

THE EVIDENCE OF THE BIBLE.

If there be a God who is wise, good, and the Author of nature, and who has expressed some of His attributes there, will He be likely to manifest Himself to the creatures made in His image in a fuller and more special way?

I. REASONS FOR EXPECTING A SPECIAL REVELATION :

1. *Man's need of it.* This is seen in : (1) The deep consciousness of sin which possesses every man and his helplessness to get rid of it. (2) The insufficiency of nature, reason and intuition to teach man all that he needs to know about God, forgiveness and duty. (3) The confessions of the most thoughtful heathen. (4) The corrupt state of heathen religions as well as of Mohammedanism and perverted Judaism. (5) The claim to a special revelation made by almost every religion.

2. *God's nature.* His wisdom and goodness are so displayed in nature as to awaken the hope that He will unfold Himself more fully to man, e. g. (1) His ingenious contrivances for the supply of need, and the fact that the higher the need the more intricate are the means of supply. (2) His provisions for repairing injuries and counteracting disease. (3) His delay in bringing on the results of transgression.

II. CREDENTIALS WHICH CERTIFY THE HISTORICAL TRUTH OF THE BIBLE :

To prove this it is necessary to establish the genuineness, authenticity and credibility of the books of Scripture. Genuine is the opposite of spurious, and means that these books were written at the age to which they are assigned, and by the men or class of men to whom they are ascribed. Authentic is the opposite of vitiated—the books have come down to us substantially as their authors composed them. The credibility of these books is their trust-worthiness in relating matters of fact as these actually happened.

1. *Proofs of the genuineness and authenticity of the Old Testament.* (1) The extreme carefulness of the Jews over their sacred books. (2) The witness borne by the later portions to the earlier. (3) The Samaritan Pentateuch, 600 B. C., and the Septuagint Version, 280 B. C. (4) The general recognition of the Old Testament by Christ.

2. *Proofs of the credibility of the Old Testament Scriptures.* (1) The general character of the history interwoven with these books. (2) The measure of divine truth enjoyed by the people among whom they appeared. (3) The character of the individuals through whom they came. (4) The fact that one line of truth and promise in them comes into full expression in Jesus Christ, whose life and character have been proved a phenomenon in history.

3. *Proofs of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament :* (1) Manuscripts. (2) Catalogues of the books. (3) Versions in other languages. (4) Quotations from the books and allusions to them in the writings of christians, heretics and pagan sceptics. (5) The doubts which were at first expressed by certain parts of the church about some of the books, and which were finally overcome and the books in question accepted by all, imply a sifting of evidence on this matter in the early church. (6) The failure of unbelief to maintain historical consistency in accounting for the facts of New Testament history and literature in any other way than on the basis of the genuineness of the books.

4. *Proofs of the credibility of the New Testament.* (1) The character of the writers and their belief that endless suffering is the penalty of falsehood. (2) The losses they sustained and the sufferings which they endured in maintaining the central truths in their writings. (3) The agreement of their narratives with contemporaneous history. (4) The effects of the New Testament on the history of the world. It is impossible to believe that the benefits conferred through Christianity are the outcome of a series of falsehoods.

III. CREDENTIALS WHICH CERTIFY THE SUPERHUMAN AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE :

After having proved it to be historically true, it is necessary to take a step further and shew that its authors must have been supernaturally influenced.

1. *The unity of subject, spirit and aim which runs through all the books.* And this in spite of forty writers of different social position, various surroundings and education, and scattered over sixteen hundred years.

2. *The superiority of the moral teachings of these books to all others.* (1) Morally and religiously these books were greatly in advance of the age in which they appeared. (2) There is progress in Biblical morals from less to greater clearness and fulness in the unfolding of the truth, without any contradiction. (3) These moral ideas as completed by Christ are adapted to all men in every age. (4) They still lead the world's thought.

3. *The books of the Bible, and especially the teachings of Christ, are attested by miracles.* Some think this is a weakness instead of a strength to our Scriptures, and many christians are now attempting to make our faith entirely independent of the miraculous, but this seems impossible.