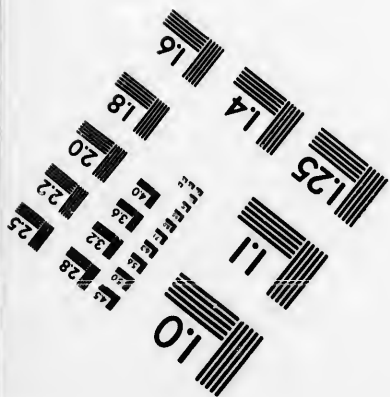
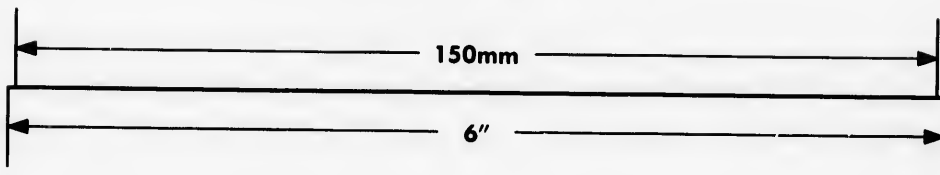
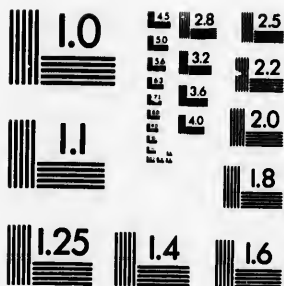
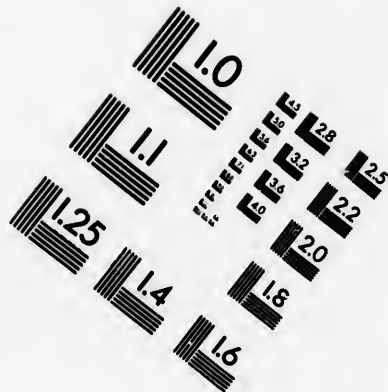
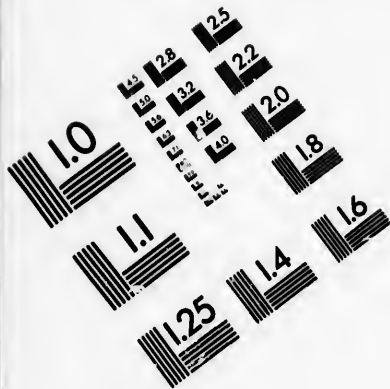


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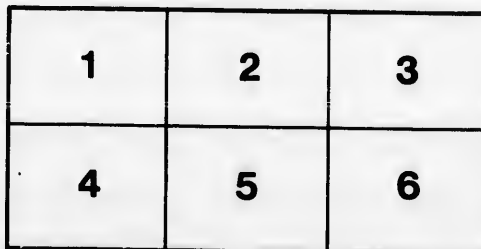
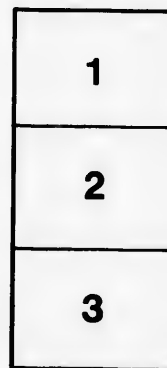
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A YOUNG MAN'S PERILS

AND

BIBLE DIFFICULTIES.

CONTAINING

*A YOUNG MAN'S SAFEGUARD IN THE PERILS
OF THE AGE.*

BY REV. WILLIAM GUEST, F.G.S.

AND

*A YOUNG MAN'S DIFFICULTIES WITH
HIS BIBLE.*

BY REV. D. W. FAUNCE, D.D.

Toronto, Canada :

TORONTO WILLARD TRACT DEPOSITORY,
YONGE AND TEMPERANCE STREETS.

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PREFACE.

THE author, on assuming the pastoral charge of a church in a thrifty and intelligent inland city of New England, found in the community a large number of young men not exactly sceptical, but a good deal unsettled in their views of religion. They were graduates of Grammar and High schools; intelligent young men, who, though employed as clerks or apprentices, found time to read the papers, the magazines, and occasionally a book. They had caught the drift of one section of popular thought. They asked for some book which should meet briefly and yet fairly the difficulties which they felt. There were plenty of scholarly volumes, suited to men who had received a liberal education and who were masters of their own time. But a small, popular, and at the same time accurate volume, suited to this demand, the author could not find. It occurred to him to invite these young men to state to him

Preface.

frankly their perplexities, and then to give a course of lectures on the general subject of these "Difficulties." The lectures were given to crowded houses on Sunday evenings, one in each month, for two successive seasons. It has been thought that good might be done by publishing selections from these lectures. A few of them have been taken, and the style somewhat changed from the spoken to the written form. The aim has been to give the results of careful study without the processes, to be as accurate in the statement of facts as if the work were to be used as a text-book, and yet to keep in mind the class of young men for whom it is designed. Every chapter, without an exception, has grown out of an actual conversation held with some young friend, or else out of some letter or message received from him. When delivered as lectures the author received repeated thanks from individuals to whom they were helpful. It is his prayer that God may make this little volume a blessing to those who read it.

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A YOUNG MAN'S SAFEGUARD

IN THE

PERILS OF THE AGE.

BY THE REV.

WILLIAM GUEST, F.G.S.

Sixth Edition, completing Eighteenth Thousand.

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
THE MORAL DANGERS OF THE AGE : HOW TO ESCAPE THEM	1
II.	
THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE AGE : HOW TO PREPARE FOR THEM	41
III.	
THE SCEPTICAL DOUBTS OF THE AGE : HOW TO SOLVE THEM	73
IV.	
THE CHRISTIAN YOUNG MAN'S PLACE IN THE AGE : HOW TO FILL IT	119

I.
**The Moral Dangers of the Age : how
to Escape them.**

My unknown friend, do not, I pray you, regard the following pages as an officious attempt to preach to you, and to check that innocent mirth and merriment which is good for every man. You know that the young merchant will gladly take hints from the experienced man of business ; the young lawyer and medical student will thank an older and successful practitioner for friendly counsels ; and the young art-student will carefully listen to the precepts of his master. I have no right to address you except this : I have watched life thoughtfully. I have observed how some young men rose to honour, and others sunk to infamy ; and I sometimes receive thanks from men, who in different parts of the kingdom occupy distinguished positions, and

2 *THE MORAL DANGERS OF THE AGE:*

who are good enough to tell me that my words have helped them. I aim at nothing more than to point out to you who are now stepping on the paths of life, some of the moral dangers you will encounter, and to indicate methods whereby you may rise to success and dignity. May I ask you then to read my words, not lightly, but with seriousness, and to regard them as the friendly help of a guide-post which directs a traveller on an unknown road to the goal he desires to reach.

And be very sure of this,—the counsels meet you as you are about to take your place in the world of men, not to arrest, but to create your joy. This is an age which is sad at heart. Men there are who proclaim that the faculty of joy in Englishmen is dead. Now it is probably true that modern civilisation has well-nigh exhausted its efforts to multiply the sensational in the way of pleasure, and a black shadow of satiety and disbelief has fallen on this generation. When a late statesman's words are quoted—that life would be endurable but for its amusements, there is more than a satire intended. Amusements of late have grown reckless and full of moral dangers. A despair of being really happy would appear to have fallen on many, so they drive men on desperate courses, and the very faces of Englishmen in this generation have lost their old brightness. But be you sure of this : the sunshine

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of joy may bathe your life with gladness. Yours may be a happiness which becomes more serene and satisfying as your days multiply. Yours may be a youth of delightful aspiration, a manhood of satisfying honours, and an age of grateful retrospect. To this end these pages are written. Surely this is an end worthy of the labour, and worthy of the few hours of earnest thought on your part to which you are invited.

Even hopeful men are anxious about England at this time. There is a frost of scepticism touching the young mind of England. There is a dread of enthusiasm which bodes ill. Young men stand in our great cities amid juggling expedients, glittering pretences, specious deceits, unscrupulous graspings after wealth or position; the tides of temptation flow fast around them; a high civilisation has made wickedness very facile and seductive; veteran experts in vice are found everywhere, and the very streets are allowed to be fevered walks of lustful solicitation. A man, therefore, who is indifferent to the moral dangers of young men is no friend to his country.

On the threshold of the theme I speak to you, not of something belonging to others, but of that which emphatically belongs to yourself. You are mysteriously endowed with an existence in which the grandest and the most terrific possibilities are

4 THE MORAL DANGERS OF THE AGE:

wrapped up. Life has been given to you. What significance is in the word ! Life, with its unknown treasures and vast capabilities ; life, with all its limitless resources and opportunities ; life, with all its rich enjoyments and its countless avenues for happiness ; life, which, beginning with the sweetness of infancy and passing through the open-heartedness of school days, can ripen into a beauty and strength and force of goodness, which, through the long ages of immortality, will find accessions of ever-augmenting felicity, power, and blissfulness. When, therefore, I discourse to you of the moral dangers which assail you, a too earnest solicitude is scarcely possible. No mortal can measure the grandeur to which you may rise, or the depth of degradation to which you may fall.

And it is much to be observed, that millions of men have been ruined, not so much through wrong intention as from want of thought. They have drifted into an evil course through a passive unthinkingness. It is not that they have resolved to do bad things, but they have not resolved to do good ones. Instead of being masters of themselves, sad to say, they have not even belonged to themselves. On their forehead might have been once written, "We are open to become the possession of whatsoever shall make capture of us." Instead of controlling, they have been borne along by outward

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things, like a little boat on a dangerous stream, not carefully rowed and guided, but empty, and inviting any unskilled or wicked hand to become its master.

Let me indicate to you some of the dangers which will assail you through examples and associations. You go forth into life, wise in heart and loyal towards truth and goodness. But you also go forth with besetting tendencies, and to meet Satan's temptations. Those temptations will come to you through the influence which others will seek to exert over you.

