miracles to the doctrines announced by those who wrought the miracles. The design of a miracle, as we conceive, is by no means to establish anything *directly* or *primarily* in regard to the character of the *truths* delivered by him who performs the miracle. It is but the external *seal* of a divine commission which attests the right of the bearer of it to teach as from God. It is just in harmony with the great gospel idea of a religion of *fact*, as that which alone can meet the wants of men. And it is this attestation from heaven to the authority of the teacher, that gives the gospel its peculiar adaptedness to the wants of men. It becomes thus a positive faith—a religion of fact. Aside from this, however, this method of revealing the truth through teachers, with commissions so attested, has a great advantage, in that hereby the world is protected from “false Christs.” For a distinct ground of evidence is herein set forth, which by its *concurrence* with the intrinsic excellence of the truths taught, and the honesty and purity of the teacher, makes it demonstrable beyond mistake that the religion so taught is of God. Accordingly Jesus appealed ever to these three things

as evidence of his trustworthiness as a teacher ; the character of his doctrines, the holiness of his life, and the miracles which he wrought. The truths which he taught commended themselves to their consciences, his own character was in harmony with his doctrine, and forbade the supposition of any sinister or selfish motive in teaching as he did ; and the signs and wonders which he did attested his authority to teach as one come from God.

Now it will be found that the deistical argument against the subject matter of the Christian records, never yet has met the Christian evidences as presented in this *concurrent* argument. Either strangely confounding these three separate though concurrent lines of proof, or not less strangely separating one from the rest and presuming the argument to rest upon that alone, the impugnors of Christianity create ever false issues, or shifting the issue from one to another point, as the urgency of the case may seem to demand. They declaim against the doctrine of the gospel—especially its “mysteries,” but when so doing, first separate these doctrines from their place in the scheme of revelation, and, leaving out of view the facts which attest their claim to be divine, deal with them as though truths of merely human origin. They impeach the honesty and veracity of the teacher—but in order so to do, first separate them in thought from the sublime truths which they taught, and the wonders which they did. They cavil at the miracles, but in order to give the cavil any force they must first separate the miracle as a simple phenomenon from the intrinsic excellence of the doctrine, taught by him whose commission it was the purpose of the miracle to attest. These must suffice as illustrations—they are fair specimens of the whole method of infidelity in dealing with the gospel.

It now remains that the logical absurdities of Deism when called upon to account for the existence of Christianity as a philosophical phenomenon be summed up very briefly.

There is at least one point in the whole matter upon which the friends and the enemies of Christianity may come together, and in regard to which even skepticism itself will have no doubts. *Christianity exists.* It is one of the phenomena of the world's history ; and one important enough to merit at least some attention, simply as a subject of philosophic inquiry, if for no higher reason. The believers in Christianity have a theory on which they account for this phenomenon. In a manner exactly analogous to that in which they logically trace back some of the peculi-

arities of modern governments—as the habeas corpus, and trial by jury, to a certain era in history, and a certain Saxon race, as their origin,—they trace the present existing Christian religion back to a period 1800 years anterior to the present, and to a certain person called Christ, from whom it derives its name. Their logical process is in substance:—This system of religious doctrine, ordinances, and government is now wide-spread over the world. It did not have its origin in the last age, for that is absolutely impossible, being contradicted by every fact in history. It did not have its origin in the age before that, for that is equally impossible, and for the same reason. It could not have originated in any age between the last mentioned and the period we have assigned to its origin—for such a supposition does violence to all the facts in the world's history, and no less violence to known principles of human nature, which absolutely forbid the supposition, that men would submit to have such a yoke put upon their necks by those who must be palpably known to be impostors. It originated therefore at the period, and under the circumstances which it claims for itself. To this theory infidelity demurs,—not so much from any objection to the train of reasoning, as to the conclusion; which conclusion it avers is encompassed with difficulties so great, that nothing but a credulity that defies all reason can overcome them. Let infidelity then devise a theory attended with less difficulties. In answer to this demand a multitude of theories have been proposed, the most important of which may be reduced to four:—

1. Christianity originated in priestcraft and imposture during the “Dark Ages.” This is the vulgar Horn-book theory.

2. It originated at the period to which it refers itself, but was then the work of imposture and falsehood. This is a theory of a portion of the French and English infidelity of the last century.

3. It originated 1800 years ago, not in imposture, but in the ignorance of well-meaning enthusiasts, who testify truly to the occurrence of events, but were prone to attribute natural events to supernatural causes. This is the theory of rationalism, of which Paulus may be taken as the exponent.

4. It originated 1800 years ago. Yet neither in imposture nor in the ignorance of mistaken men, but as all other fabulous religions, in legends and “myths,” which were designed by their authors to convey great moral truths under the guise of allegory, but these were mistaken for fact and reality. This is the celebrated transcendental theory of Strauss.

Now, not to speak of the difficulties arising out of the utter contradictions of these several theories; take them one by one, and we hazard little in saying that it requires infinitely more credulity to receive any one of these theories as true, than would be needful to swallow all the contradictions and mysteries that skeptics are wont to ascribe to the Christian faith. There is, however, now space for only a single paragraph in regard to each of them.

As to the theory of priestcraft and imposture in the dark ages, there is this insuperable difficulty. The conditions of the problem are contradictory. It is necessary to suppose at one and the same time, an acuteness, shrewdness, genius and capacity in the impostors altogether unparalleled; and at the same time a darkness and stupidity of the people in the ages that produced the impostors *darker* than history takes any account of. Now great men have generally partaken somewhat of the character of the age that produced them; but this theory supposes the darkest and stupidest age in the history of man, to have produced impostors of a genius, a daring and an intellectual grandeur, before which all the illustrious names of the world's best and brightest ages sink into utter insignificance. That an age stupid enough to have been so imposed upon, should have produced such impostors is a greater wonder than any wonder the impostors ever devised.

The second supposition—of imposture and falsehood 1800 years ago—involves all the absurdities of the first, with the additional difficulty of not having the "*dark age*" in which its impostors might play off their fantastic tricks. The detail of absurdities to which this theory leads, is so long as to defy any ordinary limits. The singular paradoxes which its impostors exhibit in their characters; the union of pre-eminent villainy with transcendent purity—of low artifice with heroic chivalry—of more than satanic acuteness and forethought in arranging prophecies and their fulfilment—with a stupid thoughtlessness, in exposing themselves to detection by unnecessary reference to names, places, and dates, and unnecessary letter-writing,—which would disgrace the flimsiest demagogue,—who is always shrewd enough to "*cover up his tracks*;"—all these with an hundred other absurdities to which this supposition drives us, mark it as the product of mind utterly "void of judgment," and as the faith of one "given over to strong delusion to believe a lie."

The third supposition—of ignorant integrity—while at first sight less glaringly inconsistent, yet seems so only because it has the

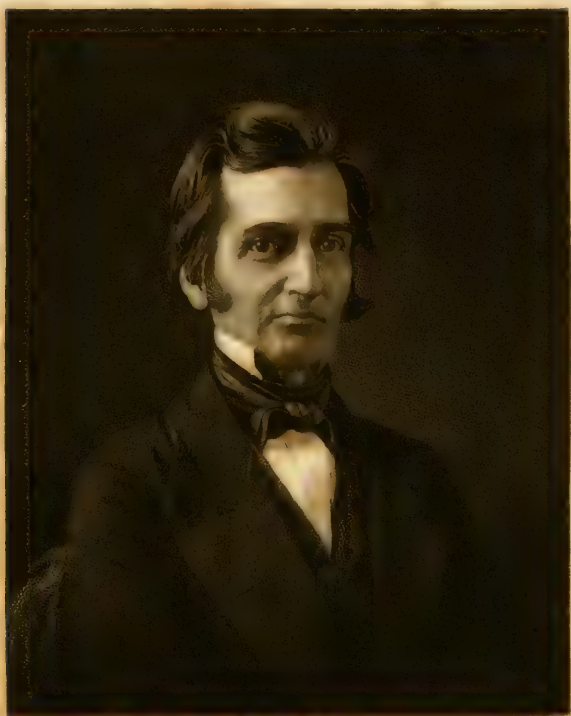
advantage of more cautious and less plain-spoken advocates. When however the system is fully and fearlessly developed by such men as Paulus—who seem to have been happily constituted by nature with no perception of the ridiculous—we find paradoxes fully equal to the “impostors” of the former supposition. When men gravely interpret the narrative of restoring sight to the blind, as simply the modern operation for cataract, only a little more rapid—or that of restoring speech to the dumb, as but a rapider operation of the present German system for teaching the dumb to speak—or that of Jesus calming the winds and waves, as meaning simply that by some now unknown mesmeric power he magnetized them—we may, without any disrespect to great learning and acuteness, be disposed to laugh. When, however, it comes to describing the doctrine and ethics of Jesus as remarkably *pure for the age and the circumstances*, yet only such as even a self-deluded impostor with good intentions may be conceived to have developed, we shudder at the preposterous impiety.

