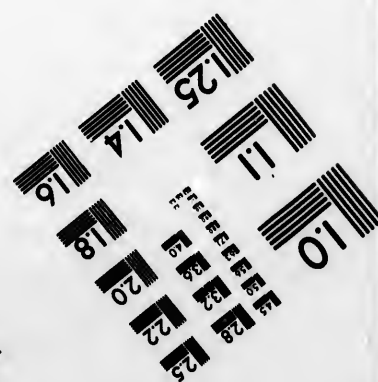
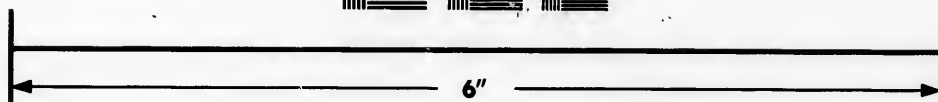
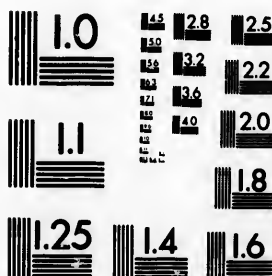


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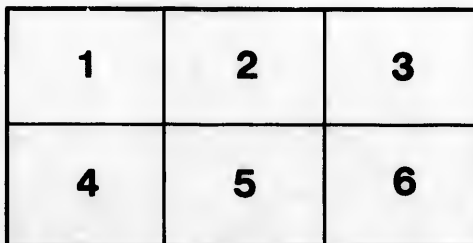
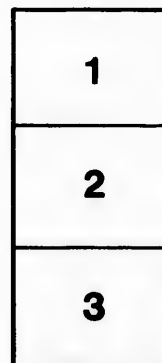
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# EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY:

BEING

 Course of Lectures

DELIVERED BY

REV. H. D. STEELE,

MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA.

(SECOND EDITION—ENLARGED.)

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*"Magna est veritas et prevalebit."*

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TORONTO:

HUNTER, ROSE & COMPANY.

1881.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE following Lectures were originally prepared as part of the Author's regular pulpit discourses, which will account for the style in which they appear. His object was to give to the public the results of modern research derivable from a study of ancient history, and from the recent discovery of monumental and hieroglyphic inscriptions, so far as these throw light upon ancient Scriptures corroborative of "the old, old story" told by the sacred writers. The Lectures are a compilation of facts from various sources, embracing ancient and modern history—as well as monumental inscriptions, confirmative of the Biblical narrative. That this little pamphlet may reach many who have neither the opportunity nor the leisure for widely extended study; and that it may prove (with the Divine blessing) helpful in deepening their interest and strengthening their faith in "the oracles of God," is the sincere desire and earnest prayer of the Author.

PAISLEY, ONT.,  
1st October, 1880.

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## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

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**I**N preparing a second edition of his pamphlet on the "Evidences of Christianity," which appeared a few months ago, the author has enlarged the work considerably, by adding two discourses on the *Existence of Deity*, and four additional chapters on Christian Evidences, properly so called, viz.: one on *The Miracles of Scripture*; another on the *Experimental Evidence of Christianity*; a third on the *Confirmatory Testimony borne by Geology to the Mosaic account of creation*; and a fourth on the *Theory of Evolution*.

The rearrangement of the lectures in their present form is better adapted, as the author believes, for meeting the prevailing scepticism of the day—whether in the shape of Atheism, Deism, or Rationalism. Some have remarked to me, "why the need of publishing books on the Evidences; is not the Bible its own best witness?" My reply is, we cannot afford to let infidels have it all their own way; the friends of truth should not be less active or zealous than the advocates of Atheism and Infidelity. So long as the public mind is disturbed by the sceptical objections and bold assertions of so-called clever men; so long as the youth of our day are exposed to the insidious and blasphemous literature sent broadcast over the length and breadth of the land; it behoves every

stripling, like David, with the sling and stone of Divine truth to go forth in the name of the Lord of hosts, and to meet the Goliath of this nineteenth century who boldly *defies* and *denies* the God of the armies of Israel. Confident that truth is on our side, and that being more powerful than error it must eventually prevail, the author commends to Christian people of every name this little contribution to the cause of religious literature.

H. D. S.

TORONTO, ONT.,  
April 20th, 1881.

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## LECTURE I.

### THE BEING OF A GOD.

Rom. i. 20: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

THE Being of a God lies at the foundation of all religion, natural and revealed. His existence is traceable to different sources. No man hath seen God at any time; yet there are none so blind as not to behold foot-prints of the Creator legibly inscribed in every part of the universe. One who had never seen the body of the Sun, owing to intervening clouds or a partial loss of light, but observed the invariable change from day to night, would nevertheless conclude that there was a sun behind the canopy of darkness, which to us is the source of light. We have never seen our own soul, or that of our fellow-man; yet we are fully convinced that man is possessed of a moral and intellectual nature. So, although God is invisible to human eye, His existence is clearly proven from the works of nature, from the dealings of providence, from our inward longing after immortality, and from all those innate moral feelings—such as love, joy, hope and fear—which distinguish man from the lower animals; but above all by the existence within us of that moral faculty called *conscience*, which sits in judgment upon our actions, and as the vice-gerent of heaven reminds all men of their moral accountability to their Creator, so that even the heathen are "without excuse."

One of the oldest inspired writers has told us that

upon the original creation of this universe when the Divine Being laid the foundation-stone of this world, "the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy." And there never has been a period since the morning of Creation when the voice of nature has ceased to echo that primeval song of the angels—the stars of heaven uniting with the rocks of earth in swelling the hymn of praise to the Omnipotent Creator, "for whose pleasure and glory all things are and were created." St. Paul declared to the early Christians at Rome, converted from idolatry, that "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even His eternal power and Godhead." The Apostle here lays it down as a truth which could not be controverted that the existence of a Supreme Being—His wisdom, power and goodness—is clearly established from the creation of the material world; and from the order, harmony and government which prevail throughout the temple of nature. These things afford evidence of a Designing Mind which planned, framed and upholds the universe of matter by the exercise of skill and power. So that, although man in the blindness of his nature, through sin, has often forgotten the true God and bowed down to idols of wood and stone, yet even the heathen nations, who "worship the creature rather than the Creator," are still "without excuse."

From the light of nature itself there is ample evidence for the existence of a Divine Being; and although the heathen choose not to "retain God in their knowledge," but have "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things"—yet in condescension to man's fallen nature, the Almighty has given to us higher proofs of His existence by favouring man with a special revelation from heaven. In the earlier ages of the world men were left to discover a knowledge

of God from the works of His hand, and the arrangements of providence, as well as from that inner witness so deep-rooted in our nature which testifies to our dependence on the Almighty, by our inward longings after immortality. But as the ages rolled on, and sin obliterated a knowledge of the true God from the human soul, the Creator, out of compassion to fallen humanity, thought fit to give a special manifestation of His will by the mouth or pen of messengers and prophets, commissioned from heaven to reclaim man from his idolatry. Still, the multitude heeded not the warning voice of His servants the prophets, even as they had failed before to recognise the Voice Divine speaking to them in the thunder and the lightning, the glories of the starry firmament, or the hidden treasures of the earth. At length, out of forbearance to man, and in condescension to our infirmity, the Divine Being, who for ages had spoken to the human family through His works, and for centuries by His written word given to the Hebrew race, gave a yet higher revelation of His character in and through the person of His Son: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." And if they who are without a written revelation from heaven are inexcusable for their knowledge of God, what shall be said of those who have the light both of nature and of revelation to guide them, but fail to profit thereby; who have this twofold testimony to the Divine Being, bearing witness to a mind omniscient, an arm omnipotent, and a spirit omnipresent?

The knowledge of God derivable from a study of nature does not depend upon an intimate acquaintance with the

various branches of scientific study. This would be impossible to the majority of mankind, whose position and occupations necessarily debar them from the higher walks of learning. But the evidence of a great Designer is patent to every one who treads the earth *beneath* us, or gazes at the canopy of heaven *above* us, or takes cognizance of the workings of the human mind *within* us. In all these departments we may behold a plan and a purpose—wisdom, power and goodness—all tending towards one great end. Every one familiar with the return of the seasons, and the display of wisdom and goodness manifest in the annual supply of food for man and beast; every one who has observed the upspringing of the grass and grain, the budding of the trees, or the migration of birds; every one who surveys the starry firmament, or has studied the complicated arrangements in providence of means to end, or given but a passing thought to the curious mechanism of the human frame, must feel impressed with the idea that there is a great First Cause—a Being who presides over universal nature—whom the ancients called the ENS ENTIVM, the *causa causarum*—One whom Christians worship as “God over all, blessed forever.”

To whatever department of nature we direct our thoughts, we are furnished with ever-increasing testimony to the Divine wisdom, power, goodness and love. We commonly speak of the threefold kingdom of nature—the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms; all of which have a mutual dependence, and are so arranged in their constituent parts as well as in their relative dependence upon each other, that the least disturbance of their present conditions would involve the universe in hopeless confusion. It is well known that there are about *sixty* elementary substances, out of which all matter is formed—in different combinations and in endless variety. Now, the wisdom of Deity is specially manifest in the nice adjustment and beautiful arrangement of all those material

substances, and of their several properties, so as to bring about the present harmonious condition of things visible in the universe. We shall illustrate this thought by a few particulars. We all know how necessary is the atmosphere which we breathe for the support of animal and vegetable life. The air which a living creature inhales mixes with the blood, thus forming by the process of combustion one source of heat that goes to support the animal frame. A very slight change in the component parts of our atmosphere in two of its main ingredients—namely, oxygen and carbon—would be destructive of animal life. To prevent such a catastrophe, a beautiful arrangement has been made by the Creator by which the carbonic acid thrown off by the germination of plants, and by the respiration of animals, is absorbed by the vegetable kingdom, so that the atmosphere is distributed again into its constituent elements, and thus its purity is maintained. The animal and vegetable kingdoms are thus made to balance each other nicely, and the universe upheld in its regular course of uninterrupted law.

Again, we find in nature certain rotations or circuits, according to which rude matter from the mineral kingdom is taken up into vegetable composition, for the support of plants; and these again enter into the animal frame as food, thus proving the mutual dependence of one part of nature upon all the rest. So, the moisture which is evaporated by the sun's rays from earth and ocean first refreshes the air above, then descends to earth to invigorate both animate and inanimate nature, and finally gushes forth in streams to fertilize the earth's soil, thence to find its way back to ocean. And any material change in the quantity of water in the ocean, or in its distribution, would be destructive of the present fauna and flora of our earth. The very size of the planet on which we dwell is in meet adaptation to the living beings existing thereupon. And, as a distinguished writer has shown, the very form and structure of flowers growing in our

fields and forests are dependent on the size of the earth, and its present temperature, for their fertility and subsistence. Truly, we may say: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches."

As another illustration of the Divine presence and wisdom in the material world, we may notice the adjustment of parts and the order which reigns throughout the temple of nature, according to which *the grain and plants of earth* owe their continued existence to *the period of the earth's revolution* in its orbit round the sun. It might appear as if these two things had no necessary connection with each other; and yet it is found that the rising of the sap in spring time, the opening of the leaves and flowers in summer, the ripening of the seed in autumn and its preparation for becoming a new plant in the vegetable kingdom—all those processes require a certain period of time fully to mature the plant or grain; and no other time than 365 days, or one revolution of the earth in its orbit, would answer the end in view. Multitudes of similar illustrations might be adduced showing that there is a unity of plan and purpose running through the whole material universe; and that even our solar system has a connection with other distant systems reached only by the telescope—in all of which we may mark a Designing Mind, Divine power, infinite goodness, leading us to the conclusion that verily there is One who "ruleth in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth." We can thus reckon with unerring certainty on the faithfulness of Him who is "without variableness or shadow of turning."

If we desire additional evidence of design, as proving the existence of Deity, we have only to turn to the human body, which is "fearfully and wonderfully made." Its erect position, being poised midway between heaven and earth, and nicely balanced on a few inches of ground; the adaptation of muscles, bones, sockets and ligaments,

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for the purpose of locomotion ; the position of arms, hands, legs and feet, for self-defence, free movement, manual labour and prehensile purposes ; the position of the eye, for taking an elevated view of surrounding objects ; and the formation of the ear, so as to gather in the vibrations of sound and convey them to the sensorium or brain ; in short, the nice adaptation of every member of the human body to fulfil the end designed in creation—all afford ample proof of infinite wisdom and benevolence on the part of a designing great First Cause. The human eye is of itself a study for a philosopher. What a curious and delicate piece of mechanism is the organ of vision in a human being—with its socket, cornea, iris, pupil, crystalline lens, vitreous humour, retina, optic nerve, &c.,—showing no fewer than eight hundred different contrivances in the human eye, the absence of any *one* of which would seriously affect our present vision ! The same line of argument might be pursued with respect to the organ of hearing, which one writer calls “the harp of three hundred strings.” May we not here emphasize the question of the prophet : “He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? he that formed the eye, shall he not see ?”

All the branches of science, which at one time were resorted to in order to disprove revelation, are now uniting their harmonious voice to declare the glory of Him who made all things by the word of His power. *Chemistry* reveals the existence of subtle forces operating in nature, all under the reign of law, by which the face of this earth is being continually renewed, and human life sustained and perpetuated. The dissecting knife, and the microscope, and the crucible, clearly must distinguish between the living and the non-living—between mere animal matter and spiritual life. One eminent writer says : “It is futile to attempt by chemistry to bridge the chasm between the living and the non-living !” *Astronomy*, which at one time was the battle ground on which the evidences of Christianity were to be overturned by the sceptic, now

yields its ever-increasing testimony to the truth of Revelation. *Geology*, the younger sister of the sciences, and which at one time was thought to contradict the testimony of Moses in regard to the antiquity of our earth, in unfolding the stony record of past ages brings before our view a series of creations upon this planet reaching far back to an indefinite period of time, during which plants and animals existed in the pre-Adamite ages. So that man now finds himself, in pondering over the facts and lessons of geology, to be only the *creature of yesterday*; just as by the wondrous discoveries of astronomy he finds himself to be a mere *atom in creation*, thrust into a small corner of the universe. It was long ago declared by one of the oldest inspired writers: "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee." And as science unfolds the pages of the stony record in the bosom of the earth, showing that in comparison with previously existing forms of creation "we are but of yesterday and know nothing," we feel that human pride is rebuked; and the most becoming language which we can employ is that of the royal Psalmist: "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

But while we are thus taught a lesson of humility, we are also reminded of a grand designing purpose wisely preparing this earth, through a vast period of time and by a long series of changes, for the reception of intelligent man. It is worthy of consideration, as illustrating the text, that there has been during all the past ages—as now unfolded to view by the discoveries of geology—one uniform plan exhibited on the part of the Creator, by which a succession of plants and animals appeared upon the stage of Creation from lower to higher forms, until MAN was reached—the apex of creation, and the noblest specimen of Divine workmanship! And, mysterious fact! it hath pleased the Almighty to employ a human body with which to clothe the INCARNATE REDEEMER—thus restoring man's dignity to what we once were before sin entered the universe, and elevating the race to a higher po-

sition than Adam could ever have attained in his sinless state. For we have it on apostolic authority that redeemed man will be finally clothed in a resurrection body which will never decay, like unto Christ's own glorified body now in heaven; and that throughout the coming ages we shall occupy that celestial body in the "new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." For "there are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

And what is the one grand truth or lesson taught by the findings of science, in regard to the Being and character of God? It is that "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: even His eternal power and Godhead!" For while we can decipher in the bowels of the earth the record of past changes, and of mighty convulsions, in which fire and water, cold and heat, atmospheric influences and chemical agency, have been among the chief forces employed by the Almighty in wearing away the mountain tops or in elevating the land from ocean's bed—we are also led to observe the unchangeable character of Him who "in the beginning created the heavens and the earth." He "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance," is the same unchangeable Being both "yesterday, to-day, and forever." All things, therefore, are under His sovereign control; so that the most antagonistic forces are wisely ordered and nicely balanced to serve the grand purpose of Creation, and the not less grand and glorious purpose of Redemption. As it was on tables of stone that the finger of the Almighty inscribed the ten commandments, for the guidance of Israel; so it was the same Divine Power which has inscribed upon the rocks of earth a history of the pre-Adanite ages, from which,

taken in conjunction with the Mosaic narrative of creation, the true Israel of God may learn of the doings of Him who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." There is thus one "God over all, blessed forever;" one mind has governed the universe throughout all the past ages; all things visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, fulfil the purposes of Jehovah. And the one song of praise which shall resound throughout earth and heaven during the ages to come will be "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

We conclude by reminding you that, while God may be known from His created works, and by His providential dealings,—by the light of nature, and from our own inner consciousness as rational, moral, and accountable beings—His character as a just God, and yet a Saviour in Christ Jesus, is discoverable only by the written Revelation of His will. It is thus that the Bible is the Book of books. Its very silence on many points is a proof of its inspiration and divinity. More can be learned from what it does *not* say on certain points, than from the distinct utterances of all human writings. In the lively oracles which a God of truth has graciously committed to our trust, we have all that is needful for salvation. In the gospel of His grace, we see how "mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have embraced each other;" and that which we could never attain to from a knowledge of creation or providence—viz., *peace with God*—may now be enjoyed by every soul of man whose blessedness it is to know the joyful sound. In the Bible we are taught to know God as He is revealed to us in Christ—just as in nature we may learn the great fact that "God is." This last teaches us to *know* God—but the other shows us how He is to be worshipped, loved, and enjoyed. Nature teaches us that God is a just being; but revelation shows us how He can be just, and yet the

justifier of the ungodly who believe in Christ. Such a revelation of Deity as is given to us in the Bible was what might have been expected,—in order to satisfy the yearnings of our moral nature, and to retune the musical chords of the soul in order to bring it into unison with the Father of our spirits. The schism of the human soul can be remedied only by that revelation of Himself which has been given to us from Heaven. If nature be but a revelation of *law* from the great Lawgiver, may we not *a priori* conclude it to be reasonable that the Divine Being should give us a revelation of *love*? In what way and to what extent the Creator has thought fit to reveal Himself to His creatures, will form the theme of the following lectures. Meantime the Being and attributes of God are clearly taught us by His works, no less than in His word;—and whether you look up to the heavens above, or to the earth beneath, or to the waters under the earth, to contemplate those acts of creative energy and of providential care which proclaim “His eternal power and Godhead,” you can, not only say or sing with the poet:

“The hand that made them is divine;”

but with a feeling of child-like confidence you are entitled also to

“Lift to Heaven an unpresumptuous eye,  
And, smiling, say—‘My Father made them all.’”

Amen.





## LECTURE II.

### CUMULATIVE TESTIMONY TO THE EXISTENCE OF DEITY.

Is. xliii. 10: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."

**I**N an age when doubt and scepticism abound, and when such strenuous efforts are being put forth to shake the faith of Christian people, and to disparage in the eyes of the world the religion of the Bible, it seems proper that we should examine afresh the "foundations of our faith," in order to have an intelligent appreciation of Divine truth, and be ready to give a "reason for the hope that is in us with meekness and fear." It is matter for gratitude that "God has never left himself without a witness" to His existence and to His Divine character; for we behold within and around us, both in the world of nature and in the kingdom of grace, both in the arrangements of the material world and in the complicated evolutions of Providence, abundant proofs of the existence of a Divine Being, who is at once the great First Cause, and who continually presides over universal nature. Whether we direct our inquiries to the starry firmament above us, or to the earth beneath our feet with its hidden treasures, or to the waters under the earth, "wherein are things creeping innumerable;" whether we study the widely extended universe of matter, with all its wonderful adaptations; its boundless field of operation or the multiplied motions of its vast and complicated machinery; no rational mind can rise from the contemplation without admitting that "the hand that made them is divine." And

when we pass from the outer world of matter to that clear revelation which has been given to us in Holy Scripture, we seem to pass from the outer court of the temple of nature, built by the Supreme Architect, into that Holy of Holies where God has given to us the visible Shekinah, or symbol of His presence, dwelling between the Cherubim!

The prophet in recording the words, "Ye are my witnesses," plainly gives a challenge to the heathen idolaters and idol-makers of his day, to produce their cause and bring forth their strong reasons, that it might be decided who was the one living and true God. And to convince them of the existence of Israel's King, as a Being possessed of Eternity, Infinity, Omnipresence, and Foreknowledge—One who could "declare the end even from the beginning"—the prophet refers to the Jewish nation as "witnesses," for God, who had foretold future events regarding their nation, and interposed to deliver His people out of the hands of their enemies; first from the Egyptians, afterwards from the Canaanites, then from the Assyrians, and lastly from the Chaldeans, on the return from Babylonish captivity.

But the testimony for the existence of Deity has ever since been accumulating during the progress of ages, and during the continuous history of the church and the world. Like a mighty river which takes its rise on the mountain side, but has gone on gathering accessions from many a rivulet and tributary on its way to the ocean—so the evidence for God and His truth has during the past ages derived additional strength by every new development in providence, and by every new discovery in science, and by every fresh conversion to Christianity; by every successive fulfilment of prophecy, and by every unexpected discovery made in opening up the buried ruins of Egypt, or Nineveh, Babylon or Moab—all of which have afforded fresh confirmation of Old Testament Scripture. In regard to one and all of these, we are justified in applying the words of the prophet as illustrating the

existence and character of Deity : " Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."

We propose to arrange the testimony in support of the existence of Deity, under the three following heads, viz. : 1st, Astronomy ; 2ndly, Geology ; and 3rdly, the Bible, or written word of God. From either and all of which we may justly conclude that verily there *is* a God who "doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth."

I. ASTRONOMY.—All the sciences have a close and intimate bearing upon religion. In fact, natural science—which treats of the works of the Creator—is properly to be viewed as just the handmaid of religion. And the works of Deity, when rightly viewed, tend to throw clearness upon the written word of God—even as they mutually assist the believer in forming just conceptions of the character and attributes of Him who framed the world, and gave to us also His written word. Before the world was favoured with a special revelation from heaven, man was chiefly indebted for his knowledge of the Divine Being, to a contemplation of the works of His hand. The royal Psalmist derived much profitable instruction by meditating on the starry firmament. He says : " When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained ; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him ?" So the inspired prophets continually directed the minds of God's ancient people to a view of His creative wonders, as these were to be seen in the planetary bodies, rather than to the earth on which we dwell. Indeed, little or nothing was known by the ancients of the wonders which modern science has disclosed respecting the geological formations of our globe. This earth was just to them a kind of platform, or basis of observation, from which they could look up and contemplate those starry spheres which on a clear wintry night invite the gaze of the thoughtful. Hence the language of Isaiah :

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"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power." So when the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, to convince him of his ignorance, and of the weakness of his faith, He directed his contemplation to those brilliant constellations visible at night, which tell of the Divine Power, faithfulness and love. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?"

The lessons of astronomy were not lost to the ancients, however much they may be disregarded by the busy multitude in our day, who, in their eager haste to be rich, lose much of that spiritual fervour and simple-minded faith and mental elevation which characterized our forefathers. But the advance of science in the field of astronomy, even by men whose aim is to turn their knowledge against religion, has had the effect of bringing into view greater wonders—illustrative of the Omnipotence, Wisdom, and Goodness of the Almighty Creator. Vast (*e. g.*) as our world is, whose diameter is about 8,000 miles, and circumference 25,000—containing on its surface of land and water an area of about 200 millions of square miles—yet this earth dwindles into an insignificant ball or globe, compared with many of the planetary bodies. There is Jupiter, for example, which to the naked eye appears like a small lamp hanging in the ceiling of the sky; yet that glittering planet is 1,400 times larger than our earth, and attended by four satellites or moons which can be seen only by the aid of a telescope. Jupiter is nearly four hundred millions of miles distant; and when we consider the rapidity of its motion, travelling through space at the rate of 29,000 miles every hour,—when we consider the distance gone over in making one revolution around the sun, requiring twelve of our years to do so,—one cannot but feel

impressed, if not overpowered, by a sense of the Divine Omnipotence, and of the infinite resources of that great Being "whose Kingdom ruleth over all."