There are young men possessing all the capacities for a dignified and manly conduct. Theirs, through the hard industry of others, are all the qualifications of education and competence; they are surrounded with circles offering every facility to happiness and pure enjoyment. And what do these young men do with all this wealth of possession? I will sketch a few of the courses into which they permit themselves to be seduced. Perhaps the poorest in character are those whose solitudes extend no farther than the fast fashion of their garments, the colour of their gloves, the fit of their boots, the diamond ring on their finger, and the flexibility of their cane. But I need not linger over such. Nor do I say that a young man may not have a gold chain, and trousers made in the height of fashion, if he likes. But for the sake

6 THE MORAL DANGERS OF THE AGE:

of all that is manly, let us not come to think that this is to make a worthy use of life—to be a show thing to be looked at in the streets.

Another young man has higher aims; he is literary in his tastes; has studied rules of etiquette, and selects associations that are irreproachable. He permits his vanity, however, to grow into a chronic craving for admiration. He affects insensibility to attract attention; falls into the modern fashion of a supercilious apathy; looks unimpassioned under the most eventful circumstances, and twirls the points of his moustache with elegant *nonchalance*. Repudiating all domestic and common interests, he becomes valueless to humanity. In him the most beautiful emotions of human nature become frigid. His life is a negation which can never become a heroism. Ineffective in youth, unloved in manhood, he becomes testy and splenetic in old age, and dies at length, unmissed and unmourned.

Or a youth may have no *ideal*. To be what others are, to say what others say, to do as others do,—are allowed to quench in him all aspiration. There are Red Indians on the American continent whom philanthropy mourns over in vain. Their paint, their squalor, their monotonous savagery, limit their desires. All efforts are thrown away on them. The presence of a ripe civilisation never

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inspires them. They die out and give place to nobler races. And there are young men in this hemisphere who are thus helplessly unambitious. They allow themselves to be shaped by others, not because they distrust themselves, but because they are content to be weakly inane. They are surrounded by grand examples, they hear thrilling appeals, but they make no effort to get out of their unmanly acquiescence in the trivial, or the mercenary, or the commonplace. Humanly speaking, there is no hope for them; no impression can be made on them. Dead leaves are borne along by the eddying current, and are not to be stopped by any voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

Perhaps society does not suffer so much from this class of useless young men as from another, who are at one with them in ignoring truth and nobleness, but who add to this an impertinent contempt for all that can dignify and immortalise life. This is a very numerous and growing class in our day, and it is as the upas shade in modern society. It is sad to witness a little boy who is sceptical about goodness and purity, but for a young man this is ineffably disgusting. There are men you meet with who have schooled their hearts to disbelieve in greatness of character until all their conceptions are soiled and debased. They hear

themselves in a braggart, assuming, blustering manner, which is as far removed from the bearing of an English gentleman, as that of Captain Bobadil from an English soldier. They have brought themselves to this enlightened belief: that goodness is a myth, purity a pretence, and honour a sham! There are great statesmen of all political parties in the land; there are great philanthropists of princely wealth, whose benevolence is blessing millions; there are great poets, who inspire the loftiest ardour; there are great scholars, who make all literature the heritage of this age; there are great painters, whose artistic nature is permeating modern life with pathos and beauty;—but no word of enthusiasm for greatness or goodness ever falls from the tongue of these braggadocios. They can lounge against pillars in public halls, or swagger on railway platforms, casting a leering gaze on the pure faces of Englishwomen, and a stony stare on men of unpretending greatness.

This book may induce those who read it not to associate with these modern vapourers, but it is not likely to benefit *them*. They read nothing that comes with the intention of making men wiser and better. They are ignorant to a proverb of English literature. Most earnestly would I caution a young man against this class of men, whose cold, sneering, contemptuous scepticism as to worth and noble-

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ness, has blighted their own manhood, and awakens an offensive emotion wherever they move. The despair and ruin of Roman society, just before the advent of Christ, sprang from the impure sceptical braggardism of such a class more than from any other source. They inherited their father's wealth, and despised their father's virtues; and when Rome wanted men, it found only roysterers, wrapped in the silk of pride and of voluptuousness.

There is another growing class, over whom solicitude lingers more tenderly. They are amiable, clever, and obliging. They can sing well, recite with ability, and charm with *facetiæ*. They are desired in circles of pleasure, and young men and ladies speak of them as good fellows. Their aptness and mimicry when presenting the newest production of the satirical school, make the merriment of the evening party. But they excite our sympathy, rather than our admiration. They possess a dual nature which longs to be appreciated by master spirits, yet they cannot resist the temptation to become the caterers for inferior persons. They make base men laugh who ought to weep, and amuse fools who despise them for their pains. Surely their own kind-heartedness and endowments call them to a more elevated mission. They have made the by-play of life its substance. Always on the look-out for the satirical,

they lose interest in more wholesome reading. Their perpetual attempts at humour lower their own tone. Observe, this is not said as a disparagement of humour. A man of real humour is as pleasant a companion as the man who attempts nothing else is a bore. Who cares to be always dining on highly flavoured dishes? Who would be ambitious to be the buffoon of society? Such a man finds his mistake in the end. He is set aside by his friends in the grave exigencies of life, and he finds that the power of influence he might have won has been frittered away.

It is recorded, that a fellow-student once said to Paley : " You are a great fool to waste your years thus. You have talent that might raise you to the highest distinction. I have none, and it matters not how my life is passed." Paley took the hint so roughly given, and now few names stand higher in literature than his.

Would that my descriptions might cease here ; but the tale of failure has not run out. There are young men with the pathway of honour open before them, but who turn from it, and in pompous dash care for none of the things that would make for their peace. Like dogs kept hungry that the scent after the game may be keener and more impelling, they slip the leash of what they term their "mother's apron-string," and burst upon life with

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a dare-devil spirit that defies control. The shades of evening find them prowling under the mask of darkness after every pernicious gratification. Their imaginations have been polluted by the vile literature secretly circulated. From the dice or billiard-table they go to the lighted hall, where prostitutes, decked in gay and voluptuous attire, mingle in the waltz and ply their seductive arts, and thence they hasten to the house where I will not follow, and of which the Scriptures say that it is "the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

The prevalence of vice in great cities makes it imperative to prolong the portraiture of this last class of men. The curiosity and inexperience of youth demand an unhesitating and adequate statement of the perils that now assail a young man who enters on the sea of city life. The false glare of modern vice is so dazzling to an unsuspecting youth as to compel plain speech. A pure-minded father will shrink from unfolding to his son the nature of the fearful temptations which, with a subtle and tremendous current, will sweep around such a youth. Dear friend, will you pause and ponder the path of evil?

A young man in a London warehouse was solicited to spend a night in a dancing-saloon. He refused. "What a fool you are to be so dull," said

12 *THE MORAL DANGERS OF THE AGE:*

the tempter. "We'll wait awhile and see who is the fool," said the young man. In ten years' time the tempter was in a dishonoured grave, and the other was rising to affluence.

You young men who sneer at religion as weakness, and call godliness hypocrisy, it is you who are the hypocrites. You have risen many a morning after a night of sin, and have felt disgusted with what you have witnessed, and you have known how terribly degradation was leaving deep footprints in your nature. You have seen the shamelessness and hollowness of wickedness, and have been too cowardly to say that you saw it. You have laughed at virtue at the very time you were bearing agonies in your flesh which were horrible and indescribable. In ten years, the tempter I have spoken of was in his grave; and if the brief life and dreadful end of thousands of young men in England could be told, it would be the most awful tragedy ever written. Men would be horrified as they read it, and the ghastly memory would haunt them for years. Ah, men do not know it. There are hundreds of young men constantly leaving the warehouses of great cities to carry their emaciated and sapped constitutions to die in country homes, or solitary and neglected they lie in the upper chambers of lodging-houses in the back streets of cities. Angel sisters are kept from sights which they could not compre-

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hend. Nurses shrink from the foul and loathsome atmosphere. And this is what they have made of life—a murdered manhood, not living out half their days ; a past all loss, a future all blackness. Oh, where are our tears, if they do not fall over numbers who are dying every day in such chambers, and with such demons of remembrance ?

Far be it from me to utter a word that would debar you from the recreations and excitements appropriate to your age. Joy and cheerfulness are your strength and heritage. Monkish austerity and sanctimoniousness are rarely virtues. But our modern life has multiplied, under the name of pleasure, the facilities of vice. The perils that assail young men in great cities are so many, so seductive, and so ruinous to body and soul, as to make an observer tremble. There was once a time, before cities grew so huge, when places of business were homes. The employer admitted young men to the domestic sanctities of his family. They received aid from him in the formation of acquaintances, and had even access to his own circles of recreation. Now, young men in cities can scarcely be said to have a home. Some have not even the privilege of a common room, or a fire in their chamber. They are open, therefore, to every allurements that promises pleasure. Places of business, moreover, are large establishments where the

loose moralist can cover vice by self-deceivableness, and where the subtle infidel, the scoffer, and licentious mingle together. Religion is ridiculed, and the clergy spoken of with a sneer. Filthy books are circulated—books of infamy which minister to the vilest tastes, which taint and befoul the imagination with unclean images, and which a man can no more look at without defilement than he can touch molten pitch and be clean.

Wherever a young man turns for worldly amusement he meets danger. Towns swarm with brilliantly lighted saloons, which hold out their meretricious attractions. There is the drama, music, and art. It was ascertained that in two hours one evening six hundred young men entered one music-hall in London. Were these rooms harmless, he would be an enemy to human happiness who objected to them. If they are demoralising and ruinous to the health and character of the inexperienced, he is a friend who points this out. It is little suspected how women with bedizened head-dresses and flaunty robes are folding around them the last shreds of their modesty; how married men hide under white waist-coats polluted hearts; how, while "grey hairs dance, devils laugh and angels weep;" how bankrupts wear forced smiles; how the victims of disease and death hide their ghastliness by flowers, and light their rapid progress to the grave by flaring gas-light. It

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is little known how thousands of young men from the religious homes of Scotland and Wales pass into a speedy oblivion after their feet have once crossed the threshold of these rooms in English cities. Alas, what a tale might be told of fathers' hairs whitened, mothers' hearts crushed, sisters' eyes swollen with tears,—over sons once the pride of their homes!

