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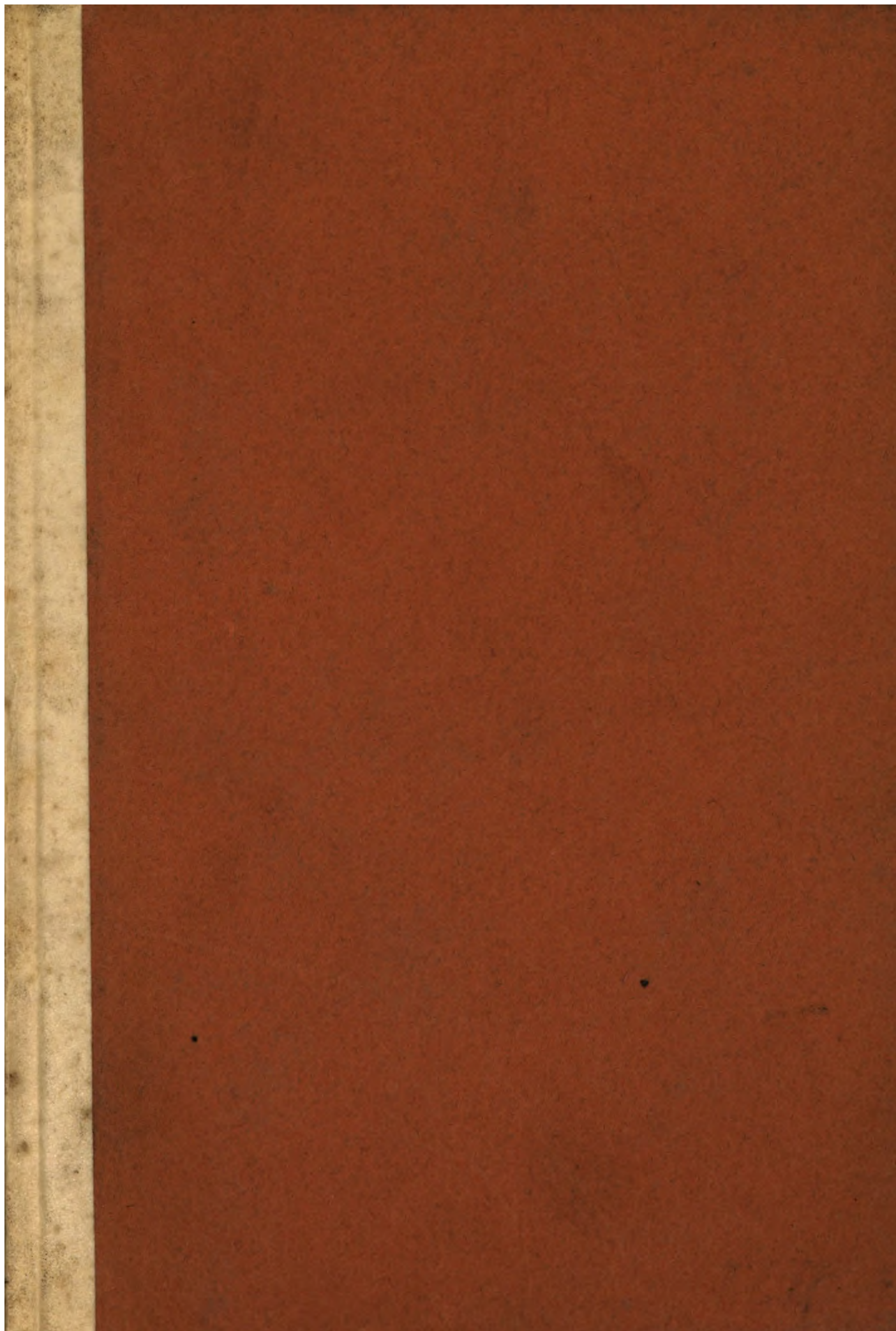
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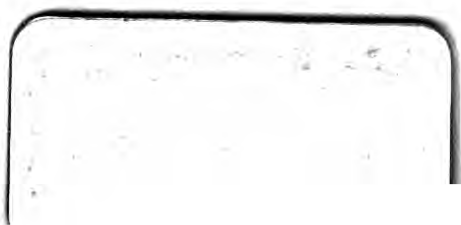
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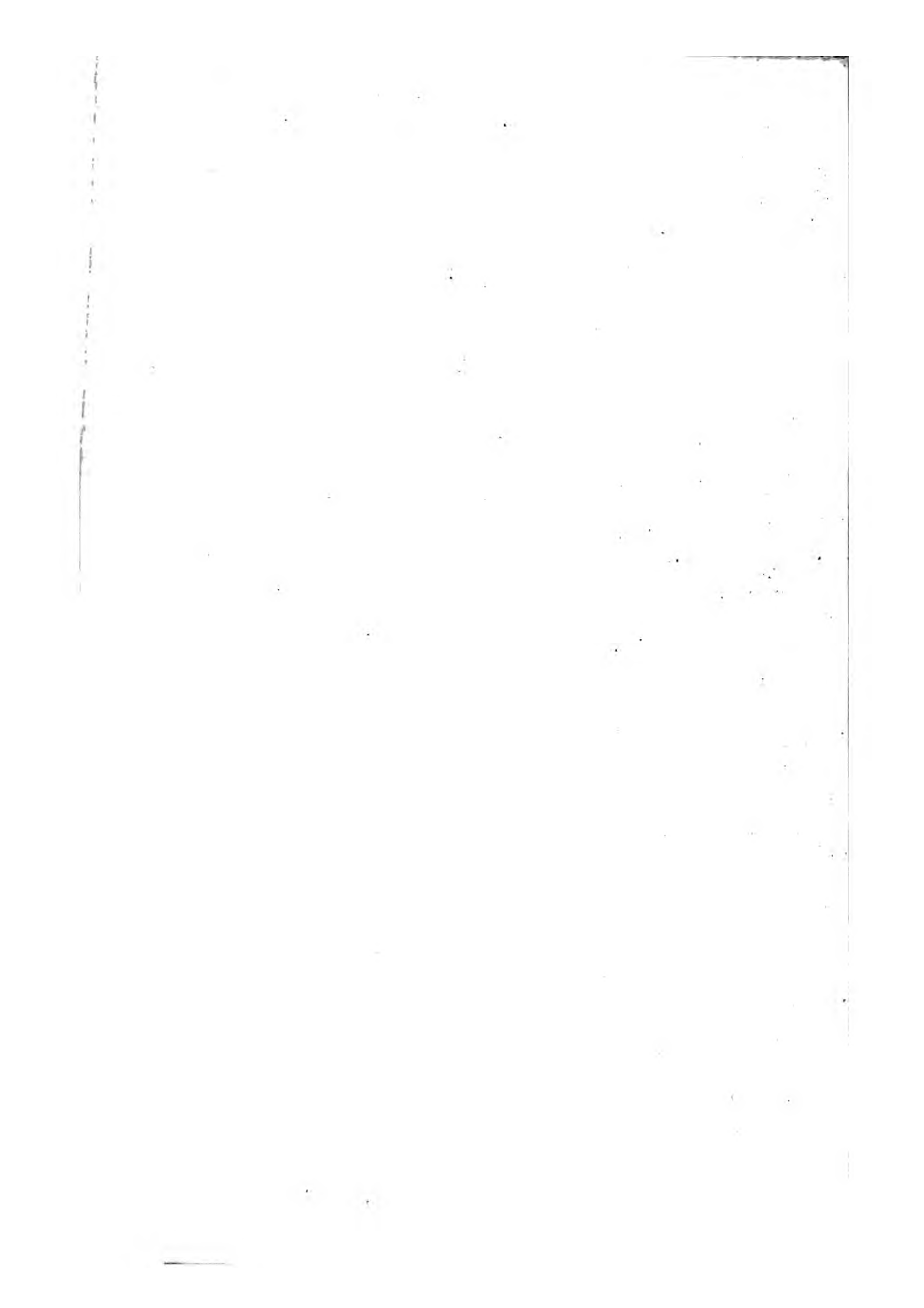
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CHRISTIANITY AND ITS EVIDENCES.