But to realize the full force of the Omnipotence of God as we contemplate the starry firmament, we must pass from planet to planet, from nebula to nebula, and from our own solar system to those other systems in the universe outside our own, where brilliant groups or constellations are brought into view—all revolving at immense distances from us, and from each other, without any clash or disorder, but ever harmonious in their movements, and all obedient to the laws of their Creator! It is not enough for us to view simply the larger bodies which form part of our own planetary system, of which the Sun is the centre. It is not enough to view Saturn, we shall say, which is 900 times larger than our earth, and surrounded by a magnificent double ring 200,000 miles in diameter. It is not enough to view through a powerful telescope the rings of Saturn, his belts, and seven satellites—and forming one of the grandest sights witnessed either by the angels or by the inhabitants of other worlds. It is not enough to go to the outer margin of our own solar system, and by telescopic aid to view the planet Uranus, with his six moons, which is the most distant orb from the sun ever yet discovered—being no less than 1800 millions of miles from that luminary, and about eighty times larger than our earth. But leaving the sun behind us, with all the solar system, let us in imagination wing our way to those stellar regions beyond, and pass away on to the fixed stars which are but centres of other planetary systems in infinite space; and then to the "milky way," called by the ancients "the road of souls to paradise," which is but a vast collocation of worlds created by the Almighty, governed by fixed laws, and forming to us the outer Court of the Grand Temple of Nature. And as we reflect upon the number, the magnitude, the distance, the velocity, the complicated but harmonious movements of that vast

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assemblage of worlds, myriads of them inhabited by sentient beings like ourselves, what language can so fitly express our emotions as that of the New Testament prophet: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints. Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy."

It has lately been discovered that the whole visible universe, including our own solar system, revolves continually around a common centre called Alcyone, in the group or constellation known as the Pleiades. Now, it is a striking coincidence that, in the original Hebrew, the word translated Pleiades in the book of Job means a pivot, hinge, or axle! And in utter ignorance of the meaning of that word in Job, astronomers by following out their own independent calculations have discovered the very interesting fact that Alcyone is the centre of gravity to our solar system. According to Prof. Mitchell, a distinguished astronomer, it would take 18,200,000 years for our solar system to make one complete revolution around Alcyone! These thoughts on the extent of creation, are well nigh overwhelming to our finite capacity; and they bring to remembrance the fable of a German poet which, though founded on legend, yet contains a great truth regarding the infinite resources of Deity. God (he said) called a man of dreams up to heaven, saying, "Come, view the glory of my House!" To the servants standing round His throne He said, "Take from off him his robes of flesh, but touch not his human heart." It was done; and with a mighty angel for his guide, the man started on his infinite voyage. They left behind them the terraces of heaven, and wheeled away into endless space. Sometimes, with flight of angel-wing, they swept through deserts of death that divided worlds of light; sometimes they fled through space where new worlds were being formed out of chaos. Then, from a distance which could be counted only in heaven, light

dawned upon them through a sleepy film ; and in a moment the light once more swept by them, and they were in the midst of blazing suns. Then came eternities of twilight ; on the right hand and on the left towered mighty constellations ! Above, below, around them were stairs that scaled eternity ; depth was swallowed up in height insurmountable ; height was swallowed up in depth unfathomable. Suddenly, as they rose from infinite to infinite, and passed onward through the impenetrable vista of worlds, a cry arose that worlds more numerous, and systems more mysterious, and heights more steep, and depths more profound, were just at hand. At last the man with human heart sighed, and stopped, and shuddered, and wept. "Angel," said he, "I shall go no further ; for the spirit of man acheth with this infinity. Insufferable is the glory of God. Let me lie down in the narrow grave, and hide me from the inaccessible glory of the Infinite ; for end there is none !" And from all the listening stars the cry went forth, "End there is none !" "Is there no end," demanded the angel, "and is this the sorrow that killeth thee ?" But no voice answered through the depths of heaven. When, at length, the angel lifted up his hands, crying, "End there is none to the universe of God ; lo, also, He hath no beginning !"

II. Another witness to the existence of the Divine Being and confirmatory of Revelation, is GEOLOGY. Latest among the sciences, this younger sister brings up the rear of a glorious procession of witnesses for Divine truth. Until within a century, little was known of the hidden wonders which a scientific investigation of the earth's crust has brought to light. True, the ancients, so far back as Job's time, could speak of "a vein for the silver, and a place for gold ;" they tell us that "iron was taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone ;" but while the necessities of man led to an early invention of metals for domestic purposes, it was only within the last century (owing to the march of scientific discovery), that

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the excavation of the earth for railway purposes and mining operations suddenly revealed the interesting fact that, in the successive layers of rock composing the crust of our earth, we have an indelible record of past history, and of the changes that have occurred on this planet, together with the remains (in a fossil state) of plants and animals that lived on our earth long previous to the advent of man. It would be out of place here to enter into a detail of all the wonderful discoveries made by the science of geology, and the remarkable confirmation which has thus been given to the truth of Genesis regarding *the order of Creation*. Suffice it to say, that while on the first announcement of discoveries made by scientific men in the rocks, there was a great outcry made against the Bible, because it was supposed to contradict the evidence of our senses—now, through more patient study and a more cautious interpretation of scripture, we can see how the Bible may be so understood as not to militate against science; or rather that science has brought a flood of new light to bear upon scripture, by which harmony is established between the *works* and the *word* of God.

The time was, in the field of astronomical science, when there was thought to be a contradiction between nature and the Bible; and the immortal Galileo was forced to abjure his belief in the modern system of astronomy to save his life. Thus too has it been in the field of geology. To this day, there are some theologians who decry against science, as if it were necessarily infidel in its tendency, and fitted to undermine the faith of Christians in those eternal verities which are the foundation of our hopes. But science has shed a new lustre on the opening page of Scripture, and aided us in taking a broader view of Creation, and by consequence larger views of the Author of Creation, with whom "a thousand years are as one day!" As Dr. Dick has remarked in his "Christian Philosopher:" "It is found that the more minutely the system of

nature is explored, the more distinctly do we perceive the harmony that subsists between the record of Scripture and the operations of the Creator in the material world." True, some startling assertions have been made, and exaggerated theories advanced, fitted (if true) to overturn the Christian's faith; but competent men of science have shewn that those theories which contradict the narrative of Scripture are wholly unsupported by facts; and so far from being shaken in our religious belief by the discoveries of geology, the Mosaic narrative of creation is only confirmed thereby. We may not fully understand *all* that has been revealed in God's word; certainly we are not in a position to put geology or any other branch of science in battle array against the Bible—the more so, when we know that the "word of God is perfect," while science is but in a state of comparative infancy.

Nevertheless, there is much that can be and has been reconciled; while it behoves us to wait patiently for further light, so that what is now dark or mysterious may be made plain. Knowledge is progressive. It would not do for us to know everything all at once. "'Tis but a part we see, and not the whole." And the promise of our heavenly Father is: "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." But science, and geology especially, enables us to discover great harmony between the works and word of the Creator. Do we find (*e. g.*), that there are no fossil remains of man until we reach the later rocky deposits—those resting immediately upon the Tertiary formations? Here geology confirms "the old, old story" of Genesis, written by Moses 3,500 years ago, revealing that man was the last created animal at the close of the sixth day! Again—do the fossil remains of huge reptilian animals that lived in the water, appear in the sedimentary deposits which precede the era of land animals and man? The same fact was revealed to us long ago by inspiration, that huge marine monsters (Heb.: *tanninim*) which ploughed

the ocean were the result of the fifth day's work of creation, as recorded by Moses ! Do the carboniferous deposits *precede* in point of geological time the age both of marine and land animals ? Here we have another remarkable illustration of the harmony that obtains between the Bible and nature, as respects the *order of creation* ; for upon the third creative day, by the upheaval of the mountains, and the separation of land and water according to the Almighty fiat, the vegetable kingdom was introduced—when such an immense growth of trees and plants followed the appearance of dry land, as never since has been witnessed on our globe. And that vast vegetable deposit buried beneath the rocks of the next succeeding age, was converted, by the exclusion of the light and the atmosphere, into carbon or inexhaustible beds of coal, provided for the use and comfort of man ages before he was created ! Once more—is it now generally believed by men of science and even by theologians that, instead of being six or seven thousand years old, this earth has been in existence for long ages,—during which it has been the scene of many changes and the abode of life, vegetable and animal ? Then we see nothing in Scripture to militate against such a view ; for Moses does not pretend to fix the date of the earth's antiquity, but simply declares that the earth had a beginning, and that God (Heb. Elohim) was its Creator. There is, according to the now generally received opinions both of theologians and of scientific men, ample room for all the successive changes that geology reveals to have taken place between the chaos and the era of man ! And whether we look to the ancient story of Genesis given by Moses, or to the modern record brought to view by the discoveries of geology as legibly inscribed upon the rocks, we must arrive at one and the same conclusion, viz. : that this earth emerged into existence by the creative fiat of the Almighty, who “spake and it was done ; who commanded, and all things stood fast.” Matter could not create itself, and all the discov-

eries of science go to show that there was a "beginning."

III.—We now come lastly to another of God's witnesses in support of "His eternal power and Divinity, viz.: THE BIBLE; which claims to be an inspired revelation from heaven by the pen of prophets, apostles, and evangelists. In one sense, this is the highest testimony which we can adduce for the Being and character of God. The statement of the prophet Isaiah, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord," primarily refers to the Jewish Church and nation. They were the true worshippers of Jehovah. They were the custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures, for "unto them were committed the oracles of God." Those sacred writings have been handed down to us with assiduous care, almost with superstitious veneration, through the channel first of the Jewish Church and then by the hands of New Testament apostles and evangelists. The Christian portion of the sacred writings consists of twenty-seven distinct books, written by eight or nine different persons, at sundry times and in divers places—all given to us by inspiration of the Holy Ghost—and, together with the Hebrew Scriptures, forming the completed Canon of Inspiration. This is the claim made by the writers of those sacred books, and one which must be accorded to them on the ground that they were honest men who spoke the truth. When we come to examine the Bible—and to pass from the outer bulwarks of Christianity, to examine its wonderful contents—when we begin to mark the antiquity of the documents composing the book, its high standard of morality, its glowing imagery, its melting pathos, its fierce invective against sin, its stirring records of history, its prophetic announcement of future events, its discovery of a plan of salvation, evincing the profoundest wisdom and love, and (above all) its glorious views and hopes of another world; who shall regard the Bible in any other light than that of the highest testimony to the existence of God and of the things of eternity? Shakespeare drew his poetic inspiration from the

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Bible. Lord Bacon drew his inductive philosophy from the Bible. Sir Isaac Newton derived his love of truth and his patient investigation of nature's secrets from the Bible. Milton drew his inspiration which culminated in that grand epic poem, "Paradise Lost," from the Bible. Herschel and Faraday, Brewster and Murchison, Owen and Agassiz,—all lighted their lamps at the same torch of Divine truth, the Bible, that they might descend into the subterranean cavern of rocky deposits in the bowels of the earth, and there read the past history of this planet; or, mounting up as on angel-wing by the aid of the telescope to the blue vault of heaven, behold the great Eternal ruling over myriads of worlds scattered through boundless space!

Finally—if there be any true morality in the world, any heaven of righteousness which keeps society from sinking into barbarism; if there be any true science, or sound philosophy, or stable principles of jurisprudence in the world, it is all traceable to the Bible! And why so? Because, far above all human reasoning about the genuineness or authentic character of the Book, we can discover on its pages the IMPRESS OF DEITY—THE FINGER OF GOD—THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST! He "who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."—Amen.





### LECTURE III.

#### EXTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.—CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

Rom. xv. 4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

THE Christian religion is exposed to assault from two different sources—from open, undisguised infidelity from without; and also from professed friends of the Bible, who, though believing historically in that Divine record, denude it of its value by false interpretations of Scripture, and also by presenting to the world the appearance of "a house divided against itself." While it would be a great point gained, were Christian people to discover a harmonious solution of their differences—so as to give to the world the appearance of *unity*—it is needful that, in the meantime, we do what in us lies to establish on a sound basis THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY; shewing our reasonable belief in the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, which are the only foundation of the Christian's faith. It is important for Christians themselves to be able, in these days of free thought and bold scepticism, to "give a reason for the hope that is in them with meekness and fear." The Bible is the sole rule of faith among Christians—as the sacred books called the Veda are the rule of faith among the Hindus, or the Koran among the followers of Mahomet. What superior claim has the Christian Bible above these so-called sacred books of other religious systems? What right have the advocates of Christianity to appeal

to Scripture as a final resort in all matters of controversy, with the announcement to their fellow-men : " Thus saith the Lord ? " How can we feel assured that the sacred books, of which the Old and New Testaments are composed, may not have been forged, or interpolated, and palmed upon the world as inspired, or authentic and genuine ? Do the first five books called the Pentateuch contain a true historical narrative in regard to the creation and the early history of the human race ? And was Moses, the lawgiver of Israel, the writer of those five books ?

While a full and exhaustive answer could not be given to these inquiries within the compass of a single discourse, we may indicate generally the grounds upon which we are fairly justified in receiving the Canon of Inspiration as the word of the living God. This may be established from the concurrent testimony of Jewish and Christian writers in past ages—from the confirmatory testimony of heathen writers of different nations and languages—from the recent discovery of ancient records made on stone or brick, by people who lived at different periods of the world's history, and in different parts of the old world—and, lastly, from the high moral tone of the authors of Holy Scripture ; their claim to inspiration ; and the fulfilment of prophecies uttered by them hundreds and even thousands of years before the events themselves took place. We should be perfectly justified in dealing with the sacred writings in the same way as we would deal with any mere human writing—such as Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, Cæsar's *Commentaries*, or Macaulay's *History of England*—and receive their statements as historical facts worthy of credit unless contradicted by the nature of the case or by other credible authorities who, at the time of their publication, called in question the truth of the Bible narrative. The time was when all ancient history, sacred or profane, was received in a spirit of humble acquiescence, without any critical examination into the truth of

the facts. But all that has been changed, through modern historical criticism. Christian people have no right to complain of this; but they *do* complain of that sceptical spirit which seeks to overturn the bulwarks of our faith, by insinuating doubts into the minds of the young, and those who are predisposed against a revelation from heaven. This line of attack began with the Old Testament scriptures, in which it was claimed that there was no historical basis for the facts narrated; and that much of it was founded on oral tradition, exaggerated by poetic fancy. It was not long till the same course of attack was pursued by infidel writers in regard to the New Testament itself; which, though written in an age of general enlightenment, and narrating facts which were known to the great mass of society, was nevertheless declared to be partly mythical, until Strauss and other continental writers have eliminated the Christ of history and reduced Him to the level of a mere man perfected by the refinement of the nineteenth century. In short, the individual history of Christ is denied by those sceptical writers, and a sort of dreamy spiritualistic Christ is substituted, called *Humanity*, in which the race of man develops into what is called the divinely-human life. As an example of this levelling process, the book of Esther is reduced to a mere poem, although written in the most matter-of-fact style; and as a history has always been received by the Church, both Jewish and Christian.

Another objection taken by sceptical writers is to the miracles of the Bible. It is contended that miracles are impossible; but the Bible itself is a miracle. It is the result of a special revelation from heaven, made known to men endued with power by the Holy Spirit not only to narrate the facts of history, but to foretell future events. And if miracles are impossible, although publicly performed in the eyes of multitudes, and attended by credible witnesses, as in those performed by Moses or Elijah, or by Christ and His apostles, then we should be precluded

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from applying to the Bible the ordinary rules on which we should judge of the truthfulness of any historical book, or any religious system. If God created the universe, that was a miracle itself. The creation of a first man was also a miracle, more so than the resurrection of a dead man. And if we admit the possibility of one miracle, then we must conclude that by the same Divine power others could follow. In no one respect does Christianity differ from Mahomedanism more than in the number and conclusiveness of its miracles. The denial of miracles, or their possibility, implies a denial of the existence of God, who is "*above all*" nature, and "*through all*" history. And the result of this atheistic teaching would be to make us *children* without a *Father*, followers of a blind instinct, groping in the darkness of a fatal necessity, to be sooner or later laid in the grave uncheered by the hope of a resurrection or of a coming immortality. But the subject of miracles will more fully be discussed in a future Lecture.

In our investigation of the facts of Biblical history, we naturally start at the beginning, going back to old time, and following down the stream till we plant our feet on what is *present* and *visible* to our eyes. It will simplify our subject, if we divide past history into PERIODS, beginning with the earliest and oldest recorded in sacred history. We who believe in the inspiration of Scripture rest our testimony on the ground that all the facts narrated in the Bible are worthy of entire credence, because *inspired*. Christ Himself, as well as the whole line of prophets and apostles, rested their belief on an appeal to what Moses, or David, or Isaiah, or Daniel said by the Holy Ghost. We will not press this view in the present stage of our investigation; but we are content to treat the sacred books, meanwhile, as we would treat any other merely human production—entitled to be judged by its merits.

What is called the Pentateuch embraces the first five books

of Scripture, viz., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy ; written (as we shall assume for the present) by Moses, the lawgiver of Israel. The first one of those five books carries us back into the dim vista of past ages, and discourses about "things ancient." The other four present us with a history of the Hebrew race, as the true worshippers of God under the leadership of Moses. Now, the uniform testimony of the Jewish people is that the books called the Pentateuch were written by Moses, with the exception of the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which contains an account of his death, added, probably, by either Joshua or Samuel, to complete the memoir of the great Jewish lawgiver. The objections raised against Moses being the author of those books are of the most flimsy character, and such as might be urged against any production of the many writers of history, ancient and modern. We are told that Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of Egypt;" and we know that writing on papyrus, as well as hieroglyphic inscriptions on stone or brick, was common among the Egyptians at the period to which the Pentateuch belongs. And it is probable that long before the time of Moses, when Abraham went out from Ur of the Chaldees, "the father of the faithful"—who was an Eastern Prince, and the founder of the Hebrew nation—would transmit to his descendants the alphabet of the Chaldeans with which he was familiar in Mesopotamia. Every race of people, however savage, has had its traditions carefully handed down, and its inscriptions of events (however rude) on brick or stone.

But the testimony borne by the Jews to the authorship of the five books of Moses is corroborated by many ancient heathen writers—Egyptian, Chaldean, Grecian and Roman—who all admit that he was the author of that written code of laws which distinguished the Hebrews from other nations. And according to the testimony of Moses himself, the book of the law was by a Divine command placed in the ark, watched over jealously by the Levites, and read in the hearing of all the people once, at

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least, in every seven years, and sacredly guarded against all innovation by the most solemn sanctions.

The difficulties are somewhat increased when we come to the book of Genesis; for it is admitted on all hands that Moses could not have been an eye-witness of the facts recorded in that book. His authority was *tradition* to a large extent. But when we consider that this was the only way in which history at that early period of the human race could be transmitted; when we consider, moreover, that Moses received a traditional account of most of the events which he records either at third hand, or at most at fifth hand—because the very long age of the patriarchs made only *three or four* stages or removes between Adam and Moses—our faith in the credibility of the book of Genesis is not severely taxed. Moses, even, on that low ground, is just as reliable an authority for most of the facts contained in Genesis, as many of the older historians extant—who give us not what they actually saw, but what they gathered from tradition and other reliable sources. It is very probable, however, that Moses, in compiling his history, had access to documents, monuments, or ancient records of the patriarchs, who would naturally wish to transmit to posterity a reliable account of early history, more especially of what concerned the creation, the fall, the deluge, and other leading events. The very *minuteness* with which the history of the patriarchs (for example) is given, would indicate that some monuments or records had been kept. [We are now speaking altogether apart from the claim of inspiration.] And we may fairly conclude that Moses gathered the materials of his history, partly from tradition, but mainly from old family records or monumental inscriptions; and, in regard to the latter part of the book of Genesis, from written materials handed down from Abraham on papyrus or parchment.

It will be regarded as confirmatory of the book of Genesis, when we state that the historians of Egypt and Babylon which, if we may except Moses himself, were the oldest

historians in the world, mention many of the same facts which he does ; such as the deluge, the creation of man, and the formation of the world into land and water, in almost the identical language employed by Moses himself. One of these historians makes the period between the first man and the deluge to be just *ten* generations ; so does Moses ; and his account of the deluge is so strikingly similar to that of the Hebrew prophet in all its details concerning the ark, and the animals, and the dove and the drying up of the waters, and the building of an altar, and the going forth of the occupants of the ark on the high tableland of Armenia, that one would almost conclude that the Chaldean historian must have borrowed his account of those things from the history of Moses. And yet they are quite independent witnesses, for the history of Berosus is from an entirely different source, was written in another language, and in another part of the old world. As an instance of the authenticity of the book of Genesis Sir Henry Rawlinson has shewn that the tenth chapter of that book contains the only reliable account of the dispersion of the human family after the flood ; and if we were to be guided in our search for the origin of the different languages which sprang up in the world, after the confusion of tongues at Babel, we should be led to the plain of Shinar as the focus from which they all originated. The interesting fact is now established, that the wonderful accuracy of the tenth chapter in regard to different tribes and nationalities, and the course which each of them took in spreading themselves over the old world, is confirmed by ancient monuments lately discovered among the ruins of Babylon.

In short, it could be shewn to any reasonable mind that the history written by Moses is corroborated by every branch of science—by Geology, *e. g.* in establishing that man is the last created of the animals, and that the creation itself proceeded by æons or ages ; by *Physiology*, which decides in favour of the unity of the human family, all proceeding from one common stock ; and by *Ethnology*,

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which shews that the migrations of the human family, and the several types of races, whether European, American, African, or Asiatic, are all traceable to a common centre on the plain of Shinar. The result of modern investigation and discovery goes to show that, with a little learning, men of a sceptical turn of mind may wander into the mazes of unbelief, and get bewildered as they lose the golden thread of sacred history; but by a larger acquaintance with science, and ancient history, and modern discovery, and comparative philology, they must come back again to the old foundations of the Christian faith. Witnesses, which have long been buried under the ruins of ancient cities, have risen up unexpectedly to silence the tongue of the sceptical scoffer; and to put to flight the flimsy arguments (or rather objections) which have been urged against the Christian's Bible, proving that it is "no cunningly devised fable," but a treasury of wisdom as well as a reliable book of history; and that, in trying to discredit the books called the Pentateuch, men are acting the part of Jannes and Jambres of old by "resisting the truth." In the words of our Lord Himself, "if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

We purpose, in continuing our subject, to carry forward our investigations to the other parts of Scripture, that we may be able "to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in us." Meanwhile, we have a "sure word of prophecy" on which we may confidently rest our faith and hope—a revelation from heaven which, while it is borne out by external evidence, contains within it such high thoughts and noble aspirations, such views of the Deity, such discoveries of infinite wisdom, such glorious visions of a future world, as commend it to our *inner consciousness* as having been written by the finger of God—and that, in the words of an apostle, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." To the only wise God, therefore, be all the glory!



## LECTURE IV.

### HISTORICAL TESTIMONY TO THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES FROM PROFANE SOURCES.

Luke xxiv. 44 : " And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in *the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms*, concerning me."

**I**T has already been shown in the previous lecture that there is good ground for believing that the first five books of Scripture, usually called the Pentateuch, were written by Moses the Lawgiver of Israel—with the exception of the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which records the death of that distinguished prophet ; and which appendix to Deuteronomy was probably added either by Joshua or Samuel to complete the narrative. It was the universal testimony of the Jewish Church that the book of the law, as the Pentateuch was called, was written by Moses—the prophets of a later date invariably quoted them as the books of Moses—and our Lord Himself, who was not likely to make mistakes, or to be deceived in regard to their authority, was in the habit of appealing to the Old Testament Scriptures under the threefold division of "*the law, the prophets, and the psalms*."

In continuing our remarks on the authenticity of the books of the Old Testament, we take up that period of history which follows the narrative written by Moses, and which extends from the time of Joshua to that of King Solomon—when the Hebrew nation attained to a degree of prosperity and peace never enjoyed by that wonderful people either before or since.