I have read somewhere of an eagle in the Far West. Soaring with steady wing, he saw far below him the grand scenes of American nature, clothed in the first snows of early winter. As he rose higher towards the blue heaven, his keen eye saw, floating on the distant river whose margin was already frost-bound, the carcass of a huge buffalo. He paused in his upward flight, descended to settle and revel on this feast of corruption. He was borne calmly down the stream towards the fall and the rapids which lay below. Gorged with his foul meal, with drooping wing and dormant energies, he slept on the fetid mass and amid the oozing putrefaction. The blood, stiffened by the frost, bound his feet to the remains of the carcass; and onwards was he borne until the roar of the cataract thundered on his ear. He struggled for liberty; his powers had been enfeebled with satiety; his drooping wings were bound to the frozen blood; his wild cries awoke the echoes; he made frantic efforts to throw

off his horrid companion ; looked up to the blue heaven he had abandoned. It was too late : hurried over the rapid, he was sucked into the boiling cataract, and dashed to destruction on the rocks beneath.

How doth such an illustration find its analogy in human life ! " His own iniquities," saith the Scripture, " shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." There is a deep and awful mystery in the downward progress of souls, when he who once was the master of sin becomes its slave. Alas, there are scores of men in every neighbourhood who would give all they have to begin life again. A reformed drunkard who moved in good society, once said to me that he would strike off his right hand if the penalty would sweep out of his soul the memories that haunted it. These men never intended to be bad, but step by step they lowered themselves. The lower elements of their nature first were freely indulged, then became importunate, then exacting, then domineering, then uncontrollable. Dear young man, the pride of a mother, the hope of a father, with an intensity of yearning love I conjure you to pause ere you go into the way of sinners. If your feet have turned aside, retrace, I beseech you, your steps. Your strong " No" now, may, through God's mercy, turn you from the pit of infamy, But soon

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weaker will be your will, dimmer your sense of moral beauty, more desperate your passions, till at length you will feel bound, and then find yourself borne over the rapids a lost and helpless wreck.

There are indeed young men who, in an unguarded moment, have gone into scenes of temptation, and have turned away with horror, like a bird that, having strayed into the poisonous atmosphere of a chemical laboratory, has rushed back quickly to the pure air of heaven. But such cases are the exceptions. There is a witchery about sin. One night in a music and dancing-saloon may so pollute the imagination as to break down the barriers of years. One throw at a gaming-table, or bet on a race, may so excite the craving for this perilous speculation, that it may be followed by the frenzy and suffering of years of gambling. One indulgence of the lusts of the flesh may so damn a man in his own eyes that in a year he may be utterly foul. Dear young man, nothing deadens the conscience so much as sin; nothing creates a desire for repetition so much as sin; nothing rises in its demands from every concession made to it so much as sin. Among the most striking things in our language is a sentence of Jeremy Taylor on the progress of sin: "Sin startles a man—that is the first step. Then it becomes pleasing; then it becomes easy; then delightful, then frequent; then habitual, then

confirmed ; then the man is impenitent, then obstinate ; then resolves never to repent, and then is damned." My young brother, it is in mercy that our heavenly Father sweeps away all the trifling with sin by those strong but loving words—"Thou shalt *not*." Our poor self rises ; passion raises its tempest of desire ; experts in vice solicit ; the wrong waits to claim us and hold dominion over us, and our good God who sees the end, says, "Go not in the way of evil men ; avoid it, pass not by it ; turn from it, and pass away."

I know there is a maxim very common, that "a young fellow must sow his wild oats." They shall not be my words that reply to that saying. They shall be those of a man who knows the world, and an ardent lover of the pure pleasures of the world. "In all the range of accepted British maxims," says Mr. Thomas Hughes, "there is none, take it all in all, more thoroughly abominable than this one, as to the sowing of wild oats. Look at it on what side you will, and I will defy you to make anything but a devil's maxim of it. What a man, be he young, old, or middle-aged, sows, *that*, and nothing else, shall he reap. The one only thing to do with wild oats, is to put them carefully into the hottest part of the fire, and get them burnt to dust, every seed of them. If you sow them, no matter in what ground, up they will come, with long tough roots

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like couch-grass, and luxuriant stalks and leaves, as sure as there is a sun in heaven—a crop which it turns one's heart cold to think of. The devil, too, whose special crop they are, will see that they thrive, and you, and nobody else, will have to reap them; and no common reaping will get them out of the soil, which must be dug down deep again and again. Well for you if with all your care you can make the ground sweet again by your dying day. 'Boys will be boys' is not much better, but that has a true side to it. But this encouragement to the sowing of wild oats is simply devilish, for it means that a young man is to give way to the temptations, and follow the lusts, of his age."

No, you may not be able to stop when the evil is done. Let me beseech you to take five minutes to consider whither the *beginning* of a wrong companionship leads. The first step may mean an unseen path with an ending of degradation and misery. It *does* mean this in countless cases. I assure you the bitter end I have witnessed in men after an earlier course of wrong-going makes me look on a youth who is stepping on an evil way and choosing an evil companionship with feelings of the keenest anguish. Surely he is only a fool who steps upon a course and will not ask himself what is the probable termination of that course.

But it is not merely the open temptation that is

your danger. The impure thought, the harboured imagination, may seem to create a necessity to the indulgence of sin. You have come, it may be, from a pure home. If you allow yourself to hear talk of sin, or allow your spirit to rest on the supposed sweetness of it, you may lower your standard until you readily yield to the miserable way, and you may bind yourself fast in habits of ruin. Let a young man or woman dally with temptation, and they will find plenty of liars-in-wait. It is not, as a rule, the great temptation that ruins; it is imperceptible beginnings. It is these that must be watched and guarded against. The snowflakes are light and fall noiselessly; but let them continue to fall, and soon the highway may be blocked up. It may seem a small thing to go once into a doubtful place, but there may be there an invisible chain with which, by having gone once, you have become irrecoverably bound.

As I am in these addresses to picture life as it is, let facts speak. I feel sure that hundreds of young men would have shunned vice if facts had been told them of its issues. They have few to tell them. It is intensely disagreeable to tell them. But I cannot see young men coming into our great cities without forewarning them of the rocks ahead of them. While I was writing these words I had a most painful illustration of the

ruin and sorrow following upon the indulgence of sin. A young man came to London, bearing with him the confidence and affection of a holy and afflicted mother, the pride of a Christian father, and the yearning love of pure and beautiful sisters. Because of his intelligence and probity, he was placed in a situation of trust, and went on well while the thought of home and its sanctities was with him. The tempter tried her arts, and caught him in her wiles. The expenses of the dancing-room and the habits it led to were beyond his limit of wealth. He took from entrusted money. The embezzlement was not at first discovered; he grew confident. Satan wrapped blinding folds around him, Alas, the success was brief! From a gloomy prison he sent up a message to ask my prayers for him. I do not know him. None will know him through this reference. At twenty-one he has brought a dark shadow over his life-dawn. Deep as is the darkness, it may be God's only means of answering his mother's prayers. Alas! for five years of his imprisonment has that mother's heart to be riven!

When I was a minister in Leeds a fine youth came to that town. He was a native of a far-off land. He came to acquire mechanical knowledge prior to becoming the head of a large business house. Wealth and possessions were before him.

An attached family circle delighted in him. He was amiable, fascinating, and naturally generous. A group of wild young men determined to allure him to pleasure and sin. He fell into the snare. The billiard-room was visited : it led to the tavern, and then to the brothel. His kind employer remonstrated with him and pointed out the consequences of his courses. It was of no avail. He had consulted the "secret physician," or, rather, "quack." A severe cold brought to a climax his virulent disorder. His magnificent form was tossed upon a bed of anguish. Loved ones hastened over the sea to seek to save him. It could not be. So loathsome was his chamber that nurses could hardly be secured to attend him, and those most loving him rushed overpowered from his bedside. His pearly teeth all dropped out, and at length, decayed and agonised, he died a dreadful, hopeless death.

Observe, however : if I speak of the perils of great cities, I might speak also of their grand opportunities. They are the schools for the highest education of which man is capable. But my advice is, let no man come to a great city without courage. If he is weak, yielding, cowardly, let him not venture upon the encounters of a city life. Let a youth aim to live a godly life, and the sluggish will sneer, the empty-souled will laugh, the wicked

will throw out sarcasms. Woe to the man who cannot brave the laugh of fools.

Dante says,—

“Not on flowery beds, or under shade
Of canopy reposing heaven is won.”

Thank God victory is possible. But we must pay the price of courage for it. My friend, it is the first step that costs. The courage that faces the cannon's mouth is grand; but grander is that which braves the tyranny of false custom, and dares to be true and good. Canon Farrar tells a noble story. “There was at Eton, not many years ago, a boy, hale and strong and athletic—a boy, not particularly clever, but always high in his form, captain of the boat, in the cricket eleven: very popular, yet very good. It was a bad custom there, that at certain gatherings songs were sung which were not fit for gentlemen to sing. This boy declared that in his presence such songs should not be sung. It seemed presumptuous for him to say it before his elders; it was to risk popularity, to face sneers. But he was brave. When the song was sung he got up there and then and left the room. The brave action stopped the bad custom. That boy was Coley Patteson in 1845; that man was Dr. Coleridge Patteson, the martyr bishop of Melanesia, in 1871.” Ah, it was not only

at Melanesia the martyr-crown was won, but in that public room at Eton!

