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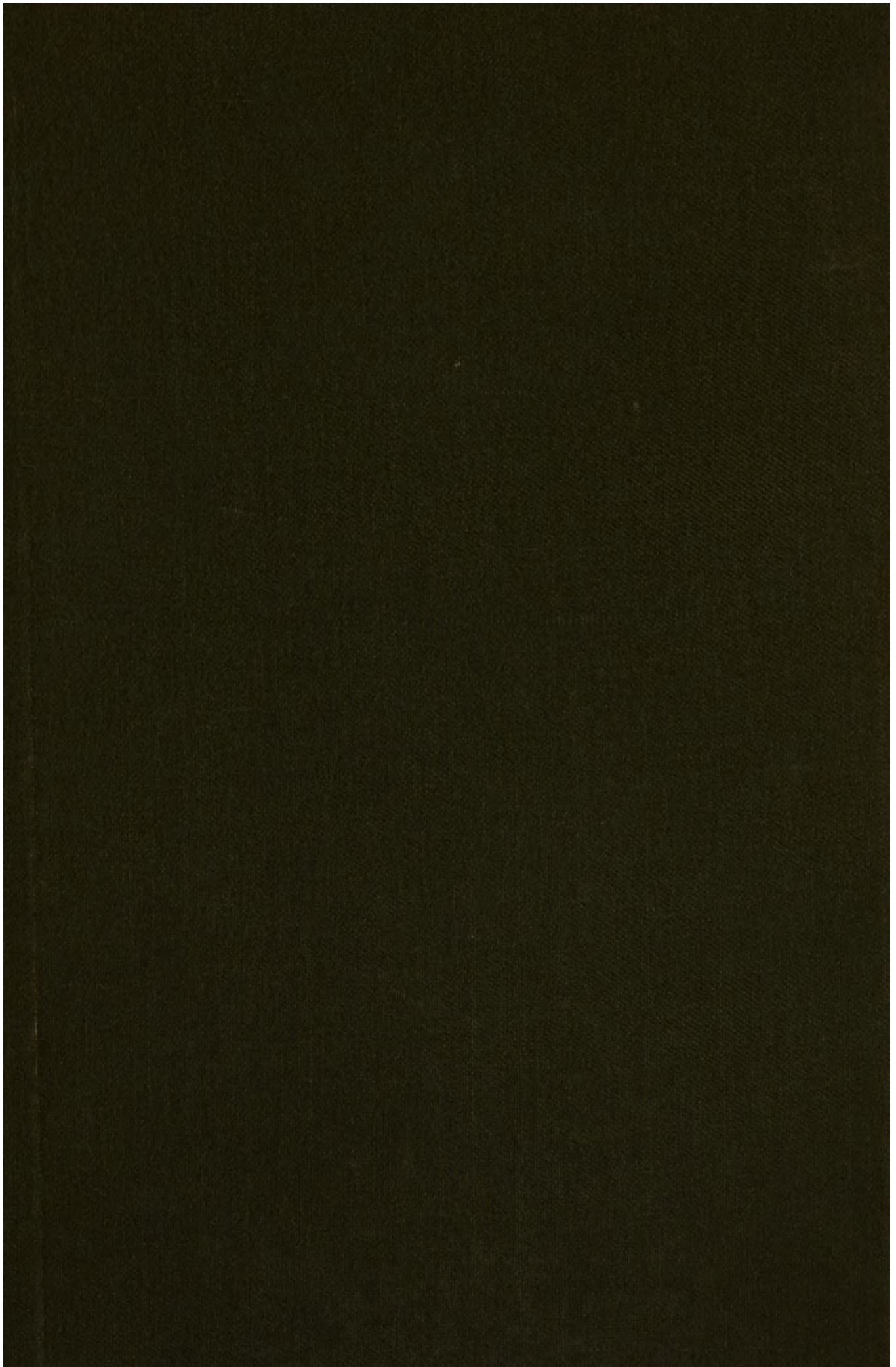
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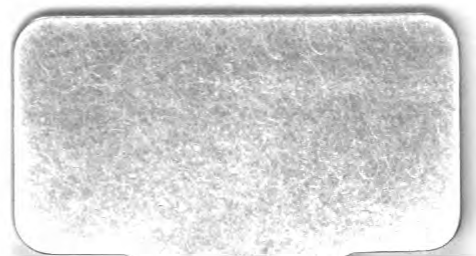
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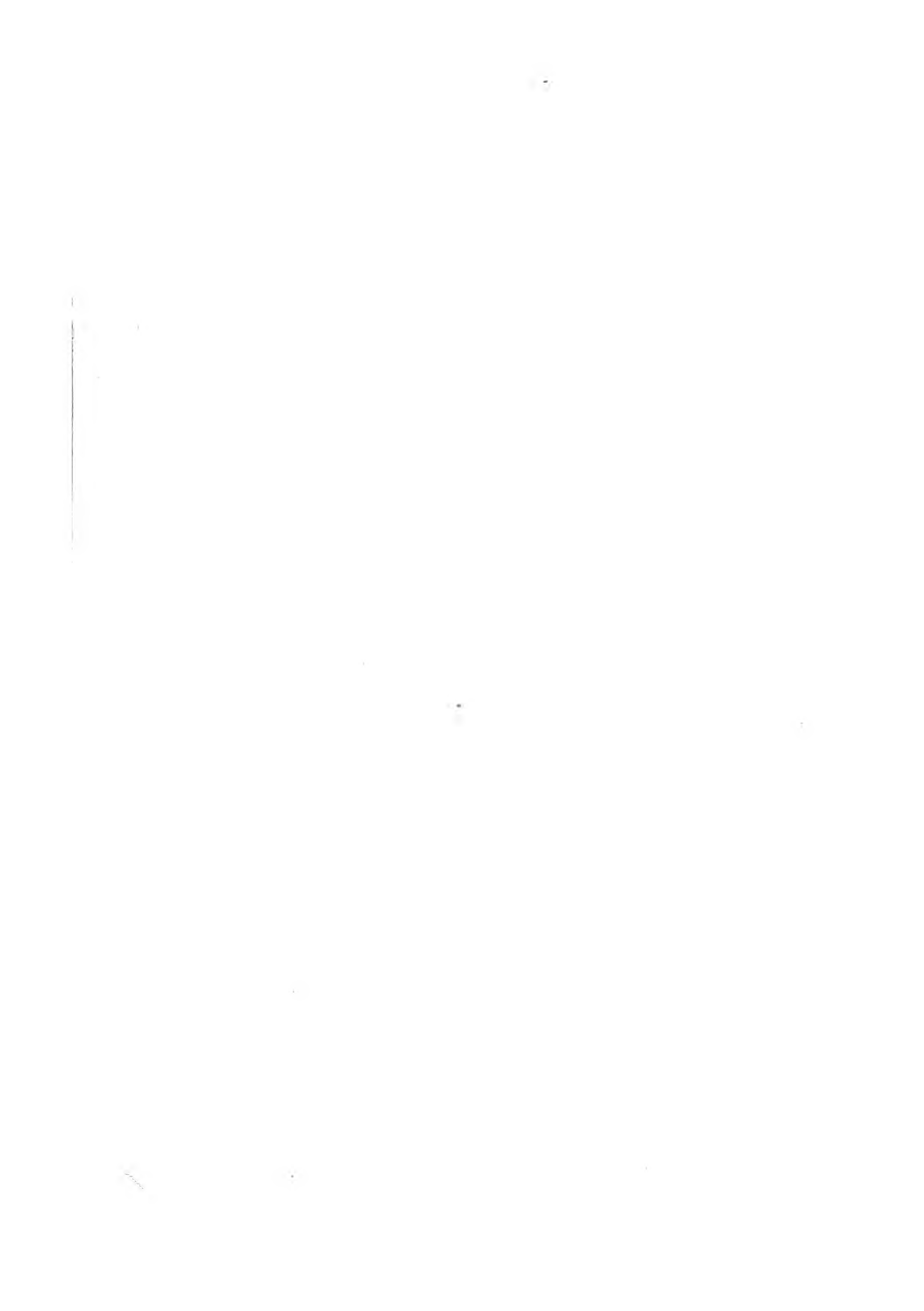


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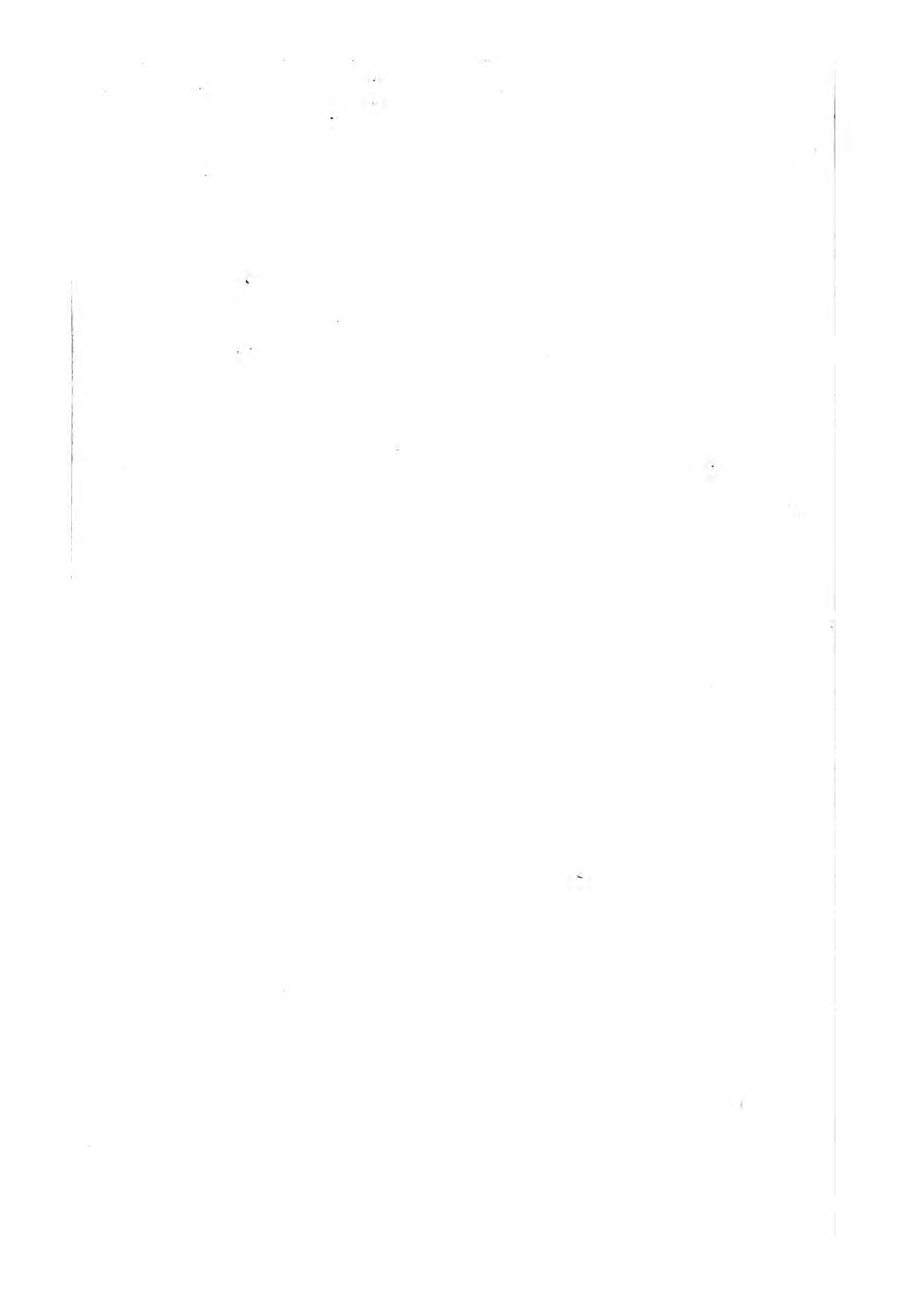












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A POPULAR HANDBOOK  
OF  
CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

BY JOHN KENNEDY, M.A., D.D.,  
HONORARY PROFESSOR, NEW COLLEGE, LONDON;  
AUTHOR OF "THE GOSPELS: THEIR AGE AND AUTHORSHIP," ETC.

Part First.

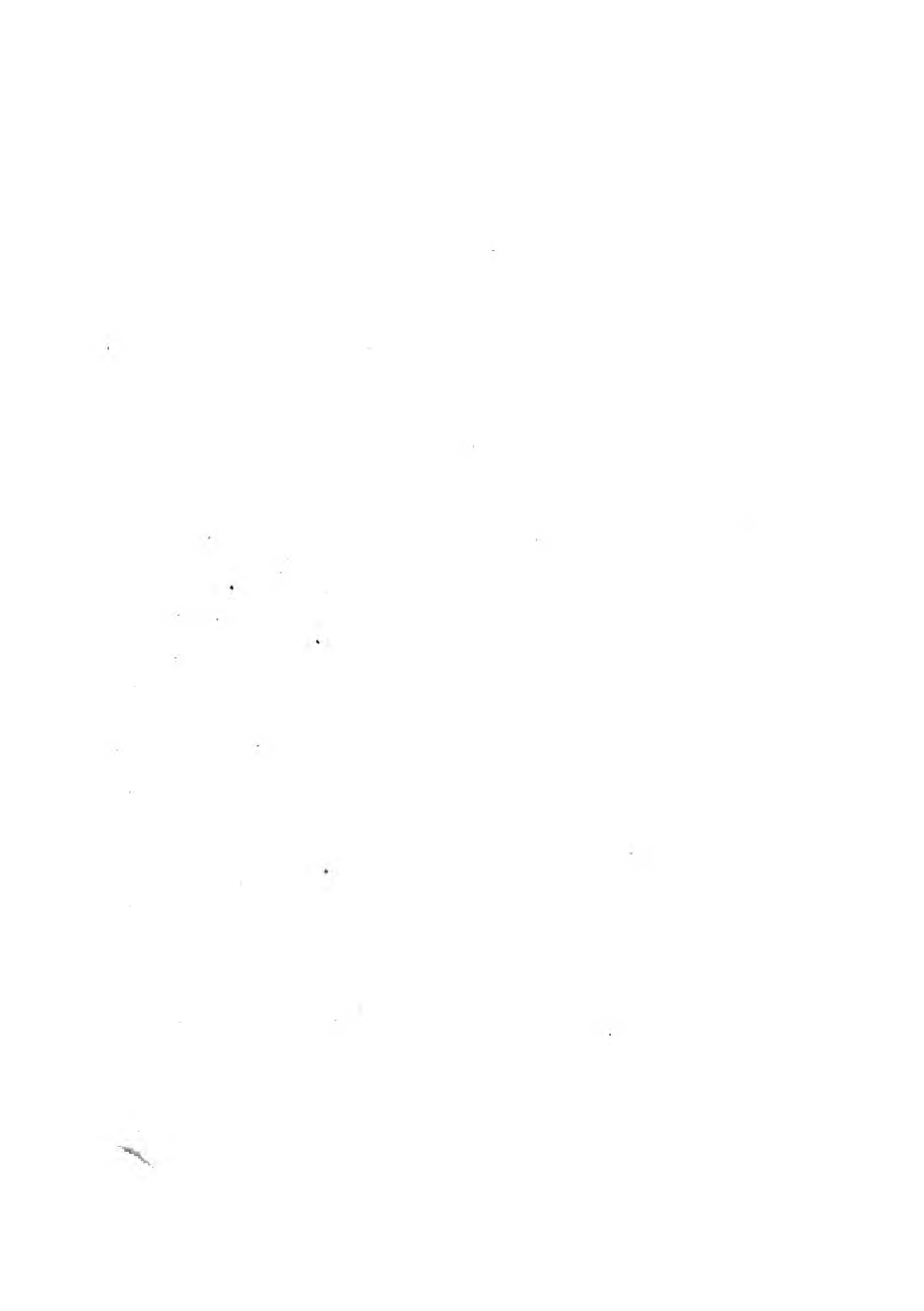
*THEISM AND RELATED SUBJECTS.*



SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,  
56, OLD BAILEY.

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## P R E F A C E.



THAT the Divine origin and authority of Christianity may be established without any foregoing discussion of the principles of Natural Religion, I fully believe. On grounds independent of the previous determination of the great question, God or no God, and by processes that are perfectly legitimate and logical, we may reach the conclusion that the character and life of Jesus Christ cannot be adequately explained on purely naturalistic principles. We may thus find ourselves shut up to the conviction that here there is a moral demonstration of the existence and action of the supernatural ; in other words, that Jesus was and is all that His words respecting Himself imply. And then the fact of *His* divine personality, thus established, will throw light on questions which, in the order of nature, should go before. The existence and personality of God, and the spirituality of man, can no longer be questioned. We may still concern ourselves, as I have said elsewhere, with arguments more or less satisfactory, against Atheism, Pantheism, and Materialism. But being once assured that in Jesus Christ we have an Incarnation of the God of truth and love, we may feel that practically we are independent of these arguments.

In some respects this is the best mode of setting forth the evidences of our faith. But unhappily, many stumble on

the very threshold of inquiry through popularly and speciously urged doubts respecting the very existence of a God and of a divine government. And they will not apply themselves to the honest study of properly *Christian* evidences till these doubts are removed or at least considered. They demand of us that we shall meet them first on ground anterior to the question who and what Jesus Christ was. Hence the plan which I have thought it well to adopt in this Handbook,—devoting the first part to the Theistic argument and to subjects related to it and preparatory to the evidence, which the second part will endeavour to set forth, on which we rest our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

A Handbook, as it seems to me, should steer a middle course, between the baldness of a mere skeleton and the fulness of a course of lectures in which popular illustration may be freely used. How far I have succeeded to realize my idea I do not know. But I have kept it steadily in view.

As to the importance of the subject, no sane man can question it. Nor can any one who has understanding of the times doubt the obligation which is laid on “believers” to vindicate, in every available form, the grounds of their faith. The burden of proof lies on them, and they must bear it. But unbelievers should remember at the same time that their position is not rational or defensible, unless they can furnish a better explanation of the universe than is to be found in the doctrine of an Intelligent Creator, and a better explanation of the wonderful story of the Gospels than is to be found in the admission of their truth. Whatever be the difficulties of faith, the difficulties of unbelief are greater.

STEPNEY,

*September, 1880.*

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PART FIRST.

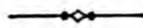
THEISM AND RELATED SUBJECTS.



# HANDBOOK

OF

## CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.



### CHAPTER I.

#### FUNDAMENTAL AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

##### I.

WE must begin our inquiry into the claims of Christianity with a clear apprehension of the *nature and value of the only kind of evidence that is available in such problems as we have to consider*. It is what is known as "Moral," or "Probable," not "Demonstrative." "Probable evidence," says Bishop Butler, "is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this, that it admits of degrees; and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty to the very lowest presumption." This is not the only distinction between them. They differ in kind; but the difference is understood by description better than by definition. It is not arbitrary but real; as real in questions that are purely secular as in those that are

Moral, or probable, evidence alone available.

*In the "Analogy, Introduction."*



religious. It is founded on the nature of the case ; and in the ordinary business of life it is unchallenged.

“ *The Principles of Science,*”  
vol. i. p. 248.

The words of Bishop Butler—“Probability is the guide of life”—have now passed into an axiom ; and Professor Jevons, in quoting them, says, “We can hardly take a step or make a decision of any kind without correctly or incorrectly making an estimation of probabilities.” Even in matters which are popularly supposed to admit of demonstrative evidence, this able expounder of “the principles of science” shows that we are dependent on probability.

“ *Idem,*” pp.  
248, 249.

“The whole cogency of inductive reasoning, as applied to science, rests” (he says) “upon probability. The truth or untruth of a natural law, when carefully investigated, resolves itself into a high or low degree of probability.”

“ *Origin of the Laws of Nature,*”  
pp. 3-5.

To the same effect Sir Edmund Beckett says, some men “are, on the one hand, constantly proclaiming that nothing ought to be believed which cannot be proved ‘positively,’ as they call it, or by the evidence of our senses ; while on the other, the very thing they

Even scientific theories based on probabilities.

worship, viz. science, or theories about natural causes and effects, are never proved positively, but only by inferences and probabilities. . . . All that can be said [even] of the well-known law of gravity is that it is shown to be immeasurably more probable than any other explanation of the motions of the universe. The undulatory theory of light is at present the most probable one, because it explains all the known phenomena better than any other ; but there is not the smallest direct proof of the luminiferous æther which it assumes. That may be proved or disproved any day. Hardly any theory of the nature of electrical force can be said to have such a preponderating probability that it may not be superseded to-morrow.

And the same is true of other scientific theories in various degrees."

Demonstration is possible only in the science of mathematics, or of numbers, or in argument based immediately on intuitions, or necessary truths. In all else we are dependent on probability. Probability does not imply deficiency of evidence or uncertainty of conviction. But it admits of degrees, as Butler has said, from the lowest presumption to the highest moral certainty—a certainty on which men are prepared to stake both this life and the next. When it is demanded of us, then, that we *demonstrate* that there is a God, or that we *demonstrate* that the Bible contains a divine revelation, it is a demand for that which, *in the nature of the case*, is impossible. These and similar propositions do not come within the circle of truths to which demonstration is, not arbitrarily, but of necessity, confined.

When it is said that the hypothesis of a God, or of a soul, or of a future life, cannot be *verified*, the force of the assertion depends entirely on the ambiguity of the word "verified." That which is capable of demonstration needs no verifying. To verify a thing is to prove that the thing alleged to be true is true. A demonstration contains the evidence of its truth in itself. And of matters which are not capable of demonstration, the verification is variously effected. An historical fact is not verifiable in the way in which a physical fact is. An abstract, or an ethical, or a spiritual, statement, is not verifiable in the way in which an historical fact is. Things are verifiable or provable only by evidence suited to their nature. An hypothesis in chemistry is verified when chemical experiments prove it to be true. An assertion in regard to a matter which admits of ocular proof, is

APPENDIXA.

Provinces of demonstration and probability.

Truths that do not admit of demonstration.

What "verification" means.

Various applications of the word.

verified when such ocular proof has been obtained. A prophecy is verified when it is fulfilled. An historical fact is verified when sufficient evidence of its truth has been obtained. An ethical judgment is verified when the evidence in support of it is conclusive to the satisfaction of the understanding and the moral sense. An abstract opinion is verified when the arguments in support of it greatly preponderate. We do not commonly use the term "verify" in all these cases; but when it is used, it can only be as thus explained. And, thus explained, we entirely deny the assertion that the fundamental truths of Natural Religion, and the supernatural claims of Christianity, are not verifiable. We believe they are.

Let the student of this book, then, begin with a clear apprehension of the only evidence that is available in the great concern of religion. It is in kind such as he has to depend on in all the affairs of life.

## II.

No right to  
prescribe  
what  
evidence  
shall be  
accepted.

*Matt.*  
*xviii. 3.*

We have *no right to determine for ourselves beforehand*, or *À PRIORI*, *what shall be the amount or the character of the evidence which we shall accept in any case as sufficient.* The words of Christ, "Except ye . . . . become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," have very far-reaching and important bearings. The childlike spirit—the spirit that is docile and free from perverting or distorting prepossessions, is the true spirit of study and inquiry in things secular as well as in things sacred. Those who followed Christ—I refer to them at present only to illustrate a general principle—must, their Master taught them, disabuse themselves of their precon-

ceptions, and open their ears and eyes, and judge according to the evidence set before them. They must cease from the expectations with which their Galilean upbringing had made them familiar from their youth, and be prepared, as if still in unbiassed childhood, to accept, if so taught by Him, altogether different conceptions of the divine kingdom. In this there was true philosophy; and we insist that, in the spirit of it, men abstain from determining, *à priori*, what and what manner of evidence they will accept. It is not for us to say,—If God willed us to believe in Him, He would have made the evidence of His Being stronger, more palpable, and more conclusive than it is; if Christ was really the Son of God, He would have done as the devil is said to have urged Him to do—He would have cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, and overwhelmed the worshippers in the sacred courts with the proof of His divinity; if Christ really professed to heal incurable diseases, and to restore life, by His word, He should have called a jury of impartial men to examine His pretensions, and to ascertain that there was neither deceit nor the use of occult natural powers in His alleged miracles; if Christ really rose from the dead, or would satisfy the world that He did, He should have shown Himself openly to His enemies, and should have demanded an official investigation, first, to prove that He had been really dead, and then to prove that He who now called Himself Jesus was the same Jesus who had died.

The childlike spirit the true philosophy.

Not for us to say what signs Christ should have given.

These references to Christ's history only illustrative.

We use these references to the history of Christ only as illustrations of the principle, that we have no right to predetermine by what evidence facts or truths shall be certified to our satisfaction. In each of the cases supposed the hypothesis is at least admissible—

and this is enough for the present argument—that there may have been good reasons why such evidence should not be given. We have to deal with facts or alleged facts, proofs or alleged proofs, and it is for us to face these, to sift them, and to form our judgment on such evidence as is actually available. This is the dictate of common sense.

Our concern is with evidence actually alleged.

### III.

We should recognize *the fact that we may be “shut up” to faith in conclusions which can neither be demonstrated nor comprehended*—conclusions not merely supported by a balance of probabilities, but from which we cannot, by any effort of reason or imagination, escape. Such, for example, are the ideas of infinite space and infinite duration. Both these ideas are incomprehensible. The mind cannot imagine the facts that space has no limits, and that duration has none; but when it attempts to imagine limits to either, it becomes conscious of the necessity which is laid upon it to accept that which it cannot comprehend. This necessity is immediate. It does not depend on any argument, metaphysical or popular. It is *felt*. It is inevitable and involuntary. We can imagine the non-existence of the material universe; but we cannot imagine the non-existence of space and time. Such truths as these are called *necessary truths*.

May be shut up to conclusions that are neither demonstrable nor comprehensible.

Infinite space and duration.

APPENDIX B.

There *may be* other conclusions not of the character of necessary truths, or intuitions, to which we shall find ourselves “shut up,” although not so immediately and summarily. Such are—

Two sets of conclusions to which we may be shut up.

I. Conclusions to which we are led by so many concurring arguments or considerations, that the denial of them would land us either in logical

absurdities, or in difficulties immeasurably greater than any which can attend the acceptance of them. And—

2. Conclusions arrived at by the exhaustion of all other hypotheses than that which accepts them.

An hypothesis should not be confounded with an ascertained and proved fact ; and the cause of science as well as of religion is injured when our faith is demanded for that which is only an unverified hypothesis. But the use of an hypothesis, *as such*, is not only allowable, but may conduce to scientific discovery or to rational certainty. “When facts are already in our possession,” says Professor Jevons, referring to natural facts, “we frame an hypothesis to explain their mutual relations, and by the success or non-success of this explanation is the value of the hypothesis to be entirely judged.” And again, “Agreement with fact is the one sole and sufficient test of a true hypothesis.”

Proper use  
of  
hypothesis.

“Principles  
of Science,”  
vol. ii.  
p. 131.

This principle applies to other than such natural facts as are classified and explained by natural science. Take, for example, the Being of a God. There are many facts in the outer world of what we call nature, and in the inner world of man’s soul, which *seem*, at least, to point to a God, intelligent and almighty, and which *seem* to demand the idea of such a God as their true explanation. Let us hold this explanation, or hypothesis, in abeyance, and try every other which has been or may be imagined. Should the result be unsatisfactory ; should every other hypothesis fail to account for all the facts that have to be explained ; should every other hypothesis rather involve in it greater difficulties than those which it attempts to explain, we are “shut up,” if we act reasonably—if we are not content to settle down into a condition of

“Idem,”  
p. 138.

The exhaus-  
tion of  
hypotheses,  
*e.g.* with  
reference to  
the Being of  
God.

absolute scepticism and ignorance—to the one hypothesis which still remains. And to this hypothesis it is no objection that it involves us in the incomprehensible idea of infinitude. We are shut up, as we have seen, and that without any intermediate process of argument, to a belief in infinite space and infinite duration. I do not argue that infinite space and infinite duration necessitate a belief in an Infinite Mind. But they prepare the way for it, or, at the least, they remove out of the way all objection founded on its incomprehensibility. Let us have reason on other grounds to believe in an Infinite Mind, a Great Intelligent Self-Existence, and the difficulty of believing in Him is greatly lessened by the confessed *necessity* of believing in infinite space and infinite duration.

No objection that we land in the incomprehensible and infinite.

Apply the "exhaustion of hypotheses" to Jesus Christ and the Gospels.

See "Pilate's Question—Whence art Thou?" Part II.

Take another example of how we may be shut up to a conclusion by the exhaustion of all other hypotheses. Jesus Christ is a great fact in history, and the Gospels are great facts in literature. Take the Gospel version of Jesus Christ—who He was according to Himself, and who He was according to the first preachers of Him and His faith—and we reach a very clear conclusion respecting Him. Let this conclusion be denied, and those who deny it are bound to supply us with some other hypothesis than its truth—to explain facts which cannot be reasonably denied. Should all the hypotheses that are suggested to supply the place of the hypothesis of the truth of the Gospel version of the claims of Jesus Christ, fail or collapse, when tested by acknowledged facts and common-sense principles, we are shut up, if we act reasonably, to the acceptance of the conclusion which they were designed to supplant.

These, at present, are only illustrations of a position

which is of first importance in the study of all questions which lie outside the domain of demonstration—namely, that we may be shut up to the acceptance of conclusions that are based on moral evidence, practically as completely as if they were based on demonstration.

May then be shut up to conclusions by moral evidence.

---



## CHAPTER II.

MODERN FORMS OF UNBELIEF AND THEIR ESSENTIAL  
UNITY.

Whence and  
what is  
Christianity?

Is Christianity a human product, with or without an admixture of dishonesty, evolved out of other and earlier religions by the natural laws of progress? or is it distinctively divine and supernatural? We accept the second of these alternatives as the truth. The thesis we are prepared to maintain is that the Christianity of the Four Gospels, and of the Letters of its first preachers, is not of man but of God; that Jesus Christ held a divine commission, and was Himself divine; and that the great end of His ministry, human and divine, was the recovery of mankind from sin and its consequences.

To be  
proved in  
Part II.

Natural  
Religion  
presupposed  
in Judaism  
and in  
Christianity.

Christianity does not in any formal manner undertake to prove that there is a God, Creator, Ruler, and Judge, of mankind. Among the teachings of Christ and His Apostles we find no arguments on this great and fundamental subject. The existence of God, Maker and Moral Governor of the world, is assumed. And so it is in the Old Testament. The first words of the Book of Genesis assume the existence of God, and, assuming it, declare that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." These Books, both of the Old and of the New, were given to a people,

and in an age, which did not need that proof should be given of another world than the visible, and of a higher Being or Beings than man. The only question then was whether there was one God or many, and what might be the character of the one or many. A “fool” might say “in his heart”—“There is no God.” But men were not found who professed atheism on intellectual or rational grounds.

This is not the only reason which may be assigned for the abstinence of our Scriptures from any formal proof of the divine existence. These books—for which we claim no authority at this stage of our argument—recognize and refer to the testimony which the visible universe bears to God. Professing to contain the records of a supernatural revelation, they do not make light of the revelation which is made by or given in nature, but, on the contrary, appeal to it, and charge it against mankind that they make light of it and do not discern in it the voice of God Himself. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.” “That which can be known of God is manifested in their [the heathen’s] hearts, God Himself having shown it unto them; for His eternal power and Godhead, though they be invisible, yet are seen ever since the world was made, being understood by His works, that they who despised Him might have no excuse.” Between Natural Religion and Revealed Religion, then, there is no antagonism. The doctrines of the former are fundamental to the latter, and the professed records of revelation recognize the fact, and do not attempt to do what might be regarded as already done.

Revelation charges men with neglect of the teachings of nature.

*Psalm xix.*  
1, 2.

*Rom.*  
*i. 19, 20*  
(*Conybear*  
*and*  
*Howson*).

It does not follow that in no sense is revelation How reve-

lation *proves*  
God and His  
government.

a proof of the existence of God and of His government. If the alleged facts of the Bible, in both Testaments, are real facts, and can be proved to be such, they leave no room for doubt upon the subject. And, practically, the faith of man in God may be found far more dependent on revelation than on nature. But it is still true that our Bible abstains from any attempt, by argumentative or rational process, to prove that God is and is the Supreme Ruler of the world.

The  
nineteenth  
century.

The  
eighteenth  
century.  
The Deists  
of that age.

The basis of  
Butler's  
"Analogy."

The nineteenth century, however, will not allow us to advance to the defence of Christianity without proving first of all that there is a God, and that He may be known. The eighteenth century admitted all this. The Deists of that age, who waged resolute war against Christianity, magnified the light of nature. They worshipped, or professed to worship, nature's God. They needed, they said, no Revealer of God and of our relations to Him, but what they had in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and in the vicegerent of God whom they found in their own consciences. Christianity was altogether unnecessary. Butler's great work, the "*Analogy*," accordingly, was addressed not to Atheists but to Theists, to men who believed in God, but did not believe in revelation. He and his opponents occupied common ground thus far—that there is an almighty, all-wise, and all-good God, who made and who sustains the universe, both of matter and of mind. But now nature, instead of teaching us all that need be known respecting God, is held to teach us nothing, and the defenders of Revealed Religion are required first of all to defend Natural Religion.

Changed

This change in the position taken by unbelief

renders it necessary, not that we should discuss all the questions *per se* which stand between us and Christianity—that would require volumes—but that we should indicate what these questions are, and give some idea of their true solution. Christianity will be found to be sustained by evidence of its own, which will justify our faith in the face of all difficulties.

position of  
unbelief.

The terms in which modern unbelief expresses its many phases, present a very formidable array—such as Atheism, Pantheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Materialism, Positivism, and Deism or Theism. The last of these differs essentially from the others, and these others may be reduced to a very few heads, if not ultimately to one.

Many forms  
of modern  
unbelief.

Bald and absolute Atheism is very rare. The proposition, "There is no God," could be maintained only by one who is prepared to arrogate to himself omniscience. It is conceivable that the proof that "There is a God" should be pronounced insufficient. But it is not conceivable that proof should be found to justify the dogma, "There is no God." "The wonder turns," says John Foster, "on the great process by which a man could grow to the intelligence that can know there is no God. This intelligence involves the very attributes of divinity, while a God is denied. If a man is not in absolute possession of all the propositions which constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be a God. If he does not know everything that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is,

BALD  
ATHEISM.

Incapable of  
proof.

"Essays"—  
Essay on  
"a man's  
writing  
memoirs of  
himself."

See also—precludes another Deity by being one himself, he  
Chalmers's cannot know that the Being whose existence he  
"Natural Theology," rejects does not exist."  
i. 60, 62.

PANTHEISM. Pantheism is, in one aspect of it, the opposite of  
APPENDIX C. Atheism, but, in another and profounder, not to be  
distinguished from it. While Atheism says, "No  
Proteus-like. God," Pantheism says, "All is God," or "God is All."  
"The universe is God" or, "God is the universe."  
Pantheism is Proteus-like in its forms, and no definition  
could probably be given of it that would satisfy its  
Materialistic Pantheism. teachers. There is (*a.*) a Materialistic Pantheism,  
which ascribes to the Universal Being the attributes  
Idealistic Pantheism. of matter only. There is (*b.*) an Idealistic Pan-  
theism, which ascribes to the Universal Being the  
The two combined. attributes of spirit only. And there is (*c.*) a Pantheism,  
which, to a certain extent at least, ascribes to the  
Universal Being the attributes of both mind and  
Indefinable shades. matter, thought and extension. And (*d.*) there are  
shades of Pantheism, both poetical and practical,  
which can scarcely be placed in any of these classes.  
But there is a negation common to them all—and in  
Personality denied in all. this negation we find their essence—the negation of  
personality with conscious will and intelligence. The  
God of the Pantheist is not a God that knows Him-  
self, that thinks, that wills, that loves. We cannot  
speak of this God as *Him*—but can only say *It* and  
what this *It* is, no one can tell us. So that while  
Atheism and Pantheism seem to be opposites, the latter  
denies as effectually as the former all that belongs to  
the very essence of the idea of God. Neither of them  
leaves to us an object of trust, or love, or worship.

AGNOSTI- Agnosticism is more modest than Atheism. Trans-  
CISM. lated into unscientific English, it means "Ignorance."

Agnostics are the "Know-nothings" of religion. They do not say, There is no God. They only say, We do not know that there is a God. And they add to this the dogma, If there is a God, He is unknowable. Agnosticism, with its seeming humility, thus practically reduces itself to Atheism; for, although it does not deny God, it places Him, if He exists at all, beyond the sphere of knowledge, or faith, or trust, or love, or worship. The Agnostic is, to all practical intents, as much "without God," as the Atheist.

The Know-nothings of religion.

Practically "no God."

Of Agnosticism it is enough to say—

1. That the intellect of man cannot rest in it. "An impulse inherent in primeval man," says Dr. Tyndall, "turned his thoughts and questionings betimes towards the sources of natural phenomena. The same impulse, inherited and intensified, is the spur of scientific action to-day." And of more than *scientific* action. It impels to "questionings" beyond the domain of science. "In vain," says another discourses on science, "does science reveal to man the physical structure of the universe and the order of all its phenomena. *Excelsior!* He will strive onward and upward, in his innate instinctive conviction that things have not within themselves their *raison d'être*, their foundation and origin; he is gradually led to subordinate them to a primary cause, an unique and universal God."

Intellectually impossible.

In his "Belfast Address," p. 1.

Dr. Wüerst, an eminent chemist, President of the French Association, 1874.

Let men traverse matter to the outer circumference of the universe, and to the earliest imaginable period of its existence, they will ask, Whence? Is this Kosmos self-existent? If not, is it self-originated? If not self-originated, by What or by Whom?

Men will ask—By what or by whom?

The idea of God once presented to the mind, the mind will ask whether the idea is a dream or a reality. And it will not allow the way to be barred by such words as "unknowable" and "unthinkable." It

A dream or a reality?

soon becomes conscious, or rather it begins the quest with the consciousness, that God, if He is, is incomprehensible. But then all infinitude is incomprehensible—and yet, as we have seen, the mind is “shut up” to faith in infinite space and time.

2. If it were possible for the mind to rest in a blank Agnosticism, it would be morally wrong to do so. In the most ordinary conscience there is at least enough to suggest the idea of a Moral Ruler, to whom we are responsible; and in our sense of dependence there is enough to suggest the idea that the good we enjoy comes from some unseen Benefactor. Now, we are morally bound to follow up these suggestions, and prove either that they are misleading fancies, or that the Ruler and Benefactor they point to does really exist, and is none other than God over all. There is “a duty laid upon men by the probability, or even the imagination of a God,” to seek after Him if haply they may find Him, or, on the contrary, if haply they may find that He is not. Neither the intellect nor the heart nor the conscience of man can rest in Agnosticism.

Agnosticism  
morally  
wrong.

Duty of  
quest arising  
out of the  
idea of a  
God.

See Dr.  
Chalmers's  
“Natural  
Theology,”  
vol. i. 56-99.

SECULAR-  
ISM.

The alleged  
true  
practical  
wisdom.

Secularism is nearly allied to Agnosticism. It does not necessarily imply Atheism, nor does it even say that God and an unseen world and a future state cannot be known. But it says that all these are, in fact, so little known that the path of wisdom is to concentrate our attention on the life that now is. “Putting the two worlds into two scales of value, the Secularist finds (or thinks he finds) that the one weighs much, the other either nothing or nothing that can be appreciated.” He deprecates what he calls “the old policy of sacrificing the certain welfare of humanity on earth, to the merely possible and altogether un-

known requirements of a life beyond the grave." Secularism thus assumes that God and a future life *are* unknown, and further, that faith in and care about these is inimical to "the welfare of humanity on earth"—both of which propositions the believer, of course, denies.

Untrue assumptions.

Materialism, in its more restricted sense, is the theory which denies the existence of spirit as a substance, or entity, distinct from matter, and which maintains that what is called the soul is but the result of a particular organization of matter; only, some would add, there may be in matter forces and properties which have not yet been discovered, and for which, consequently, we have no names. This theory, which is often spoken of as a theory in philosophy rather than in religion, carries us far beyond the mere question of the human mind—the question whether our mental capacities, our thoughts, and even our moral intuitions are traceable to the constituent elements and the organization of the brain. Excluding the soul from man, it excludes God from the universe. Definitions may be given of it as various and uncertain as the definitions of Pantheism. But they have this in common, that they leave no room for God. We need no Supreme Intelligent Will to explain the beginnings of the universe, or any of the changes which the universe has undergone, or any of those innumerable adaptations in which the popular mind sees God. In matter and force we have the key to the mystery.

MATERIALISM.

Restricted sense of the term.

A quasi-philosophical theory.

Excluding spirit, it excludes God.

APPENDIX D.

Materialism, in its wider meaning, is thus really the most positively atheistic form of unbelief. In the words of Sir Edmund Beckett, it "simply means the doctrine that the laws of nature, or matter, and

In its wider meaning Atheistic. "Origin of the Laws of Nature," p. 7.



The only possible alternatives.

its properties are self-existent, without any external prime cause or agent ; which, of course, is the exact contrary to the Theistic doctrine that they are all due to a cause or agent which is not material or physical, and is therefore external to matter, or supernatural. Nor is any other alternative conceivable, or propounded by any one, so far as I know. . . . And if only these two alternatives are possible, it is evident that every denial of the one is an affirmation of the other, and that no one can rationally say that he denies a Creator but does not profess to know what theory to substitute, and that he is not bound to find one. He has found one, because there are and can be only those two."

Our answer in the evidence that there is a God.

Our only answer to the doctrine of Materialism will be found in the general argument by which it will be shown, that in GOD we have the only true and sufficient solution of the existence and character of the visible universe, of which man himself is the noblest and most mysterious part.

POSITIVISM.

Its fundamental principles—phenomena and their relations alone knowable.

Positivism, in its modern form and under that name, is the conception of Auguste Comte, who died in 1857. Its fundamental principles are (1.) that all our knowledge is confined to physical phenomena ; (2.) that all we can know of such phenomena is that they are, and the relations in which we stand to each, which relations are all included under the head of sequence and resemblance. "The senses are the sources of all true thinking, and we can know nothing except the phenomena which they apprehend, and the relations of sequence and resemblance in which these phenomena stand to each other. Mental phenomena can all be resolved into material phenomena, and there is no such thing discoverable as either efficient

or final causation, as either an origin or purpose in the world, as, consequently, either a creative or providential intelligence."

Causation excluded from knowledge.

This, it will be seen, is fundamentally a philosophical and scientific theory, and both philosophers and men of science have written to show that as such it is essentially defective. We have to do with its bearing on religion, only remarking that mere phenomenalism, if logically consistent, denies matter as well as spirit. Positivism in relation to religion is what may be called a systematized Agnosticism. It condemns both Theism and Atheism, both the affirmation and the denial of the existence of God. "The mind should absolutely refuse to believe or disbelieve on such a subject," because, on the principles of Positivism, it has nothing to do with causes. The result, however, practically, is Atheism. God and religion are as entirely excluded as if they were argumentatively excluded.

A scientific theory.  
APPENDIX E.

Phenomenalism denies matter as well as spirit.

Logically and practically Atheism.

Comte saw this issue clearly, and maintained it till a comparatively late period of his life. "Religiosity," as he called it, he considered "a mere weakness, and avowal of want of power." In the later part of his life, however, he felt and recognized that men must have a religion. And he invented one for them. He set up a great idol which he called "Humanity"—not human nature, nor the human race, but some mysterious ideal organism, or Supreme Being, into which those who have been dead seven years, if found worthy of "subjective immortality," may be incorporated by the vote of the Positivist community! Of the follies of the elaborate ritual which has been founded on Auguste Comte's invention, and in which we have Polytheism, all but the name, we say nothing. The point of observation for us is this—that in this boastful

Comte compelled to invent a new religion.

system, popular with a certain class of literary men, we have only another phase of that Atheism which is as variable as the chameleon's hues, but whose identity is discoverable under very dissimilar names.

Conclusion. It will now be seen that if it only be made evident that there is a God, that He is knowable and known—not by “demonstration,” a mode of proof entirely inapplicable to the subject, but by such processes of thought and argument as really shut us up to this conclusion—these various forms of unbelief do, *ipso facto*, lose all validity and force.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### MAN'S RELIGIOUS NATURE AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF RÉLIGION.

FORMIDABLE as is the array of words and forms in which modern unbelief confronts us, they are, we have shown, but embodiments of one idea—There is no God ; or, if there is, we cannot know that there is, and therefore we cannot worship Him ; life, opinion, and practice must be as if He were not. A full presentment of the grounds on which, irrespective of revelation, we hold ourselves shut up to faith in God, the Maker and Ruler of all, would require a much larger volume than this. All we can hope to do is to indicate some of them, those especially which appeal to the common understanding and heart.

The central idea of the various forms of unbelief.

At the very outset we find ourselves in the presence of two facts—the one subjective and the other ob-

TWO FACTS.

jective ; or, in plainer language, the one inner, a fact of consciousness ; the other outer, a fact of observation.

#### I.

Of the latter, first—*the general, if not universal, prevalence of religious beliefs or observances*, beliefs or observances having reference to unseen beings or an

FIRST—  
THE  
GENERAL  
PREVA-  
LENCE OF

RELIGIOUS  
BELIEFS.

Plutarch  
quoted.

"*Tusculan  
Questions,*"  
p. 298  
(*Bohn's  
Edition*).

unseen state of existence. This fact is acknowledged by all classes of believers and unbelievers, and has been remarked by observers in all ages. "We may travel the world," said Plutarch, "and find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without wealth, without coin, without schools and theatres; but a city without a temple, without worship, without prayers, no one ever saw." "This may further be brought as an irrefragable argument for us to believe that there are gods," says Cicero, "that there never was any nation so barbarous, nor any people in the world so savage, as to be without some notion of gods: many have wrong notions of the gods, for that is the nature or ordinary consequence of bad customs, yet all allow that there is a certain divine nature or energy. Nor does this proceed from the conversation of men or the agreement of philosophers; it is not an opinion established by institutions or by laws; but no doubt in every case the consent of all nations is to be looked on as a law of nature."

Alleged ex-  
ceptions—  
their bearing  
on the argu-  
ment.

If there are exceptions to the alleged universal prevalence of religious beliefs, or beliefs in the unseen, they are to be found only in a condition of barbarism so degraded that almost every attribute of manhood has been lost. The tribes which are supposed—for the fact is doubtful—to be without any apprehension of aught beyond the visible and natural, are as low intellectually and rationally as they are religiously. You can see in them scarcely any trace of intellect or reason,—what little there is being only sufficient to discover and dig up roots that shall save animal life from extinction. And we may fairly pass them by, as not entitled to consideration as exceptions to the alleged universal prevalence of religion, or religious ideas,

among mankind. "If the religious feelings are susceptible of decay," says Dr. Fisher, of Yale College, "the same is true of the moral feelings, the sense of ethical justice and ethical truth. If the feebleness and corruption of conscience does not militate against the doctrine of a native and universal principle of rectitude, the same is true of a similar low state of religious conviction. In both cases the seeming exception establishes the rule."

"The  
Super-  
natural  
Origin of  
Christi-  
anity,"  
p. 566.

It is sometimes alleged that two of the greatest, at least the most influential, of the world's teachers, Confucius and Gautama, or Sakya-Mouni, were Atheists, or at least Agnostics, and that the systems which they originated excluded all recognition of a God. If this were true, it would not affect our argument, any more than the existence of Agnostics in our own times affects it,—for it would still be true (1.) that they found the idea existent and prevalent; and (2.) that their influence, great as it was, failed to extinguish or even to repress the idea. But the general impression respecting these ancients, especially the former, is incorrect. Dr. Legge maintains that five thousand years ago, the Chinese were Monotheists, and that in the time of Confucius (B.C. 551 to B.C. 478—a period corresponding with that of the Babylonish exile), their Monotheism was in danger of being corrupted by a nature-worship on the one hand, and by a system of superstitious divination on the other. He holds it altogether wrong to say that Confucius was a sceptic, and that Confucianism is no religion. On the contrary, Confucius accepted and helped to preserve the ancient religion of his country. What he claimed for himself was to be a "transmitter, and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients."

Confucius  
and  
Gautama.

The ancient  
Chinese  
Monotheists.

"The  
Religions of  
China,"  
p. 16.

Confucius  
accepted  
Monotheism  
as he found  
it.

"The Re-  
ligions of  
China," p. 4.

APPENDIX F. As to the founder of Buddhism, whatever may be the truth respecting his relation to Theism, if it be certain that, recoiling from the superstitions and inhuman distinctions of Brahmanism, he said nothing of God in his teaching, the argument deduced from the general prevalence of religion becomes only the stronger. For despite his Atheism, if he was an Atheist, and despite the absence of any avowed recognition of God in the ethics and the practices which he inculcated, Buddhism speedily became a religion with "gods many." The Buddhism of to-day, with whatever consistency or inconsistency with some of its principles, is a huge system of idolatry, proving that no system without god or gods could long resist the yearning of the heart for an object of worship.

Buddhism  
an idolatry.

## II.

SECOND  
FACT—THE  
RELIGIOUS-  
NESS OF  
OUR  
NATURE.

Maximus  
Tyrius.

The inner fact, the fact of consciousness, to which we refer is—*the existence of a religious faculty or susceptibility in our nature.* We need not entangle ourselves in any controversy respecting innate ideas. We need not maintain that the mind is born with ideas, or furnished by nature with a set of abstract principles or general truths. But it cannot be denied that the mind is born with capacities and susceptibilities. And our position is that "Religiousness" is one of these—that the religious faculty or susceptibility is innate and essential to us, in the sense in which reason or any other faculty is. An ancient writer, of the age of Antoninus, speaks of Atheists as being "as monstrous as a lion without courage, an ox without horns, or a bird without wings." Philo spoke of the invocation of God, with hope towards Him, as the only genuine

property of man, preferring this to the common definition that man is a reasonable creature. Lord Herbert, a prominent Deist of the last century, says, "That, upon accurate search, religion and faith appear the only ultimate differences of man, whereof neither divine perfection is capable, nor brutal imperfection;" reason, according to him, descending low among the inferior creatures, but religion and faith being the peculiar property of man. These writers, to use the words of John Howe, "accounted it a less absurdity to admit such a thing as a rational beast than an irreligious man."

*Works, vol. iii. p. 32.*

Professor Huxley speaks of the religious sentiments as "the noblest and most human of man's emotions." Professor Tyndall recognizes "an immovable basis of religious sentiment in the nature of man." And an American unbeliever says, "The religion of the heart can never perish, because it is a human instinct."

*"Lay Sermons," p. 1.*

*Higginson, "Bib. Sacra," 1874, p. 641.*

We have thus a singularly varied and general consent to our assertion that religiousness is an essential faculty or property of our nature,—and that, in fact, it is, much more than reason, the true differentia between man and beast.

### III.

What, now, is *the true connection between these two facts—the inner and the outer?*

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO FACTS.

That they are co-related, the one being the counterpart of the other, cannot be questioned. It may be argued that the existence of religiousness in our nature is an inference from the prevalence of religion in all ages and among all peoples. And this is true—to this extent at least, that the universal prevalence of religion proves the fact that our nature is religious.

"Religiousness" proved by general prevalence of religion.



“Religions” would have vanished without a root in “religiousness.”

The one fact cannot be accounted for or explained without admitting the other. How comes it to pass that peoples in the highest state of civilization and in the lowest condition of barbarism, have this in common—that they believe in, or have impressions of, unseen beings and an unseen world? In many cases, these beliefs or impressions may be, or certainly are, most superstitious, practically absurd, and expressed in cruel and immoral rites. But could they have thus prevailed so widely and variously if they had no root in our nature? We do not argue that man’s first ideas of God sprang out of his own soul. They may have been communicated by God Himself—this being at least a permissible *hypothesis*, even at this stage of our argument. But if they were, they would soon have vanished if they had not had a permanent groundwork in our nature. The hypothesis that man’s first knowledge of God was imparted by God Himself, requires us to suppose that it was a true knowledge—the knowledge of an Infinitely Great, Good, and Holy Being. But while this knowledge has been lost, and men have degenerated into innumerable forms of Polytheism, nature-worship, and even fetichism, the root idea of the invisible and supernatural has survived with a tenacity and universality which show at least that it found a response in the very heart of humanity.

“Religiousness” the power by which savage tribes are reclaimed.

While the existence of religiousness in our nature is thus proved by the prevalence of religion in the world, it is proved in other ways likewise. Those very tribes with reference to whom the doubt has arisen whether they had any conception of the supernatural, have been proved capable of religious thought and sentiment, and have actually been raised into a

religious condition. More than this, it is through this side of their nature—the religious—that they have been most easily and powerfully moved to seek general improvement and progress. All manner of instruction and example has failed to raise them, or even to awaken a desire after better things, till their hearts have been moved religiously. In these cases the Christian teacher has evidently quickened a faculty already existing, has awakened it out of a deep slumber, and restored it to self-consciousness. And this awakening has not been consequent on the awakening of the general intellect or reason, but anterior to such awakening, and apparently the cause of it.

History repeats itself. We have seen how Positivism, whose first principle is more purely atheistic than Agnosticism or Secularism, has become itself a religion. Comte began by declaring religion to be a delusion of the childhood of the race, now for ever superseded by the new and true philosophy. But he ended by supplementing positive science by an elaborate system of Religion, with a “Catechism of Positive Religion,” and a “Positivist Calendar.” This new faith demands for each day two hours of religious service. Its calendar of worthies or saints is the highway to a new Polytheism. And even the light of this age can scarcely prevent its development in that direction.

“Religiousness” proved by the development of Comtism.

The fact that some men are Agnostics or Secularists does not prove that their nature is destitute of the religious faculty. They do not deny that there *may be* a God, and a spiritual, invisible world. And it is difficult to say how far their heart of hearts accords with their theories. And this we know, that after a time their theories often fail to satisfy them.

Agnosticism no proof against our original “religiousness.”

And then they find themselves in possession of a higher reason than the reason which sees nothing but matter with laws and powers of matter, all the universe over; a higher reason, which will not content itself with a blank ignorance of what that is which lies beyond and underneath these. Circumstances break open a fountain in their nature which had been sealed or unknown; and the consciousness of Augustine repeats itself in them: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee."

See AP-  
PENDIX B,  
ON NECES-  
SARY  
TRUTHS  
AND INTUI-  
TIONS.

Taking the two facts together—the religiousness of our nature, and the universal prevalence of religious beliefs or impressions—we come to one or other of these conclusions: First, that the religious beliefs or impressions of men have been generated by his religious nature, through the observation of and reflection upon that outward nature which, our Scriptures say, declare the glory of God; or secondly, that religious ideas were originally communicated to men from without, that is, by God Himself, and have found in man's religious nature a sympathy and response which have rendered it impossible for man, even in his lowest estate, altogether to lose them and to become absolutely un-religious.

#### IV.

Having reached this point, our argument may be summed up thus:—

1. The fact of a religious element in our constitution implies and requires an objective counterpart—some *thing* or some *person*, towards which or whom this religious element shall be exercised. "Indeed,

"Religious-  
ness"  
implies an  
objective  
counterpart.

religion is, strictly, a recognized relation toward God, and dependence upon Him. Without this the term itself is deprived of significance. The alternative is unavoidable: religious worship and dependence have a correlative object, or this 'strongest element in the human soul,' this 'noblest and most human of man's emotions,' is most false and deceptive—a conclusion which would not only endanger religion, but with it also endanger all philosophy." If there be no objective counterpart to the religious element in our nature, we must suppose this part of our nature to be an abortion, a meaningless and useless power, as much so as if we had eyes, marvellously made, but no light; and ears, equally marvellously made, but no sound.

2. The proper object or objective counterpart of the religious element in our constitution is a *Person*. It is admitted by all that Monotheism—faith in one ever-living God—is the highest religious conception to which man has attained, whether it was his primitive faith, as we believe, or whether he has advanced to it from and through lower conceptions, as is held by some. Now, this highest conception, an ever-living God, is the proper object of the religiousness in our nature, the only object worthy of it and that satisfies it.

The proper counterpart of our "religiousness" is a Person.

This excludes (*a.*) all *things* as objects of religion. It excludes (*b.*) all mere ideals and abstractions, such as we have in Pantheism and in Positivism. Pantheism may be held as poetry, or as a mere speculation, by some, but practically it becomes Polytheism. The three hundred millions of gods which Hinduism confesses are the legitimate development of its Pantheism. So with Positivism. Its abstract Humanity must find expression in the persons of its calendar. The position that one ever-living God, a Person, is the proper object of our natural religiousness further

This excludes "things" and "abstractions."

It excludes  
all inferior  
persons.

excludes (*c.*) all inferior persons, such as are imagined in the innumerable idolatries of the world. These inferior persons, symbolized in images made by man's hands, or supposed to preside over different departments or forces of the universe, are signs to us that the heart cannot be satisfied with *things* that are without consciousness and will. But they fail themselves to satisfy either the highest intelligence of man or his highest aspirations. Such satisfaction is found only in one supreme and ever-living God.

### V.

COMPARA-  
TIVE  
RELIGION.

In what relation do the facts we have been studying stand to what is called "the science of Comparative Religion"? Is there such a science? And if there be, what is it? The term is pretentious, but ambiguous. The comparison of the religions of mankind is an instructive study, and may be a very fruitful one if conducted with right aims. Some engage in it with the *à priori* assumption that all religions are of human origin, and none, in any special sense, Divine. And, beginning with this assumption, they hope to extract or deduce from the comparison a science of absolute religion, which, we suppose, must consist of the elements that are common to all. The attempt cannot fail to be abortive. The truth cannot thus be attained. The only positive inference that can be drawn from the most extended comparison of religions is that on which we have already insisted—the fact that in our nature there is a religious element or faculty which no ignorance and no barbarism can utterly repress, however much they may distort its exercise.

The only  
positive  
inference.

The  
Christian  
the true  
free-thinker.

The Christian advocate is really the freest of thinkers. He is prepared to study the religions of

the world without any presupposition. Before his study is completed, he finds one religion with peculiarities and excellences which he cannot account for, except on the hypothesis that it comes from a higher source. And he is interested in finding certain things common, if not to all, yet to the chief, religions of the world, which contribute not a little to the removal of *à priori* difficulties or objections which are urged against his own faith.

Dr. Legge, comparing the Confucian, Tâoist, and Christian religions, says there are three things in which they agree, and which are very important—

"The Religions of China," p. 244-248.

1. There is *the existence of God*. Neither in our Bible nor in the books of Confucianism is any attempt made to prove the Divine existence. But in the earliest of Chinese historical documents, the Divine name may be traced in familiar use; and the Monotheism of prehistoric time in China has always striven, and not without success, to assert itself against attempts to corrupt it. In Tâoism, which is Polytheistic, the name of God is of course common. The existence of God is assumed in the three religions.

The existence of God.

2. The idea of *the possibility and the fact of Revelation* is also common to them all. Among the primitive written characters of the Chinese there was one which was the symbol of manifestation or revelation coming from above. That God should speak or make known His will to men did not seem strange to the Chinese fathers; and in the "*Shih*" we read that "God spake to King Wân," just as we read in the Old Testament that "God spake to Moses." Hundreds of Tâoist tracts also are circulated in China, each one purporting to be the teaching of this God or that, to "warn," or "to advise mankind." The

The possibility and fact of Revelation.

idea of revelation, therefore, is held in the three religions.

The Super-  
natural.

3. And so is the idea of *the Supernatural*. In the ever-changing phenomena of the universe, Confucius saw something unfathomable, and in that unfathomableness he recognized the working of a spiritual power. Many of the things regarded and related as supernatural in Polytheistic systems, like Tâoism, are the impostures or the delusions of superstition. But they are not the less witnesses to the existence of the idea of the supernatural.

These three  
common to  
Confucian-  
ism, Tâoism,  
and Chris-  
tianity.

The comparison of Christianity, Confucianism, and Tâoism, thus shows that they all allow the element of the supernatural, all assert the fact of revelation, all acknowledge the existence of God. "On each of these points," as Dr. Legge remarks, "there are great differences in the three religions when we go into detail; but the things themselves are admitted by them all."

The comparison and generalization of the world's religions might be extended with the same results. The very idea of religion, except in the case of Pantheism, which, strictly, is no religion, involves the supernatural. And in false or inferior religions, it is the natural rather than the supernatural that is denied or obscured—what we know to be natural occurrences being very commonly ascribed to supernatural agencies.

Comparative  
Religion  
shows  
Monotheism  
to have been  
primitive.

Another result of deep interest follows from the comparison of the religions of mankind—namely, that Monotheism, the belief in one God, instead of being of later growth, a development from Polytheism, is the older and earlier faith. We have seen it to be so in the history of the Chinese religions. The same may

now be affirmed confidently of the religions of Egypt. From the days of Herodotus men have been familiar with the grosser and even ludicrous aspects of Egyptian worship. But the hieroglyphics of Egypt, now rendered intelligible, reveal to us beliefs which are scarcely recognizable in the animal symbols, if symbols they were, of the times best known to history. "Texts are known," says Le Page Renouf, "wherein Rā, Osiris, Amon, and all the other gods, disappear, except as simple *names*, and the unity of God is asserted in the noblest language of Monotheistic religion. There are many very eminent scholars who, with full knowledge of all that can be said to the contrary, maintain that the Egyptian religion is essentially Monotheistic, and that the multiplicity of gods is only due to the personification of 'the attributes, characters, and offices of the supreme God.'"

The religion of Egypt.

"*The Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Egypt,*" p. 89.

"No scholar," Renouf continues, "is better entitled to be heard on this subject than the late M. Emmanuel Rougé, whose matured judgment is as follows:—'No one has called in question the fundamental meaning of the principal passages, by the help of which we are able to establish what ancient Egypt has taught concerning God, the world, and man. I said *God*, not the *gods*. The first characteristic of the religion is the unity [of God], most energetically expressed; God, One, Sole, and Only; no others with Him. He is the Only Being—living in truth—Thou art one, and millions of beings proceed from Thee;—He has made everything, and He alone has not been made. The clearest, the simplest, the most precise conception. . . . Are these noble doctrines, then, the result of centuries?' says M. de Rougé. 'Certainly not; for they were in existence more than two thousand years before the Christian era. On the other hand, Polytheism develops

Egyptian Monotheism.

Polytheism subsequent.



itself, and progresses without interruption until the time of the Ptolemies. . . . The belief in the unity of the supreme God, and in His attributes as Creator and Lawgiver of man, whom He has endowed with an immortal soul—these are the primitive notions, en-  
chased, like indestructible diamonds, in the midst of the mythological superfetations accumulated in the centuries which have passed over that ancient civilization.’”

False  
assumption  
by many  
writers.

Many writers assume that original man must have been “without God,” in fact, an Atheist; that from Atheism he advanced to Fetichism, or the worship of material objects; that from Fetichism he rose by degrees to Polytheism, the proper idea of which is that there are unseen deities, of which material objects, whether natural or the work of art, are only symbols; that from Polytheism man advanced to Pantheism and Monotheism, or to Monotheism and Pantheism. But this order of progression has no foundation in known facts. History is altogether against it. Not one instance can be found in which a tribe or race has advanced, as by “spontaneous generation,” from Atheism or from Fetichism to the worship of one living God. Professor Max Müller says, “Nature-worship, tree-worship, serpent-worship, ancestor-worship, God-worship, hero-worship, fetichism, are all parts of religion, but none of these by itself can explain the origin and growth of religion, which comprehends all these and many more elements in the various phases of its growth. . . . Let any one who thinks that all religion begins with fetichism, all worship with ancestor-worship, or that the whole of mythology everywhere can be explained in a disease of language, try his hand on this short account of the beliefs and

The  
testimony of  
history.

“*Introduc-  
tion to  
Wyatt Gill  
on the  
Mythology  
of the South  
Seas.*”

tradition of Mangaia." "While there is much that is puerile and absurd," says Mr. Gill, writing of the Mangaian religion, "in this heathen philosophy, there are evident glimmerings of primeval light. The Polynesian name for God expresses a great truth."

The  
Mangaian  
religion.

"The more we go back," says Professor Max Müller, "the more we examine the earliest germs of every religion, the purer, I believe, we shall find the germs of every religion."

"Lectures  
on the  
Science of  
Language,"  
2nd Series,  
p. 442.

"Recent facts, with reference to primitive man," says Dr. Dawson, of Montreal, "show that his religious beliefs were similar to those referred to in Scripture. The whole of the long-isolated tribes of America held to a primitive Monotheism or belief in a Great Spirit, who was not only the Creator and Ruler of the heaven and the earth, but had the control of countless inferior spirits—manitous or ministering angels. They also believed in an immortality and a judgment of all men beyond the grave. . . . No one who studies these beliefs of the American tribes can fail to recognize in them the remnants of the same primitive theology which we have in the patriarchal age of the Bible, and more or less in the religions of all ancient peoples of whom we have any historical records."

Author of  
works on  
Geology, etc.,  
in paper at  
New York  
Meeting of  
the Evan-  
gelical  
Alliance.

These historic conclusions, which have important bearings which it does not concern my present argument to develop, confirm all that has been said of the existence of a religious element in our nature, the logical necessity that this religious element should have an objective counterpart, and that this counterpart is found only in a Person. They further support us in saying that the only Person worthy to be the counterpart of our religiousness is the living and true God. He was the first object of man's worship.

APPENDIX H.

Account for it as we may, man, in the earliest state in which he is known to us in history, possessed the highest conception of God. And to this conception he did not work his way upward from meaner ideas. A fact which can be explained only on one of the two hypotheses already indicated: either that the intuitions of his childhood apprehended the truth at once on his first consciousness of himself and his first observation of the material world around him; or that, in his very childhood, the truth was communicated to him by Him whom we believe to be his Father and his God.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### GOD MANIFESTED IN THE MATERIAL WORLD AND IN OUR MORAL NATURE.

THE reader will find in the Appendix a classification APPENDIX I. of the various arguments on which dependence is commonly placed either in proof of the existence of a Personal, Intelligent God, or in corroboration of the more direct proofs. In the present chapter we confine ourselves to certain evidences that are furnished, first by the outer world, and secondly by our moral nature.

#### I.

#### THE OUTER WORLD.

I. The Being of one almighty God alone accounts for THE ORIGINATION OF THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE. *the existence or origination of the material universe.* As to the possible eternity, and therefore self-existence, of matter, we need not speculate, nor as to whether the idea is conceivable or not. But that something existed from eternity is certain, something eternal, uncaused, independent—in short, self-existent. And this self-existent something must have been the cause of all other existences. The argument may be put thus—

(I.) Since “something” exists *now*, something must John Howe's

argument,  
summarized  
by Henry  
Rogers.  
See "Life of  
Howe,"  
p. 372.

always have existed, unless we admit that, at some period or other, "something" sprang out of "nothing."

(2.) Something or other must have existed from eternity *of itself*, uncaused, unless we are prepared to embrace the absurdity above mentioned.

(3.) This something which has eternally existed of itself, exists necessarily; in other words, it is of such a nature that it could not but exist.

(4.) Whatever partakes not of this necessary, self-existent nature, must obviously owe its existence to that which does; unless we come back to the former absurdity, that something may spring, spontaneously, or uncaused, out of nothing.

The cause—  
matter or  
spirit?

The only question that remains, then, is what was this mysterious something—this eternal, uncaused existence, the cause of all other existences? Matter, blind and unintelligent? or spirit, with the intellectual and moral attributes of spirit? Most persons would answer this question promptly, and say,—Whether the eternity of matter, as such, be conceivable or not, the universe, as it is, cannot be the product of matter—in other words, cannot have been its own author. Matter, as such, has no properties that can account for the production of such a universe as that with which we are conversant.

If a begin-  
ning—super-  
natural.

We may approach and develop the argument in another way. Either the material universe existed from eternity—that is, it is self-existent; or it was brought into existence by a Great Cause adequate to its production. It will not be maintained—it cannot for a moment—that the universe sprang, spontaneously, or uncaused, out of nothing. Mr. John Stuart Mill says what is self-evident, "If the universe had a beginning, its beginning, by the very conditions of the

case, was supernatural ; the laws of nature cannot account for their own origin." Now, the present state of the universe at least, or the universe as it now is, had a beginning ! Geology traces back the history of our own globe through innumerable changes which, it is believed, required almost countless ages for their effectuation or development. The first condition in which the matter existed which has become through these ages what we see it now, can only be conjectured or imagined. But the opinion is entertained by many that it was *atomic*. And certainly no analysis could resolve it into a simpler form of existence.

Original  
condition of  
matter.

Having reached this primitive condition of material existence, can we, then, dispense with the idea of a God, the Creator of the atoms and their Moulder into material worlds and all other material things—to say nothing of beings, or persons, that have other than material attributes ? Two suppositions may be made : —(1.) The atoms, inconceivably small and probably gaseous, were lifeless, and unendowed with any properties other than those with which we are familiar as pertaining to material atoms now. In this case, it can scarcely be contended that such atoms should develop themselves or be developed into the Kosmos which our eyes now behold, without being operated upon by an external agency endowed both with power and intelligence. (2.) Let another supposition be made. That atoms possess inherently all the qualities necessary for their self-development into a Kosmos of innumerable worlds. Now, these qualities are not mere blind forces ; they are a power so great that our minds can imagine no limits to it, and with Intelligence directing this power. In this case the atoms themselves become gods. We thus substitute many creators for one !

Were the  
atoms blind ?

Were the  
atoms in-  
telligent ?

Sir Edmund  
Beckett in  
"The  
Origin of  
the Laws of  
Nature,"  
p. 24.

The atoms  
widely  
separated.

"The  
Origin of  
the Laws of  
Nature,"  
p. 27.

Did the  
atoms make  
laws for  
themselves?

Take an illustration from a competent man of science. "A very large proportion of the atoms of the universe have never been within millions and billions of miles of each other; and according to the most received theory of the growth of the universe, their original distances were much greater, for those which are now gathered into the lumps of matter called stars and planets were originally spread over enormous distances in *nebulæ*." Sir Edmund Beckett, discussing the theory that inherent properties or powers or forces in these atoms furnish a final explanation of the origin and formation of the universe, says, "Let us see, further, what follows from that theory: and first, take only a single law of nature and the most universal of them all, that is, gravity, or the tendency of every atom to approach every other with a fixed intensity at some given distance, and then increasing or decreasing as the square of the distance decreases or increases, which is called varying inversely as the square of the distance. The idea of all the atoms having spontaneously adopted this law and standard of attraction by chance, before there were any laws of nature which put an end to chance, I suppose will be universally dismissed as nonsense not worth spending another word on. The only alternative is that every atom, being self-existent, had the power to adopt what laws of motion it pleased, and that they all, by some mysterious universal suffrage, conveyed through the infinity of space, or through the immeasurable sphere of the primeval *nebulæ*, agreed on the law and intensity of gravity, and have steadily kept to their agreement ever since. If such a proposition looks absurd, it is not my fault. I defy anybody to translate the doctrine of inherent forces into any other plain and simple meaning,

though it is easy enough for clever men to translate it into other forms of unintelligible, or evasive, or rhetorical language; which is not philosophy, but mere verbal conjuring."

This is but a single illustration, but it is enough for our purpose. "If matter was self-existent, *ab eterno*, it cannot have been such matter as exists now, for we have just seen that the forces which make it so, by giving the proper motions and attractions to the different kinds of atoms, must have begun at some epoch. Consequently, on the automatic [self-acting] theory, dead atoms with no properties must at some definite time have spontaneously divided themselves into sixty-three groups, [the elementary kinds of matter], or whatever the number may be, and adopted for themselves, first the universal force of gravity, and then each group adopted all its own peculiar attractions and motions with respect to its own kind and every other besides. If this is perceived to be absurd and inconceivable, the only alternative is—a power existing from all eternity, which made all the different kinds of matter what they are, at some definite time."

Sir  
Edmund  
Beckett,  
p. 50.