Moses who was raised up by Providence to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and to lead them through the wilderness on the way to the promised land, died before they entered Canaan. He had done a mighty work in rescuing his countrymen from an idolatrous and oppressive bondage. For forty years he was their leader and lawgiver—combining many qualities in one person; for he was their military general; he was the prophet of Jehovah in giving to them laws from heaven; he was their chief civil ruler in perfecting a code of laws for their government as a nation; he was the mouth piece of God in arranging for the service of the tabernacle, which in so many particulars typified the priesthood of Christ, and also the more spiritual worship of the New Testament economy. And now, having reached the advanced age of one hundred and twenty years, he called all Israel together; and addressing them at great length upon the blessings and the curse, he appointed a successor in the person of Joshua, the son of Nun, who was to lead them into Canaan, when Moses went up by command of Jehovah to Mount Nebo, and died! Before his departure, he was privileged to obtain a Pisgah view of the land promised to Abraham and his seed, and in a spirit of prophecy he foretold the blessings that were in reserve for Judah and the other tribes of Israel.

The portion of history to which we have now come—and which is left on record in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Ruth, Kings, and Chronicles—covers a period of nearly 500 years; that is from the death of Moses down to the reign of King Solomon. During that period the Hebrew people had many reverses—and at one time it appeared as if the various tribes and nations whom they had to encounter would overcome and finally extinguish them as a people. But all of a sudden the tide of fortune turned in their favour; and out of a position of deep obscurity the kingdom of Judah rose, under the rule of King Solomon, to the highest pitch of prosperity and

renown. In little over half a century, the people who were compelled to "hide themselves in caves and pits," for fear of their enemies, were all of a sudden exalted to national greatness; and, under the reign of King Solomon, (whose name in Hebrew indicates that he was King of Salem, and Prince of peace), the Hebrew people had acquired an empire which extended from the River Euphrates in the east to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

The book called Joshua, whether written by himself or not, was evidently written by an eyewitness—one who was familiar with the inner life of the Israelites, and with their outward history—their contendings with enemies, the division of the land among the twelve tribes, and other details of a minor character, which none but an eye-witness could have recorded. The book was written by one who passed over Jordan and entered into the land of Canaan; by one who speaks (*e.g.*) of Hebron as being (when he wrote the history) still in possession of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. He refers to documents or records of events, such as the book of Jasher, from which he quotes in support of his narrative; and this is all the more probable when we come to examine the minuteness with which the writer records the boundaries of the territory allotted to each of the twelve tribes; which shows that the Hebrews must have kept *official records* or documents from which the subsequent writers drew their history of the nation.

The book of Judges is of a similar character, but covers a much larger period of Hebrew history—and from the fulness with which he narrates events, the writer evidently had access to records and documents of a reliable nature in writing his history. In respect to the other books, there is no reason to doubt the truth of the Jewish tradition—that they were written by Samuel, continued by Gad, and concluded by Nathan the prophet. There is, in one place, a reference made to those very names as the

authority which the writer of the book of Chronicles had for making his statements! [1 Chron. xxix., 29 v.]. It is impossible for us to conceive of those books otherwise than as *historical books*, containing the facts as they occurred, when we read the minuteness with which every event is recorded, the number of characters who figured in past history, and the apparent honesty for which the whole narrative is characterized. Neither should it be forgotten that just in proportion to the number of names mentioned—both of friends and enemies of the Jewish nation—and just in proportion to the minute details of the history, so were the writers of these books subjecting themselves to the criticism of adverse historians, who (if they could) would have destroyed, or at least weakened, the credibility of the sacred historians.

On the contrary, what do we find? When we come to examine contemporary history—written not from the stand point of the Hebrew nation, but written by profane authors—we find that many of the leading events of sacred history are mentioned by different writers, and are confirmed by inscriptions on marble found in the Phœnician language. It is only of late that a lengthy inscription has been discovered on a Moabite stone, partly defaced, however, by the Arabs; but so far as it goes, it confirms the narrative of the book of Kings in a most unexpected and remarkable manner. Here is a silent witness to the truth of the Old Testament, suddenly dug up from the ruins of ancient time—and when the records made by unfriendly hands (that is, unfriendly to the Hebrew people) are translated by competent scholars, they only confirm the history which was written centuries before Christ came into the world. So, we find a flood of light cast on Bible history by Egyptian and Assyrian records or monuments which those people preserved as a matter of history. Those testimonies are not so numerous as might be expected; but we must remember that a large portion of the Old World, where the events recorded in

the Old Testament occurred, has been desolated by the Arab, the Moslem, and the Turk—who from 2,000 to 3,000 years have wasted the country, and thus rendered it next to impossible to obtain any ancient records of the people who once inhabited those regions of country. It was with the utmost difficulty that what is called *the Moabite stone*, which has proved of such value in confirming the Jewish Scriptures, was saved from total destruction by the superstition of the Arabs.

When the Jews advanced from a position of obscurity to one of great splendour under King David, and more especially under King Solomon, then we find, as a matter of course, that the notice of them by profane authors was more full and distinct. Those heathen writers confirm the testimony (for example) of David's wars with Syria; and a partial reference is made to his victories over the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Idumeans, and the Amalekites. It is, however, when the Phœnicians and Hebrews are thrown into a closer commercial union with each other; and when the power of the Hebrew nation was such that neighbouring kingdoms could not afford to lose their influence and friendship, that we find historians such as Homer referring to Tyre and Sidon as having existed from early times, and as carrying on a mutually advantageous trade with the Hebrews. More especially when we come down to the time of the building of Solomon's Temple, we find that the land of Tyre was dependent on Judea for its supply of corn and wine and oil; for which in return, Hiram, King of Tyre, sent the timber down in floats to Joppa, and from thence overland to Jerusalem, to build the temple. And the magnificent marble stones that entered into the construction of that glorious edifice (which took seven years in the building) were all prepared on Mount Lebanon by Tyrian artificers, men skilled in masonry, who quarried the stones on the spot, and shaped them to occupy their proper place in the Temple; so that when they were conveyed down to Jeru-

saalem the Temple was reared "without sound of hammer, or axe, or any tool of iron!" All this is confirmed by contemporary historians such as Herodotus, and also by Assyrian inscriptions found on monuments—which was their method of transmitting history to posterity.

Although with our modern ideas we might suppose the account given in the Bible of the prosperity of Solomon's kingdom, and the magnificence of the Temple and palace, to be fanciful and extravagant; yet it is tame compared with the descriptions given in profane writings regarding the display and wealth of Eastern nations—such as Persia, and other countries in Asia. But here again the Bible narrative is confirmed by heathen writers belonging to different nations, in regard to the great extent of Solomon's Empire, the magnificence of the Temple, and the sumptuous display of the royal palace. To this day, no European architecture or display can excel (even if it can at all vie with) the splendour and architecture of Oriental countries. Even the great wisdom of Solomon who (it is said) was pressed with "hard questions," and the visit of the Queen of Sheba to witness for herself all the wondrous things heard in her own country relating to the fame of Israel's King, are corroborated by the testimony of other historians who were either contemporary with Solomon, or flourished at a subsequent age. So the recent discoveries made by Layard at Nineveh and Babylon, as well as the accumulating evidence that comes upon us year after year, by men of research, acquainted with the original languages—confirm in a very striking manner the account given in the book of Kings and Chronicles regarding the great wealth and splendour of the Hebrew nation in King Solomon's time. In short, Homer among Greek authors, Menander among Phœnician historians, Manetho among Egyptian writers, Berosus among Chaldean historians, and the ancient records found in the excavated ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, as well as old Phœnician coins—all concur in giving to Old Testament

history the credit of being a truthful narrative by those who best knew what they were writing about; and who had no object in concealing the truth, or in perpetrating a falsehood; for in the most honest straightforward way they record what was humiliating to them as a people, as well as what redounded to their credit and glory as a nation.

Without pressing, as we might fairly do, the argument drawn by Christians from *the inspiration of Scripture*—a doctrine in which all Christians fully believe—one to which our Lord and His disciples continually appealed—without, we say, pressing the argument from inspiration, we are entitled to regard the Jewish Scriptures as a truthful narrative of the Hebrew nation, and of the Jewish Church, in its reverses and successes—in its decline, and in its prosperity. Those writings are *internally consistent*, carrying upon their face the appearance of candour, honesty, and truthfulness; their style is not forced, but perfectly natural, even to a sublime simplicity—which is, (in this respect) the very counterpart of those exaggerated statements which characterize the religious books of the Hindoos, or the Chinese, or the Koran of Mahomet. Besides being thus simple and without exaggeration, they are corroborated along the whole line of history, here and there, by proofs derived from foreign or outside sources. As we have already seen, the facts of Bible history have not only been confirmed by profane authors—who had no intention or wish to corroborate the sacred narrative—but, very unexpectedly, silent witnesses have risen up in our day from the tombs of ancient cities, and from the monumental records of ancient dynasties, to bear witness in open court to the harmony of Scripture with the concurrent testimony of profane history. It was this confidence in the integrity of the Hebrew Bible which led the first Christian martyr, Stephen, in view of death—when even a bad man would bear a willing testimony to what is true—to appeal to the recognised history of the

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Israelites from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to King Solomon's time, as worthy of credit. In the same way, the great apostle of the Gentiles invariably appealed in his public addresses before the Jews to the authenticity of the Hebrew Scriptures; even as our Lord Himself *did*, and as we find in the 44th verse of the last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel He *does*, by quoting the Old Testament writings under the threefold division of "*the law, the prophets, and the psalms.*"

In the good providence of God, there is no break in the historic chain which binds together the past with the present—the new covenant with the old—Christ with Moses—the true Israel of God's people with the Father of the faithful. Amid all the changes which passed over the Hebrew nation, the torch of Divine truth has been handed down uninterruptedly from prophet to prophet; and the result is, that, by an overruling Providence which was displayed among no other people so signally, and in no other way, what are called the Old Testament writings have been carefully preserved by the Jews, with an almost superstitious reverence; so that we may fairly keep company with the Jewish people in maintaining the integrity of those sacred writings to which our Lord and His apostles invariably appealed, and which by them was the foundation (so to speak) of the Christian faith.

When learned sceptics have sprung up in our day threatening to overturn the bulwarks of our religion, and refusing to yield their credence to a Revelation which has come from God, the very "stones" themselves are made to "cry out"—to bear their silent but most emphatic testimony to the truth asserted by an apostle that "no scripture is of private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."



## LECTURE V.

### HISTORICAL TESTIMONY TO THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES FROM PROFANE SOURCES.

(Continued.)

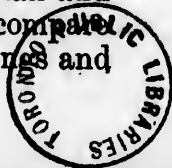
- I. Kings, 31-32 :—" And he said to Jeroboam, take thee ten pieces ; for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee : (but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel."

**I**N following up our course of Lectures on the truth of Christianity, we have arrived at *the third stage* in the history of God's ancient people, viz., that which begins with the death of King Solomon (when the Hebrew monarchy had attained the height of its splendour), and ends with the destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. This will embrace a period of about 400 years. After the death of King Solomon, the Hebrew monarchy—which had been so peaceful and prosperous, first under King David, and then under his son,—was seriously weakened, owing to the separation into two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, by the revolt of Jeroboam. From that time history records two continuous lines of Kings,—the one ruling over "the kingdom of Israel," which was by far the most numerous, because it embraced ten out of the twelve tribes; the other, though small, was "the kingdom of Judah," embracing the little tribe of Benjamin. So far as the records enable us to speak with certainty, it may be safely

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asserted that the setting up of those two kingdoms—i.e. of Judah and Israel—on the ruins of Solomon's empire, occurred in the earlier half of the tenth century before Christ; while the destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, occurred in the year 586 before Christ. Although events did not occur with nearly the same rapidity as in modern times, yet very many important changes affecting the destiny of the old world—and especially affecting the progress of the true religion—occurred during that interval of about 400 years. The growth and subsequent fall of the Assyrian empire, the sudden rise of Babylon—then of Media and Persia—the springing up of Greece—the founding of Carthage and Rome—and the spread of civilization by means of the Phœnician and Greek colonies—all are matters of history, which have raised the old world out of the cloud-land of fable into the sober reality of truth. Hence we now find the records of Old Testament Scripture more fully confirmed by the contemporary history of heathen authors. And whereas, before the period to which we have come, the notices of the Hebrew people by heathen writers were comparatively few in number; we now find Egypt and Assyria, Babylon, Phœnicia and Greece—all lending their aid in furnishing us with proofs that the Hebrew Scriptures contain a reliable account of the fortunes of the Jewish nation, whether in adversity or prosperity.

Speaking of the Old Testament writings themselves, they were compiled (as we have already seen) from State papers, and from reliable public documents, in which the history of events as they concerned the Hebrew nation was transmitted to posterity. This was done by the prophets and seers, as appears from the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah,—in which reference is made to no less than *thirteen books*, or registers kept, such as those by Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and Iddo, the Seer, as far down as the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. Any one who will take the pains to compare the historical entries made in the books of Kings and



Chronicles, with statements made in the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah—must see at once the close agreement *as to facts*; and will conclude in the words of a German writer that, in general, “the same men who acted as prophets in holding forth the law of God to the people acted also as the historians of the ancient Church, in composing and handing down the history of the Hebrew race.” The objection made by certain sceptical writers—that the great mass of Hebrew records most likely perished with the overthrow of Jerusalem and Samaria, and therefore could not have been accessible to any authors who lived after the captivity—this objection has no force against the digested records kept by the prophets; and there is no more difficulty in regarding the records as authentic than there is in understanding how the prophecy of Isaiah and the rest of the sacred volume, written at an early age, were preserved from destruction. We know as a matter of fact, that, after the destruction of Jerusalem, and after the time of the captivity, the “Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Israel” were still in existence, and were quoted from, and publicly appealed to, as books with which the great body of the people were more or less familiar. Let it be noticed here that the book of Kings, and the book of Chronicles, are quite independent of each other; having been evidently written by different authors, each of whom tells his story in his own way, such as to convince any rational mind of the truth of Bible history. In addition to this, we find the different prophets—such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, &c.—referring incidentally, in passing, to the very same events which are narrated more fully in the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles; thus, by a kind of evidence which in a court of justice would be regarded as highly corroborative, confirming the facts of Bible history. [Time and space will not permit us to enter into any detail on this part of the subject—showing how remarkable is the agreement between the incidental references made by the prophets, and the recorded facts which

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we have in the books of Kings and Chronicles]. As has been shewn by Christian writers, the notices of the Hebrew Prophets, though *only incidental*, are as confirmatory of the plain narrative given in Kings and Chronicles, as the Epistles of St. Paul have been shewn to illustrate and confirm the history called the Acts of the Apostles.

Having said thus much of the harmony that obtains between the different books of sacred history—and it is a harmony which is all the more striking because it is *incidental*, and comes under that high class of testimony called by Archdeacon Paley, “undesigned coincidences”—let us show you, very briefly, how profane history goes to corroborate the truth of the Bible. Remember that we are now speaking independently of what is called the inspiration of Scripture. We Christians are persuaded firmly that the Bible is God’s book—inspired by the Holy Ghost, who taught holy men what to say and what to write, so that they were kept from falling into error. And this on any matter of doubt is conclusive to us—for we are enabled to say, “Thus saith the Lord!” But at present we are taking lower ground—we are proceeding to examine the truth of the Bible, as if it were only written by men without the Divine guidance. We are treating the authors of the Bible as if they were ordinary witnesses called into court to give their testimony on matters which they profess to have seen, or heard on competent authority. And now we shall go further, and put heathen or profane writers into the witness box; to see how far their testimony confirms the evidence given by those good men, who were the worshippers of the one living and true God. And what is the story which those heathen writers—those profane historians tell us? It so happens that we have testimony of the highest possible character to prove that the sacred writers were honest, truthful men! Among the ruins of ancient Nineveh and Babylon have been discovered tablets containing inscriptions or records of events relating to their own nation, and also to the Hebrew nation; and when these are de-

ciphered and translated by competent scholars, we find that in so far as they refer to events recorded in holy Scripture, they supply a striking confirmation of the Bible narrative. They speak of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel—giving the names of kings reigning over each of the two kingdoms—recording the invasion made (*e.g.*) by Shishak, King of Egypt, who came up against Jerusalem “with twelve hundred chariots and three score thousand horsemen,” besides footmen “without number,” in the very language employed by the sacred historian! The same kind of evidence is given in regard to the Kingdom of Israel, as we have in relation to the Kingdom of Judah—the struggle for power; the conflicts with other nations such as the Egyptians, the Zidonians, or the Assyrians; the victories gained, or the defeats encountered; the repeated mention of campaigns; the kings who figured in them; the number of the army; and the final result of all those military engagements, until both Judah and Israel became tributary to the great Assyrian conqueror. It so happens that, at one period of the Hebrew history, mention is made of certain kings of Assyria carrying their arms into Palestine and playing an important part in the history of God’s ancient people. The names of those kings are given as Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon (as you will find in your Bibles)—all mentioned apparently in an uninterrupted, unbroken line of descent. Now these were among the greatest kings that Assyria ever produced; and their records have been inscribed upon tablets carved by workmen employed by the State to hand down to posterity an account of their military exploits. With the exception of one or two slight chronological discrepancies—(and that Christian’s faith must be very weak which would be shaken by such a discrepancy, and the change of a letter might cause such a discrepancy)—between the account given in Scripture and the account recorded on the Assyrian tablets,—these last go to confirm the sacred narrative in every important particular. It is

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interesting to any one who has a love for antiquarian research, to compare the several accounts of the two hostile nations—on one side the narratives given of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel; and on the other the inscriptions written on stone by Assyrian engravers, whose object was to exalt their empire at the expense of, and for the purpose of humiliating, the now fading glory of the Hebrew Commonwealth. The account given particularly of Sennacherib's invasion, when Hezekiah was King of Judah, is *very full*; both on the Assyrian tablets, and in the book of Kings—and they afford one of the most striking confirmations of the truth of Bible history. We have a boastful account of the invasion, given from the Assyrian standpoint; while we have a no less true, though humiliating, account furnished by the Hebrew historian. A second expedition by Sennacherib into Syria,—for the purpose of weakening the power of Egypt,—and which is the subject of one of Lord Byron's finest poetical pieces, beginning with: "*The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,*" resulted in the total destruction of Sennacherib's army at Jerusalem; and it forms a striking feature of sacred narrative. This, though not corroborated by the Assyrian inscriptions—for they never recorded either the death of their kings, or any great national defeat—is nevertheless confirmed by Herodotus, the Greek Historian, who doubtless got his account of the great defeat which the Assyrians then sustained from the Egyptian version of the matter. The Bible account of it is this:—"The angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians (at Libnah) a hundred, four score and five thousand, and when they arose early in the morning, they were all dead corpses."

Assyria, soon after this event, disappears from the stage of history as the ruling empire; and is succeeded (after the death of Esarhaddon) by Babylon as the great conquering power in the old world. We shall therefore close our notice of this period of ancient history by showing the close agreement between Bible narrative, and the na-

tive Egyptian and Babylonian records, during the latter period of the Hebrew monarchy.

We find in sacred history repeated references made to both Egypt and Babylon, and to the attempts made by those haughty and idolatrous empires to encroach upon the little territory of Judea. In short, Syria or Palestine seem often to have been a common battle ground as between the Hebrews and the Egyptians from the west, and between the Hebrews and the Assyrians or Babylonians from the East. We will not occupy time with going over the names of all the monarchs that figure in those national conflicts, nor need we enter at large upon the results flowing therefrom. Suffice it to say, that on the one hand the Egyptian annals fully bear out the sacred writers in regard to *four* distinct movements made by Egypt in the direction of Palestine; while at *two* other points in ancient history (during the period now under consideration) the Babylonian and Jewish history are brought into close contact. For example, in the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah, we learn, II Kings, xx.: that Merodach-Baladan, King of Babylon, sends letters and a present to that prince—partly because he heard he was sick, and partly to inquire concerning the strange wonder recorded in the Second Book of Chronicles that the shadow had gone back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz. Now this story, which is regarded as incredible by some, is fully authenticated by the inscriptions lately found in Babylon—so far as the name of the reigning monarch is concerned—and they make the reign of Merodach-Baladan 720 years before Christ, the period when Hezekiah was King of Judah. While the message sent to Hezekiah receives additional confirmation by the fact that the Babylonians were noted for their study and skill in Astronomy, and would naturally inquire through their king concerning the astronomical wonder which is said to have occurred in Hezekiah's time.

Once more. Later on in the history of the old world, Babylon succeeds to the place and influence once occupied

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by Assyria ; and we read of several campaigns carried on by that new power against Palestine and the neighbouring regions. Those events are referred to by the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and are fully recorded in the historical book of Kings. And the fact of Nebuchadnezzar having destroyed the temple at Jerusalem, and carried away the Jews captive into the land of Babylon—is confirmed by Berosus the Chaldean historian. Thus, while we have a very full account of the sieges and campaigns by which Palestine and the Hebrew people were more or less disturbed—either by the Egyptians to the left of them, or by the Assyrians and Chaldeans on the right—when we come to examine the history of Egypt, as written by Manetho; and the history of Babylon, as written by Berosus; and the inscriptions found on the tablets of the Assyrians; more especially those discovered by Layard, and Rawlinson, and Smith, and other eminent men—we regard it as nothing short of a special interposition of providence that, at this period of the world (when men of a sceptical turn of mind are trying to uproot the old foundations of our faith), suddenly and unexpectedly witnesses should rise up, some of them from under the ruins of ancient cities long since buried, to testify to the truth of sacred history, and thus confirm the authenticity of Revelation ! Egypt and Tyre—Assyria, Babylon, and Greece—unite their historical contributions in confirming the Bible record at every stage. And while we have to depend on the Old Testament alone for many facts not mentioned in profane history—some of them bringing new light to bear upon the knotty points of man's antiquity, the unity of the races, and the true source from whence sprang all the different languages and dialects spoken on the face of the earth—a time may come when further discoveries will be made, such as have already been made, by which the whole narrative of God's word may receive that illustration and confirmation which is now confined only to a part, owing to the scanty records left by profane authors concerning that early period of the world's history.

These things ought surely to strengthen our faith, and call forth our admiration for the wisdom of that Being who has providentially watched over His Church, and guided His servants, and preserved them from falling into error, and given us the assurance of an Apostle that the sacred Scriptures "came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."



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## LECTURE VI.

### PERIOD OF THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY AND RETURN OF THE JEWS.

Psalm cxxxvii. v. 1: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

Psalm cxxvi. v. 1: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream."

THE period of the Jewish captivity forms a memorable epoch in the history of the Israelites. It was the last striking judgment visited upon the ancient Church because of its defection, and especially for its connivance at idolatry. We purpose in the present lecture to deal with the period which begins with the captivity in Babylon, and ends with the restoration of the Jews to their native land. The Jewish records show a sad blank in regard to the former of those two events,—as if the national harp hung in silence, and refused to sound during that dismal period of national calamity. But this blank in the history between the book of Kings and that of Ezra—which is to be accounted for by the long exile in Babylon which continued for seventy years—is in a measure compensated for by the narrative given us in the book of Daniel, which embraces both *history* and *prophecy*.

That Daniel was a real person may be inferred from the fact that he is twice mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel—once as being noted for his wisdom. From Josephus, the Jewish historian, we learn that he was descended from one of the noblest families of Judah, if not of royal blood. His birthplace was probably Jerusalem; and he

was among the first Hebrew captives whom Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, carried away in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, King of Judah. From the book of Daniel we learn that he was selected, with three other Hebrew youths, to be trained up in the language and customs of the Chaldeans, so as to be of service at the court of Babylon. We gather from the narrative that he lived under five of the monarchs who reigned over Babylon, commencing with Nebuchadnezzar, and ending with Darius and Cyrus; the last two being monarchs of the Medo-Persian Dynasty. From the position of importance which he occupied during those several reigns, he became very familiar with the condition of his countrymen throughout the provinces of the Empire; and it was most likely through his influence at court that Cyrus, King of Persia, allowed the captive Hebrews to return at length to their own country. It is the common opinion among historians that Daniel did not himself return to Judea, along with his fellow-countrymen; but that being far advanced in years, and of eminent service at the Persian court, he remained in Babylon until his death. He was always acknowledged by the Jewish Church as one of their prophets and sacred writers, until after the coming of the Saviour into the world;—and it was only when Christians began to appeal to his plain prophecies, in support of the Messiahship of Christ, that the Jews were led to disparage his testimony. As Jerome, one of the ablest of the early Christian fathers, has observed:—"None of the ancient prophets have spoken so clearly of Christ as the prophet Daniel; for he not only foretells His coming, but also fixes the time, and mentions the number of the years, and the signs of His appearance."