No. I.

*A Request to Dr Lee for Further Particulars
Concerning Biblical Inspiration.*

BY A

DIVINITY STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN.



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A REQUEST TO DR LEE.

THE Christian apologist, according as his assailants shift their ground of attack, assumes in succession various attitudes of defence. The weapons employed by the Deists of the last century in their attack upon the Christian citadel, consisted mainly in certain presumptions, which they held to exist, against the notion of a miraculous revelation in general, and against the particular scheme of Christianity, on such grounds as its want of universality, its incomprehensibility, and the like. They appealed to man's "*à priori* sense of what ought in equity to be." "It is impossible," so they said, "that if the scheme of Christianity were divine, it should not be characterised by such and such attributes, which it lacks, and should lack others which it possesses. These positive characteristics and negative imperfections constitute a series of difficulties in the way of its reception." Accordingly, Butler, starting from the ground common to him and the Deists, namely, the belief in "an intelligent author of nature and natural governor of the world," and demonstrating that for every difficulty advanced by the Deist as inherent in the Christian scheme, there existed an analogous difficulty in the known course of nature, proved that those who deny Christianity to have been from God on account of these difficulties, may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him. It is with a very different class of opponents, however, that the apologists of orthodoxy at the pre-

sent day have to deal. Without venturing so far as to deny the possibility of a divine revelation *à priori*, they confine themselves to the question of evidence, and ask upon what proof supernatural Christianity rests. What authority, they say, have the writers of the Scriptures that they should be believed? The establishment of new canons of evidence, of a new criterion of historic truth, has resulted in the unhesitating rejection of miracles from all profane history. Upon what grounds, then, do the orthodox demand that the gospel narratives should be received? The philosophical student of history puts to himself the question, "Whether, in any given story of a miracle, the proof is so strong that no room is left for mistake, exaggeration, or illusion?" and this question he feels himself compelled in each instance to answer in the negative. With such conclusion the Protestant heartily agrees, in the case of all miraculous narratives save those of the Bible. What, then, is the ground whereon he rests the wide distinction which he thus draws between the Bible and all other history? Is it that the miracles reported in Scripture are supported by a higher *degree of historical evidence* than all other miracles; or is he in possession of a proof of the Gospel story, distinct *in kind* no less than in degree from all the methods of historic authentication?

To this the majority of our clergy reply: "The foundation on which our belief rests differs from historical evidence *in kind*. Our authority is an infallible book, written by the finger of God himself, and thus constituted an indisputable authority for the facts which it narrates." Proof of this assertion is hereupon demanded; and so it comes to pass that the task of the Christian Apologist of the present is regarded by many, if not most, of our church, as consisting in the establishment and defence of the traditional doctrine of inspiration.

Now, it must be admitted on all hands that, in order

to the maintenance of any doctrine or theory of inspiration, it is absolutely necessary that such theory be shown to be at least not incompatible with any fact or facts observable in Holy Scripture. A just theory of inspiration is simply a comprehensive survey of the facts which are observed in the course of an exhaustive study of the Bible ; and accordingly this is the task which Dr Lee sets himself to, in the book which forms the manual on inspiration appointed for the students of the University of Dublin. To quote his own words : " My object throughout has simply been to collect as many facts and results as my acquaintance with ancient or modern researches into the text or interpretation of scripture could supply, and thence to deduce what appeared to be the necessary inference." The conclusion to which such a survey leads is, according to Dr Lee, the establishment of " the infallible certainty, the indisputable authority, the perfect and entire truthfulness of all and every the parts of Holy Scripture." Nothing, then, can be clearer than that this writer regards his doctrine on inspiration as resting upon an exhaustive examination and induction of facts (p. 33), and that he is content to leave the safety of his inference, and consequently the authoritative truth of his doctrine, to the support of that induction (Preface, p. xxxiii.). His book is offered as " a reply to the general position that fallibility is a characteristic of the composition of the inspired penmen." It is obvious that any effective reply to that position must embrace the consideration of all the facts on which it is founded, and must show them to be at least not irreconcilable with the traditional views on inspiration. And it would appear that Dr Lee is strongly assured of the effectiveness of his reply. His doctrine, it seems, has nothing to fear from the most searching criticism of the contents of Scripture ; the difficulties in the way of accepting it have for the most part been met with such marvellous success as must convince any fair mind that such as

still remain are not insurmountable (pp. 421-423). He is convinced "that every assault which has marked the course of nineteen hundred years has but served to strengthen the bulwarks of his belief; and that above the chaos of human systems, and the wreck of philosophical speculation, the light of inspiration shines more brightly than ever." But now, strangely enough, in the face of this unambiguous language, which clearly implies that the great majority of *prima facie* difficulties in the way of the traditional doctrine of inspiration disappear on a closer and fuller examination of them, it is notorious that a large and influential party amongst the clergy feel themselves forced to abandon this view of inspiration as incompatible with many of the results of Biblical criticism, and to seek for one which will recognise the presence in Scripture of a human element, involving fallibility and error. Again, it will hardly be denied that those of our century who stand foremost in the ranks of literature and science are, seemingly, not those to whom the teaching of orthodoxy on the subject of inspiration seems most satisfactory. Grote and Froude, Mill and Bain, Huxley and Spencer, Arthur Clough and Francis Newman, George Eliot and Matthew Arnold,—all these adopt an attitude of suspense or indifference, if not (as in some cases) of actual hostility to this teaching. Now what is the natural conclusion from such a state of things? Plainly, that there exists a body of facts, which constitute in the eyes of a large number of the most cultivated men of the day a serious obstacle in the way of the reception of the church doctrine of inspiration. Thus the language employed by Dr Lee on this subject suggests a conclusion directly opposite to that to be drawn from the attitude of many of the widely-endowed and highly-trained intellects of our age. It thus becomes a matter of the deepest interest and importance to examine which of the two conclusions is warranted by the facts; and to this end we propose giving a brief consideration

to the array of objections which are advanced against the traditional doctrine of inspiration, as drawn from the contents of Scripture itself. In doing so, we will confine ourselves to the examination of those difficulties which are alleged to be found in the Book of Genesis. Our space would not admit an exhaustive discussion of the entire body of objections, and the issue can be determined as effectively if we limit ourselves to the study of a narrow department of the subject as if we were to "expatiate free" over the wide field which the whole literature of the subject presents to our view.

Now, in examining any portion of Holy Writ with a view to test its claims to infallibility as an inspired narrative, the first question which suggests itself to us is this: Can any "absolute palpable contradictions" be pointed out in the general story? It is plain that if any one such contradiction be shown certainly to exist, the claim for infallible accuracy falls instantly to the ground. There are two instances in which even Bishop Browne (in the Speaker's Commentary) admits that the narrative of Genesis thus contradicts itself.