But our view of life demands other considerations than those that relate to time and personal dishonour. It is a grand thing to live. A thousand times have I blessed God for this great gift of life. But it is very serious also. Life has its *responsibilities*. Influence, like all things else, is imperishable. Nothing perishes. The leaves of autumn do not perish, they enrich the earth. The fuel of our fires sends curling upwards its light smoke, which bears its properties for other uses. The broken fragments of the mountains through torrent and tempest nourish plants and renovate the earth. So, in like manner, not an act you perform, not a word you speak, can wholly perish. It was probably this that Jesus Christ meant when He spoke of the idle words for which we shall give account at the day of judgment: that is, our words which go from us as light as air may be making others better or worse, and their consequences may look us in the face in the judgment. *Sin is imperishable*. Sin, like the soul, has immortality stamped on it: when once done, *it cannot be undone*. Even a saved man's sins are imperishable in the consequences. David, the king of Israel, sinned—alas, how pitilessly! He repented, and poured out a psalm of contrition that has ever

since been the liturgy of humbled souls, and every verse of which seems vocal with a groan. But he could not undo the sin. In his own days the enemies of truth blasphemed through him, and, since that time, in every generation, wicked men have encouraged themselves in wickedness because of that great crime, and the atheist hath barbed his arrow in the blood of that murder. Voltaire, when he came to die, longed that his blasphemies against Christ should be expunged from his writings. He wished what was impossible; his errors led to all the horrors of the French Revolution, and have shattered since then the peace of thousands. A drunkard may obtain forgiveness, but his example may have taught his own son to brutalize himself. A young man may turn away from the evil courses he followed, but he may leave the silly youth whom he first tempted, to go floating down to the bottomless pit. There is a thought that often appals me. It is nothing, as it seems, for the seducer to play upon innocence, to instil poison into her sweet affections and her maidenly instincts. He has done, as he thinks, a manly thing, when he has crumpled up the beautiful flower of her chastity, and left it to be fouled in the mire. Ah, hard is the father's shame and the brother's scorn she bears. Cold are the streets that she treads at night, and lonely is the garret where she soon lies

down to die. What cares he? Perhaps in a beautiful home he has forgotten her and her child. His turn comes at length to die. If conscience puts in a reminder, he calls the deed an "indiscretion" of his youth, which signifies little. O man, it *shall* signify. As sure as there is a God in heaven, thou shalt meet again in the great hereafter that deserted one to whom thou didst open the door of ruin. Her own lips shall tell thee how thou didst help to put out in her all that was pure, and to send her into the streets an outcast. It *shall* signify. That child of neglect shall claim thee as its father: an unerring finger shall point it to thee. Before God and holy angels, it shall tell thee of its bare infant feet on snowy street-flags, of night-watchings at omnibus steps, and of the ignorance, and wretchedness, and foul examples, through which its struggling life was passed, and which left it no chance of virtue. From thee it shall demand account of those paternal duties which thou didst incur, and didst never care to discharge. Yes, it shall signify. Oh, there is a solemn irony of Scripture when it saith, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: *but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove the*

*cause of sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh."*¹

Would that my address to young men could be in a more joyous tone. But life has such a tragic side to multitudes in our epoch, that I am compelled to deal with the causes of this failure and misery. It is imperative that the ground be cleared of the hindrances, before I can offer, in subsequent chapters, the stimulus and encouragement. One other social peril of our times I am bound to refer to.

Charles Kingsley, whom I may quote because he

¹ There is a sin of which I have hinted. I can do no more. Alas, its terrible temptations, and its awful consequences are becoming frightful. It is not safe to omit notice in an appeal to a young man who may be entering life in a great city. If you could know the little that has come to my knowledge, your very hairs would stand on end. I could tell you of the finest physical constitutions, which, after twelve months' tampering with this perilous fascination, have become pitiable wrecks of disease. I could tell you on medical authority of men now dragging out a useless existence, with reason dethroned, and drivelling in idiotcy. And the punishment once done to the flesh does not depart. Life ends in early death, or is a long suffering of humiliation; yea, worse still, the suffering is perpetuated in the third and fourth generations. Young men starting in life have none to tell them these things, therefore I have forced myself to the hateful task. The displeasure of God against this sin is awful. What would you think of a man who should pluck a flower from a yawning chasm, when there were ninety-nine chances to one that he would fall into the abyss below, and even if extricated, be scarred and begrimed to the end of his days?

was no precisionist, divided the human race into three parts :

1. Honest men, who mean to do right and do it.
2. Knaves, who mean to do wrong and do it.
3. Fools, who mean to do whichever of the two is the pleasanter.

These last, Mr. Kingsley divided into black fools (who would rather do wrong, but dare not unless it is the fashion), and white fools (who would rather do right, but dare not unless it is the fashion).

In relation to this last class, for whom every man must have a liking, some wise words were written on the subject of *betting*. Mr. Kingsley took strong ground. You can reject it or not ; but at least hear what one of the noblest Englishmen of this last generation wrote.

Betting and gambling of every kind is in itself wrong and immoral. I do not say that every man who bets is an immoral man. Far from it. But the honest men have not considered what they do. Betting is intended to take money out of your neighbour's pocket without giving him anything in return. But, says one, he is trying to do as much by me. Just so ; and is that a very noble and friendly attitude for two men who have no spite against each other ? Betting is founded on selfishness, and men who live by betting cannot help being the most selfish of men.

But some will say, It is not the money I care for, but the amusement. Excuse me, why then do you not bet for counters, or pins, or pebbles? It would be better for many a young man, for some of the finest fellows of all, men of eager temper, high spirit, delicate honour, if they would make up their minds never to bet, even a shilling. For Gambling, like drinking, grows on some men, and upon the very finest natures too. Nay, more. Gambling is almost the only thing in the world of which it is true the baser a man is the better are his chances: the more honourable a man is the the worse are his chances. The honourable man is no match here for the dishonourable.

Now as to betting on horses. How many betting young men know anything about a horse except that he has four legs? But they know what the horse has done. Yes; but not what the horse might have done. No one can know, who is not in the secrets of the turf, what the horse's engagements really are,—whether he has been kept back in view of these engagements; whether he will not be kept back again; whether he has not been used to make play for another horse; and, in one word, whether he is meant to win.

Ah, but the young gentleman has sent his money on commission to a prophet of a newspaper. And if you are fool enough to buy his facts, his easiest and

cheapest plan must be to invent sham facts and sell them to you, while he keeps the real facts for his own use.

These things are said well ; but I am not sure whether the restlessness of the man who bets ; the absorption on what was commenced as an amusement ; the time consumed in consulting betting information ; the unworthy company men are seduced into ; the craving temptation to make bets beyond means, and which has started hundreds on courses of knavery and theft ; the growing dislike that comes to steady work, and to slow but sure gains ; the sort of fevered passion that must have gratification and is wound up in intensity in its very eagerness to pursue it ; the alternations of exultation and of despair ; the sort of mad appetite in which men live ;—whether all this is not the sorest evil of that modern habit of betting and of gambling which is so serious a moral danger of the age. Happy is that young man who, in view of all these things, comes to this wholesome resolution : “ Whatever else I may do or not do, gamble and bet I will not.”

But will you let me ask you to follow me in more serious reflections ? You are the child of eternity ; you have now your time of probation ; you have your one earthly life to live, and upon what you make it will depend that which will follow through

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31

the great future. Every sinful habit you form here may cling like a leprosy to the soul there; every depraved passion you nourish here may perpetuate its black defilement there. "The child is father to the man," saith the proverb. A young man of sense knows that he will be as a master what he made himself as an apprentice, and as a man what he made himself as a youth. He knows too that character is not built up by one or two, but by the constant series of actions. So the daily thoughts and acts of your earthly life are forming your character for the vast existence of which you are an heir, and which lies beyond the grave.

Archbishop Whately, in some annotations on Lord Bacon's Second Essay, mentioned a very remarkable phenomenon connected with insect life, and recorded that it often occurred to him as a very impressive analogy of a future state. You know that every butterfly (the Greek name for which, it is remarkable, is the same that signifies also the soul—Psyche) comes from a caterpillar; in the language of naturalists called a larva, which signifies, literally, a mask. Now, there is a tribe of insects called ichneumon flies, which inhabit and feed on these larvæ. These parasitical flies have a long sharp sting, which pierces the body of the caterpillar, and whereby they deposit their eggs on the inward parts of their victim. But, strange to

say, the caterpillar thus attacked goes on feeding and apparently thriving quite as well as those that have escaped. But when the period arrives for the close of the larva-life, then the evil is made manifest. Caterpillars assume the pupa-state from which they emerge butterflies; and it is then that the difference appears between those that have escaped the parasites and those that were the victims of them. Beautiful and awful analogy! There are many who, as to the outside, look like other men. They dress well, look well. The sin is preying only on their immortal part; and when they have laid aside that which merely belonged to their physical life, then the soul shall stand, with all its poverty and scars and shrivelled places, naked and open. "The kingdom of heaven is within you," said Christ to His followers: so are the elements of hell in other men.

Prodigious is the inconsistency of some modern reasoners. They believe in the future life of the soul. They see that the man is the development of the boy, and that the acts of the youth leave their impress on the whole after life. They say law is inflexible, and that miracles therefore are impossible. They affirm that justice is so exact that its penalty must fall on its proper victim, and that therefore Christ's death is not vicarious. But somehow, at this point, all their reasoning falls to

pieces. According to them, man in the future life is not to be dealt with after this inflexibility of law and this exactness of justice. According to them, up to the moment of death, law goes in a straight unbending line. Why then, in the name of all pretence of reason, does it fail at that point, so that wickedness, which has met with its exact punishment in this world, fails to meet with it in that coming one? Dear young man, fearlessness as to what that future may be is stark madness. It is folly for which there is no name, for a man all through his *earthly* life to bear the traces of the indolence and self-willedness of his youth. But, oh, what must it be for a future and eternal life to bear the traces of all the wrongs that have been done to the soul in this! What must it be for all the possible features with which the soul entered on this life—truth, purity, love, faith—not only to have lain undeveloped, but to have been quenched!