The book of Daniel was evidently composed by an eyewitness; and its being written partly in Hebrew, and partly in Chaldee, shows that it was composed during the period of the captivity. It was afterwards translated into the Greek language about 180 years before Christ; and its antiquity is farther proved by the fact that Daniel's

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prophecies were shown to Alexander the Great, on occasion of his conquests in the East, by the High Priest at Jerusalem in the year B. C. 332.—which circumstance inclined that Emperor to show the Jews special favour. As the eminent Professor Moses Stuart has shown, "there is nothing beyond the fact of miracles or prophecy to convince any enlightened mind that the book is not the genuine production of the prophet Daniel."

In regard to the main event narrated in the book of Daniel, viz. :—the Babylonish captivity—there is no room whatever for doubt. All history confirms it. We have the testimony of Josephus, who refers to Berosus, the Chaldean historian; and we have also the general record in the ancient monuments that such transfers of whole populations, such as that of the Jews to Babylon, were common in the East. But to establish the exact agreement that obtains between Scripture and profane sources, it may be mentioned that the period of Nebuchadnezzar's reign is put down by three historians at forty-three years. The inscriptions found on a clay tablet in Babylon speak of the forty-second year of that king; while Scripture is found to be in exact agreement with all those records, by fixing the date of the captivity in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, and the beginning of his son's reign—Evil-Merodach—as the thirty-seventh year of the captivity. Thus there is a remarkable confirmation of sacred history from two different sources, viz. : from the inscriptions on the Babylonian tablets, and from the records of contemporaneous history.

It is somewhat curious that in the inscriptions found in Babylon no mention is made of King Nebuchadnezzar's loss of reason; but as he was afterwards cured of his malady, and again "established in his kingdom," the Chaldeans would not wish to tarnish the national glory by any public record of such a calamity to their king. And yet we have an indirect proof of its truthfulness; for, as Sir Henry Rawlinson has shown from their own annals, there was a considerable period of time during

which the Chaldean monarch "did not build high places or lay up treasures, or keep up the public works" of the nation—in short, that owing to some unaccountable cause things were quite at a stand-still. And the only rational way of accounting for this total suspension of the public works, and the corresponding silence in the national records, is by the artless narrative furnished in the book of Daniel, that Nebuchadnezzar was deprived of his reason for a period of seven years. From the time of the king's recovery to the conquest of Babylon by the Medo-Persians,—that is, for about a quarter of a century—the only fact mentioned in Scripture is the release from prison of Jehoiakim by the son and successor of King Nebuchadnezzar, who showed kindness to the captive King of Judea, and received him as a guest to his table. (See Jeremiah lii.) Here, again, profane history confirms the sacred narrative; and it also informs us (what Scripture does not state) that Evil-Merodach was the *son* of Nebuchadnezzar.

It will be remembered that the name given in Scripture of the last King of Babylon—that is, previous to the Medo-Persian dynasty—is Belshazzar. Some have tried to shake the faith of Christians in the credibility of the Bible, by showing that no such name is mentioned in the Chaldean records, or found on the inscriptions on the national tablets. Rationalists have been bold enough to declare that Daniel is even contradicted by Berosus, the Chaldean historian,—and that doubt is thus cast upon the authenticity of the whole book of Daniel. At one time it was not easy to answer these objections; and the difficulty was increased by an apparent contradiction between the Jewish and Chaldean historians in regard to the fall of Babylon. Some were driven, like Sir Isaac Newton, to the supposition that there must have been *two* falls, to escape the apparent discordance. But God in His Providence has enabled us, by a simple discovery made in the year 1854, through the labours of Sir Henry Rawlinson—from documents obtained at that ancient city, Ur of the Chaldees—to clear up the whole difficulty, and

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thus to confirm again the truth of Bible history. It was found that Nabonadius, the last king mentioned in the Chaldean list, associated with him on the throne his son Bilsharuzur (the same mentioned in Scripture as Belshazzar), and allowed him the royal title. This was the Prince who conducted the defence of Babylon, who on the night of his impious feast saw the mysterious handwriting on the wall, which was interpreted by Daniel; and who was slain in the massacre which followed upon the capture of the city by Darius the Mede; while his father (as profane history mentions) was at that time in Borsippa, and taken prisoner, but treated with clemency. Thus we have the Bible narrative again confirmed in a remarkable manner.

We now approach the period of time when the captivity of Judah was about to end. Daniel perceiving from the prophecy given forth by Jeremiah that the seventy years fixed for the restoring of the Jews to their native land were drawing to a close, "set his face to seek by prayer and supplication, and fastings, and sackcloth and ashes," that God would "turn away his fury and anger from Jerusalem, and cause His face to shine on His sanctuary." There is here, again, a close agreement between Scripture dates and the time recorded in the Babylonish annals, which last make it sixty-eight years between King Nebuchadnezzar's first conquest of Judea and the fall of Babylon. Now Daniel speaks of making his prayer for the restoration of the Jews, "in the first year of Darius the Mede;" which, according to profane history was B.C. 738, that is sixty-eight years after the first conquest of Judea. This is sufficiently definite to allow of seventy years as being the full period of Jewish captivity, according to the prophetic reckoning.

From this time onward the Hebrew history is resumed, after the blank occasioned by the captivity; and we have a full account of the restoration of the Jews, and of their subsequent fortunes, in the three historical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. This fact of history receives further illustration in the prophetic books of Zechariah,

Haggai, and Malachi,—which last book closes the canon of Old Testament Scripture. Ezra was the priest and “ready scribe” who recorded that period of Jewish history, in which the people returned to Judea and rebuilt the temple; while Nehemiah gives an account of the reforms brought about in the Hebrew nation during the same period, when he was Governor of Judah. In both books we have a register of all the families which came up from the captivity to Jerusalem; while we have also a register of the priests and Levites whose genealogy was established in the line of succession from Aaron. And those who could not trace their genealogy were put out of the office of the priesthood, “as polluted.” Nehemiah mentions six generations from Joshua to Jeddah, which would bring down the history of the Jews to the latter half of the fourth century B. C.; and exactly at that period there lived the famous high priest of that name, who received Alexander the Great at Jerusalem, and showed him the prophecies of Daniel which pointed out that a Grecian prince should put an end to the Persian empire. There is, therefore, little doubt but that the Jeddah mentioned by Nehemiah is the same high priest who was contemporary with the Macedonian monarch and met him on his arrival at Jerusalem.

The book of Esther has been the subject of criticism more than almost any other book of the Old Testament. One objection is that the name of Deity is not once mentioned, which is at variance with the regard which the Jews paid to the name of Jehovah; but God is in it all! And the one fact that the Jews to this day observe religiously the feast of Purim, which is mentioned only in that book, and was designed to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from Haman’s treachery, is sufficient proof of the regard paid by the nation to Esther as one of the sacred books. Mordecai the Jew, who was held in such esteem by the King of Persia, and through the influence of Queen Esther exalted to honour at the palace at Shushan, was most likely the author of the book entitled “Esther.”

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We conclude the present lecture by noticing the light which profane history has thrown upon the sacred narrative, and the further confirmation given to it by recent discoveries. Nothing strikes an intelligent student of Scripture more than the religious tone which (according to the book of Ezra) pervaded the decrees and proclamations of the Persian monarchs, so far as these related to the Jews. Cyrus is made to speak of "the Lord God of heaven;" and Darius in his decree recognises the "God of heaven." So also does Artaxerxes in his letter to Ezra the priest. When we come to examine the Persian cuneiform inscriptions, there is the same acknowledgment of a Supreme God who rules over the affairs of this earth. In the progress of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem the Jews experienced opposition from the Samaritans, who "troubled them in building" during the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses (known in Scripture as Ahasuerus). But the only instance wherein the work of rebuilding "the House of God" was interrupted, was in the time of Artaxerxes—the only king who for a time changed the friendly policy of the Persians towards the conquered Jews. And here again we obtain an unexpected confirmation of Scripture from the Persian records, which tell us that Darius (who succeeded Artaxerxes) "restored to the people the religious worship" and liberty of which they were deprived during the reign of the preceding monarch; and that under Darius the house of the Lord at Jerusalem was carried forward to completion.

The successor to Darius was Xerxes, his son, who appears to correspond with the Ahasuerus mentioned in the book of Esther. And the graphic description given therein of the Persian court, which to some may appear improbable, seems fully borne out by profane authors in their descriptions of that court before the decline of grandeur which followed on the death of Darius. This closes the period of Old Testament history. For nearly four hundred years the Jews had no inspired writer—that is, from the time of Malachi to that of the Apostles and Evangelists.

As to the books called Apocrypha, they form no part of the sacred canon, and are of no authority in matters of faith or practice. They were never received or acknowledged as such, either by the Jewish or by the early Christian Church.

Finally, the books of the Old Testament are entitled to be regarded as *authentic*, from the fact of their authors having been eyewitnesses of the events recorded, or from having received their statements on competent authority; while as we have seen, both profane history and the monumental records of past ages—representing no less than five different nations as distinct sources of evidence, viz: the Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian, and Phœnician—go to confirm in a remarkable manner the truthfulness of God's word, which may now be regarded as safe against every assault. From Genesis to Malachi, we have a true historical record of events as seen from the Jewish standpoint—not romantic poems or mythological fables—but a sober narrative, written in an artless natural style, according to the age in which the different books appeared. The writers have testified to "that which they have heard, which they have seen with their eyes, which they have looked upon, and their hands have handled." We are naturally led to the conclusion stated by an Apostle, that the sacred writings "came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."



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## LECTURE VII.

### TESTIMONY FROM ANCIENT MONUMENTS TO TRUTH OF REVELATION.

Isaiah xlii. 10: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."

**I**N these last days, when men of a sceptical turn of mind are pressing historical criticism beyond the limits of reason, witnesses have risen up from beneath the ruins of ancient cities to attest to the truth of Scripture. It is an interesting fact that, while the proof of Bible history may be somewhat obscured owing to the lapse of time, and by extending so far back into the dim cloud-land of past ages,—suddenly and unexpectedly there has sprung up in our day a new line of witnesses to rebuke the cold negations of rationalism, and to give fresh testimony to the truth of revelation.

We propose to devote a portion of our space to a consideration of some of the historical testimonies to the truth of Scripture drawn from sculptures, monuments, and inscriptions found on the remains of antiquity. One of the prominent events recorded in sacred history is the Deluge in Noah's time. Traditions of such a terrible catastrophe are to be found among most nations. We find reference made to it in the classic works of heathen authors, and in the sacred books of the most ancient people. Latterly, fresh evidence has been gathered to confirm the Bible narrative of a universal flood. Through

the enterprising labours of Layard, and other excavators of the ruins of the Nineveh, clay tablets have been dug up containing, in Assyrian characters, an interesting legend of the deluge in Noah's time. The record of this ancient story, which has been translated by competent scholars, was found at Nineveh; where it was apparently translated from the original Chaldean text into the vernacular or spoken language of the Assyrians, at the distance of seventeen hundred years before Christ; making this wonderful document to date somewhere in the neighbourhood of thirty-six centuries ago, if not much older! In all the main particulars, this Assyrian translation of an older Chaldean document confirms the narrative given by Moses in the Book of Genesis. And the record asserts that the deluge was a punishment from heaven on account of the wickedness of the old world previous to the flood.

So, when we come to examine the records and pictures made on Egyptian tombs and temples, there is a minute agreement between the customs and manners of ancient Egypt and the statements made by the writer of Genesis. The story of Joseph in Egypt, for example, and the circumstance that Pharaoh took the ring from his own hand to put upon the hand of Joseph, has received a striking illustration from the discovery at Nineveh of a metallic signet-ring bearing the title of an Egyptian King. In the same way, the book of Exodus has been remarkably confirmed by the monuments, which represent the use of bricks made of straw and stubble as having been employed extensively for building purposes. At Thebes, a representation was discovered of a gang of slaves engaged in brick-making, which gives an exact description of the bondage of the Israelites under their Egyptian taskmasters.

If we pass from Egypt to Palestine, the same kind of testimony is borne to the truth of Old Testament history by the recent discoveries made in and around Jerusalem. The description given of the Temple of Solomon, in the

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books of Kings and Chronicles, shews that it was a most imposing structure. It was seven years in building, and the total number of workmen employed upon it was considerably over one hundred and fifty thousand. The house which King Solomon occupied took thirteen years to finish ; and we read of "great hewn stones and costly," all of which were prepared at a distance and conveyed down to Jerusalem from Mount Lebanon. Recently explorations have been made among the ruins of ancient Jerusalem, which city has undergone many disastrous changes at the hands of the Roman, the Saracen, and the Turk ; and from those explorations we get fresh evidence of the grandeur of Solomon's temple, and of the truth of Bible history. The whole area of ground covered by the temple was fifteen hundred feet long, by about nine hundred feet broad. The pinnacle of the temple was, including the depth of the Kedron valley, over four hundred feet ! Huge stones, bearing the marks of ancient Tyrian masons, have been discovered at a depth of seventy or eighty feet beneath the rubbish and *debris* of the city. No stone-chippings or dressings have been discovered, an indication that the stones of the temple were not prepared on the spot. The style of masonry is Phœnician, similar to what may be seen in the ruins of ancient Tyre. Some "foundation stones," which have never been disturbed, bearing the quarrymarks of King Hiram's masons, contain letters in ancient characters—showing in what course the stones were to be laid. One stone found was thirth-eight feet and nine-inches long. It is well known that a wall separated the Gentile foreigners from the Jewish worshippers, in the ancient temple ; and one of the pillars sustaining this wall of separation has been discovered, containing, in ancient Greek, words of prohibition to strangers !

But one of the most interesting discoveries yet made relates to the "ascent" by which King Solomon "went up to the house of the Lord." This must mean the passage or viaduct from the palace to the temple which,

crossed the ravine that lay between Mount Zion and Mount Moriah ; and which was so magnificent a structure as to call forth the admiration of the Queen of Sheba on her visit to King Solomon. That such a viaduct existed in the days of King Solomon is now left without a doubt. Through the exploratory labours of Captain Warren and others, there have been found jutting out from the western wall of the temple inclosure large stones, whose peculiar shape indicate that they were part of a colossal bridge that once spanned the ravine called by Josephus the Tyropoeon. The abutment is over fifty feet in width, and one of the stones twenty-four feet six inches long. The piers which supported that huge structure have been found at a great depth below the *debris*.

Not to speak of other discoveries in different parts of Palestine, which go to establish the literal correctness of the sacred historians, let us cross the Jordan and enter the land of Moab. This territory is often mentioned in Scripture, and at times there must have been considerable intercourse between the two countries. So late as the year 1868, a missionary clergyman in riding past the ancient Dibon came across what has since been known as the famous Moabite Stone, with ancient characters engraved upon it. These having been deciphered by competent scholars, the inscription proves it to have been a Moabitish monumental record, dating as far back as about 900 years before Christ. It contains a narrative of Mesha, king of Moab, who is mentioned in the second book of Kings ; and so far as portions of the inscription have been preserved, from attempts made on the part of the Arabs to deface the record, it corroborates exactly the Bible history concerning the times of Elisha the prophet and Ahab, king of Israel. Besides giving an account of victories gained over Israel, it contains the names of thirteen places in the land of Moab, mentioned in Scripture. Thus, when tested by the records of a hostile nation, the statements of history contained in the second book of Kings are found to be trustworthy.

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Equally interesting are the sculptured remains found embedded among the ruins of Nineveh, which have been opened up to view by the labours of Layard, Botta, Rawlinson, and other antiquarians. These recovered monuments carry us back twenty-five centuries ago; and on the Assyrian tablets we have another edition of the same story told by sacred historians in the Old Testament Scriptures. We find the names of Jehu, Omri, Hazael, Menahem, Tiglath-pileser, Salmanezer—all inscribed upon Assyrian tablets, as having figured in ancient history in the conflicts between Assyria and Israel or Samaria. The invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, King of Assyria, as recorded in Bible history, together with a mention of King Hezekiah—are among the records found inscribed on the tablets of Nineveh. And such is the close agreement between the two records that, when placed in parallel columns, no one can doubt the veracity of the sacred historian.

In regard to the overthrow of Nineveh, while we are justified in referring to its complete desolation as a proof of the literal fulfilment of prophecy,—we would call attention to the evidence arising from a view of its disintegrated ruins. The prophet Nahum predicted its overthrow 114 years before the event, in language which indicated that fire and sword and flood would combine to bring about the threatened desolation. And he concludes his vivid picture, as though he were describing the past instead of the future: "Nineveh is laid waste!" Most of the ruins of that ancient city exhibit the traces of fire. Some of the large gypsum slabs were found reduced to lime by the action of intense heat, and when exposed to the air crumbled to pieces. Where the monumental records have been preserved, they corroborate the statements of Old Testament historians in respect to repeated invasions of Jewish territory by the Assyrian power. And the careful measurement of the city by Mr. Layard goes to confirm the accuracy of the Bible, in regard to the size and extent of Nineveh as a mighty city. The ala-

baster slabs now in the British Museum, brought at great expense from the scene of ancient destruction, after the lapse of 3,000 years, are powerful witnesses to the truth and accuracy of Bible history. These living witnesses confront the sceptic who would doubt the truth of Christianity; and they show that the sacred writers did not "follow cunningly devised fables"; that they recorded what they had "seen and heard;" and that no lapse of time can overturn the historical groundwork of the Christian's faith; because "the Scripture cannot be broken." And if the *facts* of the Bible are true, the *doctrines* which flow by necessary consequence from those facts are also true. If we are satisfied that the books of Scripture contain a truthful record, then we may rest assured that we "shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."



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## LECTURE VIII.

### PERIOD OF NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY.—CREDIBILITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

Matt. xviii. 16 :—" But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

**W**E have now reached in our investigations the second portion of inspired narrative, known as the New Testament; which covers the period of history extending from the birth of Christ to the death of the last survivor of the twelve Apostles. A space of about four hundred years elapsed between Malachi, the last writer of the Old Testament, and the evangelists and apostles of the New Testament. During that interval the world was allowed to develop its various systems of philosophy; and the utter inability of the refinement of Greece and Rome to elevate the human race, in a moral point of view, and to satisfy the immortal yearnings of humanity, proved that when Christ appeared in the world it was "the fulness of time." The history of society just previous to the introduction of the Christian religion demonstrated the truth of St. Paul's statement to the Corinthians, that when "the world by its wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." In the world's greatest time of need, the historical fact that heathenism and idolatry were dethroned, to give place to a pure religion which could meet the wants of humanity, proves that the world hailed the arrival of Christianity as a boon from heaven to heal the festering sores of the body politic. In that "fulness

of time" God sent forth his Son into the world, "made of a woman, and made under the law." The birth of Christ took place in the year of Rome (A.U.C.) 749, corresponding to the year of the world 4000. With this event the New Testament begins; while the historic record of the progress of Christianity contained in the Acts of the Apostles ends with A.D. 58, in the fifth year of Nero, Emperor of Rome. Thus the formal history of the inception of Christianity covers a period of about sixty-two or sixty-three years. The whole period, however, covered by the sacred writers of the New Testament—including St. John, the author of the Apocalypse—extends onward to about A.D. 95 or 96, in the time of the Emperor Domitian. What are called the New Testament Scriptures, is a collection of twenty-seven documents, written by eight or nine different persons—evangelists and apostles—at separate times, and under varied circumstances. Four of those documents are biographies of Christ; one is a church history; one is a prophetic book, sketching in bold figures and in highly metaphorical language the future condition of the Christian Church, from the close of the first century down to the end of the world; while twenty-one of the documents consist of letters apostolic written to different churches, individuals, or people. Our present concern is mainly with the four gospel narratives—which record the incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For the truth of those four biographies, we have evidence of an authentic and satisfactory nature.

Sceptical writers, such as Strauss, who would disparage the testimony arising from a study of the sacred writings, pretend that we have no certainty that the four gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear; and that, beyond the assumption of the names of the several authors, we have no certainty that they were eye-witnesses of the facts recorded by them. In reply to such objections, the sole aim of which is to overturn the truth of Christianity by weakening (if possible) the evidence

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for its Divine origin,—it may be stated that our authorized version of Holy Scripture is a literal translation from very ancient Greek manuscripts, including the titles borne by the several books; and these have descended to us from earliest times. There never was any doubt entertained as to the authorship of the historical books of the New Testament, until a very recent period, when men of a sceptical turn of mind have sought to overturn the foundations of Christianity. Those sacred writings have received the unanimous consent of ancient Fathers; and their genuineness and authenticity are supported by the concurrent testimony of the whole Christian Church in the earliest ages. Indeed, they come to us *better fortified* as to their authorship, than do the writings of almost any classical author. There is no instance of mere human or classical writings having been quoted within a short period of their publication; but this was the case with the four gospels of the New Testament, and no doubt whatever was attempted to be cast on their genuineness or authenticity by authors of a contemporaneous period. On the contrary, we find such men as Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen—who flourished in the end of the second or beginning of the third century—appealing to the four gospels, and to the Acts, as authentic histories received by the Universal Church. Some who sat at the feet of the Apostles quote their writings; and, generally speaking, the four gospels were read publicly for instruction in the Christian Church. There is undoubted evidence that the person who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, was the author of the gospel according to St. Luke; and, by the use of the first person, he identifies himself with the companion of St. Paul. In the case of St. John's Gospel, we have the distinct assertion that its author "*saw and bare record*, and his record is true." St. Matthew appears to have written mainly for the Hebrew people, soon after the ascension of our Lord; and he quotes largely from the Old Testament Scriptures. The second gospel, written by St. Mark, was mainly in-

tended for the use of the Gentiles ; and it was evidently composed before the destruction of Jerusalem. St. Luke's Gospel, which was composed by "the beloved physician," bears the stamp of a high degree of Greek culture. It was addressed to Theophilus, an Italian of some distinction, and intended for the higher ranks in society. It appeared much later than the two former gospels, viz.: about A. D. 58—60 ; and it differs from both in the *order* of events, and in its *historical style*. The Gospel of St. John is supplemental to the other three, and deals mainly, not so much with facts or events, as with spiritual doctrine ; concerning the Person and discourses of our Lord. It was called by the ancients the *Spiritual Gospel*, as differing from the mere *historical* gospels. The evidence for its canonical authority is undoubted ; and the time and place of its publication was probably at Ephesus, about A. D. 78. There is such an array of testimony borne by early writers in support of St. John's Gospel, that critics have scarcely ventured to call its authorship in question. Even the Tübingen School, whose severe criticism excluded this Gospel from the Canon of the New Testament, has virtually ceased to exist. We consider it nothing short of a special interposition of Providence, that four distinct narratives regarding the Founder of Christianity have come down to us ; and that so many "have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us."

The apparent discrepancies between some of the gospels, —and the silence of one evangelist on matters related by another,—so far from invalidating the testimony of inspiration, only go to establish the absence of all collusion or fraud between the different writers ; while it stamps their credibility as distinct and independent witnesses. The discrepancies are only apparent ; and, even were it otherwise, the substantial agreement on all the important events narrated concerning the life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, would place the authors of the four gospels, and the writer of the Acts, in the

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highest rank of historical authorities. Apart altogether from the question of verbal inspiration, in which the Church Catholic fully believes, the Christian system rests on a historical basis which cannot be overturned, unless we adopt the bold alternative that the New Testament is a forgery from beginning to end, and that the first promulgators of the Christian religion were either dupes or impostors !