1. In Genesis xxxv. 16-18, we read that Benjamin was born to Jacob after his return from Padan-Aram, while Jacob and his family were journeying from Bethlehem to Ephrath. Further on in the same chapter (vv. 24-26) Benjamin is enumerated amongst the sons of Jacob "which were born to him in Padan-Aram." Assuming that both these passages proceed from one and the same author, we have no resource but to pronounce him guilty of the grossest inaccuracy, and in this verdict Bishop Browne cannot but acquiesce, inasmuch as he notes on Gen. xxxv. 26 ("These are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-Aram") "*i.e.*, except Benjamin, whose birth has just been recorded in Canaan, v. 18."

2. In the account of the creation which is given in the first chapter of Genesis, we find the following declared to be the *order* of creation:—1. The whole

vegetable kingdom ; 2. Lights in the firmament of heaven ; 3. Fish and fowl ; 4. Cattle, creeping thing, and beast of the earth ; 5. Man and woman. On reading the first and second chapters continuously, our attention is immediately drawn to the fact that in chaps. i. 1—ii. 4, we apparently have a narrative that forms a complete whole in itself, concluding with the words, "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created." Upon this narrative follows another version (apparently) of the creation, which commences with this passage, "In the day of Jehovah-Elohim's making earth and heaven,—now no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no shrub of the field yet sprouted ; for Jehovah-Elohim had not made it rain on the earth, and man was not, to till the ground : and a mist rose from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground,—then Jehovah-Elohim formed the man of dust out of the ground." Here, then, it is asserted, as plainly as possible, that there were two conditions necessary for the existence of vegetation,—namely, moisture to nourish and a man to till,—which were called into existence by God antecedently to the appearance of any "plant or herb of the field." Subsequently to the creation of the man and his location in the garden, the vegetable kingdom is called into existence (this includes the "tree of life," and the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," v. 9). Hereupon follows the creation of beast and fowl, which is apparently understood by the writer as an assay towards the production of a help-meet for the man. No suitable mate being found amongst all these living things for Adam, a woman is constructed out of a rib of the man. Lastly, it seems as though the writer would imply that the existence of "thorns and thistles" (which apparently embraces all vegetation useless or hurtful to mankind) dates from the fall of man and the consequent curse pronounced on him by God. According to this latter story of the creation, then, the

order in which God made "the earth and all that therein is" would be as follows:—1. Man; 2. "Every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food," "the tree of life," "the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" 3. The animal creation; 4. Woman; 5. All noxious vegetation (?). There is no need to enlarge upon the discrepancy here laid bare between the two narratives; we will content ourselves with quoting a passage from a lecture by the Bishop of Carlisle, which will show the weight of difficulty attaching to such an order as that last given above. "We are so accustomed to the first chapter of Genesis, that I think we sometimes scarcely perceive its peculiarities; but *suppose that the reverse order of arrangement had been adopted, and that man in deference to his dignity had been represented as coming in first, and that other creatures had been represented as being made afterwards for his use and pleasure, would not this have made a radical change, and introduced an enormous scientific difficulty?*"

It has been said above that Bishop Browne admits the contradiction here. This statement the following remarks will show to be correct. In his commentary on ii. 5, Bishop Browne adopts the true rendering which we have already given of the passage, "Now no plant of the field was yet in the earth," &c., instead of the translation of the Authorised Version, to which, as he says, "it was objected long ago that it is opposed to i. 11." Bishop Browne, however, interprets ii. 5 to mean "that *no cultivated land,* and no vegetables fit for the use of man* were yet in existence on the earth," and states that the words rendered *plant, field, grew*, are "terms expressive of the produce of labour and cultivation." Unfortunately for the upholders of the traditional view of inspiration, this statement (which Bishop Browne has borrowed, without verifying it, from L. de Dieu) is *utterly untrue*. In the only other instances in

* Bishop Browne, be it observed, regards the narrative of ii. 4, seq., not as distinct from what precedes, but as "a kind of recapitulation, yet with some appearance (!) of diversity."

which the Hebrew word translated *plant* occurs in the Bible it means *a wild plant, not* "the produce of labour and cultivation;" and the words rendered *field* and *grow* are constantly employed in the sense of *uncultivated ground* and *spontaneous sprouting* respectively. Bishop Browne, therefore, having given his sanction to the amended translation of ii. 5 which is given above, and having signally failed in the endeavour to show that the plant creation of ii. 9 is distinct from that of i. 11, may be fairly said to have admitted the discrepancy, as above stated, to exist. (Comp. Colenso's "Critical Examination of the New Bible Commentary," part i. page 85.)

The process of deducing the order of creation from the latter narrative which we have here instituted, will doubtless seem to many harsh and overstrained. But we are compelled to subject the sacred story to this severe treatment, in consequence of the uncompromising attitude adopted by the champions of the traditionary view, who are incessantly talking to us of "the extraordinary scientific accuracy" and "the absolute infallibility" of the Mosaic cosmogony. These men force us upon a searching criticism of the Bible records, when they bring forward pretensions of such moment, and on them, consequently, the odium should fall, if any should be offended at the freedom of our treatment of Scripture.

Before leaving this particular topic it will be well to bring forward the views of the conservative commentator Delitzsch, as they will serve to show how reckless theologians of his class are of the meaning they import into the text of Scripture, provided they can wrest it so as to bring it into conformity with their preconceived theory of inspiration. His remarks on Gen. ii. 5 are to the following effect: The creation of the earth and its inhabitants was, in some sense, a struggle of the Creator with Satan and his powers. In this struggle Satan prevailed so far as to "mislead the earth, translated thus into misery, to stir up the dark, fiery prin-

ciple of the creature, and make unnatural intermixtures and mongrel formations, mutual murder, disease, and death, common among the races of God-created animals." The result of this was that all these animals (the work of the fifth and sixth days) were swept away, together with the vegetation created on the third day. In the creation of man Satan's interference would appear to have been ineffectual for any evil, so that this act is to be regarded as a triumph of God over the kingdom of darkness. A new creation of plants, beasts, and birds now follows, which is recorded in the ninth and the nineteenth verses of the second chapter (Delitzsch says nothing about the omission of reptiles and fishes in the latter story), and we have thus a plant world and an animal world, "such as corresponds to him who is called to be the lord and conqueror of evil, viz., man." Such is the series of perfectly gratuitous assumptions by which Delitzsch seeks to show the consistency of the two narratives which we are considering. It is remarkable that in his attempt to vindicate the truth of both, Delitzsch forces upon the language of Scripture such a meaning as to drive us to the conclusion that, if his view be correct, the Mosaic account of the cosmogony is simply a dexterous word-puzzle, so framed as to lead the ingenuous reader into innumerable misconceptions of the facts which it relates, while at the same time being capable of an interpretation in accordance with truth. (See Appendix A.)

Without pausing to notice at greater length the apparent contradictions which present themselves on comparing Genesis i. 29 with ii. 16, 17, and xxxvii. 28 with xl. 15, we will now proceed to the consideration of another question,—Are there to be found, in those portions of the Book which profess to relate mere matters of common history, any impossibilities or inconsistencies which, if they occurred in an ordinary narrative, would leave us no alternative but to conclude that narrative to be essentially *unhistorical*? In answer to this question, the following facts may be adduced:—

1. In Genesis xx. it is stated that Abimelech, king of Gerar, was taken captive with the beauty of Sarah when she was over ninety years of age, "old and well stricken in years" (chap. xviii.); and Abraham is said to have instigated her to the well-known dissimulation which she had before practised upon Pharaoh (chap. xii.), at a time when she was already pregnant of Isaac. (Bishop Browne obviates the first-mentioned difficulty by the assumption, for which there is no ground whatever, that Sarah's youth was miraculously renewed by the angels, whose visit is recorded in chap. xviii.)

