

Part Fourth advances to affirm that the moral greatness of human nature has been still more strikingly displayed in the character of the Ideal Man, Christ Jesus. Even if, Bersier says, man had himself invented that illustrious figure, the figure so invented would still remain the supreme triumph of human nature. But there is something here, he declares, better than an invention :

“The colossal attempt to which Strauss brought a skill of science as ingenious as it was profound, that attempt of his to resolve the Gospel into a myth, into a sublime dream of the human consciousness, is to-day definitively abandoned. There is not a single man of science who does not admit that Christ lived. . . . Now, when you study that life, does it ever occur to you to think for one moment of the littleness of the theatre upon which it was lived? Do you not feel that the greatness of Jesus Christ is of a different order, compelling us to elevate ourselves to far different thoughts? . . . What matters it to you that all this occurred in an obscure corner of Galilee and upon a little planet lost in the vastness of the universe? . . . Enlarge the theatre of these scenes, give to them gigantic proportions, you will have added to them absolutely nothing.”

Having pointed out that the dignity of the person of Jesus Christ imparted itself to all that was associated with Him, Bersier, with fine, because just and lofty, pathos, exclaims :

“No doubt unbelief may be able to obliterate for a few days those sublime teachings, and our common people, blinded by sophists, may forget that prodigious revolution which transformed the ideas up to that day dominant in the world; but the mistake soon disappears, and the consciousness of the little ones of the earth understands that the Book which has set forth, as furnishing example to mankind, a few fishermen thenceforth more popular than your Cæsars and your Alexanders, is the best charter of the rights of humanity.”

Bersier's Fifth Part discovers in the doctrine of redemption the crowning demonstration of the worth of human nature. He says :

“The tragic solemnity of our destiny, the gloomy power of evil, and the infinite greatness of the Divine love invest themselves, in the light of the cross, with a splendor of revelation which it is no longer possible to extinguish. . . . They tell us it is absurd to pretend that redemption was achieved by the Son of God on a planet so insignificant as our globe. Would it then be easier to accept it, if it had had for theatre some mighty star—say one of those prodigious suns about which gravitate thousands of worlds? For myself I here recall the exclamation of the prophet saluting the obscure hamlet which was to become the cradle of the Redeemer: ‘O Bethlehem, though thou be the least among the thousands of Judah, it is from thee that shall come forth He who is to rule over Israel!’ and, looking at our earth, that other cradle of Christ, I, in my turn, exclaim: ‘O earth, planet lost in the vastness of the universe, thou art nothing in space but an atom of dust, but it is thou that hast seen love beam out in its highest splendor, and a gaze which should explore the infinite depths of the worlds would not be able therein to discover anything greater, anything more magnificent, than the sacrifice of the cross. . . .’

“There is something which every Christian can understand, even the most ignorant, the most insignificant, the most obscure. . . . God has remembered him, God has redeemed him, God wills to make him sharer of an eternal glory ;