I will add a word here respecting that doctrine of the future destination of the wicked which a school of preachers has latterly discussed. I am not going to imitate these writers. I cannot see in the dark. I have a hold of the mercy of God which grows in blessedness perpetually. But while I know next to nothing of the *origin* of sin and of Satan, the supreme power of evil, I feel

quite incompetent to speak about what will be the *end* of sin. The words of Jesus Christ respecting the men who will not be redeemed, seem to me to be the most piercing in their pity and the most appalling in their warning which the world ever heard. So far as I can see, it is not so much that the Lord punishes as that evil punishes itself. Hell is a condition rather than a place. Men and devils who will not be ruled by the divine goodness make the hell they profess to hate. Ah, if we would measure the calamity that hangs over a sinning man, let us do so by the Incarnation, the tears, the pleadings, and the cross of Jesus Christ, and we shall admit that we have no measure of the extent of that calamity. Let us behold a man, who had been immediately taught by Jesus Christ, labouring in a Gentile city "three years," "day and night," warning "every one," "from house to house," and "with tears," and we shall have some idea of the awfulness of the catastrophe which impends over unsaved men. These facts cannot be explained away. The punishments that sin brings in this world by its own inflexible law are harrowing and heart-breaking. Have we not a hint in these horrors of what devilism will bring a man to in the great hereafter? It may be that the education of a spirit does not cease with this life. About this no man *knows* anything. But

inspiration teaches that a spirit which has refused in this world the infinite drawings of Divine love, will be accompanied by a "worm" of regret which "will never die," in the world to come. And is there not something due to God? If you have allowed idiots to teach you that it is manly to sneer at prayer to God—if you deliberately choose darkness instead of light, what wrong is done you if you are left in the "outer darkness," whatever that may be? If a flowering plant should say, "I will not have what heaven's influences can do for me," it would be rightcously excluded, in its hideous deformity, from the monarch's banqueting hall. Ah, that plant *must* comply. A plant's life lies in involuntary obedience. *Your life lies in will.* The sublime lesson of your life is to make a *right choice* between good and evil. Christ calls men "*lost*." That word "lost" seems to cover the future destiny of a soul. But Christ strives with you for your recovery. His garments have been dyed in blood for your salvation. He bows himself to you as one who is knocking, and persistently waiting, at the door of your heart. Oh, for the sake of what is holiest, dearest, infinite, do not resist His pleadings! On this, the starting-point of your manhood, you are in your own power. God appeals to you and says, "I set before you life and death." The end of life now seems far off.

Believe me, it will come sooner far than you think. Ceaselessly, noiselessly, swiftly will life pass. Your life must be looked back upon. If, after your opportunities, it be proved to have been a life of waste and evil influence, heavier will be your remorse and doom.

God meets you as you read these words, and offers to be the guide of your human life. The good God did not send you into His creation to be afterwards an accursed thing. This life of yours, with its endowments and capabilities, may become a sublime and influential life—a blessed ascendancy, a tower of strength to men, regnant in all that is majestic and godlike. Oh, reject with loathing the philosophy that you have no freedom to choose purity and nobleness. Your will is perilously but grandly free. God has given you freedom over yourself to be in obedience to His blessed will. This liberty is the grandeur of your life. To see the good on starting life and to resolve to follow it, is peace and greatness. To refuse to do this, is confusion, misery, dire disaster. It is to you possessed of freedom that the divine counsel comes — “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love folly? Turn you at my reproof: *behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.*” Nor will life thus passed be too earnest to be happy. Yours

will be the happiness—not of animal enjoyments merely, not purchased with stabbing your self-respect, not followed with the heart-sobs of those who love you,—but of one who is bringing into use the higher and diviner faculties of your nature. Your intelligence will be fed by knowledge, your soul will be ennobled by purity, your tastes will be in harmony with sweet sounds and beauty, your conscience will be kept in peace, and your heart's emotions will have play in ways that will leave no bitterness, but oftentimes swell into rapture.

The only thing that can give meaning and glory to your life, is to resolve most resolutely that you will not be enslaved, will not be degraded, will not be plunged into the mire and foulness of sin, but will live according to a life-plan of real goodness. Remember, no one can do this for you. God's Spirit will go forth to meet you on your consenting to be His, but He will not save you without your consent. You are called at this crisis of your life to a choice sublimely awful, because of its destinies. Others may pray for you, but they cannot work out this question of your destiny. They may persuade you, but they cannot decide for you. They can seek to inspire you, but they cannot control you. You may be a poor waif on the winds of temptation, drifted to whatever abyss of destruction they hurry you, or you may be a

son of God, victorious over sin, ranking with the earth's great ones, and followed with blessings. And then, and then, when the final issue comes, and you lie down to die, instead of regrets, yours may be the solid satisfaction that your life, from its very morning, has been consecrated to the side of goodness ; and then, instead of a place with the wicked, you will go into a heaven which will be the consummation of the life of righteousness into which you have entered down here.

Yes, this will be your safeguard against the moral dangers of the age. Those dangers were never so serious, never so numerous, as they are now. Men make charts and erect lighthouses to direct a vessel on its course and to give note of perils ahead. I have ventured to do this in the foregoing chapter for the young men who have launched their vessel on life's vast ocean. There is danger beyond all power of language to depict ; and that danger means ruin in its widest meaning ; but there is also a way of safety. Two steps there are by which you may enter that way. Obtain, first, forgiveness for the sins of the past. God offers you all the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Plead those merits, and by faith appropriate and make them your own. Through that great sacrifice, God will receive you, and *remember* your sins no more. In the blessed Book, and in every variety of form, in every

glowing and rich expression, are you assured that pardon shall be granted to a repentant soul. Young man, this is the first step. Believe, and drop at the cross your burden of the sins of the past. Start a free man!

This is the second step,—offer your life gratefully, lovingly, to the Friend and Saviour of your soul. The noblest, divinest lives ever lived among men had this as their starting-point—a solemn and blessed surrender of themselves to God. Ask for His Spirit to help you in this surrender and to make you faithful. His ear will be swift to hearken. “Rise morning by morning to read, to worship, to pray. Behold the face of God before you behold the face of man, and then go forth to make sorrow smile and burdens fall and sin to hide its head,—to make trade honest, literature pure, and conversation holy.” Love to Christ as His saved one will make His yoke easy, will make the cross light, will make life to have a magnificent meaning, will break the force of temptation, and will make sin to you the hateful thing. Fail you may; but with such a purpose of consecration you may draw without doubt on the patient benignity and forgiving love of your Saviour. Sneered at, and even hated you may be; but you may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” Such a daily

4c *THE MORAL DANGERS OF THE AGE.*

course will cause your feet to find "peace and pleasantness" on the path of life, till you reach the mansions where the golden gates shall be thrown open for you, and the angels shall tell you they have been waiting to welcome you.

Brother, will you try this life ?

*The Opportunities of the Age : how to
prepare for them.*

THERE have been men who, after they have crossed the line of manhood, have attempted by a new life to acquire force and consideration among their fellows. It would astonish you to find how few of such men, comparatively, have been able to do this. The men of mark all through the ages who have powerfully affected society, have been those who started on their course of influence as young men. Remarkable and most significant is the honour God has put on such consecration. Review the past : the most powerful impulse which has moved the world has been that proceeding from young men. In the olden times of the Hebrews you cannot find nobler examples of prowess, disinterestedness, chivalry, purity, and a marvellous power of ruling

men than in Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Josiah, Daniel, and the Maccabees—and they entered on such a path of ascendancy as young men. On the human side, the Founder of Christianity was a young man. The forerunner, pronounced the greatest born of women, and who shook a nation to its depths, died when little more than thirty years of age. The first great missionaries of the early Christian centuries,—men who won a path for the conquests of Christianity through chaotic barbarism and savage warfare, were young men. Anthony, Benedict, Francis of Assisi, who must not be confounded with the scheming or wanton monks of later times, and who raised a powerful protest in the East and West for charity, industry, and self-denial, were mere youths when they gave themselves to the task of regenerating their age. Martin Luther was twenty-seven when he began to study the sacred Scriptures in the original languages, and at thirty-four years of age he broke with Rome by denouncing Tetzal and his indulgences. Savonarola was twenty-three when he started on his grand, tragic, and triumphant career of testimony against the violence, vice, pride, and blasphemies of Central Italy. Michael Angelo was a young man when in Florence he gave his powerful impulse to the revival of the arts of sculpture and architecture. Raphael and Mozart, who have never been sur-

passed in their respective vocations of painter and musician, had hardly reached middle age when they passed away. The great evangelical revival of the last century, the pulses of which are now beating so grandly in the activities of Christendom, was owing, under God, to a few young students who in Oxford met to stimulate each other to saintliness and fidelity. George Washington, the illustrious father of the republican empire of America, and who has been pronounced by a high authority the greatest uninspired character on the page of history, gave signs of the courage, virtue, and patriotism that have made him immortal when quite a young man.

Wherever you look in history you are met by similar facts. "Hannibal at the age of twenty-five led to victory the great armies of Carthage. Alexander had conquered the world and died at the age of thirty-eight. Charlemagne at the age of thirty had made himself master of the whole French and German Empires. Napoleon led his brilliant Italian campaign at twenty-seven, and at thirty-three was Emperor of France. William Pitt at twenty-five was First Lord of the Treasury, and Edmund Burke made his mark as a statesman when young. Byron at twenty-three was the poet and the idol of England." Ours is an age distinguished in Europe and America by powerful names in statesmanship, science, oratory, commerce, and philanthropy. You

will scarcely find one of these names which did not early in life give a prophecy of the greatness now universally recognised. Yes, great is the honour God puts on young men, and therefore I head this chapter by the inquiry, "How a young man can prepare for the opportunities of the age."