2. Judah is represented as being *a great-grandfather* at the age of *forty-two* years (comp. Gen. xli. 46, xxix. 35, xxx. 24-26, xxxi. 41, xlvi. 12; and see "Colenso on the Pentateuch," p. 29); that is, at the time of the going down into Egypt. Bishop Browne says with great truth that this "must surely require some correction," and accordingly he proceeds to correct it by adopting for the period of Jacob's sojourn at Padan-Aram "a far more probable chronology than that commonly acquiesced in," namely, that after Jacob had served Laban fourteen years for his two wives, he then "had for twenty years taken care of his cattle, not as a servant but as a neighbour and friend;" and that, on the expiration of these thirty-four years, "at last for six years he served for wages." This would fix Judah's age at sixty-two years instead of forty-two, at the time of the migration into Egypt. But Bishop Browne's chronology is based merely upon the assumption that the "twenty years" of xxxi. 38 are different from the "twenty years" of the 41st verse of the same chapter, a notion for which there is not the faintest shadow of foundation, as will immediately be seen if we compare the two passages:—

"These twenty years am I with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten,"—xxxi. 38.

“Thus have I been twenty years in thy house ; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle,”—xxx. 41.

Bishop Browne would fain have us regard this chronological statement as another instance of the ingenious word-puzzle above alluded to. He will, however, it is to be feared, find few to go with him here.

3. We may now call attention to another difficulty which presents itself on comparing chaps. xii., xx. and xxvi. The story of Sarah's dissimulation recorded in chap. xii. is found repeated twice afterwards in Genesis. In the last instance, however, the accomplices are, not Abraham and Sarah, but Isaac and Rebekah, while their victim is Abimelech, king of Gerar. Now this last event occurred *about eighty years* after that recorded in chap. xx., on which we have remarked above, and in which the participators were Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech. Accordingly, many persons understand the Abimelech of chap. xxvi. to be the son of the king of that name who figures in the story of chap. xx. Even were we to admit this, it seems strange that the name of the “chief captain of the host” should have been Phichol on each occasion. This latter difficulty Bishop Browne would obviate by explaining the name Phichol to mean “the mouth of all,” *i.e.*, *commander-in-chief*,—so that Phichol would be, like Pharaoh, a title rather than a name. Unfortunately for this view, it is added that Phichol was “the chief captain of his army,” in xxvi. 26, a piece of information which would be superfluous on the supposition that Phichol was merely an official title.

It is quite true that such a difficulty as that here noticed would not, in the absence of any plainer instances of “impossibilities and inconsistencies,” be sufficient to establish the unhistorical character of the book in which it occurs, and that if the narrative now under consideration stood alone, we might very well accept the explanations offered for the difficulties in-

volved in it (always protesting against the loose style of narrative which introduces a second Abimelech without giving any notice to that effect); but when this story is flanked by the others above discussed, in which undeniable impossibilities are found, it certainly heightens considerably our suspicions as to the historical value of these early chapters, and must be duly taken into account in estimating the cumulative evidence adduced against the historic truth of the Pentateuch.

We will now go on to consider a few of the objections which have been brought against the truthfulness and authority of Genesis, on the ground of the discrepancies alleged to exist between its teaching and the positive results of science. Our review of this part of the subject must be brief and imperfect. Before entering upon it, we must in a few words justify and explain the method which we are about to adopt in interpreting the language of the Mosaic narrative.

If, as we are told by Dr Lee and others, "all and every the parts of Scripture are infallibly certain, indisputably authoritative, and perfectly and entirely true," then it follows that we must regard the first chapter of Genesis as a formal scientific treatise on the cosmogony. There is really no escape from this conclusion. The record expressly undertakes and professes to give the order and the exact details of creation. Dr Lee says (Lectures, p. 421) that "they who seek in the announcements of Scripture for positive information on matters pertaining to natural science, will, indeed, ever seek in vain." We do not at all question the truth of this assertion; we merely ask, Is it consistent with the doctrine of inspiration as laid down throughout these discourses? It is or it is not true that, previously to a certain point of time in the period commencing with man's advent upon earth, all living creatures, be they cattle, beast, bird, or reptile, were supported exclusively by vegetable food. The words of Scripture assert that

this is true; the certain and indisputable results of geology prove that it is false. Which testimony are we bound to believe? Surely the question, when brought to this simple and definite issue, is not solved by asserting that Scripture does not contain any positive information on matters of natural science. If the first chapter of Genesis is altogether and in every part infallibly true, what, we ask, is its object, if it is not to supply information on natural science? We must say that such an attempt to evade the pressure of scientific difficulties as that we have just given from the university text-book on inspiration, is not by any means creditable, and that it would be at once more logical and more honourable to assume the attitude of the Roman Catholic theologians, and boldly maintain with Suarez the scientific adequacy and authority of the Mosaic story of creation and of all possible deductions therefrom, against the counter assertions and results of geology and palæontology.

We deem ourselves justified, then, while instituting a comparison between the teaching of the Bible and that of science, in treating the written record as if it indeed were in all parts absolutely true, and accordingly in drawing any logical inference whatever from its statements. And now, to return from this digression:—

1. Scripture teaches us that the universe of things was called into being about six thousand years ago; that “in six days God created the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that therein is;” that the blue expanse* which we see over our heads is a solid vault, furnished with a door (Gen. xxviii. 17) and windows (vii. 11), through the latter of which the rain descends upon the earth from a supernal ocean, supported over us by this solid transparent vault; that light, day, and night were in existence previously to the creation of the sun, moon, and stars, though these are elsewhere

* See Appendix B.

said to have been created "to give light upon the earth;" that first the whole vegetable kingdom, then all fishes and birds, then all cattle, beasts and reptiles were created; that the vegetable kingdom *in its entirety*, and to the exclusion of animal food, was given for food to these living creatures and to man.

The following facts may, on the other hand, be given as the positive results of science:—That our earth is many hundred thousand years old; that it has assumed its present condition, not in a period of six days, but by means of gradual and continuous changes through a long series of ages; "that the introduction of fresh genera and species of plants and animals has been very gradual" (*Faith and Free Thought*, p. 147); that plants and animals were not called into existence in distinct and successive creations (*i.e.*, first, all the plants, then all the fish and fowl, then all the beasts and reptiles), as the first chapter of Genesis asserts; that the source of rain is not to be found in a heavenly ocean, sustained by a solid vault above us, but in sea-vapours and in "fen-sucked fogs, drawn by the powerful sun," which condense and fall in raindrops on our earth; that for thousands of years before the advent of man upon the earth, the sun existed as the source of light and heat to earth and its living organisms; and that, for ages prior to that advent, animals lived upon animal food, as the formation of their teeth and stomachs testifies.

We have here what would seem to be the teaching of the Mosaic account of the cosmogony, directly contradicted by the thoroughly ascertained results of science. And accordingly much has been written to show that the plain and obvious meaning of the narrative (as above given) is not necessarily the true one, and that the words of the sacred writer are capable of an interpretation which places them in harmony with scientific truth.

