

knowledge its guidance, these are a ceaseless testimony to validity of its claims.

But, I am answered this is a biased and partisan testimony. So volatile are emotions, so fine is the boundary line between credulity and intelligent convictions, that we are not justified in accepting such proofs as final.

Turn we then from this mighty argument of internal evidence. Crown we logical reason as arbiter in the adjudication. The Challenge of Faith is to the test of external proof; Christianity is true, by her history. Her claims are established by the mighty argument of fact. She asks no concession; shrinks from no investigation; submits her claims to every challenge of reason, and proclaims herself proven by the unanswerable logic of history.

What are the proofs that she claims?

I. The testimony of the Historic Scriptures.

A mighty marvel in the literature of the world are these sixty-six books, written in far separated epochs of time, and in far distant surroundings in the history of the world. Sole surviving remains of a far removed era of earth, lasting while all else of law, of civilization, of art and custom have perished, their very existence is an archaeological miracle. Written in the midst of every possible stage of enlightenment and culture; partaking in expression, in form of speech and in collateral declaration of the ideas and beliefs of their time, they yet exhibit a unity of purpose, a single central idea, that is inexplicable upon any hypotheses of merely human happening. Purporting in no degree to be a treatise on cosmical science, they yet declare in the idiom of their day the great fundamental truths of natural law, and the quibbles of fanciful interpretation and the cavils of inventive skepticism aside, I challenge the result of the much vaunted conflict of science and the religion of the Bible.

Entering into the ethnology and the history of the development of the race, only in so far as is necessary to the complete unfolding of their purpose, I challenge the voice of carved monument and the testimony of deciphered hieroglyph, as the archaeologist turns from his quest to the record to substantiate his conclusions.

Dealing with the relative affairs of men, only in the light of the foundation law of God, I read here the basis of the pandicts of Justinian, the Code of Civil Law, and of all the precepts of righteousness and order the world has known. Admire with me the beauties of thought, the exactness of expression, the thrilling periods of eloquence, or the soft syllables of rhythm in the world's great store of letters, and I shall find for you here their matchless and incomparable example. Seek you clear and incisive narrative. Read with me the stupendous sentences of Moses, or the splendid narrative of the Kings; look you for stirring eloquence; turn to the days of Israel and listen to her Judges and Kings; love you the

drama; look upon the days of Egyptian captivity, or see the splendid setting of the story of the beautiful Queen; seek you satire and exhorting wrath;—read the prophetic of the captivity. Would you hear the poet? Learn the language of bird and flower and softly beaming star? Listen then to the sweet songs of Isaiah; harken to the mighty symphonies of Job, or hear the Shepherd King tune his harp to Nature's key and sing the beauties of his Maker's world.

Here is a book that, all the literature of the earth perished, would still preserve its loftiest ideas and enshrine its grandest possibilities. Its little pastoral of Ruth, sad Voltaire, exceeds in beauty anything of Homer or the classics of earth. The chast beauty of Greece and the songs of Italy, land of the passions, have never equalled it. Bacon found in it his inspiration; Milton caught its spirit as he sang his mighty epics. Byron made it his literary thesaurus; Macaulay said of its translation, "The English Bible;—a book which if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

But grand as is this book in all this that makes it unique, it finds its peculiar charm its mightiest meaning as its purpose turns upon the future, and in type and symbol, in word and parallel, it paves the way for Christ in prophecy. In claiming its prophecy as a basis of proof, Christianity stands unique among all the faiths of time. Other religions have had mighty founders, other faiths have developed voluminous literature, but their books and their creeds have been posthumous. Christianity alone looks back to where the grey-haired prophet strikes his harp and sings the glory of the Day-star that should rise upon the world. "To declare a thing before it comes to pass," says St. Justin Martyr, "and then to bring it to pass according to that declaration, this or nothing is the work of God." The prophecies of the Bible are explicit. In the course of preparation for their final culmination they touch much of the merely secular history of time. Empires, nations, mighty cities, glorious in their might and resistless in their strength, are touched by the inspired finger, and the crumbling ruins of the centuries are witnesses to the exactness of the foretelling.

And through it all there runs the great burden of prophecy; the coming of Christ; the advent of the Virgin-born; the degradation and ignominy; the cruel death and the mighty victory, and the setting up of the Kingdom of Righteousness. In the fullness of time these prophecies are fulfilled. Foretold ages before, they find their perfect accomplishment, as even type and symbol, mysterious in their use and institution becomes realized in the one great central figure of time.

That these prophecies exist is indisputable fact. That these prophecies are fulfilled is indisputable history.

What is the conclusion? That it is a mere happening; that all this came from a mere chance, and an ingenious

contortion of words and ideas? Why then, alone, of all the literature of earth, is this strange combination extant only here? Why, if it could happen so, has it never happened elsewhere and again? Why should these Hebrew Scriptures, gathered up from many different centuries, alone afford this miracle of fortuitous prophecy?

Shall we say these are fortuitous, clever coincidences, contrived to substantiate an extant and to be proven fact? Nay! but the voice of history is against us. In these books are all that was holiest and best to a mighty nation. They were the code, the law, the national archives, the very title deed of the great Hebrew commonwealth. Treasured for centuries with a care that precludes the possibility of the change of a single word, they stand, crystallized in their imperishable Hebrew, the best authenticated literature of the world. Biot them out, and you destroy all history; disprove them, and all the ages past sink into oblivion. Make them but human productions, if you can, or admit that "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" you change not still the fact, mighty in its significance, that these Scriptures foretell the Christ, and on them Christianity rests her claims as the Truth of God, come down from Heaven.

II. I find my second argument in the Person of the Historic Christ.

That such a person as Jesus Christ lived, that He taught and gathered to Him a band of followers; that He was apprehended by the Roman law at the instigation of the Jewish priests; was tried, condemned, and crucified; are component parts of human history. While in detail the narrative is confined to the New Testament, Josephus reverts to the fact, and there is extant a letter of Pliny to Trajan, giving the facts of his trial and crucifixion.

That He lived, that is history; who He was, that is history too, as the record of His life and of His words is spread before us in the Holy Gospel. And here as we face this newer Scripture, I come to you with the same challenge. Take these books of the New Testament. Eighteen centuries have passed over them since the name and influence of the subject of their story changed the calculation of the world, and wrote the years Anno Domini, the year of our Lord. Take these books and try them. They ask no allowances; they claim no unique canons of investigation; they challenge every test of authorship and authenticity. Place them by your Livy, your Caesar, your Seneca, your Marcus Aurelius, and prove them by the same tests, and you can overthrow their claims to authorship, or shift them from their place in time, by the same logic I shall prove to you that Alexander of Macedon is a myth and that Caesar's Commentaries are the production of the seventeenth century.

These books are history, and on their pages is spread the portraiture