

acknowledges that he has been troubled by doubts.

It is my purpose to-night to pursue a line of thought adapted to assist the honest doubter, and to strengthen any Christian who, from time to time, may feel that doubts come—he cannot tell how or whence—which disturb his thoughts and his prayers, and trouble him in his works and in his Bible searchings.

I believe that the Gospel itself is the strongest evidence of its truth. The processes of logic are valuable, and we all employ them; but we are obliged to employ them in defending the Gospel by piecemeal. We have to take up here a point, and there another, and argue either in the way of answering an objection, explaining a difficulty, or substantiating a proof. There is a better way, but it is very difficult: and what I shall endeavor to do to-night is to pursue that more excellent way and make, first myself and then you to see the Gospel exactly as it is, and to hold up before the mind the consequences of assuming this truth on the one hand, or of denying it on the other. And I hope, if I shall succeed in evolving my own thought, that I shall make a symmetrical presentation, which will have, not the kind of force that is produced by a process of argument, but that which results from a moral conviction which bears down upon the heart and conscience, and the understanding at the same time.

The question that I raise is the one of the text, which begins, not with an affirmation, but with a question; and is in, not the indicative, which declares, but the subjunctive, which doubts: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Our question is this: What will inevitably follow from the assumption that the Gospel of Christ is untrue? It cannot be assumed to be partly true and partly false in the supernatural sense. Of course, it can be assumed to be partly true and partly false in the human sense, just as we say that Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall of the

Roman Empire" is partly true and partly false. Probably there is not a book in the world, unless it be a book of pure mathematics, that is not partly true and partly false. But the question I raise is this: if the Gospel be untrue in this sense—that it has not a supernatural origin? If it be answered in the affirmative—that it *is* untrue in that sense—then, of course, the book that contains the record must be put down by the side of "Appleton's Cyclopædia," or the "Cyclopædia Britannica," or any other book that is offered to the acceptance of men. Please to consider that it is not the truth of particular parts of the Bible that we have before us, but the question whether it be a voice from God to man, a supernatural voice, a voice that did not come in the way of natural cause and effect; a voice that did not come as this sermon comes; not a voice on theology, or history, or politics. Now let us adhere to this, and not flinch. Thousands of persons enjoy benefits without any proper reflection upon their source, and there are many persons who suppose that they are doubters who never yet have had the moral courage, or the intellectual perception, to doubt. They are mistaken with regard to doubt. They do not understand it; for when the doubt would assume a form in which it could be clearly identified, they dismiss it.

1. In the first place, if the Gospel be untrue, does it not follow that God has never, in any supernatural way, spoken to man? Is there any way to avoid that conclusion? Is there any other religion that can be put into competition for a moment with the Gospel as having claims to a supernatural origin? By which I mean, that if you deny the supernatural origin of the Gospel, is it possible for you to admit the supernatural origin of any other religion? I suppose it cannot be necessary to argue that point. Of course, Judaism you would reject, unless you are a Jew, if you reject Christianity; and you cannot accept Mohammedanism, which is a mixture of Judaism, Christianity,