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## ON THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

At a time like this, when infidelity, with gigantic strides, ranges through the more enlightened nations of the world, what can be more worthy of the attention of mankind than an attempt to check its course? What can we urge the more effectually to accomplish that desirable object than the divine truths of the Gospel, imparted to man from the mouth of Divinity, and containing precepts every way worthy of the reverence and obedience of mankind, whether we consider them as the production of man's wisdom, or, as we are taught to regard them, the immediate commands of an omnipotent Deity? In both views they are perfect, adapted to the capacity of human beings, and yet containing all that is sublime and dignified. It is now thought a certain proof of wisdom to hold the volume of inspiration in contempt: be it so; let others boast of their wisdom; I confess I am willing to be accounted ignorant, if to know and acknowledge the divine force and noble truth of holy writ be ignorance. What can I gain by disbelieving the evidences of Christianity? What can I lose by obeying its injunctions? I answer nothing. I am amazed when I view the vast number of men who profess to disbelieve the truths of religion. It is impossible to behold all the accumulated proofs of Christianity without being convinced of their force,—a force to which no reasonable and really wise man will object. Let us consider its *establishment*: could a religion so opposite to the passions of men be established without the aid of worldly power, and be so firmly rooted in the hearts of its first possessors, that no torments, however severe and cruel, could compel those martyrs to recant, if it were not the immediate work of heaven? Let us consider the sanctity, the glory, and humility of a *Christian Spirit*. Heathen Philosophers have often raised themselves above the rank of their fellow-creatures by a more regular mode of life and morality, and by opinions which have some resemblance to the duties enjoined by Christianity, such as charity and universal good-will; but they have never accounted that quality a virtue which Christians denominate *humility*; indeed they have ever pronounced it incompatible with the other virtues they professed. It is the Christian religion alone which has been able to join together the practice of virtues, which, until its institution, were deemed so opposite, that they could not find a seat in the same bosom; and it is Christianity which has taught men that without humility, all other virtues show like faults in the human character. Let us in the next place, reflect upon the *miracles* of the scriptures: for number, infinite—upon the more than human grandeur and sublimity of the things they contain, and the noble simplicity, without affectation, without ostentation, which pervades the whole; the convincing character of truth which distinguishes them, and which the greatest efforts of human beings have not been able to remove or invalidate. Let us consider *Jesus Christ* of whom the Gospel testifies: none can deny that his

mind was of a most superior order, and of this he gave convincing proofs in his early infancy, before the doctors in the temple; and we know that, instead of endeavouring to cultivate those great talents by application and study, and the conversation of the learned, he passed thirty years of his life secluded from the world, and occupied in the practice of his father's trade. During the three years of his ministry he called to his service and chose for his Apostles men without learning, without knowledge, and without fame; he had for enemies those who passed for the most wise and learned, as well as the most powerful of his time. Is not this a strange conduct to be adopted by a person who wishes to establish a new doctrine? would any man have done this? Does not this very circumstance prove, beyond doubt, that it is the act of God? and with the same feelings, let us turn our attention to those *Apostles* so chosen by Jesus Christ as the Ministers of his Gospel: let us view them without learning, and then suddenly endowed with capacity and knowledge sufficient to confound the most skilful Philosophers, and with resolution to resist the evil machinations of all the worldly powers opposed to the establishment of that religion it was their duty to announce. Let us consider that mighty host of Prophets who succeeded to each other during the space of 2,000 years, and who predicted, in different ways, even to the last remarkable event in the life of our divine Redeemer, as well as his preaching, his death, his resurrection; they also foretold the conversion of other nations, and the obdurate disbelief of the Jews, their consequent dispersion, and the final establishment of Christianity. In the next place we are involuntarily led to consider the *accomplishment of the prophecies* of the servants of God. The accomplishment of these prophecies, so evident during the whole course of our Saviour's life, needs no arguments to enforce a belief of them; it is palpable, and supported by other evidence than that of the scriptures. What was the state of the Jewish people before and after the coming of the Messiah? before that event, flourishing and great, and after they had rejected him, miserable and degraded.

The long duration of the *Christian faith* requires our attention; from the very formation of the world it has been contemplated; by the prophets it was often alluded to—"I shall see him, but not nigh." &c.; and the thread is kept unbroken till the birth of Christ, brought down since then by the professors of its doctrines, Christ himself being the connecting tie. In the last place, let us turn our thoughts for a moment to the *sanctity* of our lovely faith, whose paths are peace, and who, after all this has been pointed to out him, will be so incredulous as to doubt of the truth of the Gospel? The Christian system alone is perfect; and every one who will be at the pains carefully to examine it, with a mind unbiassed by prejudice, and open to conviction, will be found to say, "Lord I believe help thou mine unbelief."—*W. H. Lance.*

How sad is the reflection, that youth with the freshness, vigour, and full developement, of physical and mental powers, should fritter away the best portion of existence, in grovelling and degrading pursuits, and glide down on the sluggish stream of pleasure, to the overwhelming vortex of eternal misery.—*Dewey.*