The supposition of an origin of the gospel in mere “legend” and “myth,” which the stupidity of every age since has mistaken for veritable history and real transactions, is one about which the first “*difficulty*” must be to conceive it possible for the human mind to have devised it. Indeed we are not sure, but that we feel prepared if challenged to the task to show, that there are this day more imposing difficulties in believing the proposition, that a certain Dr. Strauss lived in Germany who projected this theory of the gospel, than in believing the proposition which asserts the most remarkable miraculous event in the gospel. Yet there is conclusive evidence, and therefore in consistency with our system of logic we are bound to believe, that a German Doctor has lived, who gravely propounded to the world the opinion—that the personage described by the evangelists, was an allegorical personage;—that these writers do not *mean* to relate real occurrences;—that the hero of their story is simply a condensation into a concrete form of certain nebulous ideas of the “legendary age” of the Jews;—that this fabulous legend or “myth”—unlike all other legends which vanish from the earth as soon as an age of writing commences,—(as ghosts at the coming of the dawn) out-lived the age of writing; nay absolutely obtruded itself upon the Augustan age of the Roman Empire! Nay more, in that age of lawyers and critics, who had reduced the laws of evidence to a science—in that age of skepticism and keen scrutiny—in the face of a learned priest-

hood on the one hand, and of skeptical sadducees on the other, and in spite of the prejudices of a people celebrated for their fanatical attachment to their religion;—this wonderful “myth” was mistaken for truth—yea, was adopted with zeal as a religion—was embraced by such numbers as soon to revolutionize the religion of the country that gave it birth;—yea, in spite of the bitterest opposition and persecution, it spread and obtained power till it revolutionized the Roman Empire! This, surely, forms a fitting *finale* to “the difficulties of Infidelity.”

From the whole view of the subject thus presented in mere outline, it is plain that whatever may be the justice or the injustice of the charge of illogical, stupid credulity so often hurled at Christians, it ill becomes infidelity to make the charge. Had it been consistent with the limits of this argument, it would not have been difficult to show by a comparison of each of the skeptical systems, as they passed in review before us, with the Christian system, that it requires far less sacrifice of reason and common sense, and involves far less credulity to receive, than to reject Christianity. That so far as concerns the larger portion of the skeptical systems, any faith in them involves a degree of credulity so utterly preposterous as to be indicative of a “mind void of judgment” given over to “believe a lie.” Whilst so far as regards the very best of the skeptical systems, the mind which can work its way through all the difficulties that inhere in them ought to find little trouble with even the greatest difficulties of Christianity. The mysteries of Christianity all lie in a region where finite reason cannot, in the nature of the case, be expected to reach them. The mysteries of infidelity, equally inexplicable, originate merely in its own self-contradictions. The religion which Christianity offers to the world is a religion of *fact*, which the learned and the ignorant alike can comprehend. The religion which infidelity presents, where it presents any religion at all—is a religion of subtle and refined speculations beyond the comprehension of all but a few learned and acute thinkers. The sanctions of Christianity appeal directly to man’s conscience, and to his instinctively felt relation to God as his Ruler and Judge. The sanctions alike of all the systems of skepticism, to the lowest views of his self-interest. The evidences of Christianity, aside from the intrinsic fitness of its doctrines to his spiritual nature, rest upon *facts*, the force of which any man can comprehend. The evidence of any system of faith provided by skepticism must rest upon subtle and refined deductions, of the correctness of which

even the most learned can never feel absolutely certain. The authoritative standard of Christian faith presents a *unity*, absolutely miraculous, between men of every variety of natural gifts, extending over a period of fifteen hundred years. The *diversities* of skepticism are almost equally wonderful, but only as exhibiting the endless vagaries of the human mind. Christian philosophy with its fundamental fact admitted concerning a revelation, can explain on almost any theory the phenomena of humanity and of the universe. Infidelity repudiating that fact, runs into every conceivable absurdity in the attempt to construct a theory of the universe. Christianity contains mysteries. Infidelity exhibits endless contradictions. Christianity teaches doctrines which excite the hostility of the human heart. Infidelity promulges dogmas which do violence to the human understanding. Christianity is accused of setting at naught the laws of reason and of evidence; and of opening a door to all manner of imposture upon the credulity of the world. Infidelity subverts all the laws of evidence, and if consistent with itself, makes all history one vast blank. In its sublimest results it leaves man's soul doubtful of its own existence, without moral principles to guide and enlighten it—man's intellect to become "a mind void of judgment,"—and the whole race of man to an eternal orphanage, wandering forever the sport of a fitful chance, or—what is no better—left to the guidance of certain blind "natural laws," or to the iron rule of a cold and heartless destiny.



E. L. Rice

The Moral Effects of Christianity

BY

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THAT men are fallen creatures, the past history and the present condition of the world sufficiently prove. Christianity professes to reveal the only means by which they can be restored to the favor of God and to happiness. Two great difficulties stand in the way of such restoration, viz. : their legal responsibilities and their moral character. As transgressors, all are condemned ; as sinners they are hateful to God, and are miserable. Christianity offers gratuitous justification through the atonement of Jesus Christ, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit through revealed truth. It proposes to secure to those who embrace it, a title to an eternal inheritance, and to fit them for its enjoyment. Sinful affections, as the Scriptures teach, are necessarily the cause of misery. Perfect happiness, therefore, cannot be enjoyed, unless perfect holiness be attained.

The chief means by which the moral perfection of human nature is to be accomplished, is *the truth*. "Ye shall know the truth," said our Saviour to the Jews who believed on him, "and the truth shall make you free." "Sanctify them through thy truth," he prayed for his disciples, "thy word is truth." Christianity is eminently distinguished from all other systems of religion, in that the affections it requires, and the virtues it inculcates, arise and are matured in connection with correct views of truth. The service it demands, therefore, being obedience to the truth, is eminently a "reasonable service." The doctrine of the Scriptures is, that the tendency of moral and religious truth is to produce virtuous affections and upright conduct; the tendency of error, the reverse. False teachers, therefore, as our Saviour taught, are to be distinguished from the true "by their fruits"—that is, by the effects of their doctrines upon their own moral character, and upon that of their followers. One might as reasonably expect to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, as to find true virtue the result of false principles. The same idea is beautifully expressed by Bacon—"Truth and goodness differ but as the seal and the print ; for truth prints goodness." I think, I may venture to as-

sume the truth of this principle without labored argument, and may venture, without the fear of contradiction, to found upon it the following proposition, viz.:—

There is no safer test of the truth of any system of religious belief, than its practical effects upon those who embrace it. If the practical effects of any system are partly good and partly bad, then it is partly true and partly false. If they are wholly good, then it is wholly true. But in looking for the effects of Christianity we must be careful not to attribute to it effects which it does not produce. Mistakes on this point have thrown upon it most unmerited reproaches, and have driven multitudes to infidelity. That we may avoid such an error, and obtain a fair view of this important subject, I remark—

1. Christianity cannot be justly held responsible for evils existing *where its doctrines and worship have been materially changed and corrupted.* It is not fair, for example, to charge Christianity with the ignorance and the immorality which prevail in countries, where Roman Catholicism predominates. For there the people have not access to the Scriptures; and the doctrines of the gospel have been corrupted by a multitude of human traditions, and by the interpretations of a corrupt priesthood. We are here to defend Christianity as it is presented to us in the Bible alone.

2. Nor is Christianity to be held responsible for evils resulting *from interpreting the Scriptures according to popular systems of philosophy.* Both in ancient and modern times not a few professed expounders of the Scriptures have insisted, that philosophy must furnish the key to the right understanding of them. Origen, the most learned of the Christian fathers, employed all his learning and ingenuity in the vain effort to harmonize the doctrines of Revelation and the philosophy of Plato and his followers. To do this, it became necessary to neglect the obvious meaning of the language of the Scriptures, and to adopt the most fanciful methods of interpretation; and it is not difficult to trace many of the most absurd superstitions of the dark ages to the unnatural union of false philosophy and Christianity. And in modern times many learned men in Germany have attempted to expound the Bible in accordance with a system of philosophy which denies the possibility of inspiration. “Esteeming themselves wise, they became fools.” The same philosophy which declared inspiration an impossibility, drove its admirers into the glaring absurdities of Pantheism.

The Bible was not written exclusively or chiefly for learned men, but for the people; and its writers intended to be understood. We insist, therefore, that it be understood according to the obvious meaning of its language; and we are prepared to abide the result. If, when thus interpreted, its effects are bad, let its claims be rejected.

3. Christianity cannot be expected to produce its legitimate fruits where church and state are united. The church is trammelled by the legislation of men who neither understand the doctrines, nor regard the precepts of the gospel; and civil honors and worldly gain bribe corrupt men to enter her pale, and to seek the ministerial office. If you would judge fairly of any system of religion or of morals, examine its fruits where it stands on its own merits, and makes its own impress upon the characters of men. Christianity has achieved her most glorious triumphs, when the world stood in open hostility to her; and she asks still to be allowed to stand forth in the majesty and power of truth, and to be judged by her fruits.

4. It is important to remark, that Christianity proposes gradually to purify, not instantly to perfect those who embrace it. Their progress is as the growth of the human body from infancy to manhood, or as the gradually increasing light from the early dawn to "the perfect day." Even the Apostles of Christ professed not to have attained perfect holiness, but only to be pressing toward it. We must, therefore, expect to find imperfections even in sincere Christians, and still greater imperfections in the church, since it is impossible entirely to exclude from its pale, self-deceived or hypocritical men. But when evils do appear, fairness and candor require us, before admitting them as evidences against the claims of Christianity, to inquire, whether they are the result of adherence to its doctrines, or of departure from them. If the former be true, an argument, we acknowledge, is thus presented against its claims; if the latter, those very evils prove its truth. The skill of a physician is as clearly proved by the fact that his patients suffer by departing from his prescriptions, as that their health is improved by regarding them.

We are now prepared to inquire into the practical tendencies of Christianity. These are so numerous and so important, that we can do little more, in a single discourse, than glance at the more prominent.

