

piety does not depend on this or that interpretation of the sense of the most ancient records. Yet, it seems to me that there is extreme danger of allowing our modern experience and modes of thought to exercise undue influence in determining questions of fact reputed to have occurred when, from the very nature of the case, man's sources of knowledge and mode of thinking of God must have been different from ours. To assume that Adam and Abraham must have held fellowship with God in the same quiet, undemonstrative manner as we do, is to say that the relation to God of people who had no Bible to nourish their faith and guide their conduct is exactly the same as that of people who have the entire history of revelation in their hands. This is a proposition which requires more credence than many of us can give to it. Looking at the subject comparatively it will be seen that there is, obviously, a vast unlikeness in the accounts of divine interposition contained in Genesis and those contained in the Acts of the Apostles. The one would be called crude and glossed as compared with the other. The "wrestling" with Jacob and the opening of Peter's prison in answer to the orderly petitions of a prayer meeting are most diverse in form, as instances of a divine dealing with earnest men; and yet the diversity is not greater than what is seen between God's deliverance of Peter and the manner in which he deals with us in modern times. Those who are disposed to treat the deliverance of Peter as they treat the "walking in the garden" of Eden and the "wrestling" with Jacob—ascribing both narratives to a highly wrought imagination—are perfectly consistent. But, I venture to affirm that those who take the records of the New Testament as being substantially correct cannot argue against the literal interpretation of the accounts in Genesis on the score of strangeness; for the same argument would avail to set aside the literal value of the New Testament, if we test its narratives by the uniform experience of these days.

To arrive at a conclusion on this difficult question, based upon a broad induction of facts, I would invite attention to a few generally admitted propositions.

1. *The Interposition of God in human affairs is a cardinal Doctrine of Scripture.*

Whatever opinions men may entertain concerning Inspiration, most of them will freely admit that its general teaching is consistent and may be taken as correct. On matters of morals and our relation to God it is with all an authority. Well then there can be no doubt that, from first to last, the Bible does teach the reality of a connection between a living, independent God and living men; and that this connection is much more than a dumb invisible answering of spirit to spirit. The idea of occasional, palpable, authoritative manifestations is so persistently set forth that those, in modern times, who hold only to the perpetual uniform and silent communion of the Divine with the human, such as we are conscious of, are driven to all kinds of devices to explain away the allusions, from Genesis to Revelation, to visible appearances and oracular utterances. In the past ages God has not been a dumb friend of mankind,—not a mere subtle something in everlasting contact with all souls. He who created the voice and fashioned all forms, has spoken and assumed for Himself a visible appearance. If the argument be against the possibility of such outward divine manifestations, then, let us be told so, and we will deal with it by testing its philosophic value. But, as a matter of Scripture doctrine, the reality of the interposition of God in human affairs is beyond all dispute.

2. *The Purport of Divine Interposition in human affairs is clearly for the entire Race.*

Whatever the immediate and ulterior design of God's self-manifestation may be, we cannot but think of it as being for the present and prospective use of the entire family of man. The unity that is known to pervade the material system of things finds its counterpart in the moral administration. Our fundamental conceptions of God compel us to believe that he lives for all His creatures. No reason can be assigned why a portion of mankind, living in the latter ages, should share in a