2. The origination of such a universe as this, we see, can be accounted for only by the presupposition of an almighty living God; *the same presupposition is necessary to account for the ORDER which distinguishes it*—the Order which is indicated in the word Kosmos. This order pervades the globe which we call the earth, the relations of this globe to the solar system of which it is a part, the relations of all the parts of the system to one another, and, so far as we have the means of knowledge or can conjecture, to worlds and systems beyond. Throughout our own globe there

THE ORDER  
OF THE  
MATERIAL  
UNIVERSE.

The solar  
system.



is a reign of law—no caprice or variableness in the relations of things to each other, but everything performing its part after a uniform and regulated manner. A most beneficent provision this, whence-soever it comes. “It is the regularity of the laws of nature which leads us to put confidence in them, and enables us to make profitable use of them. If, instead of returning in a regular manner, the seasons were to follow each other capriciously, so that spring might be immediately succeeded by winter, and summer preceded by autumn, then the labour of the husbandman would be at an end, and the human race would perish from the earth.” The reign of law is indicated in such words as these: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease;” and in the expression repeated three times in the first of Genesis, “everything after its kind.” It is assumed in such popular speech as this: “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”

Regularity  
of natural  
law.

*McCosh's*  
*“Method of*  
*the Divine*  
*Government,”*  
p. 143.

*Gen. viii. 22.*

*ch. i. 21, 24,*  
*25.*

*Matt. vii.*  
*16.*

*Hodge's*  
*“Systematic*  
*Theology,”*  
*i. 224.*

Laws neces-  
sary for the  
stability of  
the solar  
system.

The order which pervades the earth itself pervades equally its external relations. “Our globe is one of eight primary planets which revolve round the sun. The most distant of these planets is some three thousand millions of miles from the central luminary. These planets all move in the same direction, in nearly circular orbits, in nearly the same plane, and with so equable a motion that each performs its revolution in the proper time. The stability of the system depends on these circumstances. To secure these results matter must attract matter according to its quantity and the square of its distance. The central body must be of such a mass as to hold the planets in their course. The centripetal and centri-

fugal forces must be exactly balanced, to prevent the planets flying off into space or falling into the sun. Each planet must have been projected with a precise definite velocity, to secure its orbit being nearly a circle rather than any other curve. The central body alone, in accordance with the evident plan, is luminous and heat-producing. All the others are opaque and cold. These are the facts which Sir Isaac Newton says he is 'forced to ascribe to the counsel and contrivance of a Voluntary Agent.' Since the time of Newton, indeed, it has been the commonly received theory that the planets were at one time fluid, highly heated, and luminous; and that they became opaque in the process of cooling. But this only puts the argument one step back. The fact is that a most wonderful and beneficent result has been accomplished. The question, *How?* is of minor importance. It is the result which indicates mind, and this indication of mind implies a 'Voluntary Agent.'"

Supposed  
original state  
of the  
planets.

More than this—Our system is only one of many. Astronomers assert their knowledge of a hundred millions of suns, some of which are incalculably larger than ours. Besides these systems, in which planets are assumed to revolve around suns, there are others in which suns revolve around suns, at distances proportioned to their magnitude. Then more distant in space float the unresolved nebulæ. Whether these nebulæ are vast continents of stars too distant to be distinguishable, or cosmical matter in a formative state, is still an open question with astronomers. "Throughout this vast universe order reigns. In the midst of endless variety there is unity. The same laws of gravitation, of light and of heat, everywhere prevail. Confusion and disorder are the uniform result of chance or blindly operating forces. Order is

Other  
systems  
besides the  
solar.

*Hodge, i.*  
225.

APPENDIX K.

the sure indication of mind. What mind—what wisdom—what beneficence—does this all but infinite universe display !”

THE DESIGN  
ARGUMENT.

3. Intimately connected with the evidence which the existence of law and order throughout the universe furnishes in proof of the being of God, is the common and popular argument from design. This is what is technically called the teleological argument, that which asserts the existence of *ends* to be accomplished and of *means adapted* to the accomplishment of these ends. Its force and true value do not depend on our metaphysical apprehension of the reasoning which it involves, but on what we may call either our common sense or our intuitive perception of its truth. It is as true in the popular form in which Socrates and Cicero have bequeathed it to us, as in the most logical form into which it may be cast.

Used by  
Socrates.

In discussion with Aristodemus, Socrates appealed to the striking evidences of consummate wisdom displayed in the eye, the eyelid, the eyebrow, the ear, the teeth, the mouth of man, and asked whether a disposition of parts like this should be regarded as a work of chance or of wisdom and contrivance. Cicero, after describing the “multitude of vast fires” in the heavens above us, and their relation to the earth, says, “Is it possible for any man to behold these things and yet imagine that certain solid and individual bodies move by their natural force and gravitation, and that a world so beautifully adorned was made by their fortuitous concourse? He who believes this may as well believe that if a great quantity of the one and twenty letters, composed either of gold or any other matter, were thrown upon the ground, they would fall into such order as legibly to form the

By Cicero,  
“*De Natura  
Deorum*,”  
ii. 27.

annals of Ennius. I doubt whether fortune could make a single verse of them. How, therefore, can these people assert that the world was made by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, which have no colour, no quality, which the Greeks call *ποιότης*, no sense? But if a concourse of atoms made a world, why not a porch, a temple, a house, a city, which are works of less labour and difficulty?"

To Cicero's illustration a German author adds: "It is perhaps more difficult to assume, that by the blind combination of chemical and physical elements and forces, any one even of the organs of the body should be formed—the eye for example—much less the harmonious union of organs which make up the body, than that a book should be formed by chance by throwing types about."

Tredelenburg, quoted by Hodge, i. 226.

Philo, a Jew, but more a philosopher than a Jew, presents the argument in a simple syllogistic form. "No work of art is self-made; The world is the most perfect work of art; Therefore the world was made by a good and most perfect Author. Thus," he adds, "we have the knowledge of the existence of God."

Philo.

Even Kant, although denying its conclusiveness, says that the teleological argument should always be treated with respect. It is, he says, the oldest, the clearest, and the best adapted to the human mind.

Acknowledged by Kant.

The books that have been written in modern times in support and illustration of this argument can scarcely be numbered. And the student must be referred to these for details.

APPENDIX L.

The argument is often put in the form of a syllogism: Design supposes a designer; The world everywhere exhibits marks of design; Therefore the world owes its existence to a Designer, an Intelligent

Syllogism.

Its defect. Author. The objection to this syllogism is that the word "design" involves a begging of the question. For design implies the choice or selection of an end to be attained, and the choice or selection of means for its attainment; whereas the question is whether the adaptations which are admitted are the result of such choice or selection. But the argument is independent of any form which can be charged with ambiguity or fallacy. The facts to be explained are these: Ends are actually accomplished,—*seeing*, for example; and they are accomplished by means perfectly adapted to their accomplishment,—the *eye*, for example. And the question to be determined is, whether between the end and the means there is any but a casual connection, or whether the connection is one of design and intention.

Any connection between end and means?

The eye, matter, and light, necessary for sight.

Whence their conjunction?

When this question is addressed to what I have called our common sense, the answer is immediate. It seems little short of mockery to ask us whether the eye was *made for* seeing, and the ear *made for* hearing? The eye sees; the ear hears. That the eye might see, it must be constructed more skilfully than any telescope, there must be an external world to be seen, and there must be light (what light is does not matter at present) by which to see it. These three must co-exist in order to vision. But they are independent of each other. The eye makes neither the matter that is to be seen, nor light wherewith to see; and neither matter nor light makes the eye. And yet the three independent existences combine to one great result *as if* designed to effect it, and could not effect it more skilfully or perfectly *if* designed to effect it. Who then can doubt that they *were* designed to effect it?

This putting of the question will hold equally good even if we admitted, with evolutionists, that the eye, the ear, the hand, and every other human organ, have been developed into what they are by slow degrees and many changes, through periods in the past indefinitely long. If this be true, we have these alternatives: First, it means that some power or force was for ages secretly building up an eye, or any other organ, without contemplating any kind of use for it when completed. But when completed, it is found that other things, without which it would be useless, are completed likewise. And a conjunction is now effected, unanticipated not only by themselves, but by the force which has produced them—a conjunction most singularly wise and beneficent. It is to the operation of this blind force, acting persistently and progressively through a millenium of milleniums, that we owe the eye, the world, and light! This is one alternative. "Blind force" may be translated into "chance." And it is to chance, not acting suddenly and once for all, as chance is supposed to do, but perseveringly through ages, as if inspired with the noblest purpose, that we owe our vision and all the good of which our vision is the minister!

The other alternative is this: Admitting the evolution theory, which is still but an hypothesis,—admitting that the eye, say the human eye, is not the work of an immediate creation, but has become what it is by a process of gradual and prolonged development, the result was contemplated from the beginning by an Intelligent Power, and by that Intelligent Power the process has been carried forward from age to age to its consummation. In the origination of the process and in its persistent progress, till the eye opens on a glorious world prepared for it, flooded

The  
evolution  
hypothesis  
of the eye.

Suggested  
by Sir  
Edmund  
Beckett,  
p. 95.

First  
alternative.

Second  
alternative.

Evidence of  
design only  
the more  
striking.

with light prepared for it likewise, we have evidence of a foresight which indicates the highest, even a Divine, Intelligence. The theory of the evolution of the eye does not, then, destroy the evidence of design of which that organ is an illustrious proof and example. In some respects it enhances it, especially by adding to it the conception of an age-long prevision both of the end to be accomplished, and of the means by which it was to be accomplished.

*Hodge's*  
*"Theology,"*  
i. 192.

Every  
effect must  
have a cause.

The appeal to common sense in this case is really an appeal to a deep-seated intuitive principle in the soul, namely, this, that every effect must have a cause. "There are certain truths which the mind perceives to be true immediately without proof or testimony. Such are the axioms of geometry; and such is the principle that every effect must have a cause. This conviction is not founded on experience, because experience is of necessity limited. And the conviction is not merely that every effect which we or other men have observed has had a cause; but that in the nature of things there can be no effect without an adequate cause. This conviction is said to be an innate truth, not because the child is born with it so that it is included in its infant consciousness, nor because the abstract principle is laid up in the mind, but simply because such is the nature of the mind that it cannot but see these things to be true."

The aphorism, "every effect has a cause," understood in one sense, is a mere truism, an identical proposition—"every thing caused has a cause." But what is the proper meaning of an effect? "If we analyze it, it will always be found to imply a change,

or something new. An unformed mass could not of itself have suggested the idea of a cause, and that there must be something uncaused. But let this mass be seen springing into being, or let it be seen assuming a new form, and the idea of a cause is at once suggested. When we say that every effect must have a cause, we do not say that every existing thing has an antecedent, invariable or necessary. There is something new implied in the very conception of effect—it is something effected, something which did not exist before or which is put in a new state. Whenever such phenomenon is brought under cognizance, the mind rises intuitively into the belief in a cause.”

*McCosh's  
"Method of  
the Divine  
Government,"  
p. 525.*

True mean-  
ing of the  
aphorism.

Now, adaptations of nature come very obviously under the designation of “effects” properly so called—things effected. We feel or perceive them irresistibly to be such, and, instinctively, we look for a cause. And no adequate cause can be imagined but the action of a Mighty and Intelligent Being.

And having reached this point, both the intellect and the heart are at rest. “The intuition which demands a cause for every effect is satisfied when it reaches a Being with power adequate to the whole effect; and if, on the contemplation of the nature of that Being, we find no marks of His being an effect, the intuition makes no call on us to go further. It feels restless, indeed, till it attains this point; as long as it is mounting the chain, it is compelled to go on; it feels that it cannot stop, and yet is confidently looking for a termination; but when it reaches the All-Powerful Being, it stays in comfort, as feeling that it has reached an immovable resting-place.”

*McCosh on  
the Intui-  
tions of the  
Mind,  
p. 434.*

The idea that the design which pervades nature is immanent in nature, inherent, or indwelling, in it, in fact

Design not  
immanent  
in nature.



a property of nature, should deceive no one. Unconscious intelligence and an unconscious will, are not only meaningless terms, but self-contradictory. “The intelligence indicated by design is not in the thing designed. It must be in an external agent. The mind indicated in a book is not in the book itself, but in the author and printer. The intelligence revealed by a calculating machine, or any similar work of art, is not in the material employed but in the inventor and artist. Neither is the mind indicated in the structure and bodies of animals, in them, but in Him who made them. And in like manner, the mind indicated in the world at large must be in an extra-mundane Being.

*Hodge, i.*  
216, 217.

Design not  
in the  
machine, but  
in its maker.

The argu-  
ment not  
affected by  
the differ-  
ence be-  
tween the  
works of  
God and the  
works of  
man.

“There is indeed this obvious difference between the works of God and the works of man. In every product of human art dead materials are fashioned and united to accomplish a given end; but the organized works of nature are animated by a living principle. They are fashioned, as it were, from within outward. In other words, they grow; they are not constructed. In this respect there is a great difference between a house and a tree or the human body. But nevertheless, in both cases the mind is external to the thing produced; because the end, the thought, is prior to the product. As the thought or idea of a machine must be in the mind of the machinist before a machine is made; so the idea or thought of the eye must be anterior to its formation.”

## II.

### OUR MORAL NATURE.

See on the  
“Anthropo-  
logical”  
argument,  
in the  
APPENDIX I.

The moral argument for the being of a God who rules over us, and to whom we are responsible, is that which, probably more than any other, determines the

question practically for most men. While the intellect discerns an Intelligence which is supernatural, the conscience discerns a moral law and Lawgiver that are supernatural. "The conscience is the great root of Theism," says a profound thinker. "It is something supernatural within the natural, and there is no separating these two spheres if you are true to psychology. The webs of the natural and supernatural are so interwoven together in the soul, that they cannot be untied." This is no mere modern doctrine. It was as familiar and obvious to Cicero as to us. "There is indeed a true law, a right reason, in harmony with nature, diffused among all, constant, everlasting; which calls to duty by commanding, and deters from deceit by forbidding. . . . There will not be one law at Rome, another at Athens,—one now, another hereafter; but one law both everlasting and immortal will curb all nations and at every time; and there will be but one common Master, as it were, and ruler of all things, God. He is the author, the propounder, the bearer of this law: he who will not obey it, himself will flee from himself and shall do despite to the nature of man."

Dr. Duncan.  
See "Life,"  
p. 65.

Cicero on  
moral law  
and con-  
science.

God the  
author of  
moral law.

The argument from conscience to God involves these two things: First, that there is an inherent and essential distinction between right and wrong; and, secondly, that conscience itself is a distinctive moral power in our nature, not a growth or product of education or of circumstances. These two doctrines are not separable; they stand or fall together.

What the  
argument  
from con-  
science  
involves.

"Moralists have always been divided into two schools: The school which has regarded moral distinctions as mysterious and immutable, bearing their own authority on their face—an authority which cannot be disregarded without enduring the special and

Two schools  
of moralists.

R. Hutton  
in Cont.  
Rev., July,  
1871, p. 464.

unique suffering of remorse ; and the school which has regarded the distinction between morality and immorality as identical with the distinction between the balance of happiness or unhappiness to be ultimately produced by any given action,—this last school being itself divided as to whether the happiness of other persons than the agent is to count of equal weight with his own, or not to count at all except as it affects his own.”

The theory of the first of these schools is called the Intuitional ; that of the second, Utilitarian.

The  
Utilitarian  
theory.

The second involves the denial of conscience as an original faculty, and ascribes it to development in some form or by some means, by education or by inherited impressions, or by some other process. But it fails to account for the moral phenomena of our experience and of life. This is confessed by an eminent apostle of evolution, who, after arguing that mere natural evolution is not sufficient to account for the *mental faculties* of man, says, “Exactly the same difficulty arises when we attempt to account for the development of the *moral sense*, or conscience, in savage man ; for although the *practice* of benevolence, honesty, or truth, may have been useful to the tribe possessing these virtues, that does not at all account for the peculiar *sanctity* attached to actions which each tribe considers right and moral, as contrasted with the very different feelings with which they regard what is merely useful. . . . The intuitional theory explains this by the supposition that there is a feeling—a sense of right and wrong—in our nature antecedent to and independent of experiences of utility.”

Wallace in  
“Contribu-  
tions to the  
Theory of  
Natural  
Selection,”  
1st Edit.  
p. 352-354.

Natural  
evolution  
does not  
account for  
moral intu-  
itions.

Admit this, which is both the popular and the truly philosophical theory, and we have no difficulty in rising from this part of nature to nature’s God. If we

are under a moral law we are under a Moral Lawgiver. "DUTY! Thou great, thou exalted name!" says Kant. "Wondrous thought! that workest . . . merely by holding up thy naked law in the soul, and so extorting for thyself always reverence, if not obedience—whence thy original? and where find we the root of thy august descent?" The philosopher's answer is—in God. The sense of a moral law above us, overshadowing and encompassing all moral agents, leads our thoughts, with resistless force, to a Great Moral Lawgiver, "in whom the law abides as the uncreated light of perfect essential goodness." This is in substance the argument on which Kant, and those who follow him more or less, who deny or seem to deny the validity of other arguments for the existence of a God, rely. They hold that our moral nature compels us to believe that He is, and that He is a Person.

"*Meta-  
physics of  
Ethics,*"  
Edited by  
Dr. Calder-  
wood, p. 127.

Conscience has well been called the regal power in our nature. Even when "dethroned from her place of mastery and control, she is still felt to be the superior or rather supreme faculty of our nature notwithstanding. She may have fallen from her dominion, yet still wears the badges of a fallen sovereign, having the acknowledged right of authority, though the power of enforcement has been wrested from her. She may be outraged in all her prerogatives by the lawless appetites of our nature—but not without the accompanying sense within of an outrage and wrong having been inflicted, and a reclaiming voice from thence which causes itself to be heard, and which remonstrates against it."

Conscience  
the regal  
power.  
Dr. Chal-  
mers's  
"Natural  
Theology,"  
vol. i. p. 315.

The mythology and literature of all ages show how

The  
Nemesis of  
the Greeks.

universally and how deeply the idea of conscience, and with it retribution, possesses the hearts of men. The "Nemesis" of the Greeks is "a personification of moral reverence for law, of the natural fear of committing a culpable action, and hence of conscience, and for this reason she is mentioned along with 'Shame.'" Nemesis was "a check upon extravagant favours conferred upon man by Tyche, or Fortune, and an avenging and punishing power of Fate which sooner or later overtakes the reckless sinner."

Translation  
of Æschylus,  
vol. i. p. 173.

The Greek  
religion.

In the ancient Greek religion, says Professor Blackie, "the wild and wanton ebullitions of human passion, over which a Bacchus, a Venus, and a Mars preside, are not free from the constant control of a righteous Jove, and the sacred terror of a retributive Erinnys. The great lesson of a moral government, and a secret order of justice pervading the apparent confusion of the system of things of which we are a part, is sufficiently obvious in the whole structure of the two great Homeric poems; but, if it exists in that sunny luxuriance of popular fancy as a felt atmosphere, it is planted by Æschylus, the thoughtful lyrist of a later age, on a visible elevation, whence, as from a natural pulpit, enveloped with dark clouds, or from a heathen Sinai, involved in fearful thunders and lightnings, it trumpets forth its warnings and hurls its bolts of flaming denunciation against sin."

### III.

#### SUMMARY.

RESUMÉ. If the arguments which we have sketched are true substantially, although they do not amount to a demonstration—which from the very nature of the

subject they could not possibly do—yet they shut us up to faith in God, the Creator and Ruler. “On reflection,” says Principal Shairp, “we find that there are many facts of human nature and of the world, many separate lines of thought, all leading upward and converging on one spiritual centre. These are like so many mountain paths, striking upward in diverse directions, but leading all at last to one great summit. Of these the moral law is the loftiest, the directest, the most inward, the most awe-inspiring.

*“Studies in Poetry and Philosophy.”*  
p. 367.

“But to begin with the outward world, there is, I shall not say so much the mark of design on all outward things, as an experience forced in upon the mind of the thoughtful naturalist, that, penetrate into nature wherever he may, thought has been there before him; that, to quote the words of one of the most distinguished, ‘There is really a plan, which may be read in the relations which you and I, and all living beings scattered over the surface of our earth, hold to one another.’ The work of the naturalist, as he goes on to say, ‘consists only in an attempt to read more and more accurately a work in which he has had no part,—a work which displays the thought of a mind more comprehensive than his own.’ . . .

Evidence of thought and mind in natural adaptations.

“Again, when we look within, there is ‘the causal instinct of the intellect,’ as it has been called,—the mental demand for a cause of every event, or rather the ineradically craving for a power behind all phenomena, of which they are but the manifestations—a craving which no form of Comtian philosophy will ever exorcise.

Intuitional demand for a cause.

“Again, there is the passionate longing of the imagination, aspiring after an ideal perfection for ourselves and others, apprehending a beauty more than eye has seen or ear heard.

Aspiration after an ideal perfection.

Insufficiency  
of self for  
self.

“Again, there is ‘the unsufficingness of self for self’—the dependency of the affections, feeling the need of an object like themselves ; yet higher, more enduring, all-perfect, on which they can lean, in which they may find refuge.

Conscious-  
ness of being  
derived.

“Again, another avenue upward is the feeling of the derivative nature, not of our affections merely, but of our whole being. We are here a little while,—each a small rill of life,—containing many qualities. We feel, think, fear, love ; no facts are more certain to me than these. Yet it is just as certain that I am here not by my own will. I did not place myself here ; cannot keep myself here. My life is in the grasp of powers which I cannot, except in the smallest measure, and for only a little while, control. There must be a source whence this life, and all the other similar lives around me, come. And that source cannot be anything lower, or possessed of lower qualities, than myself, but rather something containing, in infinite abundance, all the qualities which I and all other beings like me, in finite measure have. . . .

The law of  
duty.

“Lastly, and chief of all, there is the law of duty, coming home to the morally awakened man more intimately, affecting him more profoundly, than anything else he knows. What is it—whence comes it—this law, which lies close to all *his* thoughts, an ever-present, though often latent, consciousness, haunting him like his very being? . . . Here, if anywhere, we find the golden link which connects the human nature with the divine.

The conclu-  
sion reached  
by all these  
lines of  
thought.

“Putting, then, all these converging lines of thought together, we see that they meet in the conviction that there is behind ourselves, and all things that we see and know, a Mind, a Reason, a Will, like to our own, only incomprehensibly greater, of which Will and

Reason the moral law is the truest and most adequate exponent we have."

Thus are we shut up to faith in God. These are facts, without and within, of which no other explanation can be given.

The author of a great treatise on the subject of the Being and character of God, written two hundred years ago, demanded of the Atheist, whether—if he will reject all the evidence that is now available for the existence of God—there are any conceivable methods by which the fact (supposing it to be true) could be certified to us? On this question being answered in the affirmative, Howe proceeds to examine all the other methods of certifying the great fact, at all conceivable to human reason—such as strong impressions, glorious apparitions, terrible voices, surprising transformations—and then proves that they would every one be open to stronger objections, and would on the great scale be less convincing, than the evidence which the Atheist has already rejected as insufficient. Thus he compels him to adopt the strange conclusion, that *if there be a God*, it is, so far as we can conceive, *impossible* that His existence should ever be adequately ascertained to us.

We repeat John Howe's demand. If God has not sufficiently revealed Himself in His works—at present we say nothing of what we believe to be His Word—in what other ways, altogether different, shall He so reveal Himself as to make Himself irresistibly known and confessed? How—quoting from myself—shall the Invisible make Himself visible, and yet, in making Himself visible, not make it less certain that He is indeed God? If He veil His glory, lest our eyes be dazzled; if He subdue the thunder of His voice,

*John Howe*  
in "*The*  
*Living*  
*Temple*,"  
*Part I.*  
*chap. v.*

"*Life of*  
*John*  
*Howe*," by  
*Henry*  
*Rogers*,  
*p. 382.*



lest our ears be deafened ; if He hide His majesty, lest we be confounded ; the probability is that we shall not believe that He is very God. In vain I try to imagine how God is to meet the demand for other proofs, or other kinds of proof, than those which He has given. - But it must be in some way that is unearthly and supernatural ; some way as startling and confounding as the coming down of God on Mount Sinai is represented to have been, when the multitude said, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." And if one man has a right to demand all this for his satisfaction, so has every man. God must reveal Himself in every age, and in every land, and to every individual. No man may say to another—God has revealed Himself to me. Every man must see Him for himself, and without such seeing no one will believe !

The demand supposed is nothing less than this—that the boundary line between the material and the spiritual world, which now hides the latter from our view, shall be swept away, and that the two worlds shall be merged into one. It is a demand which, perhaps, no sane man would make in this literal form, but it is involved in the spirit which seeks other and more palpable "signs" of God's Being, and which would prescribe to God what evidence He ought to give us to prove His own existence or our immortality. And the impossibility of meeting it leaves us more than ever—not reluctantly, but thankfully—"shut up" to the conclusion that God is, and that He is our moral Ruler and Judge.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT OF GOD IS MADE KNOWN IN AND BY NATURE.

THE remark has already been made that the teacher is not to be measured or judged by the scholar. Sound is not to be measured by the ear, because the ear may be deaf, wholly or partially. Neither the magnitude nor the beauty of objects is to be judged by our actual perception of them, because the eye may be imperfect, or even diseased. The teacher with whom we have to do at present we call Nature, under which designation we include both the material universe and man himself. The learner is man. Now, it may be that this learner is intellectually slow to learn, or is morally disinclined to learn all that the teacher teaches him. In the writings of a man whose profound wisdom and insight cannot be questioned, whether we credit him with divine inspiration and authority or not, the Christian Apostle, Paul, we find it strongly asserted that such is the case. According to this writer—we speak of him now as we should of any other ancient writer of acknowledged worth—mankind did originally know God, and his descent from the worship of God to the worship of “the creature” was occasioned mainly by moral causes. And it would be difficult to find any other

The teacher not to be measured by the scholar.

Intellectual or moral defect possible.

*Rom. i. 20-25, 28.*

A moral defect according to Paul.

rational explanation of the loss of the knowledge of God. It is not as if the idea of God was foreign to the human mind, an altogether outside idea, which it required a constant intellectual effort to understand and retain. This idea is, in a sense, indigenous to the human mind. That is, as already set forth, there is in the human mind a faculty or susceptibility for religion, and there is in nature, external to man, everything to foster and cultivate the belief in "the Eternal Power and Godhead." But in spite of all this, according to Paul, men lost the knowledge of the true God. The holiness of God, as we understand it, was the "offence" on which they stumbled. And yet they must have a God; and thus, "at sundry times and in divers manners," in different lands, losing the true God, they came to worship gods many and lords many.

The teacher  
may be  
good.

Even if this be only an hypothesis—we believe it is more—it illustrates our position that we are not to judge of the teacher by the learner, not to judge of what the actual lessons of nature are by what men have learned from nature. It *may be* that the heavens do declare the glory of God, although in heathen lands men worship the creature rather than the Creator; and although, in lands like our own, and in our own times, there are some who learn from the heavens not the glory of an Infinite Intelligence and Power and Goodness, but only an "underlying substance" to which they attach no meaning and to which they give no name.

## I.

GOD IN-  
TELLIGENT  
AND  
PERSONAL.

The first truth which may assuredly be gathered from nature is that God is Intelligent and Personal.

We say *assuredly*, although there are students of nature who come short of this truth. The apostles of Agnosticism admit that there is—to use the expression so often quoted—an “underlying substance,” a “reality,” an “absolute” something, which is no part of nature as nature is seen and known by us; only they say that “the power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable.” We accept the admission, but hold that the considerations which lead to faith in a “substance underlying” nature, teach us not a little respecting this substance. For what are these considerations? They are all included in our intuitive sentiments—the intuitive sentiment which will not be satisfied with a knowledge of mere phenomena, but demands to know their cause; the intuitive sentiment which sees in the complex and innumerable adaptations of nature evidences of an Intelligent Mind; and the intuitive sentiment which discerns in our moral nature the sign of a Higher Moral Authority, to whom we are responsible. If by these intuitions we are constrained to look beyond nature, and see beyond it or underneath it an Absolute Reality, we are equally constrained to see in this Absolute Reality not a blind, unintelligent power, but a Being possessed of the highest conceivable intelligence, and at the same time possessed of moral attributes. Thus we are led far beyond an undefined and undefinable SOMETHING, even to a LIVING GOD, in whose will and intelligence and power we have the secret of the world’s existence and of our own.

Agnostics confess an “underlying substance.”

The evidence of an “underlying substance” shows what that substance is.

The ancient question—“Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?”—may still be asked. But the patriarchs who, in such questions, confessed the limits of human knowledge respecting God, did not

God not known to perfection, but still known.

Incompre-  
hensible, but  
not un-  
knowable.  
APPENDIX M.

regard the "Power" which filled them with awe as "utterly inscrutable." They believed in Him as all-wise and all-mighty, as reigning over mankind with perfect justice and goodness, and as holding men responsible for the life they live on earth. And these conclusions, whether they were reached by the observation and study of nature or not, are justified by a correct interpretation of nature.

By Dr.  
Matthew  
Arnold.

The attempt has been made to interpret the God of the Bible Pantheistically. We are told that the God of our holy books is an impersonal God, without volition, who "neither *thinks* nor *loves*," but only "a Power that makes for righteousness." The most ordinary reader of the Bible can determine this question for himself, and most readers will only wonder how such a notion could come into existence. To the common understanding, indeed to any understanding, it is difficult to explain wherein such a God differs from "no God." Most certain it is that this abstraction can never say "I," and can never be addressed as "Thou." Our point now is this—that the evidence which proves that there is a "Power which makes for righteousness," proves that it is a Personal power. The sense of responsibility of which we are conscious, is not an abstraction, a thought which we project from our own minds, a thought-process, a spiritual nonentity; it looks to a Person, the Author of the law whose authority we feel, the Judge to whom account shall be rendered. The faith, variously begotten in us, that there is an enduring "Power that makes for righteousness," is not faith in a blind, unthinking, unknowing, unknown, unknowable something; it is faith in very God Himself, who hath implanted the sense of righteousness within us, who watches over righteousness when it is most op-

The "Power  
which makes  
for righ-  
teousness,"  
is a Personal  
Power.

pressed ; and who will finally adjudicate between good and evil.

According to nature, then, God is a Person ; that is, a Self-conscious Agent, an Intelligent Being, who can say "I." An "Impersonal" God has no self-consciousness, can exercise no volition, possesses no intelligence, is capable neither of approving nor of disapproving, never consciously does anything, and never can. In short, we do not know of any attribute that can possibly be ascribed to—we were going to say, Him ; but we cannot think of such a God as an existence at all, and can almost as little use the pronoun *it* as the pronoun *Him*. If for convenience' sake we speak of an Impersonal God, the God of Pantheism, as a being, it is a being whom we cannot love or worship ; for he or it has no attributes that can be the object of either—no attributes that can possibly be the objects of a rational affection. Strauss, indeed, demanded for his "Universum" "the same piety which the devotee of the old style demanded for his God." But it cannot be rendered. You cannot worship the universe ; you cannot pray to the universe. Prayer to such a Being—but Being it is not—would be no better than "an apostrophe to woods and wilds and waters ; a moan cast forth into the viewless winds, or a bootless behest expended on a passing cloud ; a plaintive cry directed to an empty echo that can send back nothing but another cry."

An Impersonal God is not self-conscious, and cannot say "I."

The "Universum" cannot be worshipped.

With metaphysical questions as to what constitutes "Personality," it is not necessary that we should deal. Enough for all practical ends to say that where there is Will and Intelligence there is Personality. "Con-

Meta-physical questions as to personality.

See "Half-Truths and the Truth," by Dr. Manning of Boston, U.S., pp. 172, 173.

Impersonality a degradation of God.

scious volitional agency," Dr. Carpenter says, "is the essential attribute of personality." The idea of personality is not dependent on the littleness or greatness, finitude or infinitude, of the Being to whom it is ascribed. In all cases it involves freedom and the power of choice. There can be no personality in matter, for matter has no self-determining powers. To affirm, then, that God is impersonal is not to exalt our conceptions of Him, but to degrade Him below man; it is to teach that He can never have the sublime sense of liberty which man has; it is to affirm that He must come down to man's estate, in order to feel that He has the power of doing as He wills. "It is not the personality of God, but of man, that is imperfect," as Dr. J. M. Manning says. "God's being is not limited. Hence He is immeasurably above us, in all that goes to constitute Him a Person. He is infinite in His Being, and therefore as a Person He is absolutely perfect."

The idea of personality Anthropomorphic.

But to this idea it is objected that it is Anthropomorphic—that is, that it transfers to the nature of God what belongs to the nature of man—and the objection is supposed to be fatal. The objection, however, is really an argument in its favour. Anthropomorphism, within certain limits, and rightly understood, is *truth*. We cannot speak of the hand and the eye of God otherwise than metaphorically. And if we ascribe to Him, as the mythologies of most nations do, the evil passions of our own nature, we expose ourselves to the rebuke—"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." But this is a perversion of the idea. Three hundred years before Paul stood on Mars Hill, a Greek poet had said, "For we are also His offspring." And some-

Psalm l. 21.

Aratus.

what earlier another, in a hymn to Jupiter, said, "For from Thee we are the offspring." The Apostle adopted the saying, and confirmed the sentiment. If we are God's children, we are like God and God is like us. This is that dreaded thing, Anthropomorphism—the Anthropomorphism of nature as well as of the Bible. The foundation of the Anthropomorphism of Scripture is the historical statement that God made man in His own image. And this too, as a fact of nature, is the foundation of the rational Anthropomorphism without which all ideas of God become shadowy and unreal.

*Cleanthes.*

The offspring like the parent.

Dr. Carpenter, while he speaks of Pantheism and Anthropomorphism as the two extremes towards one or other of which most of the current notions regarding God may be said to tend, says of Anthropomorphism that "even the lowest form of any such conception embodies a great truth—this, namely, that it represents the Deity as a Person; that is, possessed of that intelligent volition, which we recognize in ourselves as the source of the power we determinately exert through our bodily organism upon the world around; and it invests Him with those moral attributes which place Him in sympathetic relation with His sentient creatures."

*Dr. Carpenter in the Contemporary Review, October, 1872, p. 762.*

True Anthropomorphism.

Thus understood, the Personality of God of which we have the image in our own, and which in this sense is an Anthropomorphic conception, does not, as alleged by some, "dwarf the Supreme Being." It is the idea of Impersonality that dwarfs Him; yea, rather, that kills Him.

We must have a God. Absolute Atheism is repudiated. But to ascribe creation to a conscious will and intelligence, is, it is objected, Anthropomorphism. Whereunto, then, shall we liken God?



If mind is  
not like to  
God, is  
matter?

The con-  
sequence.

If we in the domain of consciousness and will and intelligence, that is, of personality, find no likeness of God, we must explore the domain of matter and force, if peradventure we find it there. But if we do find it there, it will partake in some way of the nature of matter and force. And the end is that, instead of rising to a higher conception of God, we sink to a lower. Forbidden to find any notion of God in the spiritual nature of man, we must be content to find it in unspiritual and unintelligent matter.

## II.

THE DIVINE  
INFINITUDE.

Having thus found nature itself teaching us that God, the First Cause of all things, is a Person endowed with intelligence and moral attributes, may we further ascribe to Him infinitude—an infinitude of power and of intelligence?

*On the In-  
tuitions of  
the Mind,*  
p. 436.

We have admitted that the existence of infinitude in space and in time does not directly prove a third infinitude—an Infinite Mind. Still, as Dr. McCosh says, "Infinite extension and duration, and our belief regarding them, are felt to be void and empty till we are able to place in them infinite substance with infinite attributes; but when it has done so, the mind feels that it has found the wanting truth, and is satisfied supremely and to the full."

A limited  
effect can-  
not prove an  
unlimited  
cause.

We come to the same practical conclusion in another way. Let us admit that logically we cannot prove from a limited effect an unlimited cause,—the cause is not necessarily greater than the effect. The world is not infinite; even the material universe, vast as it is now known to be, is not infinite. But then it is inconceivably great, and therefore its Cause must be

inconceivably great. And for all practical ends this is enough. In its impression on our minds it is equivalent to infinitude. If we could directly and logically prove the First Cause of the universe to be infinite, we should not feel ourselves more profoundly moved to reverence and worship than we do now. Nor should we have a deeper sense of our own insignificance. The astronomer of to-day, with all the knowledge which the telescope has brought him of suns and systems without number, cannot exclaim with a devouter feeling than did those who knew only what their own eyes told them, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou dost visit him?"

But there may be an impression equivalent to infinitude.

*Psalm*  
*viii. 4.*

But if a limited effect cannot logically prove an unlimited cause, much less does it prove that its cause is necessarily limited. And yet this fallacy was gravely argued by Hume. "When we infer any particular cause from an effect," he says, "we must proportion the one to the other, and *can never be allowed to ascribe to the cause any qualities but what are exactly sufficient to produce the effect.* Allowing, therefore, the gods to be the authors of the existence or order of the universe, it follows that they possess that precise degree of power, intelligence, and benevolence, which appears in their workmanship; but nothing further can be proved. The supposition of further attributes is mere hypothesis." We have here truth and error blended. The actual physical force put forth in any given act may be measured by the effect which it produces. But if this physical force dwells in and is put forth by a Being having intelligence and will, we cannot measure the whole of the power that dwells in Him by the power which He chooses to exert in any given

Fallacy of  
Hume.

An intelligent being not to be measured by the force of particular acts.

act. A man breaks a piece of glass : the power put forth is very small. But it would be absurd to say that "we cannot be allowed to ascribe to him any qualities but what are exactly sufficient to produce this effect." He may be able to break a piece of granite, and may likewise have other "qualities" of another kind than physical power. The creation of one globe like ours does not prove in the Creator more power than is necessary to produce this particular effect. But it does not follow that in Him who is the Cause of this effect, there is no more power than was needful to produce it, and no other "qualities" than this power. And it is no mere hypothesis to say that in Him who can produce a thousand such effects there is power equal to the production of ten thousand. If the inference be not a logical necessity, it is at least so natural and probable as to commend itself to our reason.

### III.

THE DIVINE  
UNITY.

Paley's  
argument.

Unity of  
plan and  
system.

It is a question of no small interest whether nature proves the unity of God or affords a sufficient basis for faith in it. "Of the unity of the Deity," says Paley, "the proof is the uniformity of plan observable in the universe. The universe itself is a system ; each part either depending on other parts, or being connected with other parts by some common law of motion, or by the presence of some common substance. One principle of gravitation causes a stone to drop towards the earth, and the moon to wheel round it ; one law of attraction carries all the different planets about the sun." As to our own globe, he says, "We never get among such original, or totally different modes of existences, as to indicate that we are come into the province of a different Creator, or under the

direction of a different will. In truth, the same order of things attends us wherever we go." All the discoveries which have been made in distant space, and on the surface of our own globe, since Paley's time, confirm this line of argument. But Paley concludes—and the additions which modern discovery have made to the facts on which his argument is founded, do not affect its essence—that "the whole argument for the Divine Unity goes no farther than to an unity of counsel." And the possibility is obvious that unity of counsel may subsist amongst a plurality of counsellors. "Admitting," says Dr. Wardlaw, "the competence of One omnipotent and infinite Designer to produce every effect which is discernible throughout the universe, the inference does not seem to be an absolutely certain one, *from this consideration alone*, that only One such Being exists."

Seen in all modern discoveries.

But this proves only unity of counsel.

The *probabilities* of the Divine Unity are so great that practically the fact can scarcely be doubted. And they are increased and strengthened when the question is asked, whether the Creator or First Cause of things and the Designer whose intelligence we see in the adaptations of things, is One? "Does the adapting agent," as the question has been put,—“simply take the efficient forces and laws of the universe as it finds them, and, arranging them as best it may, bring out of them the wisest results to which its capacity may adapt them; or does it (likewise) originate the forces which it arranges and combines? The one view gives the eternity of matter, making the Deity a Demiurgos or Plastic energy. The other makes the Originator and the Arranger to be the same power and the same mind. The one view is the cruder Theism of ancient philosophy, the other the purer Theism of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. . . . Psychology suggests that

But unity of Being scarcely to be doubted.

Is the Creator and Designer One?  
*Porter's "Elements of Intellectual Science," p. 523.*

the analogy of the human soul, which combines in itself—under limits—a creating force and an adapting or designing force, furnishes a decisive argument in favour of the conclusion that the Creator and Thinker is One Being.”

Is it possible  
that there  
should be  
more than  
one Infinite?

Some have endeavoured to make up for the logical deficiency of the argument from the uniformity of nature to the unity of its author by a process of metaphysical reasoning ; or, more correctly, they have used metaphysical reasoning as an independent and additional argument. They have argued that there can be but one necessarily existent Being, one Omnipotent and Infinite Being,—one Infinite, rendering a second impossible. But it may be doubted whether any philosophical argument on this subject is wholly satisfactory, and whether the facts of nature and the subtlety of logic can carry us farther than to the very highest presumption in favour of the Divine Unity.

*Robert Hall  
quoted.*

We may certainly accept the words of Robert Hall, that the notion of more than one Author of nature “solves no appearance, is supported by no evidence, and subserves no purpose but to embarrass and perplex our conceptions.” When we turn from nature to revelation, we attain absolute certainty.

#### IV.

THE DIVINE  
GOODNESS.

The next question is, whether the evidences which conduct us to the conclusion that God is, conduct us likewise to the conclusion that God is good? Do those adaptations which evince the existence of Divine Intelligence evince at the same time the goodness of this intelligence? We do not now refer to moral goodness, that is, rectitude or purity or holiness,—but

to goodness in the sense of benevolence, the opposite of malignity. Does nature prove its Author to be good in this sense? A question which we must carefully distinguish from the question, "Have men universally or generally understood the testimony of nature to be that God is good?" In heathendom, ancient and modern, the more common belief has been that the gods are not good; at least, that they partake of the mixed character of men themselves,—some gods partially good, some partially evil; some of them absolutely malignant, and all of them capable of acts of malignity—being fitful and capricious. The sublime conception expressed in the words—"GOD IS LOVE"—can scarcely be found in unrefracted light, except in our Holy Scriptures. But it does not follow from the failure of man to attain this conception, that nature fails to teach it.

Heathen ideas.

There are two questions that present themselves here—First, whether there is positive evidence to sustain the conclusion that God is Good; and secondly, how we may reconcile with this conclusion certain phenomena which seem opposed to it.

TWO QUESTIONS.

The first question is easily answered. Let the following suffice :—"The phenomena which prove the existence of God, also demonstrate that He delights in the happiness of His creatures; for it is conceivable that the world might have been filled with adaptations such as any of the existing ones, but all of them of a diametrically opposite character. The exquisitely formed joints of the animal frame might, in the very delicacy of their organism, have communicated the more exquisite pain. The plants of the earth might have grown to nourish the bodies of animals, only as food spread through the organs to torture every

Is there positive evidence of the Divine goodness?  
*McCosh on the Method of the Divine Government, p. 10.*

member. The sunbeams, instead of gladdening all nature, might have struck every being as with a succession of spear-points, to harass and annoy. How delightful to find that every adaptation indicating design, also indicates benevolence, and that we have as clear evidence of the goodness of God, as of the very existence of God ! ”

General consent of writers on design.

Writers on the evidence of design dwell largely on the benevolence of the Great Designer. They urge that “the goodness of God in the form of benevolence is revealed in the whole constitution of nature. As the universe teems with life, it teems also with enjoyment. There are no devices in nature for the promotion of pain *for its own sake* ; whereas, the manifestations of design for the production of happiness are beyond computation.”

The cogency of such argumentation can scarcely be denied. Its conclusion is substantially that of Holy Writ, that “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.”

How explain the phenomena of pain and suffering ?

Various questions involved.

But it is certain that there are phenomena which seem to jar with this conclusion, and hence the second question,—How these phenomena, which may be summed up in the one word, pain or suffering, may be reconciled with the Divine goodness ? This question is intimately connected with another, apart from which it cannot be satisfactorily discussed, namely, the origin of moral evil and the consistency of its existence with the moral perfection of God ? and still another question, the connection between moral evil and suffering ?

APPENDIX N.

These questions involve problems on which the profoundest thinkers have expended their strength in vain. Any attempt to deal with them in this chapter,

or even to explain the attempts which have been made, would be unsatisfactory. I must content myself with two remarks.

1. The righteousness, or holiness, of God, involves in it, or carries along with it, the goodness of God. Righteousness and goodness are very distinct attributes, it is true; but we cannot imagine a pure or righteous God to be other than good. Now, to a belief in His righteousness we are shut up by our own moral nature. Even in the outside world, notwithstanding all its impurities and crimes, there is abundant evidence of a righteous moral government over men. The fact of such a government, and of the holy God whose government it is, does not, indeed, explain the mystery of evil,—it only deepens it. But if held fast, it will relieve our minds of many saddening and painful misgivings, and enable us to rest in the conviction, that, if ever the solution shall be found, it will be found in a quarter that shall not dim the brightness or tarnish the honour of the Divine Name. And this conclusion embraces the goodness as well as the righteousness of God.

The attributes of holiness and goodness inseparable.

Positive evidence of holiness.

And of a righteous government.

2. The positive evidences of the Divine righteousness and goodness cannot be set aside by appearances or facts which it is beyond our power to explain. In explanation of this position I quote from myself a simple illustration: "If I have had lifelong evidence that my father is a man of integrity and a man of love, an integrity and a love which have been tested a thousand times, and have always come forth from the trial with greater brightness, it does not become me to tremble for his honour when circumstances occur which I do not understand and cannot explain. My faith in him will be unshaken. I will accept the known as a key to the meaning of the unknown. I

Positive evidence not to be set aside by appearances.

"*Work and Conflict,*" pp. 267-271.

A child's faith in his father.



will hold fast my confidence that, when the time of revelation comes, his character will be found still radiant with light and love. Much more let me feel and act thus with reference to my Heavenly Father. I am but as a very little child, who, at the dawn of his infant reason, tries to penetrate the thoughts and understand the doings of his Father. I can think now only as a child, and speak only as a child. Let me, then, cultivate a child's humility and a child's teachableness, and be content to trust my Father till I enter on the manhood of my nature in a higher state, where that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part shall be done away."

Object of  
this chapter  
not to set  
forth a  
scheme of  
Natural  
Religion.

The object of this chapter has not been to set forth a scheme of the doctrines of Natural Religion, but to show that the evidence which proves the existence of God, proves or reveals much concerning the nature and character of God. The altar which it would set up is not to an "Unknown God," but to a God of whom much is known or may be known. The Teacher reveals much, however inapt the learner may be.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TRANSITION FROM NATURE TO THE SUPERNATURAL.

THE natural and the supernatural should never be confounded. There is a clearly marked line between them. In some quarters there is a tendency or disposition to obliterate this line, and to confound the two under the one designation of Mystery. In others the tendency is to create an impassable gulf between them, or to regard the one as absolutely excluding the other. We affirm a real difference, but not a difference inconsistent with the actuality of both. The natural we hold to be one mode of Divine action, the supernatural another. But to us, looking from our side of things, the one mode is very different from another.

Natural and supernatural not to be confounded.

Take, for example, the production of food. The ground is tilled ; the seed is sown ; the harvest is reaped ; the wheat is ground ; the bread is baked. We are familiar with the whole process, and our familiarity with it blunts our sense of wonder. Some parts of the process, indeed, are very wonderful. What or whence the strange power which so acts on the seed sown as to make it germinate and produce thirty or sixty seeds after its kind? How explain the action of moisture and heat and light on the seed or the plant, and the absorption by the plant of certain

Distinction illustrated by an example.

Food produced naturally.

elements from these and from the soil in which it grows? It is all filled with and hidden in mystery. But, then, it is all natural; that is, there are laws—themselves, we believe, of Divine ordaining, but whether of Divine ordaining or not,—there are laws in nature by which or in accordance with which in the same circumstances the same results are always produced. And these laws are our ministers; we can use them to accomplish our ends, and they never fail. Seed never fails to produce seed, if all the natural laws which conduce to the production are in operation—including the action of rain and sunshine, the needful moisture and the needful heat.

Food produced supernaturally.

But food may be produced in other ways. At least, Bible story represents it as having been actually produced in other ways, and we may use the story as an illustration of what we mean by the supernatural. There are five thousand men to be fed, and there are only a few loaves to feed them, not sufficient to feed fifty. The loaves are distributed, and, in the act of distribution, they are found so to increase as to be more than sufficient to feed the five thousand. This is not the result of any natural law,—there is no sowing, no growing, no reaping, here. There is no process known to nature, no process within the observation of man, by which this instantaneous production of the food of thousands can be explained. The difference between the manner in which the harvest-field, by means of spring and summer and autumn, produces food for thousands, and the manner in which it is said to have been produced on a memorable occasion on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, is not in any sense a mere difference of degree or a mere difference of time, the one being gradual and the other instan-

Reported miracle of Christ.

taneous. No amount of time, with tillage and rain and sun, could make the baked loaves germinate and grow into a larger quantity. The difference must be held to be an essential difference in the mode of action—so that if we call the one Natural, we must call the other Supernatural. Even if we suppose that there may be means employed in the second case as well as in the first, we cannot call them natural means, means discoverable among the physical powers or ordinary laws of nature. They must be of a kind known to God only. And the supposition of the possible existence of such means, occult and undiscoverable, forms no bridge between the natural and the supernatural—the fact being, rather, that in such a case the means are as supernatural as the end produced.

We are not required to attempt a definition of the miraculous or the supernatural—a definition that shall contain the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Important as definition is, substance is sometimes sacrificed to form in endeavouring to effect it. Only we must insist that in our idea of a miracle there is nothing “opposed to the laws of nature,” and nothing that can be called a “violation of the laws of nature.” The term “Supernatural” indicates not that which is contrary to nature, or violates nature, but that which is *above* nature, or *beyond* nature. It is something altogether out of the range of the action of natural law. The natural and supernatural are not contrary the one to the other—they are only different modes of Divine action.

A perfect definition not attempted.

With the natural we are familiar. But the uniformity of the action of natural laws is regarded as

Two alleged presumptions against

the occurrence of the supernatural.

a strong presumption against the occurrence of aught that is supernatural; and the credulity of mankind in regard to alleged supernatural occurrences is held to be a strong presumption against the credibility of any such occurrences. Let us look at both.

### I.

FIRST ALLEGED PRESUMPTION AGAINST MIRACLES.

Improbability supposed to arise from the constancy of nature.

Of the *impossibility* of the supernatural sometimes asserted, we need take no account. It can be maintained only on the ground of Atheism or Pantheism. Admit the existence of a Personal God, and the possibility of the supernatural cannot be denied. But then its *improbability* is said to be so great as practically to place it beyond the limits of reasonable belief. And this improbability is grounded on the uniformity of the action of natural laws. "All things continue as they have been from the beginning." Day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat—the laws of light and of gravitation, of life and of death,—all these were known before men learned their science, and they are now what our remote ancestors knew them to be. They are constant and regular. The same antecedents are always followed by the same consequents. Than this law there is not a more unfailing characteristic of nature. Whether our faith in it is a deduction of reason from the general experience of mankind, or is, as Dr. Chalmers argues, "an immediate and resistless belief in the human constitution," matters nothing at present. The fact is admitted, and in our daily life we act on the faith of it. Now, the argument against miracles, fairly put, is this, that any departure from this commonly ob-

The argument fairly put.

served and trusted-in constancy of nature is so improbable as to be incredible.

When it is further said, as by Hume, that miracles are contrary to all experience, we object that this begs the question. We do not admit that miracles have never been matters of human experience or observation. But we do admit all that can be said of the constancy and regularity of the action of natural laws. We only deny the inference that supernatural action is rendered thereby so improbable as to be incredible.

Unfair addition by Hume.

For these reasons—

1. Natural laws themselves, in their most constant and regular action, lead us to the conclusion that there is a Great Supernatural Being. It is in the products of these natural laws we see the evidence of a Designing Mind and Will.

See Chap. IV.

2. Natural laws are themselves the ordinances of a Great Supernatural Being. They are not self-ordained or self-made. Their origin is inexplicable except as traced to a Being of supernatural wisdom and power.

See Chap. IV. and Sir Edmund Beckett on the Origin of Natural Laws.

3. Even the common action of natural laws, the regularity of which is alleged as an argument against the probability of supernatural action, is scarcely explicable without the supposition of a continuous supernatural agency. This at least is the most rational explanation that can be given of it. Let a man of science be the witness. "When we have once arrived at that conception of Force as an expression of *Will*," says Dr. Carpenter, "which we derive from our own experience of its production, the universal and constantly sustaining agency of the Deity is recognized in every phenomenon of the external universe; and we are thus led to feel that in the Material Creation itself we have the same distinct

A continuous divine agency.

Contemporary Review, October, 1872, p. 762.

APPENDIXO. evidence of His Personal Existence and ceaseless activity, as we have of the agency of intelligent minds in the creations of artistic genius, or in the elaborate contrivances of mechanical skill, or in those written records of thought which arouse our physical nature into kindred activity."

Analogy between the human will acting on matter, and the Divine Will acting on matter.

4. If, as Dr. Carpenter holds, all force is ultimately resolvable into, or traceable to, WILL force; and if, as he says, there are "most satisfactory grounds" for the "belief that the phenomena of the Material Universe are the expressions of a Mind and Will, of which man's is the finite prototype,"—we are supplied with an analogy which aids our conception of the action of a Supernatural, that is, of the Divine, Will, on Nature. Our will, the human will, acts on matter immediately. It acts on our material bodies. Between the will and the lifting of the hand there may be several hidden links or processes, but if there are they are all material or in our material framework. Between the first of these and the will there is no medium. When will acts upon it, it is spirit acting on matter *immediately*. Need we be startled, then, if told that the Great Creator-Spirit has acted at certain times immediately on the material world, without the intermediation of natural laws? True that the material world is not the body of God, as our material frame is our body, and not joined to God as our frame is joined to us. But shall we make ourselves the measure of God, and limit His action on matter to the mode in which we act on matter? The action of our will on matter, though it be immediately only on the matter of our own bodies, is a profound mystery; and it supplies us with an analogy which at least removes all difficulty from our believing that the Creator-Spirit may act on the material universe

A difference admitted.

But God not to be measured by man.

by His Will, otherwise than through the natural laws which He has Himself ordained,—such action being that which we call Supernatural or Miraculous.

This analogy is strengthened by the consideration that the *origination* of matter, with all the forces and laws of matter, must have resulted from an *immediate* act of the Divine Will. There was no medium existing through which it could then act.

With these considerations before us, we cannot say that the constancy of nature excludes, or renders incredible, the idea of supernatural events. The probability or improbability of such events depends entirely on whether there is any great moral reason for their occurrence. Nothing but a great reason and a moral reason can render them probable.

In saying this we exclude, and that purposely, a current sceptical objection that miracles imply a flaw in the constitution of material nature, which needs to be repaired through a special intervention—that miracles are in fact “arbitrary suspensions of law” to remedy original defects or imperfections. No believer in the supernatural imagines that God works miracles “arbitrarily,” or to repair the defects of nature. It is not by any such supposition that we overcome the difficulty which the constancy of nature interposes to our faith in their occurrence.

No flaw in nature to be repaired.

But there may be great moral reasons why God should manifest Himself supernaturally, and should work works which no natural laws are capable of effecting. That such reasons exist will be shown in our concluding chapter. Enough to say at this point that the miracles in which we believe are not casual and isolated facts, or alleged facts, occurring arbitrarily here and there in the world, prodigies to excite idle

But there may be moral reasons.



The connection and reason of the Christian miracles.

"The Supernatural Origin of Christianity," p. 502.

wonder. They are all connected with great moral purposes. They all belong to what claims to be a continuous purpose of redemption, incarnated, so to speak, in human history; revealed in progressive stages; and consummated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unbelievers may disallow this claim. But if they would judge of Bible miracles aright, they must judge of them in connection with it. Connecting them, as we do, with the spiritual history to which they belong, all *à priori* prejudice against them melts away, all improbability disappears; and we feel, with Dr. Thomas Arnold, that their absence would be far more wonderful than their presence. "If God should mercifully approach us with new light and new help," says Dr. G. P. Fisher, "why should He not verify to man the fact of His presence by supernatural manifestations of His power and goodness? In this case nature is used as an instrument for an ulterior moral end. . . . Material nature, be it remembered, does not include the end of its existence in itself. It is a subordinate member of a vaster system, and has only an instrumental value."

## II.

SECOND ALLEGED PRESUMPTION AGAINST MIRACLES.

Human superstition and credulity.

But if there be no such improbability as would justify our refusing to listen to the evidence adduced in support of miracles, yet the fact is notorious that history, so called, especially the earlier history of nations, is full of supernatural narratives which no man now believes, the belief in which would at once distinguish a man as superstitious and credulous. Is there not in this presumptive evidence that all super-

natural relations are the fruits of ignorance and superstition? How is it possible to distinguish the true from the false?

This is the summary method by which some would discredit all miracles. They gather together from all ages, and all states of society, tales of prodigies and wonders, and write over them all—"Myths and Legends." The trouble of sifting and distinguishing and separating, and classifying them as true, or false, or doubtful, according to the evidence, is thus avoided. All genuine or all false! This is the principle adopted. Many, very many, are false, they convict themselves; therefore they are all false!

Summary method of rejecting all miracles.

This is a short method of dealing with a great question, but it is not more rational or satisfactory than it would be if applied to other alleged facts. History is a gathering together, and setting in order, a multitude of alleged facts or alleged events; but many of these alleged facts and events rest on no sufficient evidence—they are fables; therefore all the alleged facts and events which fill innumerable pages in what is called history are fables! Men of science collect together what are called natural facts, report them to scientific societies, and record them in scientific reports; but many of these so-called natural facts are found to be imaginary or illusory; therefore all the natural facts which are so laboriously compiled are but fruits of the imagination!

Applied to natural events.

I am quite prepared to admit that supernatural events need stronger evidence to justify their admission into history than do natural events. I would even submit to the dictum of Hume, that "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, as I understand it,

Admit that supernatural events need stronger evidence.

more difficult to account for] than the fact which it endeavours to establish." I believe it would be more difficult to account for the testimony of the Apostles respecting the resurrection of Christ, and the founding of the Christian Church on that testimony, on the supposition of its being false, than it is to account for the fact of the Resurrection itself. I believe it would be more difficult to account for the character of Christ as we have it in the Gospels, on the supposition of the story being false, than it is to account for that which is alleged to be supernatural in that character, including His supernatural person and His supernatural works.

A more  
rational ex-  
planation.

"The  
Friend,"  
Bohn's  
Edit. p. 286.

Bampton  
Lectures on  
Miracles.

Root in  
human  
nature.

"Discourse  
on the  
Evidences of  
Revealed  
Religion."

We are not, then, prepared to surrender miracles on the vague charge that they are to be ascribed in the lump to imposture or superstition, or to a credulous misreading of natural events. The general faith in the supernatural and marvellous is capable of a more rational and philosophical explanation than this. "I am firmly persuaded," says Coleridge, "that no doctrine was ever widely diffused among various nations, through successive ages, and under different religions, which is not founded either in the nature of things, or in the necessities of human nature." "The love and belief of the supernatural," says Dr. Mozley, "has flourished successively upon heathen, upon Christian, and upon scientific material; because in truth it is neither heathen, nor Christian, nor scientific, but *human*. Springing out of the common stock of humanity, which is the same in all ages, it adapts itself to the belief, the speculations, and the knowledge of its own day." "The propensity of men to believe in what is strange and marvellous," says a writer of another school, Dr. Channing, "though a presumption

against particular miracles, is not a presumption against miracles universally, but rather the reverse; for great principles of human nature have generally a foundation in truth." The great beliefs of mankind certainly have such foundation. And the only sufficient explanation of the common faith of men in the supernatural or miraculous, is that it springs from, or at least is nourished by, a deep and ineradicable instinct of our nature.

The argument against the credibility of miracles is thus turned into an argument in favour of it. "It is very unphilosophical," says Dr. Channing, "to assume this principle (of credulity and superstition) as an explanation of all miracles whatever. I grant that the fact, that accounts of supernatural agency so generally prove false, is a reason for looking upon them with peculiar distrust. Miracles ought on this account to be sifted more than common facts. But if we find that a belief in a series of supernatural works has occurred under circumstances very different from those under which false prodigies have been received, under circumstances most unfavourable to the operation of credulity, then this belief cannot be resolved into the common causes which have blinded men in regard to supernatural agency. We must look for other causes, and if none can be found but the actual existence of the miracles, then true philosophy binds us to believe them."

Presumption  
in favour of  
miracles.  
"Discourse  
on the  
Evidences of  
Revealed  
Religion."

This is not the place to show that a comparison of the Biblical miracles with the prodigies of mythology and of confessedly legendary history, and even of mediæval and Romish story, instead of leading us to dismiss both as fictions or follies, would lead to the conviction of an essential difference. Our

What a  
comparison  
of Biblical  
and other  
miracles  
would lead  
to.

present concern is only to dispute the dictum that all miracles are to be rejected as the fruit of superstition or imposture. And our conclusion is that the world-wide disposition to believe in the miraculous is a presumption not against, but in favour of, miracles.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE NECESSITY AND PROBABILITY OF A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.

WE have now reached the conclusion that there is a Supernatural Existence, a Supernatural Being, in whom we find the First Cause of all things, and to whose intelligence and power we ascribe all the order and manifold adaptations of nature. We have endeavoured to ascertain some at least of the attributes of this Great Being, as manifested in the material creation and in our own moral constitution. We have insisted especially on His Personality, and His moral attributes of Righteousness and Benevolence. Admitting the constancy of the action of Natural Law, we cannot find, as we have seen, in such constancy, any presumption against supernatural action, if only there exist strong moral reasons for a special divine interposition ; and in the common beliefs of mankind that such interposition does take place, or has taken place, how much soever of superstition and credulity there may be found in them, we see the fruit of a deep-seated instinct of our nature.

The conclusions reached in the preceding chapters.

Before we proceed to inquire whether there be any evidence, and sufficient evidence, that God has

MAN'S  
NEED OF A  
SPECIAL  
REVELA-  
TION.

revealed Himself and His Will to mankind otherwise than by His visible works and by the human conscience, it will be of service to consider man's need of such further and special revelation, and the probability of its being given.

### I.

Man's need  
seen in the  
state of  
Heathen-  
dom.

*Rom. i.*  
Whether  
primitive  
or a  
degeneracy.

If Mono-  
theism the  
primitive  
faith.

The state of Heathendom, ancient and modern, affords the broadest and most palpable evidence that man needs to be taught by God, who and what He is, in other ways than by what we call Nature. Whether that state is a condition of degeneracy, as the Apostle Paul taught, from one in which primitive men "knew God;" or whether it is itself the primitive condition of men, as some would say;—in view of it the need of man is painfully proved. In the former case the proof is the stronger. Men knew God, the first men did, the first race of men did,—whether the knowledge came to them by a direct revelation from God or was acquired intuitively from their first conscious observation of His works,—they knew God. The race, on this hypothesis, began its existence in a most favourable condition. And even without supposing any subsequent or successive revelations, it had the means of preserving and perpetuating its knowledge in those glorious teachers of the eternal power and Godhead, with which it was in habitual communion—the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the soul within. But notwithstanding all, men lost the knowledge of the One Living and True God, and degenerated into idol-worship, often of the most grotesque and loathsome kind. This the Apostle Paul ascribes to moral causes, and no other sufficient explanation has ever been found. But be the explanation what it may,

the fact remains, and, in view of it, man's need of a supernatural revelation can scarcely be regarded as doubtful.

On the other supposition, namely, that primitive men were Polytheists, and that Monotheism, or the worship of One God, the Creator of all, is a later attainment, the argument, although weaker, is sufficiently strong. Men, when they first opened their eyes on this beautiful world, failed, we are to suppose, to rise from nature up to nature's God. They did not discern His eternal power and Godhead. They were mysteriously impelled to worship, by something within themselves, they knew not what; but they worshipped things created, not the Creator. And there is no instance known to history in which a people, once idolatrous, have risen spontaneously, or without external teaching and aid, into a Monotheistic faith. Sufficiently conclusive this, that men do very greatly need a supernatural revelation to teach them the Divine.

If Poly-  
theism.

## II.

But to us the most conclusive evidence is that which is furnished by the most modern experience in the most enlightened classes. There are those who reject that which we regard as a revelation. "There is no revelation," they say; "there never has been; there cannot be." In saying which they arrogate something like a divine knowledge. But, rejecting revelation, what do they know of God? By their own confession, *nothing*. Not only is He unknown, but He is unknowable. In their feeling after Him, if haply they might find Him, they have come to this most sad conclusion, that He is not to be found. They do

Man's need  
seen in the  
most modern  
experience.



not venture to say that He is not, but they have not found Him; and the very crown of the philosophy they have reared for themselves is, that He is not to be found.

Agnosticism  
proud of its  
failure to  
find out God.

The failure not merely to find out God unto perfection, but to find Him at all, should prepare men to welcome light from any quarter. But Agnosticism is proud, not humble—proud to have attained to this high philosophic principle that God is unknowable!—proud of its ignorance, or at least that it knows its ignorance to be incapable of enlightenment! Far otherwise was it with the heathens of Northumbria in the sixth century, when the question was discussed by the king and his nobles, whether they should accept the teaching of the Culdee missionaries. “Perhaps thou recollectest, O king,” said a noble, “what sometimes happens in the wintry days, when thou art seated at table with thy captains and thy warriors, while a good fire is burning, and the hall is pleasant and warm, but it rains, snows, and there is a high wind outside. There comes a little bird, which flies across the hall with fluttering wings, coming in by one window and going out by another. The moment of crossing is for it full of sweetness, it no longer feels either rain or storm; but that moment flies, the bird passes on in the twinkling of an eye, and from winter it goes back to winter again. Such,” said the noble, “seems to me to be man’s life on the earth, and its momentary flight, as compared with the length of time which precedes and that which follows it. This time is dark and irksome for us; it torments by the impossibility of knowing what it is. If, then, the new teaching can shed but the least light upon it for us, it behoves us to follow it.” The high priest of the Northumbrian gods expressed a desire to hear the

Wise conduct of the  
Northumbrian  
heathens.

Story told  
by the  
Venerable  
Bede.

The  
Northumbrian high-  
priest.

Christian missionary discourse more fully concerning the God whom he preached. And when the sermon was ended, he exclaimed, "I have long perceived that what we worship is nothing; for the more earnestly I have sought the truth in that system, the less I have found it. But now I openly profess that in this doctrine to which we have listened is contained the truth which can confer on us the gifts of life and everlasting blessedness."

So decided the high priest of Heathenism; but a modern high priest of Naturalism would have said, "Not so. These missionaries profess to bring us a revelation from God. There is no such revelation. There can be none. The thing is impossible." To which the heathen might have replied, "We have long walked in the light of our own fire, and in the sparks which we have ourselves kindled. We have laboured to find out all about our lot and our end in vain. We have cherished the traditions of our fathers, but they give us no satisfaction. What shall we do?" And if he had known the writings of Plato, and the sayings of Socrates and of other ancient teachers, he might have fortified his question by their longings after a higher knowledge than they had attained to. But the only answer of an Agnostic to his "What shall we do?" would have been, "Do nothing. Be content to pass, like the bird, from darkness into darkness, without knowing whence or whither." But the human heart within the heathen breast would have shouted, "That I cannot do. I must, I will, seek, if haply I may find."

What an  
Agnostic  
would say.

Reply to the  
Agnostic.

The Apostle Paul's statement—"The world by wisdom knew not God;" and his challenge—"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the dis-

1 Cor. i.  
20, 21.

puter of this world?" were meant to be, and have commonly been understood to be, reproachful. But now they may be regarded as a eulogy on the world's wisdom. Only they do not go far enough. "The world by wisdom knew not God," says Paul. The world's wisdom now understands that God is not to be known!

Modern un-  
believers  
know less  
than the  
men of the  
first ages.

A more complete demonstration of the impotence of the unaided human intellect in the department of the spiritual and divine cannot be imagined. Moderns who reject revelation know no more of God and His relations to men, than did our Aryan forefathers three thousand years ago—yea, not so much; and far less than did that despised Semitic nation, the Hebrew, at a period still more remote. There has been no growth, no progress. On the contrary, if we accept the speculations of those who consider themselves the most advanced thinkers of the nineteenth century, the Aryans, from whom Hindoo, Teuton, and Celt, are alike descended, were wrong; the Hebrews, from the days of Abraham nearly four thousand years ago, have all been wrong; the Egyptians, of whom Le Page Renouf tells us, that their most ancient faith was Monotheistic, were wrong;—they were all the victims of an illusion—they only thought they knew God—God is not to be known! And thus modern wisdom, or rather this form of modern wisdom, instead of adding to our knowledge of God, takes a sponge and blots out all the knowledge possessed by the sages of Egypt and India and Greece, as well as by the prophets of Palestine, as unreal and illusory.

*In his  
Hibbert  
Lectures.*

III.

There is another ground on which we maintain our need of a divine revelation. There are questions which have been urgently asked in every age, which Nature cannot answer, and which, if answered at all, must be answered supernaturally. Even if men had not failed, as they have, to learn all respecting God which may be learned from His works; if they had understood His eternal power and Godhead as these are manifested in the visible creation, their moral nature, their conscience, would awaken solitudes on which their highest conceptions of "eternal power and Godhead" could throw no light.

Man's need seen in questions which Nature cannot answer.

*Man is morally divided against himself.* There is a schism in his soul. This has been felt by thoughtful men in all ages. Long before Paul said, "The good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do ;" and "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh ;" a Greek had said, "I certainly have two souls, for if there were only one, it surely could not be at the same time good and bad, nor could it at the same time love good and base actions, and also at the same time wish some thing, and not desire to put the wish into action ; but evidently there are two souls, and if the good soul gets the upper hand, then good will be done ; and if the evil, then shameful actions will be perpetrated."

Schism in man's soul.

Rom. vii. 19.

Gal. v. 17.

Xenophon's "Cyrop." vi.

Pascal saw more clearly than most, and felt more profoundly, the greatness of man on the one hand, and his misery on the other, to which this schism in his soul points. Philosophers, he says, "inculcated a notion either of absolute grandeur or of hopeless degradation, neither of which is the true condition of

Pascal's insight into the state of human nature.

man. From the principles which I develop," he says, "you may discover the cause of these various contrarieties which have astonished and divided mankind. Now, then, consider all the great and glorious aspirations which the sense of so many miseries is not able to extinguish, and explain whether they can proceed from any other cause save a higher nature. Had man never fallen, he would have enjoyed eternal truth and happiness; and had man never been otherwise than corrupt, he would have retained no idea of truth or happiness."

The Biblical explanation.

Pascal accepted the historical explanation which the Bible gives of our present divided and mixed moral experiences, and found in it the clue to our condition, "insomuch that man is more incomprehensible without this mystery than this mystery is incomprehensible to man." But reject the history and mystery of inherited original sin, if you will, there remains the fact of a radical evil in our nature, universal and unquestionable, before which thoughtful men have paused, and by which they have been appalled. In its presence they have felt themselves bewildered and helpless. And the elder Pliny, having said that "Man's nature is a lie," only gave expression to an extreme consciousness of man's impotence to restore his nature to harmony, when he said, "The best thing God has bestowed on man is the power to take his own life."

The elder Pliny.

*Neander's*  
"Ch. Hist.,"  
vol. i. 14.

Schism between God and man.

With this conscious schism in his own soul, man is conscious likewise of a schism between himself and God. He is not at peace with God any more than with himself. And the question which he has everywhere asked himself, and toiled in vain to answer, is in substance—"Wherewith shall I come before the

*Micah vi.*  
6, 7.