The facts narrated by the four evangelists are all admitted by the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, as having occurred from the period "beginning with the baptism of John, until the day in which he was taken up;" and the truth of Christ's resurrection from the dead is established "by many infallible proofs,"—for "He showed himself alive after His passion," being seen of His disciples "forty days," in which He "spake of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." No fact of gospel history is more completely established than the resurrection of Christ. This has been maintained by the highest judicial authorities, both in England and America—such as Lord Chief Justice Hale, and Greenleaf on the "Rules of Evidence,"—who regard the testimony for the fact of Christ's resurrection as irrefragable. Nine or ten appearances are recorded (while many others no doubt took place that are *not* recorded): First to Mary Magdelene; then to the other women; afterwards to the Apostle Peter; on the same day, towards evening, to the two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus; again, in the midst of the disciples on the first Easter Sunday after His resurrection, on which occasion Thomas was absent; eight days thereafter He appeared to all the disciples, Thomas being present with them, who had his doubts dispelled by an ocular view of the Saviour's hands, and feet, and wounded side; thereafter, Jesus showed himself to seven of the disciples by the Sea of Galilee, when the interesting episode occurred in which Simon Peter was gently reminded of his triple denial, by the question three times repeated: "Lovest thou me?" and when

the destiny of the Apostle John was obscurely hinted at; subsequently He "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, the greater part of whom remained" alive at the time when St. Paul recorded the fact in his Epistle to the Corinthians—and we may suppose that this meeting with the brethren took place on the mount in Galilee, from which He gave commandment to the eleven Apostles to teach and baptize in His name, promising to be with His Church until the end of the world. After which time He once more met His disciples in Jerusalem, and led them out as far as to Bethany, where after bidding them tarry at Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Spirit, He was parted from them, and "a cloud received him out of their sight." Another appearance, not mentioned in the gospels, is alluded to by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians; where, in summing up the evidence in proof of the resurrection of our Lord, the apostle says: "*After that He was seen of James*; and last of all he appeared to me also, as of one born out of due time." In virtue of the power conferred on the Apostles after the resurrection of our Lord, they performed miracles, spake in divers tongues, and accompanied their message by signs and wonders "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" which had the effect of gaining over multitudes of converts to the faith of Christianity.

The narrative contained in the Acts of the Apostles, which was written by S. Luke about A. D. 63, or two years after St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, is confirmed (as Archdeacon Paley has shown in his masterly work) by the "undesigned coincidences" which have been shown to exist between St. Luke's history and the epistles ascribed to St. Paul. After a thorough examination of those points of agreement, no unprejudiced mind can arrive at any other conclusion than that the persons mentioned and the transactions recorded in the Acts were real; and that the history was composed by one who had an intimate acquaintance with the apostle who is the chief subject of the narrative. Besides the "undesigned coincidences"

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enumerated by Paley, there are others equally conclusive; one of which may be mentioned, viz., where the authors of the first and third gospels give a list of the twelve Apostles "in pairs," without assigning any reason for such an arrangement; while St. Mark (whose list is not in pairs) mentions that they were sent out "two and two." Such incidental points of harmony afford the highest probability of the truth of the gospel narrative.

When we examine the Pauline and other epistles, written by so many of the apostles at different times and places, and addressed to different individuals or Churches—all based upon the admitted facts of the gospels—we cannot resist the conclusion, that the authors of those several epistles challenged the world to a denial of the facts of Christianity. It was an age of history, rather than of mythological fable. At the very time when the documents comprising the New Testament appeared, there appeared also a Jewish historian (Josephus) whose narrative of events was considered trustworthy. Upon what ground, therefore, can we reject the historical truth of the New Testament, except we ascribe it to imposture? Such an idea is totally at variance with the morality of the religion which it inculcates, and the sufferings endured by the first propagators of Christianity in its defence. Finally, the authors of those sacred writings wrote concerning what they knew, and testified of that which they had seen; and unless we violate the first principles of evidence, such as govern judicial proceedings in courts of civil law, we are bound to accept their writings as at once genuine and authentic. "The foundation of God standeth sure;" and if men receive not the testimony of Christ, and that of His servants, the evangelists and apostles, "neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead."



## LECTURE IX.

### CORROBORATIVE TESTIMONY FROM JEWISH AND PROFANE AUTHORS, AND CHRISTIAN FATHERS OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES—EVIDENCE FROM THE CATACOMBS.

2 Tim. ii. 2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

**I**N no respect does the New Testament differ from the Old more than in the prominence given to the Christ of history. The Jewish Scriptures are taken up mainly with a history of the Hebrew nation; whereas the inspired writers of the New Testament are occupied with the person of Christ—His life and doctrine. This will account for the scanty references made in contemporaneous history, by those writers whose principles led them to ignore the influence of the Christian system. They were not concerned about the propagation of the new faith; possibly they regarded it as a troublesome sect, which would soon pass out of public notice; hence they pursued a studied silence regarding the origin and growth of Christianity, which can only be explained on the ground of national pride, or policy, or a tenacious adherence to heathenism. And yet we find incidental allusions made to one "Jesus, who was called Christ," by Josephus, whose ill-concealed enmity to the Prophet of Nazareth leads him to notice John the Baptist; while he virtually ignores Him "of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Heathen writers also—such as Tacitus, Juvenal, Pliny, Trajan, Adrian, and others—writing soon after the inception of

the Christian religion, testify to the life and teaching of Christ; His execution under Pontius Pilate; the rapid spread of His doctrines; and the persecutions endured by His followers—who were noted for the morality of their lives, and their worship of Christ as God. Nothing but a blind prejudice can account for the studious ignoring of Christ on the part of Josephus at Jerusalem, or Seneca at Rome—for they were both contemporary with the introduction of Christianity, and must have been both familiar with the events which had drawn so many eyes towards Judea.

But from repeated allusions made by the Evangelists themselves to the civil history of the times of which they write, a complete harmony has been established between their statements and those of profane historians. We have thus the strongest indirect testimony to the truth of the New Testament. The political position of Palestine affords an illustration of this harmony. There was for a time an admixture of native with Roman supremacy, which made the civil history of Judea perplexing to historians and others who did not fully understand the double system of Jewish ecclesiastical and Roman civil power that existed. Hence we find a double system of taxation in force, civil and ecclesiastical; two tribunals, two modes of capital punishment, two methods of marking time; a condition of things which came to an end within forty years of our Lord's crucifixion. This double system of civil and ecclesiastical arrangement which existed for a time is verified by Josephus and other writers, who thus become unconscious witnesses to the truth of the New Testament.

The same is true in regard to the civil history of the times covered by the New Testament writers. The names of the Roman emperors, of Jewish kings and princes, of the Roman governors or procurators, and the order in which they occur; are fully borne out by contemporaneous history, both Jewish and Roman. As an instance of this, Josephus corroborates the whole narrative given by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, regarding "Herod

the King" (this was Herod Agrippa), whose persecution of the early Christians—for he killed James the brother of John, with the sword—and whose miserable death (being "eaten of worms") are both minutely recorded in sacred and profane history. So in regard to Herod Antipas, whose adultery with Philip's wife, as well as his execution of John the Baptist, are narrated by the Evangelists and corroborated by Josephus. Illustrations and examples of this kind could be multiplied indefinitely. It has been objected that the reference by St. Luke to the "decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed," is not borne out by civil history;—that no such taxing took place in the time of Augustus, nor until ten years later! The Evangelist asserts that "this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria;" and Josephus, the Jewish historian, mentions the extension of the Roman census to Judea under Cyrenius. The apparent discrepancy between the two writers is easily reconciled by the fact of the decree having been issued, and the enrolment actually being made before our Lord's birth, with the view to the levying of a tax; whereas it was never *fully executed* until Cyrenius carried it through. This is the explanation given by Whiston and Prideaux, and fully meets the case. There is no reason why the statements of St. Luke or any of the Evangelists, should not be considered as reliable as those of Josephus, who had to please his Roman masters, and who has shown himself prejudiced in favour of the Pharisees.

Having thus seen that the main facts constituting the basis of the Christian religion are corroborated both from profane and Jewish sources,—and that no serious discrepancy can be established between the sacred writers and other historical witnesses,—we turn to another quarter from which to derive additional confirmation to the truth of the sacred records. We now call into court as witnesses early Christian writers, most of whom flourished in the period of time between the death of the last Apostle and the close of the second or beginning of the third

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century. We shall also produce evidence from primitive Christian monuments, especially from the Catacombs of Rome—which furnish indubitable proofs of the faith, the sufferings, and the hopes of the early Christians.

It may be objected that the early Christian writers were biassed on the side of the religion they espoused; but this could not make them unworthy of belief, or render their testimony of less value than if they had continued heathens or Jews. Christ told the Pharisees, in replying to such an argument: "Though I bare record of myself, yet my record is true." And if Justin Martyr, or any other of the early Christian fathers who embraced Christianity, had remained unconvinced of the truth of its claims, instead of renouncing all for Christ, there is no reason why, on this account, they should be deemed less worthy of credit. Indeed, so far from weakening their testimony, it would possess, in the estimation of all believers, a value far in excess of that given by enemies, whether heathen or Jews. And as the testimony multiplies from early Christian sources, it will be found to possess a strength which is impregnable. The message of the gospel did not find a reception solely from the humbler and more illiterate classes in society. Converts were gathered occasionally from among persons of distinction, including "honourable women not a few"; while there were converts to the faith of Jesus to be found under the shadow of the Emperor's palace, as well as many from among officers of state and men of wealth. The examples of St. Paul, the learned pupil of Gamaliel,—of the Treasurer of Queen Candace,—of Gaius, the wealthy "host of the whole Church,"—of Erastus, the Chamberlain,—of Sergius Paulus, the Roman Deputy—and of converts from "Cæsar's household,"—are enough to show that the Gospel message was embraced occasionally by the rich and the educated, as well as by the poor and the unlettered. Speaking of names, we may observe in passing that the multiplicity of names employed by the New Testament, such as by St. Paul in the 16th chapter of his

Epistle to the Romans, rendered detection all the more easy—on the supposition that the epistle was a forgery or the facts narrated were untrue !

Among the early Christians of the first three centuries, a large number of able writers appeared as “Apologists” for the faith of Jesus ; and these, in point of intellectual attainments, compare favourably with the best heathen writers of the same period. The names of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and Clement,—had they not been Christian Fathers—would have been ranked by the outside world as authors of eminence. These, and many other writers, who are to be regarded quite as trustworthy as either heathen or Jewish authors, bear ample testimony to the facts recorded in the historical books of the New Testament. A few specimens of such testimony may not be out of place, as tending to confirm the faith of Christian people.

One of the earliest documents, admitted on all hands to be genuine, though not canonical, is that of Clement of Rome, the “fellow-labourer” of St. Paul. His testimony is valuable from the fact of having been an eye-witness of the earlier triumphs of the Gospel. The object of his epistle was to allay dissension in the Corinthian Church ; and, though its style is hortatory and didactic, occasional reference is made to the facts contained in the four Gospels, such as to the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Christ ; and also to the labours and sufferings of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred A.D. 107, left behind him several writings which are quoted by by later Fathers of the Church and written in different languages, bearing similar testimony to that of Clement, Bishop of Rome.

Still later, we have an epistle in the original Greek by Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna—a disciple of St. John—who lived to a great age, and suffered martyrdom at the hands of heathen persecutors, A.D. 166. Polycarp, in his letter addressed to the Philippians, bears witness to all

the leading facts of the Gospel: and we learn from an ancient Father that he used to relate his conversations with St. John, among which were mentioned the miracles of Christ. Polycarp was about twenty years of age when St. John died.

Among the many early writings of the first and second centuries, we have those of "The Shepherd of Hermas;" an "Apology" by Quadratus (Bishop of Athens), presented to the Emperor Adrian about A.D. 122: a similar defence of Christianity by Justin Martyr, about A.D. 148; and another by the same author addressed to the Roman Senate, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Concerning the writings of this last named Father of the Church, it has been observed: "there might be collected from them a tolerably complete life of Christ, agreeing in all points with that which is delivered to us in Holy Scripture." It is enough to say that this writer enumerates all the events of Gospel history, beginning with the miraculous conception of Jesus—and ending with His resurrection, the subsequent descent of the Holy Ghost, and the spread of the Gospel throughout the then known world.

While this kind of evidence might be multiplied by numerous quotations from Athenagoras, Tertullian, Irenæus, Origen, and other Fathers of the Church, who handed down to their successors an unbroken chain of testimony in support of the New Testament Scriptures; we shall now turn to the *monumental remains* of early times, which bring before our eyes the primitive Church as founded by Christ and His Apostles, together with the relics of martyrs and confessors who suffered for "the truth of God and the testimony of Jesus." As when we have examined the buried ruins of Herculaneum or Pompeii, and conclude therefrom that Pagan life existed in those ancient cities; so when we descend into the Catacombs of Rome, which are now admitted to belong to the earliest Christian ages, we have brought vividly before our minds a living world—a struggling persecuted community—which sought refuge from the hand of the

oppressor "in dens and caves of the earth." From an examination of those Catacombs, extending beneath the ground over nine hundred miles, and reckoned to contain nearly seven million graves of departed Saints, we infer the rapid progress which Christianity must have made during the first three centuries, and the heavy persecutions to which its disciples were exposed. Tacitus, the Roman historian, asserts that in the time of Nero, the Christians were "a vast multitude"—and history has left on record that under the heathen persecutions vast numbers of Christians were massacred. In the inscriptions written upon the Catacombs, in Latin and Greek, the word "Martyr" is frequently found; and, where this is not the case, we find sentiments expressive of Christian trust or resignation, and hope in a future resurrection. He "sleeps"—he "rests"—she "sleeps in peace"—are among the inscriptions commonly found on the tombs of this vast cemetery; while emblems such as the Anchor, the Cross, the Dove, the Phoenix, are of frequent occurrence as indicating a state of mind which the Christian religion alone can account for. Besides these, we have representations from Bible history, expressive of the faith held by those whose ashes repose in the subterranean vaults of the Catacombs. Such subjects as the Temptation, Noah and the Dove, Daniel among the Lions, the Adoration of the Wise Men, several of the miracles of our Lord, the Last Supper, &c.; are among the many artistic representations found in the Catacombs, from all which we infer that the belief of the early Christians was substantially the same with that of orthodox Christendom at the present day.

If it be said that the early converts were credulous in accepting the Christian religion—the certain knowledge of having to undergo a moral ostracism from the rest of society, and their continual exposure to obloquy and suffering and death, afford sufficient proof of their having "counted the cost." Men do not willingly run into danger with their eyes open, or accept a new religion which

exposes them to obloquy and loss of worldly goods, unless they are influenced by high moral reasons, and are fully satisfied with the claims made upon their intelligent acceptance of the new faith. The grounds upon which the religion of Jesus made such progress in the world as to dethrone idolatry and to uproot long established systems, in less than three hundred years from the time of our Saviour are to be found in the purity of the doctrines taught and in the morality of the lives of the early Christians; in their intelligent belief of Gospel facts relating to Christ, the founder of the new religion; in the miracles wrought both by our Lord in His lifetime, and by His servants the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Ghost; in the undoubted testimony borne to the truth of the Sacred Scriptures by Pagan writers, by cotemporaneous history both Jewish and heathen, and by the continuous chain of witnesses to the faith of Christ, whose sincerity was attested by worldly loss, imprisonment, and death. They sealed their testimony with their blood. Nearly all the first Apostles of our Lord passed through the bloody baptism of suffering and death; while myriads of their followers were martyred under one or other of the ten heathen persecutions. Several of the early Church defenders and historians, including eminent Bishops and clergymen suffered death on account of their religious principles. It is evident that they must have felt good reason for accepting the truth of Christianity before they would rank themselves on the side of a persecuted sect, and expose themselves to loss of worldly goods, to loss of social position, and encounter the risk of the scourge, the rack, the cross, the stake or the wild beasts of the amphitheatre—to which multitudes actually submitted rather than deny their faith.

The evidences for the truth of Christianity may be summed up as follows:—The historical books of the New Testament are the production of contemporaries and eye-witnesses; two, at least, of the authors of Christ's life were His intimate friends;—the history of the earliest Acts

of the Apostles was written by a companion of the first missionaries of the cross ; there are many striking coincidences between that history and the Epistles sent to different churches or individuals ;—we have frequent notices by profane writers confirming the sacred story of the Gospels ; in the full belief of the truth of the New Testament Gospels, Christianity spread rapidly through the civilized world against many obstacles and in the face of the direst persecution ;—and, finally, the authentic character of the New Testament Scriptures has been handed down to future generations by those who either witnessed the events recorded by them, or had them transmitted on competent authority. If the authors of the New Testament were good men, and honest men—and the character of their writings is sufficient proof of this—then we ought to accept their testimony as that of credible witnesses who “saw and heard” what they declare unto us. In the words of one of their number, “that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled ; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”



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## LECTURE X.

### ON MIRACLES—AS EVIDENTIAL OF CHRISTIANITY.

Acts ii. 22: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

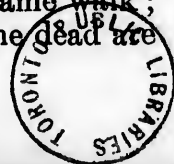
**M**IRACLES may be defined to be extraordinary signs or wonders intended to show the power of God, in a way contrary to the usual course of nature. What we commonly call miracles are variously termed, in Scripture, "signs," "wonders," "powers," and "works." The idea attached to the term *miracle* is not merely of something that is marvellous or wonderful, but that which is fitted to convey a token of the special presence and power of God. Hence in the miracles both of the Old and New Testaments, "signs" were furnished as proof of the Divine authority with which Moses or Christ was commissioned respectively to introduce to the world that particular dispensation of the covenant of grace, of which either was the accredited messenger. Moses and Christ both wrought "signs and wonders" in the sight of the people, to awaken inquiry and to authenticate their mission. Pharaoh demanded "signs" of the former, just as the Jews asked of Christ Himself to show them a "sign." But while, in one sense, every process of nature acting in the ordinary way is a wonder, this does not imply that God, for special ends to be served, may not give a special manifestation of His presence and power, in such a way that we are entitled to speak of it as out of the ordinary course of nature. To speak of an army of six hundred thousand people being led across the bed of a sea; or of

that same army being fed in the wilderness for forty years with manna from heaven ; or of a person walking upon the sea ; or of a dead man being restored to life after lying in a state of corruption for nearly four days ; either of these things is termed a miracle. It is not an event which is *contrary* to nature, but *above* it. It is a *supernatural* intervention of Divine power for moral ends. As an illustration of the term miracle, which implies the suspension of a lower physical law for a high moral purpose, we may instance the familiar case of raising one's arm by the exercise of our will, and thus for the time suspending the law of gravitation. The physical law is held in abeyance, to effect a special purpose by the higher law of my will. Is this interruption of the regularity of fixed law beyond "human experience?" So the higher law of a spiritual mind controls the mere animal nature in man, which is not destroyed, but modified and neutralized by the superior moral law of a renewed spiritual nature. Is not this within the limits of "human experience?"

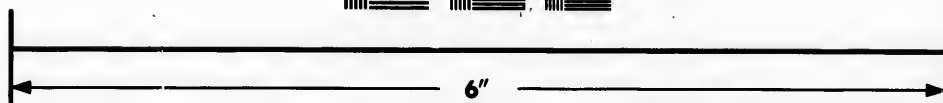
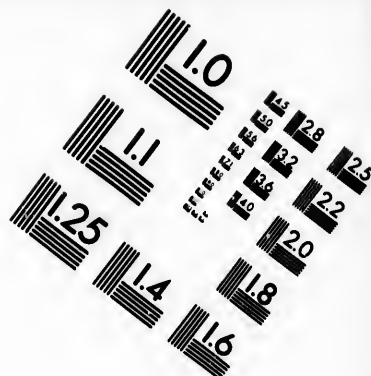
We are to distinguish between works of wonder, such as those wrought by the Egyptian sorcerers or the vagabond Jewish exorcists ; and miraculous signs evidential of Divine power for moral purposes, such as those wrought by Moses or by Christ. In the case of the latter, more especially, they were gracious works—miracles of mercy and of healing—in which God was speaking to men of the great *Redemptive work* for which He sent into the world His only-begotten Son. They authenticated Christ's mission—they were pledges of His power, and tokens of His mercy and love. They were directed towards the amelioration of the various ills to which humanity is subject, including death itself ; and they are properly to be viewed as the "first fruits" of that final restitution of all things in "the end" of the world when Christ "shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father." In His miraculous acts, Christ, as the manifestation of Deity, was evincing His power over universal nature ; thus indicating that "all power" was given to Him both in heaven

and on earth; and that "all things were put under His feet for the sake of His body, the Church, which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The miracles of Christ are, therefore, to be viewed not merely as acts of power—for such were the "signs and lying wonders" of the Antichrist of Scripture—but they were all designed for high moral ends in the economy of grace. In nearly the only instance of what might appear an exception to this general rule—the cursing of the barren fig-tree—it is not a human being, but "an unfeeling tree" (as Trenchard well observes), that comes under the malediction of heaven. In this respect, there is a wide contrast between the miracles of Moses and those of Christ. The former were miracles of power done under the law, and accorded in their nature with a legal dispensation; whereas the latter were miracles of mercy, showing that "we are come unto Mount Zion," and not unto Mount Sinai. The miracles of the Old Testament had to do rather with external nature; whereas the miracles of the New Testament economy, had to do more with the moral nature of man. *Those* had to do with the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire; but *these* with the still small voice of Divine mercy in relation both to man's body, soul, and spirit. And thus they find their true interpretation in that greatest of all miracles, the Incarnation of God's Eternal Son.

It should never be forgotten, as evidential of the truth of Christianity, that Christ and His Apostles continually laid claim to miraculous powers, and appealed to them in part as proofs of their heavenly mission: "If I had not done among them (says Jesus) the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." As a proof that the Messiah had really come in fulfilment of ancient prophecy, and thus fulfilled, too, the reasonable expectations of those who were "looking for redemption to Israel," He sent this message by the disciples of John, the forerunner: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are







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raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." In like manner, the Apostle Peter, addressing the multitudes assembled in Jerusalem on the great day of Pentecost, from all parts of the habitable earth, spoke in no terms of dubiety or reserve upon the miracles of Christ, but as a matter of public notoriety which could not be gainsaid or denied, and as an attestation of His Divine mission: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." The only difference in the miracles of Christ and His Apostles, was that *He* performed them in His own name; to the cripple at the pool of Bethesda, for example, He gave the word of command: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." But His servants, the Apostles, performed their miracles in the name and by the power of Jesus, as they did in the case of the first one wrought by them after the Pentecostal effusion; to the man lame from his mother's womb, who was carried daily to the gate of the Temple, which is called Beautiful, Peter and John said: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

The rapid spread of the Christian religion was largely owing to its having been thoroughly attested by undoubted miracles; and in this we see a striking contrast between the faith of Christ and the religion of Mahomet. *The latter durst never appeal to miracles*, although the material he had to work upon was extremely favourable; and the appeal by our Lord and His Apostles to miraculous "signs and wonders," would have been as unsafe, but for the fact that those works were wrought in presence of multitudes, and in open day. John, the forerunner of our Lord, though a mighty prophet, "did no miracle;" although he came "in the power and spirit of Elijah," one of the great miracle-workers among the Old Testament prophets. With the close of the Apostolic Age, there is every reason to believe that both the gift of tongues and the power of working miracles ceased; as these were necessary only at the inception of Christianity, to convince

an unbelieving world of its Divine mission. In proof of this, Christianity, in less than three centuries, dethroned the idols of heathenism, and conquered the Roman world. It was a great moral victory, won by the power of moral suasion, and achieved in the face of direst persecution.

Still later on in history, the evidential value of miracles occupied a large share of public attention during the Deistical controversy of the eighteenth century. Vital religion and practical godliness had sunk low in the scale of society; it was a period of general licentiousness and debauchery; this much may be inferred from the prevailing literature and amusements of the day; and the defenders of our faith were compelled to rely on the miracles of our Saviour as the main fortification of the Christian citadel. And so far complete was the work of Christian Apologists, such as Butler, and Paley, and others, that sceptics found it useless to attack the evidence on historical grounds. David Hume endeavoured to cut short the argument by the subtle fallacy that no amount of evidence could prove the truth of miracles; that they were a violation of the laws of nature; and as those laws were fixed and immoveable, there could be no evidence from "human experience" in support of a miracle. The same argument, though presented in different language, is employed by infidels at the present day. And the modern denier of the credibility of miracles has, unconsciously perhaps, become the true successor of those early idolators who deified the powers or laws of nature, and ascribed the existence of every mountain, river, or ocean, to its patron god. As Prof. Christlieb observes: "The old heathen personified the forces of nature and made them demi-gods; we do the same, and call them laws." Both systems alike deify nature; both are built upon the ignoring or the denying of the unity of a personal God, superior to nature, who holds under His control the universe of matter, and makes it subservient to the great purposes of His moral and spiritual kingdom.