I. Our first inquiry shall be concerning *the moral effects* of Christianity. Sin, as the Scriptures teach, is not only dishonoring to God, whose moral image it effaces from the human mind, and

whose law it transgresses, but is the prolific cause of all the degradation and misery in our world. The intelligent and candid philosopher must acknowledge the truth of this doctrine. For it is not reasonable that free moral agents under the government of an infinitely perfect God, should be made wretched, or in any degree unhappy without guilt; and a large portion of the sufferings of men are traceable directly to sin. When, therefore, the Scriptures teach, that the attainment of perfect holiness is essential to the enjoyment of perfect happiness, they may safely appeal to sound philosophy for a confirmatory testimony.

What, then, are the moral tendencies of Christianity? We may answer this question either by inquiring into the character of its doctrines, and judging from what we know of human nature, what must be the effects of such doctrines upon it, or by ascertaining from history what effects it has actually produced. We propose very briefly to adopt both these methods.

To produce upon the human mind the best moral impressions, there must be a *perfect moral* code—a code perfect in its requirements and in its system of motives. Such a moral code we find in the Scriptures. This truth has been so ably presented in preceding lectures of this course, that I need do no more than state a few leading principles.

1. The God whom Christianity teaches us to love and to worship, is a being of infinite holiness. The seraphim around his throne cry one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!" Now, no truth is more evident, than that the moral characters of men are, to a very great extent, moulded by the character of the being whom they worship. In him they recognize the highest perfection, and it is their supreme desire to please him. His attributes are the constant theme of their admiring contemplation. No one wonders, that the worshippers of Bacchus were drunkards, or that those of Venus were licentious. In view of this principle, what, we ask, must be the moral influence of the character of the God of Revelation—a God of inflexible justice, of infinite truthfulness, of boundless benevolence—possessing, in an infinite degree, every moral perfection? But God has come nigh to us. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." God was "manifest in the flesh." We have before us in the Gospels, the history of his life and labors. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." And an Apostle exhorts—"Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The Christian is the disciple,

the follower of Christ. In him he beholds and admires "all human beauties, all divine." How powerful the effect of such an example—an example of meekness and gentleness, of uprightness and holiness, of benevolence and good doing.

2. The moral law, is like its glorious Author, perfect. No sin was ever committed which it does not, directly or indirectly, forbid. No virtue ever adorned the human mind, which it does not inculcate. No relation which God has constituted or allowed, the duties of which it does not prescribe. Husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, ruler and subject,—all find in it their duty and their reward; whilst the foundation of universal benevolence is laid in the truth, that all men are the children of the same Father, and in that other truth—that "he hath made of one blood all nations." This law lays hold on the heart's affections and places them on proper objects. "LOVE is the fulfilling of the law"—love supreme to God, and equal love to man. Christianity, unlike all other systems of religion, is not satisfied with forms, rites and ceremonies. It demands "clean hands and a pure heart." Could the hearts of all men be, at this moment, brought into conformity to its requirements, the ten thousand streams of misery that flood the earth, would be instantly dried up, and ten thousand streams of joy would be instantly opened.

3. Christianity, whilst it calls upon men to "follow holiness," presses upon their minds every possible motive to holiness, in its fullest strength. It appeals to the *understanding*, and claims a "reasonable service." It says to men—"Come and let us reason together." God is your Creator, supporter, benefactor, redeemer; is it not reasonable that you should serve him? It appeals to the *conscience*. God is glorious; are you not bound to adore and praise him? Is it too much for the Creator, and the author of "every good gift and every perfect gift," to claim the affections and the service of the creature? Is not man most solemnly bound to love Him by whom he was loved even unto death?—who gave his life a ransom for him? Christianity appeals to the *affections*. Look upon "the king in his beauty," and admire him. Think of his ten thousand unmerited gifts—above all, of "his unspeakable gift"—and be grateful. Consider all he has done and all he offers to do for you, and then exclaim—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Christianity appeals to the *interests* of men. They are averse to misery, and they desire happiness. It says to the righteous—"it is well," but "woe to

the wicked." It teaches that sin destroys peace of mind even in this life. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." It places before us the doctrine of a particular providence—a providence extending not only to every individual of the human race, but even to the sparrow sold for half a farthing; and upon this doctrine it founds another of vast practical importance—that the path of duty is always the path of safety and of prosperity. Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace.

Christianity proclaims man immortal, and that the present life is probationary—a preparation for the next, which is eternal. It opens before him the deep, eternal degradation, and fearful ruin into which sin will inevitably plunge him. It holds up before him a crown of glory and of honor that fades not, to be placed on the head of him who perseveres in holy living. When the world would tempt him from virtue's path, it asks him—"What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?"

The Christian regards himself as a pilgrim on the earth, and is accustomed to think of heaven as his eternal home. When he thinks of the shortness of life, he thinks also of his nearness to heaven. When weary of the cares, toils and troubles of life, he looks with delight to heaven as his rest. Now, no principle of human nature is better understood, than that its character is moulded very much by the objects of frequent and pleasing thought; nor is anything more natural, than that one should endeavor to become fitted for the station he expects and desires to fill. But the heaven of which the Christian thinks so constantly and with so much pleasure, is a holy place—a place of holy employments and holy joys; and without holiness none shall enter within its portals. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." How powerful the influence of the hope of such a heaven in elevating and purifying the affections. As often as the Christian thinks of heaven, he thinks of its spotless purity, and feels powerfully impelled to "follow holiness," without which he cannot hope to enjoy it.

Christianity brings those who embrace it, under the most solemn promise to live a life of holiness, to avoid even the appearance of evil. The promise is made, not to man, but to God. The baptismal water, the emblem of purity, seals the promise, and consecrates him forever to the service of the God of holiness; and God promises to bless him in his endeavors to cultivate virtue. And as

often as he partakes of the Lord's Supper, he renews that solemn covenant engagement, and is reminded by the broken bread and the flowing wine, that Jesus Christ died "to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Whatever influence, then, can be exerted by promises the most sacred, often and most solemnly repeated, is exerted by Christianity to preserve from sin those who embrace it.

The moral character of men is powerfully influenced by the sentiments and example of those with whom they associate. In view of this principle of human nature, Christianity brings its subjects into an organized body—the church. Thus each individual is sustained by those of similar views and aims.

Such are the moral influences which Christianity brings to bear on the minds of those who embrace it. And we may boldly challenge the infidel to find a single defect in its moral code, or to suggest a single additional motive, or even to add one particle of strength to any motive presented by the gospel. Whatever can be done, therefore, by reason, and motive, and encouragement to make men virtuous, Christianity does, and does perfectly. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." It approaches the mind by every avenue, lays hold of every faculty, and moulds the whole man to virtue. Its fruits are wholly good; and it is wholly true.

Does the *history* of Christianity sustain us in these positions? We affirm that it does. When Jesus Christ appeared on earth, he found the Jews in deep moral degradation, having substituted forms and ceremonies for the virtues of religion, zealous in the observance of their traditionary ablutions, and in tithing "mint, anise and cummin," but utterly forgetful of "the weightier matters of the law." The surrounding nations were enveloped in the midnight darkness of a degrading polytheism, which the intricate speculations of Grecian and Roman philosophers had utterly failed to dispel. "The world by wisdom knew not God."

But at the preaching of the gospel the Jew turned from his shadowy rites to cultivate the virtues of an elevated piety; and the Gentile abandoned his images of wood and stone to worship the high God of heaven. In the former, an expansive benevolence took the place of narrow bigotry; and in the latter, pure morality was substituted for degrading rites and beastly pollutions. "Certainly," says Wadsworth, "the character of the first Christians presents to us a singular spectacle of virtue and piety, the more

splendid as it was surrounded by very mournful and very general depravity." "Is there anything more unquestionable," asks the learned Witherspoon, "or that hath been more frequently observed, than that the victory of truth over error, in the first ages of Christianity, was much more owing to the shining piety of the primitive Christians in general, together with the patience and constancy of the martyrs, than to any other means?"

Even the uncandid and sarcastic infidel Gibbon was constrained to bear testimony to the eminent virtues of the primitive Christians. He felt it incumbent on him, in writing the history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, to account for the astonishing success of a religion which he would not allow to have come from God; and strangely enough he accounts for it in part from the extraordinary purity of the morals of its early converts. "The primitive Christian," he remarks, "demonstrated his faith by his virtues." And so far from intimating that there was any lack of purity in their morals, he considered them excessively severe. "It is," says he, "a very honorable circumstance for the morals of primitive Christians, that even their faults, or rather errors, were derived from an excess of virtue." Truly this is an important testimony. An infidel historian is constrained to testify, that such were the purity and the excellence of the character of the primitive Christians, as to convince multitudes who observed their conduct, that the religion producing such fruits was from heaven. When was a similar testimony borne in favor of any other system of religious belief?

And here it is worth while to adduce the testimony of Pliny, the Roman governor, to the virtues of the Asiatic Christians. In executing upon them the persecuting laws of Trajan, the emperor, it became his duty to inquire judicially into their character and conduct. But in searching out their crimes he was constrained to acknowledge their virtues. He ascertained, as he informed the emperor, that "they bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it." Nearly a century later, as Gibbon remarks, "Tertullian, with an honest pride, could boast, that very few Christians had suffered by the hand of the executioner, except on account of their religion."

It is true, a sad change was witnessed in the piety and morality of the church in succeeding ages; but this very change affords

evidence conclusive in favor of Christianity. For it took place just in proportion as the Scriptures ceased to be the sole rule of faith and of life, and as the doctrines of the gospel were corrupted by pagan philosophy and by vain traditions. It is well known, that during that long period emphatically and appropriately called *the dark ages*, the Bible was a prohibited book; and it is equally certain, that in churches where it was still read by the people, as among the Waldenses, no such corruption in morals occurred.

