

upon the lives of those who framed them and on those of their disciples. The idea of God was in itself vague, shadowy, unsatisfying, powerless to effect any change in the moral turpitude that characterized equally the age of Socrates and the age of Cicero ; valueless to invest life with spiritual comfort and peace, to remove the sense of sin or shed a ray of hope on the world beyond the grave.

God is not phenomenal to us, in all probability will not be while this life lasts. Are we not therefore compelled to believe in the unphenomenal God, if we believe in Him at all? By no means. All the world believes in phenomena which have not been apparent to its own senses. The naturalist has faith in the existence of plants and animals and minerals that he has never seen, the cosmographer tells of lands that himself has never visited, the historian records facts that are separated from him by long ages. We accept the testimony of others to phenomena that may be totally unlike anything that has fallen under our own observation. In fact by far the greater part of our knowledge consists of that which has been phenomenal, not to us but to others. How dependent would a blind man be upon testimony as to the many faces apparent in this assembly. Thus blind and thus dependent upon testimony are we in regard to a thousand things in which we firmly believe. There are some here, doubtless, who have never seen our gracious queen, but of her phenomenal existence they are as convinced as they are of their own. Such then to us is the phenomenal God. He is indeed in His essence a spirit, for so He was declared by His greatest prophet. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" asked Zophar the Naamathite, and down the ages Paul answers: "No eye hath seen nor can see Him." But for man's sake the unphenomenal became a phenomenon, a long series of phenomena, appealing to the senses of sight and hearing and touch. In the garden of Eden it was God who walked and talked with our first parents. His voice came to wicked Cain and righteous Noah. In bodily form He presented Himself before Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the God of these theophanies was the God of Israel in all later days. The God in whom the Israelites trusted was a manifested God, limited indeed in form, veiled in glory and bounded in utterance, that He might be within the scope of human perception ; yet, in spite of these limitations, a divine personality. I heard of a good man who closed his psalm book when a better than himself called upon the congregation to join in singing one of the Hebrew odes that recounts the dealings of God with His chosen people, because he did not intend to sing history. Now history was what the pious Hebrew loved to sing, that he might remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. The God of Abraham was more to him than the Lord of Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the host celestial. The incomprehensible God who fills immensity and eternity was not so dear to his heart as the phenomenal one of the burn-