Rich opportunities there are. Society is favourably disposed towards young men. The bar, the senate, the pulpit, the place of power in commerce, are open to young men as they never were before. Without the patronage which other days demanded, character and acquirements will secure the highest civil positions. In business and professional life society will entrust the most important interests to the hands of young men, when it is believed they will be safe there. This is a new and grand feature of our age. There is, however, scarcely one man in ten who makes the most of himself for the purpose for which he was created. What noble youths come out of schools and colleges! How few afterwards make their lives noble! With what prospects do many enter upon business and professions, and afterwards sink into the grave with scarcely a trace to indicate that they ever lived! There have been thousands who could have rivalled the patriotism of Hampden, or the humanity of Howard, or the eloquence of Chatham, and who have left behind them no one memorial of their

existence. It is not because men have lacked talents or genius that they have failed in life, but because they have come short in the commonplace qualities of industry, perseverance, steadiness. You may rely upon it that it has been these commonplace qualities that have raised to wealth and eminence many of the titled philanthropists, the wealthy merchants, and the professional men of our era.

John Stuart Mill, in his essay on Liberty, complained that no period of England's history had been so little marked by individual originality and force as his own. Certainly, whether we look upon the merely moral or the professedly religious circles of our country, we find everywhere the tendency to sink the man in the crowd, the Christian in the Church. This shifting of personal responsibility from the one to the many, this inert and slavish acquiescence in the customs and maxims of inferior men, is the secret of individual ineffectiveness.

Young man, if you would prepare for the positional influence of the future, do not let others fashion what your life shall be. Thomas Carlyle says somewhere that he would like to stop the stream of people in the Strand, and ask every man his history. But, "No," says the sage, "I will not stop them. If I did, I should find they were like a flock of sheep following in the track of one another." Alas, men begin to lose their individuality of con-

viction the moment they step into the world ! Here is a young man beginning life's business. He feels, as he starts, an impulse to be pure and noble. He is surrounded by clerks in an office. A fortnight passes, and one evening, when he is hurrying home after office hours, he hears a fast young man whisper at the desk, "Poor fellow ! he's off to be pinned to his mother's knee." Now, what would be the right thing for that youth to do ? To say at once, "Yes, and God forbid I should ever forget what I owe to my mother." Let him say this, and the insulter would be shamed, if shame were not dead. He would respect the self-assertion of his fellow-clerk. Does the new comer say this ? No ; his ears turn red, his face is suffused with a blush ; and in a night or two the poor weak one dares some trick of folly to show his independence, and to prove that home influences do not bind him.

I have known many a young man who has seen the right path as plain as noonday. No mental mistake has hindered him. His judgment has been convinced ; his feelings have been moved ; he has felt sure that it would be better for him, for this life and for the next, to take a decided position on the side of God and righteousness. And what has hindered him ? What has led to waste and self-remorse ? Has he been persuaded by the wise ? Has he been reasoned out of his convictions by the

influential? No; he has been moved by the jeer of a dandy or the sneer of the coquette; he has quenched his conviction before the mocking taunt of some empty-brained street lounge; he has lowered his own high tone of aspiration, lest he should seem singular in the little circle of frivolous society surrounding him. Do you say, "Can a man set himself against society?" If society quenches the true in you, if it binds you, if it robs you of moral manhood, if it makes you its slave, there can remain no question to you as to what is your duty. Scorn to degrade yourself by yielding up your individuality to suit the whim of the useless and the vulgar.

You are stepping into life, where you will find thousands who became vicious because they never *formed the resolve* to live nobly. There is many a wretched sot who is imbruted, because he never determined that he would not be a drunkard. There is many a valueless one who has become a cypher, because he never resolved to give to his life a meaning. There is many a blasphemer who is profane, because he never resolved that the foul oath should not soil his lips. There is many a defiled, vile, and diseased one, because he never resolved that he would not be the companion of a harlot. This is the sorrowfulest of all things,—men ruined, sinking into sin, vulgarity, uselessness, vileness, not

because they intended to be bad, but because they had not the courage to resolve to be good.

It is yet more deeply to be lamented that the young men who are thus ruined are mostly the open, the generous, and the frank. A cold nature that no one cares for, that is not wanted in the drinking room, or smoking room, or billiard room, passes into manhood without hurt; but good-natured and gleeful young men have a weak side whereby they become a prey to the dissipated. They are companionable and sympathetic, therefore miscreants suck them by temptation.

There is a prevailing impression that it is women, with their quick sensibilities, who are the most susceptible to the influences of fashion and opinion. It admits of question whether this prevailing weakness, in our days, is confined to the fairer sex. Take a few examples. Here, in a select neighbourhood, is a young man who affects style. A place in the omnibus would fit his limited means. But no; the omnibus is all very well for men whose position is made, and for young fellows who have no standing in society; but for him, who takes his idea of the proper thing from others, a horse and groom must form a part of his appointments. So he burdens himself, or speculates, or runs into debt, that horse or "trap" may be at command. He loses sight of the fact that it is an expenditure

according with means whereby men have risen to be honoured and esteemed, and that it is an independent weighing of the *worth* of opinions that goes before success.

Or take other cases. Yon beardless youth must smoke the, to him, offensive cigar or meerschaum, because "Tom Grandeur" struts down High Street, looking large behind his curling smoke. Nay; even little boys not in their teens must revolt their stomachs by tobacco because men do so. I have nothing to do with the habit of smoking here; that is not my point.¹ But in the name of all manliness do not turn smoker, or anything else, because men little worthy of being followed lead the way. Nor is the imitation in this only. "My Lord Meek," who cares no more for a hunt or race than the most refined and timid lady, enlarges his stables, buys a fine stud, makes up his book for the St. Leger; or, with a sore heart, joins the "throw off," caring not a whit for the brush, but very much that he may not be outdone in his equipage or establishment. All through society, this abnegation of individuality weaves its web. It is crushing all manliness out of us as a nation. Nor is the effect circumscribed to the frivolous and weak. Men think in cliques. It is intolerable to some to be out of fashion with the opinion of their set.

¹ See Appendix II.

Never was the contradiction so contemptible as that into which they are betrayed. It would be ludicrous, were it not too serious an indication of the want of principle.

Ah, this fashion of opinion, how sadly it sways. Many a young man has powers which would bless the Church and the world, but for his maudlin regard for what others may think of him. He is it may be, a young man whose father's religiousness gave him universal sway in his own town or neighbourhood. No workman but honoured him; no cottager but felt the sweetness of his sympathy. The son of this great and good man is thrown into a religious coterie, composed of people who are slow, sedate, and lack vigour. They are taught to think that religion consists in wordy prayers, sanctimonious looks, effusive utterances, instead of courageous efforts to bless men, a consistent filling up of duty, care for an employers' interest, and faithful discharge of daily tasks. Oh, do not forget that a true spirituality demands action; a true sympathy efforts to serve; and true religion will crave a manifestation of itself in the very sphere which God has appointed.

Nor is this your only danger. You will find many who will call you pietistic, puritanic, or even hypocritical, if they see you endeavouring to promote God's glory with enthusiasm and singleness. You will find men everywhere who have approval for

everything but conscientiousness. Even professors of religion will you meet who appear to have lost all standard of Christian righteousness. They have cast aside, as unsuitable to their profession, the world's code of honour, and have not adopted the higher, spiritual one. They are neither controlled by the scriptural law of right doing, nor by that standard of honour often found among men of the world; to them comfort, self-interest, popularity, are the law.

Young men, in the name of all that is true and noble, set yourself against this style of religious profession. The worst weakness in the world is to fear to do a right thing because others will criticise it. There were many Christian men in Wittenberg who said to Martin Luther, "You don't mean that you are going to hang up these theses on the church door?" "Yes," said Luther; "they are true; they assail damning error; my Fatherland is bowing down to Antichrist." "Pause," said the men who would stand well with everybody. "Is not this zeal without knowledge? Think how you will scandalise the University; how you will drive off men who would follow you in a more discreet course." "Avaunt!" said the Reformer. "The people are perishing in ignorance. The crowds of the common people who come into the city to market will read these words. Yours is not discre-

tion, but cowardice." He did the deed; and as the result of that act, Europe received the Protestant Reformation, and the night of the middle ages was ended. On one occasion, Nehemiah was urged by his friends to desert the post of duty, to conceal himself in the courts of the Temple. With heroic decision, he replied, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there that, being as I am, would go into the Temple to save his life? I will not go in." Brave, perfumed words!

During the mighty struggle for West Indian emancipation, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton was about to divide the House of Commons. His friends appealed to him not to do this. They came one by one, sat down by his side, urged, and implored him not to divide; said it would be the gravest indiscretion to divide the house; that he had done his duty by his motion; that he had better accept the vague promise which had been given him by ministers of the crown that emancipation should be considered. In the whole House there was only one looking on from the ladies' gallery who was praying that he might keep true to the cause of the slave, and that one was his brave daughter. He *was* true to the cause of humanity; he *did* divide the House; the waverers were swayed; men who feared the public opinion of their constituencies, albeit they would have been better pleased to have

compromised, went into the same lobby with the emancipator. And that division, Lord Althorp declared, decided the question of emancipation,—the question was next introduced as a Cabinet measure.

