

that by such direct testimony as may be immediately available; but, surely, it is fit that the court and the world should know that his criminality in other charges also admitted of proof.

Now, the folly and guilt of infidelity is virtually proved by every exposition of the evidences for revealed religion; and it is proper and just that that folly and guilt should be made to stand prominently out, by a copious illustration of the varied attestations which God has given to the reality of those revelations which he has made of himself to our fallen world. And if one writer chooses to dwell on the historical arguments for the fundamental facts on which christianity rests, he should not disparage the evidence drawn from the antecedent dispensation, from the adaptation of the Gospel to the moral necessities of individuals and of the world, from the harmony existing between natural and revealed religion, and from the history of the latter.

Bishop Butler gives a masterly summary of the evidences in his celebrated treatise on the Analogy.* And, if it were not presumptuous in us, to say that even his sketch is not complete, it would yet be unreasonable to do so: for he thus prefaces his "account of the general argument for the truth of christianity consisting both of the direct and circumstantial evidence considered as making up one argument:"—"To state and examine this argument fully, would be a work much beyond the compass of this whole treatise: nor is so much as a proper abridgment of it to be expected here."

If christianity consisted of certain doctrines and external rites which had no influence on the character of its followers, we can readily conceive that the argument for its truth should have been sought mainly in the evidence for its first introduction into the world. But, seeing that it professes to convey a divine and spiritual energy to the minds of all in every age who submit to it, then must it, like all the other works of God, have an attestation to his agency concurrent with it self. According as it is felt in its power and acted out in the lives of christians, so shall its heavenly origin be demonstrated. In this respect alone, then, apart from the fulfilment of prophecy, and the increasing confirmation which the records of revelation are continually receiving, the argument for christianity is as it has been called, "an accumulating argument."

A second defect in not a few treatises on the evidences of revealed religion is this, that the ques-

tion is discussed with the infidel as though it as little addressed itself to the conscience as any controversy in literature or history. Surely the enlightened christian advocate should never forget that according to the express language of the New Testament, eternal life and eternal death are suspended on the reception or rejection of the gospel, and that the same authority declares, what all observation confirms, that infidelity originates in moral perversity, and is in no case attributable to the inadequacy of the proof of christianity. It is a false charity, then, to presume on the candour of infidels as some writers have done; and charity and truth are alike injured when the advocate for christianity does not feel and evince that his argument goes to convict the infidel, not merely of weakness as a disputant, but of criminality as a subject of the divine government, in rejecting the light which he has made to shine forth for the salvation of men, and in calling that light darkness.

To this defect in many books on the evidences of christianity their inefficiency may be referred; and so also the dislike which many well meaning christians entertain to this department of theological literature.

THE LECTURES ON THE EVIDENCES OF REVEALED RELIGION which we are now about to introduce to our readers are not chargeable with the defects to which we have adverted. They take comprehensive views of the relations which revelation sustains towards man and the world, as will be seen from the subjects of them, which we shall, by and bye notice, and having been spoken addresses, and spoken by men who felt the vast importance of the truth to their hearers, they address themselves to the conscience. They were preached on week-days, we believe, by so many different ministers. And it must be taken as a most favourable indication of the ministry of our church in the City of Glasgow that, out of its 29 ministers, fourteen—and these, young men, should be found capable of producing so many able and powerful appeals for the truth of christianity against the subtleties and perversions of infidels. Glasgow, we trust, is in the way, according to her ancient motto, of FLOURISHING BY THE PREACHING OF THE WORD.

The first lecture discusses the necessity for a DIVINE REVELATION and the obligation and responsibility of examining its claims.

As revelation professedly unfolds a remedial dispensation, the exposition of the moral condition of the world is a proper introduction to the direct evidence for the truth of revelation. If

* See Part II. chap. vii.