

But the Gospel is no philosophy. The truth of Christ is to be verified, not by the critical intellect, but by the common heart and consciousness of humanity. Wherever there is a heart that throbs with the common sensibilities of our nature—wherever there is a soul capable of love, and pity, and tenderness, and truth—there is fit audience and sufficient attestation for the Gospel. The lisping babe that stammers forth its first prayer of wondering awe and love to the great Father; the poor day-labourer, whose intellect never ranges beyond the narrow round of his daily toils; the weak, worn sufferer, stretched on the bed of pain, incapable of the faintest approach to consecutive thought or reasoning, bereft of almost every other power but the power to love and pray—these as much, nay, more, than the most erudite assemblies of high and philosophic, constitute the auditors it claims. It is true that the highest minds may fitly occupy their ratiocinative powers in the investigation of the evidence, and the systematic study and development of the truth. But let us never confound the gifts and acknowledgments necessary for the theologian with those of the believer. The powers sufficient to perceive, and know, and relish, are ever to be distinguished from the powers that are needed in order to theorise. It may imply much intellectual power to draw out and digest the theory and laws of music, but many who know nothing of the subject theoretically can sing and be delighted by song. And to make a man relish music, a good ear is better than all the analytic powers in the world. It may demand the most subtle intellect to discuss metaphysically the theory and laws of beauty, but no such powers are needed to gaze with delight on the glory of the grass and the splendour of the flower. In investigating the problem of the foundations of morals, metaphysical minds of the rarest order have been employed for ages; but to honour an unselfish or noble act, to perceive and hate baseness and selfishness, to appreciate what is pure and lovely and of good report, needs qualities which no skill can confer, and yet which may be found in the garret or hovel where rude and unlettered poverty dwells. And so it is not the scholar's or the theologian's acquirements that best qualify for apprehending and appreciating the evidence of the truth as it is in Jesus. These may be indispensable for the theoretical analysis and development of the truth, but the consciousness of spiritual need, the yearning after pardon and reconciliation with God, the orphan instincts of the spirit towards its lost Father, the contrition, the humility, the meek trust and self-devotion of an awakened and earnest soul,—these are the qualities which,