Lord, and bow myself before the High God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" There is not a darker page in the moral or religious history of mankind, than that which records men's efforts to answer such questions as these, the gross conceptions of God which they indicate, not as the Just God but the Malignant—and the insane and unutterable cruelties to which these conceptions have led. But underneath them all, there is the deep-seated feeling of alienation from God, of guilt and condemnation, and the necessity of atonement.

Urgent question.

Underlying gross conceptions of God.

And this feeling is not to be removed by any knowledge which reason or nature can give us of the eternal power and Godhead. On the contrary, as Christlieb says, "The more profoundly the knowledge of the Holy One penetrates the conscience, the purer is the heart's desire after atonement; but the more a man seeks to find comfort in false means of expiation, the more confused and darkened does his conscience become."

"Modern Doubt," p. 92.

That Natural Religion, even when most enlightened, fails to meet this, the greatest moral difficulty of human experience, is confessed. And the last resort of those who will not be taught by God Himself, is to crush down the difficulty and quench the question which causes it. "Happy he," says one of this class, "who can sleep amid the empty noise of the threats which sometimes trouble the human conscience—noise which ought no longer to be aught but the rocking of the cradle." This is the language of Pantheism, which recognizes no Personal Living

Natural Religion cannot solve the chief difficulty.

Renan, in Fourth Hibbert Lecture.

The threats  
of conscience  
genuine.  
Will not be  
silenced.

Judge and no future retribution—a system in which conscience is a delusion, the voice of conscience a delusion, the moral law a delusion, judgment a delusion! Happy is the man who has attained to this knowledge, and can sleep on this pillow! But it is the happiness of moral death or of moral stupefaction. The noisy threats of conscience are loud and terrible; they disturb the quietude of savage and civilized, of Oriental and Occidental, alike. And no soporific strong enough has yet been discovered that can produce a sound sleep amidst their uproar. Men will not sleep with the noise of the threats of conscience in their ears. They will not be persuaded that it is an empty noise, but will ask—“Whither shall we flee? What shall we do?”

Is revela-  
tion, then,  
improbable?

*Renan's  
words.*

If God really  
be our  
Father.

Shall we in these circumstances say that a supernatural revelation is improbable? Improbable that the Father of our spirits should compassionate our ignorance and our impotence? Teachers who deny revelation yet confess that “there is a touching struggle of this poor disinherited being man, to make his lot bearable,” and take comfort from the thought that “there is an eye looking at us, and a heart which follows us.” If it be so—if there be a Father whose eye sees us, and whose heart loves us, why should it be thought a thing incredible or improbable that He should reveal Himself to His children, and do for them what they cannot do for themselves? If He sees us, He sees our “touching struggles,” our writhings to free ourselves from our bondage, and how much we need His help. If He loves us as a Father, what so likely as that He should Himself render us that help without which the burdens of life, and its sins, are insupportable? Regarded in

this light, a supernatural revelation is no longer improbable. In view of our condition on earth, and of the divine relation to us as a Father, there can be nothing more probable than that He should reveal Himself, and that He should, by means above nature and independent of nature, effect for us a great spiritual redemption.

And, looking at the history and character of Jesus Christ, there can be nothing more probable than that He is the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of men. If one-half of the beautiful things which even unbelievers have written concerning Jesus Christ be true, and if these beautiful things are to be understood in the plain obvious sense of the words in which they are described, there is no adequate explanation of the Jesus of the Evangelists but that He was all that He professed to be, and all that His first disciples believed Him to be—the very Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Christ the  
Revealer  
and  
Redeemer.

But in saying this I am running before my argument. It remains for the Second Part of this work to establish the claims of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX P.  
AND Q.



## APPENDIX OF NOTES TO PART FIRST.



A. Page 5.

### DEMONSTRATIVE EVIDENCE.

DEMONSTRATIVE evidence is more easily understood than defined in its essential character. Opening our dictionaries, we find *Johnson* defining, or at least explaining, it, as "such proof as not only evinces the position proved to be true, but shows the contrary position to be absurd and impossible." *Webster* says, "To demonstrate—to prove by deduction; to establish so as to exclude possibility of doubt or denial." Turning to writers on metaphysics and logic, *Locke* says, "Those intervening ideas which show the agreement of any two others are called proofs; and where the agreement or disagreement is by this means plainly and clearly perceived, it is called demonstration." *Playfair*: "Direct or positive demonstration, that which concludes with the direct or certain proof of the proposition in question.—Indirect or negative demonstration, that which proves a proposition to be true by showing that the supposition of its falsity involves an absurdity; called also *reductio ad absurdum*."

I do not know that the difference between demonstrative and moral evidence, can be better explained than it is by an author now seldom consulted, Dr. George Campbell, in his "*Philosophy of Rhetoric*" (*Book I. ch. v.*): "All rational or deductive evidence is derived from one or other of these two sources: from the invariable properties or relations of general ideas; or from the actual, though perhaps variable, connexions subsisting among things. The former we call demonstrative, the latter moral. Demonstration is built on pure intellection, and consisteth in an uninterrupted series of axioms. . . . *It*

*is solely conversant about number and extension, and about those other qualities which are measurable by them. Such are duration, velocity, and weight.* With regard to such qualities as pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, beauty and deformity, though they admit degrees, yet, as there is no standard or common measure by which their differences and proportions can be ascertained and expressed in numbers, *they can never become the subject of demonstrative reasoning.*" As to the most important differences between moral and demonstrative reasoning, Dr. Campbell enumerates : (1.) A difference in their subjects. (2.) Moral evidence admits degrees, demonstration does not. (3.) In the one (demonstration) there can never be any contrariety of proofs ; in the other, there not only may, but almost always is. (4.) Demonstrative evidence is simple, consisting of only one coherent series, every part of which depends on the preceding, and, as it were, suspends the following ; moral evidence is generally complicated, being in reality a bundle of independent proofs.

The subject is discussed in other ways by modern writers on logic and metaphysics, such as J. Stuart Mill (*Book II. ch. v. and vi.*) and Dr. Noah Porter (*"Elements of Intellectual Science," Part III.*), but not with results practically different.

The term "Demonstration," it need scarcely be added, is often used in a less rigid and more popular sense, as when Tillotson says, "Which way soever we turn ourselves, we are encountered with clear evidences and sensible *demonstrations* of a Deity ;" and as in the title of a tractate, which forms part of Jeremy Taylor's "*Ductor Dubitantium*"—"An Instance of Moral Demonstration ; or, A Conjugation of Probabilities, proving that the Religion of Jesus Christ is from God."

#### B. Page 8.

#### NECESSARY TRUTHS.

The truths which are called "Necessary," are variously designated Intuitions, Intuitive truths, First principles, Elemental laws of thought, Fundamental laws of human belief, etc. They are divided into Formal, Mathematical, and Real. Their characteristics or philosophical criteria are—Their universality, their necessity, and their logical independence

and originality. (See Porter's "*Elements of Intellectual Science*," Part IV.)

Dr. McCosh ("*Intuitions of the Mind*," Book III.) describes "the relations intuitively observed by the mind," as—The Relations of Identity ; of Whole and Parts ; the Relations of Space ; of Time ; of Quantity ; of Resemblance ; of Active Property ; and the relation of Cause and Effect.

The intuitions with which our argument has to do are : (1.) That which perceives in the adaptations of means to ends the presence of a Designing Mind. At least, it is difficult to account for the immediateness, and at least almost universality, of this perception, except by ascribing it to an intuition. "A son of the desert, being asked how he came to believe that a God existed, replied that he knew it as he knew from traces on the sand that a beast or a man had passed." (2.) The principle of causation, or that which demands a cause for every effect. Whether any phenomenon before us is an effect may be the subject of question. But there are many phenomena about which no question can be asked ; and for these an adequate cause must be found. The characteristics of an effect have already been stated. (3.) The intuitive conviction of right and wrong—the universal conscience. "Surely the God who implanted this conscience must Himself love the good which it would lead us to love, and hate the evil which it would impel us to hate. This moral power in man manifests itself in leading us to cherish a conviction of obligation to a law above itself, independent of itself and of the mind which looks to it, and having authority or right to enjoin and forbid."

For a defence of the truths which are called Necessary, as being really necessary and intuitional, in reply to what is called the "associational school," and to those who would ascribe them to experience, the reader may consult the work of Dr. Porter, already named.

C. Page 16.

#### ON PANTHEISM.

For discussions on Pantheism, the reader may be referred to Hodge's "*Systematic Theology*," vol. i.; McCosh's "*Method of the Divine Government*," and his "*Intuitions of the Mind*;"

Calderwood's "*Handbook of Moral Philosophy*," chap. iii.; and "*Half Truths and the Truth*," by J. M. Manning, D.D., Boston, U.S.

Pantheism is "the doctrine that God includes all reality, and is identical with it, nothing besides Him really existing. To use the Greek phrase, He is τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ πᾶν—the One and the All. Spinoza's way of stating it is, 'Besides God, no substance can exist, or be conceived to exist.' The doctrine thus enunciated will be made clearer, perhaps, by comparing it with Theism and Atheism. The Theist separates nature from God, in his system, and recognizes the existence of both; the Atheist starts from nature, and denies the existence of God; the Pantheist starts from God, and denies the existence of nature. Atheism and Pantheism seem to be in direct and necessary antagonism to each other. One of them does not believe in any God, the other believes in nothing but God. This hostility is apparent rather than real, however, at least in its religious aspect; it is not so much in ideas as in language. When the Atheist has explained what he means by the word *nature*, and the Pantheist defines that which he chooses to call *God*, it is often clear that they both mean the same thing; that they occupy common ground in their attitude towards Christianity, although their methods of philosophizing may be opposite. One denying nature, and the other everything but nature, it is clear that they must alike reject the *supernatural*."—*Manning*, pp. 74, 75.

Apart from all rational and philosophic arguments against Pantheism, the moral argument is conclusive. We are intuitively conscious of our individuality or personality and free agency, and of the essential distinction between moral good and evil. But on Pantheistic principles all this is a delusion. There is no such thing as sin or as responsibility. The sinful acts and passions of men are as much the states and acts of God as the holiest acts and feelings. Such conclusions are boldly avowed by many expounders of Pantheism. "All things that exist"—I quote from myself—"including man and all his doings, are but manifestations of the activity of that 'ALL' which is God. Freedom of the will is a phantom. All things and all persons are ruled by the iron sceptre of Fate. Nero is as much a phenomenal manifestation of God as St. John. The wicked are only a form of His self-manifestation; sin is only a form of His

activity. God is everything ; and if there be a Satan, God is Satan ; and evil is as properly deified as good.”—“*Brief Defence of Supernatural Christianity.*”

It is one who had escaped from Pantheism, both as a speculation and as a practical principle, that wrote these strong words : —“ The doctrine which would subvert the indestructible barrier raised in every human breast between light and darkness, the doctrine which declares the eternal difference between good and evil to be a lie, is itself a lie from the bottomless pit. . . . Let the doctrine of one substance suffice to explain nature and the world ; let it banish spirits, and annihilate space and time with their perceptions ; still the little heart of man, with its infinitude of wants and longings, is an<sup>1</sup> enigma which that doctrine cannot solve ; it has maladies which that doctrine cannot cure.”—*Tholuck*, in “*Guido and Julius*,” pp. 28, 29.

D. Page 19.

#### ON MATERIALISM.

“ The fundamental affirmation of Materialism is, that all the phenomena of the universe, physical, vital, and mental, are to be referred to unintelligent physical forces ; and its fundamental negation is that there is no such objective entity as mind or spirit. If, therefore, it can be shown that unintelligent force cannot account for all the phenomena of the universe, and that there is such an objective entity or substance as mind, the theory is refuted.”—*Hodge*, i. p. 275.

We have shown, or endeavoured to show, that “ unintelligent force cannot account for all the phenomena of the universe.” “ Materialism not only fails to reach a *primary source* of finite existence, but, at the opposite extreme, it fails to harmonize the complex facts of *known existence*. Intelligence may be taken as the highest of these facts, with which to test the adequacy of the Materialistic doctrine. Intellect starts the problem, and the solution must at least carry an explanation of such powers as belong to the investigator. Let us say that matter and force conjointly produce intelligence, or that one of the two is competent to originate this high type of being. How can thought interpret and accept the possibility ? Either the cause need not be adequate to produce the effect, and we are reduced to Hume’s

maxim, 'Anything may produce anything,' which is a mere utterance of scepticism, or avowal of absolute ignorance, amounting to an abandonment of the problem, in face of the natural demands of intelligence ; or, there is that in the cause which is competent to produce the effect, in which case force is more than material ; or Personal Intelligence is the fountain of dependent personality, and the Materialistic position is abandoned." — *Calderwood's "Handbook of Moral Philosophy,"* p. 236.

As to the Materialistic denial of "such an objective entity or substance as mind," and the identification of mind with the brain, Professor Tyndall, while asserting that "thought, as exercised by us, has its correlative in the physics of the brain," maintains, at the same time, that thought and the action of the brain cannot be identified :—"The passage," he says, "from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously ; we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from the one phenomenon to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated, as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain ; were we capable of following all their motions, all their grouping, all their electric discharges, if such there be ; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling,—we should probably be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness? The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable. Let the consciousness of love, for example, be associated with a right-handed spiral motion of the molecules of the brain, and the consciousness of hate with a left-handed spiral motion. We should then know when we love that the motion is in one direction, and when we hate that the motion is in the other, but the Why?' would still remain unanswered."—"*The Athenæum*," August 29, 1868.

We are entitled to go farther, and to say that mental attributes and states are so different from the attributes and states of

matter, that they cannot be accounted for except on the hypothesis that they belong to an essentially different entity or substance.

E. *Page 21.*

#### POSITIVISM ANTI-SCIENTIFIC.

“In so far as my study of what specially characterizes the Positive philosophy has led me, I find therein little or nothing of any scientific value, and a great deal which is as thoroughly antagonistic to the very essence of science as anything in ultra-montane Catholicism. In fact, M. Comte’s philosophy in practice might be compendiously described as Catholicism *minus* Christianity.”—*Professor Huxley, in “Lay Sermons,” 6th Edit., p. 140.*

F. *Page 26.*

#### MAX MÜLLER AND MR. CONDER ON BUDDHISM.

“As to Atheism,” says Professor Max Müller, “it cannot be denied that, if we call the old gods of the Veda—Indra and Agni and Yama—gods, Buddha was an Atheist. He does not believe in the divinity of these deities. What is noteworthy is that he does not by any means deny their bare existence, just as little as St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church endeavoured to sublimize, or entirely explain away, the existence of the Olympian deities. The founder of Buddhism treats the old gods as superhuman beings, and promises the believers that they shall, after death, be reborn into the world of the gods, and shall enjoy divine bliss with the gods. Similarly he threatens the wicked that, after death, they shall meet with their punishment in the subterranean abodes and hells, where the Asuras, Sarpas, Nâgas, and other evil spirits dwell—beings whose existence was more firmly rooted in the popular belief and language, than that even the founder of a new religion could have dared to reason them away.”—“*Lecture on Nihilism,*” p. 6.

It is still difficult to ascertain, with any certainty, the true relation of Gautama (Buddha) to religion and religious thought. It may be accepted that he did not believe in One Supreme God,

Creator and Ruler of all. But it must likewise be accepted that he was far from being a mere *Naturalist*, as Professor Max Müller's statement, just quoted, shows. Buddhism was a revolt against the religious and social tyranny of Brahmanism. "But," as the Rev. E. Conder says, "Just as Positivism, by its fantastic apparatus of church, priesthood, sacraments, and ritual, and the peevish resentfulness manifested when its right is questioned to wear the dress and use the language of religion, bears witness to the necessity and difficulty of filling up the immense void it has made; so the history of Buddhism, in its assumption of religious forms, in its alliance with various systems of heathenism, in the tendency to deify Gautama himself, and in those modifications of his doctrine which have even transformed *Nirvâna* into Paradise, bears witness to the strength of those very instincts and yearnings of human nature, which, as a system, it ignores."—"*The Basis of Faith*," p. 438.

G. Page 33.

"COMPARATIVE RELIGION."

"The study of them (other religions) continues to be a duty, full of interest and importance. The results of it will throw light on the religious nature and wants of man, and show how adapted Christianity is to supply those wants and satisfy that nature. They will even help to give us, I believe, a better understanding of Christianity itself, and a more vivid apprehension of its doctrines.

"The divine stamp, however, rebukes the view of some that, by the study of the Chinese and other religions, we shall find one truth of importance here and another there, and that, bringing these together, we may, by an eclectic process, frame a universal religion that will supersede Christianity itself. I must think that the comparative study of religions will dissipate this imagination, and prove it to be an unsubstantial hope."—"*The Religions of China*," by Dr. Legge, p. 287.



H. Page 37.

FROM LOWER TO HIGHER OR FROM HIGHER TO  
LOWER?

It is no small trial to the patience of honest thinkers to observe how certain writers assume it to be confessed that men have risen either from Atheism or from Fetichism, by degrees, to Monotheism. Philosophers, like John Stuart Mill, who write for men, and popular discounters of all current forms of scepticism, like Edward Clodd, who write for children and for all who are easily imposed on by confident assertion, write in this fashion. They seem quite superior to the necessity of proving their hypothesis, or of disproving the arguments, philosophical and historical, which go to establish the contrary hypothesis.

“As far as the lamp of history can shed its ray, its witness points to the belief that man began his pilgrimage on earth in the morning light of his Father’s smile, knowing and worshipping the One Living God, Father of the spirits of all flesh, and Maker of heaven and earth.”—*Conder’s “Basis of Faith,” pp. 28-34.*

The question of man’s primitive religion is part of a wider question—the question, namely, of man’s primitive condition, savage or civilized? On this subject see the Duke of Argyle’s “*Primeval Man.*” “Sir John Lubbock speaks of primeval man as having been in a state of utter barbarism. But no one speaking philosophically has a right to use such terms as ‘barbarism’ and ‘civilization’ without some definition of their meaning. What were those faculties which made the first creature who possessed them ‘worthy to be called man’? A mind capable of reason, disposed to reason, and able to acquire, to accumulate, and to transmit knowledge;—this is the distinctive attribute of man. The first being ‘worthy to be called man’ must have had such a mind. But it cannot be said of such a being, on the ground merely of his ignorance of the mechanical arts, that he was in a condition of ‘utter barbarism,’ if he were at the same time conscious of moral obligations and obedient to them. . . . This is a fundamental objection to the whole scope of Sir John Lubbock’s argument. It imposes an impassable gulf between his premises and his conclusions.”—“*Primeval Man,*” pp. 130-133.

Nearly thirty years ago, I wrote to the same effect in a book which has been long out of print, "*The Natural History of Man*," published by Mr. Cassell. Sir John Lubbock himself says, incidentally, "The whole mental condition of a savage is so different from ours, that it is often difficult to follow what is passing in his mind, or to understand the motives by which he is actuated." Now this "mental condition," not the knowledge of science or the possession of the mechanical arts, is the true differentia between savage and civilized.

In the book which I have named, it was maintained, as conclusive of the historical certainty of a primitive civilization, that we have no authentic instance of a barbarous tribe emerging out of barbarism spontaneously, or by its own internal energy, without external help and impulse. This is still true. The Australians and Polynesians, as found by European discoverers and missionaries, showed no symptoms of a tendency to rise out of their low estate. And if their present condition is but the continuance of the primitive condition of man, they must have been in the same low estate for many thousands of years. How tribes like them—and on this hypothesis all were originally like them—could have risen so soon, and spontaneously, into the state of high civilization in which we find Egypt and Assyria at the remotest times of which history has preserved any record, is an inexplicable mystery.

### I. Page 39.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF THEISTIC ARGUMENTS.

The arguments in support of the existence of an Almighty God have been variously classified, but the variety is more in form than in substance. Some of the arguments relate only to the existence of an Almighty First Cause, some to the intelligence of this First Cause, and some to His moral character and government.

Kant classified the ordinary Theistic arguments thus : Firstly, the Ontological, or that derived from the very idea of the Infinite, the Perfect, in the mind ; secondly, the Cosmological, or that which infers from the world, as a bare existence, the existence of an Absolute Being ; thirdly, the Physico-theological,

or that from traces of Design. Discarding all these, Kant himself maintained that "the only valid argument for the existence of God, or the immortality of the soul, rests on the ground of man's moral nature."

Dr. Hodge classifies the arguments as Ontological, Cosmological, Teleological, and Anthropological.

1. The *Ontological* argument is that which is commonly known as the *à priori*, and has been used with slight modifications from the days of Anselm. It is an argument from cause to effect—that from effect to cause being *à posteriori*. The form in which it is commonly discussed is that of Dr. Samuel Clarke in his "*Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*," published in 1705. Dr. Clarke attached much importance to this argument. But it is very difficult to make it intelligible, and from this it may be inferred that it cannot possess much practical force.

2. The *Cosmological* argument, when separated from the Teleological, is the argument from the world considered simply as an effect, to a great First Cause, of which, or of whom, it is the effect. Syllogistically stated, the argument stands thus: Every effect must have a cause; The world is an effect; Therefore the world must have had a cause,—a cause outside of itself, and adequate to account for the effect. In sustaining this argument, the proper meaning of the terms "cause" and "effect" must be determined. Dr. Hodge adduces three arguments to prove that the world is an effect; that is, that it is not self-existent and eternal: (*a.*) That all its parts are dependent and mutable. (*b.*) The Historical argument. "We have historical evidence, for example, that the race of man has existed only a few thousand years. That mankind has existed from eternity is absolutely incredible. Even if we adopt the development theory, it affords no relief. It only substitutes millions for thousands of years." Man must have had a beginning. And this beginning must have been an effect. (*c.*) The Geological argument. Geology shows us that all the external plants and animals on the earth began to be. And if they began to be, they must be regarded as effects, and as such they must have had a cause. These arguments, Historical and Geological, are really illustrations of the first argument, that all the parts of this world are dependent and mutable. We cannot conceive of an infinite succession of contingent events. Such events

must have had a foregoing cause, external to themselves, and adequate to the production or origination of them. Even Mr. John Stuart Mill says, "If the universe had a beginning, its beginning, by the very conditions of the case, was supernatural; the laws of nature cannot account for their own origin."—"*On Positivism*," p. 14.

3. The *Teleological* argument is the common argument from design to a Designer—the main argument of Paley in his "*Natural Theology*," and of the series of works known as the "*Bridgewater Treatises*."

4. The *Anthropological* argument. An Anthropological argument for the existence of an Intelligent God might include all the arguments drawn from the evidences of design in the human body, and in the many adaptations of the human body to the external world, and in the external world to the human body. But these are included in the Teleological argument. *The Anthropological* argument proper divides itself into three parts: (a.) The argument from the existence of mind. Socrates used it in his discussion with Aristodemus. Underlying it, is the doctrine of the immateriality of mind. (b.) The argument from the capacities and aspirations of the human soul. And (c.) the argument from conscience, or our moral nature. Of this last I have spoken in the text.

Dr. McCosh describes "the different classes of objects from which we derive our idea of God," under four heads. "First, There are the order and adaptation exhibited in the separate material works of God." "Secondly, There are the relations which the physical world bears to man, which we call the Providential arrangements of the Divine Government." "Thirdly, There is the human soul, with its consciousness, its intelligence, and its benign feelings." And "Fourthly, There are the moral qualities of man." In this last, the reference is particularly to the conscience.

The principal arguments in Dr. McCosh's classification, it will be seen, are those which we have considered in our text—that from design and from the order of the universe, and that from our moral nature.

K. *Page 45.*

### THE ARGUMENT FROM ORDER.

The argument from the order which exists on earth, and throughout the universe, is accepted by men who stand in doubt of the more common argument from design. Thus Dr. Carpenter says, "From the time when I first began to think on the subject, I had entertained a distrust of all arguments based on those individual instances of adaptation of means to ends on which Paley and his school built up their proofs of design." "But," he says, "when, on the other hand, a distinct uniformity of Plan can be shown to exist among the structures which exhibit a vast diversity of such adaptations, and still more when constant uniformities of sequence exhibit themselves in the developmental processes by which these diversified forms are evolved, it has always appeared to me, that if, on other grounds, we recognize the action of Intelligent Power in the universe, our highest notions of its character are based on such evidence of continuity and uniformity of action." But uniformity of Plan and uniformities of sequence are proofs neither of the character nor of the existence of an Intelligent Power, except so far as they are proofs of intention or design.

Professor Jowett, after objecting to Paley's argument for design, says, "That which seems to underlie our conception both of First and Final Causes, is the idea of law which we see, not broken or intercepted or appearing only in particular spots of nature, but everywhere and in all things. All things do not equally exhibit marks of design, but all things are equally subject to the operation of law. . . . He who has ever thought in the most imperfect manner of the universe which modern science unveils, needs no evidence that the details of it are incapable of being framed by anything short of a Divine Power. Art and nature and science, these three,—the first giving us the conception of the relations of parts to a whole; the second, of endless variety and intricacy, such as no art has ever attained; the third, of uniform laws which, amid all the changes of created things, remain fixed as at the first, reaching even to the heavens,—are the witnesses of the Creator in the external world." All this, instead of being substantially opposed to

Paley's argument, is a good re-statement of the evidences of intelligent intention or design of which the external world is full.

Even Kant, who discarded the argument from traces of design, and maintained that "the only valid argument for the existence of God or the immortality of the soul, rests on the grounds of man's moral nature," said, in a passage which has been often quoted—

"There are two things of which it may be said that the more we think of them, the more they fill the soul with awe and wonder : the starry heavens above, and the moral law within." In a later strain of reflection he says, "There are two witnesses of the Being of God : the order of nature in the world, and the progress of the mind of man. *He* is not the order of nature, nor the progress of mind, nor both together ; but that which is above and beyond them ; of which they, even if conceived in a single instant, are but the external sign, the highest evidences of God which we can conceive, but not God Himself." Now "the order of nature in the world" is a "witness for God" only in so far as it is a "sign" or evidence of Intelligent Design.

Again, in a "*Fragment of a Moral Catechism*," we find Kant proposing the following question, and giving the following answer :—Question : "Has reason any grounds for believing in, as REAL, any such Supreme Power, dealing out happiness and misery according to desert and guilt, having sway over the whole physical system, and governing the world with the extremest wisdom ; *i.e.* to hold THAT GOD IS?" Answer : "Yes ; for we discern in those works of nature we can judge of, manifested, the traces of a wisdom so vast and profound, that we can account for it only by ascribing it to the unsearchable skill of a Creator, from whom we deem ourselves entitled to expect a no less admirable adjustment of the world's moral order, which latter is indeed its highest harmony ; that is to say, we may one day hope to be partakers of happiness, if we do not, by our forgetfulness of duty, make ourselves unworthy of it." Now, "the traces of wisdom," which Kant says can be accounted for only by ascribing them to the unsearchable skill of a Creator, are simply those innumerable adaptations which are comprehended under the term "Design."—See "*The Metaphysics of Ethics*," Edited by Dr. Calderwood, p. 301.

L. Page 47.

## BOOKS ON DESIGN.

These are almost without number. The "*Bridgewater Treatises*" alone form a library. They are the following:—

"*The Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man*," by Dr. Thomas Chalmers; "*On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Physical Constitution of Man*," by John Kidd; "*Astronomy and General Physics treated in reference to Natural Theology*," by William Whewell; "*Animal and Vegetable Physiology considered in reference to Natural Theology*," by Peter Mark Roget; "*The Hand, its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as evincing Design*," by Dr. Charles Bell; "*Geology and Mineralogy considered in reference to Natural Theology*," by William Buckland; "*The Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as manifested in the Creation of Animals*," by William Kirby; "*Chemistry, Meteorology, and the Function of Digestion considered in reference to Natural Theology*," by William Prout; "*The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*," by C. Babbage.

To these may be added Paley's well-known work on Natural Theology; "*Footprints of the Creator*," by Hugh Miller; "*Typical Forms and Special Ends in Creation*," by Dr. McCosh and Mr. Balfour; and "*The Five Gateways of Knowledge*," by Dr. George Wilson. The last of these may be specially commended to those who have little time for study.

M. Page 64.

## INCOMPREHENSIBLE, NOT UNKNOWABLE.

"We must guard the reader against confounding the incomprehensible, that is, the unexplainable, with the unknowable. . . . The *that* or *what* may be known, though we are in the profoundest ignorance of the *how* or *why*. And so we can have a great deal of certain knowledge of the incomprehensible. The fact of gravity, the law of its variation, . . . these are abundantly certain, but gravity itself is as incomprehensible as the Deity. A recollection of this fact, that the incomprehensible is not the

unknowable, will break the force of many of Mr. Spencer's weightiest arguments. . . .

"As in the case of matter, while insisting upon a real knowledge of God, we do not claim a complete one. We do not pretend to say *how* He does this or that, but *that* He does this or that. We do not claim to give a *rationale* of the Divine nature any more than of our own. The mystery of existence is equally insoluble in both; and some facts, not some explanations, are all that is known in either case. 'Who can search out God unto perfection?' has been the language of the best religious thinkers, from the time of Job until now. . . . All we claim is that we have a real, though finite, knowledge of the Deity; not an infinite thought, but a finite thought, about the Infinite."—"The New Englander," *January, 1872, pp. 92, 107.*

N. Page 74.

#### THEORIES ON THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

"The origin of evil, like every other beginning, shrouds itself in darkness. The various theories on this subject, as well as on the nature of sin, are discussed with great ability in Müller's '*Christian Doctrine of Sin.*' Leibnitz's doctrine of Optimism is the most sublime attempt ever made to solve the mystery; but it cannot be so stated as not to involve this mystery, that God should select a system in which evil is allowed that good may come. Some would clear up this mystery and every other by representing sin as mere privation; but we never can be made to believe that deceit, malignity, adultery, are mere negations; they are as positive acts as integrity, benevolence, chastity. A similar objection lies against the doctrine which places it in creature imperfection. All those theories which proceed on the idea that evil is needful in order to call forth and confirm the good, are founded on inadequate views of the evil of sin, and overlook the fact that the evil quite as often seduces the good, as the good overcomes the evil. The theory of the sensational overcoming the moral and spiritual does not embody a full statement of the facts, for there may be sin, such as unbelief and pride, where there is no sensualism, and it fails to show how man should have been so constituted as that sensualism should prevail. The view that all sin originates



in selfishness is not true to our nature, for there may be sin where there is no formal or calculating selfishness ; and if by selfishness is meant merely the rebellion of an inferior impulse, we have merely the statement of the fact, but no explanation. All that man can know—and this he does know—with certainty is, that sin is as much a reality as moral good, and that the one is made known to us by the same moral power as the other.”—*McCosh's "Method of the Divine Government," p. 377.*

O. Page 82.

#### ON PROVIDENCE—ANECDOTE OF MR. THOMAS CARLYLE.

“We remember as if it were yesterday a curious scene which occurred in John Austin’s drawing-room not long after Carlyle’s arrival in London (1832). The conversation turned, as was not unusual among these philosophers, on the want of evidence of a superintending Deity and providence in the affairs of the world. Carlyle listened in silence for some time, and at length rolled forth in his broad Doric dialect: ‘That would be to reduce the infinite creative music of the universe to the monotonous clatter of an enormous mill, swung by the stream of chance and floating upon it—a mill without a builder or a miller—grinding itself with a perpetual motion.’ The tones of the seer sounded like the voice of doom. And though it was discovered the next day that the whole passage is not original, but may be found in the works of Novalis, one admired the spirit which hurled this defiance at the unbelievers.”—*“Edinburgh Review,” January, 1874, p. 115.*

P. Page 99.

#### HAS MODERN SCIENCE UNDERMINED THE FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION?

There may be in some minds a lurking suspicion that the discoveries of modern science have shaken, if not undermined, the foundations of our faith. But that the suspicion is altogether without warrant may be shown by an appeal to men of science themselves, and by a challenge to name the discovery to which any such effect may be imputed.

Mr. Froude, in his usual recklessly sceptical style, said in a recent paper that "the evidence of design in nature in proof of a Designing Mind," is "a position now abandoned by advanced scientific thinkers"—thinkers described by him variously as the "best modern," and "the ablest." Professor Tait, of the University of Edinburgh, replies in a strain of just severity in the "*International Review*." Appealing to facts, he says, "When we ask of any *competent* authority, who were the 'advanced,' the 'best,' and the 'ablest' scientific thinkers of the immediate past (in Britain), we cannot but receive for answer such names as Brewster, Faraday, Forbes, Graham, Rowan Hamilton, Herschell, Rankine, and Talbot. This must be the case, unless we use the word 'science' in a perverted sense. Which of these great men gave up the idea that nature evidences a Designing Mind?"

"But perhaps Mr. Froude refers to the advanced thinkers still happily alive among us. The names of the foremost among them are not far to seek. But unfortunately for his assertion, it is quite certain that Andrews, Joule, Clerk-Maxwell, Balfour Stewart, Stokes, William Thomson, and such like, have each and all of them, when the opportunity presented itself, spoken in a sense altogether different from that implied in Mr. Froude's article. Surely there are no truly scientific thinkers in Britain farther advanced than these."

"The assumed incompatibility of religion and science," says Professor Tait, "has been so often and so confidently asserted in recent times that it has come to be taken for granted by the writers of leading articles, etc.," and it is, of course, perpetually thrust by them broadcast before their too trusting readers. But the whole thing is a mistake, and a mistake so grave that no true scientific man (unless, indeed, he be *literally* a specialist—such as a pure mathematician, or a mere mycologist or entomologist) runs, in Britain at least, the smallest risk of making it."

Non-scientific persons may safely accept the *authority* of the foremost scientific men as conclusive that no discoveries have been made which in any wise weaken the evidence for the existence and continued government of a Supreme Intelligence. The President of the Royal Astronomical Society (C. Pritchard, M.A.) uttered the judgment of many as well as his own, when

he said, "For my own part—and I hope I say it with no affectation—from the results of modern research, I have gathered additional reasons for resting in the simplicity of the ancient Christian faith ; and in modern discoveries I have found many a new and unexpected trace of the Creator's majesty—of His power, His wisdom, and His love."

But if *authority* be not accepted, we have a right to challenge those who say that modern scientific discovery has brought religion into doubt, to name the discovery which brings even the shadow of danger on the fundamental doctrines of religion. According to Professor Tyndall, in his "*Belfast Address*," the two great scientific generalizations of the day are the evolution theory propounded by Mr. Darwin and Mr. Wallace, and the correlation of forces and the conservation of energy. Of the first of these, which is still but an unproved hypothesis, and one which brings with it more difficulties than it removes, it is enough to say that a large number, probably the larger number, of those who accept it repudiate all purely Naturalistic or Atheistic inferences. They even think that the evolution theory gives us loftier conceptions of Creative wisdom than the older doctrine of creation. And of the second, "scientific generalization"—the correlation of forces—it is enough to say that its author and apostle, Mr. Justice Grove, instead of seeing in it anything to account for the universe without God, concludes his work with the sententious and memorable saying : "Causation is the will, creation the act, of God."

There is nothing in regard to which more care is necessary than the pretensions of so-called scientific theories and their popular expounders. A writer in the "*Edinburgh Review*," discussing some of these some six or eight years ago, said well, "During the last fifteen years, not only have special branches of science been revolutionized, but science itself, the very conception of what is scientific, appears to have undergone a serious change. Instead of designating what is most vigorous, exact, and assured, in human knowledge, natural science is fast becoming identified with what is most fluctuating, hypothetical, and uncertain, in current opinion and belief."

Q. Page 99.

A CATECHISM OF SCIENTIFIC BELIEFS.

The impression is so industriously and boldly circulated, and through so many channels, "grave and gay," that men of science have reached definite and unquestionable conclusions, and that these are irreconcilable with the first principles of religion, that I venture to add to this note a brief catechism, which will show how uncertain is the creed of scientific men on subjects related at once to science and to religion. I find this "catechism" in the "Memorials" of a young minister who died in Australia in the end of 1878, John Legge, M.A.; and it might be very much enlarged. "I have sometimes wondered," Mr. Legge says, "at the assertion that the solid unity of opinion lies with the investigators of Nature, whilst infinite division lies with the theologians. I have imagined that if a catechism of scientific belief on the subjects common to both were compiled, it would evince strange disunion where there is boasted unanimity. Let me give a specimen of such a catechism, with the answers, mostly in the *ipsissima verba* of our leading scientific men:—

"I. Question: Who created all things?"

"*Buchner*: 'Matter and force are uncreated, and have given rise to the present order of things.'

"*Huxley*: 'When the materialists begin to talk about there being nothing else in the universe but matter and force, I decline to follow them.'

"*Spencer*: 'The origin of things is unknowable.'

"II. Question: What is the nature of the Author of all things judging from His works?"

"*Mill*: 'It is impossible to believe that a world, so full of evil, is the work of an Author combining infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness.'

"*Lyell*: 'The philosopher, without ignoring these difficulties, does not allow them to disturb his conviction that whatever is is right.'

"*Huxley*: 'We may liken life to a game of chess. The player who stands behind Nature is hidden from sight, but his play is always just, fair, and patient, like a calm, strong angel playing for love.'

“ III. Question : What is the origin of life ?

“ *Darwin* : ‘ The Creator at first breathed life into a few forms.’

“ *Sir W. Thomson* : ‘ Perhaps the first germs of life reached our globe falling through the sky, on a moss-grown fragment, from the ruins of another world.’

“ *Spencer* : ‘ The origin of life is probably undiscoverable.’

“ *Dr. C. Bastian* : ‘ Living things are being generated every instant all the world over.’

“ *Huxley* : ‘ There is no experimental proof of spontaneous generation. The doctrine that life now only springs from already living creatures is triumphant.’

“ IV. Question : Have men and the higher animals sprung from lower ?

“ *Darwin* : The conviction rises firm and strong ‘ that man was descended from some lowly organized form.’

“ *Professor Phillips* : ‘ This hypothesis everywhere fails in the first and most important step’—want of proof.

“ *Agassiz* : ‘ We find no indication that any animal has swerved from its type.’

“ Take another highly momentous question, and its scientific replies :—

“ V. Question : Is man a free agent, or is he fast bound in fate ?

“ *Spencer* : ‘ Unless all that is contained in these pages (and there are four hundred of them) is sheer nonsense, there can be no such thing as freedom of the will.’

“ *Huxley* : ‘ In the struggle of life “ a man’s volition counts for something.” ’

“ *Dr. Carpenter* : ‘ I cannot regard myself, either intellectually or morally, as a mere puppet pulled by suggesting strings.’

“ We do not find the boasted unanimity on this high subject.

“ As a closing question, we may ask, as the human soul has from the dim and silent past always asked—

“ VI. Question : Is man immortal ?

“ *Lyell* : ‘ To man alone is given this belief in immortality, so consonant with his reason, implanted by Nature in his soul, a belief that tends to raise him morally and intellectually in the scale of being.’

“ *Buchner* : ‘ When we die we do not lose *ourselves*, but only our personal consciousness ; we live on in Nature, in our race, in our children, in our deeds, in our thoughts.’

“ This, then,” says Mr. Legge, “ is the immortality which this Goth among thinkers would give to man. The lonely wanderer, who lays him down to die in the awful solitude of the bush, is called to exult that he will live in the grass among his whitened bones, and the flies that boom around his corpse. Let Science be silent where she can only speak to shock the soul with such harrowing humiliation. To surrender Christ for such a doctrine as this ! It is to prefer midnight, with the crawling, slimy worm, to the eternal splendours and the august societies of all that is noblest in the universe.”

The words of Sir John Herschell are as true as ever—“ Force and matter might make a chaos, but never a cosmos.” And the most timid student may, even on the authority of men of science, “ rest in the Lord.”



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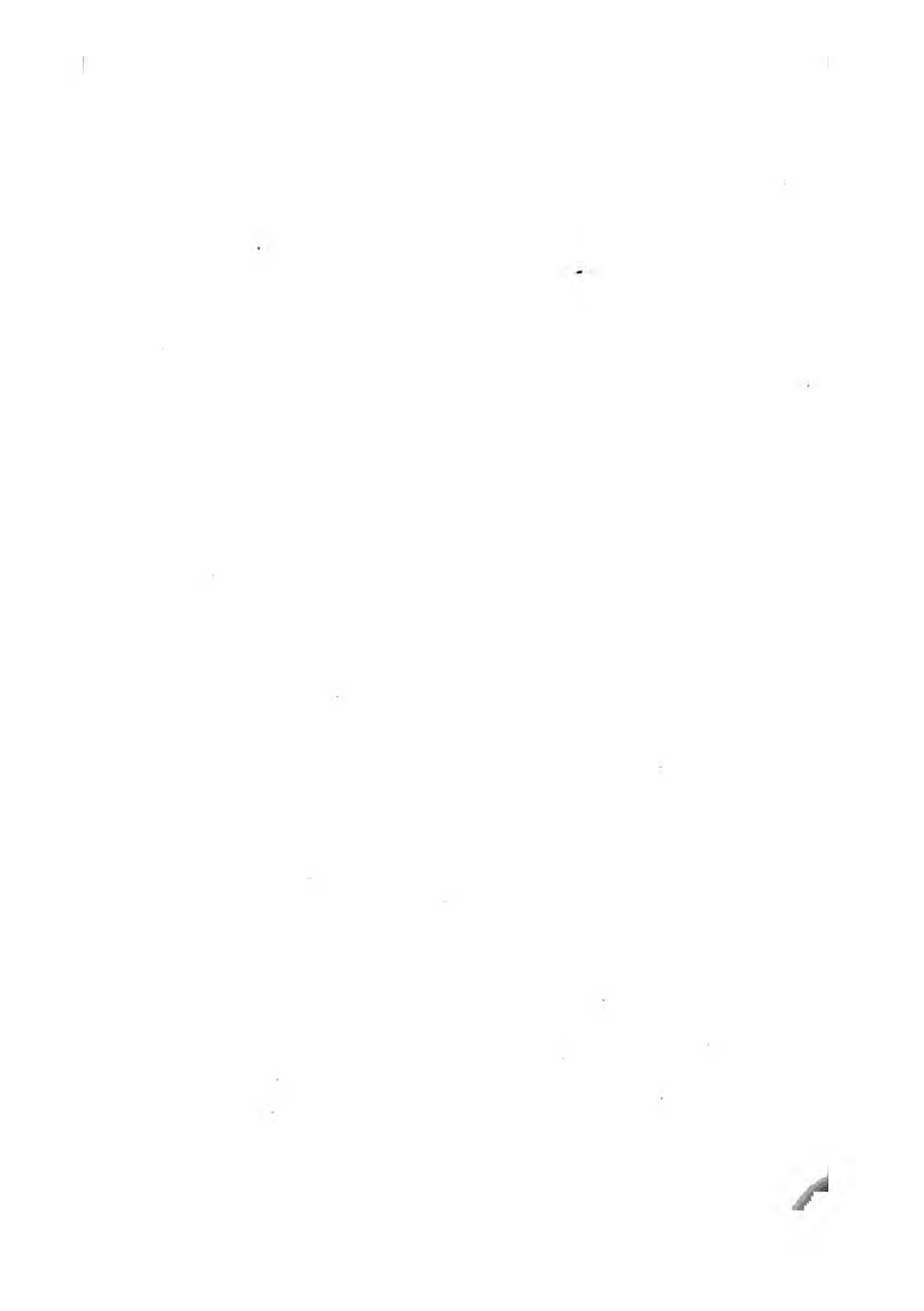
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A POPULAR HANDBOOK  
OF  
CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

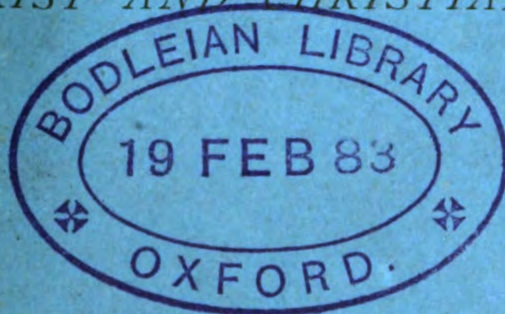
By JOHN KENNEDY, M.A., D.D.,

HONORARY PROFESSOR, NEW COLLEGE, LONDON;

AUTHOR OF "THE GOSPELS: THEIR AGE AND AUTHORSHIP," ETC.

Part Second.

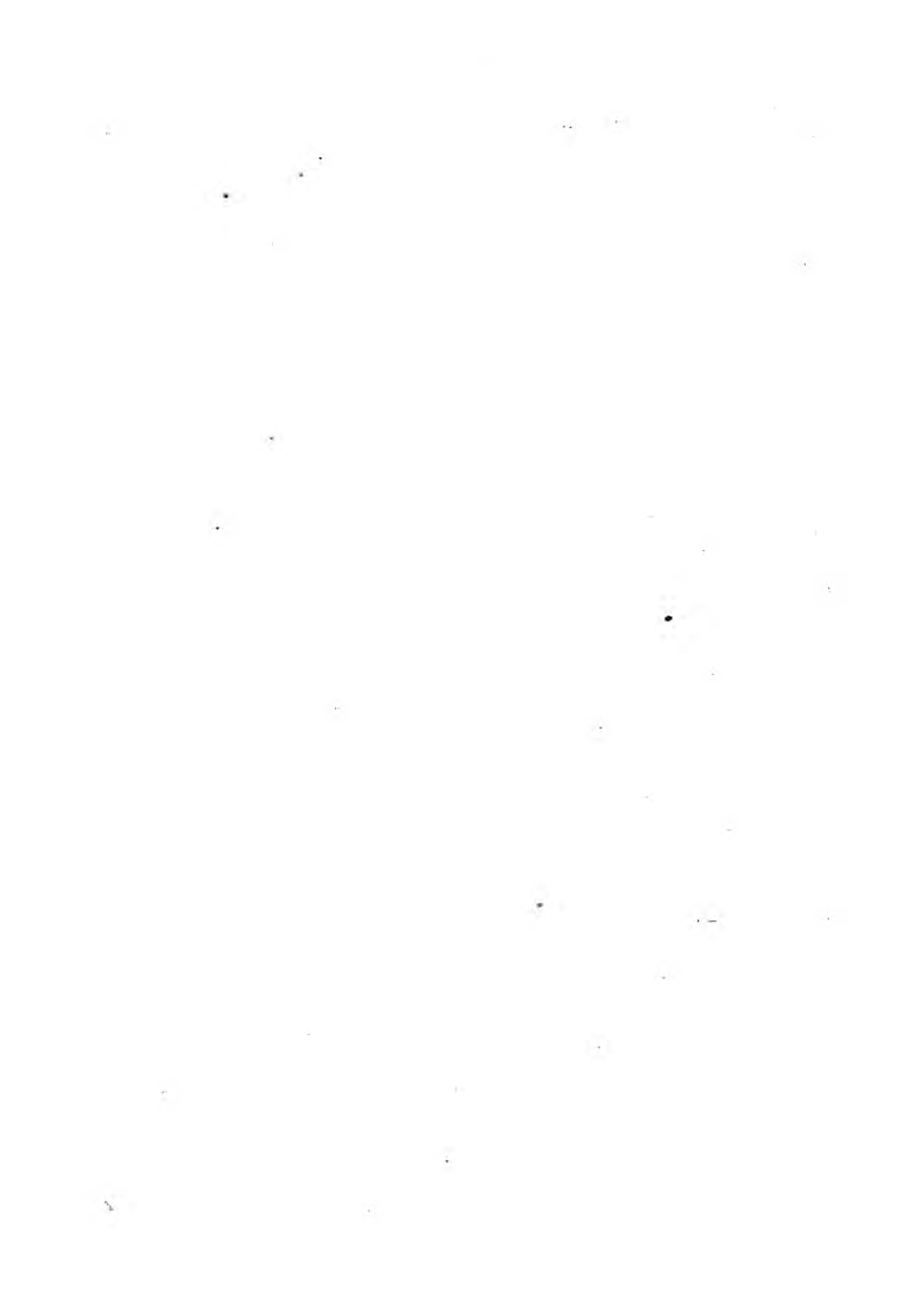
*CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.*



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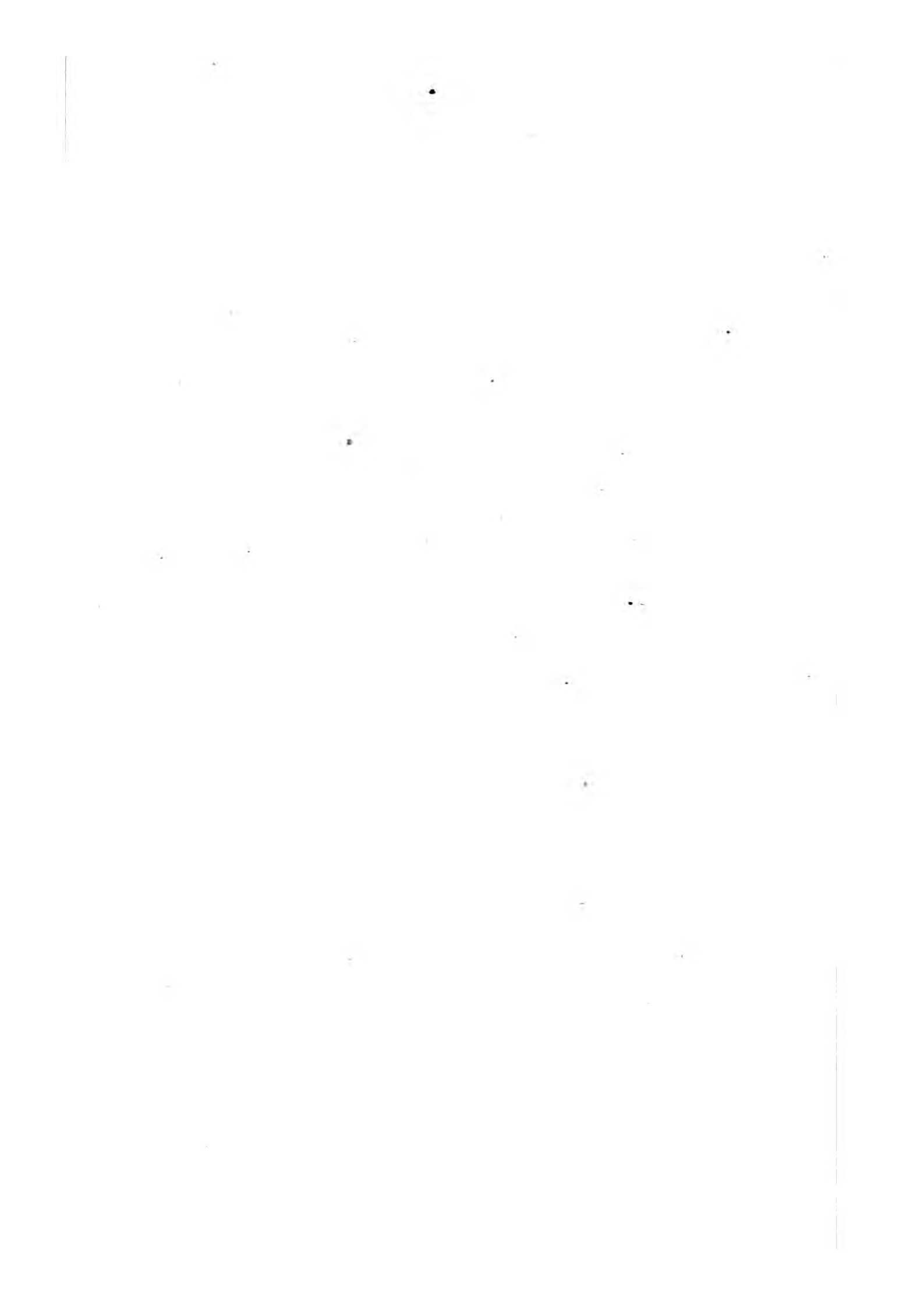
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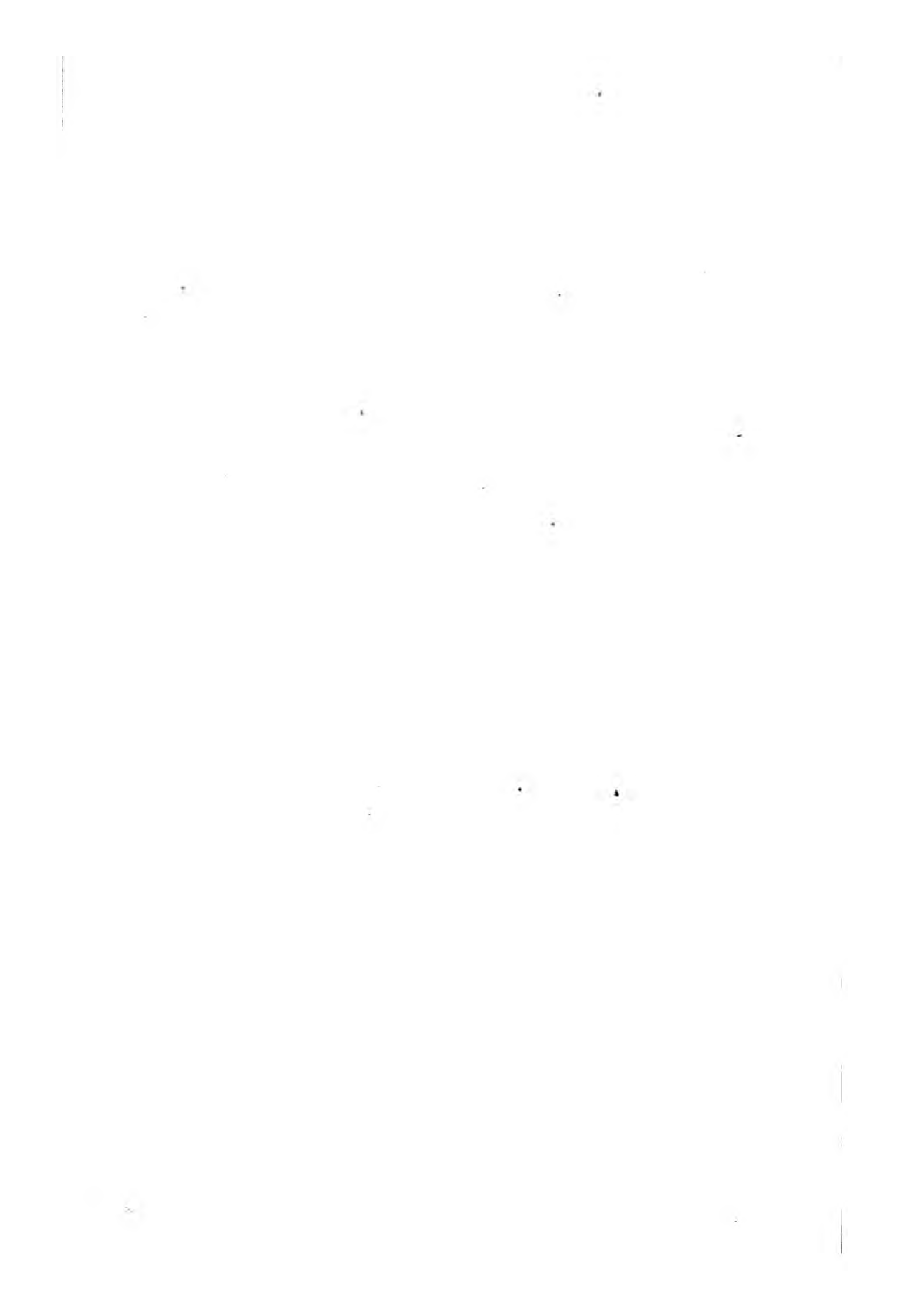
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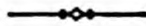


PART SECOND.

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.



HANDBOOK  
OF  
CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.



CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORIC BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE *Christian* history of the beginnings of Christianity tells us that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world—a common designation of the Roman Empire—should be enrolled; and that in consequence Joseph went from Nazareth, which was his home, into the city of David, which was called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to enroll himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him,—and that there in Bethlehem Jesus was born. It tells us likewise that “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa,” in the highpriesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, “the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias,” commonly known as “the Baptist;” and that not long after John began his ministry of Repentance, Jesus Himself, being then about thirty years of

*Luke ii. 1-7.*  
See the Revised  
Version.

*Luke iii.*  
1, 2.

*Luke iii. 23.*



age, began to teach. The personal ministry of Jesus, thus begun, lasted about three years. And from the end of this brief ministry He was represented in the world by men who had been His personal attendants, whom He had instructed, and whom He commissioned to preach His "word," and by one who was converted to the faith of Him some years after His departure, and who ultimately became the foremost preacher of Christ among the non-Jewish nations.

Such is the story of the Christian books, and so far it is plain unquestioned history.

But we shall first of all inquire what of this history, or of the history of the beginnings of our faith, may be gathered from non-Christian sources.

Tacitus. The historian Tacitus was born in the year of our Lord 61 or 62, and died about A.D. 117. His "Annals" begin with the death of Augustus, A.D. 14, and end with the death of Nero, A.D. 68. After a description of the terrible fire at Rome in the tenth of Nero, and sixty-fourth of our Lord, in which a large part of the city was consumed, and after giving an account of the orders for rebuilding and beautifying it, and the methods used to appease the anger of the gods, Tacitus adds: "But neither all human help, nor the liberality of the Emperor, nor all the atonements presented to the gods, availed to avert the infamy the Emperor lay under of having ordered the city to be set on fire. To suppress therefore this common rumour, Nero procured others to be accused, and inflicted exquisite punishment upon those people, who were hated for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians. They had their name from Christ, who was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate, in the reign

See  
*Lardner's*  
*works, vol.*  
*vi. 628, for*  
*the original*  
*Latin.*

of Tiberius. This pernicious superstition, though checked for a while, broke out again, and spread, not only over Judea, the source of this evil, but reached the city also; whither flow from all quarters all things vile and shameful, and where they find shelter and encouragement. At first they only were apprehended who confessed themselves of the sect; afterwards a vast multitude, discovered by them: all were condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enmity to mankind." And then follows a description of the cruelties to which the Christians were subjected—cruelties which led them at last to be commiserated "as people who were destroyed, not out of regard to the public welfare, but only to gratify the savagery of one man."

Of the opinion of Tacitus that Christianity was a pernicious superstition, and of the only crime which he specifies against them—enmity to mankind—we need take no account. Our concern is with the facts which he attests. And these, as well summarized by Lardner, are, "That our Saviour was put to death as a malefactor by Pontius Pilate, procurator under Tiberius; that from Christ the people called Christians had their name and sentiments; that this superstition, or religion, had its rise in Judæa, where also it spread notwithstanding the ignominious death of the Founder of it, and the opposition which His followers met with from the people of the country afterwards; that thence it was propagated into other parts of the world, and as far as Rome, where in the tenth or eleventh year of Nero, and before, Christians were very numerous; and that the professors of this religion were reproached, and hated, and underwent many and grievous sufferings." Certainly, as Dr. Lardner adds, the great number of Christians at

The facts  
attested by  
Tacitus.

Rome at this time, and their sufferings, are very observable.

Let it be noted that the statements of Tacitus in regard to "Christus" and the spread of His religion, are as absolutely and certainly historical as any statements which the most conscientious English historian could make respecting events in England at the beginning of this century. We have the double security of a love of truth and of competent knowledge.

*Dr. William  
Smith's  
Dictionary  
of Greek and  
Roman  
Biography  
and  
Mythology,  
Art.  
"Tacitus."*

"The moral dignity of Tacitus is impressed upon his works," says the writer of a biographical sketch of him; "the consciousness of a love of truth, of the integrity of his purpose." "The materials," says the same writer, "which Tacitus had for his historical writings were abundant: public documents; memoirs, as those of Agrippina; histories; the *Fasti*, *Orationes Principum*, and the Acts of the Senate; the conversation of his friends, and his own experience." There were not only "Acts of the Senate," but Acts of the City or people of Rome, Acts of other cities, and Acts of governors of provinces. These Acts were to Roman authors what our Government archives are to English historians. And to a man in the position of Tacitus, who was the son-in-law of Julius Agricola, famous for his consulship and government of Britain, and who had himself held offices of honour and trust under several Emperors, they were easily accessible. The reign of Tiberius and the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate were as well known to him as if he had been an eye-witness of all that he records.

*Pliny the  
Younger.*

The letters of Pliny, the Younger, contain important information respecting the first Christians. He was the contemporary and friend of Tacitus. In the year A.D. 106 or 107, he was appointed by the Emperor Trajan

to the government of Bithynia, and there he found himself confronted with a difficulty owing to the prevalence of Christianity. He made his appeal, consequently to his master for instructions. And from his letter we gather these facts: 1. That before his arrival in Bithynia, so numerous were the Christians that the temples were almost forsaken, and that there were few purchasers for victims to be offered in sacrifice. The Christians were of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes. 2. This, to Pliny, who has the reputation of having been a mild and benevolent man, was an intolerable state of things, and he required, even with torture, those who were brought before him, to worship the Emperor's image and the statues of the gods. 3. Those who denied that they were Christians, or who, having been Christians, were so no longer, were set at liberty. Those who refused to invoke the gods were sent away to die because of their obstinacy. 4. Notwithstanding all the severity with which he made inquisition, Pliny could discover no proper crime or moral delinquency on the part of the Christians. 5. What he ascertained shall be stated in his own words: "They [those who were charged before him] affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a certain day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God, and bind themselves by an oath [sacramentum]—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. When these things were performed it was their custom to separate, and then to come together to a meal, which they ate in common, without any disorder." On receiving

*See  
Lardner's  
works, vol.  
vi. for  
Pliny's letter  
and Tra-  
jan's reply.*

*The  
Christians in  
Bithynia.*

this account Pliny "judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two maidservants [ancillæ], who were called ministers [*ministrae*, probably deaconesses]." "But," he adds, "I have discovered nothing beside a bad and excessive superstition."

Significant  
points.

The points bearing on our present argument are these : 1. By the end of the first century the Christians were numerous in different parts of the Roman empire,—in Rome according to Tacitus, in the Asiatic province of Bithynia according to Pliny. 2. Who the Christians were was so well known that Pliny does not consider it necessary, when writing to his Emperor, to say one word by way of explanation. Tacitus, in writing history, *did* explain. Pliny was writing a letter to one who needed no explanation. 3. It follows that Christianity was not of yesterday. It must have been in Bithynia for many years to have produced the effects on the idolatry of the region which Pliny attests. And this corroborates the statement of Tacitus that it was some seventy years before this, in the reign of Tiberius, that Christ was crucified. 4. Incidentally, in reporting what the Christians said of themselves, Pliny gives us important information as to how the Christians regarded Christ. "They sang hymns to Him as to God." The words "Quasi Deo," are translated by some, "as to a god," and by others, "as to some god." The literal translation is, "as to God." But, if we admitted any other, the fact would remain, that these Bithynian Christians worshipped Christ, or offered to Him Divine praise. The fear of torture and death could not induce them to worship the image of the Emperor or the statues of the gods, or do aught that savoured of idolatry, but they sang hymns to Christ as to God.

We now combine the testimony of Tacitus and

Pliny. The one tells us of His death as a malefactor in the days of Tiberius ; the other tells us that His followers, according to their own statements, were accustomed to worship Him.

We need not follow this inquiry farther. Even if the Evangelist Luke had not told us, we should have known from the Historian Tacitus, that the Author of our faith lived in the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, and died a shameful death by the sentence of the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate. *There is no obscurity, then, about the origin of Christianity. Its fountain opens under the clear light of an historic age.* The fact is attested by men who were altogether unconscious of the service which their pens were rendering to after ages.

Origin of  
Christianity  
historic.

But where shall we find the history of the "Christus" whose name appears in the Roman annals of Tacitus—the history of His birth, His life, His teaching, His actions? And where shall we find the history of the spread of His name and faith, of which, as a notorious fact, Tacitus and Pliny inform us? Christ must have had a personal history ; the spread of His name and faith must have had a history. Where shall we find it? To whom shall we look as the fit historians? Not certainly to men who regarded Christianity as a pernicious superstition, as did Tacitus and Pliny. Nor to Seneca, illustrious as he was, who was probably, if he thought of the matter at all, of the same mind. His brother Gallio saw nothing in the conflict between Jews and Christians but "a question of words and names," and of the law of the Jews ; and not only did he decline to be judge of such matters, but, magistrate as he was, he "cared for none" of the violence which

To whom  
shall we look  
for the  
history of  
Christ?

Acts xviii.  
14-17.

the Greeks inflicted on the Jews. Seneca and Paul died about the same time, and both fell victims to the same tyrant's rage. But the Stoic philosopher could have no sympathy with the Christian Apostle. He was a wealthy courtier and statesman in the metropolis, while Paul was only a poor and homeless preacher wandering in distant provinces. And they were more widely separated still by the spirit of their several faiths. The proud and self-sufficient Stoic would scarcely "care" even to consider whether Paul's doctrine was worthy of a thought.

*See Bishop Lightfoot on Philippians — Essay on "St. Paul and Seneca."*

To whom then shall we look for a history of the "Christus" who, according to Tacitus, died as a malefactor in the reign of Tiberius, and of the growth of faith in Him, in spite of all opposition, until believers in Him were so numerous, seventy years after, that governors of provinces, like Pliny, were perplexed to know how to deal with them? The answer is obvious: To those who had personal knowledge of Him and of the events which followed His death and alleged resurrection, and who had sympathy with all that bore His name. None but such were competent to write the history. If by industry and painstaking it was possible for non-believers to collect information on the subject, they would still not only lack a motive to undertake the necessary trouble, but would be incapable of correctly representing matters so foreign to their own habits of thought. Only the followers of Christ, and those personally in sympathy with them, could be expected to write the history. And it were incredible that they should neglect to do so. They risked life, and sacrificed all that is commonly valued in this life, to maintain and spread what we now call Christianity. It is not possible that they should have failed to write, for the benefit of their own and after

To His personal followers.

ages, the story of what they believed to be in the truest sense Divine.

Have we then histories that purport to be original records of the Christ, and that were accepted by His earliest followers as written by those who had competent knowledge and a personal faith in what they wrote? We have—in what are known as the Four Gospels, and in that which is a supplement to the Gospels, the book known as the Acts of the Apostles. And the following outline of argument should suffice to establish confidence in these histories.

1. *There are no rival histories.* The Four Gospels are the only histories of Christ that exist or are known to have been ever generally acknowledged as such. Critics may please themselves by cutting out of them what they don't like, and then calling the residuum the true history. But this is a proceeding at once unreasonable and arrogant, and in which those who perpetrate it do not agree among themselves. You may invent a thousand theories, but there is only one history. The Apocryphal Gospels, so called, belong to a later age, are utterly puerile, and are in no sense the rivals of the Canonical Gospels.

No rival histories.

2. The Four Gospels and the Acts are *traceable to the very age in which the events recorded in them were transacted and preached to the world.* It can be proved beyond reasonable question that these writings are not the productions of a later age. But here the proof must be confined to a few sentences.

The Gospels traceable into the first century.

(a) Irenæus describes the four Gospels which were universally received by the Christian Churches of his day as the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, in such a way that no one doubts but that they were the Gospels now in our hands. He likewise describes "The Acts" as written by Luke, the author

*For a full setting forth of the proof, see the author's book—"The Gospels: their Age and Authorship, traced from the Fourth Century into the First."*



**Irenæus.** of the third Gospel. Now Irenæus was born about A.D. 126 and died about A.D. 202. In A.D. 177, he became Bishop in Lyons. But in youth he had sat at the feet of Polycarp in Smyrna, Polycarp having been a personal disciple of the Apostle John; and on becoming Bishop in Lyons he succeeded Pothinus, who was born about A.D. 87, a considerable period before the death of the Apostle John. The Gospels which Irenæus ascribes to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, must have been in existence, and believed to have been written by these authors, from the earliest period of his recollection. They must likewise have been so regarded by his master Polycarp, of whom and of whose teaching he had a distinct recollection when he wrote, and by his predecessor Pothinus. If they had come into existence after the days of Polycarp and Pothinus, or if they were not positively known to have been in existence in their days, Irenæus could not have written of them as being in his time, and having ever been, acknowledged as the writings of those whose names they bear. We thus trace them *into* the first century—Polycarp having been born about A.D. 69, and being at least thirty years of age at the time of the death of his teacher, the Apostle John.

**Justin  
Martyr.**

(*b*) Justin Martyr was born between A.D. 103 and 118, and died A.D. 166 or 167, and was thus the contemporary of Polycarp, who died A.D. 155 or 156, possibly for fifty years, certainly for thirty-eight. Justin quotes largely from "Memoirs" which, he says, were written by Apostles and their companions or followers. He does not name the authors of the "Memoirs;" but the contents of the "Memoirs" which he quotes correspond with the contents of our Gospels, so that, even if they were different and had survived, we

should have substantially the same history of Christ that we have now. But they could not have been different. "Between the *writing* of Justin and the *writing* of Irenæus there cannot have been more than forty years, possibly not more than thirty. That *our* Gospels and *no others* were in the hands of Irenæus and universally accepted as Apostolic, we know. Now, apart from the fact that the memory of Irenæus covered the whole interval between him and Justin, and looking only at the interval of thirty or forty years,—can we imagine it possible that four Gospels existing at the beginning of that period, and read in the assemblies of the Churches, should have dropped out of existence; and that by the end of that period other four Gospels should have taken their place in universal estimation and usage, and *that* without any protest from any Church or writer, without any record of the change, or any hint that such a change had taken place?"

"*The Gospels: their Age and Authorship,*" etc., p. 91.

We have in the testimony of Irenæus and Justin Martyr, not the isolated testimony of individuals, but the testimony of entire Christendom—that is, of the then universal Christian Church—that our Four Gospels had been received as original and authoritative from a period clearly before the end of the first century.

These testimonies not isolated.

(c) This conclusion is further sustained by the fact that by the middle of the second century, if not sooner, translations of the Four Gospels which are in our hands existed in Syriac in the far East, and in Latin among the Roman colonists in Africa. They were made independently of each other; that is, the one was not made from the other. Nor were the two made from the same copies of the great original. This is demonstrable by the character of the trans-

Early translations.

lations. And it follows that the copies from which they were taken must have originated at a date long anterior to themselves, and cannot be reasonably supposed to have been later than the days of the Apostle John.

Our argument might be strengthened by quotations from Polycarp, Quadratus, Clement, and others, which are scarcely explicable except on the supposition that these authors were in possession of our Gospels,—but it is complete without them.

General  
acceptance.

Apostolic  
imprimatur.

3. *Assuming now, as we are entitled to do, that our Gospels were accepted in the first century as genuine histories of Christ—and that no others were—we may be sure of these two things: (a) that they could not have been so accepted unless they were in general agreement with what was already known of Christ by the Churches through the preaching of His Apostles, and (b) that they could not have been so accepted unless they had at least an Apostolic imprimatur.* The history of the opposition to Paul, which is known from those letters of his own which are unquestioned, shows the importance and authority that were attached to the Apostleship in the primitive Church. And in view of it we conclude that it was scarcely possible for a history of Christ to gain the confidence of the Churches without the sanction, direct or indirect, of an Apostle.

Consistent  
with what is  
known  
otherwise.

4. The histories contained in the Gospels are *consistent with what is known of the origin of Christianity from other sources.* The reader has only to recall our quotations from Tacitus and Pliny to see that it is so. The wide diffusion of Christianity in the days of these Roman authors is accounted for by the command of the Master, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” and by the loyal zeal of

the servants to obey the Master's command, as recorded in the "Acts."

5. These histories are *consistent with one another*. They are not one but four. Much ingenuity has been expended on the question whether Matthew or Mark or Luke was the earliest, especially whether Matthew was before Mark or Mark before Matthew. And the most opposite conclusions have been learnedly maintained. The inference is that the three are independent compositions. But diverse as they are in many details they give us One and the same Christ. (a) They all represent Jesus, not as a Rabbi of great learning and spiritual insight, but as a Messenger from God. (b) They all ascribe to Him a supernatural life, a life full of works of supernatural power and goodness. (c) They all indicate that His person was superhuman as well as His works supernatural—that this was claimed by Himself and believed by His disciples. Of this more hereafter.

Consistent  
with one  
another.