1. The first great difficulty which presents itself to

the harmonist arises from the scripture statements as to the age of the earth. It appears from these statements that about six thousand years ago "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them," and that the work of creation occupied six "days." In order to bring this chronological statement into agreement with the certain fact that the earth has existed for several hundreds of thousands of years, two different hypotheses have been put forward. That for which Chalmers is responsible, interpolates a series of geological ages *before* the first day; to Cuvier is to be attributed the other, which expands the six days themselves into geological ages. According to the former of these hypotheses, a long period may have elapsed between the event recorded in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis and the transactions which are narrated in the second and following verses. This supposition, however, though obviating the difficulty which arises from the vast antiquity of the earth, is shown by Hugh Miller to be untenable, inasmuch as it fails to satisfy the conditions brought to light by the advance of geological science. It may be added that such an interpretation is rendered impossible, if we accept what some Hebrew scholars regard as the probably correct translation of the passage:—"In the beginning of Elohim's forming the heaven and the earth; and the earth was waste and emptiness, &c.,—then said Elohim, Let there be light, and there was light." (Comp. the similar parenthesis in the passage, ii. 4-7.) Hugh Miller's notion, again, that the expression "six days" here denotes six geological ages, is open to objections no less grave than those which stand in the way of Chalmers' view. In the first place, this hypothesis, even were the language of scripture such as to admit it, is not enough to meet all the requisitions of geological science; it does not constitute an adequate mode of reconciling the narrative of Genesis with the testimony of the rocks. But secondly, such an interpretation of

the language of the Bible is not possible. In Exodus xx. 11, where the reason for the consecration of the Sabbath is given, "the seventh" day must certainly be understood to mean a natural day of twenty-four hours, and consequently the other days also must have been natural days. To suppose otherwise, is to suppose that God deliberately employed language in a sense other than that which He knew it would convey to the minds of those to whom it was addressed, that is, to regard the Almighty as having "acted in a manner which he would esteem dishonest and base in a man." We must add that we agree heartily with Mr Huxley when he says: "It may be asserted that the worship of a personal God, who"—on the hypothesis we are at present considering—"must have used language studiously calculated to deceive His creatures and worshippers, is no religion worthy of the name. *Incredibile est Deum illis verbis ad populum fuisse locutum quibus deciperetur*, is a verdict in which, for once, Jesuit casuistry concurs with the healthy moral sense of all mankind." (*Critiques and Addresses*, p. 274.)

2. We will now proceed to quote the remarks of the conservative and orthodox commentator, Delitzsch, on the Mosaic account of the origin of rain. On Genesis i. 7 he observes: "It must be allowed that the Old Testament view is here chargeable with a *defect*, since no physical connection exists between the waters which descend in rain and the heavenly waters, to which the New Testament also refers (Rev. iv. 6; xv. 2; xxii. 1). This view, however, is not without deep truth. The rain is, as it were, a dole of the heavenly waters let down, and a heavenward-pointing type of it. Besides which, it is worthy of consideration that the exactest astronomical inquiry teaches us that there are white spots on the poles of Mars," apparently "snow-and-ice-covered regions;" the matter of Saturn is "not half as dense as water," &c., &c. "Such teachings of the latest astronomy are of use to familiarize us with the thought

that the upper waters really denote *a supra-firmamental fluid, or something like water, whatever it may be*:—perhaps the substance out of which, on the fourth day, the stars were actually formed, as the dry land out of the ‘lower waters.’” Need we remark on this, that the question at issue is not whether there be “a supra-firmamental fluid” or not, but whether the statement of Scripture that rain descends through the windows of the vaults of heaven to the earth, is “infallibly certain, indisputably authoritative, and perfectly and entirely true?”

3. The difficulty which arises from the point in the order of creation given by the writer of the first chapter of Genesis to the formation of the sun, is boldly faced by Dr M’Caul. That writer sees in the statements of “Moses” on this head “an instance of extraordinary scientific accuracy.” This is, indeed, taking the bull by the horns. Dr M’Caul is of opinion that geology proves “that before the human period there was no difference of climate, that the earth was not dependent on the sun for its temperature.” But it would appear to be the opinion of the geologists that their science *does not prove* either one or other of the above propositions; and, further, that it *disproves* both one and the other. (See *Colenso on the Pentateuch*, § 1006.) Another explanation of this difficulty, however, is offered by Bishop Browne. He supposes that the creation of the sun is related in the first verse of the chapter; that the sun remained obscured by “a clouded atmosphere, or other obstacle,” until the fourth day, when these impediments were removed, and the sun was manifested to the earth. Unfortunately the words of the writer will not admit of this hypothesis. He uses the word “made,” in verse 16, of the making of the sun, exactly as it is used in verse 25 of the making of the beasts, cattle, and creeping things; and consequently we are forced to believe that the writer means to convey the information that the sun was really called into existence on the

fourth day. But, supposing that the expressions here used sanctioned such a view, why, we must be allowed to ask, could not the writer have said clearly what he meant to say?

Having noticed some of the graver difficulties which have been pointed out in the Mosaic story of creation, as well as the attempted solutions of them, I proceed to consider the objections to the narrative of the flood, which will, it is feared, prove to be no less troublesome to answer than those above discussed.

And here we may, first of all, remark that the language of Scripture speaks distinctly of a universal deluge. In order to make good this assertion, I may quote Genesis vi. 17, where, it is to be remembered, Jehovah himself is the speaker: "Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy *all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven, and everything that is in the earth shall die.*" And again, vii. 4, "Every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth." (Compare vii. 21-23; viii. 21, &c.) The difficulties in the way of the notion of a universal deluge are, however, simply insuperable. In the first place, as Kalisch, Lyell, Miller, and Scrope (quoted by Colenso), as well as others, have shown, one of the thoroughly ascertained results of geological science is the fact, that during the last twelve thousand years, at least, no devastating flood can have passed over the face of the earth. Secondly, it is certain that the geographical distribution of certain species of animals has been the same for many ages, commencing at a period thousands of years anterior to the advent of man. How, then, are we to suppose that these species, *e.g.* the sloth and the armadillo from South America, the apteryx from New Zealand, the kangaroo from Australia, made their way to the ark, or back again from it after the flood? Thirdly, how could the proper food for all these species have been collected by Noah and his sons (Gen. vi. 21)? Fourthly, would it not be

an inevitable result of the mingling of the salt with the fresh water, that all marine, river, and lake fish must have perished; and would not the vastly greater portion of the vegetation have perished in submersion for a whole year? These, and a score of other questions, reiterated again and again, and still unanswered, have forced the greater number of the defenders of plenary inspiration to take refuge in the hypothesis that the deluge was merely partial. Thus, according to Dr Gladstone, it has been found that "according to the ordinary use of Semitic terms a partial deluge destroying the whole race of man, or even perhaps only that race to which the survivors belonged, would meet every requirement. That such a flood was possible, even from natural causes, in those parts of Asia where Noah probably lived, is shown by the fact that the whole of an enormous tract of land is far below the level of the Black Sea; and part of this region of the Caspian exhibits comparatively recent evidences of the action of water." It is necessary to examine this statement minutely. And, first, what proof is there that the notion of a partial deluge is in accordance with the ordinary use of Semitic terms? We are referred by Bishop Browne to Deuteronomy ii. 25, Genesis xli. 57, and 1 Kings xviii. 10, for examples of a similar overstatement. Now, in the passage quoted from Deuteronomy, the expression which occurs plainly means "all nations upon the face of the whole earth;" so that the parallel does not hold here. The passage of Genesis speaks of "all countries" coming into Egypt to buy corn; and that quoted from 1 Kings is as follows: "There is no nation or kingdom whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee." Now, we ask, are these expressions as strong and unequivocal as those quoted above from Genesis vi. and vii.; or as the following: "All flesh died that moved upon the earth;" "All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died;" "The waters shall no more become

a flood to destroy all flesh," &c., &c. Most certainly they are not: and there is no truth in the assertion that the view which would regard the Mosaic account of the flood as an account of a partial deluge, find support from parallel expressions in other parts of the Bible. But, supposing that such a view were admissible, does it "meet every requirement" of the case? No; it fails to satisfy several conditions which the narrative requires to be satisfied. In the first place, to quote the words of Bishop Colenso, "it is just as inconceivable that the worms, and snails, and grasshoppers should have crawled into the ark, from different parts of some large basin in Western Asia, as that they should have done so from different parts of the world. One small brook alone would have been a barrier to their further progress." Secondly, there would have been no need to crowd the ark with seven pairs of birds of all sorts to be found in this basin, since the large majority of these species must have been distributed beyond the limits of it; and it would have been possible for many of such as may have been confined to this area to escape by flying beyond it. Thirdly, the supposition of a partial deluge, such as to prevail fifteen cubits upward over all the high hills within Noah's ken, becomes impossible, unless we either assume that there was a complete circular range of higher hills outside these lower hills (which must have disappeared since the deluge, as no trace of such is to be found at the present day); or believe that the laws of gravitation were miraculously suspended, inasmuch as by their action such a partial deluge as is supposed would speedily become universal.

