

It is a fact worthy of notice, that all great men, since the advent of the Redeemer, who wielded an influence that has contributed to the elevation of humanity, were well disposed toward the exemplification of the highest truth in Christ. It may also be somewhat confidently stated that the great and good men before the Christian era were of such a type that had Christ been presented to them as the Revelation of the Godhead, they would have opened their hearts to Him as such. Good and great men like Lincoln, Shaftesbury or Wilberforce, may have difficulty in accepting the presentation of Christ and Christianity made by short-sighted and narrow-minded would-be followers of the Lamb, but they fall in easily with the true and noble representation made of Him in the inspired volume of Holy Scripture, and, by the grace of a merciful God, endeavor to shape their lives according to the standard set up in Him. If there be such a spirit and such a desire in us, I care not what difficulties may confront us in getting near to God, they will all disappear before the illumination of the Spirit of Him who leads us into all truth, and, because the universe is on the side of the right, we will sooner or later be able to exclaim from experimental acquaintance, "Thou art the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

2.—John the Baptist may be accounted great because of his extraordinarily keen sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. As we listen to him in the delivery of his short but powerful discourses, we perceive a spirit that is strangely alive to the presence of sin about him and to its hideous nature. He seems to stand on an eminence with God Himself, to which he would fain lift human nature, as he exhorts his hearers to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. His ethical nature as well as his spiritual elevation shine forth as he calls upon men to repent; while the holy indignation of a pure spirit bursts forth spontaneously from him as he says to the would-be followers, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come." This keen sense of the great evil of sin has departed, to an extent, from our leading thinkers.