6. These histories are *consistent with non-historical* documents which are confessedly contemporary with the beginnings of Christianity. Documents of this order—such as letters, monuments, medals, inscriptions—are confessedly of great importance. Renan regards them as more trustworthy than professed histories. Now, happily we have such documents with which to compare our Gospel histories. There are four letters by the Apostle Paul which all critics confess to be genuine—one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, and one to the Galatians. Of these even Renan says that "they possess absolute authenticity, thorough sincerity, and freedom from legendary corruption." Now these letters of Paul and the Four Gospels are in perfect harmony. The letters do not repeat or recapitulate the facts contained in the

Consistent  
with non-  
historical  
documents.

See, for  
example,  
Rom. i. 3, 4;  
1 Cor. xv.  
3-8.

Gospels—there was no reason why they should,—but they refer incidentally to many of them, and these the most important, as they relate to the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Gospels contain the basis of the entire structure which is built up in the letters. There is not only no discordance between the two sets of documents, but there is the most absolute concord.

Consistent with the general history of contemporary events.

7. The Gospel histories and the Acts are *consistent at the same time with all that is known otherwise of contemporary events and contemporary modes of life*. Relating, as they do, what took place in a Roman province—a province which was the scene of many administrative changes between the reign of Augustus, in which Jesus was born, and the reign of Nero, in which Paul suffered martyrdom—there are very many references which can be tested by Roman history; and it is not too much to say that the more thoroughly these references have been criticised in the light of the acts and decrees of Roman authority, the more literally correct they are found to be. This is a severe test of genuineness. It has detected the spuriousness of many forgeries. But when applied to our Christian histories, it confirms our faith in their genuineness.

Arbitrary criticism.

With all these reasons for faith in our Christian records as genuine contemporary histories of the beginning of Christianity, we have a right to demand on what ground they can be impugned or subjected to suspicion. We know of none. Certain critics, for reasons that are purely speculative and arbitrary, may say—this could not have been or that could not have been. But their conceptions of possibilities and impossibilities cannot be the measure of the credibility

of occurrences for which we have abundant historic evidence. Facts are too strong to be set aside by any man's unbelief or non-belief in them.

At all events this is certain, that the Gospels and the Acts contain the *Christian* account of the beginnings of our faith—that which was believed by the first believers in Jesus Christ and by those who first preached Him to the world. So that our next concern is to ascertain what they believed concerning Him, and how far their conceptions of Him and their faith in Him are justified, not only by direct historic evidence, but also by considerations arising from the specialities of His character and the fruits of His gospel.

## CHAPTER II.

THE AUTHOR OF CHRISTIANITY: WHO AND WHAT HE WAS, ACCORDING TO HIMSELF AND HIS FIRST FOLLOWERS.

POSSESSING genuine and trustworthy histories of the beginnings of Christianity, we open them to ascertain who and what Jesus Christ professed to be, and whom and what His disciples believed Him to be.

The self-assertion of Jesus Christ.

The first thing that strikes a thoughtful reader of the Gospels is the marvellous self-assertion of Jesus Christ—the claims which He made on behalf of, or with regard to, *Himself*. Prophets in former ages never ventured to claim anything for themselves, or to claim any authority other than was involved in the words, “Thus saith the Lord.” But the “Prophet of Nazareth” made *Himself* the centre of all His teaching, and the source of all the blessing which should flow to the world through His ministry. This is attested by every one of the Four Gospels. The Fourth Gospel is pre-eminent in its testimony to this fact; and for this very reason, not on historic grounds, its genuineness is questioned by men who will not accept its “Christ.” But the other Gospels likewise are explicit on the subject. “There are passages in them where Christ pronounces Himself to be greater than the Temple, greater than Solomon, the Lord of

In all the Gospels.

the Sabbath, the Lord of the angels ; where He makes Himself the Dispenser of the forgiveness of sins : where He strictly distinguishes between His own undefiled conscience and our consciousness of sin ; where He attaches to His own work and person the highest externally valid authority in all matters of morals and religion ; where He attributes to Himself, and His return in heavenly glory, the last judgment, and the consummation of the world."

To quote all the passages which bear on this subject would be to quote a large portion of the Gospels. Let a few suffice. The Sermon on the Mount, in which some see only a code of morals, concludes with the extraordinary assertion that Jesus would be the final Judge of those who heard His sayings : "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name ? and in Thy name have cast out devils ? and in Thy name done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." The same Gospel contains another very solemn and remarkable passage, in which Jesus not only claims to be the final Judge but makes the action of man towards Himself the test of character : "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory : and before Him shall be gathered all nations. . . . Then shall the King say, . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me."

*Matt. vii.*  
21, 23.

*Matt. xxv.*  
31-46.

Such claims as these were re-asserted by Jesus in



the most solemn manner before the High Priest, with what we may call His dying breath. And it is worthy of notice that it is not to John, but to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that we owe the record of the fact. “I adjure Thee by the Living God,” the High Priest said, “that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus answered, “Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” For so saying He was immediately charged with blasphemy, and condemned to die. And it was the charge that “He made Himself the Son of God” that led Pilate at last to consent to His death. However imperfectly the Roman governor might understand the charge, he saw plainly that it had reference to a superhuman claim or origin, and asked, “Whence art Thou?” “Art Thou of earth or of heaven? of human or Divine origin?” Jesus had, however, already sufficiently indicated His heavenly origin in answering the question, “Art Thou the King of the Jews?” And further answer would have served no purpose. But if He had been conscious of the untruth of the claim of a special Divine Sonship, honesty and piety would have dictated an immediate disclaimer and explanation. But instead of any such disclaimer, we find Him even on the cross using words which implied that He held the keys of the invisible world. In reply to the malefactor’s prayer, He said, “This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,”—a claim of sovereignty this over both worlds. The terms of the commission which He gave to those who were to propagate His faith in the world, placed the stamp of finality and unchangeableness on the mysterious personal dignity, in union and equality with God, which He had ever asserted for Himself: “All power

*Matt. xxvi.*  
63-66;  
*Mark xiv.*  
61-64;  
*Luke xxii.*  
66-71.

*John xix. 7.*

is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

*Matt.  
xxviii.  
18-20.*

The question now arises, How shall we account for Christ's assertion of these mysterious and superhuman claims ?

*For a fuller  
discussion of  
the matter,  
see the  
author's  
" Pilate's  
Question—  
Whence art  
Thou ? "*

1. *Shall we suppose that He was a conscious deceiver ?*  
No writer, worthy of any consideration, will now venture to say that either Christ or the writers of the Gospels were consciously guilty of falsehood. How could Jesus of Nazareth, if conscious of deliberate fraud and hypocrisy from the beginning to the end of His life, not only profess but sustain a character extraordinary, apparently at least, for moral grandeur and purity, without a word or act or look that should betray its hollowness ? If there be such a thing as a moral impossibility, we have it here. But it is scarcely necessary to deal seriously with this most clumsy method of accounting for the self-asserted claims of Jesus Christ.

A conscious  
deceiver ?

2. *Shall we suppose that Jesus Christ was Himself deceived—self-deceived, by His moral enthusiasm, into the notion that He was the long-expected Messiah ?*  
The result is proof enough to the contrary. Renan himself says, " It has not yet been given to insanity to influence seriously the progress of humanity." We may say the same of self-deception, if indeed such self-deception as is supposed be not insanity. Christ's relation to the Messianic ideas of his time on the one hand, and His relation to the Messianic ideas of the

Self-  
deceived ?

prophets on the other, will be considered at a later point, and it will then be seen that the idea of self-deception supplies no explanation of the position which he assumed and sustained throughout His ministry.

Legendary  
accretions?

3. Shall we suppose that the claims alleged to have been asserted by Jesus Christ are *the accretions of a later age*; in fact, *that Christ did not utter the words that are ascribed to Him*, and that the many tales of strange words found in the Gospels sprang up at a later period, no one knows how? This is the theory, or rather the imagination, of those who regard all that is supernatural in the Gospels as mythical or legendary, and who are credulous enough to suppose that what is called myth or legend produced, as by magic, or by a superhuman instinct, with the aid perhaps of some cunning and imposture, the wonderfully beautiful character which all recognize in the grand Personage who is the subject of the Gospels. As an outline of argument against this dream, for it is nothing more substantial, take the following:—

(a) The natural and the supernatural are so interwoven in the narratives of the Gospels that they cannot be separated. Let any one attempt to separate them and he will find that in rejecting the supernatural he must reject the natural as well. And he will land in the conclusion of that most irreconcilable unbeliever, Strauss, that really we “know nothing” about Jesus. “To pretend to know anything,” he says, “carries us back to the old orthodox position which claims to know everything.” In other words, receive the moral teaching of Christ on the authority of the Gospels, and you must receive all His teaching as represented by that authority. It is not merely

that the natural and the supernatural elements of Christ's life are inextricably interwoven in the narratives, but that even His moral teaching has Himself for its centre. In the Sermon on the Mount He is as supernatural as when He commands the winds and the waves into a great calm.

(b) There is not the slightest historic ground for the supposition that in the beginning Jesus avowed Himself as nothing more than a Rabbi, and that His followers believed in Him only as in a wise "Rabbi,"—as Saul of Tarsus may have believed in the teacher of his youth, Gamaliel. If such had been His original character, some historic trace of it must have survived. But neither in the Gospels nor out of them do we find it.

(c) Myths and legends need time to grow, as well as favouring soil and circumstances; but there is positive evidence, apart from the Gospels, that from the very first Jesus was recognized as superhuman. This evidence is to be found chiefly in those Apostolic letters whose genuineness, we have seen, is unquestioned, and which Renan declares to be absolutely free from the legendary.

In the very beginning of that to the Romans we find that Paul regarded Jesus Christ, not as his fellow-servant, but as his Lord; that this Lord of the Apostles was possessed of a twofold nature, being the Son of David and the Son of God; and that His higher nature was placed beyond doubt or question by His resurrection from the dead. In a later part of the same letter the same Apostle says, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be

*Rom. i. 1-4.*

*Rom. xiv.  
8-12.*

Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Here we have Jesus Christ represented as the Lord of all and the Judge of all; our standing before the judgment seat of Christ is represented as giving an account of ourselves to God; and an Old Testament passage in

*Isa. xlv. 22,*  
*23.*

which Jehovah says, "I am God, and there is none else," is quoted in proof, or, if you will, in illustration, of the statement that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ*. What need we further witness that the author of the letter to the Christian Church in Rome, recognized the very highest claims which the Gospels ascribe to the Prophet of Nazareth?

His other letters are equally explicit. In the first to the Church in Corinth we find that, according to

*1 Cor. ii. 8;*  
*xv. 47;*  
*viii. 6.*

Paul, Christ is "the Lord of glory," "the Lord from heaven," "by whom are all things." In the same letter Paul summarizes the gospel which he preached throughout the world thus: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." In his second letter

*1 Cor. xv.*  
*1-4.*

to the same Church, Paul says, "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." And there, too, we have words which associate Christ with God, in a manner that is nothing less than blasphemous, if Christ be only a man: "The grace of the

*2 Cor. v. 10.*

Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.” 2 Cor. xiii.  
14.

Further quotation is unnecessary. To disprove the allegation or suggestion that the narratives which represent Christ as claiming a superhuman character are the products of a later age, when legend ascribed to Christ a character which He did not claim for Himself, it is enough thus to show that a superhuman character did not begin to be ascribed to Him in a later age, but was ascribed to Him *from the beginning*. For Paul's testimony carries us back to the very beginning. The earliest of the letters we have quoted was written about twenty-three years after the death of Christ (A.D. 56). But “the faith of the Son of God” which they represent was the faith which he preached from the beginning of his ministry, and thus we are carried back to within three or five years of the death of Christ. He says he received it by revelation, and in preaching it he conferred not with flesh and blood. From the  
beginning. Moreover we have through him the testimony of Peter, James, and John, whom he visited in Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and whom he found one with him in the faith which he preached. See Gal. i.  
and ii. These were the most attached and most intimate disciples of the Master, and, in giving the right hand of fellowship to Paul, they put their seal on his representations of what the Master was. Gal. ii. 9.

In such letters as those of Paul we have no right to expect, and we do not expect, to find minute quotations of the words of Christ. Enough that we find in them such representations of Christ Himself as correspond with and justify the words ascribed to Him in the Gospels. But we find one instance in which the occasion of writing led to an exact quotation of the words of Christ. The abuses connected with the

observance of the Lord's Supper in Corinth led Paul to repeat in writing what he had already "delivered" to them in his preaching. And in his recital of the original institution of the Supper, he ascribes to Christ these words: "Take, eat [the bread]: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me:"—"This cup is the new Testament [or covenant] in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." Now, in all the Gospels we have no sayings ascribed to Christ more significant of mysterious superhuman claims than these. "In remembrance of *Me*." Why remember *Him*? If only a devout Rabbi or holy prophet, He would have hidden Himself behind His mission and work. Moses dared not to connect himself thus with the institution of "the Lord's Passover." Any such words as "In remembrance of *Me*" are not found in the record. We cannot conceive of one who, notwithstanding his greatness and the great works which were wrought by him, was only a "servant," and a "faithful servant," attempting to place himself thus in the foreground of an ordinance which was designed to commemorate a Redemption wrought by God. But what Moses could not do, Jesus Christ did. According to the Apostle Paul in those very epistles which are confessedly his, the work of Jesus Christ was a Redemption, a spiritual Redemption, a Redemption in which all mankind are interested. And the commemoration of it in the Lord's Supper stood in the same relation to it as did the Passover to the Redemption from Egypt. And yet the same Apostle tells us that Jesus Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of *Me*." The Apostle, then, must have understood Jesus to claim that He was, not as Moses, the mere servant, the mere human instrument of the Redemption, but Himself the Redeemer.

1 Cor. xi.  
23-26.

"In remembrance of  
Me."

Exod. xii.  
1-28.

Heb. iii. 5, 6.

Rom. iii. 24;  
1 Cor. i. 30;  
Gal. iii. 13,  
iv. 5.

1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

Nor should we overlook the mysterious character which Jesus Christ, according to Paul, ascribed to His own death : “This is My body, which is broken for you,” “This cup is the new Testament in My blood.” It is impossible to overlook the correspondence between these words and the words of Moses when he had sprinkled the blood of sacrifice on the people,—“Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you.” “As often as ye eat this bread,” the Apostle said, “and drink this cup, ye do shew [or, as in the Revised Version, “ye proclaim ”] the Lord’s death till He come.” Jesus, then, chose a symbolic representation of His *death* as the most fitting commemoration of *Himself*,—a conclusive proof that Jesus regarded His death not as His shame but as His glory, and that, of all events and incidents connected with His person, His dying was that which it was of most consequence for the world to remember.

Mysterious  
character of  
His death.

*Exod. xxiv.*  
8.  
*1 Cor. xi. 26.*

There is another New Testament book which the most unbelieving critics confess to be the writing of an Apostle—the Apocalypse. Denying (without reason) that John wrote the Fourth Gospel, they confess that he wrote the Book of Revelation ; and, in the words of one of them, they confess that “it possesses the greatest value as an indication of John’s views,” and that “it is most interesting as an illustration of the religious feeling of the period.” To this book, then, apart from all theories of its interpretation or religious authority, we may appeal on the question of fact. Were those lofty conceptions of the person of Christ which we find in the Gospels, and which, according to these Gospels, Christ Himself asserted, entertained by the immediate followers of Christ, or were they post-apostolic, the growth of an after age?

The Book of  
Revelation.



The answer is to be found in the very first chapter—  
*Rev. i, 5, 6, 8, 17, 18.* “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 for ever and ever.” “I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” “He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last, the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I live for evermore; and have the keys of Hades and of death.” The whole book rests upon, and is pervaded with, these views of the personal glory and rulership of Christ. In the Fourth Gospel, there is nothing higher said *about* Christ by its author, or recorded as said by Christ about Himself, than we have here. And even if we make that Gospel of none effect, we have in the Apocalypse evidence that the Apostle to whom the Gospel is ascribed, was acquainted with and held those exalted views of Christ which the Gospel contains. These views, then, cannot be relegated to a post-Apostolic age. We have not a scrap from the pen of “the disciple whom Jesus loved” to indicate that he regarded his Master as only a supremely wise Rabbi, but much, very much, to show that he could adopt as his own the words which he ascribes to Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

*See, for example,  
 Ch. v. 9-14;  
 vii. 10, 17;  
 xix. 11-16.*

In reply to those who ascribe the supernatural claims of Christ as we find them in the Gospels to a later age, and regard them as legendary, the products of the superstitious imaginations of those who did not know Christ personally, we thus *prove* that these claims date from the time of Christ Himself. We *prove* this, we say, because for the sake of argu-

ment we are content to put the Gospels aside and to appeal to documents whose genuineness is not challenged, four letters written by the Apostle Paul, and one book written by the Apostle John. From these we *know* that the most intimate personal disciples of Christ understood their Master to claim for Himself all that the Gospels say that He claimed; and in that character, and in that alone, they preached Him to the world. And we know that an Apostle whose conversion took place only three or five years after the death of Christ preached Him among all nations as One whose Divine Sonship was attested by His resurrection from the dead, and who, though rich in a pre-existent state, became poor for our sakes, that we through His poverty might be made rich. The dreamings of a later age added nothing to the dignity and supernatural claims, which the first age and the first disciples ascribed to Jesus Christ. This must be taken as an established historical fact.

*Rom. i. 3, 4.*

*2 Cor. viii. 9.*

And there are critics of the Rationalist school who confess it.

The conclusion to which this chapter brings us is this—that the Superhuman Christ of the Gospel records is an Historical reality—that He was, and that He was all that He professed to be. By this conclusion we mean to exclude (1) the supposition that the character ascribed to Him in the Gospels is a fiction or myth, intentional or unintentional, of a later age; and (2) the supposition that He was in any sense, or in any degree, deceived or deceiving.

## CHAPTER III.

THE GOSPEL PORTRAITURE OF JESUS CHRIST—  
INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF ITS REALITY.

The Gospel  
Portraiture a  
fact.

IN the argument of this chapter we shall not assume the truth of the Gospels, or that the Personage whose history they profess to tell ever existed. We shall deal only with the fact that in these Gospels we find a professed history; and that this history embodies a certain portrait or character, which we shall endeavour to study with a view to determine, from internal evidence, whether it be fictitious or whether it has been drawn from a life. "We take up the account of Christ in the New Testament just as we would any other ancient writing, or as if it were a manuscript just brought to light in some ancient library. We open the book, and discover in it four distinct biographies of a certain remarkable character called Jesus Christ."

Real or  
fictitious?

Was it a real character, and a superhuman character, or was it an invention?

Christ's  
childhood.

Two of the four Biographies ascribe the birth of Jesus Christ to a miracle, and the others imply it. Of His childhood and early manhood they say but little. But that little gives us the impression of a child and youth of the purest excellence. "The Child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." He "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." There

*Luke ii.*  
*40, 52,*  
*Revised*  
*Version.*

is no attempt to throw an air of romance around the beginning of the life of the Man Jesus—nothing but this plain characterizing of what He was.

In the history of the three years of public ministry ascribed to Jesus Christ the biographers rarely, so rarely that we might say never, make any remark about Him, or any comment on what He did or said, or on what others said and did in relation to Him. They tell or profess to tell what He taught, what works He performed, what and how He suffered. Anything more artless than the structure of their compositions, or more calm and sober than the style in which they write, cannot be imagined. And the impression which their histories give us of the character of Jesus is due wholly to the portrait itself, not to the painters. Now what is that impression? If there be one thing more than another, outside the region of pure mathematical demonstration, about which men are agreed, it is the beauty, the grandeur, the nobility, of this character. Some of the most eloquent *eulogia* pronounced upon it, have been written by men who would not call themselves Christians. Its brightness has constrained a homage which, on the supposition of a fictitious or of a purely natural personality, is almost idolatrous. Even when exception is taken to the worshipful spirit in which it is regarded by others, it is with bated breath, and with some trembling lest holy ground should be profaned.

History  
without  
comment.

*Eulogia* by  
unbelievers.

In Jesus, according to Rousseau, the greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people on earth." "Where," said Strauss, "shall we find, in such beauty as we find it in Jesus, that mirroring purity of soul, which the fury of the storm may agitate but cannot

Rousseau.

Strauss.

cloud?" "The teaching of Jesus," says the author of "Supernatural Religion," "carried morality to the sublimest point attained or attainable by humanity. The influence of His religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity and elevation of His own character." "It is Christ, rather than God," says John Stuart Mill, "whom Christianity has held up to believers as the pattern of perfection for humanity." "It is difficult," says W. R. Greg, "without exhausting superlatives even to unexpressive and wearisome satiety, to do justice to our intense love, reverence, and admiration for the character and teachings of Jesus; we regard Him not as the perfection of the intellectual or philosophic mind, but as the perfection of the spiritual character; as surpassing all men at all times in the closeness and depth of His communion with the Father. In reading His sayings, we are holding converse with the wisest, purest, noblest Being that ever clothed thought in the poor language of humanity. In studying His life, we feel that we are following the footsteps of the highest ideal yet presented to us on earth."

Author of  
"Supernatural  
Religion."

John Stuart  
Mill.

W. R. Greg.

No ex-  
aggeration.

Complete-  
ness and  
symmetry of  
character.

The student of the Gospels knows that there is no exaggeration in these sayings. Jesus Christ stands not merely above but apart from the most honoured men, even of Bible story. With a faith that never failed as did that of Abraham; with a meekness that never failed as did that of Moses; with a goodness that never failed as did that of David; with a wisdom that never failed as did that of Solomon; with a courage that never failed as did that of Elijah; with a patience that never failed as did that of Job; with a goodness that never failed as even Daniel was conscious that his did; there was a harmony and completeness in His

character which is found nowhere else. "Meekness and majesty, firmness and gentleness, zeal and prudence—composure and warmth, patience and sensibility, submission and dignity, sublime sanctity and tender sympathy, piety that rose to the loftiest devotion and benevolence that could stoop to the meanest sufferer, intense abhorrence of sin and profound compassion for the sinner,"—all these are rays of the acknowledged glory of His character. He was "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

This Jesus, it should not be overlooked, did not live the life of a recluse to protect and cultivate His soul, but in daily conflict with the sins and sorrows of an evil world. He was brought into relation with every class and character, soldier and priest, lawyer and rabbi, prince and peasant, Pharisee and Sadducee, the devotee of the temple and the money-changer of the market-place. And, studied and scanned in all these relations, "the universal consent is," in the words of Henry Rogers, "that *there* is ONE who is absolutely superior to circumstances—ONE on whose serene and lofty spirit the changes that affect sublunary interests can produce no permanent or injurious impressions—ONE for whom His friends never had to make an apology, for whom the impartial critic needs not to demand any forbearance, in whom the keenest-sighted of His enemies can find no fault—ONE whom no transient weakness from within, no cunning temptation from without, could divert for a single moment from His own career of virtue, beneficence, and purity—ONE, in short, who, tried by the loftiest standards of spiritual excellence, must be pronounced, in the language of a disciple who had seen as much of Him as any man while He was on earth, 'without blemish and without spot.'"

Not a recluse.

According to Henry Rogers.

1 Peter i. 19.

By the words "without blemish and without spot," the Apostle Peter meant a great deal more than that Jesus attained what ordinary writers might call unparalleled excellence. He and his brother Apostles believed Jesus to be absolutely sinless. And such is the impression which we derive from His history in the Gospels. That He was sinless is not asserted by any of the Gospel historians, but it is the inevitable inference from what they tell of Him. These things are very observable, (a) He saw into the sinful condition of mankind most clearly. Looking beneath the surface, He pronounced the heart of man to be the fountain of all the corruptions which appear in his life. Men, all men, Pharisees as well as those whom they reputed "sinners," were "lost," and He had come to save them. (b) He insisted earnestly and constantly on inward purity of heart as well as on outward purity of life. This is one of the most marked features of His teaching. Scribes and Pharisees, whose "righteousness" was all outward, were but as "whited sepulchres" in His judgment. And the best of them must be "born again" in order to a true holiness. (c) But with all this He was Himself not only unconscious of sin, but conscious of a purity which was pleasing and always pleasing to His Father. He taught others to pray for forgiveness, but He never asked forgiveness for Himself. There is one long prayer of His on record—in the seventeenth chapter of St. John,—but there is not a breath of contrition in it from beginning to end, not a sigh of conscious shortcoming or imperfection; but, on the contrary, "I have glorified Thee on the earth. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Within a few hours after, we find Him in Gethsemane, praying to the Father with strong crying and tears, but all His agony fails to

*2 Cor. v. 21;*  
*Heb. vii. 26;*  
*1 John iii. 5;*  
*1 Pet. ii. 22*

Sinless.

His  
knowledge  
of sin.

*John iii. 3, 6.*

Himself  
without.

*See also John*  
*viii. 23, 24,*  
*29, 34-37,*  
*44, 45, 46.*  
*John xiv. 30.*

No con-  
fession of  
sin.

wring from Him one word of confession of sin. The mystery of the trouble of His soul in that terrible hour is not relieved or explained by the slightest indication of conscious demerit. "We feel that in this one life, His religious character throughout has the remarkable distinction that it proceeds from a point exactly opposite to that which is the root or radical element in the religious character of men. Human piety begins with repentance. It is the effort of a being, implicated in wrong and writhing under the stings of guilt, to come unto God. The most righteous, or even the self-righteous, men blend expressions of sorrow and vows of new obedience with their exercises. But Christ, in the character given Him, never acknowledges sin. It is the grand peculiarity of His piety, that He never regrets anything He has done or been ; expresses nowhere a single feeling of compunction, or the least sense of unworthiness. On the contrary, He boldly challenges His accusers in the question, 'Which of you convinceth Me of sin?' and even declares, at the close of His life, in a solemn appeal to God, that He has given to men, unsullied, the glory divine that was deposited in Him."

In  
Gethsemane.

*Bushnell's  
Nature and  
the Super-  
natural,  
Chap. X.*

"We feel," says Godet, "that in this one life remorse has no place. And this fact is so much the more remarkable and decisive, in proportion as Jesus was more humble than other men, and His conscience more sensitive than theirs. The more advanced we are in the life of holiness, the more painfully do we feel the stains of sin. If the slightest defilement had existed in Him, He would have been more affected by it than we are by the gravest faults into which we fall."

*Godet.*

We are not now assuming the historic truth of these statements. We are only setting forth the portrait



Consciously  
sinless. which the Gospels, as a fact, give us of the Jesus Christ whose life they profess to relate. And it is, we see, the portrait of a consciously sinless man.

*See Chap. II.*  
Consciously  
superhuman. It is likewise the portrait of a consciously super-human man. This is implied in all those prerogatives which, we have seen, He claimed for Himself. There is scarcely a conversation or a discourse of His recorded which it does not underlie. We find it in the *Matt. vii. 21-27.* Sermon on the Mount as distinctly as in the Fourth Gospel. In the beginning of His ministry He accepted the title of "the Son of God" given Him by Nathanael, *John i. 49.* while in the end of His ministry He asserted for Himself this grand distinctive title. In such sayings as *Matt. xxvi. 63-66.* "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," a super-human personality is implied as certainly as in such *Matt. xi. 28.* mysterious sayings as, "Before Abraham was, I am." *John viii. 58.* This is an essential part of the Gospel portrait of Jesus Christ. You cannot cancel it without destroying the portrait altogether.

Of His claims to the long predicted Messiahship we shall speak more particularly in a later chapter. Enough at present that the Gospel portraiture is professedly that of "Him who was to come."

*John i. 41, 49; iv. 25, 26.*  
*Matt. ii. 1-6.*  
*Luke ii. 11; vii. 19-23.*  
His  
kingship.  
*Mark xvi. 15.*  
*Matt. xxviii. 19.*  
Divine  
ambition. There is one point with reference to the Kingship ascribed to Him, and claimed by Him, to which we call attention now. May we call it His marvellous ambition, or His Divine ambition? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Make disciples of "all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "All the world"—"all nations." The Nazarene carpenter, who

had never travelled beyond the borders of a land which was utterly insignificant in extent, speaks of all the world and all nations with all the calmness of a conscious right to rule over them: "Teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I command you.*" Then "all the world"—"all nations" are to be brought under His rule by truth, by "teaching." Such was to be the extent of His empire and such the means of its establishment! "Art Thou a King?" said Pilate. "Thou sayest that I am a King," was the answer. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Never was such honour done to truth as in those words of Christ. To the disciples, however, the charge given to them imposed an apparently impossible task. Impossible—but that He who gave it said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Lo, I am with you alway." May we not well call His ambition Divine as well as marvellous? Ambition to bring all nations into subjection to Himself, the Nazarene, ambition which claimed "all power in heaven" as well as on earth to effect it. But marvellous as it is, it is as natural as it is supernatural, if we believe the Gospel narrative, that He had now risen from the dead and was about to ascend to the glory of Heaven.

Conquest by truth.

*John xviii.*  
37.

Charge to His disciples  
—How not impossible.

It was not now, however, for the first time, that Jesus indicated a consciousness that the wide world was the sphere of His kingdom. When He had nowhere to lay His head, He spoke of the world as the field in which He, the Son of Man, sowed His seed, and of Himself as the final Judge of all mankind. Even when He stood in apparent helplessness before the Sanhedrim, He spoke of Himself as sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

*Matt. xiii.*  
37-41; *xxv.*  
32.

*Matt. xxvi.*  
64.

These representations belong essentially to the Gospel portraiture of Jesus Christ. They involve these two wonders specially: (*a*) That one, in the position of a Galilean peasant, should contemplate the moral subjugation of the world to Himself; and (*b*), that a Jew of that period should contemplate the enlightenment of the world and its restoration to God without conformity to Judaic laws.

In the Gospel portraiture of Jesus Christ, then, we have these features definitely marked—1. Its marvellous moral beauty; 2. Its absolute sinlessness; 3. Its avowed Divinity; and 4. Its assumption of universal sovereignty.

True or  
Imaginary?

What shall we now say to these things? Have they the witness in themselves that they are true, or is it possible that they are imaginary? Rousseau, who cannot be suspected of a bias in favour of Christianity, answered this question long ago: "It is more inconceivable that a number of individuals 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 its truth are so striking and inimitable, that *the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.*"

Rousseau  
quoted.

Reality  
proved.

In support of this conclusion, the following remarks are submitted.

Altogether  
unique.

1. *The character of Jesus Christ as it appears in the Gospels, and as we have sketched it, is altogether unique—that is, it stands alone in the history of the world, without any, either before or since, that may be classified with it as of the same order. This is true, even if we take into account only its marvellous purity and*

elevation, its world-wide sympathies, and its combination of righteousness with profound compassion and loving well-doing. And its truth may be tested by the simple process of imagining any other name, the most honoured that can be found either in Bible or other history, placed alongside the name of Jesus Christ as His equal or His like,—let it be the greatest of monarchs, the greatest of prophets, or the greatest of moralists. It is felt at once that Jesus must stand alone. And those nearest to Him, and most capable of appreciating His superiority, will be first to adopt the words of One who is described as “more than a prophet,”—“His shoes’ latchet we are not worthy to unloose.”

Even in its  
purity.

But the uniqueness, the absolute aloneness, of the character described in the Gospels, becomes more obvious when we add to its general moral elevation its pronounced sinlessness. We may say boldly that it never entered into the heart of man to conceive the existence of a sinless man, far less to embody the idea of such a man in the story of an actual life. History and fiction will be searched in vain for a man who, through life, carried with him the consciousness of a perfect conformity to the will of God, as Jesus is represented to have done. Men with low conceptions of what the law of God requires, ignorant of themselves as of duty, and self-satisfied as the proudest Pharisee, may be found without number. But a man with anything like Christ’s conception of what sin and holiness are, conscious of being without sin, and acting through life a part against which no charge of sin could ever be brought, has not yet been found. *In this respect Jesus still stands alone.* It is admitted that sinlessness in man, if it be found, must be supernatural. And it is likewise admitted that while history, apart

In its  
pronounced  
sinlessness.

Impossible  
to act the  
part of a  
sinless man.

from the Gospels, contains no record of a sinless man, fiction has never ventured to imagine and never ventured to portray such a character.

Crowning evidence of uniqueness.

When we add to this the *superhuman* personality ascribed to Christ in the Gospels, and the mission ascribed to Him and with which He regarded Himself as charged, we give the crowning evidence of the uniqueness of the character which is embodied in Gospel story. Such monstrosities as are to be found in heathen mythologies—vile as well as monstrous—do not admit of a moment's comparison with it.

The "age" cannot account for this portrait.

2. *We can find nothing in the age in which Jesus lived to account for that which distinguishes Him from all the world beside.* "Great men," we are told, "are the representative men; they embody in a distinct, visible form, and proclaim in an audible, unmistakable tone, the instincts, the aspirations, which are semi-dormant in the hearts of the noblest and best of the people of their epoch, and which struggle in vain for utterance." But Jesus Christ did not reflect the humanity of His age, and did not echo its voice, not even that of the "noblest and best" of its people.

The age corrupt.

The age was corrupt and superstitious to the core. As in the days of Isaiah, "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there was no soundness in it." And of such an age Jesus could not have been the natural product, nor could such an age even conceive the character with which the Gospels invest Him.

Its various influences.

If we look more closely at the various influences which in that age might contribute to the formation of character, we shall come to the same conclusion. These may be regarded as Jewish, Greek, and Roman.

Jewish influences.

As to the Jewish influences of that age, the reader of the New Testament can judge for himself. It will

strike him at once that Jesus, instead of being in accord with them, is in perpetual antagonism to them. Whether we look at the common people, so far as we know them, or at particular classes of them, religious or political—Pharisee, Sadducee, and Essene—Herodian and Zealot—we find Him distinguished from them all, without one speciality that can be called theirs.

Judaism, even at its best, could not produce and cannot explain the character of Jesus Christ. “We cannot by any known law of heredity explain its origin as a possible Jewish face. There were elements in the life of Jesus which were not of Jewish origin. The laws of descent fail utterly to account for the coming of Jesus as a mere Hebrew child. He was unlike His mother and His brethren—so unlike that His brethren did not understand Him, and His mother wist not what He would do. Though He grew to manhood in a quiet Israelitish home, no man ever thinks of calling Him a child of Abraham. Though living all His life among His father’s people, He never became a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Though inheriting the traditions of Israel, the Son of David was known as the Son of Man. Though never walking beyond the mountains of His native country, He lived a life which belongs to the whole world. The contrast between Jesus’ character and the fixed Jewish type appears at once when we view beside it the greatest of the prophets who came just before Him, or the chief of the Apostles who followed after Him. We cannot mistake the manner, the garb, the voice of the Israelite in the Baptist. . . . In freedom from distinctively Jewish characteristics, Jesus surpasses even the Apostle, whose Hebrew habits had become most thoroughly revolutionized. St. Paul, long after he

Newman  
Smith  
quoted.

Contrast  
between  
Jesus and a  
character-  
istic  
Israelite.

had become accustomed to speak of himself as a new man, to whom all things had become new, still shows incidental signs of his Hebrew descent. The Israelite appears, every now and then, in the Christian. . . . But such inborn marks of nationality, which manifest themselves unconsciously in St. Paul, never attract our attention in the Son of man; and that, too, although the portraiture of Him was drawn by rude Jewish hands."

Gentile influences.

Suppose we look beyond Judæa for an explanation of the character ascribed to Jesus Christ, shall we find Gentile influences more adequate than Jewish to account for it, either as a reality or as an invention? "Does the portrait of Christ, as we now behold it, present any real analogy to the aspirations of heathendom? The heroes of all nations, as embodied in their works of fiction, will be found to be simply the expression of the national ideal. Is the portrait of Christ the expression of the heathen ideal? The first point of inquiry is, What are the ideals of heathendom? As they appear chronologically on the page of history, they may be reduced to four—physical strength, intellectual power, æsthetic culture, and regal majesty."

Four Gentile ideals.

George Matheson, B.D., in the *Contemporary Review*, Nov. 1878.

"Does any one of these ideals," asks an able writer on "the Originality of the Character of Christ," "or do all of them united, suffice to explain that Christian conception which is the essence of the Gospel narrative? If the character of Christ, as there delineated, can be referred to any of them singly, or accounted for by a combination of them all, we shall then be forced to admit that there is nothing in that character above the powers of human creation. But if, on the other hand, the Gospel conception of Christ refuses to

coalesce with these ideals ; if it shows on many points not only an important difference from them but a positive antagonism to them ; if the longer we compare them we are the more impressed with the belief that they belong to separate orders of thought, we shall be driven to the conclusion that nothing in heathendom with which we are acquainted was adequate to the Christian portraiture."

Antagonism  
to these  
ideals.

The only one of the four ideals named which has the semblance of likeness to anything that is found in Christ, is that of regal majesty. But the semblance is only in name. "My kingdom is not of this world" would have been as unintelligible to the representatives of Assyria and Babylon as it was to that of Rome. "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself," said Napoleon Bonaparte in St. Helena, "founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love ; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him." It was not from the kings of the earth that Jesus derived His conception of "Regal Majesty," or that those who wrote of Him derived the conception which they ascribed to Him.

John xviii.  
36.

Napoleon  
Bonaparte.

Nor was it from the age that the idea of Godhead in Christ was derived. That the Roman Emperors did demand for themselves, and for some others, divine honours, is certain. Tacitus tells us of a city which was deprived of its freedom for being unwilling to worship Augustus. But there is no proper analogy between a heathen apotheosis and the Incarnation of the Son of God. It may be confidently affirmed that the citizens of Rome who bowed down before their Emperors as gods, did not believe that they were gods. The homage was rendered not to the Divine but to the Despotic. The Christians were content to

The "Incar-  
nation" not  
derived from  
the spirit of  
the age.

Not from the  
"apotheosis"  
of emperors.



die rather than burn one grain of incense on the altar of the mightiest Cæsar. And the reason why the Roman Christians worshipped Christ while they refused to worship Cæsar, was, not that the character of the one was beautifully pure while the character of the other was vile and corrupt, but that they regarded the One as very God Incarnate, while they regarded the other as only a man.

Nor from  
their  
Judaism.

Nor were they led to this by the Judaism of their age and education. It is well known that from the time of the Babylonish captivity, the Jewish people were thoroughly purged of those idolatrous proclivities which had often betrayed them into apostasy from Jehovah. And at no period of their history was their spirit more intensely anti-idolatrous, more intolerant of anything that bore the semblance of an encroachment on the prerogative of the One Living God, than in the age of Christ's appearance among men. The Nazarene cannot say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," without exciting the angry cry, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" The utterance of words which seem to claim equality with God is at once provocative of tumult, and endangers His life; and when other charges against Him fail to interest or move the populace, the charge of blasphemy, in that He has called Himself the Son of God, awakens a fanaticism which will be satisfied with nothing short of His death.

The hypothesis which would ascribe the "Deification of Christ" to the spirit of the age is thus at fault at every point.

The Portrait  
proved real  
by the unity  
of the four-  
fold  
Biography.

3. There is *another consideration* which renders it certain that the portrait of Christ in the Gospels is not an invention or a fiction of any kind, but a reality—the true portrait of a true person—and *that is, the unity*

*of the fourfold biography.* That one mind could have conceived, and produced by its own genius, the character which we find in the Gospels, is not credible; that four minds should have conceived it simultaneously and separately, would be a miracle of a kind which finds no parallel in either the Old or the New Testament. Three of the Gospels, we are entitled to assume at present, were written independently of each other and at periods very near to each other; while the fourth is founded on them only in the sense that it is supplementary to them. It omits those considerable portions of the life of Christ with which the others are mainly occupied; and in the portion in which it traverses the same ground with the others, that which relates to the death and resurrection of Christ—it is evidently not based on what the others contain, but on information either possessed personally by the writer or acquired independently.

Inde-  
pendence of  
the separate  
histories.

Now, it is the same Christ, the same character, that we find portrayed by these four writers. Let each of four men take one of the four Gospels and make it his exclusive study; and then let them hold conference as to the answer they should give to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" And they would be found of one mind. Each could tell the others much that would be new to the others, both sayings and doings. But each could say, The Christ of my Gospel was full of grace and truth; most loving and most pure; performing works which no other man ever did; speaking with a wisdom which astonished priests and people; professing to have come from God and to be returning to God; claiming attributes and powers which, if not blasphemously claimed, must be Divine; seemingly humble and inculcating humility as a grace pleasing to God, and yet speaking of

Illustrative  
supposition.

We find the  
same Christ.

Himself as no prophet had ever done before, as if all things in heaven and on earth had their centre in Him ; calling Himself the Son of God, and allowing others so to call Him ; dying by the united verdict of the Jewish Sanhedrim and the Roman governor ; yet mysteriously intimating that His blood was shed for the remission of the sins of men ; and then, on the morning of the third day, rising from the dead and appearing to His old disciples, who were to be His witnesses to the world. In other words, the four students would declare with one accord that they had found the same Christ in all the Gospels—the same in His spotless purity and practical beneficence ; the same not only in His authority as divinely inspired but in His superhuman personal dignity ; and the same in His avowed mission on earth. A comparison of the four books would throw light the one upon the other, and upon the character of their common object, but only make it the more certain that the writers were not inventors but recorders of one and the same history.

Whence their  
materials ?

If they were recorders, did they find their materials floating in the air around them ? If they did, these materials must have had an origin in something. That that something could not have been the thoughts and imaginings of the people of that age, has, we think, been proved. It must have been a real person. And the information afloat respecting Him must have been recent, and preserved from intermixture of myth and idle tradition ; otherwise the four Gospels could not have given us a consistent whole.

Conclusion  
from the  
unity of the  
Gospels.

In the unity of the Gospels we have thus conclusive evidence, that the character which is portrayed by the Evangelists is not imaginary but real, and if real, Divine.

4. Complete as is the evidence already furnished that the character portrayed in the Gospels bears witness to itself as real and not imaginary, *it is strengthened by another consideration.* Supposing it possible that the idea of a sinless man, and He at the same time God-man, appearing on earth with the aims ascribed to Jesus Christ, should originate in some human imagination, *who shall create the history that shall embody the idea? who shall turn the idea into action?* who shall construct the life, with all its bearings, that shall be worthy of the idea and consistent with it?

How create  
a life from  
ideas?

“Let us suppose for a moment that the four Gospels have no existence; and let us suppose the problem given to construct, by the aid of imagination merely, a history that shall correspond in its minuteness with that given in the Gospels, and throughout consistently exhibit the daily life of one maintaining such exalted claims, and acting in accordance with them. Who would not pronounce the task to be impossible, as involving conditions which, if not absolutely incompatible with one another, were yet so far beyond the range of human experience as to be reached and mastered by no conceivable effort of human genius? Yet such a history exists; and the mere fact of its existence is a sufficient vindication of its truth. The picture of the life and character of Jesus, exhibited in the Gospels with the utmost minuteness and variety of detail compatible with the briefness of the record, accords most fully with the claims He is represented as advancing.”

*D. S. Talcott, D.D.,  
in Boston  
Lectures on  
Christianity  
and  
Scepticism,  
1871, p. 407.*

In illustration of the difficulty of the proposed problem, take the sinlessness which appears in the life and the self-consciousness which is ascribed to

How  
embody  
sinlessness?

Jesus Christ. It will be remembered that the piety of Jesus Christ was radically distinguished from ordinary human piety in that it was unconscious of any defect. "No mere human creature, it is certain," says Bushnell, "could hold such a religious attitude, without shortly displaying faults that would cover him with derision, or excesses and delinquencies that would even disgust his friends. Piety without one dash of repentance, one ingenuous confession of wrong, one tear, one look of contrition, one request to heaven for pardon—let any one of mankind try this kind of piety, and see how long it will be ere his righteousness will prove itself to be the most impudent conceit! how long before his passions, sobered by no contrition, his pride kept down by no repentance, will tempt him into absurdities that will turn his pretences to mockery! No sooner does any one of us begin to be self-righteous, than he begins to fall into outward sins that shame his conceit. But in the case of Jesus no such disaster follows. Beginning with an unrepentant piety, He holds it to the end and brings no stain upon it." Rather, He pursues His cause to the end of life in a way of such unfaltering grace and beauty as to command the universal homage of mankind.

Let any one  
try.

The result.

For a consciously sinful man to profess himself to be without sin, and so to act his part through life as never to be found out or to betray himself, will be admitted to be a moral impossibility. To imagine such a man, to invent an imaginary life, in which the idea should be embodied and acted out in sharp collision with the world, and in the midst of the world's temptations, is scarcely less impossible. And the attempt, if made, would be pronounced unnatural, and the imagined character incredible.

The problem with which we are dealing, namely, how to construct an imaginary history that should embody in action the character of Jesus Christ as we find it in the Gospels, has even greater difficulties to overcome than that of which we have just spoken. That Jesus was understood to claim equality with God is certain; and that the claim became an article of faith with His disciples is equally certain. The personal claims of Christ, howsoever to be accounted for, Strauss admits, are of the very essence of Christianity. How are they to be embodied, who can embody them, in an imaginary life? Who can invent a life that shall be a natural representation of so mysterious a person as a God-man? The task may well be pronounced impossible. But we have such a life in fact in the Gospels. As we read it we feel that it is the life of a true man, and yet we are in no wise shocked when He claims to be more than a man. Even Renan, speaking of "the exaltation of self" in Christ's preaching, says, "It is regarded as vain-glory by those who see in the new teaching only the personal phantasy of the founder; but it is the finger of God to those who see the result. It has not yet been given to insanity to influence seriously the progress of humanity." With a still truer appreciation Bushnell, after quoting some of Christ's words, says, "Was there ever a man that dared put himself on the world in such pretensions?—as if all light was in Him, as if to follow Him and be worthy of Him, was to be the conclusive or chief excellence of mankind! What but mockery and disgust does He challenge as the certain reward of His audacity? But no one is offended with Jesus on this account; and what is a sure test of His success, it is remarkable that, of all the readers of the Gospel, it probably never occurs to one in a hundred thousand

How construct a "Divine" life?

The task impossible.

But Christ—Renan's admission.

"Nature and the Supernatural," Chap. X.

No sense of presumption in Christ's claims.

to blame His conceit, or the egregious vanity of His pretensions."

Why? Why? because it is felt that there is no vanity in the matter; that this life is neither pretence nor fiction, but reality. The study of the Gospel portraiture of Jesus Christ, apart from all accessory or corroborative

Conclusion. evidence, leads us to the conclusion that it has been drawn from a true historic life. We can account for it in no other way. We accept it joyfully as real and supernatural. As one, not a Christian, has said, "It would have taken a Jesus to forge a Jesus."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE JESUS CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—THE TESTIMONY OF PROPHECY.

THE Jesus Christ of our Gospels is the Messiah—Prince, Priest, Prophet, Deliverer—foretold, at sundry times and in divers manners, long before His birth in Bethlehem and His ministry in Galilee and Judæa. This is the proposition to be maintained in this chapter,—and if it can be established, both His Divine Authority and His Divine Personality are the legitimate inferences.

The  
proposition  
to be  
maintained.

At the outset we meet with certain facts which may be regarded as strictly historic.

1. *About the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ, there was a general expectation of the coming of some Great One—known among the Jews as the Messiah.*

Expectation  
of the  
Messiah.

It is scarcely necessary to prove this. Keim, a Rationalist interpreter of the life of "Jesus of Nazara," after describing the various elements at work in Judæa when Jesus appeared, says—"In the midst of these enormous antagonisms of the ideal and the actual, of the claim to be the special people of God, together with a glowing zeal for God's honour, and the actually existing servitude and disruption, nay of physical and moral wretchedness, this marvellous nation ever busied itself afresh with the sublime and holy picture of a

Keim, vol. i.  
p. 314.



better and ideal future, a future usually expressed by the phrase, the *Messianic age*." "The times of Jesus are full of a restless expectation of the salvation that was to come." "The unhappy nation wrestled feverishly for its salvation in a hundred ways, seeking to create or to bring near the promised time. The old prophetic watchwords—the Messiah, Christ, the Kingdom of the great King, the Kingdom of Heaven, the throne and seed of David—were, in the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, on every man's lips in Judæa and Galilee, and even in Samaria."

*Keim, vol. i.*  
*pp. 320, 321.*

Prophetic  
watchwords.

*Renan.*

To the same effect writes Renan, more Rationalistic than Keim. "In Judæa expectation was at its height. Holy persons—among whom may be named the aged Simeon—passed their life about the temple, fasting, and praying that it might please God not to take them from the world without having seen the fulfilment of the hopes of Israel. They felt a powerful presentiment; they were sensible of the approach of something unknown." "Jesus, as soon as he began to think, entered into the burning atmosphere which was created in Palestine by the ideas we have just stated." Continual seditions were the fruit of these ideas, and "Galilee was an immense furnace wherein the most diverse elements were seething."

Continual  
seditions.

2. It is equally certain that *Jesus of Nazareth regarded Himself, and was regarded by His followers, as the promised Messiah.* John the Baptist preached "the kingdom of heaven as at hand." He was, he said, the "voice" of which Isaiah spoke as crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." And the Lord, whose way he was preparing, was already in the midst of them. Andrew said to his brother Simon, "We have found the Messias, which is, being inter-

Jesus re-  
garded as  
the expected  
Messiah.  
*Matt. iii.*  
1-12.

*Mark i. 1-8;*  
*Luke iii.*  
3, 4

*John i. 20.*  
*John i. 41.*

preted, the Christ." Nathanael said to Jesus, "Rabbi, *John i. 49.*  
Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of  
Israel."

In reply to the woman of Samaria who had said, "I *John iv.*  
know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ;  
when He is come He will tell us all things," Jesus  
said, "I that speak unto thee am He." When John  
the Baptist sent to inquire, "Art thou He that should  
come or do we look for another?" Jesus said to his  
messengers, "Tell John the things which ye do hear  
and see,"—these things being the signs that He *was*  
"He that should come." The Messiahship of Jesus  
is implied throughout all His teaching and working.  
And after His resurrection we find Him saying to  
the two disciples at Emmaus, "O slow of heart to  
believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not  
Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into  
His glory?"—the Evangelist adding, "Beginning at  
Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them  
in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."  
On the same evening, He said to the disciples  
assembled in Jerusalem, "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, con-  
cerning Me." "Then opened He their under-  
standing," it is added, "that they might understand  
the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written,  
and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from  
the dead the third day: and that repentance and  
remission of sins should be preached in His name  
among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

3. It is certain that for *this very claim to the  
Messiahship, such as it was, He was condemned to die.* *Condemned  
to die.*

*John i. 11.* "He came unto His own," as the Apostle John puts  
*Revised* it, "and they that were His own received Him not."  
*Version.* In the story of His trial before the Sanhedrim and  
the Roman Governor, we find two principal charges  
*Luke xxiii.* alleged. "He had made Himself a King," was that  
*1-3;* on which His accusers relied mainly in their appeal to  
*John xix.* Pilate. It was true. He had accepted the title at  
*12;*  
*John i. 49.* the very beginning of His ministry; He maintained  
it now at its close. The definition of His Kingship  
satisfied Pilate that Cæsar had nothing to fear from  
Him; but the very sound of the word, reported to  
the jealous tyrant who sat on the Imperial throne by  
Pilate's enemies, might be Pilate's ruin, and he would  
rather crucify an innocent man than endanger him-  
self. "He made Himself the Son of God," was the  
other principal charge. And this too was true. He  
avowed it in the most solemn circumstances. The  
High Priest, adjuring Him by the living God, said,  
*Luke xxii.* "Art thou the Christ, tell us. And he said unto  
*67-71.* them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I  
*Matt. xxvi.* also ask you, ye will not answer me nor let me go.  
*63-66.* Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand  
of the power of God. Then said they all, Art  
thou then the Son of God? And He said unto them,  
*Matt. xxvi.* Ye say that I am." "Then the High Priest rent his  
*65.* clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy, what  
further need have we of witnesses?" And they con-  
demned Him to die. Thus, for the Messiahship  
which He avowed and claimed Jesus Christ suffered  
death.

These facts prepare the way for our argument.

First: we have to prove that *the expectation of a  
Messiah was really founded on ancient prophecy*, that it  
was no dream generated by the sufferings of the  
The  
expectation  
no dream.

nation but rested on the solid basis of predictions which had been given through successive ages. In Bible history there is a progressive development of the promise of conquest over evil contained in the words—the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. And in the successive stages of this development we have the true and only sufficient explanation of the Messiahship which was so eagerly and earnestly anticipated by the Jews. But we may look at the matter from another point of view.

The word "Messiah" occurs for the first and only time in the Old Testament in the Book of Daniel. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. . . . And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." "Messiah," as readers of the New Testament know, is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek "Christ," and both mean "Anointed:" so that the words in the passage just quoted might be translated in verse 25 "the Anointed the Prince," and in verse 26 "the Anointed." The significance of the passage is to be found not in its retaining the Hebrew form "Messiah," and regarding it as a proper noun, as "Christ" has been in the New Testament,—but in its foretelling the coming at a particular period of an "Anointed Prince," a Prince anointed of God who should be cut off but not for himself. Certain critics regard the book of Daniel, and especially some portions of it, as having been

The word  
"Messiah."  
*Dan. ix.*  
25-27.

*John i. 41.*

Date of the  
Book of  
Daniel.

written in an age long after that of Daniel, but on no better ground than their objection to its miraculous narratives, and the supposition that its predictions are too minute to have been written before the events to which they refer. But even if we accepted the theory of these critics, which we do not, it would still be true that the Book existed some two hundred years before Christ. The prediction of "Messiah, the Prince," in the ninth chapter, and the prediction of the Kingdom, to be set up by the God of Heaven, which should never be destroyed, in the second chapter, were given, even on the most anti-Christian theory, nearly two centuries before the period at which Christians say they were fulfilled. The Jewish expectation of a Messiah, a Prince, a Kingdom of God and of Heaven, which was rife and fervent when Jesus Christ appeared, may thus be traced AT LEAST to the days assigned by hostile criticism to the Book of Daniel.

Other prophets as well as Daniel.

But these predictions in Daniel do not stand alone ; they form but a small portion of Messianic prophecy. It is not questioned that Malachi wrote some four hundred years before Christ, and in his book we find these words : " Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in : behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." And, as if consciously closing the era of inspired prophecy, the book ends thus : " Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Mal. iii, 1, 2.

Mal. iv. 4, 5.

The prophecies which we find thus at the end of the long ages which are represented in the Old Testament, are in succession to prophecies which were given at the beginning of these ages, as ordinary readers of the Bible can verify for themselves. And for my present purpose it is enough to quote the words of one who cannot be suspected of an "orthodox" bias. "In the separation of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, (B.C. 965), in the decline of Israel, and in the decay of Judah under David's posterity, there sprang up (says Keim), and from the ninth century, from the times of the prophets Amos and Hosea, and then in the eighth century, in the times of Isaiah and Micah, there grew continually stronger, the hope that God would raise up once more 'the fallen tabernacle of David;' that He would plant upon Zion a branch from the stem of Jesse which had been cut down, from the top of the high cedar which had been broken off; that out of Bethlehem, out of the house of David, the King of Israel, there should come forth, adorned with the name of God and with the mysterious title of the Eternal, a Gatherer together of the people, a Conqueror of the Gentiles, the world's Prince of Peace, the Planter of Knowledge and righteousness. At the beginning of the Asiatic captivity, of the end of all hope (B.C. 588), Jeremiah and Ezekiel persisted in the assertion that in the seed of David, in the righteous branch, the redemption of the nation was at hand. The long exile, the weakness of the colony that returned to the land of their fathers under the Persian king Cyrus (B.C. 536), the decayed condition of the family of David, which with difficulty asserted itself in Zerubbabel, weakened faith in the old royal house, but not faith in the future of Israel. . . . Faith in the house of David dis-

*Keim in his  
"Life of  
Jesus of  
Nazara,"  
vol. i. p. 315.*

Persistency  
of the hope.

appears in Malachi, the last prophet : but the Lord Himself will come to execute judgment, to inhabit His temple, to establish His covenant and kingdom, and will have as His forerunner the heavenly Elijah, the man of incomparable power, an establisher of peace, a preparer of Israel for the coming of the Great King."

*See  
"Pilate's  
Question,"  
by the  
author, pp.  
145-6.*

We have here a most singular phenomenon, one which has no parallel in the history of the nations of the earth. At a period which, if we do not accept the earlier books of the Bible as genuine, is so remote as to be lost in primeval mist, the Jewish race set its heart and hope on a great future which was to be realized in the birth and life of one of its own sons. The land might be desolate, the people might be scattered among all nations, and despair might ask, Can these dry bones live again? But nothing could crush out of the heart of this race, the hope of a mighty Potentate who should raise it to higher honour, and a wider dominion, than it possessed in the glorious reigns of David and Solomon. There was it is true, a certain degree of mystery about the personality of the Coming One, and prophets in successive ages described Him in language that could scarcely be understood, because it ascribed to Him attributes and prerogatives that were more than human. But His coming was to their minds not so much a probability as a certainty. And never more so than in the age in which Jesus of Nazareth was born.

A most  
singular  
phenomenon.

The  
phenomenon  
found no-  
where else.

This, we say, is a most singular phenomenon. We search history and tradition in vain for anything to compare with it. Assyria perishes, Babylon perishes, the republics of Greece perish, the empires of Macedon and Persia and Rome perish. But they perish without

hope. They have no traditional prophecy of a resurrection. No seer arises in the hour of their destruction to bid them be of good hope, for they shall live again. The grave closes over them, and it needs no stone nor seal to secure that its prey shall not be delivered.

Whence the difference? The only rational explanation is to be found in the Book. The Jew received the hope which was transmitted from age to age, and to which he has clung amid the ruins of his State and temple as confidently as he did in the hour of his greatest power, from God Himself. It was not the fruit of his own imagination. It came from heaven. And not only so, but his nation was founded upon it. The God who separated his father Abraham from his kindred in the East, said to him, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Whence the  
difference?

Secondly: we have before us the fact that eagerly as the Jews in the time of Christ expected and desired the coming of the Messiah they were profoundly wrong in their idea of what He was to be and to do—*their conceptions of Him and of His work were not in harmony with the prophecies on which they were based.* This will appear more fully when we show how Jesus of Nazareth realized the Old Testament idea. And at present it is not necessary to do much more than to remind the reader of the Gospels, that the prevailing hope and desire of the Jews in Christ's time was for the coming of a great military leader, who should deliver them from the heathen domination to which they were subject. How much of the supernatural they associated with His work, if any, we do not know. But when the Galileans witnessed the supernatural power which Jesus possessed when He multiplied a few loaves into the food of thousands, they would take Him by force

The  
prophecies  
not under-  
stood by the  
Jews of  
Christ's  
time.



to make Him their King. Some, in whose minds the idea of a temporal sovereignty was uppermost, may have associated with it hopes of spiritual blessings. But the popular hope was a temporal salvation and temporal blessings.

*"Life of  
Jesus of  
Nazara,"  
vol. i. p. 320.*

Gross and  
carnal  
expectations.

*Josephus.*

Let Keim tell us the practical forms which this hope took. "The times of Jesus are full of a restless expectation of the salvation that was to come. A weak party of non-religious Jews were willing to see their ideal in Herod, who called himself the bringer of happiness to Israel. Others clung with convulsive hope to the last remnants of the Asmonæan house, to Hyrcanus, to the youthful and handsome high-priest Aristobulus, to the false Alexander, who pretended to be the murdered yet still living son of Mariamne, and whom, after the king's death, all foreign Jews even as far as Rome acknowledged, until the Emperor Augustus freed them from faith in an impostor; and, finally, the nation clung to Agrippa, the grandson, the new king of the Jews under Caligula, and whom Alexandria and Jerusalem, amid the envy of the foreigners, hailed with joyful surprise as their star of hope. Others again, in the frenzy of despair, found the saviours of Israel in the military leaders who, immediately after the king's death, sprung up like fungi, and overran Judæa and Galilee, partly as disciples of the great adventurer, and partly as speculators in the popular anticipation of the Messiah; while others flocked to the banner of Judas the Galilean, who, in the name of God, began the armed vindication of the freedom of the people of God and who was the forerunner of all the defenders of freedom, the impostors, prophets, and Messiahs, which rose against Rome from the reign of Tiberius to the reigns of Nero and Hadrian. . . . We must not forget Josephus, the rationalist, the deserter to the Roman party. He

admits, with more or less frankness, the Messianic hopes of his people as well as of many philosophers, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem ; only he refers (in radical opposition to the text, and with a view to his own life and welfare) the old 'Oracles' of a universal ruler out of Israel, to Rome, and to Vespasian, who rose over the ruins of Jerusalem to the Imperial throne."

There are certain ideas respecting the Messiah to be found in the Hebrew literature of the times immediately preceding the time of Christ which we do not find mirrored in popular sentiment. There is a book The Book of Enoch. called the Book of Enoch, the date of which is not certainly determined,—some ascribing it to the century before Christ but seeing in it traces of additions and interpolations of a later date. In this book we find very glorious attributes ascribed to the Messiah. He is the Son of God and the Son of man. But the aspect of the Messiah as a sufferer is utterly wanting. That He was to suffer, above all to die, the book does not give the slightest intimation. Its Messiah is altogether triumphant. And although He is repeatedly called the Son of man, no one trait of character strictly human is ascribed to Him. So far as His portraiture goes it is altogether divine.

The Book of Enoch.

See Prebendary Row's Bampton Lecture, pp. 236-239, 2nd Edit.

The great Alexandrian contemporary of Christ, the Jewish Philo, scarcely hints at the Messiah, although he says much concerning Jewish expectations of a brighter future ; he knows no means of reconciliation, of redemption ; he sees no need of them. According to Philo, "salvation is to be worked out by a perpetual speculation upon the eternal order of things ; and asceticism is of value in assisting man to ascend into an ecstatic philosophical reverie."

Philo.

Liddon's Bampton Lectures, lect. ii.

In a Hebrew Sibylline poem which was composed

A Hebrew Sibyl.

probably in Alexandria, a century before Christ, and not in Philo, we find the echoes of the aspirations of the Jews. "From the land of the sun God will send forth a King, who shall put an end to war in the whole earth by destroying the wicked, and bringing the righteous into His covenant." This king would evidently be a warrior king, who should establish universal peace by his conquering sword. The happiness of mankind, when thus wrought by the Jews under God's law, is represented in lively imagery. "The people of the great God will roll in gold and silver, will be clothed in purple, and earth and seas will pour their treasures at their feet."

Such ideas were more worthy of the descendants of the prophets than those of men who could see Messiah in a Herod, or a Vespasian, but yet they were far from realizing the prophetic conception.

Prophetic  
conceptions  
realized in  
Jesus Christ.

Thirdly. *The prophetic conception of the Messiah, misunderstood by the Jews of Christ's time, was yet fully realized in Jesus Christ.* In that conception, it will be remembered, there were such extraordinary and apparently irreconcilable opposites as these: the Messiah was to be "God and man; exalted and made low; master and servant; priest and victim; prince and subject; involved in death and yet victor over death; rich and poor; a king, a conqueror, glorious, and a man of griefs, exposed to infirmities unknown, in a state of abjection and humiliation." The reader can verify this representation for himself. Its chief elements are these—

God and  
man.

(a) *The Godhead and the Humanity of the promised Redeemer.* These are foretold most expressly in *Isa. ix. 6*; Isaiah; but they are to be found likewise in *Micah v. 2*; *Zech. xiii. 7*; Zechariah, and Malachi, where an eternal pre-exist-

ence is ascribed to Him, and where He is called the Fellow of Jehovah and even Jehovah Himself. His twofold nature is likewise implied in attributes and works ascribed to Him. Turn from these predictions to history, and we find the Jesus Christ of the Gospels represented and representing Himself as the Son of God and the Son of Man.

(b) The Messiah was to be *a great sufferer, even unto death*, and His sufferings were to be the means of a spiritual salvation to mankind. The Messiah, the Prince, was to die, but not for Himself. Dying, He was to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in an everlasting righteousness. His soul was to be made an offering for sin; He was to bear the iniquities of men; and men, in consequence, would be justified, and their Redeemer satisfied. All this was fulfilled in the avowed mission of Jesus of Nazareth. He was announced at the beginning of His ministry as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And at the end of His ministry, instituting the Lord's Supper, with the symbolic cup in His hand, He said—"Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

(c) The Messiah was to be *a great King and Conqueror*, but very unlike other kings in the means and ends of His reign. His glory and conquests were often described in terms borrowed from earthly prince-doms. But the indications were abundant that the King, the Son of David, who was to arise "out of the stem of Jesse," was to be above all a spiritual King and a spiritual benefactor. And one of the last of the prophets warned the nation, and called them to rejoice in it, that the Coming King was not to be martial but peaceful, not to head an army but Himself

Mal. iii. 1;  
iv. 5.

A great sufferer even unto death.

Dan. ix. 24.

Isa. liii.

John i. 29.

Matt. xxvi.  
27, 28.

A great king.

See Isa. xi.  
1-5; also  
Ch. ii. 2-4.

See Zech. ix.  
9.

Unlike other kings, to bring salvation. This is a feature of the promised Messiah which the popular Jewish expectation in the time of Christ entirely overlooked. But we find it realized from the first in the Messiahship of Jesus. John the Baptist prepared His way not by calling the nation to arms, but by summoning them to repentance. And, in what may be called the formal proclamation of His kingdom, Jesus said—"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for *theirs* is the Kingdom of Heaven. . . Blessed are the meek: for *they* shall inherit the earth." In the many parables which He spake concerning the Kingdom of which He was King, we find only spiritual blessings and spiritual responsibilities. And before Pilate He declared, "My Kingdom is not of this world." In all of which we see the true Messiah of prophecy.

(*d*) The Messiah was to be a *Priest* as well as a King. This is implied in the prophecies already quoted from Isaiah and Daniel. It is asserted expressly in a Psalm of which no rational interpretation can be invented if its Messianic reference is denied, and in Zechariah where it is said that "the man whose name is the BRANCH" shall build the temple of the Lord, shall sit and rule upon His throne, and shall be a *Priest upon His throne*. The New Testament throughout ascribes Priesthood to Jesus Christ—a doctrine which could not, from the nature of the case, be fully unveiled till His sacrifice was offered, but which was implied in such words of His own as, "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many"—the Son of Man being both the sacrifice and the offerer of the sacrifice.

(*e*) The Messiah was to be a *great Prophet* and to introduce a dispensation in which the Gentiles were to enjoy equal privileges and light with the Jews.

Unlike other kings,

*Matt. v.*  
3, 5.

A Priest upon His throne.  
*Isa. liii.;*  
*Dan. ix.*  
*Psa. cx.*

*Zech. vi.*  
12, 13.

*Matt. xx.*  
28.

A great Prophet.  
*See Rom.*  
*xv. 9-12.*

This we gather not only from the prediction of a prophet like unto Moses, a prophet with legislative authority, but from many Scriptures. In the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s House shall be established on the summit of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. . . . For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.” Even with the Jews there was to be a new covenant—not one of ritual ordinances, but of spiritual purifying: “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt. . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be my people.” “I will say to them which are not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”

*Isa. ii. 2,**Jer. xxxi.  
31-34.**Hosea ii. 23.*

It is notorious that the Judaism of the time of Christ was narrow and intolerant. Gentiles might become Jews by conforming to all the requirements of the Mosaic law, but on no other condition; and yet it was evident that the Mosaic law from its very nature was impracticable except within the boundaries of the chosen land. But the birth of Jesus Christ was declared to be an occasion of joy “to all people.” The sphere of His Kingdom He described in His parables as being the world. To the woman of Samaria He said—“The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit

*Luke ii. 10.**John iv.  
21, 23.*

Not a Jewish

but a  
universal  
dispensation.

*Matt.*  
*xviii.*  
19, 20.

and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." And before He left the world, He commanded His disciples to go and teach all nations—"teaching them (He said) to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The world was to be the scene of the Messiah's reign, and Jesus as the Messiah claimed authority to legislate for all nations, as well as power to bless them.

These particulars are far from exhausting the subject. They only set forth, in broad outline, the more important features of the prophetic conception of the Messiah and the Messianic future—features which were either entirely overlooked or utterly misunderstood by the Jews of Christ's time, but which were fully realized in the person, character, and avowed mission of Jesus of Nazareth. And the result may be stated as follows :—

Christ's ideas  
not from His  
times.

I. *Jesus did not derive his ideas of the Messiahship from the people of His times, and did not conform His claims to their conceptions and hopes.* This needs no further proof. The very best that the spirit of the age could produce would be another Judas Maccabæus, a man after the image of the noble-hearted son of Matthatias. And we know what it did produce a hundred years after Christ. Simon Barchochebas announced himself as the long expected Messiah, and called on all the descendants of Abraham to assert the hope of Israel. He called himself "the Son of the Star," because prophecy had said, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob." He collected a formidable army, and compelled the Romans to evacuate Jerusalem, where he was proclaimed King and caused coins to be struck with his name. For

Simon Bar-  
chochebas.

two years this military Messiah resisted the power of the Emperor Hadrian, but was at last overpowered and perished with hundreds of thousands of those who had hailed him as their king. And it is a noticeable fact that, throughout his brief day of power, he was especially hostile to the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, inflicting many penalties upon them to compel them to deny and blaspheme their King, and condemning to death those who would not.

In the character and acts of this man, whom his followers, in their bitter disappointment, called the "Son of a Lie," we see as in a mirror very clearly the sentiments and hopes which filled the nation of Israel when Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed Himself the Messiah. And a more absolute contrast cannot be imagined than Simon Barchochebas and Jesus. Whatever Jesus was not, Simon was : whatever Simon was not, Jesus was. The spirit which produced the messiahship of Simon could not have produced the Messiahship of Jesus. "Jesus Christ," says Mr. Matthew Arnold, "was undoubtedly the very last sort of Messiah whom the Jews expected." "Professing to be the King they expected," says the author of *Ecce Homo*, "He did none of the things which they expected the King to do. . . . They expected to see once more a warrior-king, judging in the gate of Jerusalem, or surrounded by his mighty men, or carrying his victorious arms into the neighbouring countries, or receiving submissive embassies from Rome and Seleucia, and in the mean time holding awful communication with Jehovah, administering His law and singing His praise. It was as impossible for them to conceive the true Christ, to imagine what He would do, or how He would do it, as it was impossible for them to fill His place."

Contrast  
between  
Simon and  
Christ.

"Ecce  
Homo," or  
the expected  
king.



How explain Christ. How came it to pass that Jesus of Nazareth was able to separate Himself so absolutely from His age and nation? His contemporaries spake of Him as one who "had never learned," who had never been in any school of learning. And modern sceptics confess that "He was ignorant of the strange scholasticism which was taught at Jerusalem." While "neither directly nor indirectly did any element of Greek culture reach Him. *He knew nothing beyond Judaism.*" And yet of that Judaism beyond which it is said that He knew nothing else, He is absolutely free. The elements which were most intense in the region in which He was brought up, produced no effect upon Him. There must have been something in Himself which repelled them, something with which they would not coalesce and which was stronger than they.

*John vii. 15.*

*See Matt. xiii. 54, 55.*

*Renan.*

*Luke ii. 39, 40; iv. 16.*

Jesus did not act a part.

2. While the Messiahship avowed by and realized in Jesus Christ cannot be traced to the popular ideas of His age, *neither can it have been assumed and acted out by one who was not the Messiah.* In other words, we cannot account for the realization of the long-predicted Messiahship in Jesus Christ on the supposition that He merely imagined Himself the Messiah, or that, without so imagining, He took advantage of the prevailing expectation to represent Himself as such. This supposition requires us to regard Him as either an enthusiast or an impostor. But neither alternative can be reconciled with His character and history. Nor is the theory improved by supposing a mixture of enthusiasm and imposture.

If we could conceive it possible that a man of noble spiritual character honestly believed himself to be the Messiah, and set himself to the study of prophecy to know how he should act his part, he would

find the part he had chosen an impossible one. Let him collect and classify all the attributes prophetically ascribed to the Messiah, all the offices to be sustained by Him, all the works to be performed by Him, and all the sufferings to be endured, he has to turn all these into the realities of an actual life. And how is he to do this?