But the Reformation of the sixteenth century was emphatically a *Bible reformation*. The fundamental principle of it was, *the Bible alone the rule of faith and of conduct*. Its ministers proclaimed the doctrines and the morality of the Scriptures; and it placed the sacred volume in the hands of the people. A great reformation in morals was one of the results. If you would judge fairly of the moral effects of Christianity, begin with comparing the morality of pagan nations with that of Christian nations—nations where the Scriptures are freely circulated, and the doctrines of the gospel freely proclaimed. Compare, for example, India with Scotland! What a contrast, as between midnight and noonday. Then compare countries nominally Christian, but where the Bible is a prohibited book, and its doctrines corrupted by human tradition, with countries where the principles of the Reformation prevail, and where the Scriptures are in the hands of the people, and are regarded as the only unerring guide in faith and morals. Compare Spain, Portugal and Italy with England, Scotland and the United States. De Tocqueville asserts, that “there is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America;” and he adds—“There can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation on the earth.” He further testifies, that “in America all those vices which tend to impair the purity of morals, and to destroy the conjugal tie, are treated with a degree of severity unknown in the rest of the world.”

Let us descend to particulars. Among professing Christians there are doubtless not a few whose conduct proves the insincerity of their professed attachment to Christianity. Yet no candid man will deny, that in communities where religion flourishes, the tone of moral feeling is far higher than in those where it is comparatively unknown; nor can it be denied, that in Christian churches

a much higher standard of morals is maintained than in the world. How rare a thing is it to find a member of a Christian church in a jail or a penitentiary. And who, let me ask, are the firmest and most zealous opposers of immorality in all its forms? Are they infidels or Christians?

In works of benevolence what class are found most active? Hospitals for the insane and afflicted, asylums for orphans and widows, for the mute and the blind—are they not confined to Christian countries? And by whom are plans devised, and labors costly and often perilous performed, to civilize and moralize the degraded pagan nations?

But it is unnecessary, I am persuaded, to protract the discussion of this point. The moral code of Christianity, it must be acknowledged, is perfect. It purifies the hearts of individuals, and controls their conduct. It prompts and encourages them to deeds of virtue and benevolence. It approaches the human heart by every avenue, and presents every possible motive to holiness and goodness. It extends its hallowed influence over the domestic circle, and wisely prescribes the duties growing out of every relation in life. In its progress through the world, the wilderness and the solitary place are made glad; and the deserts rejoice and blossom as the rose. The mountains and the hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands. Its effects are wholly good; and therefore it is wholly true.

Second. I propose now to consider very briefly the effects of Christianity upon education, general intelligence, and the progress of science. Every system of religion has to do with God, his perfections and his works; with man, his nature, character, duty and destiny. Education and science travel over a large portion of the same territory. Consequently every false system of religion loses public confidence just as science progresses. The reason is obvious. Such systems inevitably teach concerning God and his works, man and his nature, false doctrines; and science detects and exposes their errors. Paganism, in all its forms, has uniformly sunk into contempt, as science has successfully carried forward its investigations. The hoary superstitions of India, which have fettered and degraded the minds of many generations, are now melting away before its light. "One look through the telescope," says a late elegant writer, "dispels all the illusions of the Brahminical faith, and blots out of existence as many myriads of

gods, as it brings into view myriads of stars reflecting the glory of the one living and true God."

Christianity, in its relations to the progress of human learning, stands in most striking contrast with all other systems of religion. It has maintained its undiminished authority over the most enlightened nations. It has numbered among its humble and devout disciples many of the brightest ornaments of science. It is sufficient to name Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Bacon, Newton, Locke, Grotius, Boyle, Hale, Selden, Addison, Bonnet, Beattie, Edwards, Witherspoon, Chalmers, Siliman, Miller, Neander, Tholuck. The list might easily be increased indefinitely.

Almost every department of human learning has, at one time or another, been arrayed against Christianity. She has been assailed by great names and by eminent learning. In such men as Hobbes and Herbert, Hume and Chesterfield, Voltaire, Volney, and Rousseau, infidelity found its ablest advocates. Christianity met its forces in the open field of free discussion, and smote them with the sword of Truth. Nay, more—she has laid under contribution the very sciences, that were triumphantly arrayed against her; and she has sent them forth to furnish multiplied evidences of her divine origin and of her high mission to earth. She has not only maintained her authority over the most enlightened nations and individuals, but she has taken science by the hand, and led it forth in the path of successful investigation. Who are the presidents and the professors in the best colleges and universities in Europe and America. They are *Christians*. Do you ask further evidence, that Christianity is the patron of science?—and that without her aid it has made almost no progress? You will find such evidence in the following considerations:

1. Christianity favors general intelligence and the progress of human learning, by elevating the moral characters of men. Depravity induces them to seek happiness in the gratification of the animal appetites or of a degrading ambition. Its language is—"Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." Or it arms individuals and nations against each other to gratify a miserable avarice or an unhallowed ambition. But when they embrace the pure morality of the gospel, and begin to cherish its exalted hopes, they no longer find enjoyment in indulgences and pursuits so degrading. They desire purer pleasures and more rational enjoyments; and they find them in the study of the perfections and the works of God whom they adore, and in devising means to improve

the condition of their fellow-men. The human mind is by nature active and inquisitive; but depravity of heart employs its noble powers in the pursuit of trifles. The heart gives direction to the intellect; when the former is purified, the latter looks up.

There are apparent exceptions to this rule. The ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome speculated profoundly or obscurely concerning the origin of all things, and concerning the nature and the destiny of man; but their philosophy was fundamentally false and demoralizing, and their noble powers systematically misdirected. The ancient poets wrote beautifully, often sublimely; but what an unseemly mixture they exhibit of the pure and impure, the sublime and the trifling. They wrote, not to reform but to please men; and therefore they ministered to their ruling passions. Even religion was invoked to patronize war, and drunkenness and debauchery; and the gods mingled with delight in scenes of grossest corruption and the greatest cruelty.

2. Christianity awakens in the mind a strong desire to know all that may be known of the laws of nature and the works of God; for the works of God exhibit and illustrate his perfections. Can he who loves and worships God, be indifferent to any of the works of his hands? Such, indeed, has been the effect of the religion of the Bible in every age.

The fame of Solomon, as an eminent naturalist, attracted to Jerusalem multitudes from the surrounding nations. "And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." Job, and David, and Isaiah were accustomed to contemplate with delight the heavenly bodies, and to admire the wisdom, the goodness, and the power of God in all his works. Job adored the majesty of the Creator, "who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea: who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the South." "Where," says Bacon, "he takes knowledge of the depression of the southern pole, calling it the secrets of the south, because the southern stars were in that climate unseen." David sunk into insignificance in his own estimation, whilst he contemplated the greatness of God in the heavenly bodies. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou

art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" And as he looked out upon the heavens, and contemplated all the works of the Most High, he seemed to himself to hear them all proclaiming the perfections of their Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." When Isaiah, the eloquent prophet, would comfort the pious in their affliction, and encourage them to trust in the mighty God, he exclaimed—"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by name, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." These men contemplated the heavens, not with the superstitious veneration of the heathen, who saw in the heavenly bodies the deities who protected and blessed them, or who read in their motions the destiny of men; nor yet with the feeling of the irreligious astronomer, who inquires into the laws by which they are controlled, and admires the wonderful machinery without beholding and adoring the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the mighty Architect.

"The undevout astronomer is mad."

In nature's works they saw the glory of nature's God. They studied the works of God, the God of nature and of revelation, that they might acquaint themselves with him, and adore his perfections, illustrated by his works. Their piety awakened a strong desire to know all that could be known of creation and its laws. Indeed, the inspired writers declared knowledge preferable to silver and gold, and to all other possessions, and earnestly exhorted all to seek it. "Happy is the man," says Solomon, "that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her."

3. Christianity not only awakens the desire for knowledge, but

it teaches a large amount of that which is most important, and gives the clue to further progress.

1st. It teaches the existence and the perfections of God, and that all things were created by him. I need not refer you to particular portions of the Scriptures to prove, that they teach the eternal, underived existence of the one true God, a pure Spirit, possessed of infinite perfections, natural and moral. Nor need I do more than quote the first verse in the Bible to prove that he is the *Creator* of all things. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Precisely here the minds of the most eminent philosophers labored. Gibbon says, "Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and Platonists have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the First Cause; but as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work; while, on the contrary, the spiritual god of Plato and his disciples resembled an idea, rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less religious cast; but while the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler."* All the ancient philosophers, without exception, adopted as an axiom—*De nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil posse reverti*. That is, that creation and annihilation are alike impossible. This fundamental error was fatal to all progress in philosophical investigation, and, as we shall presently see, exerted a most unhappy influence on morals and religion.

2d. The Scriptures teach, that man has an immaterial, incorruptible, immortal mind, as well as a material body. On this most important subject there is no obscurity in their language. It brings "life and immortality to light." Here again the wisdom of philosophers failed them. "The writings of Cicero," says Gibbon, "represent in the most lively colors the ignorance, the errors and the uncertainty of the ancient philosophers with regard to the immortality of the soul. When they are desirous of arming their disciples against the fear of death, they inculcate, as an obvious, though melancholy position, that the fatal stroke of our dissolution releases us from the calamities of life, and that those can no longer suffer who no longer exist." Those of them who believed in the soul's immortality, denying the possibility of creation, held the doctrine of its eternal pre-existence. "The ancient

* Vol. i. p. 19.

Atomists," says the learned Cudworth, "concluded, that souls and lives, being substantial entities by themselves, were all of them as old as any other substance in the universe, and as the whole mass of matter, and every smallest atom of it is: that is, they who maintained the eternity of the world, did consequently assert also *eternitatem animorum*,—the eternity of souls."

