

a man shall be what every man ought to be? And far less than this is the requirement, seeing it is neither a *perfect knowledge* of the will of God, nor a *perfect conformity* with it in practice that is demanded, but only the sincere and honest desire and aim to do the will of God, associated, it may be, with much ignorance and imperfection.

The sequel of this paper will show that I have no wish to depreciate the historical evidence of Christianity. But I believe it is of no little importance that prominence should be given to the great truth, that the highest and most satisfactory evidence of the divinity of Christian teaching is *equally accessible to all*, as depending not upon intellectual qualifications such as can be possessed only by a few, but upon a moral qualification that all ought to possess, and the want of which is highly blameworthy. And at the same time, it would be well, in dealing with this subject, to endeavour to make it plain to the intelligence of our people that this evidence is, in its very nature, at once the highest obtainable and satisfying beyond any other. For, I believe, we can give a most sufficient answer to the question which it is natural to ask: "How can a man who is destitute of learning, who has little or no historical knowledge—it may be even a child—not only understand the Gospel, but have a well-grounded persuasion that it is from God?" Of course, if such a persuasion is attained otherwise than by a competent acquaintance with the external evidence, the ground of it must lie in the Gospel itself. Nor is it anything but what is in accordance with reason that the doctrine of a teacher sent from God should be such as to approve itself divine, and that it should do so not to all men indiscriminately, but only to such, and surely to such as are willing to do the will of God. Let us illustrate this.

There are two ways in which we may have a satisfactory persuasion regarding a man, that he is possessed, say, of great integrity and benevolence. Trustworthy persons may testify to his possession of these qualities. But we may have an equally reasonable, and even far stronger persuasion, without any testimony. We may know the man by intimate acquaintance with him, so that we can ourselves certify to others his possession of these qualities, instead of needing to have it certified to us. Again, there are two ways in which we may have a full persuasion that a certain piece of writing is the production of some particular man. We may have trustworthy information that he is the author of it. Or we may be so well acquainted with his style of thinking and writing, that we have no sooner begun to read than we know with the fullest conviction that he, and no other man, is the author. And so it is with the teaching of Christ. A man may have a reasonable and strong conviction