An impossible part.

“Supposing a body of ideologists to have arrived at the conclusion that the Servant of Jehovah was intended to be a delineation of the Messiah, they might have learned from the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah the following facts :—First, He was to be one of the greatest of sufferers. Secondly, He was to be despised and treated with contempt. Thirdly, that His sufferings were to terminate in death. Fourthly, that they were to be undergone voluntarily. Fifthly, that He was to exhibit in His sufferings the patience of a lamb. Sixthly, that His sufferings would terminate not only in a triumphant issue, but in a result satisfactory to Himself. Such are the materials which this prophetic delineation would have afforded the ideologists, to enable them to portray the suffering Christ of the Gospels. It will be at once seen how imperfect a model they would have formed, on which to construct the drama of the Passion. The six points referred to, would have only served as simple directions to construct a character in which these particular aspects were to be perfectly embodied : but they would have left the question unsolved as to how this was to be effected.”

*Prebendary Row's Bampton Lectures, 2nd Edit. p. 244.*

The elements to be combined.

If such a body of men as Prebendary Row supposes could not construct, out of the “ideas” they found in prophecy, a story that should embody them perfectly as they are in our Gospels, how much less could a living man construct out of them a life and actual

How  
combine the  
Divine with  
the Human?

*Bampton  
Lectures,  
p. 245.*

Probable  
result of the  
attempt.

history for himself such as is the life and history of Jesus Christ. The difficulty is immensely increased when the Divine aspects of the Messiah's character have to be delineated in combination with the human. "The combination of a Divine with a Human character," says Mr. Row, "is a rock on which all poets and ideologists have suffered shipwreck: and it need hardly be observed that the difficulty of effecting the union is greatly increased when it is necessary to delineate the human as a sufferer. But it is very unlikely that a number of ideologists who used Isaiah as their model, would have arrived at the unanimous conclusion that the Divine and human aspects of the prophetic delineation were to be combined in one person. It is far more probable that at least some of them would have considered that two Christs were intended by the prophet, one of whom was to exhibit the Divine, and the other the human attributes of the Messianic delineation. On such a point disagreement would be fatal. If on the other hand they arrived at the conclusion that both were to be combined in a single person, this would have at once launched them, without rudder, compass, or star, to direct their course, on the boundless ocean of conjecture as to how the union was to be effected. It is evident that the only possible result must have been the creation of as many ideal Christs as there were ideologists."

This argument is directed against the supposition that it was possible for a man, or for any number of men, to invent the Gospel history of Jesus out of the materials found in prophecy. The larger the number of these materials, the greater would have been the embarrassment which they would have caused as to how the various scattered rudimentary delineations were to be combined into a harmonious whole, and

exhibited in the actions and teachings of the living Christ. The argument is doubly conclusive against the supposition that any man, even the loftiest and most inventive, taking prophetic materials as his model, could have so ordered his own life as to realize these materials, in fact could have become by his own volition the historic Jesus Christ of the Gospels,—teaching, acting, suffering, dying, not to say rising again, as He did. There is an extravagance about the supposition which should condemn it, and which would, but for the reluctance of certain persons to acknowledge the grand supernatural fact of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ.

An  
extravagant  
supposition.

3. Only one theory remains,—the Theory incident with the fact—*that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Messiah, foretold and promised.* With His hand on the Jewish canon, He could look opponents or disciples in the face, and bid them “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me.” In the synagogue of that Nazareth where he had spent His youth, He read on one occasion these words out of the Book of the prophet Isaiah,—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” When the eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened upon Him, He said, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears”—*I am the Anointed One, the Christ, of whom the prophet wrote. And the part ascribed to the Anointed One was acted out by Jesus—not as by an effort, a*

CO- True theory.  
Jesus indeed  
the Messiah.

*John v. 39.*

*Isa. lxi. 1.*

*Luke iv. 21.*

study, to act it, but with the simplicity and naturalness of reality. In the reality of His Messiahship we have the solution of the marvellous correspondence between the story of Jesus in the Gospels and the prophecies of the Old Testament. The apparent contradictions of these prophecies found their reconcilment in Him, —their strange and violent contrasts found their unity in Him. He *was* God and man, prince and subject, rich and poor, dying and yet destroying death, a man of sorrows and a glorious conqueror.

Contradiction  
reconciled.

Two facts—  
prediction  
and cor-  
respondence.

We are then in the presence of two facts,—“ First, a set of predictions uttered by various persons, and at widely different intervals of time, affirming that a kingdom of God would be manifested in the future, and a Messiah to be its King. Secondly, the realization in history after an interval of several centuries. Such a correspondence between prediction and fulfilment can be found nowhere else in the entire history of man.”

*Bampton  
Lectures, p.  
219, 220.*

Prebendary Row sums up the prophetic argument for the superhuman claims of Jesus Christ, and exhibits its conjoint force thus: “ The Old Testament, many centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ, announced the setting up of a future Kingdom of God, and the advent of a Messiah, who was to be its King. It affirms that a prophet should appear in the future like unto Moses. A multitude of prophets have appeared ; but the only one who bears this resemblance is Jesus Christ. It has described a person of exalted holiness, and possessing a superhuman character, as suffering for others : the full conception of such a character is fully realized in Him and in Him alone. It announces a Messiah who was to be a Royal Priest: Jesus Christ has assumed this office and nullified every other sacrifice but His own. The Jewish dispensation con-

Summary.

sisted of a mass of rites, ceremonies, symbols, and shadowy representations. Jesus Christ and His Church are the embodiment of all the reality which they contain; and have rendered them for the future as worthless and unmeaning as it would be to hold up a candle to the noon-day sun. Its great kings and prophets earnestly longed for better things to come: those aspirations have received their satisfaction in the person, actions, and teaching of the Divine man. The teaching of the Old Testament, while founded on eternal truths, bears evident marks of imperfection: Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the ideal after which the Law and the prophets were dimly groping. The argument is spread over a large amount of space, and consists of a multitude of minor details; but such are its salient points. View them not separately, but as they converge in a common centre, in the One Great Catholic Man, Jesus Christ our Lord. Is it possible that this vast concurrence of circumstances in a single person can have been the result of a number of fortunate guesses? But if it has been the result of foresight, that foresight must have been superhuman."

The conclusion is twofold—a superhuman pre-  
science in the prophets, and a superhuman fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Conclusion.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE JESUS CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS CERTIFIED BY  
HIS MIRACLES.

Alleged  
hindrances.

“THE miracles of the Gospels are a hindrance rather than a help to faith,” we are sometimes told, and told by men who consider themselves wise. But underneath the aphorism, as it seems to be, there lurks a great fallacy. If Jesus Christ was only a wise and good man, a profound thinker, who, like other reformers, awakened His age to a sense of God and truth, and who by His teaching and example gave a wondrous impulse to all the ages which have followed, miracles such as are recorded in the Gospels would be altogether out of place in His life. And the record of them could only be a stumbling-block in the way of men who might otherwise hail Him as their Teacher and Guide. But if Jesus Christ was Himself Supernatural, as He is represented in the Gospels to have been—supernatural in authority and in person—the miracles ascribed to Him are in keeping with His claims; and the absence of them, not their presence, would be the stumbling-block. At this point it is not assumed that He was in any sense supernatural, although much evidence has already been advanced to prove that He was,—and not assumed that He wrought miracles. But it is insisted

that on the hypothesis that He was supernatural, the miracles ascribed to Him are aids, not hindrances, to faith in Him. The Christ to whom we are forbidden to go except "through Nature," can Himself have been only "Natural," and cannot have been the Christ of the Gospels, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

See  
NOTE  
on Dr.  
Abbott's  
"Through  
Nature to  
Christ."

On the subject of miracles generally, much need not be said here. A mere summary is all that space allows.

1. As to the definition of a miracle, *we do not admit that a miracle is "opposed to the laws of nature," or is in any sense a "violation of the laws of nature."*

Miracle not  
a violation of  
natural law.

Those who so describe miracles in order to discredit them, fail to give us any definition of "a law of nature," that shall contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. When they give us such a definition, we shall have no difficulty in defining the relation of a miracle to the laws of nature. For the present we insist that the "Supernatural" is, as the word indicates, not that which is contrary to nature, or a violation of nature, but as Dean Trench puts it, that which is *above* nature, or *beyond* nature. It is something out of the range of the action of natural law, and cannot therefore be said to be opposed to it. Both the Natural and the Supernatural are modes of Divine action. But to us, on our side of things, or from our point of view, they are different modes. For example, the difference between the manner in which the harvest field, by means of spring, summer, and autumn, produces food for thousands, and the manner in which the Christian story says it was produced on a memorable occasion on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, is not that the one is gradual and that the other was instantaneous. No amount of

"Brief  
Defence of  
Super-  
natural  
Christianity  
—in reply to  
the book  
'Super-  
natural Re-  
ligion'—  
by the  
author, pp.  
9, 10.  
Miracle  
above  
nature.

Two modes  
of Divine  
action.

Illustration.



time, with tillage and rain and sunshine, could make loaves to germinate and grow into a larger quantity. If we call the one process natural, we must call the other supernatural. Even if we suppose that there were means employed in the miracle, means unknown to us, we cannot call them natural means—means traceable by us among the ordinary laws of nature. They must have been of a kind known to God alone. And the supposition of the possible existence of such means in the working of miracles, means that are occult and undiscoverable, will not justify us in confounding the natural and the supernatural. The means themselves, under this supposition, are as supernatural as the end produced.

In a miracle, then, we say that the will and power of God produce an effect, or result, or event, otherwise than as effects, results, and events, are produced in the course of nature.

Miracles  
neither  
impossible  
nor  
incredible.

2. *The dictum that miracles are impossible or incredible is utterly arbitrary and untenable.* Words are almost wasted in replying to it. That they are not *incredible* is certain, for they are actually credited, and have been, by vast numbers of thoughtful and intelligent men. That they are *impossible* can be maintained only by those who deny the existence of a Personal God. If there be no God, no God who can will and work, there can be no power outside nature to act upon nature. But if there be such a God, the possibility of a miracle cannot be denied. As to those who, without denying the existence of God, are always telling us that we can form no conception of God, we might expect them to reflect that possibly the working of miracles, the producing of effects otherwise than through the laws of nature, may

be among the things unknown of God. But they speak rather as if they had measured the whole length and breadth of the Divine nature, had discovered all about God, and were in a position to declare, with prophetic certainty, that God cannot and will not, under any circumstances, work otherwise than in connection with and through natural law. To make good their right to speak thus, they must produce supernatural credentials; they must work a miracle to prove that no miracle can be wrought!

Arrogant  
assumption  
of  
Agnostics.

3. It is scarcely necessary to add that *we reject in toto the assumption that miraculous narratives are necessarily unhistorical*. There are writers who not only assume this but think it quite unnecessary to attempt any proof of it. Thus Renan says, "That the Gospels are in part legendary, is evident, since they are full of miracles and of the supernatural." But the dogma that the supernatural is *ipso facto* unhistorical, is a sheer begging of the question. It has no basis in reason or philosophy, and is altogether unscientific.

Miracles not  
unhistorical.

*On the  
"True  
principles of  
Historic  
Criticism,"  
see "The  
Resurrec-  
tion of Jesus  
Christ an  
Historic  
Fact," by  
the author,  
Chap. I.*

The sum of the whole matter may be stated very briefly. (1.) Science has no right to deny the existence of a Personal God. It has as yet discovered no substitute for His Power, and Intelligence, and Will. (2.) Admitting a Personal God, we cannot logically deny the possibility of miracles. Even Rousseau could say, "Seriously to raise this question would be impious if it were not absurd." (3.) Miracles being possible, circumstances may render them probable, so probable that, instead of being "antedecedently incredible," the antecedence is strongly in their favour. Believing as we do, in that terrible existence, sin, in man's im-

Summary.

*See  
Part First,  
Chap. VII.*

potence to deliver himself from this terrible evil, and in the infinite love of the Great Father, nothing seems to us more probable than the Incarnation and the miracles of the Incarnate One. "The possibility of the miraculous," says Christlieb, "rests upon the uninterrupted activity of a Living God in the world. Its necessity arises, on the one hand, from the Divine end and aim of the world; and, on the other, from the disturbance introduced into its development through sin. Therefore although miracles are supernatural, they are not unnatural. Far from violating the conditions of life, of nature, or of humanity, they re-establish the life of the world which had already been deranged, and initiate the higher order of things for which the universe was created."

The Gospel story.

We now turn to the books which profess to give us the story of the life of Jesus Christ, and we find them ascribing to Him many miracles. All the Gospels tell of miracles which He wrought. Some of these miracles are narrated by only one Evangelist, some by two, some by three, and one, the feeding of the five thousand at Bethsaida, is narrated by the four. The miracles thus narrated are all of one character. No moral incongruity can be detected among them. They are works of beneficence and

*Matt. xiv.* ;  
*Mark vi.* ;  
*Luke ix.* ;  
*John vi.*

Character of Christ's miracles.

*Matt. xxi.*  
18, 19 ;  
*Mark xi.*  
12-19 ;  
*Matt. viii.*  
28-32.

mercy, illustrative of the gracious purpose of the life and death of Jesus Christ. The "cursing" of the fig-tree, and the destruction of the swine of the Gadarenes, are no exception. The human person was not the subject of these miracles, and they were both wrought in the spirit of all His miracles. As to the fig-tree, the withering of it was a solemn parable—a warning in act such as He had often spoken in words—a warning to the Jewish nation. No farther oppor-

tunity of fruit-bearing was to be vouchsafed ; henceforward it would be "too late." As to the destruction of the swine, one reason for it "may have been to rebuke the offensive practice of pasturing these unclean beasts on the hills of Canaan. Another—perhaps the most important reason—to give a practical and visible proof of the real existence of evil spirits, and at the same time to assure the man of the permanence of the cure." Dr. Doddridge has well remarked, "No miracles are more suspicious than pretended *dispossessions*, as there is so much room for collusion in them. But it is self-evident that a herd of swine could not be confederate in any frauds."

See Luke  
xiii. 6-9,  
34, 35 ;  
Matt. xxiii.  
37-39.  
The Fig tree  
and the  
Gadarene  
swine.

The miracles of healing, some have imagined, may be explained on natural principles. Appeal is made to what is known of the power of the mind over the body. Certain diseases, we are told, are susceptible of cure by a sudden emotional shock. And while the miracles, properly so called, which are ascribed to Christ, must be reckoned legendary, the miracles of healing may have had a basis of actual fact, but a purely natural basis !

Miracles of  
healing.

Let the reader study the phenomena as he finds them in the Gospels, and then say whether they can be thus explained, on the theory of an "emotional shock," or any other theory of "moral therapeutics." The centurion put an entirely different construction on Christ's power to heal, when he compared it to his own military authority : "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me : and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." Christ Himself was evidently unconscious that it was by any "moral therapeutics," or any latent in-

Not wrought  
naturally.

Matt. viii.  
9.

fluence, mesmeric, electric, magnetic, or any other, that He cured disease. "I WILL, be thou clean," is His own explanation of the restoration of health to a leper; and when He healed the centurion's servant, He was many miles apart from him, and yet the healing was simultaneous with the utterance of His word. The Apostles were equally unconscious of any natural power or process by which a miracle of healing might be wrought. "Why look ye so earnestly on us," said Peter and John, "as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth," they had said to the lame man, "rise up and walk."

*Matt. viii.*

<sup>13</sup>;  
*Luke vii. 10.*

See also  
*John iv.*

51-53.

*Acts iii. 12.*

The attempt to find some natural explanation of Christ's miracles of healing is but a revival of the old rationalism which ascribed to Christ and other workers of miracles a special magnetic power, and which reduced "the Son of God with power" to a benevolent Rabbi, who executed innumerable works of charity with the help of medical skill and good fortune, a principle altogether illusory and fatal to the truthfulness of the Gospel narratives.

Are the  
narratives  
trustworthy?

Believing that no distinction can be drawn between the miracles of healing and the other miracles ascribed to Christ, and that they must all stand or fall together, *our first concern is to ascertain whether the narratives are trustworthy—whether, in short, these miracles were ever wrought.* It is evident that the question of the genuineness of the miracles depends mainly on the prior question of the genuineness of the Gospels. Now, we have already shown, as far as space allowed, that the Gospels were published in the days of the first generation of Christ's disciples; and that they could not have obtained the acceptance they did if

they were not in general accord with what was popularly known of the life and actions of Jesus Christ. The attempt to date the Gospels or any of them in the second century has utterly failed. "The writer," says Godet, "who in these last years has treated with the greatest thoroughness the question of the origin of our three first Gospels, Professor Holtzmann, of Heidelberg, who is not suspected of partiality, since he is at the head of the freethinkers in the Grand Duchy of Baden, concludes his study by declaring the results of modern labours on this subject to be in perfect agreement with the traditions of the most ancient ecclesiastical writers, namely, in affirming the writings which form the basis of our first three Gospels—and these Gospels themselves—to have been drawn up between the years 60 and 80 of our era; that is to say, not more than from thirty to fifty years after our Lord's death." We put our argument, then, thus :

"Lectures in Defence of the Christian Faith," p. 121.

Holtzmann on the date of the Gospels.

1. *These miraculous narratives were published to the contemporaries of the alleged events, the generation which could have detected and exposed their falsity.* In the year of our Lord 58, only two years before the date assigned by the Freethinking Holtzmann to the earliest Gospel, the Apostle Paul speaks of five hundred brethren to whom the risen Jesus appeared on a mountain in Galilee, and adds, "of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." "In the presence of a whole generation of contemporaries, and of eyewitnesses still living, it is difficult to understand how accounts of miracles so circumstantial as those contained in our Gospels, accompanied with the proper names of places and of persons, could have got themselves accredited, if the facts had not been recognized as real. It is even impossible to conceive to one's self how men could have

Published to contemporaries.

1 Cor. xv. 6.

Godet's "Lectures in Defence," etc., p. 122.

dared to publish fictions of such a nature, so soon after the supposed event. 'To have made it possible,' says Holtzmann, 'for such narratives to have been put into circulation and generally received, *if they were mere fictions*, it would have been necessary for as many *decenniums* to have passed away, as there did in fact pass *years*, between the life of Jesus and the composition of our Gospels.'"

The age un-  
critical.

The age  
sceptical.

If it be said that the age was uncritical and superstitious, and prepared to accept any miraculous tales that might be told, we reply that it was sceptical as well as superstitious, perhaps more sceptical than superstitious. "It was the age in which, under the attacks of philosophy, the ancient Pagan superstitions crumbled to dust; it was the age in which Lucretius was writing his completely rationalistic poem on nature, and identified its laws, as men are doing now, with the Divine nature."

Judæa had its Sadduceeism as well as other parts of the Roman Empire. And it was in the face of the world's incredulity that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the many miracles ascribed to Him, were proclaimed and believed in.

Even if we put this fact out of sight and take into account only the elements of superstition which still prevailed, we shall find no explanation of the Gospel narratives except in their truth.

The  
miracles  
which the  
age would  
have  
invented.

2. *What manner of miracles the age or its superstition would have ascribed to Christ may be seen by reference to the stories which we find in the Apocryphal Gospels which sprung up in the second century. In these Gospels we are told of the child Jesus manufacturing, in company with other Nazareth children, birds made of ordinary clay, and by breathing upon them con-*

ferring upon those which He made the power of flight ; or, again, of the child Jesus, when He had accidentally spilt upon the stairs the contents of a jug which He had just filled at the well, gathering it up in a handkerchief, and presenting it to His astonished mother. The Apocryphal Gospels even ascribe to the child Jesus the revengeful passions that are common to children, and represent Him as using His divine power to punish children who had displeased Him. Thus, some children refuse to play with Him, hiding themselves from Him ; He pursues and turns them into kids. Another child by accident runs against Him and throws Him down ; whereupon He, being exasperated, exclaims, " As thou hast made Me to fall, so shalt thou fall and not rise." At the same hour the child fell down and expired. He has a dispute with the master who is teaching Him letters, concerning the order in which He shall go through the Hebrew alphabet, and His master strikes Him ; whereupon Jesus curses him, and straightway his arm is withered, and he falls on his face and dies.

The  
Apocryphal  
Gospels.

" If in the second century, and in the Church itself, men were so unskilful at inventing fictitious history, even with the Gospels before them as models, what would the Gospel itself have been, if it had been composed a century earlier and had been inspired by the instincts of the natural man without being fashioned after a Divine and living model ?" After enumerating and describing the various gospels of post-apostolic centuries, Keim says, " Altogether undeceived by such an endless, unproductive, misleading world of legends . . . we escape from the lying magic, to seek a last support and help in the sources afforded by the New Testament in our Gospels." In nothing is the contrast between our Gospels and the productions of later ages

*Godet's*  
*"Defence,"*  
p. 131.

*"Jesus of*  
*Nazara,"*  
vol. i. 47.

Admissions  
of Keim.



Admissions  
of Renan.

greater than in the character of the miracles which they ascribe to Jesus Christ. Even Renan cannot help saying, "The marvellous in the Gospels is but sober good sense compared with that which we meet with in the Jewish Apocryphal writings, or in the Hindoo-European mythologies." And he might have added, "and even in Christian books composed at a later date than our Gospels."

Simplicity of  
the style.

"Defence  
of the  
Christian  
Faith," pp.  
129, 130.

3. Not only in the substance of the Gospel miracles but *in the style in which they are recorded, do we find evidence of the truth of the narratives.* "In respect of form," says Godet, "how great is their simplicity, their candour! An honest man bears upon his countenance and manner of speaking the stamp of his sincerity. Do our Evangelists need a certificate of honesty or of good faith? Suppose in some evil hour you have seen, heaped up before you, mountains of objections, of difficulties, open one of our Gospels, read over one or two lines in the book itself; these mountains will seem to you mere clouds which go off in vapour; you feel yourself in contact with the Divine reality. When man invents a marvel, the excessive emphasis of the tone of his writing betrays the unreality of his facts; it is the prerogative of the truth alone to be at once so grand and so simple."

"Defence,"  
etc., pp.  
123, 4.

This simplicity and conscious honesty is seen in the very differences which we observe in narratives of the same event. Again, quoting Godet, "One might fancy oneself listening to three messengers arriving from different directions, and recounting, each in his own way, some event which they have all three just witnessed. Imagine a case: A shipwreck has just occurred, in the presence of a whole population. Three eye-witnesses give an account of it. One heard

An  
illustrative  
case.

the sound of the breaking of the mast under the blows of the tempest ; another saw the sail fall upon the deck and envelope the ill-fated sailors in its folds ; the third saw the waves force their way into breaches in the ship's sides. Each tells of the particular fact which happened to strike his own mind. The three accounts do not coincide perfectly, except when they report some energetic order of the captain, or some heart-rending cry of one of the victims. In this case, do not even the discrepancies [differences, rather] between the three narratives demonstrate the reality of the facts reported? Now, just such is the testimony of our first Gospels. Their harmony regards the substance of the narrative, and their discrepancies [differences] prove that this harmony is not of an artificial nature—not the result of calculation. They are firsthand, original narratives, which, complementing as they do one another, are mutually corroborative.”

4. *The dependence of the sayings and teaching of Christ on the miracles ascribed to Him is conclusive evidence of the reality of the miracles.* “The sayings of Jesus,” says Keim, “besides possessing the characteristics of their age, exhibit all the evidence of an exalted and strongly-marked originality, of a powerful nature, of a divine enthusiasm and energy. So completely is this the case, that every sentence is full of an antique character soon lost in the Church, and bears a peculiar mental stamp which no successor, no evangelist, Jew or Gentile, not even Paul himself could have invented.” To the same effect writes John Stuart Mill, who did not take his place within the Christian fold : “It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been

The sayings  
dependent  
on the  
miracles.

“Jesus of  
Nazara.”  
vol. i. p. 87.

superadded by the tradition of His followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which He is reputed to have wrought. But who among His disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, as certainly not St. Paul."

Teaching  
and  
miracles  
inseparable.

We have just seen that "the tradition of the followers" of Jesus does *not* account for the miracles which He is said to have wrought. And we now argue further, that very many of the most memorable sayings ascribed to Christ, and which, it is confessed, must have been His, are so connected with, and dependent on, the miracles ascribed to Him, that they cannot be separated. The genuineness of the one involves the genuineness of the other. The teaching and the miracles are so interwoven in the narrative that we find ourselves compelled to accept or to reject the two together.

*Mat. vii.*  
22.

Even the Sermon on the Mount concludes with words which imply the performance of miracles. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you." "Had it not been an acknowledged fact that Jesus Himself wrought miracles, that He worked them daily, would it have been possible for Him, without covering Himself with ridicule, to have spoken to the multitude of the miracles which the disciples would work in His name?"

We may take particular instances. In three of the Gospels we have the discourse which centres on the

words, "A kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." The discourse connected with these words is one of the most striking delivered by Jesus, and even Strauss did not question its authenticity. But this discourse, according to the narrative, arose out of one of His miracles. He had healed a demoniac who was blind and dumb, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. The people were amazed, and said, "Is not this the Son of David?" *i.e.* the Messiah. The Pharisees sought to undo the impression which had been produced, by saying, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils." It was in reply to this charge, that Jesus said, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself." In this case it is evident that the discourse was occasioned by the charge of the Pharisees, and that their charge was occasioned by the miracle.

*Matt. xii.*  
22-27;  
*Mark. iii.*  
22-26;  
*Luke xi.*  
14-27.

Example—  
"A kingdom  
divided  
against  
itself."

So is it in other cases; as, for example, in the miracle of healing at the pool of Bethesda. The charge that He had broken the sabbath arose out of this miracle, and the charge that He made Himself equal with God arose out of His defence of Himself. The whole discourse which follows rests on the work performed at the pool of Bethesda. Suppress the miracle performed on the sabbath day, and "the discourse remains suspended in the air." Those who accept the words of Jesus as original and inimitable are logically bound to accept the miracles from which many of them sprang. "It is a vain attempt to seek to distinguish between the Master of Wisdom and Him who is called the Thaumaturgus or under-worker. If the miracles are false or fabulous, the sayings of Jesus which rest upon them lose all authority."

*John v. 9,*  
10.

Example—  
At the pool  
of Bethesda.

5. To many minds the most conclusive proof of the

genuineness of the miraculous narratives will be found *in their perfect harmony with the Christ of the Gospels Himself.* This will appear as we proceed. But some ideas need to be repeated and insisted on. The miracles ascribed to Christ would not have been in harmony with His claim and character as a mere Rabbi. But if He was the Son of God and Saviour of the world, the miracles ascribed to Him were in harmony with His claim and character, and the absence of them would have been unaccountable.

Harmony of  
the miracles  
with the  
Christ.

Having now established, we trust conclusively, the genuineness of the miraculous narratives in the Gospels, let us see how Christ Himself regarded His miracles. And

Evidence of  
His claims.

I. *He appealed to them in evidence of His claims.*  
In answer to John's inquiry, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus said, "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." He upbraided the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not, saying, "If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."  
*John xiv. 11.* "Believe me," he said to Philip, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake." Again, He said, "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin." Even when refusing to give such signs as were sometimes demanded, He told the people of a sign that should be given hereafter. When He drove the money-changers out of the temple, the Jews said, "What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing

*Matt. xi.*  
3-6.

*Matt. xi.*  
20-24.

*John xv. 24.*

*John ii.*  
13-22.

Thou doest these things?" "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," was His reply. When He was raised from the dead the disciples remembered and understood this saying. On two other occasions, Jesus foretold His resurrection, and called it the sign of the prophet Jonas. His disciples quite understood that His miracles were wrought in evidence of His claims. "Many other signs," we read in the end of the fourth Gospel, "did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

*Matt. xii.*  
38-41; *xvi.*  
1-4.

2. While appealing to His mighty works in support of His claims, *He would not work miracles at the bidding of those who chose to ask for them, especially such miracles as they desired.* On occasion of the cleansing of the temple, He referred the people forward, as we have just seen, to the event of His resurrection. When certain of the Scribes and Pharisees said, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee," and when certain Pharisees and Sadducees united to tempt Him, demanding "a sign from heaven," He not only referred them forward to the same event, but reproached those who made the demand, saying, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

Refuses to  
give signs.

*Matt. xii.*  
39; *xvi.* 4.  
See also  
*Mark viii.*  
11, 12.

His conduct on these occasions is more than consistent with the fact that He wrought miracles to prove His mission. It was because he wrought such miracles in abundance, that He declined to work them, as it were, to order. If those who desired them were honestly seeking to know the truth, they had evidence more than enough to satisfy them.

Consistency  
of Christ's  
action.

Besides, when these persons desired a sign from

heaven, they desired a miracle of a different kind from those which Jesus wrought. A sign from heaven would have been some portent in the sky, some mere prodigy. "If He were Himself, for example, to soar up into the sky till He should be out of sight, and were then to come down again in the clouds of heaven ; if He were to exhibit some sign like that, then, thought or pretended they, He might reasonably expect us to believe on Him." Not only, however, had they no right to prescribe what evidence He should give them, but the sort of sign which they desired was one which it would have been unworthy of Him to perform, and which would have been no true sign of what He was. "A prodigy is only a manifestation of power, an astonishing fact, which arrests the attention, and elicits admiration and amazement quite apart from its moral character. Clearly it has no religious value ; it appeals to the eye, and not to the heart and conscience, it cannot serve to establish either a Divine mission or a new truth. Besides, if power belongs to God, it is but one of His attributes ; it is not in *it* that we must seek the essence of His Being, since that is pre-eminently holiness and love. The greatest displays of power would not truly reveal Him."

See Part  
First, p. 6.

De  
Pressense's  
"Jesus  
Christ, His  
Life and  
Work,"  
1st Edit.  
p. 309.  
A mere  
prodigy of no  
value.

"The ethical meaning of the miracle," as Dean Trench says, "would be wholly lost, were blank astonishment or gaping wonder *all* which they aroused, since the same effect might be produced by a thousand meaner causes. Indeed, it is not a little remarkable, rather it is profoundly characteristic of the miracles of the New Testament, as indeed Origen noted long ago, that this name 'wonders' is never applied to them but in connection with some other name. They are continually, signs and wonders,' or 'signs' alone, or 'powers' alone, but never 'wonders' alone." That

Jesus should have declined to work mere prodigies is only a further proof that He was what He claimed to be.

3. There is another point that should not be overlooked, namely, that while Jesus met the legitimate desire for evidence by working miracles, *He complained that the people, and even His disciples, did not appreciate, as they ought, other signs.* When asked by a nobleman, or royal officer, of Capernaum to “come down and heal his son,” He exclaimed, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” He had just come from Samaria, where many believed that He was “indeed the Saviour of the world,” without witnessing any miracle, simply through the “word” which He had preached to them during His two days’ stay among them. And He no sooner sets His feet on Israelitish soil than He is solicited to work a miracle! The request springs from a father’s concern for the life of his child, and it is granted. But the reflection suggested by it was the result of Christ’s former experience in Galilee, and shows how deeply He felt the spiritual obtuseness of the people of that region.

Other signs  
not duly  
appreciated.

John iv. 48.

John iv. 41,  
42.

On the occasion on which He said, “If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin,” he said likewise, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.” The Divine wisdom of His teaching was evidence whence He was, as well as the Divine power of His working. And He had to complain that many resisted the evidence of both.

John xv.  
22-24.

Philip said to Jesus on one occasion, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” And the Lord’s reply is very significant: “Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he

John xiv.  
8-11.



“Shew us  
the Father.”

that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father? . . . Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake.” Philip had sufficient evidence, without and apart from the works wrought by Jesus, that there was a mysterious union between Jesus and the Divine Father. How he imagined that the Father could be manifested, we do not know. He may have thought of something such as they thought of who demanded a sign from Heaven—a dazzling vision, it may be, a magnificent spectacle in the atmosphere. “This request,” says Godet, “would have been well founded if the Divine nature consisted solely in power. But God is holiness and love, and hence the true Theophany could not be a splendid phenomenon, but must be a Person manifesting in word and act those features of the Divine character; a human, filial life, in which is displayed that relation full of dignity and tenderness which God maintains with the Being who calls Him His Father. Now this unique spectacle, this only true Theophany, this visible brightness of the Divine glory, had been before the eyes of the disciples for three years, and Jesus beheld with wonder and grief that they had not better appreciated the privilege which had been granted them.”

*Commentary  
on St. John's  
Gospel.—In  
loco.*

A Person  
the true  
Theophany.

The relation  
of Christ to  
His  
miracles.

We are now in a position to understand the relation of the Christ to the miracles and of the miracles to the Christ of the Gospels. These miracles formed a part of His credentials—by which we mean that they were “signs” both of His authority and of His Person; and, so far as we can judge, necessary signs. Some modern writers, in their recoil from a method of representing the evidence of miracles which took but

little note of the character of the miracles, go to the opposite extreme and make too little of the direct evidential power of the miracles. But the two ideas should not be separated. *The character of the miracles is of the essence of the evidence which they render to the claims of Christ.* In Christ's miracles we have not only power but grace and goodness, never wrought except to effect an immediately useful purpose. The question raised by a sceptical writer as to whether the miraculous change of a pen into a pen-wiper could make what was written truer or surer, has no bearing on the miracles of Christ. The difference between Christ's miracles and useless prodigies, has been marked by the defenders of the faith from the beginning. When Celsus insinuated that the miracles of the Gospel were like the tricks of magicians, Origen replied—"Show me the magician who calls upon the spectators of his prodigies to reform their life, or who teaches his admirers the fear of God, and seeks to persuade them to act as those who must appear before Him as their judge. The magicians do nothing of the sort, either because they are incapable of it, or because they have no such desire. Themselves charged with crimes the most shameful and infamous, how should they attempt the reformation of the morals of others? The miracles of Christ, on the contrary, all bear the impress of His own holiness, and He ever uses them as the means of winning to the cause of goodness and truth those who witnessed them. Thus He presented His own life as the perfect model, not only to His immediate disciples, but to all men. He taught His disciples to make known to those that heard them the perfect will of God; and He revealed to mankind far more by His life and words than by His miracles, the secret of that holiness by which it is

Origen in  
reply to  
Celsus.

Quoted in  
Pressense's  
"Martyrs  
and  
Apologists,"  
pp. 619, 620.

possible in all things to please God. If such was the life of Jesus, how can He be compared to mere charlatans; and why may we not believe that He was indeed God manifested in the flesh, for the salvation of our race?" Our conclusion then is twofold:

Signs of  
Messianic  
authority.

*John x. 41.*

Authority  
may be  
without  
miracles.

1. The miracles of Christ—*His works of might and love—were signs or evidences of His Messianic authority.* John the Baptist, we are expressly told, did no miracle. His ministry, although supernatural in its origin and authority, needed no miracle. It was an appeal to the consciences of the people, founded on divine laws, and threatenings, and promises, with which they were already familiar. In the case of the ancient prophets, the reality of the Divine communications was attested, for the most part, by their conformity to the law already given, by the consciences of the people, and by the spirit in which the prophets spoke; although sometimes peculiar circumstances and specific threatenings rendered signs necessary.

Missions  
which need  
miracles.

*Exod. iv. 1.*

But there were missions which needed miraculous signs for their attestation. That of Moses, for example, when he was commanded to go and bring Israel out of Egypt. The feeling which He expressed when He said, "They will say, the Lord hath not appeared to thee," was natural and rational. Moses knew human nature, and he knew the Israelitish nature in particular—debased and depressed by long years of cruel bondage. Let him go to them as a patriot burning to deliver them from their bondage; let him, by his eloquence, light the fire of freedom in their bosoms, and kindle a flame that shall melt their chains. In such a character let him do what he can for the emancipation of his brethren. It will be for them to reckon the chances of success in an attempt

Moses not a  
mere Patriot.

to throw off the yoke of Egypt, and say whether they will risk all, life itself, in one great effort to be free. Moses can only use argument and persuasion, like other patriotic deliverers, and trust in the blessing of the God of judgment for a successful issue. But it is not in the character of a patriot, self-moved or even God-moved, that he is about to return to his brethren. He is going to tell them, in the name of the God of their fathers, that the hour of their deliverance is come, that Jehovah has appeared to him in a most mysterious way, has expressed His deep compassion for His people, and has charged him to go and stand before the tyrant who oppressed them and demand of him, under pain of Divine judgment, to release his bondsmen. And in these circumstances Israel *must* arise and prepare, in the face of all difficulties, to march forth to freedom. It is not an open question which they may debate with one another and with Moses, whether success is possible or probable, and whether it will be wise of them to incur the hazard of showing signs of restlessness and dissatisfaction. They *must* arise and depart, that they may serve the God of their fathers. But then they are entitled to know by what authority Moses was acting. How shall they be satisfied that his message and pretensions are genuine? and that he is neither deceiving nor deceived? Moses anticipated the difficulty. He needed no miracle to call the people to repentance. But he did to justify him in demanding that they should receive him as having come from the very presence of God, to break their yoke, and to lead them forth to the foot of Mount Horeb. And he received the power which the circumstances rendered necessary.

Moses sent  
by God.

By what  
authority?

The power which Moses thus received to give

supernatural evidence of his mission was "the beginning of miracles," *so far as the use of them to attest a divine commission is concerned.* And the after use of miracles for this purpose was not lavish but most sparing—a fact which has an important bearing on the question, whether Bible miracles are legendary or historical.

"The  
Coming  
One"  
—signs  
necessary.

But when the fulness of the times arrived, when One appeared who professed to be the long expected Coming One, the King whose advent prophets had foretold, who spoke of Himself in the language of an apparent paradox as having come down from heaven and as being in heaven, the necessity which existed in the case of Moses returned with a greatly increased urgency. Whence art Thou? What sign showest Thou? were acknowledged by Himself to be legitimate questions. And His "mighty works" was His answer, not His only answer, but an answer which the people were entitled to receive.

Moral truth,  
as a rule,  
does not need  
signs.

Let it be remembered that the position assumed by Jesus Christ was not that of a mere teacher or preacher of moral truths. Such truths do not need miraculous evidence. The Bible uniformly appeals to the moral nature in man; and says in effect, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" And yet we can imagine circumstances in which God might be pleased to teach moral truth, and enforce moral duty, by a special revelation. The ethics taught by Jesus Christ rested on "love to God and love to man." And we can imagine man so sunk in ungodliness and selfishness as to have lost all idea of either duty, and needing a voice from heaven to recall them out of their low moral estate.

Christ more  
than a  
Teacher.

But Jesus Christ was immensely more than a teacher of morals. And it is in what He was beyond

this, that we see reason why His claims should be certified miraculously. Neither by His own generation nor by generations following, can we conceive these claims to be admitted and that, in the words of Nicodemus, "God was with Him," without supernatural evidence. *John iii. 2.*

In the works wrought by Christ we find the attestation not merely of a prophetic authority, but of His Messianic authority. He professed to be the Messiah, and His works were all in harmony with that profession, not merely as being wrought by Divine Power, but as being in keeping with the ends of Messiah's reign. "Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised; and to the poor the gospel is preached." *Luke vii. 22.* Mere prodigies of power, we must repeat, would not have been signs of Messiahship; nor would works of judgment. Prophecy did not expressly declare that Messiah would work miracles (Isaiah xxxv. verse 5 may refer only to spiritual blessings); but it ascribed to Him a Divine power and a Divine graciousness, and only by works embodying such power and graciousness could the claims of an avowed Messiah be certified to the world. And such were the works of Jesus Christ. *What kind of miracles.*

2. The miracles of Christ, we have further to say, *accredited His Messianic dignity* as well as His Messianic authority—they were *signs of His Person as well as of His office*. He was careful, it is true, to ascribe His works to "the Father who had sent Him," that those who saw them might be assured that they were wrought by Divine and not human power, and were designed of God to attest Him as God's servant. *Signs of His Messianic Dignity. John v. 36.*

Moreover, He never wrought miracles for Himself. He who could multiply the loaves to feed hungry thousands, would not turn stones into loaves to feed Himself when an hungered. But yet there was something quite unmistakable, in His manner of working miracles, which indicated a claim higher than that of service. "I will, be thou clean," are words which no merely human servant could use. They are in strange contrast with the words of Peter and John at a later date—"Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" When Jesus quelled the storm, it was in a tone of personal authority which led beholders to say, "What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" The effect of one of His miracles on the mind of Peter was such that he fell down at His knees and said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Had this been the fruit of a blind or superstitious impulse, He whose mission it confessedly was to set up God's Kingdom in the world, could not fail to have rebuked him. But Jesus accepted the prostrate homage of Peter, and replied in reassuring words of Divine authority like those which Jehovah addressed to the prophet—"Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt be a fisher of men."

The miracles of Christ, we see, are signs of more than that He had a Divine commission. They are signs of His personal dignity as the Messiah—that while He was "sent of God," He was likewise the Son of God, in that high and unique sense in which the Gospel represents Him to have appropriated the title. Admit this and we have not only a reason for miracles as such, but also an explanation of all that was peculiar in the tones and words with which Christ's miracles were wrought. We now understand how He

His manner  
of working.

See the  
author's  
"Pilate's  
Question,"  
p. 154.

Acts. iii. 12.

Mark iv. 41.

Luke v. 8.

See Acts x.  
26;  
Rev. xix. 10.

Isa. ix. 6;  
Psa. ii.

Sent of God  
and Son of  
God.

should walk through the world as the very Master of Nature. The calmness and quiet dignity which uniformly characterized Him only indicate His Divine consciousness that with Him all things were possible. He was Himself, as has often been remarked, the Great Miracle. "He represents, at its culminating point, the saving and special intervention of Divine love for the redemption of the world. He breaks the chain of natural causes and effects, to make a new beginning. He is the Incarnation of redeeming love; and we recognize in Him the supreme manifestation of the pity of the Father, remedying the ruin of the fall. Particular miracles are only emanations from this living and central miracle."

Himself the  
Great  
Miracle.

*De Pres-  
sense's  
"Jesus  
Christ,"  
p. 310.*

Thus understood, the miracles of Christ are no longer stumbling-blocks or hindrances to faith. They are the outward and visible signs of the presence of Incarnate God on earth. With Dr. Thomas Arnold we believe that they were "the natural accompaniments" of the Revelation of God in Christ," accompaniments the absence of which would have been far more wonderful than their presence.

Not  
hindrances  
but aids.



## "THROUGH NATURE TO CHRIST."

SUCH is the title of a work by Dr. Abbott, the Head Master of the City of London School. The avowed object of the work is to stem the progress of unbelief and to win unbelievers back into the Christian fold, and this most desirable object it proposes to accomplish by eliminating all that is miraculous out of the Gospel narratives! A process which seems more like a capitulation with unbelief than a conquest over it! Surrender all that is miraculous to the unbeliever, and he is content; he will admit any amount of goodness and wisdom which you may claim for Christ, and be an unbeliever still.

But how does Dr. Abbott hope to get rid of the miraculous narratives of the Gospels? By these very short and easy methods. First,—As to the miracles of healing; these, it is admitted, may have had a basis of actual fact, but a purely natural basis. Secondly,—Some of the miraculous narratives are to be regarded as the results of a mistaken interpretation of metaphorical language. But, then, there are miraculous narratives in the Gospels which cannot be got rid of, either as having a *natural* historical basis, or as growing out of a misunderstanding of metaphors, such as the raising of Lazarus, and the stilling of the storm. What shall we do with these? The answer is, Thirdly,—These must be later accretions around the original narratives!

All this has been answered, we trust sufficiently, in the earlier pages of this volume. Only let it be remarked here, that by such means as Dr. Abbott employs you can make anything out of anything! You can get rid of any amount of evidence, of any imaginable kind, by a mere act of your own will! You have only to say, that's not true, that's an invention, and turn away from it as an incredibility! But anything more irrational than this rationalistic method of treating evidence is not to be found in all literature.

Dr. Abbott admits that "the miraculous part of the narrative has arisen without the slightest falsification, or intention to deceive." "The theory that the Gospel miracles are 'lies' is (he says), in my estimation, more incredible than the theory that they are literally true and supernatural." But he must know full well that all theories, hitherto, like Strauss's, which have been

invented, or imagined, to preserve the credit of Jesus Christ, and to find a spiritual essence in His religion, which should be independent of the supernatural envelope in which it has come down to us, have ended in admitting some dishonesty on the part of Christ Himself or His biographers. And his theory, if theory it may be called, and which is the merest copy of the latest Rationalism, requires to have its deficiencies eked out, and its weakness supported in the same way.

Besides, the "Christ" to whom Dr. Abbott would lead us "through nature," without any aid from the *super*-natural, cannot be the Christ of the Gospels. *He* is Himself supernatural. And the supernatural in His life, instead of being "unnatural" is, in the highest sense, most natural. We repeat that for Him, being what He was, not to have wrought miracles, not to have ever visibly exercised His Divine power over nature, would have been a greater wonder than any of the wonders recorded in His life. In the absence of miracles from the story of His life, not in their presence, should we find a hindrance to our faith.

These views were argued at considerable length by the author in the *Christian World* for Oct. 5, Oct. 26, and Nov. 2, 1877. And in the close of one of these articles, on Dr. Abbott's theory of the Resurrection of Christ, he ventured to say—"The author of 'Supernatural Religion' speaks of 'distinguished men who endeavour to arrest for a moment the pursuing wolves of doubt and unbelief by practically throwing to them, scrap by scrap, the very doctrines which constitute the claims of Christianity to be regarded as a Divine Revelation at all.' Whether Dr. Abbott is one of these let the reader judge. In deference to the demands of a most unscientific scepticism, he has given up the substance of the great fact of our Lord's resurrection, and he offers a shadow so unsubstantial that the 'pursuing wolf of doubt' will not be arrested by it even for a moment. *Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus illis, tempus eget.*"

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## CHAPTER VI.

THE JESUS CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS CERTIFIED BY  
HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

The fact to  
be proved.

*Rom. i. 1-4.*  
*Revised*  
*Version.*

IN attestation of the claims of Jesus Christ, as asserted first by Himself and then by His apostles, we now appeal to an event which rests on the surest historic evidence. That same Jesus who was crucified, according to Tacitus and Luke, in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, by sentence of the Procurator Pontius Pilate, and who, according to the Christian narrative, was laid in the rock-hewn tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, was restored to life, and remained on earth for forty days after he left His grave. The bearing of this event on the claims of Christ is explicitly stated in one of those letters of the Apostle Paul which all admit to be genuine:—"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared (Gr. determined) to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead" or from the dead. The judgment-seat of the Roman governor seemed to be present to the Apostle's mind when he wrote these words to the Roman Christians. The Governor's

reluctance to give sentence against Jesus was met by a new charge which the Jews had kept in reserve—"We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." But a few hours before, Jesus had "made Himself the Son of God" in circumstances of the deepest solemnity. "I adjure thee by the Living God," the High Priest said to Him, "that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus had now an opportunity of correcting any exaggerated conceptions which His disciples had formed of Him, and any errors into which His own words had unintentionally led them, if there had been either exaggeration or error. But His reply to the High Priest, calmly spoken under all the solemnity of the High Priest's adjuration, was as a seal deliberately put on all that He had said of Himself. "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of God?" "I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." This was enough, in the judgment of the Sanhedrim, to justify a demand for His death as a blasphemer. And the demand was granted. As a blasphemer He died—"because He made Himself the Son of God." But, according to Paul, the sentence of man was reversed by the act of God. By the "resurrection" of Christ from the dead, He was "determined" to be what, in the immediate prospect of death, He had avowed Himself to be—"the Son of God." So Paul believed; and so Paul preached, from the hour of his conversion till he laid down his head on the block by one of the gates of Rome.

That Paul *believed* that Jesus Christ rose from the dead is not questioned. There is scarcely an extant letter of his in which the fact is not asserted, or referred to, as the universal belief of the Christian

Final charge  
by the  
Sanhedrim.

*John xix. 7.*

*Matt. xxvi.*

63;

*Mark xix.*

61;

*Luke x.xii.*

67.

The decision  
of the  
Sanhedrim  
reversed.

*Acts ix. 20.*

See *Rom. i.*

3, 4; *iv.*

23-25;

*vi. 8-10;*

*viii. 34;*

*x. 6-9;*

*xiv. 9;*

people. Now Paul was not a man to believe so stupendous a miracle, and one which involved consequences so stupendous, on light grounds. This miracle was not one of many, any one of which might be dropped out of sight, or out of faith, without injury to the Christian system. It lay at the basis of the entire system. "If Christ be not risen," he said, "your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." With such a conception of the relation of the Resurrection of Christ to the grand Redemption which he preached, he must have had very strong reasons for believing in its reality. And so strong did they seem to himself that he would not admit the possibility of any error, delusion, or illusion, in the matter. Let men believe the testimony which he and others bore to the fact, or, if they did not, let them call Paul and his fellow apostles *liars*. "It was either true or it was a falsehood. James, Cephas, the twelve, the five hundred, either had or had not seen the Lord Jesus; Thomas either had or had not put his finger into the print of the nails; either the resurrection was a fact, or else the Apostles were false witnesses for God." This is the position which Paul took, and he took it boldly. And, the enemies of the faith themselves being judges, he was a man of "thorough sincerity" and of a "singularly independent" mind. What then do we know of the grounds on which Paul believed so thoroughly, and preached so constantly, that Jesus had risen from the dead?

1 Cor. xv. 1-20;  
2 Cor. iv. 14;  
Gal. i. 1;  
Eph. i. 19, 20;  
Phil. iii. 10;  
Col. i. 18;  
ii. 12;  
1 Thes. i. 10; iv. 14;  
2 Tim. ii. 8.

1 Cor. xv. 14.

That Paul believed, admitted.

1 Cor. xv. 15.

1 Cor. xv. 8, 9.  
Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus.

First in his own experience, and as the first means of his own faith, comes the event which occurred to him on the way to Damascus. Writing to the Corinthians, he says, "Last of all he was seen of me also as of one born out of due time. For I am the

least of the Apostles, that am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." It was essential to the Apostleship that he who held the office should be a witness of the resurrection. So said Peter. And Paul acknowledges it when, defending his own Apostleship, he says, "Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ the Lord?" This *seeing* of Jesus must have been at the beginning of his ministry, for without it he could not have been an Apostle. It is not to be confounded with spiritual "revelations," such as those to which he owed his knowledge of the Gospel, or with such events, visions, or trances, as are referred to in 2 Cor. xii., when he was rapt up into the third heavens, and Acts xviii. 11, when the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul," and Acts xxvii. 23, 24, when the angel of God brought him a Divine message on the eve of the shipwreck at Melita. On none of these occasions is it said that he "*saw*" Jesus. *This was his privilege once and only once.*

The occasion referred to is evidently that which is related in the ninth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The same story is told in Paul's own words in the twenty-second and twenty-sixth chapters of the Acts; on the first of these occasions to a tumultuous crowd in Jerusalem, and on the second to King Agrippa and the Roman Governor Festus at Cæsarea. Between these several accounts there are minute differences, which, instead of militating against the truthfulness of the narrative, serve as do the unimportant differences of independent witnesses, to confirm it. It would have been easy for an author, or editor, who had the slightest consciousness of error, intentional or unintentional, to remove, by a touch of his pen, the slightest appearance of discrepancy. But the historian

*Acts i. 22.*

*Gal. i. 11, 12.*

Not to be  
confounded  
with  
"visions."

*On these  
differences  
see the  
author's  
"Resur-  
rection of  
Jesus Christ  
an  
Historical  
Fact,"  
pp. 53-56.*

writes in the ninth chapter, and Paul speaks in the twenty-second and twenty-sixth, with the freedom of men who were conscious of truth.

The narrative in the ninth of Acts does not say expressly that Paul *saw* the person who spoke to him. But Paul himself tells us that he "saw" Jesus. The words which Luke reports, then, were spoken, not by an unseen but by a seen person. And when Paul said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" he spoke to one whom he was seeing. The voice to Saul did not come out of a cloud, but from the lips of One who was visible at the time to the eye of Saul. This is implied not only in the words of Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 8; but in the words addressed to him by Ananias in Damascus—"The Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee (*lit.*, who was seen by thee) in the way as thou camest."

The glorified  
body seen  
by Paul.

There was then a corporeal manifestation of Christ to Paul on his way to Damascus—as real, though in circumstances very different, as those to the other witnesses whom he names. Without this he could have borne no personal testimony to the Resurrection of his Lord. Of the form in which Christ appeared to him we may gather something from Paul's own words. In Phil. iii. 21, he speaks of Christ's "glorious body," the "body of His glory," the body in which He is now manifested in glory, as the body like unto which ours shall be fashioned. It was Christ's glorified body that Saul *saw* on his way to Damascus, the risen body perfectly and permanently "transfigured" when He ascended to Heaven.

This, and nothing less, is what Paul says, whether truly or not. He gives himself forth to the world as a personal witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and so confident is he in the reality of his own

seeing of the risen Christ that he will listen to no explanation which implies that he might possibly be mistaken. If it was not true that Jesus was risen, he and others were false witnesses ; in plain words they were liars.

Not possibly  
mistaken.

Many attempts have been made to explain away the testimony of Paul consistently with his personal honesty. But they have utterly failed. Nothing but such an event as the appearance of the glorified Christ, as an objective actual fact, can explain the circumstances in which Saul of Tarsus became a disciple of Jesus Christ. For be it remembered (1) that this strong-minded and sober-minded man *believed*, most unhesitatingly, and to the end of his life, that he had *seen* Jesus, and that he had heard words from His lips. So much is admitted by the most sceptical. Be it remembered (2) further that with this belief, was connected as a consequence, an entire revolution of conviction and life.

While Paul's own seeing of the Risen Christ stood first as the means of his conversion, he did not place it first but last, in his presentation of the evidence on which the world was called to believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Of that evidence we have a brief summary from his pen. "Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures ; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve ;

Paul's  
summary of  
evidence.

Cor. xv.  
1-8.



after that, He was seen of five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also as of one born out of due time."

We have here but a *summary* of testimonies which Paul had "delivered" to the Corinthians when he first preached the gospel to them. Nothing more was necessary for the purpose which he had in view when he wrote the letter. We find elsewhere, in the Gospels, the particulars of several of the appearances of Christ to which Paul refers. But we confine ourselves now to what Paul tells us, because of the authority which even non-Christians allow to his words.

No reference  
to "the  
women" by  
Paul.

It is worthy of observation that Paul makes no reference to the appearances of Christ to Mary and the other women, who went at the dawn of the third day to the sepulchre of their Lord. Some would allege that the first Christians were deceived into a belief that their Lord had risen, by the hallucinations and fancies of these women, and especially of the devout and excitable Mary of Magdala. But so far is this from being the case that Paul does not even refer to the fact that He had appeared to the loving ones who had gone to anoint His body. And he mentions appearances to two apostles separately, one of which is mentioned in the Gospels incidentally, and one of which is not mentioned at all.

Gal. i. 18,  
19.

Peter's  
personal  
testimony.

"*He was seen of Cephas.*" Three years after his conversion Paul spent fifteen days in Jerusalem in the company of Cephas and James the Lord's brother. And he could not make the statement that Jesus was seen of Cephas, if he had not been told the fact, and, with the fact, the circumstances, by Peter himself.

To Peter who had so recently denied his Lord, the appearance of Christ to him personally, must have been an unspeakable privilege. And on the mind of Paul the impression of Peter's tale must have been deep and lasting. The appearance of Christ to Peter is mentioned in the Gospels only in the most incidental manner; and yet it is in the very position in which Paul places it, as occurring before His appearing to the Apostles collectively. When the two disciples returned from Emmaus they found the eleven gathered together, and were at once informed—"The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon."

*Luke xxiv.*  
34.

How absolutely certain Peter was that the Lord had risen—his certainty not grounded on the one special manifestation to himself, but on all his appearances, we know. The one idea predominant in his mind, in his subsequent addresses to the Jews and their rulers, seems to be the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Every speech that he utters proves that of this one great event his mind was full. The fact seems to haunt him in every place, before every audience, in every argument. And in a letter written thirty years after the event we find the memory of it as fresh as ever: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" Such was the hold which this great fact took of the mind of Peter, and such his certainty of its literal reality. That he should have spoken of it to Paul in their fifteen days' intercourse in a manner that left an indelible impression on Paul's mind, is only what we might have expected. And hence the prominence which Paul gives to the fact: "*Jesus was seen of Cephas.*"

*Acts i. 22 ;  
ii. 32 ; iii.  
15 ; iv. 10 ;  
iv. 33.*

See "*Blunt's  
Hulsean  
Lectures,*"  
p. 225.

*1 Pet. i. 3 ;  
also ii. 19,  
21 ; and iii.  
18, 21.*

The place of  
the Resur-  
rection in  
Peter's  
thoughts.

1 *Cor. xv. 7.* "He was seen of James," Paul says likewise. The appearing of Christ to James personally, after His appearing to the five hundred, and before a later appearing to the Apostles, is mentioned only by Paul. But Paul cannot have been mistaken in the matter. He must have received the information from James himself during that visit of fifteen days to Jerusalem. And if James himself had not told a fact of so much interest and significance, we cannot believe that Paul would afterwards have accepted the tale from any one else. As there was a special reason why Jesus should grant to Peter a personal and private manifestation of Himself—namely, to assure him of forgiveness and to restore his faith, we can imagine a special reason in the case of James likewise. The "brethren" or "brothers" of Jesus, whether they were the sons of Joseph and Mary, or only near relatives, were slow to believe in Him as the Christ of God. And a personal manifestation to James, called his "brother," would be, as it was to Peter, a sign of forgiveness and a means of increase of faith. Godet remarks well, "If tradition had invented, would it not, above all, have imagined an appearance to John?"

*John vii. 5.*

A special reason.

Seen by the Apostles and by five hundred brethren.

The second, third, and fifth, of the appearances specified by Paul are recorded in the Gospels: "then of the twelve:" "of above five hundred brethren at once:" "of all the apostles." The occasion on which He was seen of five hundred brethren at once can only be that which is mentioned by Matthew: "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted." These words suggest other appearances which Matthew does not record, for his narrative

*Matt. xxviii. 16, 17.*

contains no record of any appointment by Jesus to meet him in a specified mountain in Galilee. As for the omission of all reference to the five hundred who were present, it seems to arise from the object which Matthew had in view, namely, to record the commission which Jesus gave to "the eleven." It was with the eleven and their commission that Matthew was concerned. But one does not see why Jesus should appoint the eleven alone to meet Him on a mountain. It is more natural to suppose that Jesus chose a central place, one probably where the multitudes had often heard Him among the mountains of Galilee, for the convenience of "brethren," believers in Him, scattered through the villages in which he had so often preached the gospel of the Kingdom. This most natural suggestion accounts both for Matthew's description of the place, and for Paul's statement of the number.

The  
Galilean  
mountain.

Here, then, we have an averment on which the character of Paul justifies us in relying, that more than five hundred brethren saw Jesus on one occasion after He was risen, and that the greater part of the five hundred were alive when he wrote. The statement of Matthew that on that occasion "some doubted," instead of suggesting any reason why *we* should doubt the reality of Christ's appearance to His disciples, increases our confidence in the candour and truthfulness of the historian. There is here an entire absence of any attempt to make out a case. Matthew could afford, if the expression may be used, to tell the whole truth. The fact of the Resurrection was so well attested and so universally believed, that it was not necessary to conceal the first uncertain impression of some of the five hundred, or of the eleven, when they saw Jesus approaching. And some uncertainty having

"Some  
doubted."

been felt, it was only after the manner of all the Gospel writers to mention it, without troubling themselves as to how it might be interpreted. In our mind it creates no difficulty at all. The doubt may have arisen when Jesus was seen drawing near from a distance, or before "some" had the opportunity of distinctly recognizing Him. But it is not suggested that the doubt continued, or survived that interview of Christ with His disciples on the Galilean mountain. It is certain that all the eleven of whom Matthew speaks, preached boldly, and in no hesitating terms, that their Lord had risen to die no more; and equally certain that the five hundred of whom Paul speaks believed, according to him, that they had really seen the risen Christ.

Doubts removed.

Why not show Himself to His enemies?

If it be asked, *Why did not Jesus, if He really rose from the dead, show Himself to His enemies as well as His friends?* the answer is not far to seek. His not doing so was in keeping with the manner in which He had dealt with them during His ministry. He would not give a sign from heaven to men who did not find sufficient evidence of His Messiahship in works of might and mercy which no other man had ever wrought. Moreover, if He had shown Himself to His enemies, or to the Jewish multitude, it would have been but a few days' wonder, and, possibly enough, would have produced tumult. The spirit which showed itself before in Galilee, the spirit which would have taken Him by force to make Him a King, would be the most natural consequence, giving fresh trouble to both the ecclesiastical and the civil rulers, without spiritual good to any; and not improbably enraging the Sadducean authorities to fresh measures against Jesus and His disciples. Besides, if Jesus had ap-

Good reasons.

peared before them, nothing was easier for them than to deny His identity, and to take measures against this new comer as an impostor. They were not in any sense the men to be witnesses of His resurrection. They were not capable of conviction; they were not morally qualified to appreciate the fact and its bearings; they would not have become new men by the sight of the Risen One. Only those who had been chosen before of God, who had knowledge of Him and love to Him, and were spiritually susceptible of the lessons which His resurrection taught, were fit to be witnesses to the world of an event in which were wrapt up the moral destinies of the world. To object to *their* evidence because they were Christians is to object to it because they were sincere! Of course they were Christians. But in this we find the strength, not the weakness of their evidence. They were convinced, rather they knew, that it was true that Jesus rose from the dead, and therefore they said it was true. To doubt a man's word because he himself believes it, and submits to every imaginable sacrifice because of his faith, is a strange proceeding.

See the author's "Resurrection of Jesus Christ an Historical Fact."

Acts x. 41.

Disciples the only fit witnesses.

If it be objected that we have not a full, complete, and consecutive account of the Resurrection of Christ, we admit the fact, but deny that the value of the evidence is affected by it. *Those who do not accept the evidence as it is, would find a very plausible reason for rejecting it if it were such as they demand.* Let us suppose that the four Evangelists report all the appearances of Jesus Christ, in their order, to individuals, the Marys, Cephas, James, the Emmaus disciples, and to the Apostles collectively, in Jerusalem, in Galilee, and on Mount Olivet. The story is exact and complete. We see and hear all that took place

Not a consecutive account.

Objections  
to such  
an account.

during the forty days of His revived earthly life. *All* this we shall suppose we have from *all* the Evangelists. Would this satisfy those who are not satisfied by the story as it is? Would they not, rather, argue that in the perfectness of the story there is clear evidence of concert, if not of conspiracy, on the part of the writers? They have agreed together, it would be said, to tell the same tale, and how to tell it.

The  
narrative  
as it is.

But take the narrative as it is, and, though in a sense fragmentary, it will be found to possess a special evidential value. We have four narratives, none of them full and complete. On reading them our first impression is that they are independent of each other, written without mutual concert, no one borrowing from any other. Our next impression is that though thus mutually independent, and though each has its own peculiarity, they all bear witness to the same main facts of death, burial, and resurrection. They report different circumstances, and when they report the same, one does it with more fulness than another. On comparing their statements certain diversities are discovered, which it may not be easy to explain. But these diversities awaken no doubt of their honesty and truthfulness; they only prove their independence. Amidst diversity the main facts in question are attested by all. And being thus attested by all the witnesses, the evidence in support of them is entitled to be accepted without suspicion.

Diversity.

Substantial  
agreement.

In conclusion, the following facts and considerations cannot be reasonably questioned :

The belief  
dates from  
the  
occurrence.

1. *The belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not of later growth, but dates from the very time at which it is said to have occurred.* Apart from the narratives in the Gospels, it is confessed by the most

hostile unbelievers that Paul received his information from those who professed to be eye-witnesses. And among these, it will be remembered that he names Cephas and James, whom he visited in Jerusalem three years after his conversion. At a later period he names John along with these as acknowledged pillars in the infant Church. And from the three he received the right hand of fellowship as a preacher of the true Gospel. If these three asserted that they had themselves seen the Risen Lord, they must have meant that they saw Him during the brief period of His risen earthly life. And it is nothing short of an absurdity to suppose that anything could have led them years after to believe that they had seen the Risen Christ, if they had not believed from the first that they had seen Him. This is equally true of the other Apostles and of the survivors of the five hundred.

Gal. i. 18,  
19;  
1 Cor. xv.  
5, 7.

Gal. ii. 9.

Testimony of  
the three  
to Paul.

2. Those who thus from the first declared that they had seen the Risen Christ *attached the utmost importance to the fact of His resurrection.* This appears in all that they spoke and wrote afterwards. And the inference from it is, that they could not have been indifferent or careless as to the grounds of their faith. They staked their own souls' salvation upon it, and, in their maintenance of it, they lived a life of martyrdom, and not a few of them died a martyr's death.

Importance  
of the fact.

3. *Instead of being expectant of their Lord's Resurrection,* and thus possibly credulous and easily satisfied with evidence of the fact, *their own testimony is that they had no expectation of the event,* and received the first news of it with the utmost incredulity. When He spoke to them before His death of His rising again, they questioned among themselves what the

The  
Disciples  
not  
expectant.

Mark xvi.  
11;  
Luke xxiv.  
11, 21;  
John xx.  
24, 25.



*Mark ix. 10.* rising from the dead should mean. Even the women, with all the sanguine hopefulness of their nature, never dreamed of finding the tomb empty on the morning of the third day. The object of their visit was to anoint the precious body which they expected to find in Joseph's tomb. The faith of the disciples in the Resurrection of their Lord was in no wise aided by a predisposition to believe in it, but was the fruit of evidence which overcame their belief that they should see Him no more.

Revolution  
in the  
Apostles.

4. *The Resurrection of Jesus was the means of quite a revolution in the spirit and the beliefs of His disciples.*

That they underwent an extraordinary change when Jesus rose from the dead, or when they believed that He rose, is universally admitted. The whole story of the thoughts and sentiments of the Apostles, first before, and then after, the Resurrection, is so natural and so evidently truthful that it is seldom challenged. What their thoughts and sentiments were after the Resurrection, or after what they alleged to be the Resurrection, is known from their own writings. The Resurrection, or what they believed to be such, forms a historic dividing line in their mental and spiritual condition. And the only question is whether the change can be accounted for even if the belief was mistaken,—accounted for, that is, by the belief itself, even if it was the belief of a falsehood, or of a delusion.

What  
change the  
mere belief  
might have  
wrought.

That the belief itself, even if baseless, might produce a great effect, at least temporarily, need not be denied. Falsehoods taken into the soul by a firm conviction may and do mould men's lives. But it is certain that whatever change might be effected by believing that He rose from the dead although He did not rise, *the*

change which was actually wrought in them could not have been thus effected. The utmost which a mere belief that he was risen could do for them would be, to confirm them in the faith which they had before His death. And the development of this faith, if they can be supposed to have courage to preach it, could, at best and at most, result only in a modified Judaism. The Christianity, which is not more Pauline than it is Petrine and Johannine, could not have grown by any natural process out of the Messianic beliefs and expectations which were common to Peter and John and the other Apostles, before they sank into the grave in which they saw their Master laid. There might be a revival of these beliefs and expectations by a mistaken belief that their Lord was risen, but nothing more. Every seed produces after its kind. To understand the transition of the disciples from the Messianic ideas which all the personal teaching of Christ during His lifetime failed to correct, to those views of the Christ and of His redeeming work which they afterwards held and preached, we must have, not only the fact of the Resurrection, but that Divine illumination of which the Book of the Acts makes mention, by which they understood the great purpose of His dying and rising again. Even the change from cowardice to heroism, which dates from the moment when they believed their Lord had risen, is one which could not be effected by an illusion. A momentary impulse *might* result from an illusion, but lifelong courage in the face of peril and death could not. "If any one admits the change, but says, 'There was no cause for it,' such a man appears to me to admit a miracle, for I know scarcely any miracle in the records of the miraculous that would be a greater miracle than the production of a change so mar-

But a greater  
change  
actually  
wrought.

vellous, and so world-wide in its effects, without any definite cause.”

The Church  
built on the  
Resur-  
rection.

5. The Resurrection of Christ was *the very foundation on which the Christian Church was built by the Apostles*. Christ Himself is, more properly speaking, the Foundation of the Church, we know ; but whether the Christian Church be regarded as the work of God or the work of man, the fact of the Resurrection was essential to its foundation and progress. Those who see in it the work of God do not need to be assured of the fact of the Resurrection of Christ ; and what we have to show is, that in as far as it is the work of man, it was based on that fact. The Apostles were its human founders and builders, and they preached everywhere that the Jesus who was crucified by sentence of Pilate, rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. They gloried in the cross, but they could not have gloried in it if He had not risen from the dead. The cross was a stumbling-block wherever it was preached, and nothing but the fact of His Resurrection could take the stumbling-block out of the way and turn the shame into honour. The Resurrection was to the Apostles themselves the evidence both of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of the cross, and of the life of power and glory which Christ lived in heaven. They were not ashamed to say, “It is Christ that died,” but only because they could add, “yea, rather that is risen again.” “Jesus and the Resurrection” was the companion theme of “Jesus and Him crucified.” The Christian Church had never existed but for the belief of the Apostles that Jesus had risen ; and if that belief was not the belief of a real fact, the Christendom of these eighteen centuries and a half has been built on—a lie!—the generations

“ Jesus and  
the Re-  
surrection.”

which have drawn holy inspirations from the Apostolic assurances of the Resurrection of Christ, have drawn these inspirations ultimately from a lie!

Some who are predisposed to reject the evidence of miracles in general, confess themselves shut up to faith in this one great miracle. Thus Dr. Carpenter says, "I regard the historical evidence of the Resurrection of our Lord as of quite a different character from that, *e.g.*, of the raising of Lazarus or of the widow's son at Nain. . . . Looking at the unquestionable fact—for such it appears to me—that the Resurrection of our Lord was the foundation of the preaching of Paul and, so far as we know, of the other Apostles, and was universally accepted by the early Church as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity ('if Christ be not risen, then is our faith vain'), the Gospel narratives derive from that fact a support that is given to none other of the miracles of Christ or of His followers."

Dr.  
Carpenter.

*See*  
*Prebendary*  
*Row's*  
*Bampton*  
*Lectures.*  
*Preface to*  
*2nd Edit.*

These other miracles we have already considered; but the principle of Dr. Carpenter's argument is undeniable. We have no such evidence of the restoring to life of the widow's son at Nain, or of Lazarus, as we have for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Cancel any particular miracle ascribed to Christ from the record, and the loss of it will not affect the claims of Christ or of Christianity. Cancel the fact of the Resurrection of Christ from the record, and you undermine the very foundations of the faith. The existence of the Church from the day of Pentecost when Peter said to the people of Jerusalem, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses," until now, is an imperishable monument to the fact that "it was not possible that Jesus should be holden of the pains of death."

*Chap. V.*

*Acts ii. 32.*

*Acts ii. 24.*

The Resurrection  
incorporated  
in  
doctrinal  
teaching.

Rom. iv.  
23-25; viii.  
34; x. 9;  
1 Cor. xv.  
14;  
2 Tim. i. 10.

6. All this evidence is immensely strengthened by the consideration that *the fact of the Resurrection is so incorporated with the doctrinal, as well as the historic, teaching of the Apostles, that it cannot be separated from either.* To expound this statement fully would require a volume. We should have to speak of the reflex light which it throws on Christ's person, character, life, and work; and of the prophetic light which, according to the Apostles, it throws on the future destiny of mankind. The Resurrection of Christ was not, as one has well said, "a stray and solitary boulder cast upon the earth, but the keystone of a mighty arch." If you take it away, you not only take away the foundation of the fabric, but you take away something that enters into the very essence of the system, and without which the system loses both its symmetry and its cohesion.