It was on this ground that Plato and his disciples defended the immortality of the soul. It was not *generated*, said they; therefore it cannot be *corrupted*. It always *has lived*; therefore it always *will live*. Intimately connected with this opinion, and growing out of it, was the doctrine of *the transmigration of souls*. Plato said—that some of the ancient philosophers were not without suspicion, that what is now called death, is to men more properly a nativity or birth into life, and what is called a generation into life, was rather to be considered a sinking into death; the former (death) being the soul's ascent out of the gross terrestrial bodies to a body more thin and subtile; and the latter (birth) its descent from a purer body to one more gross and terrestrial.

These fundamental errors involved the philosophers in inextricable difficulties in all their inquiries, and effectually prevented any real progress in natural and mental philosophy.

3d. The Scriptures teach moral science perfectly. The leading faculties of the mind, the intellect, the affections, the conscience and the will, are distinctly recognized. Man's free agency and accountability are taught with entire clearness. And, as we have already seen, their moral code is perfect. All standard writers on moral science acknowledge themselves indebted to the Scriptures for the principles they advance. Indeed, I know not a respectable writer on this most important science, who is not a firm believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures.

I will not now detain you to speak of the Bible as a history of the human race for many centuries, and as exhibiting the great principles of civil government; nor will I attempt to prove what I may safely affirm—that it presents many of the finest specimens of beautiful and sublime prose and poetic composition, and of clear, conclusive reasoning, that can be found in the world. Some of these points may be very briefly noticed before I close.

The precise truth which I desire now to impress upon your minds, is—that the Scriptures teach a large amount of most important truth, and that they give the true clue to all philosophical investigations.

4. Before proceeding to illustrate this truth from history, let me further state, that Christianity favors the progress of knowledge, by occupying the mind with themes adapted to develop and invigorate the *intellectual*, as well as the *moral* powers. If the study of mathematics strengthens the intellect, it still more expands and invigorates its power, when applied to the study of astronomy. For then the mind, whilst making careful calculations, contemplates objects vast, sublime, and magnificent. But if the heavens be a sublime and glorious subject of inquiry and contemplation, how much more the infinite perfections of the great Creator of all. If the study of mechanical philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and of all the laws of nature, be adapted to invigorate the powers of the mind, how much more effectually does it accomplish this object, when the mind ascends from these finite objects to the great Infinite; when in the works and laws of creation it beholds and admires the perfections of the Creator. If the study of things temporal, and the continued effort to gain and enjoy them, may develop the mental powers; how much more the habitual contemplation of things eternal. What are the beauties and sublimities of earth, to the glories of heaven? The loftiest aspirations of the man of ambition, dwindle into insignificance, when compared with the cherished hopes of the humblest Christian. The objects of the Christian's pleasing thought are as vast as they are pure and lovely. The contemplation of them, therefore, tends directly and powerfully to develop the intellectual powers as well as to purify the heart.

Turning from the direct contemplation of the principles of Christianity, as they are stated in the Scriptures, let us hear the testimony of uninspired history. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was emphatically a Bible reformation. Its fundamental doctrine was, that the Scriptures contain the whole revelation of God for the instruction of men in faith and in conduct. With only the Bible in their hands, the reformers sought to deliver the church from the overwhelming mass of error and corruption under which it was crushed. Taking our position, then, by the side of the reformers, and looking backward and forward, we may be able to form a correct estimate of the effect of Scriptural Christianity upon the progress of knowledge. Let us, first, inquire what was the state of the world with regard to knowledge and science at the commencement of the Reformation.

In the third century Origen, the most learned of the Greek

fathers, became an ardent admirer of the Platonic philosophy ; and believing, as not a few in our day, that revelation could not contradict science, he sought so to interpret the Scriptures, as to bring them into harmony with the principles of this sublime philosophy. Not a few of the Christian ministry united with him in this effort. "This great man," says Mosheim, "enchanted by the charms of the Platonic philosophy, set it up as the test of all religion ; and imagined, that the reasons of each doctrine were to be found in that favorite philosophy, and their nature and extent to be determined by it." And since it was impossible to reconcile the literal and obvious meaning of the Scriptures with the principles of the Platonic philosophy, it became necessary to find in their language a mysterious or hidden sense. Having determined the existence of this hidden sense, Origen divided it into the *moral* and *mystical* ; and the mystical sense he subdivided into the *superior* or *heavenly* and the *inferior*. If, then, the literal meaning of the Scriptures could not be made to harmonize with the doctrines of Plato, there could be no great difficulty in producing harmony by resorting to the hidden sense, in some of its divisions and subdivisions. And as this pagan philosophy had taught Christian men, that the Scriptures have a hidden sense of far greater value than the literal ; it also taught them how that sense might be discovered. The divine nature, it taught, is diffused through all human souls ; or the faculty of *reason* is an emanation from God, and comprehends in it the principles of all truth. This celestial flame was to be kindled, not by study and investigation, but by silence, solitude, meditation, and penances by which the body might be emaciated. Thus were the simple, sublime truths of the Bible excluded from the minds of men, and their excited imaginations became their only guide in their search after truth.

Now for the practical effects of this philosophy.

1. As it denied the possibility of *creation*, and held to the eternity of matter ; it accounted for the existence of moral evil by tracing it to the connection of the pure spirit with matter. In this there was no impiety, since it was believed that matter was not the product of Omnipotence.

2. If moral evil proceeded from matter, and the mind had become contaminated by its contact with a material body ; it followed, that the way to attain to moral perfection was to destroy, as far as possible, the influence of the body over the mind. To

improve the physical condition of men, therefore, and to add to the comforts of life, was not only no part of the office of that philosophy, but was utterly discountenanced by it. "The ancient philosophy," says an able writer, "disdained to be useful.—It could not condescend to the humble office of ministering to the comfort of human beings. All the schools regarded that office as degrading; some censured it as immoral." Seneca thought philosophy degraded by being applied to useful inventions. Those philosophers were right in this view, on the supposition that their first principles were true. For to multiply physical comforts, was but to pamper the body which was the source of impurity, and thus to fetter the soul in its aspirations after moral perfection. The true method of improving the condition of men was to emaciate the body by fasting and severe discipline; and he was the best practical philosopher who came nearest committing suicide by a lingering process.

The fruits of this false philosophy ripened fast under the genial warmth of Christianity. Philosophers speculated concerning moral perfection, and pointed out the way to attain it; but their speculations had no power to inspire men with the ardent desire, and to excite them to the pursuit of it. Such a desire Christianity awakened; and it was not lacking in motives. Christianity awakened the desire of perfection; but most unfortunately Christians went to philosophers, rather than to the Scriptures, to learn how to gain the desired blessing. In Egypt, therefore, where the unnatural union between Christianity and false philosophy was first effected, many, in the third and following centuries, retired into caves and deserts, where they macerated their bodies with hunger and thirst, and submitted to all the miseries of the severest discipline that a gloomy imagination could present. "And it is not improbable," says Mosheim, "that Paul, the first hermit, was rather engaged by this fanatical system, than by the persecution under Decius, to fly into the most solitary deserts of Thebais, where he led, during the space of ninety years, a life more worthy of a savage animal than of a rational being."

This philosophical superstition had a most remarkable development, in the fifth century, in the *stylites* or *pillar saints*—sancti columnares—who stood motionless upon the tops of pillars for years together. The most celebrated of these was Simeon, a Syrian, who spent thirty-seven years of his life upon five pillars of six, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and forty cubits high. These

eminent saints, as they were considered, spent their time in fastings, penances, and prayers, and excited the wonder and admiration of the superstitious multitude by their worthless virtues.

If intelligent infidels laugh at this miserable superstition, let Plato and the old philosophers have the credit of it. For Paul the hermit and Simeon the stylite were but reducing to practice the principles of their philosophy; and admitting the truth of that philosophy, we must greatly admire, instead of ridiculing, their course of life. Withdrawn from worldly pursuits, they destroyed their bodily appetites by severe penances, and raised their souls toward God by devout meditations and prayers. In such men you see the ancient philosophy reduced to practice.

But during this period, Aristotle divided with Plato the empire of mind, and in the ages immediately preceding the Reformation had almost expelled him from the schools. The philosophy of Aristotle did not differ essentially from that of Plato; but he was the author of a system of dialectics which, together with the fundamental errors of the system, rendered the discovery of truth still more difficult. By the aid of his logic the schoolmen sharpened their intellects by the discussion of questions the most trivial.

The ancient philosophy was characterized by perfect sterility. False in its first principles, it could make no progress. "The ancient philosophy," says Macaulay, "was a treadmill, not a path. It was made up of revolving questions—of controversies which were always beginning again. It was a contrivance for having much exertion, and no progress." The reason is obvious. Holding to the eternity of matter and of mind, the ancient philosophers very naturally regarded the question, how things came to be as they are, as the first great question to be solved by philosophy. Consequently, their gigantic intellects were employed in endless theories and conjectures, which could never be more than mere theories and conjectures. He who will examine the fundamental principles of that philosophy, will no longer wonder that, as Lord Bacon says, "from the systems of the Greeks and their subordinate divisions in particular branches of the sciences during so long a period, scarcely one single experiment can be culled that has a tendency to elevate or assist mankind, and can be fairly set down to the speculations and doctrines of their philosophy." Nor will he censure the declaration of Macaulay as too strong, that "words and mere words, and nothing but words, had been all the fruit

of all the toil of all the most renowned sages of sixty generations."