But Hume's argument against miracles involves a *fallacy*, or rather a series of fallacies, and has been effectually disposed of by writers on Christian evidences, such as Paley, Campbell, Whately, Wardlaw, Chalmers and others. A miracle is not "a violation of the laws of nature," as contended for by the great Scottish sceptic; but simply the introduction of a new element, or combination of elements, to produce effects beyond and above the usual experience of mankind—constraining men to exclaim, "This is indeed the finger of God!" The projecting of a stone upwards, though in opposition to the law of gravitation, is not contrary to the law of nature; for, in this case, the law of gravity is made subordinate to a higher law, viz., the human will, expressing itself in the centrifugal force. Human "experience" (we use Hume's favourite expression) gives us to understand that there are uniform laws which control inert matter, and also that there is a self-originating power in the human will. The raising of a dead man to life by Him who hath the keys of death, and hell, and the grave, is no more a violation of nature's laws than is the impress made by a human mind on dead matter, or than the sequence of natural phenomena by the intervention of human power. But even though some may insist on the universality of law, they cannot deny that one law is constantly being modified by another law. In this way, the ordinary course of nature is undisturbed, and yet certain phenomena are produced by the intervention of other and higher laws for moral purposes. And, on this ground, there is nothing illogical or unphilosophical in the supposition of miracles, provided the evidence be conclusive as to their having been performed. To say that we are without "experience" as to the credibility of miracles, is to beg the whole question. To use Hume's own words, "the testimony must be of a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish." To assume that we have no experience of the occurrence of a miracle, is to overturn the inductive philosophy of Bacon, and to dis-

believe the statements of candid, honest and inspired men. That miracles are *improbable*, and therefore of rare occurrence, is admitted; but it does not follow that they are therefore *impossible*. The cry of modern sceptics that a belief in miracles is the result of superstition, is founded upon prejudice. They will believe the testimony of an ordinary historian, or even the testimony of the four Evangelists when narrating an ordinary fact in history; but the moment the same witnesses testify to an occurrence which was supernatural, many will refuse their credence. They do not distinguish, as they ought, between the miracles of the Bible, which have been attested upon the highest authority, and those spurious miracles which were the result of superstition and of a cunning imposture practised upon those who were led blindfold by an arrogant priesthood. And the fact that spurious miracles have been wrought is no more conclusive against real miracles than that doubt should be cast upon the testimony of one honest witness because another, who gave a similar story, had been convicted of perjury.

The men of science, in our day, who deify the laws or forces of nature, are so much occupied with those external phenomena that their vision of moral ends is obscured. This will explain the increasing spread of scepticism which denies the possibility of miracles. We live in an age of "things seen and temporal." Men seem to forget that the phenomena of mind—intelligence, volition, design—are as real facts, and as much the object of human *experience*, as are chemistry, electricity, or gravitation. So much are they concerned with the study of that which meets the outward senses merely, or of what may be the subject of mathematical demonstration, that they become oblivious to the facts and lessons of the moral kingdom. So far as the future world is concerned, the geometry of ethics is proportionally of higher value than the geometry of physics, and the study of theology superior in importance to the study of geology. And there are observant peasants who often perceive the truth that lies

hidden beneath the surface, while some who are learned in mere natural science pass over the surface beneath which lies a mine of moral wealth. But the progress of time and the advance of science have given us one decided advantage, which is that *no counter testimony has yet been produced to the truth of Christ's miracles and the facts of the Gospel narrative.* His enemies did not deny their existence, but ascribed them either to Satanic agency—which was the plea resorted to by the unbelieving Jews—or to the power of magic and tricks of legerdemain, which was the position taken by heathen writers. Neither of them denied the *fact* of Christ's miracles. The first heathen writers against Christianity did not dare to deny the miracles of Christ, because they were too well attested to invite controversy. And the authority of the four New Testament Gospels were so universally admitted in the earlier ages of Christianity, that the basis of historical narrative may be regarded as invulnerable, or proof against attack. It seems, therefore, to be a just conclusion that the miracles of the Gospel are credible, the enemies of Christianity being themselves the judges! The denial of the possibility of miracles necessarily implies the rejection of a personal God, who is above nature; and none but Pantheists can consistently occupy this ground, seeing that they do not, or cannot, distinguish between a great First Cause, who is "God over all, blessed for ever," and the total aggregate of physical forces which constitute what we call "Nature."

Finally, to understand miracles aright, we are to view them not merely as authentic seals of a divine commission, but as part and parcel of the system of religion introduced by the Saviour. Christ came into the world not merely as a Teacher sent from God; but his purpose was to *redeem* mankind. His life and doctrine form one main support of the Christian religion; His miracles are another pillar which goes to sustain the Christian temple. Properly speaking, there is a "mutual interdependence" of both branches of evidence in support of Christianity, viz., of

the *internal* and the *external*, by which they contribute in throwing mutual light on each other, and upon the whole Christian system which they support. We are to view Christ as the manifestation of God in the flesh, and, therefore, His miracles were only the expression of His Divinity. He wrought them in His own name and by His own inherent power, which distinguishes the miracles of our Lord from those of his servants, either Apostles or Prophets, which were performed in the name and by the power of the Master. They were "tokens" and "signs" of that mediatorial economy whose object was the physical and moral welfare of the human race. Suffering is the result of sin, and Christ, the sinner's Friend, healed diseases and cast out devils, and "did many other wonderful works," as an indication that His mission was curative and remedial. It was a foretoken of that new creation which He came to inaugurate, and which will find its fullest realization in that new "heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness;" in regard to which the Christian Church, in the very words taught by our Lord, offers up the continual prayer: "Thy Kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!" Amen.





## LECTURE XI.

### INSPIRATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Tim. iii. 16 : " All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

HAVING established in the preceding lectures the genuineness and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, we now proceed to show that the writers of the sacred books composing the Old Testament were under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Considering that the men whose names they bear were fallible, "men of like passions with ourselves," we might reasonably infer that if the Divine Being saw fit to give any revelation of His will at all to the world, He would provide for transmitting it free from human infirmity. Any one who believes in a special providence, or in the possibility of miracles, can be at no loss in admitting the possibility of inspiration. By *revelation* we are to understand a direct communication from God to the world ; and by *inspiration* we understand that the individuals through whom the revelation was given were under the influence of Divine guidance, so that they might be secure against the possibility of error.

When we come to examine the sacred writings, we find their authors claiming to have been under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Hence the use of such expressions as the following : "The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, etc.;" "The burden of the Word of the Lord;" "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day if ye will hear his voice, etc;" and "Thus saith the Word of the

Lord." The Scriptures are called "the oracles of God;" and our Lord appealed to the general body of Scripture as containing "the words of eternal life." Generally speaking, from Moses to Malachi we find the Old Testament writers either delivering their messages in the name of Jehovah, or declaring that they spake by the Spirit of the Lord. The learned Apostle of the Gentiles in his Epistle to Timothy, a young minister of the Gospel at Ephesus, reminds him of his responsibility as having been religiously educated by his mother and grandmother in "the Holy Scriptures from a child;" and adds, in those memorable words so fraught with wisdom to the Church of Christ in every succeeding age, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." It is admitted that no part of the New Testament had then been published, or, that some of them were only in course of being published; and that St. Paul's emphatic declaration could therefore refer only to the Jewish sacred writings, in which young Timothy had been instructed. But if the inspiration of the Old Testament is established, that of the New will readily be conceded. For the authors of the New Testament claim inspiration, and manifestly place their writings on a level with those of the prophets. St. Paul, for example, tells us in the name of his brethren that they "have received the Spirit of God"—that he had "the mind of Christ"—and in respect of the doctrines taught and the messages delivered by him and his fellow-servants the Apostles, he declares: "which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

There is thus a clear distinction to be made between the sacred books and all human compositions. Were it not so, there would be no certainty as to the truth of revelation; and we should be thrown back upon the light of our own fallen reason to discover what was true or false. Neither can we suppose for a moment that only some portions of the sacred writings have been inspired, as for example,

what is the subject of prophecy ; and that the rest was left to the natural faculties and the unassisted reason of the authors of the Bible. Nothing short of plenary or verbal inspiration, extending to the whole of sacred Scripture, by which the minds of prophets and apostles were under the superintending guidance of the Holy Spirit, can meet the requirements of a special revelation from heaven. This did not hinder the free use of their reasoning faculties ; neither does it imply that there are not degrees of inspiration. Where the authors of Scripture narrated facts or events, they were left to the ordinary use of their mental faculties ; it was only necessary that they should be infallibly preserved from error. In other cases, they were under a Divine afflatus, by which their minds were elevated ; so that they became the instruments of communicating doctrines or truths far surpassing man's ordinary ability, and which could not be known except by inspiration. When we reflect that some of the sacred writers were illiterate men, taken from the humbler walks of life ; and yet that their sentiments are so dignified, and their representation of divine things so majestic, that, even in the style of thought and imagery, they are not excelled by the noblest flights of human genius ; we cannot account for such a phenomenon except upon the hypothesis that they were under the influence of Divine inspiration. And this is just the claim put forth by the sacred writers themselves. They do not pretend to have arrived at a knowledge of "the deep things of the Spirit," by any stretch of human wisdom ; but they attribute their discovery to a revelation given to them from above. St. Paul expressly declares that "the mystery which was hidden for ages was now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ;" and in regard to "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," the same inspired writer, declares : "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." To use the words of an eminent English Bishop : "In some cases inspiration only produced correctness and accuracy in re-

lating past occurrences ; in the other cases, it communicated ideas not only new and unknown before, but infinitely beyond the reach of unassisted human intellect ; and sometimes inspired prophets delivered predictions for the use of future ages, which they did not themselves comprehend, and which cannot be fully understood till they are accomplished."

The inspiration of the Scriptures may be also inferred from the sublimity of their style ; the high spiritual or heavenly tone of the matters therein discussed ; the efficacy of their doctrine in reforming society ; the agreement of all the sacred writers on the general subject of Scripture ; and the full discovery it makes of the way of salvation. It is a marvellous fact that, although from Genesis to Revelation a period of fifteen hundred years elapsed between Moses and St. John, a harmony of plan is apparent from beginning to end ; which, considering the number of authors, and the different countries to which they belonged, and the different ages in which they wrote, can be accounted for only by the supposition that they were all guided by the one Spirit of infallible truth.

The grand unity of spirit and of plan running throughout the whole of the sacred volume is, of itself, a proof of inspiration. All the Old Testament writings point to Christ, whether in the way of promise, type and symbol, or prophetic announcement. And so, all the New Testament scriptures converge and find their full complement in the coming of the Messiah as "God manifest in the flesh." Another indication that the books of Scripture were written under the influence of inspiration, is to be found in the universal adaptation of its truths to the felt wants and moral necessities of men in every age and clime. The wants and longings of sin-burdened humanity find a ready response in the oracular breathings of the Divine Spirit as recorded in the Holy Bible. These two features of Revelation—the unity of spirit pervading scripture, and its universal adaptation to all classes and conditions of men—sufficiently indicate the divine origin of the

Bible. The objections often brought forward by sceptics against the integrity of Scripture are frivolous and futile—sometimes appealing to our ignorance, at other times to apparent contradictions which are quite reconcilable, and yet again to our inability to solve deep questions. But as compared with the overwhelming mass of testimony, both external and internal, both historical and experimental, in support of the Bible as a revelation from God,—the objections urged by infidels are like the nibbling of a mouse at the wings of an archangel. The mythical theory, (*e. g.*) advanced by Strauss, Renan, Baden Powell, and other sceptical writers, is a disingenuous refusal to deal fairly with the facts of history—postulating as an axiom the non-existence of supernatural law, whether in miracle or prophecy. On any other ground than that of its being a revelation from heaven, the Bible is an insoluble mystery.

From all the above considerations, we are entitled to regard the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. Men spake and wrote, but it was the Divine Spirit that indited the record. The prophets and apostles and evangelists were only the amanuenses employed to convey to living men that revelation of the Divine Will which shews us “what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.” We are not to understand by this, that all the sentiments recorded in the Bible are just, or that the examples are worthy of imitation. We are not to endorse the utterances of Satan, or the sayings and actions of wicked men, which we find on record in Holy Scripture; but they are nevertheless true in fact, and have been written for our admonition either to warn us of danger, or encourage us in the prosecution of good. “All scripture,” therefore, “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.” We conclude in the words of the Apostle Peter that “no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation,” which means—not that we are to discard the right use of our reason and the exercise of private judgment, since we are commanded to



"search the scriptures," and to "try the spirits, whether they be of God"; but the Apostle means to declare that Scripture revelation is not the result merely of human sagacity; for "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And as the spirit of inspiration was needed to indite the Holy Scriptures, so we require the spirit of illumination fully to comprehend the truth therein revealed, so that it may prove in our experience to be "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." Amen.





## LECTURE XII.

### FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

2 Pet. ii. 21: "For the prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

**T**HE Bible may be proved to be an inspired book from two distinct sources of evidence, viz., *miracles* and *prophecy*.

Miracles may be defined to be extraordinary acts out of the usual course of nature, by which the Divine Being, in a supernatural manner, indicates His power over nature. Miracles are the subject of ocular demonstration; and may be established in the same way as any other fact, by the testimony of competent witnesses. If an army of six hundred thousand people be led across the bed of a sea, whose waters divide and stand as a wall on either side, while their enemies in close pursuit are destroyed by the overflowing water; if that same army be fed in the wilderness for forty years with bread from heaven; if a dead man who has lain in the grave four days, by which time his body is turning to corruption, and through the power of a *word* is raised to life; if four thousand hungry people be fed on seven loaves of bread and a few small fishes, and yet there are taken up seven basketsful of fragments,—we call that a *miracle*, an act of Divine power, something out of the ordinary course of nature, which proves that God was with the men who could do such things.

Prophecy, on the other hand, which is one of the main pillars of Christianity, proving the Divine origin of the Holy Scriptures,—means the foretelling of future events,

by men who were specially endowed by the Holy Ghost what to say and what to write. Now, if we are satisfied that good men, calling themselves prophets, predicted hundreds or thousands of years before the events occurred—either the downfall of a nation, or the destruction of a city, or the rise, progress and fall of some civil or ecclesiastical power—then we must conclude that those men were inspired of God.

Much of the Old Testament is occupied with just such predictions as those referred to—prophecies regarding persons, families and nations, cities and empires. A very large prominence is given by nearly all the Old Testament writers to predictions regarding the Messiah, covering a period of not less than four thousand years, if we reckon from the first promise of a Saviour to the advent of Christ.

Now, the fact that the Old Testament Scriptures were preserved by the Jews with pious fidelity and care, almost with superstitious reverence, ought to satisfy any reasonable mind that the books containing those prophecies are genuine productions. That is, they were written by the men whose names they bear, or to whom they are usually ascribed. And the circumstance that our Lord and His apostles invariably appealed to the Old Testament as an authoritative standard on matters of faith, affords additional evidence that the books are genuine, and that they contain an authentic narrative of the facts recorded. Before we are at liberty to set aside the evidence arising from the genuineness and authenticity of Holy Scripture, we must convict its writers of deception and falsehood; we must convict the Saviour and His disciples of having been misled and deceived, or else that they attempted to mislead and deceive others. Nay more, we must convict the whole Jewish church and nation of having palmed off upon the world the most stupendous fraud that has ever been witnessed; that Moses plotted with David, and Samuel with Jeremiah, and Nehemiah with Nahum, and *all* with Christ and His apostles, in foisting on the world the Bible as a revelation from heaven!

The sacred writings which were preserved with such pious care by the Jews have been handed down to the Christian Church, and have now become the common property and inheritance of Christian people; who receive them, equally with the New Testament writings, as the word of God—the only infallible standard of faith and manners. While, however, the Jews acknowledge only the Old Testament writings; and while the Samaritans receive nothing more than the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses; Christian people acknowledge the Divine authority of both the Old and New Testament scriptures. These taken together form the rule of our faith, and our ultimate standard of appeal on all questions of doctrine and duty. In this respect Protestant Christians differ entirely from their Roman Catholic brethren, who take as their rule of faith the traditions of the Fathers and the voice of the Church—not as interpreting Scripture, but as adding to it new dogmas given forth as the infallible utterances of the head of the Roman Church; whereas Protestants in general would express their views on the rule of faith in the following language employed by the framers of the Westminster Catechism: “The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the *only* rule given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.” This brief statement was intended to meet the error of the Deists, who denied the necessity of any special revelation from heaven; as well as the error of the Romanist, who has added tradition to the Bible as the rule of faith.

Upon the subject of prophecy, it may be well to remark that as the Scriptures are the inalienable right of man, his birthright to study for himself; so it is his prerogative to study prophecy, that his faith may be an intelligent apprehension of Divine truth, and that he may obtain fresh confirmation of the truth of Christianity. Perhaps there is no more obscure book in the whole collection of sacred writings than the Book of Revelation, written by St. John, the last survivor of the twelve apostles. And

yet that mysterious volume opens with an encouragement to every Christian man and woman to study its contents, conveying the promise of a blessing to all who do so: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand."

Now, what is a prophet? And what are we to understand by prophecy? According to the best Hebrew lexicographers, the name "prophet" comes from a word signifying to "bubble forth," like a fountain or spring sending forth pure water from the bosom of the earth. This may mean, either that he is taught by a Divine influence what to say, or that he speaks authoritatively as the mouth-piece of God. Under the Jewish theocracy, there was a regular prophetic order of men, who were trained to instruct the people in religious things, and to give forth the will of God on matters pertaining to the welfare of the nation, or concerning the outside world. Schools or colleges of prophets were established as early as Samuel's time, and continued down to the close of the Jewish dispensation; and no doubt it was in imitation of that state of things among the Jews that, in the Apostolic Christian Church, there were officers duly ordained and set apart to the Gospel ministry. Some were apostles; others were prophets; more were evangelists; while the permanent office-bearers, who were to have the succession of the ministry, and to perpetuate the new state of things down to the second coming of Christ, were called "pastors and teachers." (See St. Paul to the Ephesians iv. 11. See also Tim. ii. 2.

Under the Old Testament economy, there were many who belonged to the prophetic order who did not exercise the gift of prophecy. This was reserved to comparatively few; but the sixteen prophets whose writings find a place in the Old Testament Scripture were, of course, endowed with the prophetic spirit. They are distinguished by the name of greater and lesser prophets; such as, Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, Hosea, Joel, and so forth. Those

sixteen prophets were the instruments of communicating God's will to man regarding future events, concerning persons, places, kingdoms, cities, empires, &c. More particularly they pointed out—most of them many hundreds of years before the event occurred—all the circumstances relating to the incarnation of Christ, His life, death, and resurrection, the time and place of His birth, and the great redemption to be accomplished for man in the fullness of time.

As this great Messianic prophecy is the central prophecy of Old Testament scripture, it may be well to observe that there are two ways in which we may present to you the truth of prophecy. In dealing with professed Christians, who acknowledge the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament writings, all that we need to do is to show that the truth of the evangelical story, and the statements of our Lord and His Apostles, are closely bound up with the truth of prophecy as given forth by the Jewish sacred writers. Because Christ Himself, as well as His servants the Apostles, invariably appealed to Old Testament scripture, and quoted its statements as authoritative and as being the inspired oracles of God. As an example of this, observe our Lord's language in St. Mark xii. 36: "For David himself said *by the Holy Ghost*, the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." So the Apostle Peter quotes from the Jewish scriptures to the same effect in Acts i. 16: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which *the Holy Ghost* by the mouth of David spake concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." So St. Paul, in addressing the Hebrews (iii. 7), says: "Wherefore as *the Holy Ghost saith*, To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. &c." And to give but one passage in which our Lord Himself acknowledges the Divine authority of the Old Testament, read Luke xxiv. 44: "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be ful-

filled which were written *in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.*"

To say the least, our Lord and His apostles regarded the Old Testament scriptures as the word of God. They quoted from them as inspired writings, and therefore authoritative. What does St. Paul say to Timothy! Speaking of the Jewish scriptures, in which that young minister of the Gospel was taught from earliest infancy, he declares: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." To the same effect is the assertion of the Apostle Peter: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

While it is enough, therefore, to satisfy any believer in the inspiration of the New Testament that the statements of our Lord and His apostles are bound up with the truth of prophecy, we need to show to an unbeliever that the facts of prophecy have had a real fulfilment. *One* prediction would not be enough to convince a gainsayer, because a man of sagacity might possibly foretell an event, such as the downfall of a dynasty or nation; but the fulfilment of a great number of events, reaching into the distant future, and embracing in it a number of minor details which could not possibly be foreknown by any amount of human wisdom or foresight—this would constitute proof so overwhelming as fully to satisfy any reasonable mind of the truth of prophecy, and of the Divine guidance imparted to the men who did thus predict beforehand a long series of future events.

Now, if we examine carefully the Old Testament scriptures, we shall find no less than about *two hundred distinct prophecies* regarding persons or events, some of them given forth many hundreds and others thousands of years before their fulfilment. The testimony arising from the fulfilment of *prophecy* differs from the testimony of *miracles*. Miracles were intended to convince men during the age in which they were performed, and generally they were

wrought at the commencement of a new era, such as on the introduction of the Mosaic testimony, or upon the introduction of Christianity; the object of miracles being to strike conviction into the minds of unbelievers that God was with the author of those several dispensations, viz., Moses and Christ. But in regard to prophecy, the testimony borne by *it* is not confined to any one period of the Church, but was intended for all time coming; so that, as has been observed by one eminent writer, "the fulfilment of prophecy is a continuous or standing miracle;" and the evidence derivable from the continuous chain of prophecy, reaching from the fall of man to the advent of our Saviour, and from the birth of Christ onwards to the end of the world, is an ever-increasing or cumulative testimony. It ought, therefore, to produce in the mind of any reasonable person the conclusion that the Bible is not the word of man, but the word of the living God; indited by Him who alone could penetrate into the bosom of futurity. As no effect can possibly exist without a cause, so the men who framed the sacred writings must have been influenced by a power from above, else they could never have given forth predictions so long before their actual fulfilment.

Take, as one example of fulfilled prophecy, the prediction of Jacob given forth seventeen hundred years before the event took place! In those remarkable words which that early patriarch employed, he refers to Christ: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Here, the time and manner of Christ's coming into the world are predicted. And it is worthy of notice that in the year when Christ was born the legislative and judicial authority began to depart from Judah, and was soon afterwards entirely taken away by the Romans. At the period when Christ was born in Bethlehem "there went forth a decree from Cæsar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed;" and to comply with this decree, Mary, the mother of Jesus, being then great with child, travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where

(in fulfilment of Micah's prophecy, given forth five hundred years before) the child Jesus was born, who was to be the hope of Israel. Thus the kingdom of Judah was made subject to the Roman power by observing a heathen emperor's decree ! The fact that the Sceptre had now departed from Judah is further evidenced by the fact that our Lord was "crucified under Pontius Pilate,"—for the Jews were not allowed to inflict death without the consent of the Roman Governor.

Not to refer to numerous prophecies regarding the Messiah, we are now in a position to state that the prophecies regarding Babylon, Nineveh, Egypt, Tyre and Sidon, Moab and Edom, have all been fulfilled to the letter. And in several remarkable instances the inscriptions found upon the monuments lately dug up from the buried ruins of those ancient cities or places have confirmed the statements made concerning them in the Old Testament scripture. When we think of the length of time since those prophecies were given forth—some of them many hundreds of years, one of them fifteen hundred ; when we consider the minute details often given in the predictions, and their exact fulfilment ; the evidence arising from a study of prophecy amounts to a demonstration, proving that God was with the men who could thus foretell the distant future.