In the preceding remarks we have indicated a few of the objections which have been put forward by many highly cultivated men of our day, as standing obstacles to the reception of the Bible as a divinely infallible whole. Confining our attention to the book of Genesis, we find that in it at least three or four instances of

self-contradiction and inconsistency have been pointed out as apparently existing in the ordinary historical narrative, and that all such solutions as have been offered to the difficulties arising from these, fix upon the author of Genesis, if they be accepted as adequate, the stigma either of gross inaccuracy of expression, or of a deliberate intention to deceive. Furthermore, we have seen that what appears to everybody as the plain, straightforward teaching of Scripture on the creation and the flood is diametrically opposed to many of the well-established results of science; and that any interpretations of the language of Genesis which have been as yet proposed fail to satisfy the conditions clearly laid down by the facts of geology. (We waive the consideration of the moral difficulty involved in the association of the notion of a divine infallibility with that of a subterhuman obscurity.) And accordingly we now turn to Dr. Lee's Discourses, in the hope of getting some clue whereby to find our way out of this difficulty. Dr. Lee, it will be remembered, demands that his book should be regarded as containing a "patient induction of facts," leading up to the position that holy scripture is an infallible and divinely authoritative whole. We must then expect to find the above quoted instances of (apparent) discrepancy duly taken into account in this "patient induction," if they are "facts," that is, if the discrepancy is real; and if it is not so, we shall expect from Dr. Lee a demonstration to that effect, or at least some indication of a quarter where we can find such a demonstration. Unfortunately, however, after reading the book through, we cannot find any attempt to grapple with these stubborn "facts," any effort to show that the discrepancies pointed out are merely apparent, or any reference, distinctly made, to the authorities by means of which Dr Lee has satisfied himself of the irrelevancy and insolidity of the objections which are urged against his doctrine of inspiration. In his preface to the third edition of his book, there is a passage

which perhaps explains this remarkable silence. Speaking of the "Essays and Reviews," and of Bishop Colenso's works on the Pentateuch, Dr. Lee observes: "In each of these cases we recognise the weapons, *long disused*, by which Christianity has, from time to time, been assailed; and this *resuscitation of the old arguments* of our antagonists has naturally suggested the resumption of *the old methods of defence*." And again, further on he says: "I have abstained from any notice of recent discussions. *There were no new difficulties to be encountered—no new arguments to be set aside*." These passages seem to show that Dr. Lee would refer us back, generally, to the body of ancient works of controversial theology, for a satisfactory answer to all recent opponents of the traditionary view. It is to be wished, notwithstanding, that Dr. Lee had particularised some one or more authorities in this matter, instead of contenting himself with a mere general reference. We would have been able in that case, by consulting the authorities cited, to determine whether he has acted in a justifiable manner in ignoring the above-mentioned instances of discrepancy as being capable of a satisfactory explanation. Perhaps, however, if Dr. Lee were to particularise his authorities, the result would not be more favourable to the establishing of his position than in the case of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, pronouncing that the objections adduced by Colenso are "for the most part puerile and trite," triumphantly refers us to Archbishop Usher for their solution!

If such be the case, and if the refutation afforded by Dr. Lee's unknown authorities of the difficulties enumerated above be not more valid than the answer afforded by Usher's lucubrations to Colenso's objections, we can quite appreciate the prudence of the course which Dr. Lee has adopted, and of the *general* remarks in which he deals so largely in this preface. Meanwhile, we must call attention to an error into which the rev. lecturer has fallen. It is not true that "there are no new argu-

ments to be set aside" by the defender of the orthodox doctrine of inspiration. The great body of objections drawn from the results of geological science are necessarily quite new, inasmuch as that science cannot date its existence farther back than the beginning of the present century.

It is to be regretted, then, that Dr. Lee has neither himself dealt with any of the recent objections to the Pentateuch, nor referred us definitely to any reply thereto, inasmuch as we are hereby hindered from accepting his conclusions, in the absence of any appearance on his part of a "patient and exhaustive induction." Indeed in all candour we are obliged to say that such an induction was not to be expected from Dr. Lee, seeing that he takes for granted, at the very outset of his investigation, not only the authenticity and the genuineness, but also *the perfect truthfulness* of every book in the Bible. How an inquiry which starts with this large assumption can be regarded by the author, or by any one, as a process of induction from "all the facts and results which ancient and modern researches into the text of scripture supply," it is indeed hard to see; nor is it very easy to distinguish between the value of such an investigation, viewed as a *proof*, and that of the argument in support of inspiration drawn from "the witness of the Spirit," although Dr. Lee appears to contrast the two lines of argument in a marked manner (p. 34).

We apprehend that the description which is given on page xxxiii. of the nature of these discourses is a mistaken one, and that they might be more correctly regarded as an attempt, starting from the assumption of the infallibility of scripture, to recognise and appraise every fact which seems to lead up to such a conclusion, and to give the *congé* to every fact which points in an opposite direction. Such a method, however, cannot be expected to have any weight with those who approach the question of inspiration unbiassed on either

side ; nor will it be regarded as in the least convincing, save by those who are convinced already.

The attitude assumed by most of the clergy on the question of Biblical Infallibility is indeed a strange and puzzling one. While upholding the unity and absolute truthfulness of scripture with a high hand, as far as assertion goes, they yet avoid the task of answering the innumerable objections brought forward against this doctrine, and content themselves with a vague and general dismissal of the whole body of difficulties, as trite and puerile. We are told that "modern science, with all its wonderful advances, has discovered not one single inaccurate allusion to physical truth, in all the countless illustrations employed in the Bible," and that in it "every scientific statement is infallibly accurate ; all its history and narrations of every kind are without any inaccuracy." (*Baylee's Manual of Inspiration*, pp. 42, 62.) Dr. M'Caul talks of the "extraordinary scientific accuracy" of the Mosaic cosmogony. Mr Garbett says that "in all consistent reason, we must accept the whole of the inspired autographs or reject the whole, as from end to end unauthoritative and worthless ;" and in this opinion it appears that Dr. Lee joins (*Preface*, p. xxiii., sqq.) Those who reject the traditionary doctrine of inspiration are spoken of as identical with the assailants of Christianity and the pertinacious "opponents of the holy faith." If this be so, then why do not the clergy come forward in a body and put to silence these opponents by refuting their arguments ? Or, if these arguments defy refutation, why not honestly say so, and proclaim an open and irrevocable breach between theology and science ? We would then be able to reject or to accept definitely the doctrine "that the belief in a proposition, because authority tells you it is true, or because you wish to believe it, which is a high crime and misdemeanour when the subject matter of reasoning is of one kind, becomes under the *alias* of 'faith' the greatest of

virtues, when the subject matter of reasoning is of another kind." (*Huxley, Critiques and Addresses*, p. 272.)