This sterile philosophy which, incorporated with Christianity, withered all its lovely virtues, had received the sanction of councils and popes, and, therefore, bore the stamp of infallibility. "Driven from its ancient haunts, it had taken sanctuary in that church which it had persecuted; and had, like the daring fiends of the poet, placed its seat

'Next the seat of God
And with its darkness dared affront his light.' *"

The wondrous virtues which it had produced in deserts and caves, had excited almost universal admiration; and the men whom it had driven mad, had been solemnly canonized. To assail it, therefore, was to assail Christianity which it had corrupted; and he who had the rashness to make the assault, expected the anathemas of the church, and the tortures of the inquisition.

Such was the state of things when the Reformation aroused the world from deep slumber. I have said it was emphatically the work of the Scriptures. It rejected at once the infallibility of the Church and her multiplied traditions. It held up the Bible as the only unerring guide in faith and morals. It translated the sacred volume into the vulgar tongue, and put it in the hands of the people, and bade them read and understand. The reformers saw at once the falsity of the old philosophy which then reigned in the church and the university, under the authority of Aristotle; and they attacked it boldly. "The first adversaries Luther attacked," says D'Aubigné, "were those celebrated schoolmen whom he had studied so deeply, and who then reigned supreme in every university. He accused them of Pelagianism; boldly opposing Aristotle (the father of the school) and Thomas Aquinas, he undertook to hurl them from the throne whence they exercised so commanding an influence, the one over philosophy, and the other over theology." "I desire nothing more ardently," said Luther, "than to lay open before all eyes this false system, which has tricked the church, by covering itself with a Greek mask, and to expose its worthlessness before the world." One year later he wrote exultingly—"God works among us; our theology and St. Augustine make wonderful progress, and are already paramount in our university. Aristotle is on the wane, and already totters to

* Macaulay.

his fall, which is near at hand and irreversible." The other reformers agreed with Luther. Zwingle, Bucer, Peter Martyr and Calvin had denounced the old philosophy as boldly as he.

This attack was successful. Wherever the doctrines of the Reformation were received, Plato and Aristotle were overthrown, and overthrown simply by the Scriptures. "Thus before the birth of Bacon," says Macaulay, "the empire of scholastic philosophy had been shaken to its foundations. There was in the intellectual world an anarchy resembling that which in the political world often follows the overthrow of an old and deeply-rooted government. Antiquity, prescription, the sound of great names, had ceased to awe mankind. The dynasty which had reigned for ages was at an end; and the vacant throne was left to be struggled for by pretenders."

The Reformation cleared away the rubbish of ages, and proclaimed freedom of thought. Then Bacon arose. He commenced his career as a philosopher with the Bible in his hand; and the Bible gave him the first great truths of philosophy, and indicated to him the limits of philosophical investigation. It taught him—

1st. That matter and finite spirits are not eternal, but created by the omnipotent Jehovah.

2d. That all things by him created are "very good."

Bacon wrote a confession of faith, drawn from the Scriptures, which commences thus: "I believe that nothing is without beginning, but God; no nature, no matter, no spirit, but one only, and the same God—that he made all things in their first estate good—that God created spirits, whereof some kept their standing, and others fell: he created heaven and earth, and all their armies and generations; and gave unto them constant and everlasting laws, which we call nature; which is nothing but the laws of creation," &c. These truths admitted, what is the proper range of philosophic investigation; and what the object it should seek to accomplish? We answer:

1. If God created all things, animate and inanimate, material and spiritual, philosophy has simply to ascertain what he did create, and what laws he established. Creation is an infinite miracle, not to be explained or comprehended. How completely this simple truth explodes all the speculations and theories concerning the formation of the world, the eternity of finite spirits and the transmigration of souls. The ancient philosophy utterly mistook the

legitimate field of inquiry. Unable to conceive the sublime truth declared in the first verse of the Bible—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—it wandered in endless mazes, as Bacon says, "fruitful of controversy and barren of effects." The *inductive philosophy* is the legitimate offspring of this sublime truth. Had it been known to those giant minds, whose powers we still admire, even when we reject as most absurd their speculations, what progress they might have made in the different sciences! Had Bacon been ignorant of it, his labors would have been as fruitless as theirs.

2. If, as the Bible teaches, all things came from the creative hand, "very good;" then matter is not inherently evil, and the mind is not contaminated by contact with it. Then holiness is not to be attained by torturing and destroying the body, nor by retiring into caves and deserts. How completely this truth annihilates the virtues so much extolled by the ancient philosophers, and so much admired among professing Christians, misled by their false theories.

If all things created by God are *good*; then they are designed for the benefit of man. The body is to be nourished, as the instrument through which the mind now acts. The laws of nature are to be learned, that they may minister to the wants of men, that their happiness may be greater. Then it is not degrading to philosophy to cause it to minister to the comfort of human beings. On the contrary this is precisely its province and its glory. The philosopher is not to spend his life in solitude, in meditation and fastings, but must imitate the example of the Son of God, "who went about doing good." Bacon had in his mind this scriptural truth when he made *usefulness* the test of sound philosophy. "For which reason," said he, "in the same manner as we are cautioned by religion to show our faith by our works, we may very properly apply the principle to philosophy, and judge of it by its works; accounting that to be futile which is unproductive, and still more so, if, instead of grapes and olives, it yield but the thistle and thorns of dispute and contention."

"Two words," says Macaulay, "form the key of the Baconian doctrine—utility and progress." For both, we affirm, Bacon was indebted to the Bible. It taught him that God created all things, and consequently the work of philosophy is to ascertain what he did create and what laws he established. Thus theories give place to fact and experiment. It taught him, that all things are

good, and therefore the business of philosophy is to apply all to the good of man.

To the Reformation, then, which was the work of the Scriptures, we are indebted for a sound philosophy, and for progress in knowledge and in all the sciences. On this subject I take pleasure in quoting a *prize essay*, presented to the National Institute of France by Charles Francis Dominic de Villers, on "The Influence of the Reformation by Luther." Of the learning and ability displayed in this essay, we need no other evidence than the fact, that it had such an award by such an institution. He says—"It has been already sufficiently shown above, what an imperfect philosophy reigned in the schools before the Reformation, and what an extravagant and puerile dialectic was amalgamated with the system of the Roman theology, which maintained itself by its aid. To support this system was, in fact, for many centuries, the end of all philosophy; the theologians, who were generally monks, were the only philosophers—A firm, independent philosophy, which aspired at becoming universal, was, in this state of things, a monstrosity; consequently, nothing of this description existed before the Reformation. * * * A strange mixture of disguised propositions of peripatetism, which was applied in the strangest manner to matters of faith and controversy, formed all the groundwork of the doctrine of the schools. Subsequent to the renovation of letters, some men of talents, with the famous Erasmus at their head, had opposed this monkish barbarism. But, remaining in the bosom of a church to which scholastic divinity had become an indispensable auxiliary, how could they labor effectually to destroy this support? Such an undertaking could only be accomplished by reformers bold enough to quit this church, and to establish one separate from it upon the pure principles of the gospel and of reason. It was in this manner that the Reformation dethroned the scholastic divinity." And in this way, we may add, it prepared the way for all the progress which science has since made.

If we would see the force of this argument in favor of Christianity, let us compare the progress of human learning in pagan lands, with its progress in Christian countries. Has it made even the slightest progress in the former? Has it not decidedly retrograded? What pagan nation now in existence will bear comparison with ancient Greece and Rome? Again, compare countries *nominally* Christian with those where the Bible freely circulates,

and Protestantism prevails. Villers said, there was more real knowledge in one single Protestant university, as that of Göttingen, or Halle, or Jena, than in the eight Spanish universities then existing. A similar comparison may be made of literary institutions in Protestant and Roman Catholic countries throughout the world. "In these," says Villers, "they teach what must, with or without the consent of reason, be believed; in the others they teach how a reasonable belief may be acquired, on any subject whatever. Here the Decretals are given for infallible oracles; there, no other oracle is acknowledged but reason, and the best supported facts." How shall we account for the fact, that science and Christianity have gone hand in hand in every country, and that the former has flourished just as the latter in its purity has prevailed; unless we admit, that Christianity is the great patron of sound learning? And how shall we account for the fact, that a book embracing so great a variety of subjects as the Bible does, written by so many different men, of few pretensions to human learning, during the darkest periods of the history of our world, does so promote learning and science, unless we admit, that it was given by inspiration of God? Is it credible that such men, under such circumstances, if uninspired, could write such a book?

Third. Let us now consider, with great brevity, the effect of Christianity upon civil and religious liberty. In every age and in almost every country, some form of religion has been established by law. The consequence has been, that multitudes have been robbed of their dearest rights, and persecuted even unto death for conscience' sake. And even in the middle of the nineteenth century neither the principles of civil, nor of religious liberty are generally understood. Indeed our happy country is almost the only country in the world, where these principles are well understood and respected. We propose to inquire how far the world is indebted for the liberty it enjoys to the influence of Christianity.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY is the unrestrained exercise of the right to examine all moral and religious questions, and to act in accordance with one's own convictions of truth, without interfering with similar rights of others. This, as the Scriptures clearly teach, is an inalienable right. This is evident from the following considerations:—

1. True religion, according to the Bible, is the belief and hearty reception of revealed truth, and a corresponding conduct. It is unnecessary to refer to particular parts of the Scriptures to prove,

that such is the religion there taught. It will not be disputed. Now, in the nature of things, belief can be produced only by evidence; and a *heartly* reception of the truth cannot be the effect of compulsion. Civil rewards and penalties on account of religious belief, therefore, make hypocrites of the unprincipled, and rebels of the conscientious; and thus they corrupt the church by filling it with hypocrisy, and weaken the government by alienating from it men of principle, who would be its firmest supporters.