There went from Manchester to the British Parliament, more than thirty years ago, a comparatively young man. I saw that young man, unknown to fame, stand up to speak in a conference of ministers of religion who had assembled to secure cheap bread for the people, and in which, I believe, I was the solitary theological student. That conference was satirised ; not a single ecclesiastical dignity was present ; the leading journal attempted to cover it with ridicule. That young senator had courage to defend the conference before a crowded House of Commons a few nights after his admission to Parliament. His reference was hailed with contemptuous laughter ; the greatest statesman of the day rebuked him. Observe,—that young man lived to receive an apology from that statesman ; to hear him introduce the measure which had been so unpopular, and to receive himself the designation which his name will bear through all coming times—"the apostle of free-trade."

Doubtless you must avoid an undue confidence in your own judgment as well as an undue distrust.

54 *THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE AGE:*

This is not easy. To refuse to concede one hair's breadth to what you hold to be wrong, and to be at the same time careful against fallacious and hastily formed opinions, is the trial and discipline of life. The chief danger, however, in these days, is that of unworthy compromise for the sake of standing well with people. The peril is to be turned away from what is true by flattery or fear, and to abandon convictions because of smiles or frowns.

"Oh, bless'd is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell,
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible.

"And bless'd is he who can divine
Where real right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man's blinded eye.

"Oh, learn to scorn the praise of men !
Oh, learn to live with God !
For Jesus won the world through shame,
And beckons thee His road.

"God's glory is a wondrous thing,
Most strange in all its ways ;
And of all things on earth, least like
What men agree to praise.

"For right is right, since God is God ;
And right the day must win.
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

To make full assertion, therefore, of your personal character, let me ask you to bear in mind these counsels.

The great things of this world have been accomplished by individuals. Vast social reformations have originated in individual souls. Truths, that now sway the world, were first proclaimed by individual lips. Great thoughts, that now are the axioms of humanity, proceeded from the centre of individual hearts. No warlike host delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, but one man—Moses. No senate of statesmen raised Israel to a pitch of greatness that proclaimed to the world the glory and safety of a theocratic nation, but one man—David. No school of divines gave to England the Bible in the mother tongue, but one man—Wycliffe. No learned society discovered America, but one man—Columbus. No association of science revealed the clue to interpret the laws of the heavenly bodies, but one man—Galileo. No parliament saved English liberties, but one man—Pym. No assembly of theologians wrote the book, which next to the Bible has had the most potent influence on the English language and on English hearts, but one man—John Bunyan. No confederate nations rescued Scotland from her distracted councils, from her political and ecclesiastical enemies, but one man—Knox. And the same thing

might be said of almost every great step since in the progress of the race. Doubtless these men found their coadjutors ; but all through the ages God has put immense honour upon individuals. Christ most instructively teaches that it is not to corporate associations of men He gives the talents which will prepare for the grand approbation of faithfulness on the last day, but "to every man, according to his several ability."

There must be an understanding of the age and preparation for its duties. The Scripture emphasises this—that a man should "serve his own generation ;" and happily in coming days a man will be called great, not merely when judged by the highest intelligence, but when he is one who is meeting the necessity of his own age. Men say this age is great. This does not define it, because in this world, where powers of evil have always been working desperately for the possession of the race, there has never been an age that was little. It is rather to the last degree a grave, solemn, and critical age. It is an age of antagonisms. Forces are working on the one hand which may bring deliverance, and forces are working on the other which make men's hearts fail them with fear. Young men, you are the hope of society. What shall be written on the page of coming history must be determined by you.

Feeble I feel is my pen, inadequate do I find myself for the task I am pursuing; but with all the intensity of deepest conviction I would remind you that the destinies of Europe and America for the last quarter of this century depend, under God, upon those who are the young men of this era.

You have all the past to help you; you begin life entering on the labours of ages. Discoveries, inventions, travels, endowments, political struggles, religious reformations, have given you a grand start. "There is not a philosopher who has not thought for you; not a martyr for truth, nor a defender of human rights, who has not bled for you." But while lives of students, travellers, inventors, and patriots have given you a magnificent vantage-ground, they summon you to be faithful to the inheritance you have received. They call on you to perfect their labours for the deliverance of our poor tempted race. The pathway has been opened for *you*; the conquering assault against the strong fortress of wrong has to be carried by *you*. The events of the future are yours. Truth waits for you to raise its banner on high and swear by the standard under which you stand. Commerce waits for you to restore confidence between man and man. Philanthropy waits for you to complete its schemes of benevolence. Temperance waits for you to add Christian motives to her appeals against

degrading appetites. Education, that is struggling so self-denyingly against ignorance and vice, waits for you to support her new crusade.

On this last point let me dwell for a brief space. It has not been until the last seven years that statesmen and leaders of opinion have resolved that from this time adequate measures shall be taken to make England an educated nation. If a young man would assert power of character in the future, he must keep abreast with the advance of education. It will be the educated men who for good or evil will come to the front. Wealth must always carry weight ; but culture and intelligence will beat wealth and family connections in the days that are at hand. Consider what questions are coming up for discussion and settlement, and how they demand mind and investigation. Questions are profoundly agitating the nation which scarcely fall within the range of politics, and about which men speak with bated breath because no competent leaders are found. I mean such questions as these : The relations of labour and of capital ; the inevitable wars, no longer of policies, but of races and of peoples ; the continental doctrines of communistic radicalism ; the assumptions of hierarchsto control education ; the profound and fundamental differences between the sacerdotal and Protestant parties in ecclesiastical communions ; the perilous license of

free thought in churches and pulpits; the bearings of Christian faith and sceptical culture; the coming conflict between Dissent and Established Conformity;—these, and others equally grave, are the questions coming up for solution. It is those who are young men now who will be the arbiters on these momentous and national questions. A young man who will not look at them will be a nonentity fifteen years hence. A young man who wishes to secure respect and influence in the community of men must study and investigate them. The literature growing around these questions is the very noblest the world has known. The opportunity for a young man to assist in moulding the thoughts and actions of men on these coming controversies was never so grand; a young man's mission was never so inspiring and magnificent.

You are not without admiration for the illustrious men who served their country during the last generation. If you read their biographies there is one invariable mark—they prepared themselves for public life by diligent self-culture. They formed their opinions upon carefully derived information. They were not satisfied with the advantages which schools, colleges, and universities had yielded. They read hard. They stimulated their intellect by the debating room. I shall not enlarge on this. Advice on matters of education is in danger of

∞ THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE AGE:

becoming a weariness. Only let us not forget it. Let us not dream that the three-volumed novel of our period will prepare for the influential places in society. Let us not be under the delusion that the smoke or billiard room will furnish a conversation to form our opinions. Let us not forget that it is mind which governs men, and that it is the cultivation of the judgment, of the higher faculties of the nature, that gives that tone of character and that ascendancy of influence which great men exert. So far as I have observed, there are two connected dangers into which young men fall. The one is to underrate their powers, the other to trust too much to hard reading. The safety is to combine with careful study a habit of independent thoughtfulness.

Reputation must be sedulously secured. I do not mean by this the popularity craved by a low ambition. I mean the reputation that wins confidence. The community now watches a young man as it never did before. There are those who are indignant that they fail to secure positions; they have not laid to their account that an unseen, unspoken opinion has been watching their life. They thought they were escaping observation. It was a serious mistake. There is no youth too obscure or too hidden to escape notice. A man reaches the place of trust and honour by one way,

and that way is high character. No hereditary claim can avail now-a-days. No gold can purchase honours which abide. Society is hard and just. It will not be permanently imposed upon, and will not withhold in the long run unlimited confidence in the man who from his youth has honestly striven to build up a fair reputation among his fellows.

But let me now point out to you *the crowning virtue of character.*

Among men there are *five classes.* The *lowest* class are the slaves of fleshly appetites. These are the sensual, the debauched, the lascivious, the drunken.

The *second* class obey the world, and judge after the worldly standard. These are the lovers of pleasure, lovers of style, lovers of money, lovers of power.

The *third* class are the intellectual. Wisely they culture intellect, but neglect the heart. They acquire information, but not benevolent emotions. They investigate nature, but do not adore before the glories of nature's God.

Higher still, there is the *fourth* class—the moral. They are the soul of honour; they love liberty; they teach political principles; they profess to comprehend the duties that man owes to his neighbour.

The summit, however, of greatness, is when, with attention to intellect and moral laws, there is the development of the capacity of religion. It is here humanity culminates — the development of the spirit in man. These of the *highest* class are lighted up from within by the Spirit of God. By the inbreathing of the Almighty, they have understanding of things unseen ; they do not despise intellect, but intellect in them is warmed and vivified by a divine brightness ; they honour morality, and seek a right standard for measuring its duties ; they fall into the movements of the Perfect Mind and the Perfect Love ; they learn to renounce self, to control the fleshly ; they acquire a disposition that can forgive ; they are prompted to do good, and are enlarged with beneficence ; they have aptitude for spiritual enjoyments, and receive constantly new accessions of joy and power, whereby they become fitted for those blissful regions where love, purity, nobleness, peace, and benignity have place for ever.

Young man, just beginning your existence, behold your true destiny. Oh, for God's sake, and your own sake, do not fall short of it ! This elevation to which I call you is not in opposition to other attainments, it embraces them. Piety will not give the intellectual talent which nature has withheld ; but, if true, it will vastly im-

prove whatever intellect a man has. It will not supply high reasoning powers if they are not there before ; but it will save reason from that blindness of conceit and prejudice whereby so many are fatally hindered and misled. With piety a man's intellect will be keener, his understanding will be sounder, his judgment will be wiser, and his tastes improved and refined. Richard Cobden is represented as having declared that he never felt confidence in a man who was not possessed by religion ; he was not at all sure what action he would take. Myriads of facts confirm the observation of the statesman. Of two poets, otherwise equal, the Christian is the greater. Of two statesmen, the Christian attains the more permanent fame. Of two artists equally gifted, the Christian takes the higher place. Of two merchants equally practical and far-seeing, the Christian reaches the surest success.

