

were not simply happy guesses, or conclusions drawn from a careful study of the laws of history and political developmen. but the revelations made to them by Him who is shaping the destiny of men and nations, rough-hew them how they will. No one who thoughtfully reads the Gospels can seriously suppose that the writers were capable of producing so artless and yet so symmetrical and graphic a history of Jesus of Nazareth, unless they had been guided in the choice of the facts and incidents, and been restrained from the tendency of biographers to exaggerate their hero. The absence of anything inconsistent with the character of one who made such lofty claims, the perfect naturalness with which this supernatural life is sketched, has always elicited the admiration of literary critics, even of those who have had no sympathy with the teaching of Jesus. This can be explained on no other principle than that the evangelists were inspired. A careful analysis of the structure of the Old and New Testaments, then, forces upon us the conviction that the authors spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God acting upon them. You may frame what theory you please as to the mode of inspiration. That is a matter of secondary importance. The all-important thing is that here, in this book, which is the production of so many different authors, writing at intervals throughout so many centuries, which is a progressive evolution of the simple truths expressed in its opening chapters, and which exhibits a unity of thought from beginning to end, we have truths which God has made known through the tongue and speech of men whom He chose for that purpose. This being so, there can be no two opinions regarding our duty to accept them as authoritative, and to hold by them as precious beyond all that imagination can conceive.

But we stand fast in the truths which constitute the substance of the Christian faith, not merely because they form the essential content of a book written under Divine inspiration, but because when critically tested they approve themselves to our reason. On principles of pure reason the idea of a personal and infinite Intelligence from whom all things do proceed, is that which affords the most satisfactory solution of the problem of the universe. The study of history leads to the conclusion that one increasing purpose runs through the ages, that all the movements of the past and present are culminating towards one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation is hastening, that there is a Providence directing all human affairs, and that a moral government is being exercised on the earth, which foreshadows a future