All prophecy concentrates, properly speaking, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ ; because it has all to do either with His spiritual kingdom on earth, or else with His mediatorial reign over the nations : "At what time I shall speak concerning a nation or kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it ; if that nation against which I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." The great burden of prophecy, therefore, relates to the person, work, character, or kingdom of the Messiah ; and the promise given at the gate of Eden concerning the Hope of Israel was gradually unfolded or developed by patriarchs and prophets, until the prediction reached its culminating

point. So clear are the marks pointed out in regard to the incarnation, life, character, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of the Messiah—as exemplified in the person of Jesus of Nazareth—that men of the mightiest intellect, such as Bacon, Newton, Jones, and many other learned men, have been fully satisfied of the truth of scripture; while others who were previously sceptics in religion (among whom may be mentioned the name of Lord Rochester, who took up the Bible in order to disprove it) have been won over to the side of truth by examining the sacred writings for themselves.

Among the numerous testimonies which may be given on this point is that of Bishop Hall, who says: “Nothing was done by Christ which was not foretold long before in prophecy; and nothing was foretold by those who prophesied concerning Christ, which did not come to pass.” Thus we see how “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;” which means that the witness borne to Christ by prophets and apostles is the great burden of prophetic scripture. All prophecy proceeds from Him, all prophecy points to Him, all prophecy concentrates and finds its fulfilment in Him. Hence, “no prophecy is of private interpretation; for it came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

We conclude by giving one other testimony to the inspiration of the Bible from one of the most profound scholars that the world has ever witnessed. It is the testimony of Sir William Jones, who, in addition to his legal acumen and his experience as a philosopher, was conversant with fourteen or fifteen different languages: “The scriptures (he says) contain, independently of their divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected from all other books composed in any age, or in any language. The two parts of which the scriptures consist are connected by a chain of compositions which bears no resemblance in form or

style to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Roman, Judean, Persian or Arabian learning. The antiquity of those compositions no man doubts, and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief that they were genuine productions, and *consequently inspired*."

In conclusion: let us feel thankful for that Word of Life which has been committed to our trust; which, while it can claim the homage of the most profound scholars, because it is a revelation from God, is yet so simple in its language that the most unlettered person can understand all that is needful for salvation. And when men who are the greatest scholars bow with profound reverence as they approach this temple of heavenly wisdom, it becomes those of humbler attainments to pause before rejecting in a spirit of incredulity what is manifestly a revelation from God. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."





## LECTURE XIII.

### EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

John vii. 17. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

**T**HE Christian religion may be proved by two distinct kinds of evidence, *external* and *internal*. The former is in its nature historical, embracing both *miracles* and *prophecy*—miracles wrought by the power of God, under circumstances which preclude all possibility of collusion or mistake; and prophecies of events foretold long before the events happened, some of them now in course of fulfilment. This kind of evidence, while sufficient to establish the truth of Christianity, may nevertheless fail to produce that full persuasion of the truth which is necessary to salvation. Hence, many have risen from the study of the miracles and prophecies of holy Scripture, intellectually convinced of the truth of Christianity, but still were unaffected by those saving truths which constitute that faith "without which it is impossible to please God." This is because miracles and prophecy are both external to the record of Divine truth; and while, by a process of reasoning, men may arrive at the conclusion that the sacred Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament are really the word of God, and therefore the only rule of faith, yet, so far as personal salvation is concerned, the Bible may be an inoperative book. The mere letter killeth; it is the Spirit that giveth life. The one is an intellectual process of the mind—the other is a spiritual awakening. The strongest proof that the Christian religion is divine, may be drawn from a

diligent prayerful study of the record itself; and this evidence can be appreciated only by those who have been illuminated by the teachings of the Divine Spirit. There is something, indeed, in the exalted sentiments of the sacred writers; their purity of style; the superior morality inculcated in Holy Scripture; and in the "undesigned coincidences" (as Archdeacon Paley has expressed it) in the four gospel narratives, that any rational man not under the influence of strong prejudice should be fully persuaded of the truth of the Christian religion. But there is a class of evidence still more confirmatory, viz.: that which arises from an examination of the sacred page—its spiritual beauty; its high-toned morality; its felt adaptation to our wants and necessities as immortal beings; and a consciousness within us of its high moral influence both upon the heart and life. These are arguments which can be understood and felt by the weak and the unlettered, as well as by the philosopher or the learned divine. Indeed, if there be any difference between the scholar or scientist, and the unlettered peasant, it rather lies against the man who prides himself upon his intellectual attainments; for we are told that "God hath hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight"!

Although there are many whose faith in Christianity is only historical, or merely traditional in its character—taking that for granted which their fathers believed before them, without a personal examination into the foundations of our faith—yet any one, however deficient in education, who has been taught by the Spirit in the things of the kingdom, believes the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and that upon the highest evidence. For when the truth of the Bible is apprehended and felt, by the power of a Divine radiance which shines on the pages of Holy Scripture, it shows itself to be the word, not of man, but of the living God, able and effectual to save the soul. One who has been born blind does not *see* the face of the

sun, though he may be fully convinced by the testimony of thousands that the sun really exists, and by *the warming influence* of that bright luminary. So, they who are blind to the perception of spiritual truth may be rationally convinced that Christ was a Divine teacher—the Son and the Sent of God. But as the blind man remains ignorant of the visible appearance of the sun in the heavens, and derives his knowledge of that luminary's existence only from the hearsay testimony of others; so they who are untaught by the Spirit remain ignorant of the truths of God's word, and fail to perceive their moral beauty or to realize the vivifying influence which Christ the Sun of Righteousness sheds upon the page of inspiration. The knowledge derived by the weakest and most unlettered child of God far excels the highest attainments of human reason. His is a faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; and it finds its practical manifestation in the corresponding fruits of life and heart, walk and conversation; for it "worketh by love, and purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world." Such an experimental acquaintance with the Divine word has the effect of calling into exercise the affections, sympathies, and emotions of our moral nature; in such a way as corresponds with the nature of the objects perceived, which are heavenly. So, under the influence of new and holy feelings engendered by a steady gaze into the glass of the Divine word, we are enabled to love, worship, reverence, and obey the Father of our spirits, and to follow in the path of His commandments.

These remarks will aid us in perceiving the true import of the passage, standing at the head of this lecture: "if any man do will his will, *he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God,*" which is thus paraphrased by the excellent Bishop Hall; "if any man, with a simple and honest heart, will yield himself over to do the will of my Father in heaven, according to the measure of what he knows, God shall encourage and bless that man with further light; so as he shall fully know whether my doctrine

be of God." The passage is not therefore to be viewed as teaching that *doctrine* is needless, and that the sinner has to concern himself only about *duty*. Doctrine, is the very substratum of all Christian attainment. Until a man be spiritually enlightened to apprehend the doctrines of salvation which are to be learned in the school of Christ,—and which doctrines, in the words of St. Paul, are according to godliness, he may never be found taking one step in advance towards the heavenly kingdom. His mind or intellect must be enlightened by divine truth, his conscience awakened to a sense of sin and its demerits, and his heart impressed by a view of moral obligation, before a sinner will put forth one single effort towards salvation. We are therefore to ply him with the overtures of reconciliation, and to lay the foundation of a new spiritual life by directing his thoughts to God and Christ, to sin and its remedy, to judgment and eternity, to heaven and hell. Like the inspired apostle of the Gentiles when preaching before the Roman procurator, Felix, we are to "reason of temperance, and righteousness, and judgment to come," so that placing before the sinner's mind that body of truth which is by an apostle declared to be "the wisdom of God, and the power of God, unto salvation, to every one that believeth," he may be constrained by the help of the Spirit to "flee from the wrath to come," and to "lay hold on the only hope set before us in the gospel."

This may be viewed as the first step in the sinner's enlightenment—the first movement in the direction of the strait and narrow path which leads to life eternal. Before this spiritual awakening, by means of the truth operating on the heart as the leaven upon the meal in preparing it as an article of food, every step taken by the sinner is towards perdition. Yea, the best deeds which he may perform out of Christ are, to use the sentiment of an old writer, only more splendid sins; or, as the Divine word has expressed it, they are all but "filthy rags in the sight of God." Hence we must know the truth, before it can

make us free. We are for this end to come to the study of this Divine message, not in a self-righteous or carping spirit, sitting in judgment upon those doctrines or truths which do not commend themselves to our finite capacity or fallen reason; but we are to come *with teachable minds and with honest hearts*; we are to come in the docility of little children sitting at the feet of Jesus to learn of Him who was meek and lowly, to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able and effectual to save the soul." If any man possess this receptive state of mind which will prompt him to study diligently the word of God and engage in His service, he will be at no loss regarding the doctrines; for he will derive such new light and wisdom from above, and obtain such new views of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, as to become fully persuaded of "the truth as it is in Jesus." Doctrines which at one time were misapprehended, or only imperfectly understood, will be now made plain; and the whole economy of salvation will be made to appear in such new glory as a revelation from God, as to evince the infinite wisdom of the Most High.

Then, the humble reception in faith of Christ's doctrine will be followed by the performance of duty, in obedience to the will of heaven. For what are the precepts of God's Word? They are nothing more nor less than *the applications of Divine truth*. Doctrine and duty run in parallel lines, like the two iron rails on which the mighty engine is propelled across the continent; and whosoever doeth the will of God from the heart, out of regard to the authority of God speaking in His Word, will experience new sensations of delight which will confirm his faith and enable him to understand more of what St. Paul terms "the deep things of the spirit." If any man is thus sincerely desirous of doing the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine—that is, he will be persuaded of its truth and its divinity—whether it be really of God.

It is thus manifest that the believer in Christ has

within him an evidence to which the unenlightened in Divine things is an utter stranger. He rests his faith not simply upon the evidence derivable from miracles and prophecy, which may only be intellectual; but he has the higher testimony, even the witness in himself, or what is called the experimental evidence, in that inward peace and satisfaction which flows from doing the will of God, and which conveys an assurance that the doctrine of Christ is a doctrine according to godliness. Hence he now delights in the law of God after the inward man; his very shortcomings but prove the spirituality of that law which is exceeding broad; while his unceasing aims after a higher degree of spirituality which constrain him to cry out with an apostle, "who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" prove to a demonstration the reality of that change which Divine grace hath wrought within his soul. And though he may be unable, owing to a lack of mental training, to answer effectually one single objection brought forward by the sceptic against the truth of Revelation, yet the unction which he has received from the Holy one abideth in him; and to every cavil of the objector intended to shake his faith in the doctrines of Christianity, he has one unfailing answer: "One thing I know; whereas I was once blind, now I see."

Thus, every true Christian, whether he be learned or otherwise, has a solid and rational foundation for his faith; and there is no other foundation upon which a saving faith can securely rest. The external evidences are sufficient of themselves to attest to an unbeliever the truth of Christianity; and they go to establish the fact that the doctrines which Christ came to reveal were not of Himself, but of God. Those evidences are useful, more especially in the case of sceptics and unbelievers, as predisposing the mind for examining the Divine record itself and for "searching the Scriptures daily," as did the ancient Bereans "to see whether these things are really so." But we only repeat what the Scriptures

themselves affirm—that we need to be “taught of the Spirit” ere we shall fully apprehend the truths revealed. Hence St. Paul declares: “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of the Spirit. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” As there were many who came within hearing of the blessed Saviour’s voice while He spake on earth as never man spake, but who profited not by the gracious words that proceeded from His lips, so there are multitudes in professedly Christian lands who—though fully convinced that Christianity is a Divine religion, both from the miracles wrought, and the prophecies fulfilled, and the glorious results attending the existence of a Church for nearly two thousand years—are still under the influence of this present evil world. Hence theirs is only a *traditional* or *historical* faith, which exerts no practical influence upon the heart and life; and while it is a blessed privilege to live in an age when gospel light is shining clearly around us, it will but increase the measure of our condemnation if our faith be only *traditional*, and not personal or *experimental*. This latter is the only true foundation to rest our faith for eternity, for it is not so much a resting upon an outward system, however beneficent, as it is a humble reception of the Person of Christ Jesus who is “the way, the truth, and the life,” and “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;” for “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

All who have thus entered the school of the Great Teacher do not attain to the same degree of faith, or experience the same spiritual discoveries of divine things.

"taught of the truths revealed. ealed them unto all things, yea, man knoweth an which is in h no man, but d not the spirit God; that we n to us of God. words which Holy Ghost spiritual." As of the blessed as never man us words that itudes in pro- ally convinced oth from the lled, and the a Church for e influence of a traditional fluence upon l privilege to early around ndemnation rsonal or ex- lation to rest. resting upon is a humble s "the way, hid all the Him dwell- the Great of faith, or vine things.

Some have but dim and imperfect views of gospel truth, and their faith is weak in proportion. Others may be favoured with more glorious discoveries of gospel truth, but like the Apostle of the Gentiles, they may be visited by some thorn in the flesh; some messenger of Satan is allowed to buffet them, "lest they should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelation." And as spiritual pride is apt to get possession of the soul during periods of high ecstatic joy, it is expedient that the Most High should withdraw His sensible comforts for a time from the soul of the believer, leaving it to feel its own weakness and imperfection. In all these dealings with the renewed soul, our Heavenly Father is but giving fresh displays of His power and presence as a Saviour—causing man to lie low in the dust of humiliation, taking unto Himself all the glory of our redemption, and by a process of discipline fitting the soul for closer fellowship with God, and thus making us "meet to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance with the saints in light."

#### MORAL LESSONS.

1. Two lessons of practical import may be learned from the consideration of this subject; (1) *The necessity of a true and living faith.* Human learning is not required to save us, else thousands of gospel hearers and of humble Christians having "a good hope through grace" would miss of salvation. Neither will the highest stretch of intellectual wisdom and culture insure for us a seat in the heavenly kingdom; "for by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." A mere historical or traditional faith, which is productive of no radical change in the heart and life, cannot in the nature of things reveal to us the personal glory of Christ as our Saviour God. But where there is a sincere faith wrought in our souls by the Divine Spirit, it will be accompanied by a humble disposition to do our Father's will, to conform to the receipts of the Divine

Law, and to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

2. We learn also *the need of divine illumination*, not only for entering the School of Christ at first, but for our continued progressive advancement in the knowledge of Divine things; for "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." If there be one lesson more than another taught us by the word and providence of God, and the history of His Church—in regard to our knowledge of the Almighty—it is, that human wisdom and strength are utterly powerless to produce one spiritual idea. When we see such men as Strauss, and Renan, and Colenso, employing their highly cultivated minds in trying to overturn the foundation of Christian faith, and giving to us another gospel—the gospel of humanity, or the gospel of natural science—how little does it speak for merely human wisdom! The wise men of past ages—Socrates, Plato, Confucius, or Zoroaster—in their attempts to construct codes of morality without a written revelation from heaven, have only proved that "the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men." For "after that in the wisdom of God the world by (its) wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And as the Almighty by the power and grace of His Holy Spirit must begin the work of illumination, and thus impart the first ray of spiritual light and life—even as He did at the original creation of matter, when Jehovah said "Let there be light, and there was light"—so the same Omnipotent Spirit is required to carry on the work of enlightenment and of progressive sanctification in the already renewed soul, until He perfects that which concerneth us, and maketh us meet for His heavenly kingdom. This entire dependence of the soul on God for every step in the progress of redemption is beautifully described by the evangelical prophet: "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be

weary ; and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ; and they shall walk and not faint."—Amen.





## LECTURE XIV.

### THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF CREATION CONFIRMED BY GEOLOGY.

Gen. i. 1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Heb. xi. 3: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

**I**T is proposed in the present lecture to give a sketch of Creation, and of *the origin* of all things terrestrial, so far as we can gather our information from *two* sources—*i. e.*, from the book of Revelation, and from the book of Nature. These are not necessarily opposed to one another, or contradictory; and if the Bible be the inspired word of God, then He who is its Author cannot possibly give a different account of Creation than what is told us in another way on the face of Nature.

We shall take for granted—what can be consistently accounted for in no other way—that the Author of Nature and the Creator of Man has actually made known to His creatures by revelation some general facts regarding *the origin of all things terrestrial*. For the things which happened ages ago, and which have been recorded by Moses in the opening chapter of the Bible, could not have been witnessed by any human eye. Man could never, without a Divine revelation, have told us as a matter of history what he had never witnessed, and what occurred ages before he was born. The narrative of Creation given by Moses, and of the successive changes which passed over our earth up to the time of man's appearance,—is neither (properly speaking) a chapter of history nor a piece of poetry. To make it history, the events recorded

must have passed before some human eye; but this is not pretended. And to suppose it to be a mere piece of poetry is contrary to what appears on the face of the narrative itself. The structure of the opening chapter of Genesis is rather *historical* than *poetical*; it is expressed in a terse, comprehensive style of language, fitted to be kept in memory and handed down traditionally from generation to generation, until such time as Moses reduced it to a permanent form and committed it as a historic legacy to the Israelites, and through them to all the true worshippers of God in after ages.

From recent discoveries of ancient records, consisting of Chaldean inscriptions written on tablets before the time of Abraham, we have substantially the same account of Creation, and of the deluge, and other leading facts peculiar to the Antediluvian age, as we have in the Hebrew Scriptures. Moses, in all likelihood, got his information from ancient records which Abraham had left among the Hebrew people; and those records must have been received by Abraham himself (who was called out from among the idolatrous nations to establish a pure religion in the world) from documents or monuments and other pre-existing materials—partly traditional and partly written—in Chaldean, Assyrian and Egyptian characters—several of which have been lately discovered in the ruins of ancient cities and translated by competent scholars. That Moses had access to those early records, besides the traditional information handed down through only a few generations, does not militate against the fact of inspiration. For the true idea of inspiration is, that the sacred writers were moved by a Divine impulse to record either facts within their own knowledge or facts communicated to them by others, or in the higher sense what could only be revealed to them directly by the Divine Being. All this was done in such a manner that the writers were preserved from error, and thus became the instruments of conveying knowledge to the Church and to the world which could not otherwise have been known.

Whoever may have been the individual to whom were communicated the facts recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, the better received opinion now is that the substance of that narrative was given in a vision somewhat like a panorama, in which a series of pictures representing the different stages of Creation passed before the mind of the seer or prophet. Enoch, perhaps, was the highly favoured person: it may have been Adam himself. Enoch was only the seventh from Adam; Noah was the tenth; then came the patriarchs; soon afterwards there appeared Moses, the author of Genesis. We know from other parts of Scripture that this was the method of communicating prophecy, viz.: by causing a vision of future events to pass before the mind. And if the Divine Being adopted this method of revealing to His servants the prophets what was in the bosom of futurity—such as that which passed before the mind of Daniel in regard to the four great monarchies, or that of the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos in regard to the future of Christ's Church—there is no impropriety in supposing that an account of Creation, such as we have in Genesis, was presented to the mind of some ancient patriarch—whether Adam, or Enoch, or Moses—and was among the earliest communications from God to His rational creatures.

No serious doubt will be entertained by the Christian that the object of making this communication was to preserve the true knowledge of God amid surrounding idolatry, and to satisfy the yearnings of our moral and intellectual nature about *the origin of things visible*, and the reality of an unseen God, by tracing all nature to the direct intervention of a great First Cause. And though the main object of the Bible was not to instruct the Israelites or the early patriarchs in the knowledge of science, but to reveal to man the sad account of the Fall, and the wonderful plan of salvation,—yet some general account of the earth's *genesis*, and of the leading changes it underwent preparatory to the arrival of man, seemed necessary to gratify our desire for knowledge; while it

impressed upon the human race from earliest times an ineffaceable idea of a Supreme Being, who is at once the Author of our existence and the Creator of that wondrous temple in which we were placed to worship for a time!

The more that we study the first chapter of Genesis, the more profound must be our admiration of the grandeur and simplicity of its announcements. It brings before us both the seen and the unseen worlds—God the Creator, and man originally formed in the Divine image! It leads us back to that shadowy period in the unknown past when *man was not*, and *this earth was not*—even to that period when in the infancy of time the Great Eternal saw fit to manifest His power, wisdom and glory by the creation of elemental matter, and by the formation of those starry spheres (including our earth) which have ever since been sweeping the circuit of the universe. Hence it is said: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Look for a moment at this sublime announcement from the oracle of Heaven. Consider man in the earlier ages, without books, without a written revelation, conscious of guilt by reason of the Fall, groping after the true Light "if haply he might find it," surrounded by idolatry, and himself too prone to worship the *visible* rather than the *Invisible*; and, after vainly searching among the idols of Ashtaroth and Belus to obtain that response for which our immortal nature craves, he stumbles over this oracle from heaven which opens with the thrilling announcement: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Does he wonder over the problem of how this universe came into being? The mystery is solved by that simple announcement, that the Creator of man was the Architect of the universe. Is he concerned to know the time and order of creation, and something about the history of that world which we now inhabit? His desire is so far gratified by the narrative of Genesis, that now "by faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Is he perplexed

by a sense of guilt, by the prevalence of sin in the world, and by a self-consciousness within him of *an hereafter* for which the light of nature affords no solid ground of hope in the future? Then this revelation from God—even the small portion of it which was communicated to the earliest patriarchs and antediluvians—gave to those who were so highly favoured a knowledge both of God and man, of nature and its mysteries, of the fall from a state of primitive innocence, and the glorious promise of a Redeemer and the hope of salvation;—such communications from the oracle of Heaven placed the earliest worshippers of the true God far above the surrounding idolatrous nations, and were well fitted to elevate the moral character of all who should come within their reach.

Confining our remarks, however, to the narrative of creation—as that which closely concerned MAN, the inhabitant of this earth—let us see in the light of modern science, and of recent explorations into the bowels of the earth, how much is contained in the Mosaic narrative. And, first of all, it is worthy of remark that *the general order of creation* is substantially the same in the book of Genesis as in the rocks which form the crust of our earth! *Wherever, or however,* Moses got his information and the materials for writing this first book of Scripture—and, according to Archbishop Usher, Moses wrote the book of Genesis about 3500 years ago—the same order of nature is recorded, and the same succession of plants and animals, are given (though not so fully) as we have found within the last fifty years by the latest discoveries of geology. Science, however, is only in its infancy; and we may well believe there are depths in the Mosaic account of creation which from our past experience have not yet been fully sounded. And if there should be still *apparent* contradictions, we can afford to wait for further light; for we have ground to justify us in the belief that the inspired testimony of Moses, being the word of God Himself, can never be overturned by any scientific investigations on the part of men. New discoveries for a time awakened

alarm in the breast of Christians—the first announcements of geology gave a rude shock to long established opinions, founded on erroneous interpretations of Scripture—but more patient study and fuller investigation and a sounder exegesis of God's holy word have led us to conclude that the Bible is always ahead of natural science; and that under a proper interpretation of the original Hebrew, and a fair deduction of scientific facts, no discovery of modern science has ever militated against the truth of Revelation.

At one time it was thought (*e. g.*) that the Bible was in error, because it appeared to make this earth only six days older than the first created human being; whereas geology reveals that the earth must have been in existence millions of years before. Some have gone so far as to conclude with Sir Wm. Thomson that from seventy to a hundred millions of years must have elapsed between the original formation of matter and the modern period! But the Bible does not fix the antiquity of the globe; although it asserts the great age of this earth, in such expressions as "the everlasting hills," and "before the mountains were brought forth, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." And whether we regard the six "days" of Genesis as long or short—literal days of twenty-four hours each, or lengthened periods of time—æons or ages,—according to the passage that "a thousand years are with the Lord as one day;"—yet the language of Moses testifying that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" allows of all the time and space which the most lengthened periods of scientific men demand for all the changes to have occurred between the first inception of creative energy and the era of man, who appeared at the close of the sixth day.