If it be asked how this bears on the evidence of the fact that Christ rose from the dead, the answer is obvious. (a) The Apostles, in whose faith the Resurrection held so supreme and all-engrossing a place, could not but take the utmost pains to be assured of its reality. (b) We cannot understand how a mistaken belief in the Resurrection of Christ could by any process be worked up into the system of which Paul, Peter, and John, are the exponents and representatives. On the supposition of a belief without reality, there could have been no such Divine illumination as that to which these Apostles ascribed the gospel which was based on the Resurrection which they preached to the world. (c) The place which the Resurrection of Christ holds in the Christianity of its witnesses reminds us that what we have to prove is not merely that a dead man came to life again. We have to do not with ordinary circumstances, or with an ordinary man.

The Resurrection

We have to do with one particular Man ; and when we look at the circumstances and character of this Man, while the wonderfulness of His Resurrection remains, its unlikelihood vanishes. The real wonder is, not that He rose again, but that He died.

not of any man but of the Man.

Those who doubt or question the fact of Christ's Resurrection are bound to find some explanation of the unquestioned fact that His disciples believed that He rose. Strauss, the most thorough unbeliever, acknowledges the obligation, and blames those who evade it.

Naturalistic hypotheses. See a full discussion of these in the author's "Resurrection of Jesus Christ an Historical Fact," Chap. VII.

1. The favourite hypothesis once was that Jesus *was not really dead* when He was laid in the grave, and that His Resurrection was only His recovery from a swoon. This hypothesis ignores the narrative which tells us of the means that were used to ascertain that He was really dead. And Strauss himself rejects it contemptuously. "It is quite evident," he says, "that this view of the resurrection of Jesus, apart from the difficulties in which it is involved, does not solve the problem which is here under consideration—the origin, that is, of the Christian Church by faith in the miraculous Resurrection of the Messiah. It is impossible that a being who had stolen half dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening, and indulgence, and who still, at last, yielded to His sufferings, could have given to His disciples the impression that He was a conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life—an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry."

The swoon hypothesis.

2. *The hypothesis on which Strauss and the greater part of unbelievers now rely is that which is called the*

The visionary hypothesis.

*visionary hypothesis.* The disciples were the victims of their own imaginations! They believed that Jesus had risen, but their belief was a pure hallucination of their own brains! a hallucination which originated with Mary Magdalene and seized the other disciples with all the force of an epidemic! This is the key by which Strauss fulfils his "pledge" to explain the honest belief of the disciples, without admitting a miraculous resurrection.

Let any one read the Gospel narratives, and Paul's statements, with a view to ascertain whether they can be reconciled with this idea, and he will need no aid from us. These narratives must be blotted out and the whole history recast in order to make room for a new and altogether different story. And after all one cannot help exclaiming, what simpletons these disciples of Jesus were! So easily deceived, founding their faith on less than a shadow! And these are the men who, by a faith thus unsubstantial and groundless, turned the world upside down!

It is a notable fact that while the women who devoted themselves so lovingly to the care of the precious body which they expected to find in Joseph's tomb, were rewarded by being the first to see the Risen one, from that hour they drop out of sight and are never appealed to as witnesses. The appeal is to the Apostles that were assembled on the evening of the day on which he rose, and on the evening of the following first day of the week, and at the sea of Galilee, and on the Galilean mountain. And Paul, as already remarked, while making special mention of Christ's appearing to Peter and James, makes no mention of His appearing to the women who had gone to anoint the body of Jesus;—so little had the appearing to Mary Magdalene to do with the faith of

the early Church in the resurrection of Christ, and so far was it from being the occasion of a great error which has survived unto this day! Many reasons have already been given why we may be sure that the Apostles exercised a most intense vigilance as to the grounds of their faith in the resurrection of their Lord, and they might all be repeated in rejecting the hypothesis that they were deceived by the hysterical impulses of Mary Magdalene.

3. *Another hypothesis* has been invented with a view to relieve us of the difficulty of supposing that a dead body was restored to life. *It may be called the spiritual or the apparitional.* This newer hypothesis supposes that the appearances of Jesus after His death were real, objective occurrences, apparitions, or communications from the spirit world, to assure the disciples that Jesus was glorified. It necessarily supposes likewise that the *body* that was laid in Joseph's tomb was not restored to life, but "saw corruption." Though more respectful to Gospel story, this theory is really as groundless as the older Visionary. (a) The term "Resurrection" is utterly misapplied when all that is meant is that the soul of Jesus went into heaven—which is equally true of the penitent malefactor. The argument of Peter on the day of Pentecost was a mistake, if nothing more than this is meant by the resurrection of Christ. (b) This theory is as irreconcilable with the Gospel narratives as the older visionary hypothesis. "Behold my hands and my feet," said the Risen Jesus, "that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and blood as ye see me have." (c) This new theory, like the former, leaves the final destination of Christ's body altogether unaccounted for. If His resurrection

The  
apparitional  
hypothesis.

*Acts ii.*  
24-36.

*Luke xxiv.*  
39.



was only "spiritual," the glorification of His spirit in heaven, His body did not rise to a new life; it "saw corruption." But it was "taken away." By whom and whither?

This theory moreover fails to accomplish the object for which it is preferred to the common belief that the resurrection of Jesus was a bodily resurrection. That object is to reduce, if not altogether to eliminate, the supernaturalness of the occurrence. But "apparitions" or "visible manifestations" of a Being who was now in His heavenly home, are as supernatural as the restoration of a dead body to life. It need scarcely be added that the hypothesis which reduces the resurrection of Christ to a mere ghost story, is utterly inconsistent with the solemn and persistent averments of those who profess to have seen the Risen Christ with their own eyes, and to have heard Him with their own ears.

The result of every test.

The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ has been subjected to every kind of test, and the more it is criticised the stronger and clearer it becomes. And the collapse of all attempts to explain the facts which unbelievers themselves acknowledge, while denying the main, the supernatural, fact, add not a little to its force. In view of them we can understand the exclamation ascribed to a French *savant*—"In truth, I am not credulous enough to be an unbeliever."

Now, if Christ be risen, the conclusion is happily inevitable, that to which the centurion came when he saw Him dying, "Truly this is the Son of God."

## CHAPTER VII.

### CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCES.

#### I. THE MORAL TEACHING OF CHRIST.

WE appeal with confidence to *the moral teaching of Jesus as corroborative of His claims*. We have already quoted some of the testimonies borne to that teaching by writers who do not receive Christ in His higher character as Son of God and Saviour of the world. It is not necessary to disparage any approaches to Christ's maxims which may be found in isolated passages written by confessedly uninspired men. These were at best but faint glimpses of moral truth, and they produced no practical impression, or but little, on the world. Dr. Hopkins sums up the characteristics of Christ's teaching as: "(1) That it establishes a perfect standard; (2) that it takes cognizance of the heart; (3) that it forbids all the malevolent and dissocial passions; (4) that it forbids all merely selfish passions, as vanity and pride; (5) that it forbids all impure passions; (6) that it includes all its positive duties under the two great requisitions of love to God and love to man, which all moralists now agree is the sum of human duty."

"Lowell  
Lectures,"  
p. 220.

These two requisitions were the ancient law, and Christ put His seal upon them as the unchangeable

*Deut. vi. 5;*  
*Matt. xxii.*  
40.

Strauss on  
Christ as a  
Moral  
Teacher.

law. Their completeness, and their simplicity and grandeur, are acknowledged by unbelievers. "Every person of eminent moral character," says Strauss, "every thinker who has occupied himself with the subject of the moral activity of man, has contributed, within a circle more or less extended, to purify, to complete, to develop, the moral ideal. Among the personages to whom humanity owes the perfecting of the moral consciousness, Jesus occupies, at any rate, the foremost rank. He introduced into our ideal of good some features which were wanting to it up to His time. By the religious tendency which He imprinted upon morality, He endowed it with a higher consecration; and by incarnating goodness in His own person, He communicated to it a living warmth. *In regard to everything which concerns the love of God and of our neighbour, to purity of heart and to the life of the individual man, nothing can be added to that moral intuition which has been bequeathed to us by Jesus Christ.*"

We should be going beyond the limits of a strict logic if we argued, directly, from the lofty character of Christ's moral teaching, that He was the Son of God; but we cannot help wondering how a man in the position of Jesus of Nazareth, a peasant-carpenter, in a corrupt age and among a corrupt people, could rise to a height of moral knowledge, which may fitly be called divine—and that, without the aid of those thinkers who, in the words just quoted from Strauss, contributed before Him to purify and develop the moral ideal. And we may argue within the strictest limits of logic, as follows:

Christ's  
teaching the  
reflection of  
Himself.

1. The moral teaching of Christ must have been the reflection of His own character. He was, in short, what He taught others to be. In the words of an

unbeliever already quoted, "He presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with His own lofty principles." We know that it would not be safe in all cases to infer a man's character from his teaching; but in the case of Jesus Christ it is impossible to doubt the connection between His character and His teaching. After recalling the sublime passage in the sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus portrays the Heavenly Father making His Sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust, Strauss adds, "This intuition of a God good to all, Jesus could only have drawn out of His own being; it could only have emanated out of that universal benevolence which was the fundamental characteristic of His own nature, and by which He felt Himself in perfect harmony with God. To be able, like God Himself, to stand firm against the irritation which is produced by wickedness, to conquer an enemy only by conferring benefits upon him, and to overcome evil only with good,—these were the principles of conduct which He derived from the disposition of His own heart. He pictured God to Himself such as He felt Himself to be in the best moments of His life. The dominant feature of His character was the love which embraces all creatures, and He makes of that the fundamental characteristic of the Divine Essence."

Concession  
by Strauss.

If the marvellous beauty and loftiness of Christ's teaching be thus but a mirror of Himself, a revelation of His own moral beauty and loftiness, we ask with wonder how all this beauty and loftiness are to be accounted for? Can any explanation be found that does not admit the superhuman in His character, if not in His person? One thing is certain, that this

An  
explanation  
required.

divinely pure man is absolutely trustworthy in all that He says respecting Himself.

Christ's  
teaching  
worthy of the  
Son of God.

*Matt. xxvi.*  
63, 64.

*John i. 1, 14.*

*Col. ii. 9.*

2. There is another conclusion which we may assert with equal confidence. *The moral teaching of Jesus Christ was worthy of the very highest claims asserted by or for Him.* If He was all that the Gospels represent Him to have declared Himself to be—the Son of God; all that the Fourth Gospel calls Him—the Eternal Word made flesh; all that the Apostle Paul ascribes to Him when he says that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily,—*His moral teaching was worthy of Him.* We might add that the life He lived was worthy of Him. Unbelief itself admits that “the teaching of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained, or attainable, by humanity.” From this it follows (*a*) that in His teaching nothing can be discovered that could awaken any suspicion of His very highest claims as the Son of God. Even this amounts to a great deal. But more follows: (*b*) that even on the assumption of His highest claims, a purer, diviner, moral teaching could not be anticipated; that is, we cannot say—pure and sublime as this teaching is—it would have been purer and sublimer if it were indeed the teaching of the Son of God. On the contrary, the moral law laid down by Jesus, and embodied in His own life, is *confessedly* “the sublimest attainable by humanity.”

Awakening  
no suspicion  
or doubt.

No higher  
teaching  
could be  
anticipated.

Nearly  
demonstra-  
tive of His  
claims.

Surely this approaches very nearly to a demonstration that Jesus was all in authority, and in person, that the Gospels say He professed to be. No one doubts the record which the Gospels contain of His moral character and of His moral teaching. Now if that character and that teaching are worthy of the further record which they contain of His supernatural claims, it is difficult to see how these claims can be disputed.

A man appears who—in part expressly, and in greater part indirectly—claims to be more than man, and to have more than a man's authority; and His moral teaching,—His teaching of man's duty to God and to man,—is found worthy even of that extraordinary claim, such, in fact, that a purer and sublimer cannot be conceived, and, if conceivable, would be “unattainable by humanity.” Can we rationally doubt that He was what He professed and what His followers believed Him to be?

3. There are two characteristics of Christ's moral teaching which we have not yet mentioned in this argument, and in which we see a *consistency* which strengthens our faith in Him. In laying down moral law, Jesus (*a*) *used the language of personal authority*, and (*b*) *made Himself the centre of morals as of all else that He taught*. As to “authority,” it is enough to recall the fact that in the Sermon on the Mount, in contrast with the scribes and philosophers of His age, He said, “Verily *I* say unto you.” And as to the place which He claimed for Himself in the moral motives of men, it is enough to recall the solemn words, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me:” “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.”

Christ taught with authority.

Christ the centre of morals.

*Matt. v.-vii.*  
29.

*Matt. xxv.*  
40, 45.

All this is in striking harmony with all the Gospel representations of Christ. And in this consistency we find an argument for their reality. The life, character, and teaching, form one grand and perfect whole.

## II. THE CHARACTER FORMED BY THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

We now appeal to *the character which is formed by the imitation of Christ* as corroborative of His claims. Christ called on His disciples to follow His example,

The Imitation of Christ.

*John xiii.* and they acknowledged the obligation. Now consider  
<sup>13-17;</sup>  
 1 *Pet. ii. 21,* what mankind would be, what the world would be, if  
<sup>22;</sup>  
 1 *John ii. 6.* all men followed Christ's example and were Christ-  
 like. Christ's idea of morals, we have seen, is the  
 highest "attainable to humanity," so that the embodi-  
 ment of it in a human life must be the highest attain-  
 able form of virtue.

Wherein  
 embodied.

Christ not an  
 Ascetic nor  
 an Icono-  
 clast.

The embodiment of Christ's life is not to be found  
 in either the Monk or the Communist. Christ was  
*not an Ascetic, nor was He an Iconoclast.* His very first  
 miracle was a prophetic protest against the asceticism  
 which in after ages claimed to be the highest form of  
 Christian piety, and which has found its way into all  
 the religions of the world. The manner in which He  
 repudiated a kingship which would use the common  
 weapons of the world, and the way in which He repre-  
 sented the principles of His kingdom as leavening  
 society, is in utter contrariety to a communism which  
 would create by force a social fabric of equal posses-  
 sions.

The mind  
 that was in  
 Christ.

*John iv. 34.*

*Matt. xii.*  
 48-50.

To be like Christ, is to have "the mind that was in  
 Christ." And what that mind was can be seen without  
 difficulty in the story of His life. "My meat," He  
 said, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to  
 finish His work." And again, "Whosoever shall do  
 the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is  
 my brother and sister and mother." Here is the  
 grand regulating principle which, in proportion as it is  
 operative, will so assimilate us to Christ that we shall  
 be His brothers and sisters, with a manifestly family  
 likeness. The will of God, the law of our affections  
 and thoughts and actions, this will make us Christlike,  
 in all our relations, domestic and social.

The Will of  
 God.

It must, however, be *the will of God as understood by  
 Christ*—God as revealed by Him, and God's will as

taught by Him. What all this is has to be gathered from the Gospels. Much of it is summed up in the Apostolic words, "Whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, any praise, think on these things." *Phil. iv. 8.*

Christ's devotion to the will of God included devotion to the good of man. "Lo, I come to do Thy will," was the language of prophecy: "The Son of Man is come to minister and to give His life a ransom for many," is the language of history. Jesus was doing His Father's will when He went about doing good to men. We cannot follow Him in the manner or measure of His good deeds, but we can in the spirit of them. "If we cannot say to the widow's only son, 'Arise!' we can stand by the bier and bear the widow's sorrows. If we cannot say to the buried Lazarus, 'Come forth!' we can weep with Mary and Martha, and rejoice too that their brother shall rise again at the last day. If we cannot take five loaves, and with them feed five thousand hungry men, we can at the least deal our own bread to the hungry, and befriend the outcast and the naked. If it cannot be said, in reference to our ministrations, 'The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed,' we may so follow Christ as to be able to appropriate the words of Job, 'The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out.'"

Such will be the fruits of having in us the mind that was in Christ. The man that has not in him the soul of a philanthropist is not a true Christian. Devotion like Christ's to the good of men, is not a mere senti-

The good of man.

*Psa. xl. 7;*  
*Heb. x. 7.*

*Matt. x. 28.*

"*Work and Conflict; or the Divine Life in its Progress.*"  
By the author, pp. 11, 12.

*Job xix. 13, 15, 16.*

The Christian a Philanthropist.



ment that may evaporate in tears or fine words. Time, money, labour, prayer, are its fruits, and by these fruits it is known.

It is not necessary to dwell particularly on the purity, the lovingness, and lowliness of Christ. What manner of persons will they be whose character is moulded by the principles and virtues which pervaded His character? The practice of all that is just and honourable, is but a small part of the effect that will be produced. Universal love and goodwill, will be the result. The Sermon on the Mount will be translated into actual life. The thirteenth of First Corinthians will be no longer an ideal but a real picture.

Again we ask, What would the world be if all men followed Christ? The imitation of Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, would make men beggarly ascetics. The imitation of Mohammed would make men fierce, despotic, and sensual. The imitation of Christ would make men angels in purity and love. They must be credulous indeed who can believe that Christianity, so widely differentiated from the most boasted of the world's religions, is of the earth earthly. The example left by its great Founder is nothing short of Godlike, and the Imitation of it would make men Godlike. A strange result this to be effected by an earth-born system—a system which, if earth-born, must be charged either with falsehood or with delusion.

Examples of  
Buddh,  
Mohammed,  
and Christ,  
contrasted.

Christianity  
not  
earth-born.

### III.—THE EARLY SUCCESSES OF CHRISTIANITY.

We do not maintain that the Divinity of the Christian faith can be inferred directly from its success in the early ages of its existence. But when all the circumstances of that success are considered, *we find*

Early  
successes of  
the Gospel.

*it difficult to account for it without supposing that it was furthered by the Divine hand.* As to the facts, we must assume that they are known. We have seen how it was in Rome, according to Tacitus, as early as the days of Nero ; and how, forty years later, Pliny, the Governor of Bithynia, was perplexed to know how to deal with the multitude of every rank and of both sexes who were accused of Christianity. What he calls the contagion of this superstition had seized not cities only, but the less towns likewise, and the open country, so that the heathen temples were almost forsaken, few victims were purchased for sacrifice, and a long intermission of the sacred solemnities had taken place. Thirty years after the date of Pliny's letter—one hundred after the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles—Justin Martyr writes :—  
 “There is not a nation, either Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even those who wander in tribes and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the Universe, by the name of the Crucified Jesus.”  
 Somewhat later, without claiming Constantine as a Christian convert, and his establishment of the faith as a Christian proceeding, we see in the policy pursued by him evidence of the extraordinary extent to which Christianity had “leavened” the people of the Roman Empire. The Emperor *followed* the people, did not *lead* them—a fact which shows what an immense popular power the Christian faith had now become.

The facts.

Rome and  
Bithynia.In the days  
of Justin  
Martyr.Constantine  
followed the  
people.

And this in the face of *difficulties* which we can scarcely appreciate. The chief difficulty was in the doctrine in itself, the subject-matter of the Apostolic ministry. And, paradoxical as the statement may seem, the doctrine was the power which subdued and

The  
difficulties.

(a) The cross, a difficulty.

won the world. (a) "*Christ crucified was an offence* which it was not easy to overcome. Tell the world to bow down before a crucified Jew as the Son of God and the Saviour, the only Saviour of mankind! Do we wonder that men should turn away with scorn and call Christianity a "pernicious superstition"? And yet the doctrine of reconciliation with God through the death of the Crucified One, *once understood*, commended itself to men's consciences and turned the offence into a joy. (b) *The exclusiveness of the claims of the Christian faith was a great difficulty.* The preachers of the faith recognized and built on the truths which underlay all religions and modes of worship. But they claimed an exclusive place for Christ and His religion. It would not satisfy them to obtain a place of honour for Christ in the temples

(b) Exclusiveness, a difficulty.  
*Acts xiv. 17; xvii. 22-31.*

*Acts xiv. 15;*  
*1 Thes. i. 9;*  
*Gal. iv. 8, 9.*

of the heathen. The "idols" must be utterly forsaken; they were vanities and lies. The temples must be utterly cleansed of their presence, and Christ must reign alone. This claim roused both priest and populace against the new faith. And yet, as in the case of "the Cross," this assertion of the Unity of God and of His exclusive right to worship, revealed in Christ, commended itself to thoughtful reason and

(c) Purity of Gospel requirements, a difficulty.  
*Eph. v. 11,*  
*12.*

overcame the offence which itself created. (c) *The purity of heart and life* which the Gospel required *was an immense hindrance* to its popular acceptance.

*Eph. iv. 17-*  
*v. 13.*

Heathen moralists tolerated vices which Christians felt it a shame even to speak of. Heathen religions embodied vice and invested it with sanctity. But the Christian faith would have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." It revealed a Holy God, a Holy Christ, and required men to be followers of Christ in the practice of a divine holiness. It thus aroused against itself all the evil passions and prac-

tices of mankind. But here, again, that which was the occasion of resistance was itself the means of overcoming the resistance. The Gospel, which was so obnoxious to the sin-loving heart, commended itself to the conscience which it enlightened and awakened, and thus secured the approval of that which is the strongest and most resolute part of our nature.

(d) To these difficulties may be added *the violent* (d) Prejudice and persecution, a difficulty. *prejudice* which existed everywhere against the Jews—Christianity being of the Jews, and its missionaries being Jews—and *the persecutions* which almost everywhere awaited the Apostles and their converts.

Such and such like being the difficulties in the way of the Gospel, we turn to *the means by which it was spread*; and these are summed up in the words *Preach* and *Teach*. “Preach the Gospel to every creature.” “Teach all nations.” These were the *marching orders* of Christ; and the Apostles observed them religiously. They were but imperfectly instructed, and imperfectly imbued with the spirit of their Master, when they expressed a desire to call down fire from heaven to punish inhospitable Samaritans. The teaching by which Christ corrected the spirit of His disciples as they passed through Samaria, is in glorious contrast with the teaching of Mohammed, who pretended a Divine Order to wage war against all unbelievers failing to submit themselves to Islam, and who, and whose followers, used the sword with savage mercilessness to convert men to the Moslem faith.

While “preaching” and “teaching” were the only weapons which Christ put into the hands of His followers, these followers were not men accustomed to the use of such weapons,—neither Rabbis nor philosophers. There was not one man of learning

The means by which the Gospel was spread.

Luke ix.  
51-56.

The first preachers unlettered.

among the eleven to whom Christ said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." They were all "unlettered and private" persons, who "found the whole world before them armed to the teeth to dispute their pretensions, to maltreat their persons, and to put an end to their lives; . . . with the power, wealth, learning, ingenuity, malevolence, and malignity of the world ready to exhaust their venom on their devoted heads." These are the men who undertook, at their Master's bidding, the more than gigantic task of turning the world morally "upside down." But they had faith in their Master. "To them the ultimate triumph of their religion was only a question of time, and they calmly and confidently looked upon the whole world as conquered territory." And, wonder of wonders! "they lived to see their day-dreams realized to an extent such as was enough to foreshadow the complete fulfilment of the glowing prophecies they uttered! They scattered themselves throughout the greater part of the then known world; and everywhere, as they marched forward, mighty superstitions receded, time-hallowed institutions, and customs fell to the ground, and the wilderness bloomed as the rose. And to-day, when Socrates and Plato have perished, or live only to tickle our fancy at times when we have nothing important to do, their word is law in millions of homes scattered over the fairest as well as the darkest regions of the world." "Why" (asks the converted Hindoo from whom these words are quoted), "why resist any longer the conclusion that the word they preached was the word of God, that the power they were endowed with was the power of God?"

*Ram  
Chandra  
Bose, p. 244.*

Our argument, let it be observed, is not based on the mere fact of the rapid extension of Christianity.

The merest delusion may spread with the rapidity of wildfire. And it may be assumed that no religion will spread rapidly or permanently unless it is favoured by some elements of our nature, good or bad. But the history of the race has nothing to show that can for a moment compare with the conquests of the Christian faith. It is true that the fulness of the times had come, and that Providence had in important respects prepared the world for the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. But it is equally true that the world had never been more corrupt than it was when the Christ was preached to it. Though an age of literature and refinement, the Roman world was sunk into unfathomable depths of vice. "Voluptuousness of the most disgusting type prevailed among the great, rank scepticism flourished in the schools of philosophy, poets and satirists laughed at the very idea of religion, and society in general seemed plunged into the deepest degradation." It was to such a world that the Gospel was first preached. And the propagation of such a religion as Christianity, in opposition to such obstacles, with such rapidity, and by such means, is a moral miracle, and can be reasonably imputed only to the power of truth and of God. "How will the infidel account for it? Does he believe that these men were weak and deluded? Then he believes that weak and deluded men could accomplish a work requiring greater moral power than any other. Does he believe they were deceivers? Then he believes that these men laboured and suffered, and died, to cause others to believe that which they did not believe themselves."

*Dr.  
Hopkins's  
Lowell  
Lectures,  
p. 345.*

We are told that the theophilanthropist Larevellière-Lepeaux once confided to Talleyrand his disappointment at the ill-success of his attempt to bring

*Anecdote of  
Lepeaux and  
Talleyrand.*

into vogue a sort of improved Christianity, a benevolent rationalism which he had invented to meet the wants of a sceptical age. "His propaganda made no way," he said; "what was he to do?" he asked. The ex-bishop politely condoled with him, feared it was indeed a difficult task to found a new religion, more difficult than could be imagined, so difficult that he hardly knew what to advise! "Still," so he went on after a moment's reflection, "there is one plan which you might at least try; I should recommend you *to be crucified, and to rise again the third day.*"

"Yes, indeed!" (says a recent author) "this is a lightning flash that clears the air." The Gospel won its way because of the great facts on which it was based, and the great truths which it taught. God was in it, "reconciling the world to Himself."

#### IV. THE EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

"History of  
Morality  
from  
Augustus to  
Charle-  
magne,"  
vol. ii.

Christ's  
influence on  
all ages.

Within the limits of this handbook it is impossible to do more than touch on this subject and indicate the argument. It might be enough, indeed, to quote the words of an Historian who does not profess to accept Christianity as a Divine Revelation. Mr. Lecky writes as follows: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of

philosophers, and than all the exhortation of moralists. This has indeed been the wellspring of whatever has been best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft, the persecution, and fanaticism, which have defaced the Church, it has preserved in the character and example of its Founder an enduring principle of regeneration.”

A principle of regeneration.

As to the evils “which have defaced the Church,” neither Christ nor Christianity is responsible for them. One often wonders that Christianity has survived the terrible wrong which has been done to it, by the misrepresentation of it both in doctrine and in practice, but especially in practice, of those who have called themselves Christians. But in spite of the imperfect realization of it by its best disciples, and the shameful travesties of it by men who have claimed to be its disciples, “it has done more (according to the confession just quoted) to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists,” and it has in it “an enduring principle of regeneration.” It is not in “the example and character,” *alone*, of its Founder that this power and principle of regeneration resides. But it is admitted that of all the moral and regenerating influences that have been exerted in the earth, that of Jesus Christ has been the most potent. “Enumerate all the great men that have ever existed, whether kings, conquerors, statesmen, patriots, poets, philosophers, or men of science; and their influence for good will be found to have been as nothing compared with that which has been exerted by Jesus Christ. Why is this? He alone of the sons of men possesses in Himself a power of Divine attractiveness which can penetrate to the depths of the human heart, and exercise there a mighty moral and spiritual power.

Notwithstanding the imperfection of Christians.

*Bampton  
Lecture by  
Prebendary  
Row, pp.  
93, 94.*

An explanation demanded.



What has He accomplished? He who was in outward form a Galilean peasant, who died a malefactor's death, has founded a spiritual empire which has endured for eighteen centuries of time, and which, despite the vaticination of unbelievers, shows no signs of decrepitude. Commencing with the smallest beginnings, His empire now embraces all the progressive races of men. Those by whom it has not been accepted are in a state of stagnation and decay. It is the only one which is adapted to every state of civilization."

The  
legitimate  
deduction.

*Prebendary  
Row, p. 97.*

"What is the legitimate deduction from these facts? Are they consistent with the theory that Christianity has originated in nothing but the action of those forces which for three thousand years of unquestionable history, and for an indefinite period which is semi-historical, have been energizing in man's intellectual, moral, and spiritual being, and have produced the results which we behold in his past developments? Or do they testify to the presence and energy of a superhuman power?"

The effects of Christianity are in the nineteenth century what they were in the first. We see them first of all in individuals. In our modern Churches there are men who were only less sensual, less degraded, than those whom Paul found in Corinth; and who give evidence not less demonstrative than was given in Corinth, that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God to the regeneration of men. You will find the same results of the Christian faith in Arctic regions where Eskimos were turned to God by the simple story of the cross; in the sunny Isles of the Pacific, where "every prophet pleases, and only man is vile," you will find tribes which were sunk into a lower condition than that of any that heard the gospel from the lips of Paul, redeemed from cannibalism and savage-

*1 Cor. vii.  
9-11.*

*Greenland.*

ism, and clothed with the virtues and graces of Christian holiness ; in lands which were civilized when our fathers were barbarians, such as India and China, you will find thousands who were as polluted a few years ago as any to whom the Apostles preached in Antioch and Rome and Corinth, and who are now as worthy to be called saints as those to whom the Apostolic epistles were addressed. Blot out the history of all the ages before our own,—and out of our own we can produce evidence that Christianity, the Christianity of the New Testament, possesses a power to regenerate and purify which is *worthy of the origin which it claims for itself*. More than this, so far as we can judge from the history of the past or the experience of the present, the only rational hope that can be entertained of mankind ever being regenerated and purified is in Christianity. In such circumstances there is scarcely room for the question, Whether Christianity is of God or whether it is of man?

Polynesia.

India and  
China.Of God or of  
man?

Evidences corroborative of the Divine claims of Christ and the Divine origin of Christianity might be multiplied. But these will suffice to show that our faith does not rest on a single line of argument, but on many, all converging to one point and shutting us up, happily, to the conclusion that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of God and the Saviour of man. We admit the justice of the demand that we prove our case. But, in the words of our preface, “unbelievers should remember at the same time that their position is not rational or defensible unless they can furnish a better explanation of the universe than is to be found in the doctrine of an Intelligent Creator, and a better explanation of the wonderful story of the Gospels than is to be found in the admission of their

CON-  
CLUSION.

Objections  
no objection.

The  
argument  
multiform  
and  
cumulative.

truth. Whatever be the difficulties of faith, the difficulties of unbelief are greater." It is no objection to any scheme, either of philosophy or of religion, that objections can be taken to it. Very plausible objections may be taken to many things which we know to be true. Let the inquirer study the various lines of argument by which we have endeavoured to establish the claims of Christ; let him examine them first separately, as we have presented them, chapter by chapter,—inadequately, we are conscious, but sufficiently, we hope, for the purpose of this volume: and then let him examine them in combination, and in their combined force. Let him say how these things can be explained, any one of them, and above all how they can altogether be explained, on any other hypothesis than that of their truth. If he cannot do this honestly and satisfactorily, let him bow the knee to the Saviour of the world.

The evidences of the Christian faith form more than that "threefold cord" which is "not quickly broken;" they form a manifold cord, binding it round and round, which has resisted the utmost strength and skill to tear it or to break it. All that an expounder of these evidences can do is to help his fellows to understand them, and to perceive somewhat of the glory of Him who is enshrined in the heart of the Christian Church.

THE END.

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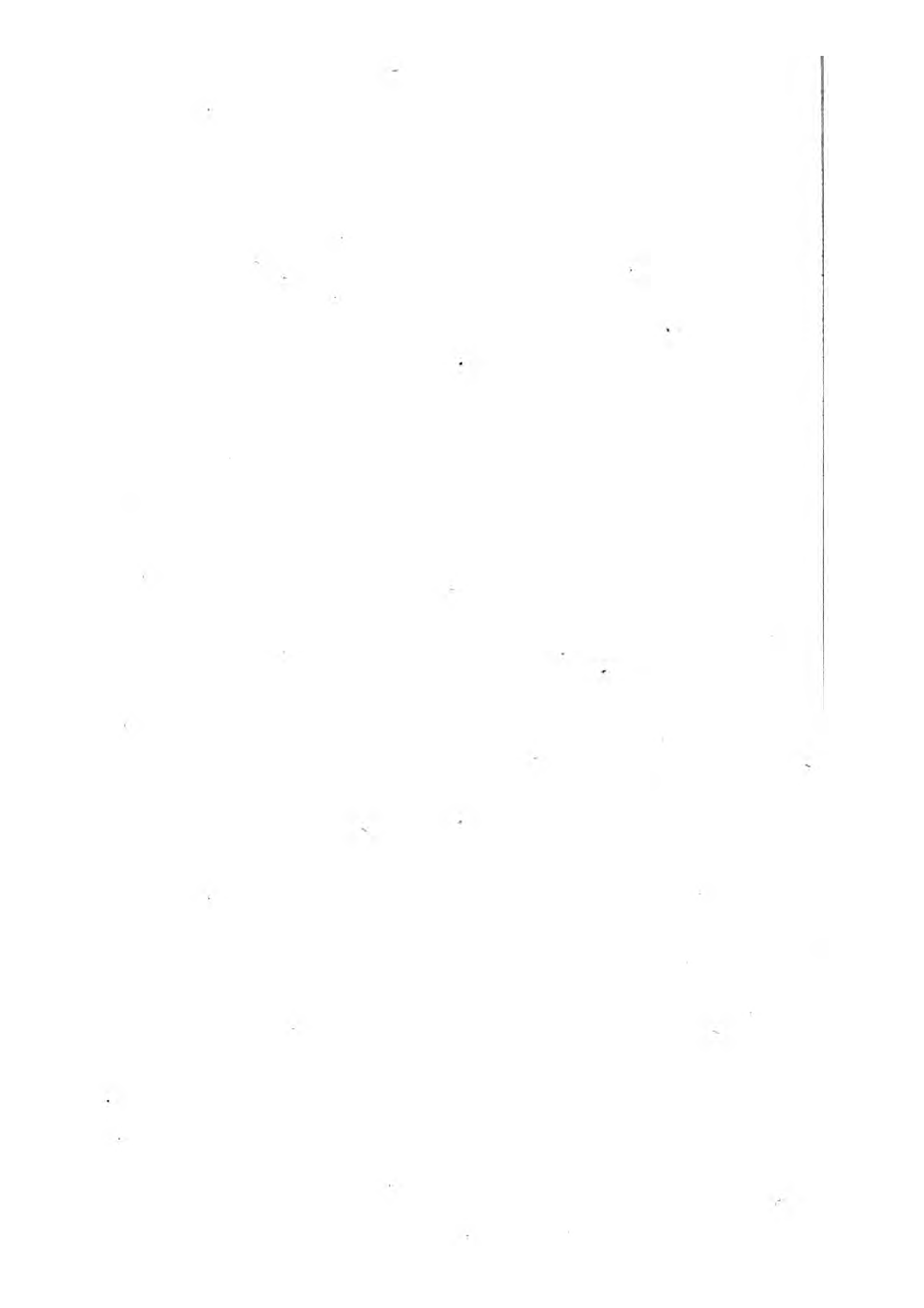
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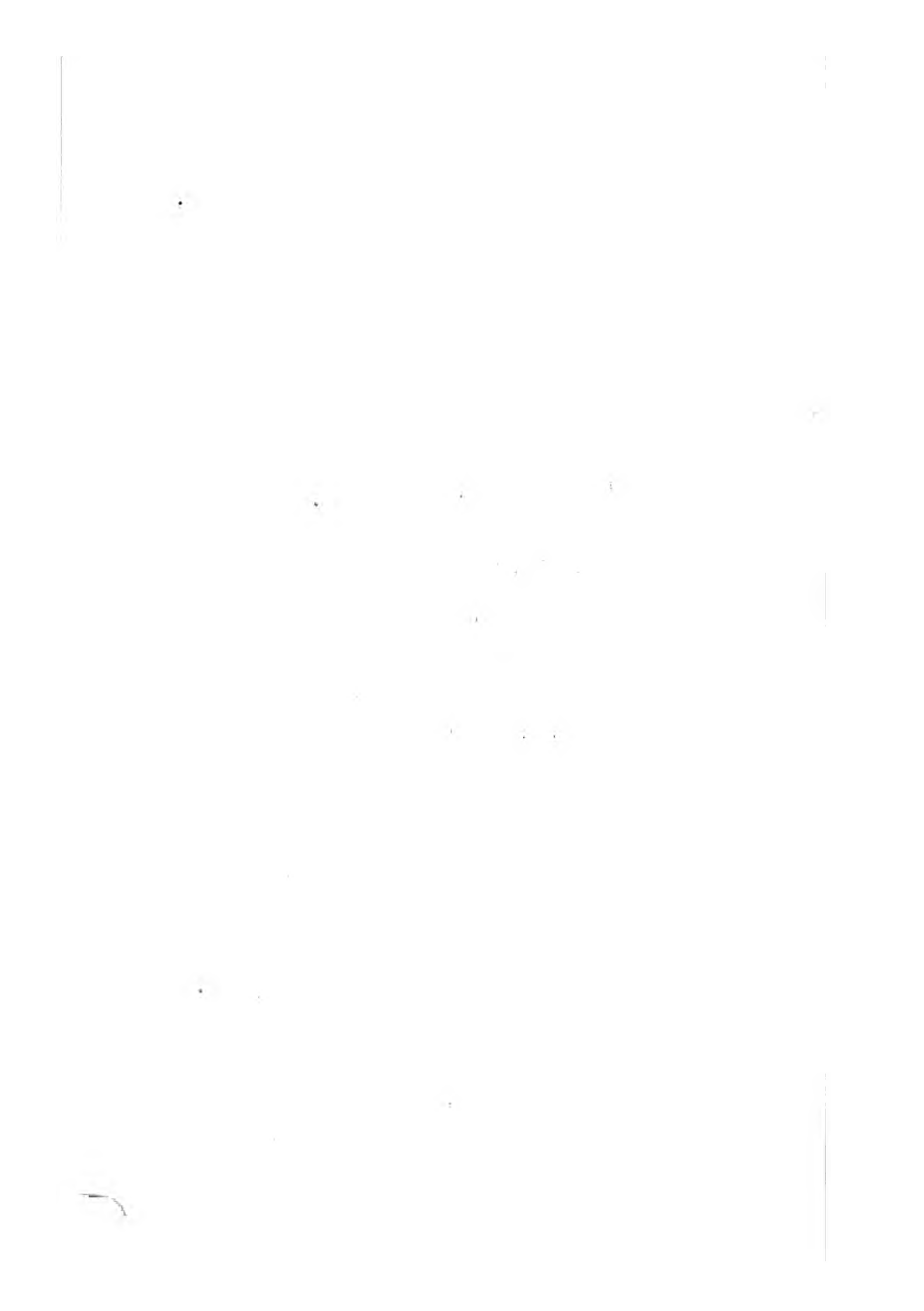
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great question of Theism—God or no God?—and  
questions immediately connected therewith. The  
Second Part, on “Christ and Christianity,” was based Part Second.  
on the principle set forth in our preface—to the effect  
that the Divine origin and authority of Christianity  
may be established without any foregoing discussion  
of the principles of Natural Religion. On this prin-  
ciple we stated grounds on which we are justified in  
believing in Jesus Christ as the Revealer and, in a  
unique sense, the Revelation of God—grounds which  
are independent of all antecedent questions of Natural  
Religion or of Philosophy.

Having reached the conclusions which are main-



The "Book" now to be considered.

tained in Parts First and Second, our task may be regarded as completed. Practically, we need no further argument, and we need travel into no other region of inquiry, to justify our assured confidence in Christ as our Lord and Saviour. But there is a Book which professes to contain the history of the Faith which found its culmination and consummation in Christ, from the very beginnings of man on the earth. And there are certain aspects of this Book, and certain considerations regarding it, which demand most earnest study, and which, we think, will establish its claim to be regarded as the authoritative record of Divine Revelations.

This not an "Introduction" to the Bible.

It does not come within the scope of our plan to write what are called "Introductions" to the books which together form the Bible. An "Introduction" discusses the history, date, authorship, and contents of a book; our concern is with the specialities of the Bible, which may be stated briefly thus:—

What the Bible professes to contain.

1. From the beginning to the end of the Bible it professes to contain, or it contains professedly, histories of supernatural communications from God to man, or supernatural communings between God and man. The most superficial reader can verify this statement for himself. In Paradise, and after Paradise, onwards to the last of the Apostles in "the isle that is called Patmos," we find such professed histories. In the world before the Flood, they are connected with the names of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Enoch, and Noah. In the world after the Flood, they are connected, among others, with the well-known names of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and a long array of prophets, to whom it is said God spoke at sundry times and in divers manners. And in later times, according to the

Revelation connected with historic names.

Book, God hath spoken unto us by or in His Son, and by Apostles whom the Son appointed to be His ambassadors to mankind. All this is avowed in the Bible, whether truly or not.

2. The second speciality of the Book may be stated thus : Amid all that is local and temporary, amid laws and judgments, amid a variety of prose and poetry, the historic and the didactic, we can trace one grand characteristic of the whole series and system—the prophetic anticipation or revelation of Redemption, and that Redemption associated with the work of a Person. “The Revelation recorded in the Scriptures is before all things a self-manifestation of God, as the God of *grace*. In that revelation God appears as One who cherishes a gracious purpose towards the human race. The revelation consists, not in the mere intimation of the purpose, but more especially in the slow but steadfast execution of it by a connected series of transactions which all point in one direction, and at length reach their goal in the realization of the end contemplated from the first.”

Redemption  
and a  
Redeemer  
anticipated.  
“*The Chief  
End of  
Revelation,*”  
by Prof.  
Bruce, p. 58.

To the same effect Professor Wace says, “The Bible is not so much a record of the efforts of men to seek and find God, as a revelation of His gracious work in seeking and guiding men.”

*Bampton  
Lectures :  
on “The  
Foundations  
of the  
Faith,”* p. 83.

We might select a few books, or portions of books, from the writings of the Greeks and Romans, such as Socrates and Plato, Cicero and Seneca, the common theme of which should be God or the Gods, and the relations of mankind to God. But the volume thus formed, even with God as its theme, would be totally different from our Bible. It would exhibit man feeling after God—and that with very little success ; whereas our Bible exhibits God in actual communication with man, teaching, and saving man.

On "verifying evidence," see Part First, p. 5.

Such being the specialities of the Bible, and such the claims involved in them, can these claims be verified? Shall we find in the Book itself sufficient grounds for faith in them as true?

There are two preliminary objections or prejudices which we mention only to brush them out of our way.

For Definition of "Supernatural," see Part First, pp. 77-79.

Part First, Chaps. VI. and VII.

1. The first is the *à priori* objection to all that is supernatural—the alleged impossibility or improbability of the miraculous. On the dictum that God cannot speak to men, or reveal Himself, otherwise than in nature and in the human conscience, we have already said all that is necessary. This can be maintained consistently only by those who will maintain at the same time that there is a gulf between God and man which God Himself cannot bridge over—a conclusion which comes to this, that whether God wills it or not, or whatever may be the urgency of human want or danger, God is doomed by His very greatness, or perchance by some insuperable limitation of His power, to the Epicurean enjoyment of His own existence, and cannot make His voice heard or His hand seen on earth. It is a conclusion, moreover, which involves those who accept it in this logical difficulty: They say that God is *unknowable*, and yet they profess to *know* this of God—that He is unknowable, and that He cannot reveal Himself in any special or supernatural way to mankind. We hold that it is not only possible but probable that God should reveal Himself supernaturally.

See Part First, pp. 16-18.

See Part First, Chap. VII.

A Book-revelation objected to.

2. Another preliminary objection is taken to the claims of the Bible. It is a vague objection to what is called a Book-revelation. But on the assumption that God is pleased to reveal Himself or His Will supernaturally, whether once for all or "in divers portions and at sundry times," it is evident that, so far

Heb. i. 1.

as the bulk of mankind in successive ages and in all lands are concerned, the revelation must be conveyed to them either by oral tradition or in a Book. How far tradition may be accepted as a tolerably safe guide, is a question which we need not consider. But the utmost imaginable capacities of oral tradition are unequal to the requirements of the case with which we have to deal. Let special Revelations have been given by God in Palestine or Greece or Rome some thousands of years ago ; let the period of their communication have extended over one or two thousand years : how should they be conveyed to the peoples of distant lands, of different tongues, and of an immense variety in habit and culture ? And how should these revelations be preserved uncorrupt through all ages to the end of time ? It needs no argument to prove that oral tradition could not effect all this, except by a perpetual miracle, a miracle greater than the original revelation itself.

*See Cornwall Lewis's "Credibility of the Early Romish History," I. 100; and Rawlinson's Bampton Lectures, p. 20.*

Tradition not sufficient.

Against the supposition of Divine Revelations being recorded in a Book, there is really no presumption whatsoever. The art of writing is scarcely less mysterious than the power of speech. We cannot assert that the one is contemporaneous with the other, and say that as soon as men learned to speak they learned to write. But the origin of writing is so ancient as to be lost in the unhistoric dimness of the earliest ages, and its value is so evidently great that it was very natural to ascribe it to the *gods*. Without it the thoughts of one age could not be communicated to ages following, except within a very narrow range and in a very imperfect manner. The art of writing may be pronounced essential to the progress and education of the race. We have only to think of the place which it has occupied, and still occupies, in the intellectual

No real presumption against a Book.

Antiquity of the art of writing.

and moral forces which rule the world, to be assured that there is nothing undivine or unworthy of God, or in any way improbable, in the use of a *Book* to record God's revelations of Himself, and thus to speak to man in God's name.

What an  
"Introduction"  
would  
require.

Impartiality  
of Bible  
histories.

Were we writing an "Introduction" to the Bible, we should have to consider the grounds on which we credit the books of the Bible with the antiquity which is commonly ascribed to them, and the grounds on which we affirm their historical truthfulness. The reader will find in the note below, the names\* of some books which will enable him to study these subjects. As to the truthfulness of Bible histories, we may pause to remark on the impartiality with which the doings of the most honoured heroes of the history

\* Two by the author of this Handbook, and published by the Sunday School Union :—

"*The Pentateuch : its Age and Authorship.*"

"*The Gospels : their Age and Authorship.*"

See also, published by the Sunday School Union, "*The Bible, the Sunday School Text-Book,*" by A. Holborn, M.A.

Canon Rawlinson's Bampton Lectures on "*The Historical Evidences*" (Murray).

Canon Rawlinson's "*Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament*" (S.P.C.K.).

"*Fresh Light from the Monuments,*" by A. H. Sayce.

"*The Witness of Ancient Monuments to the Old Testament Scriptures,*" by A. H. Sayce. A "Present-Day" Tract. (Religious Tract Society.)

Moses Stuart on "*The Canon of the Old Testament.*"

Canon Westcott's Works : "*Introduction to the Study of the Gospels,*" and "*The Canon of the New Testament*" (Macmillan).

Isaac Taylor on "*The Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times.*"

Dr. Scrivener's "*Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient MSS. which contain it*" (Deighton, Bell & Co.).

are recorded. Dr. Thomas Arnold says, "In estimating whether any history is trustworthy, I should not ask whether it was written by a contemporary, or by one engaged in the transaction which it describes, but whether it was written by one who loves the truth with all his heart and cannot endure error." That such was the spirit in which the writers of the Bible history wrote—whether actuated merely by their own conscience or by special Divine guidance—is evident from the way in which they pourtray character. They make no attempt to glorify Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, and others, great and sacred as these names were in the eyes of the Jews—no attempt to conceal their failings and sins. On the contrary, there is nothing more prominent in the story of their lives than the record of their sins and shortcomings. It is notorious that in the monumental histories of Egypt and Assyria, which recent discoveries have brought to light, there is a studious concealment, or passing by, of events which did not contribute to the glory of the monarch or the nation. Royal defeats and national disasters are either unrecorded or recorded with a gloss which misrepresents their true character. Such is the testimony of all writers on the subject. But we have a perfect contrast to this in the Bible histories of the Jewish people. And yet, taking this people as a people, they were as vainglorious as others. And they had a reason of their own for exalting themselves above others—they regarded themselves as chosen of God for His peculiar people. And among the most distinguished of those whom God had called and honoured were Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon. And yet there is no glorifying of these favoured ones—there is an almost ostentatious exhibition of what was evil in

"Lectures  
on Modern  
History,"  
Lecture  
VIII.

Faults of  
heroes and  
saints.

Partiality of  
monumental  
histories.

them. Not only have we in this proof that the history is genuine and honest, but we might find in the scrupulous fairness and honesty of the history proof that those who wrote it were guided by higher principles than those that are common to men, and in fact were overruled by an influence higher than any which was natural to themselves.

*Heb. i. 1, 2,  
Revised  
Version.*

*"The Chief  
End of Reve-  
lation,"  
p. 57.*

From this point we assume, not without abundant reason, that the books which compose the Bible are genuine, and that they contain honest and trustworthy histories, and our task is to examine their special claims as a record of Revelations made by God to man through long ages. In one of the latest of these books we read—"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." These words justify the definition of Revelation given by Professor Bruce: "Revelation signifies God manifesting Himself in the history of the world in a supernatural manner and for a special purpose. Manifesting *Himself*; for the proper object of revelation is God. The Revealer is also the Revealed. Manifesting Himself in *History*, I add, to distinguish the revelation now under discussion from that which God has made of Himself in *Nature*. The words, 'in a supernatural manner and for a special purpose,' are included in the definition to distinguish the subject under consideration from that revelation of God as a moral Governor which is discernible in the ordinary course of Providence. I believe we have the record of such a Revelation in the Bible."

This definition includes, it will be observed, not only words but acts—not only communications made

to men in words or in thoughts imparted to, or awakened in, human minds, but also those special acts or works by which God was pleased to accomplish His purposes.

The terms "revelation" and "inspiration" are often used synonymously, but they are not strictly synonymous. "Inspiration" may be understood as including Revelation, in fact all that is implied in ascribing anything to a Divine origin and investing it with a Divine authority. But much may be inspired that is not revealed and that needed no revelation. The contents of the historical books of Scripture were not revealed to the historians. The knowledge of them was derived from natural sources, and many of these sources are referred to by the Bible historians, as they might be by other historians. But we believe that the Bible historians were inspired in the use of them—that is, Divinely guided as to the choice of their materials and in the correct using of them. The introduction to the Gospel by Luke explains what we mean. The Evangelist did not acquire his knowledge of the life of Christ by revelation, but from those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, and, thus informed, he "traced the course of all things accurately from the first." This he did, we believe, by Divine Inspiration, or the Divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. While Inspiration does not necessarily imply a foregoing Revelation, Revelation, if it is to be communicated by him who receives it to others, must be accompanied by Inspiration or a Divine guidance to secure its faithful transmission. Practically, therefore, the two go together. And when we say that the Bible contains Divine Revelations, we

Revelation  
and Inspira-  
tion dis-  
tinguished.

2 Tim. iii.  
16;  
2 Pet. i. 21.

Luke i. 1-4.

See the  
Revised  
Version.

John xiv. 26.



mean likewise that it contains a faithful record of them.

Moham-  
medanism.

The only religion, other than that of the Bible, which claims without doubt to have been a revelation from God, at least in an historical sense, is the Mohammedan. But, as has been well remarked, "it is so obviously a bare-faced imitation of the Bible—both of the Old Testament and of the New—that we need not tarry over it." The Hindoos, indeed, maintain that their Vedas were uncreated, that they came directly from the mouth of Brahma, and were identified with him as the shadow is with the substance. But Hindoo legends have no claim to be regarded as historical. They are utterly beyond verification, going back, as they do, to millions of years and into regions beyond this world into which we cannot penetrate. The distinction of the Bible, as a Revelation capable of being historically tested, is unique. Can it be maintained, or must it be regarded as false and hollow?

The Hindoo  
Vedas.

The struc-  
ture of the  
Bible :  
diversity and  
unity.

We find a presumption in favour of it in the very structure of the Bible, its diversity and its unity. The Book is not one but many. It is a collection of books, and these of all forms of literature—poetry and prose, history and prophecy. It is the product of many authors, the earliest of them separated from the latest by at least sixteen hundred years. These books follow each other in orderly succession, like successive developments or growths, or like the successive portions of a great structure, each of which rests on that which went before. By this it is not meant that all the books as they appear in the Bible are placed there in chronological order. Of some books—Job, for example—it is not easy to determine

the date of their writing ; and of others—the prophets of the Old Testament, for example—it is certain, from the histories which accompany them, that they are not placed in the order of time. But this does not affect the orderliness of which we speak. The Book tells us first of the creation of the world and of man, and of the relations of God and man during long ages before a particular people was separated from others to be God's witnesses in the world ; it then tells us of this particular people, the Jewish, from the call of their progenitor, Abraham, until the object of that call and of the separation of his descendants from other nations was accomplished by the Advent of Him in whom, according to the Book, all nations are to be blessed. And it contains professedly Divine communications, such as the circumstances of the people during the period before the Advent of the Promised One seemed to require. The later portion of the Book, called by us the New Testament, contains a fourfold history of Jesus Christ, whose coming it sets forth as having been predicted even before the call of Abraham ; the history of the early propagation of the faith of Jesus Christ throughout the world ; several letters, containing expositions and discussions of Christian doctrines and morals, addressed by apostles to Churches and to individuals ; and, lastly, a book of practical instruction and prophecy, the record of professed communications received by the last surviving Apostle while he was an exile in the Isle of Patmos.

From this description of the Bible, which the reader will recognize at once as true, it will be seen that, though it consists of many and various parts, it is no miscellany ; it is not a mere binding together of the works of authors whose only connection is that of race or nation, and whose only succession is that of

Orderliness.

The New Testament.

The Bible not a Miscellany.

About 700  
B.C. to 450  
A.D.

About 240  
B.C. to 524  
A.D.

Contrast  
with Greek  
and Roman  
literature.

the ages in which they happened to live. Any attempt to gather into one volume the literature of any other nation—say of the Greeks from Homer to Proclus, ranging over a period of about twelve hundred years ; or of the Romans from Titus Livius Andronicus to Boethius, ranging over a period of about eight hundred years—would show, by way of contrast, the peculiarity of the Hebrew literature. In the case of the Greeks and Romans, you would have nothing but a conglomerate, and that made up for the most part of discordant and irreconcilable materials. In the case of the Hebrews the unity is as marked as the diversity. The many books form one, not only externally but internally. And their theme is one from first to last : stated popularly, it is Paradise lost and Paradise restored.

The truth of  
Revelation  
involved in  
the truthfulness  
of the  
history.

Further, it will occur to the student at once that the admission of the genuineness of the books and the trustworthiness of their histories carries with it the truth of the Divine Revelation which they embody. For not only is the history of these Revelations inseparable from the other historical matter in the Bible, but it constitutes the chief part of Bible history. Instead of being subsidiary to the main theme, it is itself the main theme, and all else is subsidiary to it. The history makes no distinction between the Natural and the Supernatural ; it records both, not as if they were separate and separable things, but as parts of an indivisible whole. This is true of the book from beginning to end, from the age before the Flood to the days of the Apostles. The attempt to eliminate the supernatural and leave the natural as a historical residuum, is no sooner made than it fails.

In the inseparability of the natural and the supernatural in the histories of Abraham and Moses, as well as of Christ, we have a sound basis on which to

defend the truthfulness of the supernatural. But this, after all, is but a small part of the grounds of our belief in the Bible records of the Revelations which God has given of Himself and His will. We are content to leave it for the present without further enforcement, and proceed to illustrate signs of the superhuman in the Bible which, we think, are unmistakable.

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## CHAPTER II.

SIGNS OF THE SUPERHUMAN IN THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE BIBLE.

*Part First,  
Chap. V.*

Nature not  
Agnostic.

If—a con-  
sensus  
between the  
Bible and  
Nature.

WE turn, first of all, to the Teachings of the Bible. Nature, we have shown, is not Agnostic. It does teach that there is a Supernatural Being, in whom and in whom alone we find the First Cause of all things, and to whose intelligence and power are to be ascribed all the order and manifold adaptations of the universe. Of the attributes of this Great Being some at least are discernible in the material creation, and in our own moral constitution—such as His Personality, His righteousness, and His benevolence. Not that all this is still unquestioned; but all this the arguments already urged allow us now to assume to be the true teaching of Nature, however far short men may come of understanding and receiving it. But the Bible professes to tell us more of God than Nature does. And so far as these two teachers go, they must be consistent with each other. So that if we should find the Bible teaching a doctrine concerning God inconsistent with what Nature teaches, we should be compelled to reject it as untrue. But if we should find the doctrine of God in the Bible consistent with the doctrine of God in Nature, we shall have at least

presumptive evidence that it comes from God Himself—*especially as nowhere else but in the Bible do we find this perfect consensus.* And if, further, we should find the Bible lighting up the doctrine of nature, making it clearer to our apprehension, turning the probabilities of it into certainties, and this in a way which wins our heart as well as convinces our judgment; if, further, we should find the Bible supplementing the teaching of nature respecting God, by a knowledge of which only the vaguest hints are furnished by nature; if, still further, we should find the Bible answering questions of deep and even awful import which nature and conscience suggest but cannot answer, and answering these questions in a way which commends itself to men's consciences;—if all this be found true, we shall not be far from a moral demonstration that the professed revelations of God in the Bible are genuine. Let us, then, look at these points in detail.

First. *The teaching of the Bible respecting God is coincident with the teaching of nature.* One of the most important conclusions to which, as we have seen, nature leads us, is that God is a Person, a self-conscious Agent, an Intelligent Being who can say "I." Many readers will wonder that any other idea should ever have been entertained. But it has been and still is. Not only among those who have to grope after God unaided by Revelation, but among those who will not accept the aid of Revelation, there are who dream of an "Impersonal" God who has no self-consciousness, can exercise no volition, is capable neither of approving nor of disapproving, who never consciously does anything and never can. Now, on this subject the Bible is explicit. In its first verse we have the key to

If—the Bible supplements.

The Bible coincident with nature.

See Part First, Chap. V. pp. 62-68; also Chap. IV. p. 52.

The Personality of God.

all that follows. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The God of the book which follows is "not a God who is a part of nature or a personification of the powers of nature, but one who is as distinct from nature as the builder of a house is from the house." "God said, Let there be light." "God said, Let the earth bring forth grass." "God said, Let us make man in our image." In that marvellous first chapter of Genesis "*God said*" occurs nine times. And in other fourteen sentences in the same chapter He is represented as a Personal Being, working, creating, blessing, and taking pleasure in the results of His power. Whatever may be the relation of the first chapter of Genesis to the physical history of the earth as disclosed by science, its relation to the nature and character of God is clear as day. "The opening chapter of Revelation is, in short, most properly considered, not as a revelation of nature, but as a revelation of God. All the wonders of nature are reviewed and displayed so as to reflect the power and majesty of that great Being who created them." And throughout all the books which constitute the one Bible it is the same. There is no faltering in the voice with which they speak, no hesitancy, no consciousness of doubt. Historians, prophets, poets, are all one in ascribing creation to the will and power of God—never sliding into a pantheistic tone, and never seemingly conscious of an effort to avoid it, but writing and speaking as men to whom it was a simple matter of *knowledge* that God is, in our modern awkward phraseology, Personal and not Impersonal, a conscious Being with intelligence and will. The very last of them, the seer of Patmos, represents the spirits of the just in heaven as worshipping God, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and

*Bampton  
Lecture by  
Professor  
Wace,  
M.A.,  
p. 194.*

honour and power : for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.”

*Rev. iv.*  
11 ; also *x. 6.*

With the personality of God nature teaches us His Unity. Not that men have always so understood nature, but that when thoroughly studied such is the conclusion to which, with a very high degree of probability, it leads us. It need scarcely be said, that monotheism or the Divine Unity is the doctrine of the Bible from first to last.

The Unity  
of God.

It is with a very high degree of probability, likewise, that nature points to the Infinitude of the attributes of the One God. If we cannot logically infer an Infinite cause from effects which, however vast, are still finite, the impression produced on our minds by these effects is that there can be no limits to the power and wisdom of the Creator. And for all practical ends this is enough. The Bible confirms this impression by representations which are not the less true that they are not scientific but popular and poetic. “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.” “The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.” “Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.” “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there : if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.” The God of the Bible is Almighty and Omniscient and everywhere present. And the Naamathite expressed the feeling of all the Bible writers when he exclaimed, “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do? deeper than hell ; what canst thou know?”

See Part  
First,  
Chap. V.  
pp. 68, 69.

The  
Infinitude of  
God.

*Jer. xxiii.*  
24.

*Isa. lxvi. 1.*  
*1 Kings viii.*  
27.

*Psa.*  
*cxxxix.*  
1-12.

*Job xi. 7, 8.*

We have seen likewise that nature is not wholly silent with reference to the moral attributes of God,

See Part  
First,  
Chap. IV.  
pp. 53-56.



His Righteousness and His Goodness. If we are under a moral law we are under a moral Lawgiver, "in whom the law abides as the uncreated light of perfect essential goodness." The Bible idea of God's moral nature is summed up in two sublime sentences, "God is light" and "God is love." These sentences occur towards the end of the Bible, but they only condense doctrines which were held from the beginning by Bible writers as the first principles of their faith. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

The Moral  
Attributes of  
God.

1 John i. 5;  
iv. 8.

Ex. xxxiv.  
6, 7.

Ex. xv. 11.

Thus far the teaching of the Bible concerning God is coincident with the teaching of nature. But,

Bible teach-  
ing more  
conclusive  
and  
impressive  
than that of  
nature.

Secondly, *It is far clearer, more conclusive, and more impressive*, and this is an important part of our argument. The man who opens his ear to the voice of nature, may find it difficult to be assured of what it really says, and when he does attain to some assurance, the impression which he receives may be faint, and the worship to which he is moved may be cold and faltering. But the man who reads the Bible seems to hear articulate sounds which cannot be mistaken; he feels himself in the presence of a living speaker; he not only understands what is said, but it is said in a way which moves him to action and to worship. "The Hebrew writers," says Mr. Isaac Taylor, "stand possessed of an unrivalled prerogative as the teachers, not merely of monotheism, but of *the spirit-stirring belief in God*; and

The Spirit of  
the Hebrew  
Poetry, p. 17.

near to us is He, not only because in Him we live and move and have our being, but because He—infinite in power and intelligence—is in so true a sense one with us, that the unabated terms of human emotion are a proper and genuine medium of intercourse between Him and ourselves.”

If it be objected that to ascribe to God anything like “human emotion,” and to speak of His thoughts and works in terms descriptive of man’s thoughts and works, is “anthropomorphic,”—we reply, that this anthropomorphism is based on the fact that man is made in the image of God, and instead of “dwarfing the Supreme Being,” without it all our ideas of God become shadowy and unreal. We maintain, with Mr. Isaac Taylor, “that, not less in relation to the most highly cultured minds than to the most rude—not less to minds disciplined in abstract thought than to such as are unused to generalization of any kind, the Hebrew Scriptures, in their metaphoric style and their poetic diction, are the fittest medium for conveying what it is their purpose to convey, concerning the Divine nature, and concerning the Spiritual life, and concerning the correspondence of man, the finite, with God, the Infinite.”

*See Part  
First, pp.  
66-68.*

*Spirit of the  
Hebrew  
Poetry, p. 2.*

We admit, as a general principle, that natural and moral truths do not need Revelation to teach them. They shine in their own light and commend themselves by their own inherent force. But we can imagine men to be so sunk in ignorance that the light and force of nature are not sufficient to illumine them in the knowledge of God, and still less sufficient to recall them to their duty to God. And in any circumstances we can imagine a state of great perplexity being occasioned by the entire absence of direct communications from God. Dr. Mark Hopkins, writ-

*Lowell  
Lectures on  
the Evi-  
dences of  
Christi-  
anity.  
Fifteenth  
Edition,  
pp. 59, 60.*

The super-  
natural  
needful to  
enforce the  
natural.

The absence  
of all miracle  
supposed.

ing of "the effect of miracles in producing a conviction of the being of a Personal God," says well, "This is of the utmost importance. Let us suppose there had been no miracle, nor any supposition of one, as far back as history goes; that the uniform course of nature had moved on without any supposed intervention of a superior personal Power; that, in the language of the scoffer, all things had continued as they were from the beginning of the creation; that no flood had swept the earth, and no law had been given in the midst of thunderings and earthquakes, and no messenger from above, whose form was 'like the Son of God,' had walked with good men in the fire, and no other indication of a righteous administration and of future retribution had appeared than are connected with those unswerving laws that bring all things alike to all,—and who can estimate the tendency to practical, if not to speculative, atheism, of such a state of things? It may even be questioned whether the common argument from contrivance, for the being of a Personal God, when that stands alone, and is connected with such a uniform course of things, would be valid. If this rigid order could once be infringed for a good and manifest reason, it would obviously change the whole force of the argument. Could we see gravitation suspended when the good man is thrown by his persecutors from the top of the rock—could we see a chariot and horses of fire descend and deliver the righteous from the universal law of death, then should we be assured of the existence of a personal Power, with a distinct will, whose agents and ministers these laws were. Such attestations of His being we might expect God would give, not merely to confirm a particular revelation, but with reference to this feeling of indefiniteness, of gene-

rality, of a want of personality in the Supreme Power, which the operation of general laws, necessarily confounding all moral distinctions, has a tendency to produce.”

Bible teaching, then, gives to nature teaching additional light and force, especially in relation to the moral attributes of God. Not only is the Bible one with nature in teaching that God is both righteous and good, but it brings these grand truths out of the obscurity in which nature leaves them, and out of the practical forgetfulness of mankind, and makes them shine as in sunlight. The government of the world which the Bible ascribes to God, and the histories in which we have glimpses of that government, are all mirrors in which both the righteousness and the goodness of God are reflected. The story of our first parents, of Noah and the flood, and of the Jewish people in all their generations, is one long recital of the fact in which the world should rejoice, that God is both Light and Love. Those who wrote these stories and other portions of the Old Testament were not unconscious of perplexity and difficulty in this matter. The existence of sin and suffering, the inequalities and wrongs, which distress us, distressed them. But this only makes their faith in God more remarkable. They did not shut their eyes, they neither refused nor failed to see the evils that are done under the sun. No observers or writers, ancient or modern, have seen them more clearly or mourned over them more painfully. But through all they clung to the assurance that the Judge of all could only do right. The Psalmist gives voice to the uniform doctrine of the Bible when he says, “The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles [all Gentile lands] be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness

Bible teaching in relation to the Moral Attributes of God—enforcing the teaching of nature.

*Psa. lx.iii.*

*Psa. xcvi.*  
1, 2, 12.

are round about Him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. . . . Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous ; and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.”

*Dr. Mark Hopkins's Lowell Lectures, p. 56.*

If it be thus true, as it is, that the Bible teaching concerning God not only coincides with that of nature, but makes the teaching of nature immensely clearer, and turns its lessons into a practical force, we have at least presumptive evidence that it is of God Himself. “Who can believe that *any speculative and problematical solution* of one or all of the great questions respecting God and His government and human destiny, could introduce a religion that would effectually control the passions, and predominate over the senses, of men? No. It is exceedingly clear that if anything was to be done to enlighten man, it must be by a voice from Heaven—a voice that should speak with authority, and not as the scribes.”

*See Part First, Chap. VII. pp. 95-98.*

The Bible supplements the teaching of nature.

*Micah vi. 6, 7.*

*See Part First, pp. 96, 97.*

Thirdly. We come now to a still more important fact. *The teaching of the Bible supplements the teaching of nature where that fails, and answers questions which that suggests but cannot answer.* The moral nature which points to God as a righteous Ruler troubles man with a consciousness of sin and demerit ; and the question which man has asked himself in every age, and toiled in vain to answer, is in substance—“Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” There is not, we repeat, a darker page in the moral or religious history of mankind, than

that which records men's efforts to answer such questions as these, the gross conceptions of God which they indicate, not as the Just God but the Malignant—and the insane and unutterable cruelties to which these conceptions have led. But underneath them all, there is the deep-seated feeling of alienation from God, of guilt and condemnation, and the necessity of atonement.

We have here the greatest moral difficulty of human experience, and no light which nature sheds on the character of God can remove it. "Nothing can be more contrary to the history of all the past than what is asserted by some modern deists, that it is a dictate of natural reason that God will pardon sin on repentance.

. . . The deist may be challenged to show any heathen creed in which this was an article. . . . Repentance, even as a condition of pardon, is peculiar to the Gospel system ; and as an historical fact, it is produced only by Gospel motives. The truth is, deists have borrowed this partial truth from the Bible, and then used it to show that we do not need the very book from which they borrowed it. The question of the method or possibility of pardon, by a perfectly just God, involves the highest problem of moral government ; and there is no analogy of the operation of human laws, and certainly nothing which we see of the inflexibility and severity with which the natural laws of God are administered, which could lead us to believe in the efficacy of repentance alone for the pardon of moral transgressions."

It is a matter of no small moment that the Bible teaches the *possibility* of forgiveness. "If there is any one primary doctrine of natural religion, it is that God is Just. This was so strongly felt by Socrates that he doubted whether God could pardon sin."

*Dr. Mark Hopkins's Lowell Lectures, p. 54.*

Nature does not teach that God will forgive the penitent.

*Psa.*  
*xxxii., li.*  
*Psa. cxxx.*  
3, 5.

But the Bible is full of the doctrine of forgiveness. Its histories teach it, its prophets and its Psalmists teach it. "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared"—that men may be brought to serve and worship Thee. God is, in these striking words, represented as one who forgives sin in order that the sinner may be encouraged to come to Him, and be His true and trustful worshipper. Without the assurance that God waits to be gracious, there can be no worship but the most servile and abject. And this assurance the most enlightened Natural Religion cannot give.

The mystery  
of sacrifice.

*Heb. ix. 22.*

The Bible  
idea of  
sacrifice.

Those to whom only the earlier revelations of the Bible were known had to rest in large measure on the simple assurance that God would forgive the penitent sinner, without knowing how. But they practised a rite the origin of which cannot be explained except by ascribing it to God Himself, and the all but universal prevalence of which, often in cruel and perverse forms, can be accounted for only on the supposition that its origin dates from the very beginning of man's history—the rite of sacrifice. The only key to the mystery of so strange a rite is to be found in one of the last books of the Bible—"Without shedding of blood is no remission." As an expression of thanksgiving, the shedding of blood would be most unnatural. As an expression of self-devotement it would be scarcely less so. But as a confession that the offerer's life was forfeited by sin, and a belief that the life of the sacrifice would be accepted instead, it would possess a profound significance. As thus understood, however, it could have been no human invention. Nor could it have been based on any humanly conceived probabilities as to the Divine

acceptance of it. The Biblical representation of it is self-consistent. The shedding of blood in sacrifice was ordained of God. It was designed to teach men that their lives were forfeited to Divine justice ; and, by the constant repetition of sacrifice, to teach them that the animals offered in sacrifice were in themselves no adequate substitute for the lives that were spared. In the fulness of the times an adequate substitute was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, who died the just for the unjust. And henceforward the shedding of blood on the altar of worship should cease for ever.

*Heb. ix. 24  
x. 10.*

This, in few words, is the Bible doctrine on the subject. We do not at present assume its truth. But we present it as the Bible answer to the question which nature cannot answer, as to how sin may be pardoned and the sinner brought into amity with God. Those who understood the answer most imperfectly thousands of years before Christ came, understood it sufficiently to have peace with God. And since Christ came it has been the grand means of reconciling men to God, and enabling them to cherish towards Him the affectionate confidence of children. It is a doctrine, to use the words of Mr. Isaac Taylor, " which in a peculiar manner refuses to be tampered with or compromised, and which will hold its own place or none. . . . If it be asked, Is it a truth ? in reply, besides citing the Apostolic authorities, which are most explicit, we might well ask whence such a doctrine might proceed, if not from God. Which of the creations of the human mind does it resemble ? Whether we regard that aspect of it which is thoroughly intelligible, or that in which it presents an inscrutable mystery, it stands equally remote from the customary style of human specula-

The Bible answer to the question—  
How may sin be pardoned ?

*Spiritual  
Christi-  
anity.*



tions; besides that, it contravenes the pride and prejudices of the heart. Clear and bright as noon is this truth; vast and deep as infinity."