2. God requires every one to examine, and to believe accordingly. "Search the Scriptures." "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Such is the language of the Scriptures. Now, to forbid any one to examine freely, and thus to form a rational faith, is to trample under foot the authority of God. He says to each individual—"Search the Scriptures;" who, then, shall venture to forbid any one to do so?

3. Every individual is accountable to God for his own religious faith and conduct; and his eternal interests are suspended upon these. To forbid freedom of investigation and of worship, therefore, is the height of tyranny and of cruelty. Why will any man or class of men step between me and my God in the formation of my faith and the regulation of my conduct, when they cannot step between us in judgment? "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

4. Civil government, though ordained of God, is designed simply to protect men in the enjoyment of their rights, and to promote their temporal interests. So Christianity teaches. This truth is distinctly recognized in the law of Moses. "I charged your judges at that time," says Moses, "saying, hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him," Deut. i. 16. The civil and the religious laws of the Jews were kept quite distinct. Much more should they be distinct now, when no religious qualification is required of civil officers. For civil rulers, then to legislate concerning religious faith and worship, is as glaring a perversion of their office, as for ministers of the gospel by virtue of their office, to claim authority in civil matters. It is true, that civil government and religion are often concerned about the same things, as blasphemy, perjury, murder, theft, &c. But these things have both a civil and a religious aspect. It is only with reference to the

former, that the civil law takes cognizance of them. "Our law," says Blackstone, "considers marriage in no other light than as a civil contract. The *holiness* of the matrimonial state is left entirely to the ecclesiastical law: the temporal courts not having jurisdiction to consider unlawful marriage as a sin, but merely as a civil inconvenience."

The Scriptures not only inculcate the general principles of religious liberty, but determine the precise limits of civil authority.

1st. Civil rulers may not dictate to the people their religious faith or worship. Such authority belongs not to their office.

2d. They may not require subjects to do what God has forbidden, or forbid them doing what God has commanded. "Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation," says Blackstone, "depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered to contradict these. * * * If any human law should allow or enjoin us to commit murder, we are bound to transgress that human law, or else we must offend both the natural and the divine." God has not authorized civil magistrates either to enact laws binding the conscience, or to abolish those laws by which he has bound it. Upon these plain principles acted our Lord and his Apostles. Two of those Apostles, forbidden by the Jewish sanhedrim to preach the gospel, made this noble answer: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Upon the same broad principle Luther took his stand before the Diet of Worms. Truly sublime was the stand taken by a humble monk before Charles V. and his princes, and in the midst of a most excited multitude. The eyes of Christendom were fastened upon him with intensest interest. He was commanded to retract what he had published. He answered in a firm tone—"If I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture or by cogent reasons: if I am not satisfied by the very texts I have cited, and if my judgment is not in this way brought into subjection to God's word, I neither can nor will retract anything: for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience. I stand here, and can say no more:—God help me."

3d. The civil law must be obeyed in all points, within the proper limits of civil jurisdiction. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." "Put them in mind," said Paul

to Titus, "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." All systems of human laws are, like their authors, imperfect; and consequently great injustice is often done in the administration of law. But inasmuch as it is far better to have an imperfect government, than anarchy and misrule, the Scriptures require, as a duty we owe to God, to obey even imperfect laws. "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake."

Civil government, as the Scriptures teach, is an ordinance of God, not for the advantage of the chief ruler, or of an aristocracy, but of *the people*. To the virtuous, the civil ruler is to be "a minister of God for good," and "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Consequently civil government should impose on its subjects, individually or collectively, no greater restraint than the greatest good of the whole requires. Just so far as any government goes beyond this limit in restraining individual liberty, it ceases to be what God designed it—for the good of the people; and the civil officer ceases to be to them "a minister of God for good."

Civil government is an ordinance of God; but since he has not appointed any particular form of government, it is evident that every nation has the right to choose any form which to them may seem best adapted to promote their interests, and to modify that form as often as they may deem it wise so to do. God gave to the Jews a civil government. In their folly they grew weary of it, and demanded a king. Samuel was directed to make no opposition to their wishes beyond warning and remonstrance. What stronger evidence need we of the right of a nation to modify or change its form of government, than the fact that the Jews were allowed to change a form divinely appointed?

But civil office confers power, which, even under the best regulated governments, may be abused. Christianity bids rulers remember, that as they are God's ministers, they are accountable to him for the manner in which they discharge the duties of their office. The Scriptures address them in such language as the following: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." The bold and fearless Isaiah thus addressed the Jews, in the days of great corruption and oppression: "Thy princes are rebellious and com-

panions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies. And I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning. Afterwards thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."

Such are the principles of civil and religious liberty inculcated in the sacred Scriptures. That they are the true principles of liberty, will not be denied. But where do we find them recognized and respected? We answer, where the Scriptures are most revered, and best understood. These principles were proclaimed by the Reformation of the sixteenth century, to which great event whatever there is in the world of true liberty, is traceable. It was, as we have said, emphatically a *Bible Reformation*. That we may appreciate the influence of Christianity in securing freedom to men, let us, for a moment, consider the state of things before the Reformation, when the Bible was a prohibited book.

The doctrine then prevailed, that the pope and his bishops had the right divinely conferred to dictate to the people their religious faith and their morals; and that to call in question their infallibility, was a crime to be visited with the severest civil penalties. The civil ruler who refused to exterminate heretics by fire and sword, did so at the peril of his crown, if not of his life. For crowns and kingdoms were believed to be at the disposal of the Pope. The clergy, sustained by that most horrible institution, the Inquisition (which even in the middle of the nineteenth century disgraces Rome), exercised a severe censorship over the press; and authors, publishers, printers, booksellers and readers, trembled at their dreadful authority. The human mind with all its noble powers was crushed to the earth. The fate of John Huss, burned by the Council of Constance in shameful disregard of the Emperor Frederick's safe-conduct, and of Galileo, imprisoned in the inquisition for his astronomical discoveries, were a fearful warning to all against the exercise of their dearest rights. "Let us only reflect," says Villers, "on the immense train of censures, prohibitions and inquisitors employed by the Romish church to keep every eye closed, at a period in which every new truth be-

came a heresy, that is to say, a crime deserving the severest punishment, and against which all the rigor of the secular arm was demanded ; and we shall shudder at the danger incurred by humanity before the sixteenth century." These doctrines, together with that of the divine right of kings to tyrannize over their subjects, rendered the existence of liberty an impossibility.

The first effective attack upon these despotic doctrines was made by the reformers. Long, indeed, had the Waldenses borne a solemn and a suffering testimony against them. Wickliffe, and Huss, and Jerome of Prague had ventured to disobey popes and kings ; but an almost Egyptian darkness enshrouded and oppressed the nations. Only the faint glimmerings of the morning star of the day of freedom had been seen. But Luther had found a Bible in his convent ; and gradually its pure light had penetrated the thick veil of superstition which darkened his understanding. Soon his stirring voice aroused all Europe from profound slumber, and made the pretended successor of Peter tremble on his throne. "In Geneva, Calvin and Beza, rejected by their own country," says Villers, "established a new and powerful focus of religious reform. The first fruit of it was the liberty of Geneva." To this place fled Scotch and English exiles from the persecutions of "the bloody Mary," to become "intoxicated with republicanism and independence." A multitude of men of talents, says the writer already quoted, have issued from Geneva, who, as writers, and as men in office, have, in the most decided manner, influenced the different states of Europe.

If you would get a clear view of the effects of Christianity upon civil and religious liberty, begin with that wonderful man, John Knox, who had sat at the feet of John Calvin, and followed the Presbyterian church of Scotland in her struggles against tyranny, through the reigns of the Jameses and Charleses, to the ignominious flight of James II. and the establishment of William and Mary on the English throne. The final crisis which turned the scales in favor of freedom, was brought on by the famous Archbishop Laud and Charles II., in the mad attempt to force upon the Scotch a form of government and a liturgy which they abhorred. "To this step," says Macaulay, "taken in the mere wantonness of tyranny, and in criminal ignorance or more criminal contempt of public feeling, our country owes her free-

dom. The first performance of the foreign ceremonies produced a riot. The riot rapidly became a revolution."

These principles, taught in the Scriptures, proclaimed by the Reformation, nourished and matured in the stormy history of Scotland and England, were transplanted in our own country; and here have they borne such fruits as have never before been enjoyed. The noble men and women who laid the foundations of our free government were *Christians*, fled from persecution, that in the wilds of the American wilderness they might enjoy unmolested the rights of conscience. For the great principles of civil government they sought in the Word of God. True, they were not altogether free from prejudice, and therefore did not, at first, get a full view of some of the important principles there taught; but further investigations dispelled all darkness, and resulted in the organization of the noblest government the world ever saw. "They brought with them into the new world," says De Tocqueville, "a form of Christianity, which I cannot better describe, than by styling it a democratic and republican religion. This sect contributed powerfully to the establishment of a democracy and a republic; and from the earliest settlement of the emigrants, politics and religion contracted an alliance which has never been dissolved."

Thus do we find, in the sacred Scriptures those great principles of civil and religious liberty which have made our country the freest and happiest country on the globe, which are now becoming diffused through all nations, and by which all tyranny will be ultimately overthrown. "Who can foretell," said Villers, writing when our republic was yet in its infancy, "all that may result in the two worlds, from the seductive example of the independence conquered by the Americans? What new position would the world assume, if this example were followed? and without doubt it will be in the end. Thus two Saxon monks will have changed the face of the globe." The Reformation, he remarks, introduced a new order of things. "Powerful republics were founded. Their principles, still more powerful than their arms, were introduced into all nations. Hence arose great revolutions, and those which may yet arise, are doubtless incalculable."

