

The fury of scepticism rushes into headlong credulity. The adversary of Christianity will believe that a few fishermen, in a remote and enslaved province, headed by an obscure Jew, overthrew, without money, without arms, without supernatural help, the whole colossal edifice of paganism. They see that the thing has been done, they know no strength raised against it, but the naked hand of Christianity—they see paganism all breaking down at once, as if it were blasted with fire from Heaven; and yet this was to be done by a few peasants in Judea! The world has seen nothing equal nor similar to this mighty and perfect overthrow. The ancient religions of the East, forming themselves on the corrupted traditions of the patriarchal time, flowed loosely over moral deserts—the savage enthroned his dead chieftain in the sun, and worshipped him there. There is but one instance of a new religion displacing the habitual belief without the use of violence—Christianity is, in that instance, single and sublime. There is but one instance of a religion founding its assurance of triumph on the direct aid of Heaven, and that instance is Christianity.—There is but one instance in which the display of God's fore-knowledge was brought into combination with the display of his power—Christianity is the religion of prophecy and miracle. Mahometanism disclaimed miracle, and could not produce prophecy. Attachment to a national religion becomes a part of the nature. Paganism was opulent in all the means of fixing perpetual influence on the Pagan mind. It amused the vulgar with pageantry, it bound the superstitious by its terrors, it won the great by its elegance, it conciliated the statesman by its restraint on the popular mind. It had but one enemy, the philosopher, but his head was bowed before the altar, which he secretly reviled, and his protest against the abuse of reason, was seldom heard till the grave had closed upon his hypocrisy. Christianity appealed simply to the

reason of man, and it triumphed. There is nothing like this in the whole history of intellectual trial. In our own pacific time, not even the feeblest sect, upholding the most absurd doctrine, has been broken down by argument. The fierce passions, the haughty supremacy, the polluted idolatry of the Roman heart, were charmed away by persuasion; the armed Colossus of Rome, rigid and menacing, dissolved into ashes before the spell of words. Yet this the unbeliever must believe. The conversion of the Heathen world was not the work of man. It was an act of the same Omnipotence that had called the earth out of darkness; the same light of Heaven was poured in upon the heart; the same thunders sent the name of the true God from end to end of the moral world.

It has been said, for ignorance made presumptuous by malignity knows no restraint of assertion, that Christ and his Apostles were imaginary beings; and that their names and actions are not found in any histories but those of Christians. Let such reasoners be led to the writings of the great Heathen historians of the day in which the Gospel was revealed. We quote them not for their opinions, they had no power of knowing the spirit of the religion which they calumniated; we quote them for their knowledge—and it is the knowledge of adversaries. Those testimonies are commonplace among scholars, but we are now contemplating ignorance. Tacitus, writing seventy years after the crucifixion, and alluding to the fire at Rome about thirty years before his time, states these facts:—"But neither his bounties to the populace, nor his sacrifices to the divinities, could clear away, the infamous charge of having ordered the burning of Rome, under which Nero lay. To destroy the charge, he laid the guilt and inflicted the most cruel punishments upon a set of people which were held in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the populace, Christians. The found-