Other questions answered by the Bible.

There are other questions less urgent than that to which the final and complete answer is given in the death of Jesus Christ, but still important, to which nature and reason have given but dubious answers.

A future state.

It is a significant fact that men have everywhere and in every age had at least a presentiment or foreboding of a future state. But still the question has been asked bewilderingly, If a man die, shall he live again? It is well known that Greek and Roman philosophers could not satisfy themselves on the subject. Cicero, who had carefully studied the arguments of Socrates, and added others of his own, says, "Which of these is true, God alone knows; and which is most probable, is a very great question." As a practical doctrine, "Life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel." "This alone has revealed it with such authority and certainty, and in such connections as to give it all its efficiency as a motive of action?"

The books of Moses.

Surprise has often been felt that there is no clear and explicit intimation of a future state in the books of Moses; but it cannot be supposed that the doctrine of a life beyond the grave was unknown to Moses and to the people whom he led out of Egypt. This doctrine was one of the most prominent beliefs of the people of Egypt—pervading their ritual, and inspiring their monuments; and it must have been familiar to all who lived within their borders. The silence of Moses on the subject could not have resulted from ignorance or from indifference. There was a reason for it which can scarcely be ascribed to his wisdom. In the writings of Homer and Hesiod, and in the

Egyptian belief.

Vedas and Puranas of the Hindoos, there is a profusion of details respecting the future state. "With these there is no reserve, no sense of mystery, no faltering as if from imperfect knowledge. These Greek and Hindoo authorities speak with all the fulness and frankness of persons describing scenes of which they are personally cognisant, yet what scenes are these? There is nothing in them to quicken the intellect, purify the heart, ennoble the character, or even gratify a well-ordered imagination. They are but the shadow thrown on the future by the lower and baser qualities of man—his caprice, selfishness, pride, and wantonness. Such a future would only be an aggravation of the evils of the present state."

Greek and  
Hindoo  
Mythology.

James  
Kennedy,  
M.A.

Contrast with this the faith in a future state which underlies the historic teaching of the books of Moses. "God made man in His own image." This fundamental fact involves in it, as in a seed, all the assurances of after ages respecting the life that is to come. God communed with members of the race which He had made in His own image. And the argument, if the people needed argument on the subject, was near at hand: Is man's nature such that he can thus commune with God? Does God speak to him, as one speaketh to his friend, and will He not bind to Himself for ever those with whom He has entered into close relationship? Christ's reply to the Sadducees was based on this idea. God was not the God of the dead, but of the living. The God who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while they were on earth, was their God still, when He appeared to Moses in the burning bush. His covenant with the patriarchs, His communion with them, was the pledge of the life which they now lived with Him in the unseen world.

What the  
books of  
Moses  
taught.

God's  
image.

Communion  
with God.

The  
patriarchs  
living.

One fact is said to be worth a thousand arguments. And Moses had the knowledge of a fact, whose significance could not be mistaken—the translation of Enoch. A thousand years were long enough to produce sceptics and scepticism, and the argument of a later age might already be used, “All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” For a thousand years, so far as we know, there had been no visible change in the world. Let godliness decline, and the sense of God’s law and presence in the world become faint, and sceptics could easily involve men in wonderment and doubt. And even the better-thinking portion of the community might become faint-hearted, and long for some sign from Heaven that should strike conviction into every soul. In these circumstances the translation of a holy man who had witnessed against the world’s sins and doubts, who had spoken to his fellows of God and His law and a coming judgment with the authority of a prophet, was the very sign from Heaven which that generation needed. It must have thrilled with exultation all who feared God in that early age. It brought Heaven very near to earth, and God very near to man. The lessons which it taught were perpetuated to those who possessed its history. Holy men who walk with God on the earth, still walk with God after they die. There is a world that is not seen as well as a world that is seen. God is, and He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Translation  
of Enoch.

2 Pet. iii. 4.

Possible  
primitive  
scepticism.

Effect of  
Enoch’s  
translation.

See Heb. xi.  
8-10, 13-16.

See Taylor  
Lewis in  
Lange’s  
“Genesis.”

It is not necessary that we follow the later traces of the great doctrine of a future state through the books of the Old Testament. If any doubts whether it lay at the base of the thinkings of ancient saints concerning God, let him test this by endeavouring to fix in his mind the idea that the Old Testament

writers all regarded themselves as beings destined soon to depart into nothingness—in other words, that they were all sheer animal materialists. Let him carry along this impression, and keep it constantly present in reading the Psalms, the Prophets, or even the Book of Proverbs. What a discord will arise between it and many of their vivid utterances, even though there is nothing in them, dogmatically or didactively, about a future life! Let the reader study some of these utterances, and say whether men who believe in no hereafter ever talk so.

*Psa. lxxiii.*  
25, 26; *lxxiii.*  
1-4; *xvii.* 14,  
15; *xvi.*  
8-11. *Isa.*  
*lxxiii.* 16;  
*Hab. i.* 12.

The truth is, that the idea of a future life is inseparable from the idea of religion, at least of such a religion as we have in the Bible, a religion which brings the individual soul into communion with God, the Father of spirits. "God and immortality," it has been said, "are the two great pillars on which rests the edifice of religion. Remove either of them, and the entire structure falls into ruins."

Involved in  
the idea of  
Religion.

These two things are now noticeable: first, that the Bible speaks with certainty of the doctrine of the Future, and not with the uncertainty which characterized the speculations of philosophers. And, secondly, that the Bible speaks with a holy reserve, or reticence, of the conditions of the future life. This is true even of the teaching of Christ and of the New Testament. The metaphorical language of the Book of Revelation is no exception. Whereas the Jews themselves, when they left Moses and the prophets, as appears from their Talmudical writings, pictured the Future as other nations had done. The only explanation which meets the facts of the case is that the writers of our Scriptures were divinely instructed to say what they did say, and were divinely restrained from saying what, judging by the analogy of

Certainty.

Holy reticence.

The true explanation.

the history of the human mind, they would have said, if left to themselves. Their revelations of a future state all possessed a moral character which rendered the life to come a joy to the righteous and a terror to the wicked.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### FURTHER SIGNS OF THE SUPERHUMAN IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE.

THE arguments which we have just outlined to prove that in Bible teaching there are manifest signs of a superhuman source, admit of being greatly strengthened by considerations which cannot be challenged.

1. In the teaching of the Bible respecting God and His relations to the universe and man, we have *not the teaching of a single man, but of a succession of men, many of them separated by long intervals of time as well as by marked peculiarities of character and of circumstances.* From the latest Old Testament writer to the earliest New Testament writer, there is the distance of four centuries and a half. From the latest New Testament writer to the earliest Old Testament writer, the distance is scarcely less than fifteen centuries and a half. The earliest Old Testament writer gives us, in a few brief chapters, the history of mankind for at least five and twenty centuries before his own time. And whencesoever he derived his information, the notable fact is that the ideas of God and man which pervade that earlier history are the ideas which pervade the later books. The ideas which are embodied in the legislation and history of Moses, and which remain sub-

Bible ideas  
those not of  
one man but  
of a long  
succession of  
men.

stantially unchanged until the time of John in Pamos, are found in all their purity, though not in all their fulness, in the earlier history of Abraham, of Noah, and even of Adam and Eve, and of the Creation.

Contrast  
with others.

This is a fact without parallel in any other literature or in any other so-called religion. Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha, and Mohammed, whatever be their merits or demerits, stand each one isolated and alone. They may have learned much from predecessors or contemporaries, as Mohammed certainly did: or they may have been moved to their opinions and teachings by the errors and practices of others. But nowhere do we find, except in our Bible, a succession of men, actors, speakers, and writers, whose widely separated teachings constitute the authoritative and self-consistent basis of one Faith. In the one Faith of the Bible, even Jesus Christ, special as his mission was, and unique as His person and character were, belongs to the great succession which begins with Moses and ends with the Apostle John—a unity this which points to a super-human origin.

Bible writers  
not conscious  
of mental  
effort in  
attaining  
their ideas.

2. In this long line of prophets and Apostles, *we do not find one who seemed conscious of mental effort in attaining or defending or teaching the doctrines which they held in common.* There is not one in whom we find any approach to the processes by which philosophers, Greek or Roman, worked out theories for their own satisfaction, or argued them for the satisfaction of others. Their ideas appear in the histories which they wrote with all the naturalness and ease with which familiar facts are told; and when asserted in the form of teaching, they are asserted in the spirit of certainty as matters of knowledge.

3. In no instance did the prophets of the Old Testament or the Apostles of the New *claim originality for their teaching, or any personal credit whatsoever.* What they taught they professed to have received from God, and they spoke in the name of God. That they believed that they had a right thus to profess and speak, is certain. They were teachers of righteousness. Falsehood they trace to the devil as the enemy of God. And if they were conscious that what they said was not of God, while they said it was, but of themselves—or even conscious of uncertainty as to whence it came—their hypocrisy would admit of no rational explanation.

Bible writers did not claim originality.

4. The teachings of the Bible, common to all its writers, *are unique, without parallel in the history of mankind.* The higher we ascend in the history of the world's religions, in all nations, the nearer we come to the Bible doctrine of God—no mean proof that Monotheism, or the belief in one God, instead of being a development from Polytheism, and of later growth, is, as the Bible represents it, the older and earlier faith. But this older faith became obscured, and was finally practically lost in the world. By the time of Abraham, while clearer traces of it may be found in individual instances and obscurer traces in fragments of very ancient literatures, it was practically an extinct faith. And it continued so through all the later histories, of Egypt, of the Aryan race in the far East, of the Assyrians, Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans. Nor do we find one of those who may be called religious reformers, even attempting to restore it in anything like its original purity. The doctrine of Zoroaster, which ascribed the universe to two co-equal and co-eternal principles, light and darkness,

Bible teachings are unique.

See Part First, pp. 32-38, 90, 91.

See Part First, pp. 34-38.

Zoroaster—founder of the Magian religion—date uncertain.



good and evil, may be regarded as holding an intermediate rank between the Pantheism of India, in which the universe was confounded with God and was to be finally absorbed in God, and the purer Theism of the Jews, which regarded the Almighty Jehovah as the Creator and Ruler of the universe. Confucius taught a system of morals which, without denying God, ignored Him. It is still a moot question whether the founder of Buddhism believed in God or not. “Philosophic Buddhism is sheer Atheism; popular Buddhism is gross superstition.” Mohammed put the existence of God in the forefront of his teaching; but such a God!—a God of unapproachable majesty, who had fashioned man as an artificer fashions an image out of clay, with no living bond between them. The God of Mohammed gives man rain and fruitful seasons, but “He is not the less the inscrutable despot acting upon no principle but the caprices of His will.” Mohammed deemed it blasphemy to suppose that man could claim any spiritual kinship with his Creator. “Almost,” he exclaimed in horror, “might the very heavens be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in fragments. Verily, there is none in the heavens and the earth but shall approach the God of mercy as a slave.” This is not the God of the Bible, the God of Judaism or of Christianity. He indeed is “full of Majesty.” He is awful in His judgments, but not capricious—ever just and righteous, while in his relation to man, He is a Father. In the very first chapter of Genesis man is declared to have been made in the image of God—and the Fatherhood thus ascribed to the Creator becomes brighter, and to the heart of man more real, as the book advances. Neither, then, in Mohammedanism which makes God

Confucius.

Buddha.

See Part  
First, pp.  
26, 106.  
Mohammed.

Moham-  
med's idea of  
God.

an Almighty tyrant, nor in Buddhism which, as taught by its founder, ignores God altogether, if it does not deny Him, do we find any exception to the statement that the teachings common to all the writers of the Bible respecting God are unique and without parallel in the history of mankind.

This is a great fact, a moral phenomenon, which demands explanation. In the small territory lying between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, between the mountains of Lebanon and the Arabah, some forty miles in average breadth, and one hundred and forty in length, there lived a people who dwelt in light, while all the world around was in darkness. "In Judah is God known," we read in one of their own odes. This was their grand distinction among the nations. Their nearest neighbours, the Phœnicians and Syrians, their superiors in the arts of civilization, were Nature-worshippers, and in their worship practised the most cruel and licentious rites. Wherever the Hebrews looked, east, west, north, or south, they saw all nations "given to idolatry." There was no difference between mighty empires, Assyrian, Macedonian, Roman, and the feeblest tribes on which these trampled; no difference between the wisest and the rudest, the most civilized and the most barbarous—all alike worshipped the works of their own hands or the fictions of their own minds. What account can we give of this phenomenon?

A moral phenomenon which demands explanation.

5. That the difference between the Jewish and other nations originated *in a cause that was without and above them, and not within them, is capable of as perfect a demonstration as any proposition of a moral nature admits of.* To say that while other races of mankind, such as the Greek and Roman, had their

The cause of difference not in the Jew.

The Semitic  
race not  
better than  
others.

own peculiarities, it was the peculiarity of the Semitic race to originate and uphold a pure Monotheism, explains nothing. The question is, whence this peculiarity? The Semitic race was not superior in intellect or in its moral nature to other races; in some respects it was inferior; how came it to pass that it should have penetrated beyond the material universe and discovered what lay beyond as no other people ever did, and as no individual, the most gifted, of any other people, ever did? How came it to pass that the shepherds and herdsmen and ploughmen of Judæa were more enlightened than the philosophers and statesmen of all other lands? or rather that these shepherds, herdsmen, and ploughmen, walked in light, while these philosophers and statesmen walked in darkness? How came it to pass that lowly mothers in Israel, like Hannah, could impart to their children truths which the noblest fathers in other lands, whose minds were profoundly exercised on these very subjects, could not impart to theirs?

Only one  
branch of the  
Semitic race  
mono-  
theistic;

Further, How comes it to pass that of the entire Semitic race, the descendants of Shem, only one branch is distinguished by the peculiarity of which we are speaking—the branch, namely, which sprang from Abraham? The Semitic race, as such, was not distinguished in this respect from all other races, the descendants of Japheth and Ham, till Abraham's time. That is, they were all alike sinking gradually into ignorance of the true God, and becoming idolators. Was it by some marvellous power of his own—call it a religious genius or by any other name—that Abraham resisted the tide that was rolling so strongly, and laid hold of the truth and held it high up above the waves? Or was Abraham, when being carried away, or in danger of being carried away, by the

universal tide, grasped by the Divine hand, as the Bible represents, and redeemed from the world's ignorance and idolatry, that he might be the instrument of that same Divine hand in maintaining the truth which the world did not like to retain in its knowledge?

A further question arises. How came it to pass that every offshoot from even Abraham's branch of the Semitic race, when separated from the Hebrew branch, passed into the darkness and idolatry of the outer world? Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn, but his descendants lapsed into the condition of other nations. Esau, Abraham's grandson, was born in the same birth with Jacob, but Esau's descendants, the Edomites or Idumæans, became Polytheists, and were merged in the world that knew not God, while only among the descendants of Jacob were the knowledge and worship of the true God preserved.

And only one of the races descended from Abraham.

But perhaps the most conclusive proof that the monotheism of the Jews was not of themselves—neither originating in any constitutional peculiarity of theirs, nor preserved and maintained by any attributes which belonged to them and not to others—is to be found in their own history. That history, from the day of their redemption from Egypt to the day when they were exiled from their own land by the Babylonian conquest, is the history of one long struggle between the great truth which, according to the Bible, was given them in charge, and their own preferences for the ways of the nations around them. They were not many months out of Egypt when it became manifest that they were deeply tainted with the superstitions of the land they had left. The wisest of their sovereigns, whose lips had uttered the sublimest sentiments of pure devotion, yielded to the idolatrous

The Jews themselves ever prone to idolatry.

*1 Kings viii. xi.*

influences of his wives, and filled Jerusalem and the heights around it with altars to the gods of the heathen. In the days of Ahab the apostacy of the northern portion of the nation seemed complete. The very existence of the nation as a separate people, its peculiar constitution and laws and statutes, were all witnesses for the true God. And yet now seven hundred years after the Exodus, and after more than six hundred years' possession of the promised land, the question had still to be fought out, *so far as the people were concerned*, whether there was one God or many, whether worship was to be rendered to the pure Eternal Spirit, known to Israel as Jehovah, or to the powers of nature under the hideous characters of Baal, Moloch, and Astarte. From this period onward to the very eve of the Babylonian exile, the Jewish people still show a most perverse disposition to forsake Jehovah and to conform to the practices of other nations. False prophets, apostate priests, idolatrous princes and princesses, are in league, from generation to generation, to extinguish the light of God. The very keepers of the Divine lamp, those to whose solemn charge it had been committed, with awful penalties denounced on the neglect of their duty, make it their study and business to put it out, but they cannot. There it shines, as in a charnel vault, braving the mists and fogs that come one does not see whence.

<sup>1</sup> Kings xvi.  
29-34; xvii.  
xviii.

We dwell on this point because of its extreme importance. There is a great moral phenomenon to be accounted for. From the beginnings of the Hebrew people in the call of Abraham, or—if the term be preferred, in the migration of Abraham from his native Chaldæa to the land of Canaan—to the time when Judæa was laid waste by the arms of Babylon, a

period of fourteen or fifteen hundred years, that people, and that people alone, is in possession of a Monotheistic faith of the purest character. We demand an explanation of this fact. That it was neither originated by themselves nor preserved by themselves, is demonstrated by their history. Instead of being better than their neighbours, their most persistent desire was to be like their neighbours. Prophet after prophet appears, not by descent from one another as in the priestly "order," but as circumstances rendered it needful, to resist the idolatrous tendencies of the people. Whencesoever the authority of these prophets, the fact of their appearance and of their ministry is historic. They professed to speak in the name of God. The last of them before the exile represents God as pleading thus with the people: "Pass over Jer. ii. 10, 11. the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." The same prophet foretells coming disaster in these words: "Because Jer. xvi. 11 13. your fathers have forsaken Me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken Me, and have not kept My law; and ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto Me: therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not." This is the Bible account of the matter. The idolatry of the people, not their pure and peculiar monotheism, was the fruit of the "imagination" of their hearts. Their monotheism, their knowledge and worship of the everliving and Holy God, came from God Himself. And He

who gave it watched over it. His providence and grace were its guardians. Only by the constancy of His care and love was the light of Divine truth preserved among the Jews, and preserved not for their sakes alone or chiefly, but that in the fulness of the times that light should be communicated to other nations.

*Psa. cxlvii.*  
19, 20.

This is a rational and adequate explanation of the phenomenon. There is no other. And we are shut up to the conclusion that throughout the line of Jewish history, God revealed Himself even as "the Book" says: "He showeth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them."

*Rev. iv. 10,*  
11.

*Ex. iii. 14.*

6. There is another remarkable feature in the Bible religion which can be accounted for only in the same way—namely, *its progressive development; not the mere fact of progress, nor the mere fact of development, but the peculiar nature of the progress which is traceable in the Bible.* The fact that God is the Creator of all things is as clearly asserted in the first chapter of Genesis, as in the song of praise which the writer of the last book in the Bible ascribes to the hosts of heaven. The essential attributes of the Creator are likewise very explicitly asserted at a very early period: His eternal self-existence, His almightiness, His omnipresence, His righteousness, His holiness, His goodness. His *character* was revealed progressively, only, or at least mainly, in this sense, that new manifestations of Himself in deed and word made clearer what it was; and, as by line upon line, led on the people to a more perfect knowledge of it. But there is one respect in which there was literal progress.

It will be remembered that the history of the Creation in the Bible is followed immediately by the history of the entrance of sin into this world. We do not now assume the truth of either ; but, as a fact, they are both there, in the Book.

Now, in the latter of these histories these words are ascribed to God: "I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In these words we cannot find less than a prediction of conflict between good and evil, between man tempted to evil and his tempter, man finally overcoming the tempter, but not without suffering while conquering. The phrase "seed of the woman" might mean either an individual or the race descended from the woman. At this stage we have no right to assume that it meant an individual, though possibly Eve understood it so, and later scriptures confirm this interpretation. Throughout the long ages which preceded the call of Abraham, no individual appeared and no event occurred which could be supposed to be a fulfilment of the prophecy—they were ages of conflict between good and evil, but ages in which evil seemed to triumph, and man to be its earnest agent rather than its earnest enemy.

In the history of what the Bible regards as the call of Abraham by God, we find God represented as saying to Abraham—"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Again: "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." Again: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Again: "I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries ; and

Gen. iii.

Gen. iv. 1.

Gen. xii. 3.

Gen. xviii.  
18.Gen. xxii.  
18.

Gen. xxvi. 4.



in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." By the seed of Abraham in these predictive promises, might be meant either the race descended from him or an individual of the race, or the two ideas might be combined thus—Through the Jewish race, by means especially of one member of the race, all nations shall be blessed. He in whom Christians see the fulfilment of this ancient promise said, "Salvation is of (or from) the Jews." It was, because He, the Saviour, was a Jew. The point of our present argument is this, that here we have a new development of the primitive promise of conquest over evil. This conquest was to be effected by the "seed of the woman." We have it now, in the form of "blessing to all nations," by one who should be of the "seed of Abraham."

*John iv. 22.*

Some hundreds of years later the great Lawgiver of the race which was descended from Abraham represented God as saying to him, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." The writer of the chapter in which the death of Moses is recorded evidently understood this promise to refer to an individual, for he says, in what may be regarded as a postscript to the book of Deuteronomy, "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt." But whether we accept the Christian interpretation of the prophecy or not, we have in it a promise of future and further Divine revelation and legislation to which the people of Israel should be bound to give heed.

*Deut. xviii.  
18-19.*

*Deut. xxxiv.  
10-12.*

*See Acts iii.  
22, 23; vii.  
37.*

When we come to the days of David and Solomon,

we find the hopes of the future connected with the expectation of a great King who should reign in righteousness. Whether such scriptures as the second and seventy-second Psalms had any reference to con- temporary events, or whether their form was suggested by contemporary events, or not, the only rational in- terpretation of them is that which looks for their fulfilment in a great King that should come, and whose reign should produce effects on the world which no other reign produced.

*Psa. ii. and  
lxxii.*

*For the Mes-  
sianic pre-  
dictions  
fulfilled in  
Christ, see  
PartSecond,  
Chap. IV.*

In the later prophets the glorious future which was in store for the world was not only described in brighter colours than ever, but was more expressly connected with an individual man who should be of the royal race of David, and who should in some mysterious way possess Divine attributes. Isaiah, moreover, represents the great benefits of the reign of this Prince of the House of David as resulting from suffering—reminding us of the first promise that, while the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, the serpent should bruise his heel. Succeed- ing prophets, Jeremiah, Daniel, Zechariah, and Malachi, all foretell the coming of great spiritual changes, a great deliverance and Deliverer. And when John the Baptist, after a prophetic silence of four hundred years, startled Israel by the preaching of Repentance, he stood avowedly in the old succession. “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” he said. The kingdom long foretold, long expected; the king- dom of which Zechariah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the Psalms, had spoken. And Jesus Himself did not appear as the Founder of a new religion. He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil. It was of Him, He said, and His followers said, the prophets had spoken. He was manifested to destroy, as the first

*See Isa. ix.  
6, 7; xl.  
1-10.*

*Isa. liii.  
10-12.*

promise had indicated, the works of the devil. So that in Jesus Christ, according to the Book, we have the consummation of hopes and predictions which extend back to the very beginning of man's history on the earth.

Such is the representation of the Book—and we regard it at present simply as such. Now, this is a very notable fact. The religion which we call Christianity does not date from Christ, as Mohammedanism from Mohammed, Confucianism from Confucius, and Buddhism from Gautama. It is the consummation of a progress which had been going on for several millenniums. It is the ripened fruit of seed which had been sown or sowing for many generations. Or, more literally, it is the completion of revelations which had been made at sundry times and in divers manners, for many centuries. This is a fact which can be verified by the study of books which can be traced back through fifteen or sixteen centuries, and which tells us of earlier centuries, more than these, before they were written, during which men were taught to look forward to the coming of some great Deliverer.

'Heb. i. 1.  
The Revised  
Version says,  
"By divers  
portions and  
in divers  
manners."

The principal subject of this progressive revelation is, as we have seen, not the fact of the Divine existence, nor the fact of the creation by God, nor the attributes of God, but a purpose, or promise, or prediction, of deliverance from the evil by which the world is cursed. And this progressive revelation does not assume the form of a natural development properly so called. It is not as when one author or man of science takes up the theory of his predecessor, and, by genius or experiment, confirms it and extends it beyond the point at which his predecessors left it, until by successive experiments it is fully established

and all its bearings and results are ascertained. The promises said to have been given to Abraham make no reference to the promise which was designed to bring hope to the dejected hearts of the first human sinners, and they have no formal or apparent connection with it. The predictions of a King who should reign in righteousness have no formal connection with the promises made to Abraham; they are not developed out of them by any reflective process on the part of the prophets. The earlier predictions of a great King in the book of Psalms do intimate that He was to be of more than mortal race; but it was only three hundred years later that prophecy clearly ascribed to His person the "Wonderful" combination of a "child born" and "the Mighty God;" and with equal clearness ascribed His conquests and the blessings of His reign to sufferings which He should endure for the sins of men. The later predictions of Daniel and Malachi, in which the coming One is represented as the Messiah "cut off, but not for Himself," and as "the Lord" who should "suddenly come to His temple," may not add anything substantially new to the doctrine of the person and work of the promised Saviour as it appears in Isaiah, but yet they contain phases of His mission which were not previously indicated.

Thus throughout we have progress, but not such as can be accounted for by any process of natural development. We cannot imagine any natural process by which "the seed of the woman" should, two thousand years later, be interpreted to be "the seed of Abraham;" and by which "the seed of Abraham" should, nine hundred years later, be interpreted to be a son of David; and by which this Son of David should, three hundred years later, be expressly declared to be

*Psa. ii.*

*Isa. ix. 6.*

*Isa. liii.  
10-12.*

*Dan. ix. 26.*

*Mal. iv. 1.*

both Human and Divine, and represented as conquering and blessing the world by the virtue of suffering endured for the sin of the world; and by which, *Dan. ix. 24.* two hundred years later, the time of the promised deliverance should be indicated; and by which a hundred and fifty years later still, the appearance of *Mal. iii. 1.* the Deliverer in His temple should be foretold as sudden, and to be preceded by an Elijah who should prepare His way. In all this we have not a development of the seed sown in the primitive promise to our first parents, effected by the genius of thinkers of after ages. The only rational and adequate explanation of it is that which is supplied by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, namely this, that God spoke to the fathers "by the prophets, by divers portions and in divers manners," and then in these last days hath spoken unto us by His Son. We can trace for ourselves historically, throughout the books of the Old Testament, the "divers portions" in which promise upon promise, prophecy upon prophecy, created and sustained the faith and hope of some Great One who should bless mankind. This is one of the phenomena of the Old Testament which seems at least to point to a superhuman origin. Without assuming at present that this phenomenon is of God, we call attention to it as a fact, and repeat that Christianity does not date from Christ, that it claims to be the consummation of a progress which had been going on for several millenniums, the completion of revelations which had been made in divers portions throughout the ages during which man had been on the earth.

*Heb. i. 1.*  
Revised  
Version.

What nature  
teaches  
respecting  
man.

7. I have this far spoken of what nature teaches respecting God—God in Himself and God in His relation to man. *Let me say something of the teaching*

*of nature respecting man himself.* Man studied by himself, as he is in himself and in the light which his conditions on earth throw upon him, is a paradox; as Pascal puts it, "If man was not made for God, why can he enjoy no happiness but in God? If man was made for God, why is he so opposed to God? Man is at a loss where to fix himself. He is unquestionably out of his way, and feels within himself the remains of a happy state which he cannot retrieve." One of the finest passages in the English language is that in which John Howe described man as a temple in ruins. It begins thus: "The stately ruins are visible to every age, that bear in their front (yet extant) this doleful inscription, 'Here God once dwelt.' Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man to show the Divine Presence did some time reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity to proclaim He is *now* retired and gone. The lamps are extinct; the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour." And it concludes—"The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this temple, too plainly show the Great Inhabitant is gone." The true reading of man's moral condition finds him fallen, fallen from an estate of which evidence is found in what Howe describes as "the relics of common notions; the lively prints of some undefaced truth; the fair ideas of things; the yet legible precepts that relate to practice." "Behold!" (says the great Puritan) "with what accuracy the broken pieces show these to have been engraven by the finger of God; and how they now lie torn and scattered, one in this dark

Pascal's  
paradox.

Man a  
temple in  
ruins.

John Howe,  
in "*The  
Living  
Temple,*"  
Part II.

corner and another in that, buried in heaps of dirt and rubbish."

"*The Method of the Divine Government,*" p. 69.

But in the existence of these very remains of the fallen temple there is hope. And this is the other side of the paradox—the temple fallen, but not abandoned to destruction,—man fallen, but not out-cast. "Besides the traces of original beauty and subsequent degradation," says Dr. McCosh, "there are signs of reconstruction or reorganization." These are not so obvious as are the signs of ruin. But great as is the ruin, our earth is not deserted. There are no signs of neglect or abandonment.

"The Bible lifts the veil.

Argument.

"*Divine Government,*" p. 74.

It may be difficult to say how far these truths could be discovered from nature alone. But, reading nature with the light which we possess, we do see in nature at once signs of a great fall, and indications that the ruin caused by it is not absolute and final. And my argument in support of the superhuman in the Bible is this, that the Bible has lifted the veil from the moral history of man and reveals to us clearly what nature indicates but obscurely. The argument may be put in the words of Dr. McCosh, "The fact that the Scriptures furnish such an explanation of nature, may be regarded as a proof of their heavenly origin. The writings on the tombs and temples of ancient Egypt long baffled the skill of the most distinguished scholars. It was the Rosetta stone, with its triple inscriptions, one of them being Greek and a translation of the two hieroglyphical ones, which first furnished, or rather suggested, the discovery of the key. The key thus suggested by the Greek translation is shown to be the true one, by the number of hidden meanings which it has satisfactorily opened. Let it be acknowledged, if persons insist on it, that the inscriptions on the works of God are not very easily

deciphered ; still, should it be found that a professed revelation explains them, and that the two coincide, there is evidence furnished in behalf both of the genuineness of the revelation, and the correctness of the interpretation which it has put on nature. As it opens chamber after chamber, we become convinced that we have at last found the true key. ‘Who can do otherwise,’ says Pascal, ‘than admire and embrace a religion which contains the complete knowledge of truths which we still know the better the more we receive?’”



## CHAPTER IV.

SIGNS OF THE SUPERHUMAN IN THE PROGRESSIVE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE.

THERE are other aspects of the development of Revelation in the Old Testament than those which have been considered in the last chapter, which are very significant, and of which no adequate explanation can be given if we exclude the action of a superhuman wisdom. The chief instance of development, we have seen, is to be found in the prophetic revelation of Redemption and a Redeemer, from the promise of the Seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent, to the hour when the announcement was made to the shepherds of Bethlehem, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Now, the Bible account of this long period is that it was the childhood of the world, or the childhood of man in his relation to the Redeeming God. "The law," the Jewish dispensation, was a tutor, a guide and guardian, by whom the "child" was taught and protected and led onwards, until he reached manhood, at the coming of the Christ. The advent of Christ was "the fulness of the time," previous to which the world was in its nonage, and was trained and taught accordingly.

*Chap. III.*

*Gen. iii. 15.*

*Luke ii. 11.*

Childhood of  
the world.

*Gal. iii. 23-25 ; iv. 1-7.*

## I.

Without assuming the truth of this representation, we find in it a key to the understanding of the earlier revelations of the Bible, and in this we have presumptive evidence of its truth. The adaptation of these earlier revelations to a condition of nonage or childhood may be traced in various particulars.

Key to the  
earlier  
revelations.

1. The first of these is the primeval institution of Sacrifice—an institution which can be traced to the very infancy of the human race, and which, as one has well said, “was equally accepted by the sweet singer of Israel, the Greek philosopher, and the Roman magistrate,” and which “prevailed amongst all nations and peoples, though in well-nigh every other respect—habits, institutions, ideas, and modes of life—sundered from one another as widely as the poles.” My present purpose does not require me to prove that the only rational explanation of the universality of this strange institution is to be found in an original Divine appointment; while the cruel forms which it assumed, and the gross conceptions of God with which it was associated, are to be regarded as a *degeneration* of what was in itself significant of important truths. Interpreted Biblically, animal sacrifice set forth the fact of a sad moral controversy between God and man, and prefigured one great sacrifice by which God should bestow on man a free forgiveness, and man should be reconciled to God. Thus regarded, we can see how admirably adapted it was to the pre-Christian ages, the childhood of the race. It was a grand awe-inspiring symbol, which at once awoke and pacified the conscience of the guilty. The Bible represents it as practised from the day when Abel offered the firstlings of his flock

Sacrifice.

MacLear—  
“Witness of  
the Eucha-  
rist,” p. 3.

Origin of  
sacrifice.

Awe-inspir-  
ing symbol.

Gen. iv. 4.

to the Lord, to the very eve of the day when Christ died on the cross. From that day it ceased to have meaning, and it found no place among the institutions of Christ's followers. The manhood of the world had come, shadow gave place to substance, and, in possession of the substance, *men* no longer needed those outward signs which were fitting and necessary in the period of childhood. This, at least, is the interpretation which the Bible gives of its own institutions, and its self-consistency and reasonableness should place its truth beyond question.

Shadow and substance.

Levitical laws,

2. The laws and prescriptions of the Levitical code were adapted to a condition of childhood. Read in the light in which we now live, these laws and prescriptions seem needlessly minute and cumbersome. But read in the light of the circumstances of the people to whom they were given, we see in them a Divine condescension to the moral and intellectual condition of the nation. They had been for centuries bondsmen in Egypt, and had become to a great extent Egyptian in their habits and spirit. They were about to occupy the land of Canaan, where they should be exposed to moral influences which were even worse than those of Egypt. And it is only in the light of Egypt and Canaan that we can understand the meaning and purpose of many of the Levitical statutes, which are specially directed against the immoralities of the nature-worship which prevailed all around. "Not a few details, which to the modern eye seem trivial or irrational, disclose to the student of Semitic antiquity an energetic protest against the moral grossness of Canaanite heathenism. These precepts give the law a certain air of ritual formalism, but the formalism lies only on the surface, and there is a moral idea below." In short, there is a "constant polemical

Directed against Canaanitish worship and morals.

reference to Canaanite worship and Canaanite morality" throughout the Levitical system.

As to the system as a whole, it represented spiritual things by outward and visible signs. "Ideas of moral purity and of the Divine holiness were communicated and cherished by the repeated ablutions of their persons and dwellings; by the selection of clean animals for sacrifice; by the unblemished perfection required in the victims to be offered; and by the restriction of the priestly functions to a class of men who were specially set apart for these duties, and upon whom repeated purifications were enjoined. By means of impressive symbols the worshippers were constantly reminded of the justice and sanctity of the violated law, and of their own guiltiness and need of Divine mercy; and when these services were performed in a right spirit, their mind would be inspired with a humble hope of mercy, leading to corresponding gratitude, obedience, and love." The Levitical system belonged essentially to the nonage of the Church, and when its full age was attained the Church was placed under a very different law of worship and of practice.

3. Above all, it is in the *modes* of Revelation in the earlier ages that we trace the adaptation of God's communications, to and with men, to the childhood of the world, and their progress onward to the perfect day. It is remarkable that, for the most part, the history mentions it as a simple fact that "God spoke," or conveyed His will to men, without indicating *how*, and without even seeming to feel that it was at all necessary to explain how. "Noah walked with God. . . . And God said unto Noah. . . . According to all that God commanded him, so did he." "The Lord said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country and

Visible signs  
of the  
spiritual;

Adapted to  
the nonage  
of the  
Church.

Modes of  
Revelation.

"God  
spoke."

Gen. vi. 9, 13,  
22.

Gen. xii. 1.  
See Gen. xv.  
1; Exod.  
vi. 1.

from thy kindred." Throughout the history of the prophets, and throughout the books of Moses, it is in this simple matter-of-fact way that a Divine communication is recorded,—from the days of Samuel, *1 Sam. xvi.* when we read, "The Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?" onward through the periods represented in the books of the prophets. "Thus saith the Lord," is the common formula, but *how* we are not told.

Sometimes we read of a "Voice," as in the case of our first parents, and in the case of Samuel; sometimes of dreams and visions; and sometimes the words "The Lord appeared" occur, probably without intending to convey the idea of a visible form. But sometimes there was a visible form, and the instances in which such form appeared are the most remarkable illustrations of the Divine condescension to the childhood of the world. The earliest of them is the most singular. "The Lord appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day; and he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him." Two of the three ultimately proceed to Sodom, and the third remains behind, and after a time is addressed by Abraham as God, the hearer of prayer, in whose hands were the destinies of Sodom. When Joshua was about to enter on his great task of conquering Canaan, he lifted up his eyes, and behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. This man announced himself as the Captain of the Lord's host, and addressed to Joshua the words which Jehovah addressed to Moses out of the burning bush, "Loose thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." And this Captain of the Lord's host is immediately after spoken of as "the Lord."

*Gen. iii. 8.*  
*1 Sam. i.*  
*4-10.*  
*Gen. xvi. 1;*  
*xx. 3, etc.*

*Gen. xviii.*  
To Abraham  
at Mamre.

*Josh. v. 13 -*  
*vi. 3.*

"The  
Captain of  
the Lord's  
host."

*Chap. vi. 2.*

In the history of Jacob we have another instance in which He who appears at first as a "man" is recognized as God.

Jacob at Peniel,  
*Gen. xxvii.*  
24-30.

These and similar Revelations are called "Theophanies," or manifestations of God, in the language of theology. And I cannot doubt that they are right who see in them anticipations of the Incarnation of the Son of God. There is a mysterious person spoken of as "*The* angel of the Lord," who appears possessed of Divine attributes, and to whom Isaiah ascribes the redemption and guidance of Israel, and whom later scriptures justify those who bow to their authority, in identifying with the Logos, or Second Person of the Trinity. But our reference to these Theophanies has a more limited object than the illustration or proof of the great doctrine of the Tri-une God. We have to do only with the fact, or the alleged fact, of early Divine Revelations to man, and the peculiar character of these revelations.

Theophanies.

*See Ex. iii.*  
2; *xxiii. 21.*  
*Isa. lxiii. 9.*

*Comp. Isa.*  
*vi. and John*  
*xii. 41.*

Is there anything improbable in this alleged fact? If we held Epicurean ideas of God, we should say it was most improbable. But if man was made in the image of God; if man was in a condition of suffering, whether through sin or through misfortune; if God be man's Father and Ruler, and if as such He is both Righteous and Compassionate, nothing could be more probable than that He should reveal Himself to man, by threatening and promise, by deeds of judgment and deeds of mercy, such as are recorded in the earlier books of the Old Testament.

*See Part*  
*First,*  
*Chap. VII.*

No improb-  
ability.

And if God should be pleased to reveal or manifest Himself and His will, is it not reasonable to expect that He will do it in a manner suitable to the moral and intellectual condition in which He finds man? It is impossible for us to gauge the mental condition

No improb-  
ability in  
the modes.

Instructive  
even now.

of the ages which preceded the flood, and of the patriarchal and still later ages which followed. But we must take that condition into account when we read the histories of those olden times. And if we do, we shall feel that the "divers manners" in which God is said to have spoken to men possess no small degree of verisimilitude. And it is a noteworthy fact that even now, in our maturity, with all the light of Christianity, we turn with the deepest interest to the old-world stories of the Old Testament, and find them instinct with the highest truths and the purest lessons. Men, with the intellect and intelligence of a Bacon, are content to be taught by those Theophanies which we justify as in keeping with the childhood of the world. And they are right, for in these Theophanies—using the word as inclusive of all the earlier Revelations of God—they see very God condescending, not unworthily, to instruct men as they were "able to bear."

Mystery of  
the human  
form.

Be it that there is something very mysterious in these Theophanies, especially in the Divine assumption of the human form. But if visible form was to be assumed at all, no form but the human could be assumed that would not be either grotesque, or unintelligible, or in some way misleading.

## II.

Corrective  
truths.

To judge aright of the earlier Revelations in the Bible, we must observe certain truths and principles which underlay them or pervaded them, which we may regard as corrective or preventive of possible error.

One Living  
God.

I. First and chief of all was the great doctrine of One Living God, Creator, Ruler, and Judge. This

we have in the first chapters of Genesis. Men might forget it, or might not like to retain it in their knowledge. But there it is in the Book, and there it was, the possession of primitive man according to the Book. All the Revelations subsequently recorded in the Book implied it, and, how condescending soever might be their mode, there was nothing in them to diminish the faith and awe and reverence which this great truth inspires. *Gen. i. iii.*

2. Then there is the notable fact that even in the earliest Revelations there is no attempt to describe or to give form to the Deity. On the contrary, everything combines to make men stand in awe of any such attempt, as both vain and impious. One of the laws of Sinai forbade it. And, prone and eager as the people ever were to have visible symbols, if not of their God Himself, at least of some of His attributes, there is not a trace of concession to this very human desire in any of the Revelations granted to them; but, on the contrary, a most rigid abstinence from it, an abstinence which shows that these Revelations were not human but superhuman. It is true that we find Jacob exclaiming at Peniel, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." But it was a "man" that Jacob *saw*, though the words of that *man* revealed to him that God was there. *No form of Deity.*  
*Ex. xx. 4.*  
*See Deut. iv. 12.*  
*Ex. xxxii. 4.*  
*Gen. xxxii. 30.*  
*Ver. 24.*

3. Further, all these Revelations are associated with the loftiest conceptions of the Divine nature and character and purposes. They are as far as possible from being reflections of the thoughts of the people to whom they were given. Most truly might it be said that as the heavens are high above the earth, so the thoughts ascribed to God in these Revelations were high above the thoughts of men. Whether the Revelation be primarily one of judgment or one of *Lofty conception of the Divine character.*  
*See Ex. iii. 1-16; xxxii. 18-23.*



mercy, God is seen in it as All-Righteous and All-Good.

Supremacy  
of the  
spiritual and  
moral.

*Isa. i. 11-16.*  
*Micah vi.*  
6-8.

*Chap. vii.*  
22, 23.

*See 1 Sam.*  
*xv. 22.*

*Deut. x. 12.*

*Matt. xxii.*  
37-39; *Lev.*  
*xix. 18.*  
*Deut. vi. 5;*  
*xi. 1, 13, 22.*

*Lev. xix. 2;*  
*xx. 7; xxi.*  
8.

In other  
religions the  
ritual  
supreme.

4. Notwithstanding the minuteness and complexity of the Levitical law and ritual, the people were expressly taught that God requires the spiritual and moral. The principles so strongly and sternly enforced by the later prophets are to be found in the books of Moses. So much more important was the moral than the ritual, that Jeremiah represents God as saying, "I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people,"—not that God had not ordained sacrifice, but that the requirement of practical obedience so far transcended the requirement of sacrifice as almost to efface it. The words of Jeremiah are an echo of the words of Moses. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?" The two great commandments on which, Christ said, "hang all the law and the prophets," were embedded in the very heart of the Levitical code. And in the chief book of the code, the high and seemingly unattainable requirement is three times repeated: "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Nowhere else, in connection with no other religion, do we find such safeguards as these against unduly magnifying the ritual. In most religions, so called, the ritual is all in all. In Judaism, while it occupied a very large place in worship, and bore a Divine seal, it was absolutely subordinated to the

spiritual and moral. And in this subordination we see no mean proof that the seal which it bore was really Divine.

5. There is another singular characteristic of the Revelations of the Old Testament—they were conscious, so to speak, of their own imperfection, and prophetic of other and higher Revelations at a future day. The Epistle to the Hebrews rightly interprets the spirit of the pre-Christian dispensations, when it says, “If that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second,”—quoting the prophecy of Jeremiah respecting “a new covenant, not according to the covenant which God had made with their fathers when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.” The Apostle Paul teaches that in the call of Abraham there was a *universal* as well as a local and national intention—“In thee shall all nations be blessed.” The law under which Abraham’s descendants were placed by Moses some centuries after his call, did not set aside or supersede this universal intention; it only served a temporary, though most important, purpose, until the fulness of the times was come. The ancient “Scripture *foresaw*,” to use the Apostle’s significant expression, that in the fulness of the times God’s grace would cast down the barriers of Judaism and flow forth to bless other nations. Moses himself, when he had completed his establishment of the law which bears his name, was instructed by God to foretell the coming of a Prophet “like unto him,” a Legislator, Mediator, and Teacher, to whose authority the people should bow.

Conscious of being preparatory.

*Heb. viii. 8.*  
*See 2 Cor. iii. 13-15.*

*Jer. xxxi. 31-34.*

*Gal. iii. 8.*

*Gal. iii. 17;*  
*iv. 4.*

*Isa. ii. 2, 3;*  
*xi. 10; xlii. 4, 6; xlix. 6.*

*Deut. xviii. 17-19.*

A Prophet like unto Moses.

Our argument, let it be observed, is not concerned with the question how far the Jewish people under-

stood or realized the Revelations which God was pleased to give to men. There are critics who study the history of the people with a view to determine what the people thought and felt throughout the ages of their national existence, and who identify what the people thought and felt with Judaism,—the Judaism which claims to be of God. As well might we identify what peoples, having no teaching but that of nature, have thought concerning God with what nature, properly understood, teaches concerning Him. And equally as well might we identify what Christians, so called, have believed at different times throughout these eighteen hundred years, with the Christianity which we regard as Divine. This distinction is of immense importance. What we are concerned with is not what the people believed, but what God taught; not the progress of the people's knowledge, but the progress of God's revelations.

Special Revelations given no longer.

Objection taken.

"*Essays on Religion,*"  
p. 235.

Such Revelations as were given to men during the long ages that preceded the coming of Christ, are, it is admitted, given no longer. This fact, and the cessation of miracles in general, have been made the occasion of objection to Christianity and the Bible, the inference drawn from it being that they really never existed. If miracles were wrought of old, why not now? "We see no reason in God's goodness," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "why, if He deviate once from the ordinary system of His government in order to do good to man, He should not have done so on a hundred other occasions; nor why, if the benefit arrived at by some given revelation of Christianity was transcendent and unique, that precious gift should only have been vouchsafed after the lapse of many ages, or why, when it was at last given, the evidence of it should be left open to so much doubt and

difficulty." Reserving our reply to the last of these objections, we reply to the general objection thus taken, that it is a question of fact to be determined by appropriate evidence whether Christianity be a Divine revelation or not; and this question once determined in the affirmative, to say that it should have been given sooner is to say that we are wiser than God. The delay, if it may be so called, taken in connection with the Divine history of the ages going before, may be more than justified. Or rather—not to seem even to be guilty of the irreverence of implying that God's great work needs to be justified—the Bible version of the whole matter commends itself as true. It tells us of God revealing Himself and His will in various ways through many ages, and in these revelations giving the hope, sustaining and quickening the hope, of a Revelation at a future time which should be as the rising of the sun upon the world—a Revelation which should be the consummation of all that went before—a Revelation, therefore, which would render unnecessary the continuance of the line upon line, and precept upon precept, with which the Divine Revealer had vouchsafed to instruct the world for many ages. This Revelation we find in Jesus Christ, and once His kingdom was established in the world, the "divers manners" of former revelations ceased, one might say almost as a matter of course. The continuance of them would have been inconsistent with their own character and with the very end for which they were given.

Are we  
wiser than  
God?

Continued  
Revelations  
unnecessary.

## CHAPTER V.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE  
MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE.

The truth of  
miracles not  
assumed.

WE have now to consider another class of signs of the superhuman in the Old Testament. In doing so, we shall not assume the truth of the miraculous histories which it contains. This would be to assume what we have to prove. But there are certain aspects of the Old Testament miracles which may be fairly considered, as having an important bearing on the question of their historical genuineness.

There are two classes of miracles which must be distinguished, the one from the other. There are those in which man took no part, which were altogether outside the sphere of man's agency: and there are those which were connected with man's agency, directly or indirectly.

The creation  
of the  
material  
universe.

1. The first of the former class is, obviously, *the creation of the Material Universe*. It is the legitimate province of science to discover, if it be possible, the original form or condition of matter. With this, and with other scientific questions, the Bible does not intermeddle. And its abstinence or reticence is worthy of remark. Be the first condition of matter what it may, and be the ages which have passed since the first atoms (if atoms they were) came into existence,

If atoms,  
whence the  
atoms?

we must find a cause sufficient to account for their origination, and for the universe which they have become. And this Cause the Bible calls God. And, in words whose sublimity and oracular simplicity are worthy of their truth, it says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." There is no attempt to define "God." His existence is assumed, and Who or What He is becomes known by the works which are ascribed to Him. He is ONE, for "the heavens and the earth," the entire material universe, is *His* creation. He is Uncaused, therefore Eternal, for before Him nothing was. He possesses Will, Intelligence, and Power, for without these He could not give being to the universe. Much else respecting Him may be inferred from His works; but all this, whatever else, lies at the foundation of the conception of Him which is implied in the first sentence of our Bible.

The God of Creation.

Whence did Moses get this conception of God? Not certainly from that Egyptian wisdom in which he was trained and became "learned." Traces of a primitive Monotheism are discoverable in Egypt, as elsewhere, like "indestructible diamonds" amidst the refuse of a later Polytheism. But the Egypt that was contemporary with Moses was steeped in nature-worship. And it was not from learned priests or unlearned people who bowed down, not only before the great Sun-God, but also before the meanest reptiles, that Moses learned the great fact and doctrine of the first verse of Genesis. That fact and doctrine was either (first) a profound discovery of his own, an inferring, by his own clear and penetrating intelligence, of the Eternal Power and Godhead, from the visible universe around him; or (secondly) an inheritance from Abraham, preserved among his

Whence the ideas of Moses?

See Part. I. pp. 36-38.

Nature-worship in Egypt.

Whence then?

Rom. i. 20.

descendants ; or (thirdly) a Divine revelation to Moses himself. The first of these, Moses, judging by his writings, would be forward to disavow. The second and third are substantially one ; for if Moses inherited his knowledge from Abraham, Abraham owed it to Him who called him out and away from a people who "served other gods" on the banks of the Euphrates.

*Josh. xxiv.*  
2.

*Taylor  
Lewis, in  
Lange's  
"Genesis,"  
p. 148.*

Antiquity  
and sub-  
limity of the  
Mosaic  
account.

The  
conclusion.

We are not wrong, then, in seeing a sign of the superhuman in the Biblical record of the great miracle of the creation. It is so utterly unlike any other account of the "Beginning" of things which may be found among the wisest and most civilized of peoples, ancient or modern, that we know not how otherwise to explain it. "Its great antiquity is beyond dispute ; it is older certainly than history or philosophy. It was before the dawning of anything called science, as is shown by the fact that everything is denoted by its simplest phenomenal or optical name. There is no assigning of non-apparent causations, except the continual going forth of the mighty Word. It is impossible to discover any connection between it and any mythical poetry. The holy sublimity that pervades it is at war with the idea of direct and conscious forgery, designed to impose on others ; and the thought of it as a mere work of genius, having its interest in a display of inventive and descriptive talent, is inconsistent with every notion we can form of the thinking and aims of that early youth of the human race. It was not the age then, or till long after, of literary forgeries or fancy-tales. We are shut up to the conclusion of its subjective truthfulness, and its subjective authenticity. At a very early day, to which no profane history or chronology reaches, some man who was not a philosopher, not a poet, not a fable-maker,

but one who 'walked with God,' and was possessed of a most devout and reverent spirit—some such man, having a power of conception surpassing the ordinary human, or else inspired from above, had presented to his soul in some way, and first wrote down, or uttered in words, this most wonderful and sublime account of the origin of the world and man. He believed, too, what he wrote or uttered. He was conscious of some source, whether by words or vision, whence he had received it, and he had no doubt of its relation to an outward objective truth which it purported to set forth."

2. Equally significant and suggestive is the Biblical record of *the Creation of Man*. The first impression which it gives us is that God made man immediately and directly from the dust of the ground. But a different interpretation is not absolutely excluded. All animals may be said to have been made ultimately from the dust of the ground; and if man was evolved from a lower form of animal life, it would still be true of him that he was made from the dust of the ground, not immediately, indeed, but mediately. So that if science could prove that man was evolved from a lower animal, it would prove nothing contrary to the statement of Genesis, though contrary to our first impression of what that statement means. The essential point in the Bible record is that *man* came into existence by a special act of God—in short, by a miracle, not by any law of nature. And this is admitted in substance, if not in form, by Mr. Wallace, Mr. Darwin's co-apostle in the discovery and teaching of the doctrine of Evolution. The action of "some unknown higher law" may be traced, he says, "more or less distinctly in many phenomena of man's nature,

The crea-  
tion of man.

Even if  
evolved.

Mr. Wallace  
supposes an  
unknown  
higher law.



but the two most important of these are the origin of sensation or consciousness, and the development of man from the lower animals." He illustrates his views of the matter, partly by characteristics of man's physical nature which the doctrine of Natural Selection cannot explain, and which are the reverse of what that doctrine would lead us to anticipate, but chiefly by the specialities of his mental faculties and his moral sense. These, he thinks, could not be developed from any rudiments pre-existing in the lower animals. And to account for these there must have been the intervention of an unknown higher law. Now, what can such an intervention be, but the intervention of God Himself? And what is this but another way of saying that, in order to evolve man from a lower existence, there must have been a special creative act. Professor Allman says, "The chasm between unconscious life and thought is deep and impassable; and no transitional phenomena can be found by which, as by a bridge, we may span it over."

Professor  
Allman.

The hypothesis of Evolution, in all the forms in which it is held, is still but an hypothesis. It is "not proven," and is far from being entitled to a place among the *facts* of science. An eminent man of science, Professor Virchow, of Berlin, at the Tercentenary of the Edinburgh University (1884), in the presence of a thousand students and of learned and scientific men from all parts of the world, entered his protest against the acceptance of the doctrine of Evolution as an established conclusion of science. It was only a "logical possibility." "Was there anywhere a pro-anthropos?" he asked. "In regard to this question," he said, "I thought that the existence of such a precursor of man was a logical possibility,

Professor  
Virchow on  
Evolution.

perhaps a probability. Only I found, to begin with, that it was a purely speculative question—not one raised by any observed phenomenon. *No pro-anthropos had ever been discovered, not even a fragment of him.* We may turn, then, to the Biblical record without any misgiving as to what may be proven in the future; and we shall find in it, I think, some signs of a higher than human origin.

No progenitor of man discoverable.

The terms in which the record represents the approach of the Creator to the work of creating man are very significant. The earth is covered with vegetation, and peopled with life, but there is no king to rule over this lower world, and no subject to acknowledge, with conscious intelligence, a Higher Power. The Almighty seems to take counsel: "Let Us make man in Our Image, after Our Likeness; and let him have dominion." Much that was great and noble, this record would have us to understand, had already been made. The Eternal Mind had conceived the idea, or pattern, or image, of everything that was, and everything was good and beautiful after its kind; but even the Eternal Mind could not conceive a pattern or image more glorious than its own, and this image was reserved for man. Primitive man thus bore a resemblance to the Author of his being—a true resemblance, however faint and shadowy. He was "an outline, faithful according to its capacity, yet infinitely remote from the reality; a distant form of the intelligence, wisdom, power, rectitude, goodness, and dominion, of the adorable Supreme."

The Genesis account of the creation of man.

The record tells us farther that when the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." These words indicate that the life com-

"A spirit in man."

municated to man was of a higher kind than that given to other living beings ; or, at least, that it was associated with a higher unseen nature. By the act of creative power thus described, man became, not an emanation from the Eternal Spirit, as the ray is from the sun, but the child of the Father of spirits, and possessed of a spiritual as well as of a material nature.

The creation  
of woman.

The story of *the "beginning" of Woman* is as significant as that of the "beginning" of Man. "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept : and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof ; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." This may be accounted a strange story ; but the record gives it as a true story, for it founds on it a great law,—“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother ; and they shall be one flesh.” It was no more an impeachment of the Divine wisdom and power to say that He employed a portion of man’s body for the purpose of creating woman, than it would have been to say that He employed any other materials for the purpose.

The lessons  
taught by it.

Some, at least, of the reasons for this recorded manner of woman’s creation are obvious enough. The Almighty embodied in His act the great lesson of the intimate union and affection of the marital relation. In the formation of the one woman to be the companion of the one man, He laid the foundation of the unchangeable law of marriage. And as to the *mode* of her formation, why was she not formed from the dust beneath his feet? Had the narrative been a fiction or a parable, and a fiction or parable

formed among any other ancient people, such an origin, not one more honourable, would have been ascribed to her. In the Hindoo mythology the highest caste, the Brahmins, sprang from the head of Brahma, and the lowest, the Shoodras, from his feet. Did we find among the Hindoos, and even among nations higher in the scale of intelligence and moral feeling, the creation of woman shadowed forth in a mythological fable, it would be under some similar representation. The dust on which man stood would be good enough for the material of the woman's frame. But our record tells us of a rib from Adam's side as the material of which the Creator formed for him, not a slave, but a companion and a helpmeet. Were we disposed to consider this a myth or invention of man, we should be compelled to confess it the invention of a profounder wisdom, and of a purer morality, than have ever been found apart from the book which contains it. But it is only of a piece with the entire spirit of that book. "It is a beautiful circumstance in the law of Moses that filial respect is exacted for the mother as well as the father. The threats and promises of the Legislator distinguish not the one from the other; and the fifth commandment associates the father and mother in a precisely equal claim to honour from their children." In contrast with the spirit both of Judaism and of Christianity, "nothing can be more painful to contemplate than the humiliating condition in which Islamism still holds its so-called free women—a condition of perpetual childhood—childhood of the mind, while the passions receive constant incense: leaving the fine endowments of woman's soul undeveloped and inert, or crushing them when in any case they happen to germinate; and converting man into a self-willed haughty idol,

How  
Hindoos  
would have  
represented  
it.

Woman in  
the law of  
Moses.

for whose will and pleasure the other sex lives and suffers."

Whence the  
wisdom of  
Moses?

Whence, we ask with wonder—at least, we should wonder if we had no clue to the answer—whence "the wisdom of Moses" in this matter? How came he, in such an age and with such surroundings, to understand man and the true relation of man and woman? How came he to anticipate the teaching of the greatest moral Teacher the world has ever seen, and the highest results attained or attainable under the Christian civilization of a far distant age? Are we wrong in seeing something superhuman in the insight and prescience of the man Moses? The German Fichte, after first combating revelation, confessed later on that reason stood in need of its assistance, and said, "A Higher Being undertook the charge of the first members of our race, just as an old and venerable document, containing the deepest and sublimest truths, represents Him to have done; and to this testimony all philosophy must revert in the end." While philosophers and poets have been floundering in all ages in a chaos of conjectures and imaginings respecting the origin of man, the oldest book in existence, written by neither philosopher nor poet, contains this marvellous sentence—"God said, Let Us make man in Our Image, after Our Likeness, and let them have dominion over the earth. So God created man in His own Image; in the Image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

Fichte.

The Deluge  
and the  
cities of the  
plain.

3. The book of Genesis records other two great miracles of the same class, though very different from the Creation of the Universe and of Man—the *Deluge and the destruction of the cities of the plain*. What I have to prove at present is not that these miracles really took place, that the events recorded in Genesis

are historical and not legendary. I have to do only with the form of the record, and with the sign which I see in it of the superhuman. As to the reality of the event of the Deluge, the traditions of all nations, widely separated in time and space, cannot be explained on any other supposition. Turning to the Biblical record, it has all the simplicity of history, a simplicity which is in striking contrast with the forms which the story assumed or acquired elsewhere. "Different nations have heathenized, mythologized, in other words nationalized or localized the sacred and universal tradition." Some of them have even deified the patriarch of the Flood. In contrast with the myths which gathered round the true central fact, the Biblical story reads like the plain truthful narrative of an eyewitness which was preserved in the family of Shem. "It is impossible," says Canon Rawlinson, "to derive the Hebrew account from any of the other stories, while it is quite possible to derive all of them from it. Suppose the Deluge a fact, and suppose its details to have been such as the author of Genesis declares them to have been, then the widespread, generally accordant, but in part divergent, tradition is exactly what might have been anticipated under the circumstances. No other theory gives even a plausible explanation of the phenomena."

Simplicity of  
Biblical  
story.

"Historical  
Illustrations,  
etc.,"  
p. 22.

The cause to which the Bible ascribes the Deluge is very significant. In many traditions the great flood appears as a judgment upon a condemned race. But in the Bible alone do we find a clear and full explanation of the matter. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth." "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the

The moral  
cause of the  
Deluge.

Gen. vi. 11-  
13.

earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me ; for the earth is filled with violence through them ; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." So, too, in the matter of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In language which may be called Anthropomorphic, but which conveys a true idea of the Divine mind, we read, "The Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous ; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me ; and if not, I will know."

Sodom and  
Gomorrah.

Gen. xviii.  
20, 21.

The Creator  
—Judge.

The Creator now appears as the Ruler and the Judge—All-righteous as He is Almighty. Take the history, for the moment, only as an interpretation of the thoughts of its author, and what do we find? Mankind has become utterly corrupt: the earth is full of violence; the wicked prosper: enough to drive a thoughtful onlooker to despair, or to a pessimism which might say there is no God, or, if there is, the Devil is God. But the historian has no misgiving: with him God is a Fact of which he has no more doubt than of his own being; and God is Holy and Righteous; the condition of the world is an offence to Him, and He comes out of His place, to speak after the manner of men, to punish and destroy. Is there not something in this conception of God and the world that points to a more than human wisdom?

4. We may further illustrate the position that we may find signs of the superhuman in the Biblical record of the Old Testament miracles, without assuming the reality of the miracles, by referring to two which are separated from each by more than a thousand years, and which bring into prominence

other Divine attributes than the Righteousness which is prominent in the history of the Deluge.

*The first of them is that of the Burning Bush.* “The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush : and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” “The Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters ; for I know their sorrows ; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.” In answer to the question, What is Thy name ? “God said, I AM THAT I AM : and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you : this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations.”

The Burning  
Bush.  
*Exod. iii.*

“ I AM THAT  
I AM.”

Dean Stanley speaks of the wild acacia, the shaggy thornbush of the *Seneh*, as the most characteristic tree of the whole region, and adds, “So natural, so thoroughly in accordance with the scene, were the signs in which the call of Moses makes itself heard and seen. Not in any outward form, human or celestial, such as the priests of Heliopolis were wont to figure to themselves as the representatives of Deity, but out of the midst of the spreading thorn, the outgrowth of the desert wastes, did the Lord appear to Moses. A flame of fire, like that which seemed to consume and waste away His people in the furnace of affliction, shone forth amidst the dry branches of the thorny tree, and behold the bush, the massive thicket, burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

“ Lectures  
on the Jewish  
Church,”  
*vol. i. 108.*



*"British  
and Foreign  
Evangelical  
Review,"  
April, 1861,  
p. 237.*

We cannot be wrong in seeing in the Divine Name which came forth from the Burning Bush a declaration of His Eternity and Self-existence. But, taken in their connection, the words, "I AM THAT I AM," "point rather to unbroken continuity of character and of purpose, to unvarying constancy, to unswerving faithfulness. The words told Israel that the promises of God were not forgotten, that His design was not laid aside, and that they had not, in short, in any sense, a different God from Him who had spoken to their fathers. What He had been in the past, the present and the future would still reveal Him to be. His deeds write all along the ages, 'I am that I am: ' He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning."

The highest  
conceptions  
of God.

We have here the highest conceptions that have ever been formed of God. The most advanced and enlightened ages have attained to none higher. God, the Eternal and Unchangeable; God, the Judge and Avenger of the oppressor; God, the Redeemer of the oppressed. We have here, to use the common distinction, both the natural and the moral attributes of God in their completeness and purity: His eternal self-existence, His unchangeable righteousness and mercy. Whence, we ask, as in former instances, without assuming the truth of the story or the reality of the miracle,—whence the wisdom that discovered, if it was a discovery, these great Divine truths? Have we not here a sign of the superhuman? And a sign which leads by a simple process to the truth of the story which contains it? Thus—

It cannot be denied that the marvellous conceptions of God which we have indicated are in the story. Their existence there is a fact. Their

existence, therefore, in the mind of the writer, is a fact. Whencesoever he got them he was in sympathy with them, and could not therefore have embodied them in a series of ingenious falsehoods, and then given these falsehoods to the world under the character of a true history. In short, no bad man could have dreamed or imagined the views of God which we find in the story of the Burning Bush: no good man in whose soul these views were found could have written that story and given it to the world if it was not true. The whole narrative of the third chapter of Exodus is radiant with a Divine glory. And, putting our shoes from off our feet, we too would draw near with reverence and behold this great sight—the bush burning and not consumed.

The writer of the story in sympathy with these conceptions.

Towards the end of the national history of Israel, we find a miracle which illustrates and confirms the mysterious designation in which God made Himself known out of the Burning Bush—I AM THAT I AM. The nation is again subject to an oppressor. Nebuchadnezzar is as proud and despotic as Pharaoh. He causes a huge image of gold to be made, and summons all subject “peoples, nations, and languages” to fall down and worship it. There are three Israelites, “Israelites indeed,” who, though captives, held high offices in Babylon, who would not. The king, “in his rage and fury,” called for them, and said, “If ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” The servants of the God of Israel knew that He was able to deliver them, but they did not know that He would. They were cast into the midst of the fiery furnace, which was made “exceeding hot,” and the

Miracles in Babylon.

The three Israelites.

Dan. iii. 15.

issue of it is told in the words of the king himself: "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God," or, rather, *a* Son of God, a being of Superhuman majesty.

Daniel. In this story, and in the later story of the deliverance of Daniel from the lions into whose den he was cast, we see the same conceptions of God which appear in the story of the Burning Bush. The God of Moses and of Daniel is the same, the Living God, ruling over men, at once righteous and merciful. The conception which we receive of Him is not the Epicurean conception, but that of One who takes a personal and loving interest in those who serve Him. The idea of God which we find in the miracles recorded in Daniel is as remote from the Babylonian as that of Moses was from the Egyptian. And the records in both cases are free from those puerilities and follies which invariably distinguish the legendary.

No  
puerilities.

## CHAPTER VI.

### INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE (*continued*).

WE now turn to miracles with which some human agency was connected ; and of these, miracles in attestation of a Divine commission are the most prominent. On the occasion and necessity of such miracles we have already remarked.

*See Part I.  
pp. 216, 217.*

#### I.

When Moses received his commission at the Burning Bush, it was quite natural for him to say, "Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice : for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." On the fitness of the signs which he should be empowered to give to the people, Dean Stanley says, "No sword of war, such as was wielded by Egyptian kings ; no mystic emblem, such as was borne by Egyptian gods ; but—'What is that in thine hand?' And he said, 'A rod,'—a staff, a shepherd's crook, the staff which indicated his return to the pastoral habits of his fathers, the staff on which he leaned during his desert wanderings, the staff with which he guided his kinsman's flocks, the staff like that still borne by Arab chiefs,—this was to be the

*"Lectures  
on the Jewish  
Church,"  
vol. i.*

The rod of  
Moses.

Fitness of  
the sign.

humble instrument of Divine power. 'In this,' as afterwards in the still humbler symbol of the cross—in this, the symbol of his simplicity, of his exile, of his lowliness, 'the world was to be conquered.' These were the outward signs of his call. And, whatever the explanation put on their precise import, there is this undoubted instruction conveyed in their description—that they are marked by the peculiar appropriateness and homogeneousness to the peculiar circumstances of the Prophet, which marks all like manifestations, through every variety of form, to the prophets, the successors of Moses, in every age."

The grand  
lesson of the  
rod turned  
into a  
serpent.

This, however, striking as it is, touches only the surface of the miracles with which Moses began his prophetic ministry. The first great lesson which they taught him, and which, when repeated, they afterwards taught the people, was that there was a Power to which all nature, and all natural laws and causes, were subject, and that this power would be put forth to effect their redemption. The rod turned into a serpent and the serpent into a rod, the hand made leprous and the leprous hand healed, were signs to Moses of a Power to which nature in all its variety was subject, and which could work all Its sovereign will. And without the assurance that he was supported by such a Power as this, Moses could not brave the difficulties of his work, or summon the people to brave its dangers.

The lessons  
of the  
plagues.

These remarks apply equally and still more strikingly to the "signs" by which the king and people of Egypt were compelled to see in Moses a Divine messenger, and to yield submission to the demand of freedom. In the "plagues" inflicted on Egypt we have the history of a great conflict between Jehovah and the deities that were then worshipped by the

wisest and most civilized of the nations of the earth. "It was not an ordinary river that was turned into blood; it was the sacred, beneficent, and solitary Nile." "It was not the ordinary cattle that died in the field, or ordinary fish that died in the river, or ordinary reptiles that were overcome by the rod of Aaron. It is the sacred goat of Mendes, the ram of Ammon, the calf of Heliopolis, the bull Apis, the crocodile (*serpent* in Ex. vii. 9) of Ombos, the carp of Latopolis."

*Dean Stanley's  
"Lectures,"  
vol. i.*

My present purpose is not directly to prove the truth of the narrative, but to point out certain features of the alleged miracles, or of the narrative of the miracles, which may be taken as signs corroborative of their supernatural reality. Some of the plagues had a natural element in them. Swarms of frogs and lice and flies, murrain and boils and blains, hail and fire and locusts, are all in themselves natural. But the intention of the narrative plainly is to represent all the plagues as occurring supernaturally. In every instance the plague was predicted, and it came to pass at the very time Moses said it would, and it departed or ceased, as it came, at his word—Pharaoh, in his occasional relentings, being permitted again and again to fix the time at which Moses should ask his God to withdraw His hand. All nature seemed under the control of "the man Moses." But, at the same time, neither Pharaoh nor Moses, neither Egyptian nor Israelite, was left or allowed for a moment to attribute his mighty works to *him*, to his will or power or holiness. God was the Worker—there was no more efficacy in the arm of Moses than in the rod which it wielded. And in working as He did, God would demonstrate that the deities of Egypt were impotent, and that He was God alone,—a teaching which Israel needed as well as Egypt.

A natural  
element in  
some of the  
plagues.

The plagues  
predicted.

No idle prodigies.

We thus see that the "signs" wrought in Egypt were far from being idle prodigies, such as are found in legends. They had a profound significance, which goes far to establish their historical character. The natural elements of the story furnish by themselves an argument for its genuineness, inasmuch as they are perfectly and exclusively Egyptian; while they impart a special significance to the Supernatural Power by which they were used and controlled, which nothing else could have given it, inasmuch as these natural elements were all, so far as we can trace them, more or less intimately connected with the idolatries of Egypt.

The moral history of Pharaoh.

The moral history of the King of Egypt throughout the infliction of the plagues may likewise be appealed to as a strongly corroborative "sign" of the genuineness of the record. There is in it a truth to nature which proves truth in fact—a truth to nature in its most profound and subtle workings. Fiction, in the hands of a master deeply versed in the knowledge of himself and of mankind, can portray human character with wonderful accuracy. And a vivid creative imagination, like that of John Bunyan, in combination with a personal inward experience of the action of Divine truth on the human heart, can produce an allegory in which multitudes shall see as in a mirror a picture of themselves. But since the world began it hath not been known that such a moral history as that of Pharaoh, while in conflict with Moses and Aaron, and subjected to this strange series of Divine judgments, has ever been traced in legendary lore or painted by the hand of tradition. Legend and tradition deal almost exclusively with the outward and the marvellous, and furnish us with

Nothing like it in Fiction.

absolutely no example of the inner life, and especially of an inner life brought into rebellious collision with the will of a Holy God. And it is such an inner life, and in such circumstances, we have in Pharaoh, —strong evidence, to those who can appreciate it, that the whole story is simple and absolute truth.

