

refined sentiments, so many sublime and original ideas, that though it bears no name, and no distinct testimony is given respecting it, yet competent judges have no difficulty in telling who is its author. The similarity in style or thought, to some other acknowledged work of a writer, may leave no reasonable doubt that this is a production of his pen. The evidence accumulates here, according as a work abounds in displays of moral qualities, or expressions of the emotions of the heart. The children of a family might have no external evidence, in the seal or address of a letter, who was its writer; but they need no outward mark to prove to them that it has come from none other than their own father. Admit it to be possible that a stranger could copy his seal and handwriting, yet they know well it is in the power of none to imitate the voice of his heart. The love of a father that breathes in every line of his letter, the deep words of affection spoken to the inmost soul of each one of them,—these, they *feel*, a stranger could not feign; and this carries full conviction to their mind, of the authorship of the epistle. A book or letter may thus bear such unmistakeable evidence, in its substance, of its writer, that it would be reckoned a perversion of judgment, to attribute it to another source, especially to one of inadequate capacity for its production. What, for instance, would be thought of the judgment or taste of the individual, who should assert that Milton's "Paradise Lost" was written by a Hottentot, in a state of barbarism in Africa; or, that the "Olney Hymns" were composed by a Hindoo, amid all the darkness of heathenism, in India? Such monstrous dogmas as these would be supposed proof of a person's insanity, and no regard would be paid to his verdict, in any enquiry of reason in the field of truth. Now, as we might expect the Book of God would exhibit in its substance sure evidence of its authorship, so we find in it here, unmistakeable proofs, that none other but his mind can have uttered its grand truths. It would be, indeed, far easier to believe that a Hottentot wrote the "Paradise Lost," and a Hindoo composed the "Olney Hymns," than to believe that uninspired, fallen men were the authors of the Bible. To assert that sinful man, unaided by the Spirit of God, originated the glorious thoughts, penned the noble words, planned the great doctrine, which runs through the Bible, is, we venture to say, a display of moral insanity, to which the case just supposed bears no comparison. The cause alleged is, we hold, as insufficient for the effect, as were the word of a child to the creation of the world.

This prepares us for now examining the evidence actually afforded by the plan of salvation revealed in the Bible, that the book is from God. And here, at the very threshold of the inquiry, it appears that no finite mind is competent to *originate* the idea of redemption for our fallen race. Nature utters no voice to give birth to the thought; for though she speaks of Divine bounty, she says nothing of a disposition in him to pardon. Reason discovers no ground to encourage the hope; for though she declares God to be just, she fails to reveal him as a Saviour. Nothing that man knows or can know of God, by unassisted reason, avails for taking the very first step to the idea of human redemption. We may be told, indeed, that reason testifies God is holy, and true, and good. But this is not enough; the grand question is, Is he *merciful*, and can he show mercy in an honorable way to our race? Mercy, it is manifest, is different from goodness. Goodness is properly favour to the holy, mercy is favour to the guilty. The former, therefore, by no means implies the exercise of the latter; so that though God had been known to be beneficent to the innocent, it could not be inferred that he would be certainly merciful to the sinful. It cannot be deemed unfair to argue what the human mind is capable of achieving here, from what it has actually accomplished, in the most favourable circumstances. Those especially, who boast of the power of philosophy to guide man to the heights of wisdom, will not affirm that the Hebrew teachers were of themselves more able to penetrate farther into the mysteries of the Divine nature, or to solve great moral questions, than were the sages of Greece in the most glorious days of the Academy and the Porch.