But what is the attitude of the laity in our church on this question? This may be more clearly set forward by a quotation than by any words of our own. The passage is taken from a remarkable poem by Arthur Clough, entitled "The Shadow." This poem gives an account of a dream, in which the shade of Jesus Christ is represented as sitting upon "a stone that was not rolled aside," at the mouth of his tomb, and proclaiming to the world the evanescence of the historic scaffolding of the gospel, and of the cardinal fact of the resurrection in particular. The author describes the effect which this intelligence has upon various classes of men, and, amongst others, upon the body of the laity in general:—

"And the great world, it chanced, came by that way,
And stopped, and looked, and spoke to the police,
And said the thing, for order's sake and peace,
Must certainly be suppressed, the nuisance cease.
His wife and daughter must have where to pray,
And whom to pray to, at the least one day
In seven, and something sensible to say.
Whether the fact so many years ago
Had, or not, happened, how was he to know?
Yet he had always heard that it was so.
As for himself, perhaps it was all one;
And yet he found it not unpleasant, too,
On Sunday morning in the roomy pew,
To see the thing with such decorum done.
As for himself, perhaps, it was all one;
Yet on one's death-bed all men always said
It was a comfortable thing to think upon
The atonement and the resurrection of the dead.
So the great world, as having said his say,
Unto his country-house pursued his way."

These lines, intended as a description of the position assumed by the laity towards a very different question, admirably express their line of conduct with regard to

the question of inspiration. Many of those with whom the present writer has spoken, while freely accepting the results of the more advanced German criticism on the Bible, are yet strongly opposed to any recognition of the best established of these results being made officially in the pulpit, and advocate the adoption of an attitude of intelligent quietism on the matter. They dwell with emphasis upon the painful consequences sure to follow on the recognition of a fallible element in the Bible, and upon the occasion which the enemies of religion would take to blaspheme, if such an admission were made by the clergy. On the other hand it may be truly said that if the course they advise be pursued, a still wider and more general severance will ensue between the Church and men of intelligence and culture,—a consequence which it is at least as terrible to contemplate as that of the disturbance of the weaker brethren amongst us.

In conclusion, let us urge upon the defenders of plenary inspiration the absolute necessity of coming forward and grappling with the arguments of their opponents in detail. We have been hearing long enough, in all conscience, that the objections brought against this doctrine are puerile, trite and oft-refuted. Let some one of the champions of the orthodox view descend to particulars and prove them to be so, for it is of no use to indulge any longer in the very off-hand generalities to which Dr Lee treats us in his discourses. The only way, indeed, which we can see of reconciling the style of this writer's remarks on the works of Colenso, Temple, Williams, Powell, and others of that class, with a belief in his candour and honesty, is to assume that he has not given them a careful reading, but has rather caught up the contemptuous and uncandid tone of depreciation which marks so strongly all the "Replies" on the side of orthodoxy which have appeared in England. Dr Lee seems to recognise but two classes of thinkers on religion,—the scornful unbe-

liever and the convinced and faithful Christian. He ought to know that there is a third class of thinkers, far more numerous at the present day than either of the other two, namely, the honest and earnest sceptic or doubter. His book is eminently *polemical*. It strives to confirm the already strong believer,—to fling a proud defiance in the face of all who venture to question or doubt. We needly hardly say that this is not a method likely to prove effectual in bringing home to the bosom of the Church those numberless souls whose brightness and peace have been so sadly overclouded, and, alas, too often for ever banished, by the religious doubts and controversies of our day.

But it would seem as though the champions of Biblical infallibility felt instinctively that unless the doctrine of the literal and plenary inspiration of Scripture were maintained, nothing could preserve and establish the facts on which supernatural Christianity rests. And in holding this conviction they are supported by a great authority in matters of history, Mr J. A. Froude. In the first volume of the "Short Studies" he observes, "Of *evidence* for the resurrection, in the common sense of the word, there may be enough to show that something extraordinary occurred; but not enough, unless we assume the fact to be true on far other grounds, to produce any absolute and unhesitating conviction. . . . If historical facts are bound up with the Creed, and if they are to be received with the same completeness as the laws of conscience, they rest, and must rest, either on the divine truth of Scripture, or on the divine witness in ourselves. *On human evidence the miracles of St Theresa and St Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament.*" If this be so, then, indeed, is the whole fabric of the commonly received Christianity tottering and ready to crumble to pieces; but surely it is no just reason why the dogma, which forms the sole proof and stay of the edifice, should still continue to be taught and believed, in spite

of the most convincing proof of its falsity. To employ the fact stated by Mr Froude as an argument in favour of the doctrine of plenary inspiration, is clearly just as great an offence against morality as that committed by Sir W. Hamilton, when he attempted to create a prejudice in favour of his own peculiar views concerning the will, by representing them as furnishing the only reliable argument in support of the existence of God. If the sustentation of orthodox Christianity depends on the promulgation of a lie, then let orthodox Christianity perish. Let us walk meanwhile in the light of conscience, in singleness of heart, fearing God ; and if we do, we may boldly say with the poet :—

“ Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidos ferient ruinae.”

APPENDIX.

A.

IT is perhaps scarcely necessary to note that the inconsistencies here pointed out are due to the composite character of the Book of Genesis. There is no more certain result of critical research than that two hands, at least, are to be traced throughout this book. The Elohist portion, if extracted from the longer story in which it is embedded, will be found to form a continuous narrative of the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, at least so far down as the marriage of Esau. In the subsequent portion of the book, the Jehovist would seem not only to have made additions, but also to have occasionally substituted his own versions for the stories of his predecessor. The distinction drawn between these two portions of Genesis is founded on (1), numerous differences in style and expression ; (2), discrepancies in the subject matter ; and (3), on the predominance of the names Elohim and Jehovah in the Elohist

and Jehovistic portions respectively. Dr Lee characterises this distinction as a "figment," but does not give any reason for such a conclusion. Mr Neale (and also Bishop Colenso, in his lecture on the Moabite stone, and elsewhere), has extracted the Elohist narrative and given it in a separate form.

B.

Archdeacon Pratt ("Scripture and Science not at Variance," edition of 1871), rubs his hands with glee at the discovery that the Septuagint and English translators have erred in giving *στερεωμα* and *firmament* as translations of the Hebrew *rakia* in Gen. i. 6. The word *rakia* is correctly "an expanded thing," such as a canopy, as the Latin note quoted by the Archdeacon says. There can be no doubt whatever that the writer of the first chapter of Genesis, conceived of this "expanded thing" as of a solid crystal vault. We gather this from a comparison of Gen. vii. 11, xxviii. 17, Ezek. i. 22, Dan. xii. 3, Exod. xxiv. 10, Rev. iv. 6, and other passages in the Bible, which show that the Old Testament writers believed that there was over their heads an ocean supported on a solid crystal floor, furnished with door and windows, and in which were set the sun, moon, and stars (comp. also Job xxvi. 11, 2 Sam. xxii. 8, Ps. lxxviii. 23.) Archdeacon Pratt's notion of inspiration seems to be that the Almighty, in employing man as the medium of communication with men, prompted him to use such expressions as could, *in virtue of their etymologies*, be expanded to meet the ever-widening requirements of scientific investigation, while at the same time the meaning which they bore to the writer, and to those to whom the communication was originally addressed, was diametrically opposed to the truth, as in after ages independently discovered. In plain language this means that we are to believe the first chapter of Genesis to be a Revelation, because nothing is revealed in it. Archdeacon Pratt, moreover, observes:—"It is interesting to observe that the New Testament writers, who often quoted the Septuagint version *verbatim et literatim*, have been *preserved (!)* from using this erroneous term *στερεωμα* to describe the celestial firmament, although it occurs in several places in that version of the Old Testament, and the New Testament writers had not scientific knowledge to avoid the error of themselves." The puerility of this

observation would be ludicrous if it were not painful. Will Archdeacon Pratt have the kindness to explain how it was that, with so careful a supervision as he would have us believe was exercised over the New Testament writers, it ever came to pass that the Apostle St Jude was permitted to found a weighty argument on a quotation from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch, as the genuine and authentic production of "Enoch, the seventh from Adam?"