We have thus far been able to reconcile the facts of geologic science with the Bible narrative of creation, as to conclude that they are at one in regard to *man's antiquity*—that they are not at all at variance in respect to the *antiquity of the earth* itself; and that the *order of*

*creation*, so far as we can understand both records, is precisely the same in the book of Revelation as in the book of Nature. That is to say:—1st. No discovery in geology makes man older than the same period in which the last of the four-footed land animals were formed, viz.: at the close of the sixth creative day, corresponding to what are called the latest Tertiary deposits; 2ndly. That there is abundant room, with a free rendering of Scripture, to allow of many ages to have elapsed between the original creation of matter and the modern or human period; and 3rdly. That so far (at least) as the *third*, *fifth*, and *sixth* creative days are concerned—in which the vegetable kingdom, the marine animals, and the terrestrial quadrupeds were successively introduced—(for in regard to the *fourth* creative day no reference is made in Genesis to the kind of plants or animals that prevailed during that intervening period, and the ellipsis can only be supplied by the discoveries of geology); there is nevertheless a perfect harmony as to *the order of creation*, between Genesis and geology! When we come to fill up by the aid of modern scientific discovery what is *not* recorded in the Mosaic narrative of creation—and to supply the missing links, so to speak—there is really nothing in the statements of Genesis to militate against but rather to confirm the findings of geology. We are now prepared to assert without fear of contradiction, that there is nothing in the facts of modern science that is fitted to unsettle the faith of Christians, or to overturn the foundations of the righteous.

With these explanations—so needful to put the matter in a proper light—let us examine the testimony of Revelation, and then place in parallel columns the evidence drawn from a study of the Earth and its rocky deposits. In so brief a space, we can do the subject but scanty justice. The Scripture narrative contained in the first chapter of Genesis divides itself into (1) a beginning; followed (2) by a chaos; and then (3) into *seven* distinct periods of time, including *six* periods of creative energy and *one*

period of cessation or rest from creative work. The opening verse of inspiration—though brief and compendious, and merely to be viewed as an introduction to all that follows—contains two very important announcements, viz.: 1st, That the earth had a beginning, and therefore was not eternal, according to the notion of certain ancient philosophers; and, 2ndly, That the Almighty was its Creator, the word for Deity being in the plural (Elohim), thus early hinting at the doctrine of the Trinity which was more fully revealed as the ages rolled on.

Even were it true, according to the theory advocated by some few scientific men, that "in the beginning" there was nothing but "atoms"—from which all things have been evolved or developed through a long process of ages; yet the book of Genesis informs us (what Nature is entirely silent upon) that those atoms were created. For we are told by the inspired writer that "the Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters." Some modern scientists who refuse to recognise the authority of inspiration have been forced to admit that there must have been "a few first simple forms" from which all subsequent life was evolved. This, at least, is Professor Darwin's view. The existence, however, of "atoms" in a past infinity does not account for the origin of life. No arrangement of atoms or dead matter can produce either animal or vegetable life. Professor Huxley is obliged to admit that "pre-existing living matter is essential to the development of life." Even Tyndall, whose materialism is the most pronounced of all the sceptics of the present day, makes the following striking admission: "The whole process of evolution is the manifestation of a Power absolutely inscrutable to the intellect of man. As little in our day, as in the time of Job, can man by searching find out what this Power is!"

Amid all this uncertainty about *the origin of life*, how assuring are the opening words of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." *After that beginning*, when the visible universe was first created—

and *after* the lapse of ages, probably—this earth fell into a state of chaos. “Darkness was upon the face of the deep;” and the earth was during that period “shapeless and empty.” Life did not, and could not, exist in its then dismantled condition. The interior of the earth was a molten mass of fiery liquid—which, coming into contact with the waters above and around it, caused a period of steam and thick darkness; “thick darkness brooded o’er the deep.” By and bye, after the lapse of ages—for the Almighty, with whom “a thousand years are as one day,” works slowly in the evolution of His purposes—the Omnipotent Spirit “*moved* upon the face of the waters;” from which statement we infer that this was the commencement of life upon our planet. The oldest sedimentary rocks, such as are thickly strewed over Canada, called the Laurentian rocks, give evidence of primitive animals which were low in the scale of creation, without eyes, and without the sense of hearing—created during a period of darkness, and while this globe was enveloped by an universal ocean. At length light appeared, and afterwards an atmosphere was formed—both of which processes must have taken a lengthened period—and in the next succeeding strata appear animals of a higher type, which (notwithstanding the silence of Scripture on that point) entirely accords with the earth’s condition according to the Mosaic narrative. The trilobites appear suddenly in the geological record. The eye of those animals is fully developed, and there is the utter absence of their having had any predecessors.

Still later in the history of our planet the dry land rose above the surface of the primeval ocean; which confirms the truth of Genesis (9th to 12th verses inclusive) in bringing into view *the vegetable kingdom*, when there was an enormous growth of trees, and herbs, and succulent plants of such a character as indicates a long period of shade, heat and moisture prevailing over the earth. Other facts peculiar to the trees and herbage of that period, which we discover on examining the coal measures, lead

us to a conclusion which harmonizes with the first chapter of Genesis, viz.: that the sun and other planetary bodies, though created from the beginning, did not fulfil their office in relation to our earth by shining directly upon its surface, owing to the intervening cloud of steam and comparative darkness which prevailed during the first, second and third creative days. Not until the *fourth day* did the lights of heaven perform their office in relation to our planet, by shining through an unclouded atmosphere.

Whatever changes occurred in the plants or animals during the fourth creative day, after the luminaries of heaven were made to appear—and geology alone comes to our help here, in telling us what those changes were—it is enough to know that they are not at all contradicted by the Mosaic narrative, but rather dove-tail with it. And such a condition of things as geology reveals in regard to that fourth creative period is implied by the statements of Moses. Geology, however, fills up the gap—supplies the missing link; while Scripture affirms a condition of things without which, humanly speaking, the plants and trees and herbage of that period could not have been developed. Before that, they were tall, rank, and spindly—characteristic of a period of shade, heat, and moisture—whereas the forest trees of the Permian age, which would correspond to the fourth creative day of Genesis, present a cylindrical appearance, with season rings, and ligneous tissue, all corroborative of the inspired narrative which affirms that the luminaries of heaven shone upon our earth, and thus supplied the caloric and the actinism necessary to the full development of the vegetable kingdom.

The fifth day of creation brings before us huge marine animals of *reptilian type*, which record of Moses finds its exact counterpart in the next higher formation of rock; where we may take occasion to observe that, while our English translators have unconsciously fallen into a mistake, by calling the marine animals of that period “whales,” the sacred writer in the original made no such

mistake. The word in Hebrew is *tanninim*, meaning "great sea monsters" of the reptilian species, such as are found in the fossil remains of the oolitic and kindred formations.

And now we come to the last day's work of creation. According to the testimony of Genesis, the earth then produced what are called *land animals*, of a type and species altogether diverse from their predecessors and unknown to any previous age of the world. According to a more scientific rendering of the language of the Hebrew prophet, we have three species of animal now introduced—preparatory to the era of man—viz., herbivorous, carnivorous, and smaller mammalia. These could not in the nature of things have been developed out of previously existing species, as has been shown by Prof. Owen, Dana, Agassiz, and other eminent physiologists—but were the result of a special creation. Here again the facts of science go to corroborate the testimony of an old book written nearly 4,000 years ago, which, because of its high moral claims and religious teaching, has come to be discarded by the advocates of "science falsely so called." We have thus reached the era corresponding to what geologists have called the Tertiary formation.

A pause here occurs in the Mosaic narrative; and a solemn council is held in heaven, as to the formation of an animal in which reason and the higher intelligence of sentient beings is to hold undisputed sway. The Trinity of the Godhead holds a solemn deliberation as to the creation of MAN—who was to reflect the Divine image, and who, as a being possessed of higher powers than mere brute force, could comprehend something of God's plan and purpose in creation,—and be a co-worker with the Author of our being in the development of that greater and more glorious plan which was to find its climax in the incarnation of Christ, and in the final consummation of that "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The sacred historian does not tell us that man was developed or evolved through a long process of

ages from an inferior race of animals, by what some have been pleased to term "evolution" and "the law of natural selection"—thus shutting out from our minds all idea of a personal God, who is the Author of our being, and who shall be the Judge of the world. But the simple unvarnished statement of Moses is that "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Man was made for a higher destiny than the brutes that perish; his erect posture, and the size of his cranium being double that of the highest specimens of the man-like ape, as well as man's inner consciousness, all go to establish the superiority of the human race over the lower animals. And He, who takes delight in all the exhibitions of His wisdom, power, and glory, could not but contemplate with satisfaction a race of beings on this earth who should reflect, both in time and eternity, those moral excellences of character which have allied man to the elect angels, yea even to God himself. If "the morning stars sang together and the sons of God (meaning the angels) shouted aloud for joy," when this earth emerged from the bosom of the deep, and when the corner stone of the universe was laid, how much more joyful would their song of praise be, when they witnessed the creation of the first human pair as they stood "godlike erect" in their primeval innocence, reflecting the intelligent image and moral likeness of the Uncreated One!

The concluding declaration of the inspired writer that: "God saw everything which he had made, and behold, it was very good"—deserves more than a passing observation. All things were very good, because they displayed the skill and energy of that Being who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," and who takes delight in all the works of His hand. And if it be asked, what possible good can we see in the numerous plants and animals that existed upon the earth for ages before man appeared? We reply, it is not for us to comprehend fully all the ways of God. We see but a small part of His workings. Who can understand "the hidings of His

power?" As well might we reason against the utility of many objects in nature, for which we can give no account of the end to be served thereby. Why, for example, does the Creator lavish so much skill and beauty in the flowers that grow in the lonely desert untrodden by the foot of man? Why does He fill the depths of ocean with multitudes of marine animals that serve no apparent useful end to man, and with myriads of algæ of the most complicated and delicate texture which lie hidden from human view?

" Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

And yet He who is the all-wise God doeth all things well. It would seem that He who made the plants and animals of past ages had purposely treasured them up in His rocky storehouse in the form of fossil remains, that man in this modern period of the world discovering the buried history of past ages found written upon the rocks, might look back to the creative skill and energy displayed in those ancient forms of life, as illustrated in a *Divine plan which spanned the ages*: and which fossil remains now purposely speak to us from their stony sepulchres as an additional witness to corroborate the truth of Inspiration! One fact alone is worthy of serious consideration, as illustrative of the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, and as showing the truth of Holy Scripture that "God made all things very good." Take, for example, the vegetable kingdom which came into existence on the third creative day, in such great variety and in such marvellous abundance upon the earth. Although man was not present to behold the beauty of those vegetable forms, yet other beings in the universe—the angels of Heaven, if not the inhabitants of other worlds—could admire the handiwork of the great Architect! And when we consider that the enormous masses of vegetable matter which appeared during the third creative day, compared with which all the forests of America are but a drop in the

bucket,—when we reflect that those masses of vegetable deposit stored up in the bowels of the earth for ages, and by the exclusion of the sun's rays and the atmosphere were converted into carbon or coal for our use and comfort in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, we may truly say, "all things were made very good!"

In conclusion, it is matter for eternal gratitude that the sad effects of man's fall from primeval purity have been remedied by the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of God's eternal Son; and that "the dynasty of the future is to have glorified man for its inhabitant." In the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, who occupies the point of union which brings together once more the Creator and the creature—through the mystery of the Incarnation and the Atonement—we are "to recognise the adorable monarch of all the future," as bearing rule in that coming dispensation when there shall be "a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." For, in the words of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles—words, the full meaning of which the Church of Christ is only now beginning feebly to comprehend: "*Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen.*"

The glorious prospect which the redeemed family of man has before it in the distant future is thus beautifully expressed by one of our own British poets:—

"Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem, rise  
Exalt thy towering head and lift thine eyes!  
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;  
See future sons and daughters yet unborn  
In crowding ranks on every side arise,  
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!

\* \* \*

See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,  
And break upon thee in a flood of day!

\* \* \*

\* \* "The Light Himself shall shine  
Reveal'd, and God's eternal day be thine;  
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,  
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;  
But fix'd His word, His saving power remains;  
*Thy realm forever lasts, thy own MESSIAH reigns.*"



## LECTURE XV.

### THE EVOLUTION THEORY.

Gen. i. 27 : " So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him ; male and female created He them."

Mark x. 6 : " But from the beginning of the Creation God made them male and female."

ONE of the most fertile topics of discussion bearing upon religion at the present day, is what is called the Evolution Theory. It may be thus explained: That, so far from the Mosaic narrative of creation in which our forefathers always believed, being true and reliable, man was not created by an immediate act of divine energy—but that the whole human race has been evolved through a long process of ages from lower forms of creation; and that by the law of natural selection, and a lengthened process of development extending through past ages, the animal which Moses asserts to have been created originally in the image of God, sprang from protoplasm or elemental germs, through the intermediate stages of the man-like ape, ascidian, mollusc, monad, fire-mist, electricity, star-dust, or other molecu<sup>l</sup><sub>æ</sub> forces !

Not only is there no direct or positive proof of such a theory ; but there are many fatal objections to the doctrine of Evolution, as a means of accounting for the introduction and succession of vegetable or animal life. The subject possesses the highest interest to students of theology, and indeed to all who profess to believe in the testimony of inspiration, in so far as it bears more or less directly upon the evidences of Christianity. We do not say that the Creator could not or might not have pro-

ceeded by the method of evolution, in bringing into existence the different forms or types of vegetable and animal life. But the Scriptural account of the creation is directly opposed to such a method of procedure; and the facts of science themselves all look in another direction. Men of eminent scientific authority, who have no interests to serve beyond those of truth, hesitate to accept the teachings or conjectures of those who advocate the theory of Evolution. Several fatal objections to this theory, as given by Dawson, may be thus summarized:—

1. The existence of protoplasmic matter is but the product of previously living organisms, and does not account for the origin of life.

2. All plants and animals present vital properties not to be found in dead albuminous matter. The simplest organic forms can be produced only from germs possessing inherently a similar structure to themselves.

3. No new species of animal or plant has ever descended or originated from previously existing forms. Species are "unchangeable units."

4. Scientific investigation has shown that while "the general history of animal life in time bears a certain resemblance to the development of the individual animal life from the embryo," it is a mere relation of analogy in which the two kinds of series are altogether different.

5. During the lapse of geological ages, it is found that animals and groups of animals always end without any link of connection with previous forms. The introduction of the various animal types must have been abrupt, and in circumstances which wholly preclude the theory of Evolution. Dawson concludes his summary with this remark: "It is mere folly and presumption to affirm that modern science supports the doctrine of Evolution."

That the process of creation was gradual or progressive is abundantly verified by the discoveries of science; but the *breaks* in the geological record, as between successive types in creation, wholly disprove the modern theory of a development of new types or species of plant.

or animal from previously existing species. In regard to the *sixth creative day*, at the close of which man appeared upon the stage of being, science reveals that a succession of animals (some of them now quite extinct) appeared upon the earth long previous to the advent of man. Dawson and Dana both assert that the land quadrupeds of the sixth day did not all come forth together. Herbivorous animals with a few small carnivora first occupy the scene. These disappear, and are followed by others which in turn possess the earth in vast numbers, and of enormous magnitude. As the Mammalian period draws to a close, the ancient types both of herbivorous and carnivorous animals pass away, excepting only those that are useful to man. Then, suddenly, and (as Scripture asserts) by a special act of creative energy—without any intermediate links in the chain, connecting the human family with previously existing species—the monarch of this lower world was ushered into being, reflecting the moral image of his Creator. The period fixed in the counsels of the Almighty for this last crowning act of creation was towards the close of the sixth day, at the dawn of the alluvial deposits, and (as geology would seem to indicate) after the glacial period had passed away, during which the earth was being prepared for the advent of man. At the auspicious moment, there appeared upon the stage of creation an animal standing nobly erect—poised midway between earth and heaven, and nicely balanced on a few inches of ground—with eyes looking forward and upward, as if to take an intelligent commanding view of the wide domain over which the Creator had given him a delegated authority—differing in form from any of the creatures that preceded him—and possessing a moral and intellectual nature which (to use the language of an eminent writer) separated him from the lower animals by “an impassable gulf.” The gift of speech itself would indicate a superiority of origin to that of the lower animals—and speech is but the vehicle of thought and emotion. Hence, we are told that

MAN was now created the shadow and similitude of Deity (Hebrew), and reflected (so far as moral and intellectual qualities are concerned) the image of his Maker! And soon after—we know not how soon—there stood lovingly by his side *woman*, to be a “help-meet” for him; taken neither from the head nor feet of man, but from his side, thereby indicating that woman was neither to rule over the man, nor to be trodden under his feet, but to be a mutual sharer with her companion in all his joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, his trials here and his immortality hereafter. Milton, in his “Paradise Lost,” thus describes the first human pair:—

“Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall—  
Godlike erect, with native honour clad  
In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all;  
And worthy seem'd; for in their looks divine  
The image of their glorious maker shone.

\* \* \* \*

“For contemplation he, and valour formed,  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;  
He for God only, and she for God in him.  
Adam, the goodliest man of men since born  
His sons; the fairest of her daughters, Eve.”

The degradation resulting from a savage state—on which some modern writers delight to dwell as attaching to our primitive ancestors—began when our first parents lost communion with God, and through a sense of conscious guilt hid themselves among the trees of the garden, and vainly sought to cover their nakedness by sewing together fig-leaves for aprons. We have no reason for doubting the statement of inspiration that the first created human being was possessed of high moral and intellectual powers, by virtue of which He enjoyed communion with his Maker and took delight in all the works of the Almighty. He cultivated the ground, gave names to the various animals as they came before him, exercised the gift of speech which (as Archbishop Magee infers) was of divine origin, and in course of time enjoyed the social fellowship of one whom he called *woman*, because taken out of the loins of man. The Bible knows of but one species of man—for

it is not said, as it is in regard to the various species of lower animals, that men were created "each after his kind." But the simple record is:—"God created man, male and female; in the image of God created He them." In the amplification of the story of man's creation, given in the second chapter of Genesis, but one primitive pair is introduced to our notice—from which all the subsequent races of man have descended. We have it upon the authority of an inspired Apostle, while addressing a highly cultivated audience in the learned city of Athens, that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." The unity of the human race is thus not only plainly asserted in Holy Scripture; but, besides that, the separate nationalities and types of man are not incompatible with the postulate of a first human pair; and the diversity of race may be accounted for by natural causes, and climatic influences, and other conditions of life. The gift of speech, which distinguishes man from the lower animals, is the common property of *all* races of men; and this of itself would indicate strongly an identity of origin. Both on *ethnological* and *philological* grounds, it has been pretty clearly demonstrated by eminent scholars and antiquarians that the unity of the human race, as taught by inspiration; is confirmed by modern science and by archæological discovery. For example, it has been shewn—quite independently of Bible history—that the tenth chapter of the book of Genesis "is undoubtedly *the most authentic record we possess* in the department of ethnology;" that all the inhabitants of the earth soon after the flood spoke but one common language, akin to Sanscrit or Chaldee; and further, that the plain of Shinar is the common centre from which the whole human family radiated, after the confusion of tongues at Babel, to the other continents of the globe. While *the unity* of the human race is thus established to a very high degree of probability, the doctrine of *man's antiquity* (as set forth in the Mosaic

narrative) has been remarkably confirmed by the teachings of geology. In regard to the modern doctrine of evolution, we may be permitted to quote the following striking language from an eminent authority in geological science: "If we embrace the doctrine of the continuous variation of all organic forms from the lowest to the highest, including man as the last link in the chain of being, there must have been a transition from the instinct of the brute to the noble mind of man. And in that case, *where are the missing links*, and at what point of his progressive improvement did man acquire the spiritual part of his being, and become endowed with the awful attribute of immortality?" Among the many eminent authorities in support of the *unity* and *antiquity* of the human race, may be mentioned the following:—Baron Cuvier, Prof. Dana, Agassiz, Sir Charles Lyell, Prof. Hitchcock, Hugh Miller, Prof. Owen, The Duke of Argyll, Dr. Dawson, and a host of distinguished *savans* who on purely scientific grounds have felt themselves shut up to conclusions which go to confirm the sacred narrative.

Finally—the modern theory of evolution is essentially materialistic and atheistic. It ignores the being of a personal God—imparting life, creating matter, producing organisms, and presiding over the Universe. As Joseph Cook brings out in his remarkable lectures on Bioplasm, the unity of our consciousness is inconsistent with the mechanical theory of life—in other words, with the doctrine of evolution. Notwithstanding that the tissues of our body are continually changing, so that the body of to-day is no longer the body of seven years or perhaps three years ago, yet my personal identity is the same. I am conscious that I am myself, and not another. And as one of the most eminent Professors in Physiology has declared: "It is for the physiologist to assert and uphold the doctrine of the oneness, the accountability, and *the immortality of the soul*; and the great truth that, *as there is but one God in the universe, so there is but one spirit in man.*" The materialistic philosophy has been

well nigh abandoned in Germany, where it originated. Is it reserved for orthodox England and shrewd enterprising America to be hoodwinked by such crude speculations, and to perpetuate in their current literature a baseless philosophy? To get rid of creative intervention modern evolutionists fall into the absurdity of believing in blind chance as the cause of all the order we see in the world around us. Certainly, the practical tendency of modern scientific teaching—which would relegate all the phenomena of nature, and all the order and harmony which prevail in the natural world, to the operation of insensate physical laws—is to shut out from men's minds the idea of God, and therefore to loosen the moral restraints of religion upon the conscience. It tends to sap the foundations of our faith as Christians; For if there be no God, then the Bible is a false witness. Even the foundation of all natural religion is thus destroyed, and mankind are handed over to the cold negations of a philosophy which would make us children without a Father, to be laid in the grave without the hope of a resurrection to eternal life. But "death does not end all!" There is a life beyond the grave. Even Socrates could say: "When I am gone, do not say you are going to burn me. Do not call this poor body Socrates; say that you are burning my body only." Yes! man has a soul. That soul is both immaterial and immortal. It will never cease to exist. And when the human body shall be laid in the tomb, the soul will have passed from the outer court of the temple into the Holy of Holies—there to offer the continual incense of praise to the Most High "in whom we all live, and move, and have our being;" and in whose immediate presence the soul unclogged by imperfection and sin shall then "see eye to eye," and "know even as we are now known." As Carlyle has said: "The essence of our being is a breath of heaven. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body. We are the miracle of miracles. It is God's creation—it is the Almighty God's!" Our trust and hope

for immortality is thus expressed by Britain's poet-laureate :—

" That nothing walks with aimless feet,  
That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete.  
That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivl'd in a fruitless fire."

The variations of Evolutionists in their theory are fatal to the doctrine. Many of their admissions, also, virtually yield the palm to those on the Theistic side of creation. While the common-sense view taken by non-scientific men, and by a discriminating Christian public who have come to learn and love their Bibles, justify us in the belief that—like other novelties—this modern theory, which, from its imperious assumption of great learning, has dazzled the eyes of ordinary beholders to the reality of true science and of Biblical history, will find its grave before the advent of another century. Christians need not fear the issue, if we may judge from the past ; and we cannot do better than listen to the thoughtful utterances of an eminent literary man, Thomas Carlyle, who has lately passed into the unseen world :—

" So-called literary and scientific classes in England now proudly give themselves to protoplasm origin of species, and the like, to prove that God did not build the universe. Ah ! it is a sad and terrible thing to see a generation of men and women professing to be cultivated, looking around in a purblind fashion, and finding no God in the universe ! The older I grow—and I now stand upon the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the sentence in the catechism taught me in my youth, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes : ' What is the chief end of man ? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.' No Gospel of dirt, teaching that men have descended from frogs through monkeys, can ever set that aside."



Nature, reason, conscience, the Bible—all proclaim that God is near to those who would “feel after Him, if haply they might find Him.” His thoughts are photographed in the material universe, even as they are indelibly impressed on the inner universe of man’s soul. And science, when properly understood, will be the means of our holding higher communion with the highest thoughts of Him who is the Father of mankind. In the words of an American poet :—

“ God of our fathers, Thou who wast,  
Art, and shalt be, when the eye-wise who flout  
Thy secret presence shall be lost  
In the great light that dazzles them to doubt,  
We, who believe Life’s bases rest  
Beyond the probe of chemic test,  
Still, like our fathers, feel Thee near ! ”—Amen.

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