

some of which it is impossible for the most astute human mind to grasp ; but this fact no more proves that the Bible is untrue than that Newton's great work, the 'Principia,' is untrue, because not one man out of thousands can grasp its problems. To believe in nothing but what we can understand and see is a very short creed. We are surrounded on all sides, and in our own bodies, by countless facts that we believe in—Christian and sceptic alike—but we have never seen them.

"Do you believe that you have any brains?" calmly asked an old man of a youth who was loudly boasting that he believed in nothing but what he saw, 'To be sure I do,' he answered, arrogantly, tapping his forehead. 'Don't be so very sure,' was the reply, 'by your own argument you have none.'

"The Bible comes before us as a revelation from God, and it starts with the distinct assertion, 'In the beginning God.' A clear decided statement, which has to be refuted, and which stands like a granite rock in the forefront of the Divine revelation. To get over the difficulties which beset the man that attempts to prove the non-existence of a God is a task so herculean, and requires so much faith in untenable theories, that it makes us feel when once the faith of our skeptical friends released from its bondage, flies round like the needle to its true magnetic pole, God, we shall find many now in the ranks of freethinkers, valiant soldiers in the ranks of revealed truth.

"A difficulty with sceptics about the Bible, which makes them doubt its truth, is that they do not understand its plan ; it is like a labyrinth to which they have no clue, they do not know the current of thought that runs through it, or the central character or Hero of the Book.

"If each reader would open the Bible and read the three first chapters of Genesis, the beginning of the Book, and the three last in Revelation, the end of the Book, he will find on the first page a 'New heaven and earth,' and on the last a 'New heaven and earth,' and as an arch must have its two piers, so the arch of Revelation is thrown across the gulf between these two points. The plan or drift is to chronicle the fact of Paradise lost, and to reveal the secret of Paradise regained, and as eternal happiness or woe is wrapped up here, no one suffers, or will suffer, more than the freethinkers if these facts prove true.

"The Bible is often treated as if it were one Book. Now it is very probable that few have remembered that it is a collection of sixty-six different books, written by forty different writers, and running over a period of one thousand five hundred years. Suppose flaws are found in one book ; there are sixty-five that stand unshaken. Suppose ten witnesses are impeached ; there are fifty-six left. If you brought sixty witnesses to testify in a case, ten might have to stand aside, but you have fifty left. To confute the Bible you must do it in detail, sentence by sentence, book by book ; and if

you could demolish all but one epistle, there would be enough left to bring salvation to the believer and judgment to the unbeliever. But, in point of fact, Scripture is untouched by objection, and the passages criticised, when you examine closely, endure the tests, and the seeming discrepancies become evidences of truth.

"The Bible runs on through sixty stormy centuries, holding up the only lamp, and on every page, in prophecies, psalms, types, and symbols, it speaks of the coming One, the Hero of the Book, the one hope of a lost world, and at the end we find a complete revolution, a 'restitution of all things.' A great mistake made by sceptics is the making the Bible responsible for all the acts and utterances of churches, ministers, commentators, etc.; their notions are often gathered from anything but Holy Scripture, as any candid sceptic would at once confess if he would carefully study the Bible. The divisions among Christians are very sad, but they do not prove that Christ is divided. There are hypocrites and bad livers who profess to be Christians, but Christianity is not responsible for their sins, any more than a moral sceptic is responsible for the immorality of his brother sceptic, which he loathes in his heart. There are contradictions among creeds and theories, but it does not follow that the Bible contradicts itself.

"But, after all, the greatest and best remedy for unbelief is a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He always received an honest doubter with loving courtesy, and if he really wishes to know God's will, the knowledge is promised, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Countless witnesses can testify to the love of Christ, His power to forgive sin, and the sanctifying grace of His spirit in reconstructing the soul. We may not be able to prove a spiritual experience by mathematical demonstration, but we know it. 'How do you know that you are converted?' asked a sceptic of a Christian. 'How do you know that you have sugar in your tea?' was the prompt response. Again, a man, believer or unbeliever, feels a pure and true love for a woman whom he hopes to make his wife. Can he prove it by reasoning, or by any mathematical rule? No, but he knows it. True, and how we long that our freethinking friends should know for themselves what happiness is for them, if they will have it. If doubts are honest, read the Bible, read the life of Christ, and go to Him to ask a solution, even if you cannot believe in Him. If your freethought is a cover to hide a bad life. What if you have made a mistake? What if there is a God, and a Judgment?

Meanwhile let every Christian seek and obtain from God that baptism of the Holy Spirit, that Divine power and union, by which alone he can walk in the way of holiness. Infidels look for holy Christians, and they have a right to look for them, but do they always find them?"