Christianity has not only laid the broad foundations of civil and religious liberty, but it still moulds and sustains the particular laws enacted. It is a remarkable fact, that the Jews were the first na-

tion who had a written constitution, and a written code of laws. It is a fact even more remarkable, that many of the most important laws of the most enlightened nations have been borrowed from the law of Moses. And yet the people to whom this excellent code of laws was given, had but just escaped from a long-continued and degrading bondage. And now, as in past ages, the best systems of laws in the world are to be found in Christian countries; and in those countries, more than in any other, the authority of law is supreme. There the people are more intelligent; they better understand their own and each other's rights; and to support the laws, is not only their true interest, but their religious duty. "Despotism," as De Tocqueville well remarks, "may govern without *faith*, but liberty cannot. How is it possible that society should escape destruction, if the moral tie be not strengthened in proportion as the political tie is relaxed? and what can be done with a people which is its own master, if it be not submissive to Divinity?"

We are authorized, I think, in view of this discussion, to come to the following conclusions:

1st. That whatever the world now enjoys of civil and religious liberty, it owes to the Bible and Christianity; and that the progress of the principles of true liberty depends upon the progress of Christianity. Both the past history and the present state of the world justify this conclusion. The permanency of our free institutions, we are accustomed to say, depends upon the virtue and the intelligence of the people; and true virtue and general intelligence can be maintained only by Christianity.

2d. Christianity is not more decidedly the enemy of tyranny than of radicalism and anarchy. It claims even for the humblest their inalienable rights, and requires the most honorable to obey the powers that be. It throws its shield over the domestic circle, and sanctifies the relations of husband and wife, parent and child. It condemns equally the tyranny of the husband and the cruelty of the parent on the one hand, and the unfaithfulness of the wife and the disobedience of the child on the other. It utterly repudiates the levelling and demoralizing principles of Socialism in all its phases. It is eminently a *liberalizing*, yet *conservative* power.

3d. The Bible is the word of God. How, if it be not, shall we account for the fact, that though written in ages when true liberty was unknown, it yet inculcates the true principles of liberty in all their fulness?—and is now the great patron of rational

freedom?—that though written, for the most part, when the word of the king was law, and politics and religion were everywhere united, it contains the wisest laws, and draws so accurately the limits of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction? In a word, how shall we account for it, that Christianity has done, and is doing for liberty, civil and religious, just what it has done, and is doing for morals and for science? Can we persuade ourselves, that the writers of the books which constitute the Bible, as men uninspired, were so inconceivably before all other men in their knowledge of the rights of men?

4th. Let us finally consider, with great brevity, the effects of Christianity *upon the happiness of men*. That God is a being of infinite benevolence, I need not attempt to prove; nor need I adduce proof, that a system of religion from him would promote the highest happiness of his rational creatures. I may also assume without proof, that false principles can no more promote permanently the *happiness* of men, than true *morality*. If, then, it can be made to appear, that Christianity does secure to those who embrace it the most exalted happiness, it will follow as a legitimate and certain conclusion, that it is from God. That it does effect this object, will appear from the following considerations:—

1st. It most effectively promotes the purest morality and the most exalted virtue. It thus delivers those who embrace it from all the unhappiness produced by immorality in its various forms. And who that has read the history of the past, or that is acquainted with the present state of the world, does not know how large a proportion of all the wretchedness of men is traceable, mediately or immediately, to their evil passions and the conduct to which those passions impel them. But the influence of religion is not merely or chiefly negative. The fear of God and the expansive benevolence with which it fills the heart, cause us to delight in relieving the afflicted, and in promoting the happiness of all. How happy will be the condition of the human race, when this religion shall be universally diffused, and every man shall rejoice to do good to his fellow-men.

2d. It promotes general intelligence and the progress of learning, and thus puts men in possession of many sources of enjoyment, and causes the works of God and the laws of nature to minister to their happiness. Who of us would be willing to exchange the pleasures afforded by the knowledge he possesses of

the works and laws of nature, for all the treasures of the Indies? And who can number the enjoyments afforded us by the achievements of science, of which pagan nations are deprived?

3d. It promotes civil and religious liberty, leads to the enactment and the support of wise and wholesome laws; and thus secures to men the enjoyment of their dearest rights, and gives them in their lawful pursuits a delightful feeling of security. Every man sits under his own vine and fig-tree unmolested, worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and rejoicing in the fruits of honest industry. These inestimable blessings has Christianity conferred upon our country in a high degree; and Christianity only can preserve them as a rich heritage to our children.

4th. It imparts to those who embrace it the most exalted hopes, and consequently the most exalted joys. The human mind is so constituted, that it cannot be satisfied with present enjoyments, however great, but intensely desires future, unending bliss. It is, therefore, constantly looking forward, and fearing or hoping, as its prospects seem to become darker or brighter. Many of its troubles arise from anticipated evils; and many of its sweetest pleasures, from expected good. Christianity meets these desires of the human mind, and affords them the highest gratification. The Christian believes himself a child of God, and, therefore, an heir of glory. He has the promise of a future life—a life of perfect holiness, of ever-increasing knowledge, and of unmingled joy. His future home is described, in the beautifully figurative language of Scripture, as a city whose walls are of the most precious stones, whose gates are pearls, whose streets are paved with purest gold, whose light is Jehovah himself, whose inhabitants are clothed in garments of spotless white, indicative at once of their purity and of their happiness, whose glory and bliss are eternal. Cheered by such a hope, the Christian can rejoice greatly in the midst of afflictions and troubles, saying with Paul the apostle, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." And this hope, whilst it wonderfully smooths the rugged path of life, and imparts the sweetest pleasure, powerfully excites the Christian to holy living, and raises him above the temptations by which he is constantly assailed. Exclude from the mind the light of the Scriptures, and how dark, even to the wisest, is the eternal future. Is the soul immortal? They who have

relied on reason and the light of nature, give contradictory answers. If immortal, what is to be its future condition? What has it to hope for? Is there a heaven or a hell? Can God consistently forgive sins? If he can, on what conditions will he do it? The only answers to these most important questions are vague conjectures and contradictory assertions. Thus all that is dear to man is left in perfect uncertainty, and the exalted hopes of the future give place to the grovelling sentiment—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

These are some, not all, the pleasures flowing from Christianity. But in this life we see its power but imperfectly developed, and consequently the happiness it imparts, but imperfectly enjoyed. Men are here in the infancy of their being; and they learn imperfectly the elements of the sublime science taught in the Scriptures. An eternity of perfect holiness, of rapidly increasing wisdom, and of more than angelic happiness alone can unfold its "unsearchable riches." The peaceful and triumphant death of the righteous gives the clearest view afforded in the present state, of the glorious excellency of the religion of Christ Jesus.

To what conclusions may we legitimately come from the very imperfect view of this whole subject as now presented?

1. That the Bible is the word of God. Is not this conclusion both legitimate and inevitable? Do you say, no? Then take a bold stand, and maintain the following positions:—

1st. That a succession of vile impostors and deceivers (for such were the writers of the books which compose the Bible, if they were not inspired) through a period of fifteen hundred years, when universal corruption prevailed amongst all nations, became the authors of the purest code of morals the world ever saw—a code condemning most severely vice in all its forms and shades, commending most strongly every virtue that can adorn the human character, and enforcing its requirements by every possible motive, approaching the mind with its persuasions to virtue by every avenue!—a code of morals which has been cherished by the good and hated by the evil in every age, and which, wherever it has been received as divine, has dried up the fountains of pollution and misery, and opened those of purity and joy!—a code which has proved alike an inestimable blessing to individuals, to families, to communities, and to nations! Come forward and boldly maintain, that false principles produce purer

morals and more elevated virtue, than the truth, and, therefore, that falsehood is a greater blessing to men than the truth !

2d. Then proclaim to the world, that a succession of ignorant, unprincipled men, in the darkest ages of the world's history, wrote a book embracing in its vast range not only theology, but several of the most important branches of science, as history, chronology, geography, law, mental and moral science, &c.—which book has successfully asserted its claims, as a divine revelation, over the most enlightened nations, and over many of the most gigantic intellects richly stored with human learning ; nay, which gave to the greatest philosophers the true clue to their discoveries, and is the most successful patron of learning in all its branches ! Proclaim it, that ignorance is wiser than wisdom—that darkness shines more brightly than the light !

3d. Go further, and affirm, that those degraded, ignorant men did better understand, and more clearly teach the great principles of liberty, civil and religious, did more fully define the duties and guard the rights of individuals in all the relations of life, than any other men who have lived ; and through their writings have broken, and are breaking the yoke of tyranny, and proclaiming liberty to the nations !

4th. Tell it to all, that the greatest imposture the world ever saw, has been the greatest blessing the world ever enjoyed—has done more than all other causes to dry up the fountains of human crime and wretchedness, to make every man a blessing to his fellow-men and earth a blooming paradise ; to meet and satisfy the noblest aspirations of the human mind, inspire it with glorious hopes, smooth the rough pathway of life, and make the dying hour an hour of peace, and triumph, and joy !

He who is not prepared to assert absurdities so glaring, must acknowledge the conclusiveness of the argument, and admit, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

2. He who would promote most effectually the highest interests of men, must put into their hands the inspired volume, and bring them, as far as possible, under its hallowed influence. All schemes of reform which rest not upon its teaching, will, as they have ever done, not only fail, but will aggravate the evils they are designed to remove. The Bible alone strikes at the prolific cause of human misery, which is *sin*, and points out clearly the path of real prosperity and happiness.

3. Young men especially, should regard the claims of the

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