The miracles which are said to have been wrought in order to, and in connection with, the Redemption from Egypt, and the establishment of the redeemed nation in Canaan, are all such as the circumstances rendered necessary, if the end was to be attained. There is nothing trivial or arbitrary about them. And they are recorded in a simple and solid style befitting a true history, without the adornments and affectations of a conscious fiction or an unconscious myth.

The signs in Egypt necessary.

In order to see the more than reasonableness of the supernatural story of the Red Sea and of the Desert, the reader must remember the true standpoint of the history. The history professes to be far more than the history of the deliverance of an oppressed people. If Moses had been a patriot only, moved by the fire of his own soul to deliver his nation from the Egyptian yoke, let him, like other patriotic deliverers, trust in the blessing of the God of judgment for a successful issue. In such circumstances a continuous series of supernatural interpositions would have been unnatural, being out of keeping with the Providential history of mankind. Nothing like it or parallel to it could be found anywhere. But Israel was not merely an oppressed nation sighing for deliverance. The very reason of its existence was, according to the history, supernatural, and the end of its deliverance was super-

Moses not a mere patriot.

The end of Israel's existence supernatural.



The true  
standpoint.

natural. Israel did not exist for itself. However far short it came of realizing the grandeur of its calling, it was called, and it existed, for the world,—and not for the world's mundane interests, but for interests that extend far beyond time. The calling of this nation and its redemption formed an important, we may say an essential, part of a great Divine plan, in the execution of which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Men may deny all this. But if they would judge aright the miracles of the Red Sea and the Desert, they must look at them from this standpoint. The history is consistent with itself. It records "signs and wonders," which would be out of place, and therefore naturally suspected, in the story of a mere material deliverance. But professing to be the history of a Divine purpose in which the future of mankind was involved, its signs and wonders, instead of being out of place, are in the strictest keeping with its character.

## II.

The days of  
Ahab and  
Jezebel.

Midway between the call of Abraham and the coming of Christ—a thousand years after the former, nine hundred before the latter—the Biblical record tells us of a great "outburst," as it has not very fitly been called, of miraculous power. And the occasion of it, as in the case of the Redemption by Moses and the Redemption by Christ, is a sufficient explanation of its occurrence.

Earlier  
apostasies.

The reign of Ahab is memorable as a time when earlier apostasies from Jehovah seemed on the eve of being crowned by the entire undoing, so far as Israel was concerned, of all that God had purposed and was working out, by the call of Abraham and the

establishment of Abraham's descendants in the land of Canaan. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, caused Israel to sin grievously by the worship of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel. But this was not a formal repudiation of the worship of Jehovah. These calves, like that made at the foot of Sinai, were intended for symbols of Jehovah—symbols, it is true, which had been forbidden in the law given at Sinai, and symbols which, whatever may be said in palliation of them, were unworthy and degrading. But Ahab went far beyond the son of Jeroboam. The difference, in fact, is not one of degree. Ahab, under the influence of his wife, who was a daughter of the king of Sidon, and a very fanatic in her devotion to her country's gods, cast the name and worship of Jehovah aside altogether, and substituted for it the worship of Baal, Astarte, and Moloch. These deities were the representatives of the energies and laws of nature. The worship of them was essentially a worship of nature. Under the name of Baal, the paternal principle was worshipped; and under the name of Astarte, the maternal. Baal became associated, if not identified, with the sun; and Astarte with the moon. There was a third principle discoverable in nature—the destructive, and this was worshipped under the name of Moloch. It was observed that the sun not only creates life (apparently), but destroys likewise, covering fields with plenty and scorching them into barrenness, and Moloch became identified with the sun as well as Baal.

Canon Rawlinson concludes his account of the religion of the Phœnicians in these words: "Altogether the religion of the Phœnicians, while possessing some redeeming points, as the absence of images and the deep sense of sin which led them to sacrifice what

The aim now to utterly destroy the worship of Jehovah.

The Phœnician nature-worship.

"*The Religions of the Ancient World,*" p. 180.

was nearest and dearest to them (children cast into the arms of a red-hot Moloch), to appease the Divine anger, must be regarded as one of the lowest and most debasing of the forms of belief and worship prevalent in the ancient world—combining, as it did, impurity with cruelty, the sanction of licentiousness with the requirement of bloody rites, revolting to the conscience, and destructive of any right apprehension of the true idea of God.

Its cruelty  
and vileness.

Shall Israel  
become  
Canaan?

Now, the object of Ahab and Jezebel was to substitute the vile, gross, and cruel worship of Baal, Astarte, and Moloch, for the pure and spiritual worship of Jehovah; in fact, to convert "Israel" into "Canaan;" to make Israel what Canaan was, when, its "iniquity being full," it perished by the sword of Israel. And this object, the blotting out of the Divine work of a thousand years, seemed all but accomplished. For a time, we know not how long, there is no sign in heaven above or in earth beneath, that the doings of Ahab and Jezebel have incurred the displeasure of the God of Israel. The rain descends, the dew falls, the fields yield their increase, as usual. But suddenly there comes across the Jordan from the land of Gilead, a prophet—rough clad, like him who a thousand years later appeared in the spirit and power of Elijah—and utters in the king's ears these terrible words, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word."

The sudden  
appearance  
of Elijah.

The old  
conflict  
renewed.

This was the beginning of a great conflict different in outward circumstance, but similar in spirit, to that which had been waged in Egypt in the days of Pharaoh. The question at issue was not a mere question of names, as between "Jehovah" and "Baal," but, as we have seen, whether the fruits of the victory

won in the conflict with Pharaoh were to be lost. The battle between the worship of the Creator and the worship of the creature was renewed ; and, if not won for God, the " signs and wonders wrought in the land of Ham " were all in vain. Hence the supernatural works of the ministries of Elijah and Elisha. The reason which led to them was worthy of God, and the history which records them is full of a moral significance.

III.

The only perfect parallel to the occasion of the miracles which are recorded in the history of Moses is the still greater Redemption which was wrought by Jesus Christ. The miracles of this greater Redemption, and their connection with the person and work of the Redeemer, have been already considered. Between the work of Moses and the work of Christ there was a most intimate connection. Even on the low ground that Christ was an inspired prophet, His mission was to give " enlargement " to the institutions of Moses, to develop their spiritual significance while putting an end to their outward form, and to extend to other nations blessings which had hitherto been for the most part confined to the Jews. Let Him claim special authority from the God of Abraham and Moses to do all this, and the people might rightfully ask, " What sign showest thou ? " We have in this alone a sufficient reason why the new Prophet should have power to work miracles.

The greater  
Redemption.

Part Second,  
Chap. V.

What sign ?

But Jesus Christ professed to be, and was, far more than a prophet " like unto Moses." The end for which the nation redeemed by Moses existed, the supernatural end which we have ascribed to it, was

See the  
Author's  
"Pilate's  
Question,"  
pp. 152-156.

to be, and was, realized in Him. In Him all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. He was the Son of God in a high and unique sense. And in this we have not only a reason for His miracles, but an explanation of them. In the light of His Divine person we understand how He should walk through the world as the very Master of Nature. The calmness and quiet dignity which uniformly characterized Him indicate His Divine consciousness that with Him all things were possible. He was Himself, as has often been remarked, the Great Miracle. Thus understood, His miracles are not, what some have called them, stumblingblocks or hindrances to faith. They are the outward and visible signs of the presence of Incarnate God on earth.

The true  
standpoint.

Dr. Arnold.

Here again we have to insist that if we would judge of the reasonableness of the supernatural which the Gospels record, we must study it from the standpoint of the Gospels. And studying it thus, we quote once more the words of Dr. Thomas Arnold, who called the gospel miracles "the natural accompaniments of the Revelation of God in Christ," accompaniments the absence of which would have been far more wonderful than their presence.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GRAND MIRACLE OF PROPHECY.

WE have reserved for separate consideration a miracle which forms one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Old Testament — *the miracle of Prophecy*. From the days of Samuel to the days of Malachi, a period of some eight hundred years, we find a class of men known as prophets, not holding their office by hereditary succession like the priests, but Divinely called, individually, to minister to the nations of Judah and Israel. *Divinely called*, we have said,— such being the averment of the history. Their primary function was not the foretelling of future events, but the proclaiming and preaching of the Divine Will. The prediction of the future was only a part of, or incidental to, this more general function. The prophets were “preachers of righteousness,” like Noah, and it was in the discharge of this office that they foretold things that were to come, their predictions being sometimes threatenings of evil, sometimes promises of good.

The Miracle of Prophecy.

Who the prophets were.

<sup>2</sup> Pet. ii. 5.

The prophets preachers of the Divine will.

What we mean by speaking of Prophecy — the function of these men — as a miracle, is, that the history represents both parts of that function as supernatural. When they taught the Divine will, with rebuke and exhortation, it was in the name of God

Their function supernatural.

who had sent them to do it. When they predicted the future, it was on the authority of a Divine Revelation. Hence they prefaced their communications by "Thus saith the Lord." And in not a few instances, as in the case of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and others, we have the history of their call to the prophetic office. There were men who professed to be prophets and were not. And the charge against them was that they spoke visions "of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord." And God is represented as saying, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." The nation was warned from the beginning against false prophets. "If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." There was at the same time a moral test prescribed. False prophets might, like the Egyptian magicians, succeed in doing what might seem to be an accomplishment of their word. And Moses said, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

*Isa. vi. ;*  
*Jer. i. ;*  
*Ezek. i. ;*  
*Amos vii.*  
15.

*Jer. xxiii.*  
16.

*Jer. xxiii.*  
21; *also xiv.*  
14.

*Deut. xviii.*  
20-22.  
*See Jer.*  
*xviii. 7-17.*

Warning  
against  
false  
prophets.

A moral  
test.

*Deut. xiii.*  
1-3.

Without discussing in detail the predictions of the

Old Testament and their fulfilment, we have in them a strange phenomenon to be accounted for; is the explanation of it to be found in the human or in the superhuman? Even Kuenen, who regards the religion of Israel as "only one of the chief religions of the world," speaks of prophecy as "one of the most important and remarkable phenomena in the history of religion." The true explanation of it, whatever it be, must take into the account and harmonise these following things.

Human or super-human?

Things to be accounted for.

1. The prophets were confessedly men of high character. No one worth listening to dares to call them impostors. Even Kuenen takes pains to show that he does not impugn the prophets' integrity in any way. "The charges," he says, "which more than a hundred years ago, were here and there brought against the prophets of Israel are all silenced. In high estimation of their aim and their work, all are agreed."

Their high character.

Their character admitted by Kuenen.

2. The "aim and work" of the prophets from the first to the last of them, through all the ages of Judaism, was the loftiest that can be imagined. It was practically to enforce the great fundamental law, "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Around this double law, circle all the fierce denunciations of idolatry and its abominations, and the equally fierce denunciations of the wrongs inflicted by man upon man, which are found in the pages of the prophets.

Lofty aim.

To enforce the moral law.

3. The work of the prophets was prosecuted in the face of a relentless opposition, sometimes by rulers, sometimes by people, often by both. Many of them died a martyr's death, all of them had to live a martyr's life. As a rule the world "hated" them, as it hated the Apostles of a later age.

Their martyr experiences.



- Prediction. 4. The prophets professed to foretell future events. Prediction was indicated from the beginning as a part of the prophetic function, and it is assumed throughout their history to be their prerogative, not indeed at their pleasure or as they pleased, but at the will and pleasure of Him who sent them.
- Deut. xxviii. 20-22.*  
*Jer. xxviii. 7-17.*
- Prediction ascribed to God. 5. The prophets ascribed their predictions to God Himself. The authority they claimed for their predictions was invariably "Thus saith the Lord." The words of Peter, so often quoted, are but the summing up of their own uniform assertions—"No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."
- 2 Pet. i. 21, Revised Version.*
- Their predictions were fulfilled. 6. It is certain that some of their predictions were fulfilled. We believe that they were all fulfilled. But the fulfilment of some of them is so clearly demonstrable that the denial of it can be maintained only on the ground, utterly untenable, that it is *à priori* impossible. The chief of these must ever be reckoned the prediction of a world's Saviour, known in the later stages of prophecy as the Messiah, the anointed servant of Jehovah. Of the import and evidential force of this prediction or series of predictions, we have treated in our Part Second, and we now only repeat the last sentence: "The conclusion is twofold—a superhuman prescience in the prophets, and a superhuman fulfilment in Jesus Christ." To speak of Messianic prophecy as a "gigantic dream" is to set at defiance the most conclusive moral evidence. There are many other prophecies of which it can be said that they have *certainly* been fulfilled; those of Isaiah, for example, respecting Babylon, Tyre, and other cities and lands; similar prophecies by Jeremiah, and his prophecy of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon; and prophecies recorded in the book of Daniel respecting
- Prediction of a Saviour.
- Part Second, Chap. IV.; also Part Third, Chap. IV.*
- Isa. xiii., xxiii., etc.*  
*E.g., Ch. li.*  
*Jer. xxv. 8-13.*  
*Dan. ii.*

the Kingdom of Heaven and dynastic and other revolutions which should intervene and prepare the way for it. The very last verses of the Old Testament contain prophetic intimations which were remarkably fulfilled four hundred years after, in the ministry of the Elijah-like prophet and of the Lord whose way he prepared.

*Mal. iv.*

7. The prophets and the prophetic office are peculiar to the Jewish nation—to be found among no other people. “Hebrew prophecy, like the Hebrew people, stands without parallel in the history of the world. Other nations have had their oracles, diviners, augurs, soothsayers, necromancers. The Hebrews alone have possessed prophets, and a prophetic literature. It is useless, therefore, to go to the manticism of the heathen to get light as to the nature of Hebrew prophecy.”

*Dr. McCaul, in "Aids to Faith," p. 81.*

8. In addition to all this, let it be remembered that the Bible religion was a prophetic religion from the beginning. It had a forward look from the opening page of man's history in the beginning of Genesis to the very last of the prophets. The Judaism to which these holy men ministered was, in their estimation, to give way before another which was to be not national but universal.

The Bible religion prophetic essentially,

*See p. 325.*

*See Jer. xxxi. 30; comp. Heb. viii. 8; Isa. ii. 2-4; xlix. 6; lii. 15.*

Now, what induction shall we draw from all these things? What induction can be suggested that will harmonize and explain them all?

What induction?

The idea of imposture is rejected scornfully by all classes of critics. And if it were not rejected on moral grounds, it must be on intellectual; for, if entertained, it would utterly fail to account for the rise, age after age, of a consistent succession of men, all carrying the same message to the nation, and many

No imposture.

of them foretelling, or professing to foretell, distant events in which the honour of God and the good of mankind were concerned.

Not human  
sagacity.

Equally insufficient is the explanation which would ascribe the anticipation of future events to human sagacity and foresight on the part of the prophets. This explanation, if accepted, would reflect on the integrity of the prophets. For, notwithstanding all disclaimers to the contrary, it would involve them in the great fraud of ascribing to God, and claiming His authority for what they knew to be of themselves.

The  
Messianic  
hope.

But apart from this fatal objection, what sagacity or foresight on the part of the prophets could originate the Messianic hope, and develop Messianic prediction through many ages, a hope and a prediction which have found their fulfilments in Jesus Christ? Even in the matter of predictions of another kind the hypothesis fails utterly. These predictions are not "vague surmises," or "pious deductions from the moral government of God." Godly patriots might denounce judgments in general, even in vehement terms, on a corrupt nation. But no amount of godliness or patriotism could enable a man to foresee distant ages, the fall and rise of kingdoms and empires, their interlacings, with many events and circumstances connected therewith. We could imagine Moses warning the nation which he had led out of Egypt against forsaking God by declaring the certainty of punishment for their sin. But we cannot imagine any man inventing out of his own brain the details of judgment which we find in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy—details which are asserted with all the positiveness of the future "shall;" details, many of which were literally accomplished a thousand years and fifteen hundred years after, and some of the

What godly  
patriots  
might do.

What they  
could not do.

*Deut.*  
*xxviii.;*  
*Lev. xxvi.*

most striking of which are being literally fulfilled before our own eyes. "No thoughtful Jew denies that the present condition of the nation is the fulfilment of the curse written in the book of the Law." Israel, as foretold by Moses, has been scattered to the four winds, but is still preserved. Of the nations by whom, and amongst whom, they were first dispersed, the Lord has made a full end. He has chastened Israel in measure, but has not permitted them to disappear. The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Romans, have utterly perished. But the people of the Jews are "wanderers among the nations." They have survived all the revolutions of empires, ancient, mediæval, and modern, and now, consciously or unconsciously, await the consummation foretold by prophets and apostles.

The condition of the Jews foretold.

See Jer. xxx. 11 ;  
xxxix. 35-37 ;  
Isa. vi. 11-13 ;  
Amos ix. 9 ;  
Hos. ix. 17 ;  
Deut. xxviii. 64, 65.

There is no hypothesis left for us, then, but that which ascribes prophecy to God Himself. This is its own explanation of the matter. The Biblical history ascribes the communications made by the prophets to the people to a Divine inspiration ; and in particular it ascribes those predictions of future events which were given by the prophets to the foreknowledge of God, such foreknowledge being the prerogative of the Living God, and of Him alone. This is asserted with repeated emphasis in the Book of Isaiah : "Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods : " " I am the Lord. . . . Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare : before they spring forth, I tell you of them : " " I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure :

The true hypothesis.

A Divine prerogative

Ch. xli. 23.

Ch. xlii. 8, 9.

Ch. xlvi. 9-11.

See Ch. xlv.  
1-3.

calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country : yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass : I have purposed it, I will also do it."

The only  
objection  
untenable.

The only objection to the Biblical explanation of prophecy is the very illogical objection that the thing was impossible. But to say that it was impossible to foretell future events, is to deny the foreknowledge of God. It *was* impossible for men, not taught of God, to foretell the future. This we not only admit but maintain. But it follows that if certain men did really foretell the future, they were taught of God. Their word was the word not of man but of God. "It is plainly futile to attempt to account for it on natural principles,—as, for example, that Jeremiah's strong faith wrought upon the exiles, and their faith wrought upon Cyrus, who, by a lucky chance, appeared just at the right time and became the conqueror of Babylon, and thus brought about the return from captivity after seventy years ; or Isaiah, by his faith, persuaded Hezekiah and his people to persevere in their resistance to Sennacherib until fortunately the plague swept off his army. On this principle such a chapter of accidents would be required to save the credit of the prophets, as would involve that very supernatural intervention which the hypothesis was invented to escape ; and that, too, in a form far more incredible than the simple faith of ages—that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Prof. Green  
in "*Moses  
and the  
Prophets ;  
and a  
Review of  
Kuenen,*"  
p. 251.

An  
impossible  
chapter of  
accidents.

The  
Historico-  
critical  
theory

This conclusion is not impugned—not in the slightest degree impaired—by what is boastfully called the Historico-critical or organic interpretation of prophecy, and which is set forth in opposition to

what is called, by way of disparagement, the traditional. Interpreters have, no doubt, sometimes mistaken superficial coincidences for prophecies. But that which is really true in the Historic or organic theory is not new, and does not in the least conflict with the Divine origin of prophecy. That the occasions of many prophecies were historical or circumstantial is certain—the prophecies “taking shape from the necessities of the people, and being moulded by their changing circumstances from age to age.”

A true Historical theory of interpretation will include (1) the Historical circumstances in which the prophecy was given, the light which the circumstances throw on the prophecy, and the light which the prophecy throws on the circumstances, with the study of the shape and colouring which the prophecy derives from the circumstances. (2) It will include the Historical progress of prophecy, the successive stages by which the prophetic Revelation of the Divine will advanced from its dawn to the perfect day. And it will include (3) the eliciting and interpretation of those eternal truths which may be embodied in the prophecy, and which had practical bearings on the then present of those who could not see in the prophecy more than a dim foreshadowing of something that was future.

All this, while it may greatly aid in interpreting the structure and relations of Bible prophecies, leaves the question of their origin untouched. Those who would exclude any direct intervention of God in prophecy, content themselves with explanations that are superficial and hollow. Thus one says that “the phenomena [of the Prophets and Prophecy in Israel] can be accounted for—without the resort to the supposition of any miraculous intervention—by the genius and the peculiar religious character of the

The truth  
that is in it.

“Introduction  
to  
Kueneu,”  
by Dr. John  
Muir.

*See Part  
Third,  
pp. 302-306.*

Hebrews, as developed by their history and fortunes, and acted upon by the circumstances of the times in which the prophets lived." There is not a phrase in this statement which does not imply an untruth.

(a) "The genius of the Hebrews." There is nothing more certain historically than that the genius of the Hebrews was as idolatrous as the genius of the other Semitic races. (b) "The peculiar religious character of the Hebrews," as it appears in "true Israelites," was not the cause of prophecy, but the fruit of prophetic instruction by a succession of inspired men from age to age. And (c) as to the further explanation that the genius and peculiar religious character of the Hebrews were "acted upon by the circumstances of the times in which the prophets lived,"—we know that the influence of the "times," that is, of all surrounding associations, on Israel, was to perpetually drag the people down from the pure monotheism which the prophets inculcated, into the grossest and cruellest practices of the heathen.

*The  
ultimate  
Hypothesis.*

There is no true explanation of the Prophets and of Prophecy without seeking it outside and above themselves, their people and their circumstances. The only Hypothesis which maintains its ground from age to age, and which accounts for all the phenomena of the prophetic Scriptures, is the ancient Apostolic hypothesis which ascribes them to the Eternal Spirit.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON BIBLICAL MIRACLES.

WE do not assume, it must be remembered, that the miracles reported in the Bible took place; we have only remarked on certain aspects of these miracles which have an important bearing on the question of their historical reality—such as the grave and important occasions on which they are said to have been wrought, and the grave and simple style in which they are narrated. There are other considerations which go far to sustain their historical character. Let us examine some of these.

The truth of the narratives not assumed.

Confirmatory considerations.

#### I.

We do not find miracles recorded where, and in circumstances in which, we might expect to find them, *if the history or tradition of them were legendary*. Miracles are not sown broadcast over the whole Old Testament history, as Dean Trench has remarked and shown. In fact, there are but two great outbursts of them; the first at the establishing of the Kingdom under Moses and Joshua, on which occasion it is evident that they could not have been wanting; the second, in the time of Elijah and Elisha, and then also there was the utmost need. "There is, in all this an

Not sown broadcast.  
*On Miracles,*  
p. 45.

*See Part Third, Chap. VI.*



entire absence of prodigality in the use of miracles ; they are ultimate resources, reserved for the great needs of God's Kingdom, not its daily incidents ; they are not cheap off-hand expedients, which may always be appealed to, but come only into play when nothing else could have supplied their room."

Not cheap  
off-hand  
expedients.

Unlikeness  
of legend to  
history.

But where Bible history is silent legend has spoken, and *in the unlikeness of the legend to the history* we have additional proof that the history is not legendary. There is not a person of any note named in the Old Testament respecting whom legendary traditions are not found in the Jewish Talmud. How ancient these may be, and how their origin and growth are to be explained, it were difficult to say. But they serve to show how different historic fact is from legend, whether the legend be the unconscious product of superstition or the deliberate invention of fancy. In a modern work now before me, the legends about Abraham occupy sixty-seven pages, and those about Moses seventy-six. A few sentences will show their character. Abraham, legend says, was born in a cave to which his mother had fled to save her child from a murderous decree of the King Nimrod. On visiting the cave some time after, the mother found her child sucking his thumbs, out of one of which flowed milk, and out of the other honey. When three years old, according to some, or ten according to others, the child came out of the cavern and stood on the face of the desert. When he saw the sun shining in all its glory he was filled with wonder, and he thought, "Surely the Sun is God the Creator ;" and he knelt down and worshipped the Sun. But when evening came, the sun went down in the west, and Abraham said, "No ! the author of creation cannot set." Now the moon rose in the east, and the stars looked out of

Gould's.

Legends  
about  
Abraham.  
His birth.

How he  
ceased to be  
an idolater.



the firmament. Then said Abraham, "The moon must indeed be God, and all the stars are His host;" and kneeling down, he worshipped the moon. But after some hours the moon set, and from the east appeared once more the bright face of the sun. Then said Abraham, "Verily, these heavenly bodies are no gods, for they obey law; I will worship Him who imposed the law upon them."

This is a myth rather than a legend—although the distinction between the two is often overlooked. Properly speaking, a myth is the creation of a fact out of an idea; a legend the seeing of an idea in a fact. Thus defined the myth is pure and absolute imagination; the legend has a basis of fact. But the mythical and the legendary are often so intermingled that a clear distinction cannot be preserved between them, and in popular use the distinction vanishes.

There are other myths, some very beautiful, to account for Abraham's knowledge of the One True God, as, for example:—When Abraham came out of the cave, he saw a number of flocks and herds, and he said to his mother, "Who is lord of these?" She answered, "Your father Azar (Zerah)." "And who is the lord of Azar?" he further asked. She replied, "Nimrod." "And who is the lord of Nimrod?" "Oh! hush, my son," said she, striking him on the mouth; "you must not push your questions so far."

How he came to know the true God.

The legendary history of Abraham is full of conflicts with Nimrod, the great patron of idol-worship, and of miracles by which he was delivered out of the hands of this tyrant. His death is thus recorded: "The angel of death did not smite him, but God kissed him, and he died by that kiss; and because the sword of the angel touched him not, but his soul parted to the kiss of God, his body saw no corruption."

Conflicts with Nimrod.

His death.

Contrast  
with all this.

Contrast with all this the naturalness and reticence of the historical record. There is not one instance on record in which the Patriarchs demanded a "sign" of the reality of the communications which came to them from God, or wrought miracles to prove themselves favoured of God. How Abraham was assured that the voice which he obeyed was the voice of God, and not of his own imagination, we are not informed. But while the Bible tells us of no "signs," the after history of Abraham and of his descendants demonstrate that he was not mistaken.

Legends  
about Moses.  
His birth.

In the ark.

Pharaoh's  
crown.

Test  
suggested by  
Gabriel.

The history of Moses is the subject of similar myths and legends. When he was born the house was filled with light, as of the brightest sunshine. When the little ark containing the babe was floating in the Nile, the angels surrounded the throne of God and cried, "O Lord of the whole earth, shall this mortal child, fore-ordained to chant, at the head of thy chosen people, the great song of delivery from water, perish this day by water?" When the king's daughter presented him, when a boy, to her father, and told him that this child had been given to her in wondrous fashion by the divine river Nile, the king put his royal crown on the head of Moses. But the child threw it on the ground, and, alighting from Pharaoh's knee, danced round it in childish fashion, and finally trampled it under his feet. Balaam advised the king that he should be burnt with fire, and others that he should be slain with the sword. But the angel Gabriel, in the form of an old man, mingled with the Councillors, and said, "Let not innocent blood be shed. The child is too young to know what he is doing. Prove whether he has any understanding and design, before you sentence him. O King! let a

bowl of live coals and a bowl of precious stones be brought to the little one. If he takes the stones, then he has understanding, and discerns between good and evil; but if he thrusts his hands towards the burning coals, then he is innocent of purpose and devoid of reason." When the basins were brought in and offered to Moses, he thrust out his hands towards the jewels. But Gabriel, who had made himself invisible, caught his hand and directed it towards the red-hot coals; and Moses burnt his fingers, and he put them into his mouth, and burnt his lips and tongue; and therefore it is that Moses said in after days, "I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

Such is the style in which legend tells the story of Moses. And if the Biblical story were legendary, such it would be. The difference between history and legend, to be felt, need only that the two be placed side by side.

The difference between history and legend.

The only Old Testament miracles which have the slightest resemblance to those which abound in myth and legend are two which are connected with the name of Elisha. In 2 Kings vi. 1-7 we read how that Elisha caused an iron axe which had fallen into the Jordan to rise to the surface. The occasion for the exercise of supernatural power seems trivial, and not involving any urgent necessity. It has been suggested that possibly the power of working miracles was under the control of its possessor and might be exercised at his will, so that Elisha may have wrought this miracle out of sheer kindness of heart. This I regard as a very doubtful principle. The explanation must be found in the circumstances of Elisha and the sons of the prophets who were with him. They were witnesses for God in a time of grievous

The only miracles distinctly resembling legends.

The floating axe.

apostasy, exposed to the bitter displeasure of the royal court, and not supported by popular sympathy. The place where Elisha was accustomed to meet his disciples, either at Gilgal or at Jericho, was too strait for them, probably from the increase of their number, and they resolved to build on the banks of the Jordan. It was while thus building that an axe fell into the river. They were poor evidently, for the axe was a borrowed one. And the loss of the axe, however small in our eyes, may have been a very real and serious loss. Its recovery may have been of far greater consequence than it seems to us. And its recovery would doubtless confirm the faith of the sons of the prophets in their leader and teacher, and in the God whom he served.

Lesson of  
its recovery.

The other miracle to which I have referred has been a stumbling block to many, it seems so like the idle and superstitious tales we have about the wonderful cures effected by the bones of saints. Elisha died and they buried him. Some Israelites were about to bury a man when they were alarmed by the appearance of a troop of marauding Moabites, and in their haste they cast the body into the sepulchre of Elisha. And when the body so cast into the prophet's tomb touched the prophet's body, it was restored to life. The tomb, it is obvious, was not such a grave as we are familiar with; it was near at hand and easily opened.

*2 Kings xiii.*  
20, 21.

The dead  
body of  
Elisha.  
  
A man  
restored to  
life.

All miraculous working is an exertion of the direct power of the All-Powerful. Whether He will use any instrument or what instrument, must depend, as Dean Alford has remarked, on His own purpose in the miracle—the effect to be produced on the recipients, beholders, or hearers. Without His special selection

and enabling, all instruments were vain—with these all are capable. “In the present instance the primary effect was greatly to increase the reverence of the Israelites for the memory of Elisha; to lend force to his teaching; and especially to add weight to his unfulfilled prophecies, as to that concerning the coming triumph of Israel over Syria. In the extreme state of depression to which the Israelites were now reduced, a very signal miracle may have been needed to encourage and reassure them.”

*“Speaker’s  
Commentary,” in  
loco.*

Thus regarded, the miracle loses every aspect of the legendary. Elisha was dead, but Elisha’s God was living. And He would have the people to understand that the prophet’s words had not perished with him.

Not  
legendary.

## II.

The general fitness of Old Testament miracles, their appropriateness in the circumstances in which they occurred, and for the accomplishment of their ends, may likewise be regarded as corroborative of their truth. On this subject Doctor Trench has well said, “It is noticeable that the region in which the miracles of the Old Testament chiefly move, is that of external nature. Not, of course, that they are exclusively so; but this *nature* is the haunt and main region of the miracle in the Old Testament, as in the New it is mainly the sphere of man’s life in which it is at home. And consistently with this, the earlier miracles, done, as the greater number of them were, in the presence of the giant powers of heathendom, have often a colossal character; those powers of the world are strong, but the God of Israel will show Himself to be stronger yet. Thus it is with the miracles of Egypt, the miracles of Babylon; they are

General fit-  
ness of Old  
Testament  
miracles.

*Doctor  
Trench.*

Miracles of strength in presence of nature-worships.

miracles eminently of strength ; for under the influence of the great nature-worships of those lands, all religion had assumed a colossal grandeur. Compared with our Lord's works wrought in the days of His flesh, those were the whirlwind and the fire, and His as the still small voice which followed. In that old time God was teaching His people, He was teaching also the nations with whom His people were brought wonderfully into contact, that He who had entered into covenant with one among all the nations, was not one God among many, the God of the hills or the God of the plains (1 Kings xx. 23), but that the God of Israel was the Lord of the whole earth."

### III.

The cessation of miracles.

*J. S. Mill.*

Reply.

*Part First,*  
*p. 85.*

The cessation, or supposed cessation, of miracles, is regarded by some as involving a presumption against the genuineness of both the Old and New Testament miracles. John Stuart Mill says, in words already quoted, "We see no reason in God's goodness why, if He deviate once from the ordinary system of His government in order to do good to man, He should not have done so on a hundred other occasions." To which it should be enough to reply: If we can see no reason in God's *goodness* why He should not work miracles whenever any benefit might be conferred thereby, we can see abundant reason in His *wisdom* why He should not. It is held by believers and unbelievers alike that a miracle, or, as Mr. Mill puts it, "a deviation from the ordinary system of God's government," to be credited must be supported by very strong, unusually strong, evidence. And one of the chiefest elements in its strength must be *internal*—the character of the

miracle and of its occasion. Where miracles are alleged in the Bible these two things are very evident—first, that there was a manifest necessity for the giving of supernatural signs or for supernatural action; and, secondly, that such supernatural action was never independent of, but always associated with, high moral considerations. Give us such occasions for miraculous interposition as those which we find in the Bible, and we may expect miracles as of old. But in the absence of the occasion, we have a sufficient reason for the absence of the miracle. Let another Moses come to found a new Theocracy; let another Christ come to found a new Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and their work and claims will require such attestation as was given to the Moses and the Christ of our Bible. But the miracles wrought in connection with revelations and institutions which have found their consummation in the establishment of a Divine spiritual kingdom by the Incarnate Son of God, cannot be discredited by the fact that miracles are wrought no longer. There is no longer occasion for them.

Two characteristics of Bible miracles.

No longer occasion for them.

A future great material miracle.

The only occasion foreshadowed in the Bible on which we have now to expect a “deviation” from the ordinary course of nature, is at what is called “the end of the world.” The language which it uses is figurative, but its significance is obvious. “The trumpet shall sound.” “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up, and we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Accepting these scriptures, this globe shall not remain for ever

1 *Cor.* xv. 52.

2 *Pet.* iii.

10, 13.  
See *Rom.* viii. 19-24.



This mundane state not for ever.

in its present condition. We are not now in the midst of an eternal procession of events, causes, and effects. The mundane state, whose natural laws are often substituted by men for their Author and Ruler, will come to an end. And its ending will be sudden, not from exhaustion, not that the forces of nature have worn themselves out, not that the earth has grown weary in its race round the sun—but that God has willed it. As its beginning was of God, so will be its ending.

Men may doubt this, as did some of old, who appealed to the fact that since the fathers fell asleep all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation. But it must be admitted at least that the Bible is consistent with itself. From beginning to end it teaches the dependence of the world on its Maker. And if its teaching needed support, it would find it in the scientific conclusion of some of the chiefest men of science, that not only must the *origin* of the forces of Nature be traced to *Will*, but likewise and equally their *continuance*. From beginning to end, moreover, the Bible represents this earth as the theatre of moral Divine transactions, whose origin is to be found in the eternal will and love of God, and whose issues shall be reaped in the world that is to come. The earth, we are thus taught, is a far more glorious thing than mere students or observers of the material universe conceive. Not only are the footprints of God its Maker to be traced on its surface everywhere, but He who made it has made it the scene of a moral government, and of a Redemption, in which He has revealed Himself more gloriously than it were otherwise possible.

2 Pet. iii. 4.

Continuance as well as origin by Will-force.

IV.

We are not in a position to say when the miracles of the Christian age ceased. We cannot draw a clear and definite line between the miraculous and the non-miraculous age. According to Scripture history, the Apostles conferred on others the power of working miracles ; and some of those who thus received this power may have lived some way into the second century,—one of the Apostles may have seen the dawn of that century. Nor can we say for certain that no others were gifted with this power. The dispensations of God are not separated by a hard and fast line.

The line between the miraculous and non-miraculous age not defined. *Acts viii. 17-19.*

But it is well known that professed miracles have been wrought, and continue to be wrought, throughout what we call the non-miraculous age. And these miracles are used by those who regard them as un-genuine as an argument against the genuineness of the miracles of what we call the miraculous age. We have already shown the unreasonableness of the argument that because some alleged miracles were false, therefore all must be held to be false. And we have argued that the universal disposition to believe in the supernatural, instead of creating a presumption against the reality of the supernatural, may be used as an argument in favour of it.

Professed miracles still.

False inference.

*Part First, p. 85.*

*Part First, pp. 86, 87.*

As to the bearing of the alleged miracles of what we call the Middle Ages—and which the Roman Catholic Church regards as genuine—on the question of the genuineness of the Biblical miracles, we shall understand it best when we compare, or rather contrast, the two.

I. First of all, there is a radical difference between

Difference as to idea of saintliness.

mediævalism and primitive Christianity in their idea of saintliness. In mediæval and later Romish story, a man is a saint in proportion to the marvels or prodigies which are in any wise connected with his person or his acts. Let it be told of a man that he has seen angels, that the Virgin Mary has revealed herself to him, that a shining light has been seen round his head, and that he has done many marvellous things—he is a saint; collect all the stories you can find of prodigies in his life, and lay them before the Head of the Romish Church, and he will canonize him and place his name among those to whom prayer may be offered.

*John x. 41;*  
*Matt. x. 2-8.*  
*See Matt.*  
*vii. 22, 23.*  
*1 Cor. xiii.*  
1, 2.

Now the Bible or Christian idea of saintliness is altogether different. John the Baptist did no miracle; Judas Iscariot did. This fundamental difference between Romanism and Christianity as to what constitutes saintship, casts no small degree of suspicion on the wonderful things that are told of Romish saints, and which indeed constitute their title to the name.

Fraud and  
falsehood.

*See*  
*Milman's*  
*"Latin*  
*Christi-*  
*anity,"*  
*vol. iii.*  
190-199; vi.  
163.

2. There is another difference between Romanism and Christianity which has to do with this subject. That falsehood may be used to promote the interests of the Church has been maintained by partisans of the Church of Rome. In fact, the spiritual supremacy claimed by the Popes has its real foundation in a series of deliberate forgeries which belong chiefly to the ninth century; and the temporal power of the Popes over a portion of Italy is based on a series of frauds and forgeries such as have disgraced no other sovereignty on the face of the earth,—such as a letter professedly from St. Peter in heaven, which was forged by an Infallible Pope! The contrast between this procedure and that of Christ and His Apostles is

*2 Cor. iv. 2.*  
*Rom. iii. 8.*

too palpable to need remark. The effect of it is that mediæval or Roman Catholic testimony on behalf of mediæval or Roman Catholic miracles must lie under just suspicion.

3. The history of Christ's miracles and of the miracles connected with the foundation of Christianity can be traced up to the period of their occurrence; the history of Romish miracles, at least of the most illustrious of them, begins long after the date of their occurrence. It is not necessary to add to what has already been said of the former. As to the latter, two examples will suffice.

The chief Romish miracles lack contemporary evidence.

See Part Second, pp. 202-204.

There are few Romish saints which have been surrounded with such a halo of wonders as Loyola and Xavier. Upwards of two hundred miracles were laid before the Pope when the canonization of Loyola was in question—miracles beside which those of Christ sink into significance. But when were miraculous tales first told respecting Ignatius Loyola? Fifteen years after his death (1572 A.D.), there was a life of him published by one who had been his scholar and companion from early youth. Fifteen years later (1587 A.D.) it was republished, containing now many additional circumstances which had been communicated by persons who had lived in familiar intercourse with Ignatius, and who had most intimate opportunities of being acquainted with all the facts of his life. And in neither the first nor the second and greatly enlarged edition of this memoir, does the slightest trace of a miracle appear. On the contrary, the biographer enters into a lengthened discussion of the reasons why it did not please God that any signal miracle should be wrought by this eminent servant of His. In the face of these facts how can we receive a tale of two hundred miracles, of which

Loyola.

See Trench <sup>on</sup> "Miracles," pp. 49-51.

His friends knew of no miracles.

those who had been his lifelong friends knew nothing?

Xavier. The same fatal objection rests against the miracles ascribed to Francis Xavier, the great Romish missionary. According to the later accounts of his life, even the very boys who served him as catechists received and exercised the power of working miracles. He spoke unknown languages without tuition, he calmed sea tempests, he raised the dead to life. But the tales told of him cannot be traced back to any original or authentic history. We have a series of letters written by this great Apostle to the heathen, as he is commonly regarded, written in the midst of his work in the far East, in which there does not occur a single word about miracles wrought by him, or of miracles which a missionary may expect in aid of his work.

His letters contain no miracles.

Difference in the avowed end.

4. There is another great contrast between the original Christian miracles and the alleged miracles of the Church of Rome—and that is, the avowed end of both. Christ's miracles were "signs"—signs to attest to the world that He was sent of God, and signs of the nature of His mission. They are all significant of His glory or designed to set forth His glory. This is equally true of the miracles wrought by the Apostles. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Christ, be the glory," was their habitual spirit. "Why marvel ye at this," said Peter, "as if by our own power or holiness, we had made this man to walk?" And yet even Dr. Newman could say: "I firmly believe that the relics of the saints are doing innumerable miracles and graces daily, and that it needs only for a Catholic to show devotion to any saint, in order to receive special benefits from his intercession." Let a Catholic show devotion to any saint and thus render him honour, and the saint will intercede for him and bestow or procure

Acts iii. 12.

Contrast between Peter and Dr. Newman.

for him special benefits. It will all be to the glory of the saint, not of Christ. The *Catholic* of Dr. Newman is very far from being identical with the *Christian* of Peter.

The Catholic and the Christian.

The whole history of those places which have attracted Roman Catholic pilgrims during recent years might be cited in illustration of this contrast between the miracles of the Gospels and the miracles of Rome. Christ is the end of the one, Mary and the saints the end of the other.

La Salette, Lourdes, and Paray le Monial.

5. Perhaps the most palpable contrast between primitive and mediæval miracles is to be found in the miracles themselves. We have already remarked on the difference between the miracles of Christ recorded in the Gospels and the miracles ascribed to Him in the apocryphal gospels—the nobility and transparent truthfulness of the former, the grotesqueness and unmeaningness of the latter. The mediæval miracles are of a piece not with the former but with the latter. They are mere prodigies, and when they cannot be dignified even with the appellation “prodigy,” they are childish absurdities. Take a specimen of the wonders which composed the daily life of Xavier according to its later history. He had a consecrated crucifix which he greatly valued. On a sea voyage he dropped it overboard, and was greatly distressed. The vessel, however, sped her way across the ocean, and he reached his desired haven, giving up the crucifix for lost,—till one day, walking on the sea shore, he saw the object of his reverential regard moving towards him, elevated above the surface of the water, as if self-conducted, or borne by the spirits of the deep. Filled with astonishment and delight, he went to meet it, when it was reverentially deposited at his feet by a crab, which seemed to have had a Divine commission!

Contrast between the miracles themselves. See Part Second, p. 204.

A specimen of Romish miracles.

The mind and the body.  
See "The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief," by G. P. Fisher, D.D., Chap. X.

6. There are certain alleged miracles which may be explained by purely natural causes. "As the body acts on the mind, so the mind powerfully affects the body. Heated imagination, ardent faith, the confident hope of relief, may produce physical effects of an extraordinary character. There is a variety of nervous disorders which are cured by a sudden shock which turns feeling into a new channel." If the miracles of the Gospels consisted only of visions, or of the healing of certain diseases which spring mainly from nervous derangement, their supernatural character might be called in question. But even in regard to miracles of healing there is a marked difference between the gospel miracles and all others. None of the gospel miracles were tentative, unsuccessful, or of doubtful reality. But among those to whom in later times miraculous power has been ascribed, the instances of apparent success were connected with uncounted failures of which no record has been preserved. Even in the cases where it has been loudly proclaimed that there was every appearance of miracles, it is found that some have been only partially relieved of their maladies, or have experienced soon a recurrence of them. But with Christ and his Apostles there were no abortive experiments. All whom they attempted to heal were healed. None went away as they came. In accounting for the gospel miracles the supposition of accident or mere coincidence is thus precluded.

Gospel miracles never unsuccessful.

No abortive experiments.

Summary. This review will justify such conclusions as these:  
(a) The mediæval miracles belong to a type entirely different from that of the Biblical miracles. The difference is not one of degree but of kind. They do not admit of comparison but of contrast.

Difference in kind.

Want of evidence external and internal.

(b) The mediæval miracles do not possess such evidence, either external or internal, as that on which

we rest our faith in the Biblical miracles. As to the internal evidence it is such as compels us to ascribe them, or the tales respecting them, to man and not to God.

(c) The mediæval miracles cannot claim to be in succession to the gospel miracles. They are not in any true sense a continuation of those "signs and wonders" which attended the steps of the Incarnate Christ and which attested the authority of His Apostles. There is a gulf between them, somewhat in time but more in character.

The mediæval not successors to the gospel miracles.

(d) The conclusions to which we are led with reference to the mediæval miracles do not in the least affect the credibility of the Biblical miracles. We have seen that the legends which either superstition or imposture gathered around the names of Abraham and Moses only serve to assure us of the strictly historical character of the Biblical records touching these men. Even so and in like manner the mediæval follies, bearing the name of miracles, whatever their origin—superstition, imposture, or possibly in some instances, innocent misunderstanding—help us to see that the miracles of the Gospels must be traced to a higher and purer source. The two classes of miracles do not come from the same fountain.

The credibility of the Bible miracles not affected.

Rather confirmed.

If it be still asked why miracles should not be performed now as of old, I can only say what has already been said in substance, that the great end which they were designed to accomplish has been accomplished. It was not for their own sakes alone that Abraham and Jacob and Moses heard those words and saw those sights which are recorded in the Bible. It was for the sake of all the world and of all time. These men, and others, were instru-

The great end accomplished.



The purpose  
of the Incar-  
nation ac-  
complished.

ments for the education of mankind. The greatest miracle which the Bible asserts, and which the world has seen, was the Incarnation of God in the person of Christ. But for the purposes of that miracle it was not necessary that Jesus Christ should remain on the earth to the end of the world, that He should be seen by the eyes of every human being, that He should continue to work signs and wonders in attestation of His claim to be obeyed and worshipped as the Son of God. The end of His mission was accomplished when He died and rose again. And it was fit that He should return to His glory, and, still Incarnate, should rule the world from His invisible throne. To make miracles universal and perpetual was not necessary. Christ said: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Much more may we say: "If men hear not Christ and His Apostles, neither would they be persuaded if one rose from the dead."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BIBLICAL BOOKS INSPIRED : AND IN WHAT SENSE.

WE have already indicated an important distinction between Revelation and Inspiration. Popularly, the term Inspiration covers all that is meant by Revelation, as when it is said that the Bible is the Inspired word of God. Using the term more exactly, we regard it as denoting the Divine guidance by and under which the writers recorded the Revelations they had received, and other things which needed no Revelation, because they might be known without Revelation—things, however, which were in close relation with the stream of Revelation, and which it was important to record. Using the term thus, we may speak of the *writers* as inspired, or of their *writings* as inspired,—the writers Divinely guided, the writings the fruit of that Divine guidance—the guidance not being such ordinary guidance as devout men may expect to receive in answer to prayer, but such special guidance as gave Divine authority to the writing. Such inspiration was not confined to *writing*. Scripture connects it as well with the spoken words of prophets and apostles.

Inspiration  
—what it is.

Applies to  
writers and  
writing.

The arguments of the preceding chapters have shown, if they are true, that there are many signs of

What has  
been already  
proved.

the Superhuman in the Teachings of the Old Testament ; in the supernatural events recorded in them—apart from any external evidence by which their truth may be proved,—and in prophecies which have certainly been fulfilled, notably the continuous prophecy of redemption and a Redeemer which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We have now to speak of the Book in which the Revelations of God to man, and related matters, have been recorded, *with reference to its Inspiration*, or its claim to have been written by a special Divine guidance.

Inspiration  
claimed by  
Apostles.  
2 Pet. i. 21.

Ver. 20.  
2 Tim. iii.  
16.

All Scrip-  
ture.

This claim is distinctly asserted by two Apostles. When Peter says that “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” his reference is expressly to the “Scripture” which contained the prophecy. The Apostle Paul says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, etc.” The Revised Version translates thus : “Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable, etc. ;” putting in the margin, “Every Scripture is inspired of God and profitable, etc.” Whichever version we accept, the Apostle cannot be understood to say that there is some scripture which is not inspired, for he had immediately before spoken of “the holy Scriptures,” the entire collection of writings known as such by the Jews, and universally regarded as Divine. If the new translation be accepted, the force of it must be, “Every scripture *being* inspired is profitable.” The inspiration is assumed if not asserted.

Theories not  
needed.

We need not concern ourselves with definitions or theories of Inspiration. Many of the controversies which have been waged around the terms “verbal” and “plenary” might have been settled if the com-

batants had understood each other, and had penetrated through words and forms of speech to the substance of the thing. The strongest maintainers of Verbal Inspiration have not supposed that the writers of Scripture were mere amanuenses, using their pens mechanically, and writing, without a living intellectual action of their own, at the dictation of an external voice or power. While the deniers of a Verbal Inspiration—believing in the Revelations to be recorded as Divine, and other matters connected with these Revelations as important—can scarcely hold that the writers were left entirely to their own judgment as to how they should record them.

What is and is not meant by "verbal."

The maintainers of a "plenary" Inspiration mean by that term that the Inspiration of Scripture covers all the contents of the Bible, and not merely those which are distinctively religious or moral, so far at least as to preserve them from error in any part; while those who admit only a partial Inspiration will find it difficult to say where the Inspiration begins, or where it ends. If they say that Inspiration belongs only to the moral and religious teaching of the Bible, they will find that this teaching is so embedded in the historical that the two cannot be separated; and error in the historical will scarcely leave the teaching untainted. On the other hand, if the maintainers of a plenary Inspiration insist that every chapter of the Bible is equally important, and that, for example, the Book of Esther is as much or as certainly the work of the Spirit of God as the Gospel by John, they only involve the whole doctrine of Inspiration in discredit.

What is and is not meant by "plenary."

The substance of the truth contended for by those who believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures may be secured without any of the objections which are taken to that term as often understood. Thus—

It is often said that there are human elements as well as Divine in the Bible, and the impression produced by this form of expression is that the Bible resembles the image in the dream of the King of Babylon, whose feet were part of iron and part of clay ; that it is a composite book, partly true and partly false ; Divine wisdom mingled with what is at least merely human and imperfect. In opposition to this form of statement, with this possible construction of it, *our contention is that the Bible is all human and all Divine.*

*Dan. ii. 33.*

All Human  
and all  
Divine.

*It is all human.* To begin with—

Written by  
human  
hands.

*Dan. xii. 8.*  
*1 Pet. i. 10-12.*

1. Every part of it has been written by human hands, and, in being so written, has passed through human minds. Revelations which were imperfectly understood by those who received them, have still come to us through the human mind and by the human pen.

Human  
modes of  
speech.

2. The writers freely employed ordinary common modes of speech. They wrote in prose and in poetry. They used parable, simile, apostrophe, alliteration, even artificial acrostic. They indulged in playfulness, irony, or sarcasm, as occasion suggested or required. All this may be said to be very human—it is entirely after the manner of man.

Individu-  
ality of the  
writers.

3. The writers moreover left the impress of their own individuality on their writings. The differences between them are as marked as the differences between other writers. And the differences concern the thinking, *within certain limits*, as well as the style. This is true of the Old Testament and of the New alike. We can scarcely imagine an Amos or an Ezekiel or a Malachi writing as did Isaiah. Every one wrote in a style which distinguishes him from every other. So with Paul and Peter and John : with one Christ and

one Gospel, each of them had a style of his own and a standpoint of his own. We can scarcely imagine Paul writing the Epistles of John, or John writing the Epistles of Paul. All this is perfectly human.

4. The Bible historians compiled and composed their histories just like other historians. When they did not possess a personal knowledge of the events which they recorded, they sought other means of information. This is expressly stated of himself by the author of the third Gospel, who tells us that he "traced the course of all things accurately from the first," as they were delivered to him and to others by those who had been eyewitnesses and were ministers of the word. And in Kings and Chronicles there is constant reference to the contemporary annals of the Kings of Judah and Israel, and to the books of various seers and prophets on whose authority the history was based. All this, again, is quite human. It is what the historians of Greece and Rome did, and what modern historians do to this day. In fact in no other way could history be written, unless its events were supernaturally revealed.

Bible history composed like other history.

*Luke i. 3, Revised Version.*

*2 Chron. xii. 15; xiii. 22; xx. 34; xxiv. 27; xxvi. 22; xxxii. 32.*

5. In another way the Bible may be described as human—in that it is full of human experiences. It may be called a history of man—man sinless, man fallen, man redeemed. And it is a history of many men, in many ages, in many conditions; men good, bad, and indifferent; men sunk in sin, and men rising to high excellence; men fleeing from God, and men seeking after God. It is a perfect mirror of man, and reveals man to himself. It is instinct with the heart of man, and speaks to the heart of man. There is no other book so human.

Full of human experiences.

The Bible, then, we say, is all human. And in saying this we do not detract from its excellence, we

Do not detract from its excellency.

rather set forth its excellence. We often say that men are fitter missionaries of God's grace to their fellows than angels could be. And, in the same way, this Human Bible is a far fitter and more effective embodiment of the story of God's grace than a Bible such as angels might have written, or such as would-be-wise men would construct, on what they would proudly call philosophical principles, and in a style worthy of God.

Analogy  
between the  
Bible and its  
authors.  
*Acts xiv. 15.*

*James v. 17.*

*2 Cor. iv. 7.*

*1 Cor. ii.  
1-4.*

*1 Cor. ii. 5.*

There is a noticeable analogy between the Bible and the Apostles, as described by themselves. "We are men of like passions [or nature] with you," Paul said to the people of Lycaonia, who would have worshipped him and his companion. James says that the great prophet "Elijah was a man of like passions [or nature] with us." Paul says, "We have this treasure [the treasure of "the gospel," *v. 3*] in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." I shall not call the Bible an earthen vessel, lest it should be interpreted as a term of disparagement. But, as the bearer of God's gospel to us, there is an analogy between it and the living apostolic bearers of that gospel to the world. They were inspired and spoke with authority: still they were only men, and spoke with the tongues of men and not of angels, adding nothing to the power of their message by excellency of speech or of wisdom. In this respect the Book which contains the writings of prophets and apostles is like them, that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

But if the Book is all human in the sense which we have explained—

All Divine  
as well as all  
Human.

*It is likewise all Divine.* All its parts come to us with a Divine seal and sanction, and are profitable for

the ends for which they were severally designed, and for the common end of the whole. For those who acknowledge the authority of Christ and His Apostles, the proof of this position is very simple. We have only to prove that the books which constitute *our* Old Testament were all included in "the Scriptures" to which Christ and His Apostles appealed as Divinely authoritative. This *has been* proved, and is admitted as an historic fact, with scarce an exception, by critics of all schools. As to the books which record the life of Christ Himself, and contain the writings of the Apostles whom He commissioned to preach His Gospel to the world, the proof of their genuineness is sufficient proof of their Divine authority to those who believe in Christ Himself. Assuming that the writings of the New Testament are the works of those whose Divine commission was attested by sensible miracles, we may appeal to the fact that they claim to speak in the name of Him by whom their mighty works were wrought. The reality of a Divine Inspiration of the Apostles is clearly assumed in the New Testament. If they were themselves but "earthen vessels," they were entrusted by God Himself with a treasure that was not earthen but heavenly.

The authority of Christ.

The Scriptures in the time of Christ.

1 *Pet. i.* 12;  
1 *Cor. ii.* 10;  
*Gal. i.* 11,  
12;  
1 *Thes. iv.* 8.

But let us look at the matter from another standpoint, that to which the argument of this book has brought us. We are now entitled to assume, argumentatively, that the alleged Revelations contained in the Bible are genuine, and that the supernatural communications with men recorded in the Bible are true. In proof of this we have appealed mainly to internal evidence. Assuming it to be proved, we are entitled to argue that the *record* of Divine Revelations and communications could not be left to the peradventure of man's wisdom and care. The historians of the super-

Another standpoint.

The record of Revelations not left to the chance of man's wisdom.



natural in the Old Testament could not have been left to themselves as to whether they should record it, or how they should record it. Find in the histories as much of the human as you will—human feelings, human forms of speech, everything like ordinary human composition—only admit the truth of the substance, it is impossible, in view of the importance of that substance, to suppose that He who so marvellously, so righteously, so graciously revealed Himself, should leave the record of His revelations to the uncertainties of a merely human authorship. We are thus led to the conclusion of a Divine as well as a human authorship.

The entire contents of the Book.

J. E. Dwi-  
nell in the  
"New  
Eng-  
lander,"  
and in the  
"British  
and  
Foreign  
Evangelical  
Review,"  
Jan., 1880.

Divine authorship we regard as covering the entire contents of the Book. "In every portion of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation," says an able American writer, "we find time marks, race marks, human-personality marks, betraying its human relationship; but none the less there are God marks there also, showing that in both elements, the formal and the vital, it is the Book of God. He chose to give it through man, and in a way to put it in a living union with man at the time. His thought seemed to lay itself down on an elect mind, here and there, now and then, during the inspirational ages, to grasp it, qualify it, co-work with it, enter into vital oneness with it; and so these two agencies, the Divine and the human, took together the desired step in advance in giving that section of revelation to mankind. Thus man is in the inner and outer Bible; and God also is there, from centre to circumference. Dual as the Book is in its nature, its duality is not mechanical but vital, like all other vital things. The two portions are not joined together like dead branches and a living tree, but more as soul and body. You cannot travel through it, and mechanically toss asunder the two interblended elements, any

The duality of the Book, vital, not mechanical.

more than you can pass through it and say, 'These portions are put here by inspiration, and those without it.' We like that view of inspiration according to which two spirits are regarded as having been present and active when all the parts, all the sentences and words, too, if you please, were born into the record—God's and man's,—in dynamic union, each in its freedom and integrity, neither overlaid and crushed nor crowded out by the other. So, in the blending of the formal and the vital in scripture, each in a sense rests on the other, and neither can be spared from the other. They hold each other up, and so constitute the indivisible and imperishable Word to mankind—the letter and the spirit."

We have argued that, admitting the reality of Divine Revelations in the Bible, there must have been a Divine guidance to secure a correct record of them. But it will be observed that there is a great deal more in the Bible than the record of Revelations, and the record of the direct teachings of Inspired men. And it may be asked whether Inspiration covers that "great deal more." The difficulty thus suggested may be met as follows:—

1. God's Revelations to men are inseparably connected with the history of the men to whom they were given, and, in the case of the chosen nation, with the history of that nation. Hence a history of the Revelations, to be complete and intelligible, must be a history of the men and of the nation, with, oftentimes, incidental histories of associated circumstances. A bare record of Divine words spoken, and of supernatural works wrought, separated from the history of times and men and peoples, would make a very different Bible from that which we have. Very

More in the Bible than a direct record of Revelations—what of that?

Connected with personal and national history.

Extraordi-  
nary power  
of interest  
and instruc-  
tion thus  
gained.

Increased  
evidence of  
genuineness.

Temporary  
object of  
some  
portions.

<sup>1</sup> *Pet. i. 11,*  
*Revised*  
*Version.*

Principles  
permanent.

different in two respects: first, it would lack the extraordinary power which our Bible has to interest, impress, and instruct. Imagine the history of God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac,<sup>1</sup> Jacob, Samuel, David, and others, written in this fashion, and you feel at once that it would fail, not only in human interest, but in spiritual power. Then, in the next place, a history so written—a Divine history, you may call it, but not rooted in the common history of man—would lack the evidence of its truthfulness, which Bible history as it is possesses. It would be rash to say that isolated tales of Divine interventions might not approve themselves as genuine by their very character. But they would lose immensely by their isolation from contemporaneous history. When we find the Divine manifestations recorded in the Bible, not only associated with the lives of men and with the fortunes of a people, but interwoven with them, forming an integral and essential part of them, we have means of testing their genuineness which could be had in no other way. Hence the necessity and the utility of those personal memoirs and historical annals which form so large a portion of our Bible.

2. It must be remembered that the various portions of scripture had an immediate, and, in some respects, a temporary object in view. The prophets all ministered to their own times. Searching, as we are told they did, "what time or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them," they were, like Noah, preachers of righteousness to their contemporaries. This appears on the very face of all their writings, which have to do immediately much more with their own age than with succeeding ages. Consequently,

in these writings we may find local colouring and temporary precepts, but yet very little which, in its principles and moral bearings, is not as true and important now as it ever was. The loss of the prophetic writings, even without taking into account their predictive elements, would be simply immeasurable.

It is in the Levitical ritual and certain national institutions of the Jews that we find, for the most part, the temporary. But what a gap, in the history of the Divine education of the race and of the Church, the omission to preserve a permanent record of these would create! Not only would the subsequent history of the Jewish nation be unintelligible, but Christianity itself would lose all the light thrown on it by the Epistle to the Hebrews. Its character, as the perfected development of successive age-long dispensations, requires that we should know what these dispensations were. The Book of Leviticus, and other scriptures like it, cannot therefore be regarded as only of temporary importance. They are of permanent interest and utility. They are by no means obsolete, and devout students find in them spiritual nourishment even to this day.

Levitical  
ritual.

Even here  
permanent  
interest.

## CHAPTER X.

## CONCLUSION.

THE limits of this Handbook have necessitated a very brief setting forth of arguments which otherwise should have been greatly expanded, and the omission of not a few old arguments which have lost none of their cogency. Two of these may be mentioned.

Leslie's  
"Short  
Method."

First, the old argument of "*Leslie's Short Method with the Deists.*" The argument of Leslie rests on the peculiarity of Christian evidence, by which the truth of Christianity is indissolubly connected with matters of fact which could originally be judged of by the senses, and also upon the fact that there exist in the Church to this day certain institutions commemorative of those facts. The object of Leslie was to show, from the very nature of the case, apart from written testimony, that the matters of fact stated could not have been received at the time unless they were true, and that the observances could never have originated except in connection with these facts.

The object  
of his  
argument.

Published,  
A.D. 1747.

Then, the argument from *the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is as good as ever.* Lord Lyttelton's book on the subject was described by Dr. Johnson as "a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer." Modern attempts to account for

the circumstances in which Saul became a Christian, without the admission of their supernatural character, have been equally unsuccessful. The truthfulness and honesty of Paul are admitted. And it is equally certain, though some may affect to doubt it, that he was no enthusiast. A more sober-minded man has never lived. "Neither the temper nor the opinions of a man subject to fanatical delusions can be found" in his writings. The naturalistic explanation which ascribes his conversion to a hallucination, leads to a jumble of guesses most of which are belied by the known facts. He mistook the occurrences of a thunderstorm for a supernatural address, in articulate speech, to himself! He mistook a sunstroke for a perception of Christ! And this, fool though he was, is the man that turned the world upside down!

*See Paley and Lyttelton, on his character, quoted in "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ an Historical Fact," by the Author, pp. 41-43.*

Absurd naturalistic explanation.

Even Baur, in his later days, became convinced of the insufficiency of the naturalistic solution, and said that "neither psychological nor dialectical analysis can explore the mystery of the act in which God revealed to him His Son." "In his sudden transformation from the most vehement adversary into the most resolute herald of Christianity, we can see," says Baur, "nothing short of a miracle." Keim, a man of the same school, affirms the objective reality of the manifestation of Jesus to Paul. "The whole character of Paul; his sharp understanding, which was not weakened by his enthusiasm; the careful, cautious, measured form of his statement; above all, the favourable total impression of his narrative, and the mighty echo of it in the unanimous, uncontradicted faith of Christendom" are the considerations on which Keim rests his belief.

Baur's confession.

Keim.

The Supernatural in the Bible *is*, we have endea-

voured to show, *its own witness*. They who reject it, not they who accept it, are the credulous people. To disbelieve the Divine origin of Christianity, as Archbishop Whately has pointed out, is to believe its human origin. Now let the man who believes in its human origin, endeavour honestly to account for all that has been advanced in our Second Part respecting Christ, and in this Third Part respecting the Divine Book which contains the story of Christ and of earlier revelations, on purely naturalistic principles; let him try to account for all on the hypothesis that it was and is all "of man," and not "from heaven:" and he will find that, so far as argument and reason are concerned, the difficulty of *not* believing in its Divine origin is logically infinitely greater than the difficulty of believing.

Still there are who demand more evidence. "If God has made it possible for man to discover religious truth," it has been said, "He must have written it as with a sunbeam, it must have been discovered at a glance." But why should this be assumed? An ancient said that the merchandise of wisdom "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." The same ancient said, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." This may be called common sense; it is after the analogy of things. The gold and silver, the iron and copper, which are so essential to civilized life, are not found at our doors to be picked up at our leisure and at our pleasure; and men do not grudge the toil and peril of searching for them,

*Prov. iii.*  
14, 15.

*Prov. ii.*  
3-5.

No good  
without  
labour.

and digging them out of the bowels of the earth. Our daily bread is obtained only by labour; learning is acquired only by labour; nothing worth having becomes ours without labour; and that which is best worth having usually costs us the greatest labour. Why should it be assumed that religious truth, the most precious and important of all acquisitions, should be thrust into our hand, or poured into our ear, without trouble or inquiry?

*See Part First, p. 18*

The evidence, external and internal, historical and experimental, which sustains the claim of the Biblical Faith to a Supernatural origin, has been sufficient to satisfy myriads of inquisitive and intelligent men. And those who demand more or other evidence, should tell us plainly what they want. Many years ago, the author found himself sitting side by side with an avowed Atheist. "I will not believe in God," this man said oftener than once, "till He owns Himself." God must make Himself visible and stand before His creature, and tell him with His own lips that He is, and what He is! He may have done so a thousand times already in past ages, or to a thousand other persons in this age, and the witnesses may have given such testimony as no sane person can reject, but this doubter puts them all aside, and says, "Except I see Him with my own eyes, and hear Him with my own ears, I will not believe."

*See Part First, pp. 59, 60.*

An atheist's demand.

Its presumption and folly.

Thus do we find the sceptic's demand for more evidence echoed by the unlearned in a form which shows its true character. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," said Christ, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." But even the resurrection of one from the dead would not satisfy my fellow-traveller, nor would the resurrection of a thousand, if the fact depended on the testimony of

Even a "resurrection" would not suffice.



others. And even if he saw it with his own eyes, he would find some means of accounting for it. Rather than accept it as a true miracle, a true work of God, he would credit any dream, any absurdity, that should declare it a juggle and a delusion.

*See Part  
First,  
pp. 59, 60.*

How shall God "own Himself" so as to make Himself irresistibly known and confessed? How shall the Invisible God make Himself visible, and make it certain that it is indeed God? We have already shown the impossibility of a satisfactory answer to this question. The demand is that the Great God should do as *we* list,—and if He does not, we declare in our pride that we shall not believe in Him. The worm despising the giant, whose one tread would put it out of existence, is nothing to the presumption of the man who says, "I will not believe in God till He owns Himself."

*La Place's  
telescope.*

Surely this is a very *reductio ad absurdum*. But not more so than the saying of La Place, that "no God could be seen within the range of his telescope." One can scarcely give the philosopher credit for a moment's belief, that the failure of his telescope to discover God in the material universe furnished the most shadowy presumption against the Divine existence. His words, addressed to an assembly of atheists, might excite a vulgar cheer, but could not impose even on *their* reason. Neither telescope nor microscope could bring within the range of La Place's vision the human mind which conceived and constructed either, any more than it could the Maker of heaven and earth. Truer, and more philosophic, are the words of an ancient: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hades, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings

*Ps. cxxxix.  
7-10.*

of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." And they are right who have discoursed eloquently on the impossibility of finding, in the wide universe, a spot where the foot-step of the Creator does not reveal His presence.

Such as  
John Foster  
and Dr.  
Chalmers.

The desire for more evidence is very natural, and sometimes very honest, but those who are hindered by it in their search after truth, and who are pained because it is not to be had, should see in these extreme forms of it its essential unreasonableness. And they should not forget, as Bishop Butler contends, that "the evidence of religion not appearing obvious, may constitute one particular part of some men's trial in the religious sense, as it gives scope for a virtuous exercise, or vicious neglect, of their understanding in examining or not examining into that evidence."

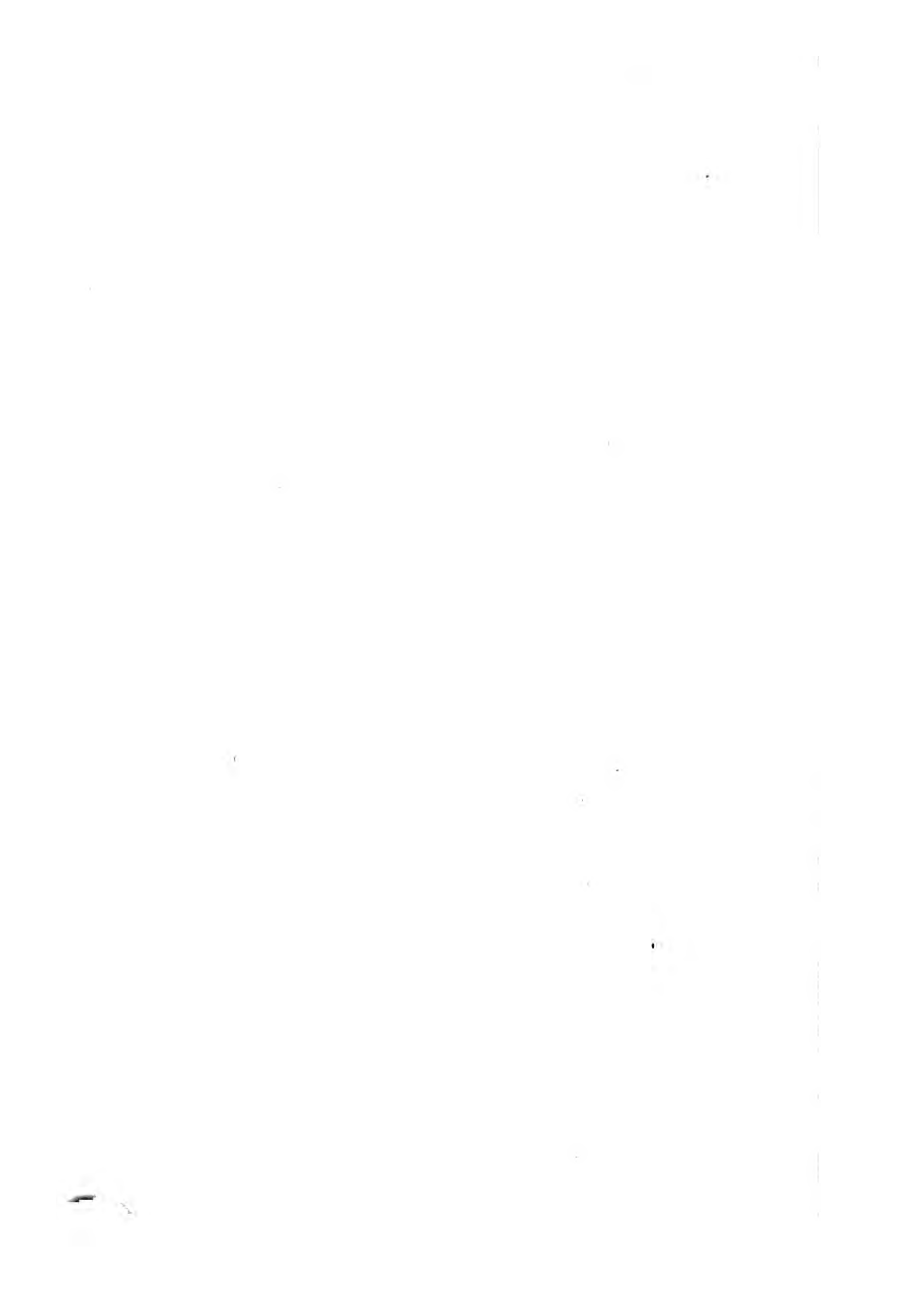
A natural  
desire.

"*Analogy*,"  
*Part II.*  
*Chap. VI.*

Moral  
discipline.

We fall back on the principle already laid down, that it is not for us to prescribe to God *how* He will reveal Himself, but reverently to inquire whether He has or has not revealed Himself in any way. His foolishness, we may be sure, is wiser than our wisdom. And the survey which we have taken of the signs of the Superhuman in our Scriptures justifies the conviction that He has revealed Himself "at sundry times and in divers manners," all of them worthy of Him and adapted to man; and that, chief of all, He has "declared" Himself and spoken to us by His Son, who is "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person."

*See Part  
First,*  
*pp. 7, 8.*



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