C.

In three of the lectures which have been published by the Christian Evidence Society in the two volumes entitled "Modern Scepticism," and "Faith and Free Thought," namely in those "On the historical difficulties of the Bible," "On the supposed collision between Scripture and Natural Science," and "On the corroborative evidence of Old Testament history from the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments," an elaborate attempt is made to maintain the traditionary view of the infallible accuracy of the Pentateuch and other portions of the Bible. The author of the first mentioned of the above lectures begins by discussing the difficulty which meets us when we observe the scanty time which the numbers of the authorised version allow for the development and dispersion of mankind from the deluge to the birth of Jesus. According to these numbers, "All mankind sprang from a single pair within twenty-five or twenty-six centuries of the Christian era," and "this time is said with reason to be quite insufficient." The author then goes on to notice the discrepancy that exists in the numbers of the Samaritan and of the Septuagint when compared with each other and with those of the authorised version. Now the Samaritan numbers extend the period between the deluge and the birth of Abraham from 292 years to 942, while those of the Septuagint extend it to 1072 years or more. Supposing that either Samaritan or Septuagint version represents the original text, rather than our authorised version (whose scantier numbers are taken from the Hebrew), "it may be questioned," according to the writer, "whether anything more is wanted," though at the same time if "the progress of scientific enquiry" should demand a longer period of time for the development of art, science, ethnical diversities, &c., &c., he "would not be afraid to

grant that the original record of Scripture on this point may have been lost." Now, we ask, is not all this totally beside the question? Supposing it to be granted on all hands that a period of thirty-four centuries (as given by the numerical data of the Septuagint) is amply sufficient for the development of mankind such as we know it to have been at the birth of Jesus, from Noah and his three sons, is there not an overwhelming amount of evidence, apart from this topic of numbers, which proves the unhistorical character of the Book of Genesis? Surely it is quite irrelevant to raise the question whether the dates of the Samaritan or Septuagint version of the Pentateuch *might possibly* be true, when we have not the slightest reason to suppose that they are true. Still more absurd is it to argue from the (supposed) demonstration of their *possibility*, to their actual *certainty*, as is sometimes done. The difficulties arising from internal contradictions and impossibilities must first be cleared away before men are asked to consider in what manner the data of the Pentateuch should be reconciled with the results of profane history. The writer then proceeds to answer the criticisms of Bishop Colenso on the Story of the Exodus. He first takes care to guard his ground by remarking that "the numbers of the sacred texts are exactly the part of it which is most liable to corruption, and least to be depended on," so that if he does not succeed in establishing the soundness of the numbers of the children of Israel, as given in Exodus xii. 37, and elsewhere, at the time of the Exodus, he may fall back upon the position that "there has been a corruption of the numbers—the addition (say) of a cipher in each case—and that the whole narrative would stand good, and the difficulties disappear, if, for "600,000 that were men" in Exodus xii. 37, we were to read 60,000, and so on." Now, in the first place, we may remark that this (supposed) corruption must extend to *eight* different passages in Exodus and Numbers, in one of which, at least, the supposition of an added cipher finds no place (Exodus xxxviii. 25.) Secondly, it may be said that most of the difficulties adduced by Bishop Colenso will remain quite as formidable on the hypothesis of a camp of 60,000 as on that of a camp of 600,000 warriors. Thirdly, it is certain that there were at least 10,000 Levites "from twenty years old and upwards" at the time of the numbering of the warriors (whose census was taken at the same age); nor is it pos-

sible that this number can be reduced, seeing that it is checked by other numbers *without a cipher* (Col. part ii, § 191). But if there were 10,000 Levites above the age of twenty, "it is very unreasonable to suppose that there were only 60,000 warriors of all the twelve tribes, even if the difficulties of the story would really be relieved by such a supposition." In short, we may take our choice between the supposition that these chapters have come from a very late hand, and the notion that the numbers of them have been *systematically and deliberately falsified* by subsequent editors. It is plain that if the latter alternative be chosen, it leaves us at liberty to make whatever deductions from the general narrative that common sense may require.

Our author next goes on to consider the number of the children of Israel at the time of the going down into Egypt, and the conclusion at which he arrives is that the tribe which took possession of the land of Goshen was a body of five or six thousand persons probably. This is deduced from the assumption that Jacob was accompanied by a large body of retainers into Egypt. For such an assumption, there is positively no ground whatever. In the famine time, ten sacks of corn were found sufficient to supply the wants of Jacob and his sons for a whole year, which certainly prevents the supposition of a large of dependants. Nor indeed, if these were at hand, would Jacob's own sons have been sent into Egypt to buy corn, unattended by any servants. (On this subject generally, see Colenso's *Critical Examination of the New Bible Commentary*, Part ii., page 26.)

"Next, as to the duration of the sojourn in Egypt, the Hebrew text lays it down very positively that it was 430 years. . . . There was a tradition among the later Jews which brought down the term to 215; but this tradition cannot reasonably be set against the plain words of Exodus." Now, anything more disingenuous than this mode of stating the question, it is hard to conceive. One would suppose from the author's words that there were no other statements in the Pentateuch itself which would stand in the way of our reception of this period as the duration of the sojourn. Space does not permit us to point out how different the real state of the case is, and we must be content merely to refer to chapter x. of part i. of Colenso's book. We may, however, mention that St. Paul (Gal. iii. 17), adopts this "late tradition" as the true account, so

that if we adopt the reading of the Hebrew text in Ex. xii. 40, we will have to explain the phenomena of two writers of scripture flatly contradicting one another.

It is impossible to enter upon a detailed examination of Mr Cooper's lecture, in which we are asked to receive the entire story of Joseph's life as fully authenticated, on the grounds of a late discovery of the Egyptologers, that official oaths "By the life of Pharaoh" were common at the time of the Psammetichi, and in which the author commits the common mistake of concluding the historic truth of a narrative from the truth of its colouring, *i.e.*, of the descriptions of and allusions to the peculiarities of nature and of social life in the regions where its scenes are laid. Our limits also oblige us to refrain from a consideration of Dr Gladstone's essay, to which allusion has been made already, on the supposed points of collision between scripture and natural science. We must, however, call attention to a remark in this last essay (*Faith and Free Thought*, p. 149), in which the author calmly contemplates the possibility of men's arriving at the conclusion that science is contradictory to the first thirty-four verses of Genesis without, at the same time, altering their views as to the inspiration of the rest of the Bible,—a view in which he differs considerably from Dr Lee. ("Inspiration," Preface, p. xxiii.)

NOTE.

N.B.—The writer would earnestly request all intending candidates for Holy Orders, before proceeding to ordination, to read a pamphlet written by Samuel Hinds, D.D., late Bishop of Norwich, entitled "A Reply to the Question, Shall I seek Ordination in the Church of England," and published by Mr Thomas Scott, 11, The Terrace, Farquhar Road, Upper Norwood, London, S.E.