At first sight you are ready to dispute this. No doubt you may find exceptions, but they do not disprove the rule. May I ask you to look round? In this generation are there any names that have more adorned a place on the woolsack than lawyers of most pronounced Christianity? Are there bankers, merchants, manufacturers of such wide-spread mark as are men of our era who make no secret of their Christian convictions? Are there

politicians of this or of the last generation who have achieved for themselves a name which has gone throughout two hemispheres like those who avowed the supremacy of the things of the kingdom of God? Were it in good taste to mention names, I might write those of modern architects also, and artists, and physicians who confirm my statement. These men have served the world, but from time to time they have looked reverently upward. Religion has raised them to a temper and plane of thought eminently favourable to success. On the other hand, I might tell out a record of names that would have towered to the loftiest heights, but around which there are sad and awful memories through the absence of a governing and master sentiment of the soul. No prejudice is so contradicted by facts as that which conceives of piety as allied with weakness. Piety is the nurse, the handmaid, the inspirer of all that can give man greatness. "A man's religion fertilises the whole field of his being. It makes his business safer, his scholarship wiser, his manhood manlier, his joy healthier, his strength stronger. It is the crown of his enterprise and the charm of his affections, the humility of his learning, and the glory of his life. And because it has sight of things not seen and eternal, it is the splendour, the transfiguration, and the sanctity of things seen and temporal."

You hear at this time much about religious cant and hypocrisy. But let me tell you the cant which is the most irrational, and the hypocrisy which is the most insane, is that which deems it manly to live without communion with God. Ashamed to be in communion with heaven! Ashamed to be inspired by your Creator! What madness would be this—if the sapphire should be ashamed of the light that makes its beauty; if the quivering beech leaves should be ashamed of the sunbeams that dance on their smooth surface; if the flowers should be ashamed of the daybreak that reveals their hues; if fields, hills, and the whole realm of nature should be ashamed of the precious influences which the heavens pour down upon them! But for you, a child of God, to be ashamed of receiving illumination and impulse, wisdom and elevation, from the Father of your spirit, is the most pitiable misjudgment of which any creature can be capable. Talk of religious cant—there is no cant that is so hateful, because there is no cant that is so unreflecting and senseless, as that which sneers at man having fellowship with his Maker. It is God, my brother, who gives to every star its brightness, to every cloud its nameless colours, to every lily its snowy whiteness, to every tiny ocean shell its mingled hues. Oh, then, go to Him! Ask Him to condescend to bless you with His Spirit; He will

bring all your nature into harmony and peace, and will be an impulse to all that is "lovely and of good report."

Have faith in the significance of your life. There is no exaggeration when a living writer says: "If there were the smallest star in heaven that had no place to fill, the oversight would beget a disturbance which no Leverrier could compute. One grain of sand, that did not fall into its place, would disturb, or even fatally disorder, the whole scheme of the heavenly motions. Every particle of air has its appointed place and serves its appointed end." God, dear young man, means something by you. Yours may not be the highest, but there is some high work which you may fulfil. The low grass-tuft is not the branching cedar towering for centuries on Lebanon, nor is it the fragrant orange-blossom, which is plucked to deck the bridal wreath; but neither the orange-blossom nor cedar could render the service of that lowly grass-tuft. Ah, and the fidelity in the lower sphere inevitably conducts in man's case to a higher. Permit a reference of observation. I have known in my life scores of youths who were aspiring and pure when in their teens. I know them now occupying in our large cities positions of weight and dignity of which they never dreamed twenty years ago. Society delights to witness these spectacles. I have known

young men to whom I have spoken in their boyhood, when the path of life looked difficult and dark, but who possessed integrity of principle and desire to be useful, and now they occupy a place in chambers of commerce, sit on the magistrates' bench, are the pillars of Christian Churches, and princely in their munificence. I have known youths entering the Civil Service with the single purpose of obedience to duty, and now they have received as their award positions of the greatest respectability, and in some cases of high governmental trust.

They libel the age who tell you that character, principle, and diligence go for nothing. Who knows, my aspiring reader, the foldings of nature in you that may blossom into this flower of success and honour. Placing your life in surrender to God through Christ, you may be guided to an elevation of influence for which multitudes may for ever remember your name. Your first acts of decision for truth and conscience may have immortal issues. Only let me ask you to note this: Do not be anxious about the high place. Ambition of a low order carries with it heart-bitterness, and often defeats itself. Nothing is so insatiable as an un-sanctified ambition, and nothing drags a man through such a realm of night. Just leave all your future in God's hands. It is by imperceptible steps he conducts a man to influence among his fellows.

He helps those who use the one talent, and increases power according to our fidelity in the least things.

Friend and brother, in starting life will you get near the Father of your spirit? Ask Him to use you. Give yourself morning by morning up to Him. I know one who for years has uttered with his waking thoughts the well-known verse of the morning hymn :

"Direct, control, suggest, this day,
All I design or do or say ;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite."

In the blessed moments of more serious converse with your Maker, breathe in this formative period of your existence the prayer : "Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do? Why have I an existence among these living souls of this creation? Why hast thou given me these grand and awful endowments of thought, reason, intelligence, speech? I look round on the universe, and see all creatures fulfilling their appointed service. I see the sun filling the whole hemisphere from day to day with his light and heat. I see at night the stars lighting up the arch of the firmament, each keeping his appointed place, the silent preacher of obedience to Thy will. I see the bird that balances its pinions on the air, testifying of Thy goodness. I learn that the tiny invisible insect is answering its purpose in

preserving the salubrity of the atmosphere and the purity of the water. I find every fragrant violet of the hedge-row and every shock of corn fulfilling a mission of serving. I learn from Thy Word of the higher spirits that dwell in Thy presence, that they have their appointed work; that angels are ministering spirits, and do Thy commandments, hearkening to the voice of Thy word; and as I thus behold a universe where each has its appointed place, I utter the prayer more earnestly, What is the meaning of my life, Father of spirits? I share Thy counsels; reveal Thy thought respecting me." Deeply am I convinced, my brother, that if with some such prayer you enter upon this period of your life, your existence will prove no meaningless thing; it will be instinct with influence, and will have an end to which you will come with unutterable rapture.

I surely need not say, When you have found the right path *do not turn back*. Should the eagle which has soared higher than his compeers break his pinion, he would drop lower than the lowest. It is related that in the American War of Independence the army of Washington had crossed a bridge over a deep river. With the river behind and the enemy in front, the great general proposed the question to his officers, "Shall we burn the bridge?" "Burn it!" said the staff;

"we may want it for a retreat." "Retreat!" said Washington; "if that is the only reason for retaining it, then it must perish. Burn the bridge!" was his instant order; and it was laid in ashes.

I have known scores of young men who started well. Their standard was high, their ideal of what Christianity demanded was just and lofty. They resolved that they would scorn the mean, the money-loving, and the selfish in life. They wound their conscience up to that point. But there the finger stopped, just at that figure: it told out still what their ideal had been at starting. And this was all; the clock did not go. They now have no sound, no tone about them. They still say they scorn the mean, without aiming to *do* noble things; they still tell you that they hate avarice, but they are not benevolent; they have their theories about selfish Christians, but none bless *them* for their self-renouncing deeds. This is of all things the most pitiable,—that a man should sink lower than his own standard, and go through life false to himself.

"To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night to day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

But to stand still is impossible. Deterioration ensues; and the man who started with right aspirations becomes tortuous in his course, just because

he did not persevere. Such a man may often be met with. He has acquired a character for being righteous, but is unrighteous. He has taken a Christian position, but follows the cunning and artful ways of the worldly. He first dallies with deceit, and then becomes confused in his notions of truth. The plain path invites him, but self-interest guides. Young men, if you would acquire permanent honour; if you would make your mark among men; if you would enjoy a growing weight of influence;—press onwards. Scorn the untruthful. Treat with contempt the dodges and subterfuges and craftiness that eclipse men's fame and lead on in the end to failure and contempt. Recall sometimes what is said of good Lord Falkland, that he abhorred the semblance of falsity, and of Wellington, that "he always told the truth."

At the beginning of manhood you stand now; a few years and you will stand at the end. The span is brief; the earthly life and the eternal life are one. No interest can another have in your living a noble life that is comparable to the interest you have in yourself. Soon the shadows will flee, and men will be judged, not by the earthly standard, but by what they have been and have done. Sometimes when bales of merchandise leave England for a colonial port, the price put upon them there is very different from that they had here. So,

when you have gone through the gates of death, the angels will not ask how you stood with this world, but they will estimate you by your fidelity, your sympathies, the consecration of your life to that which was true and good. Alone you will go into that eternity, as alone you came into existence ; alone will you tread the path to the throne of God ; alone you will be judged ; alone will your opportunities come up in review ; alone will you carry through eternity the results of the one earthly life you have lived. Said a noble youth, who lived long enough to fulfil high promise, "I shall die as an individual, I shall be judged as an individual ; I am resolved, therefore, to live as an individual." It is just this purpose to which in God's name I summon you in this address. Let it be so, my brother. Take thy place with the illustrious ones of all times who have lived to bless the world. Pass on to manhood and to immortality with the seal of God upon thy brow. And then, when death has done its mission, disenthralled of flesh, thou shalt rise to the unobstructed sphere where hindrance never comes, and where thou shalt begin an illimitable work. There, with thy life grafted upon the infinite, it will be fruitful as no earthly life can be.

III.

*The Sceptical Doubts of the Age:
how to solve them.*

My object in this address is to relieve the doubts on religious subjects which meet a young man in these days. With some, to doubt is constitutional. They are not able to give easy credence to any tidings. With others, the very stupendousness of religious subjects causes the mind to pause in hesitancy; the revelations of Christianity are so transcendent, that thought wavers before their very grandeur. There may be doubt, also, from those appalling miseries of human life which it is the mission of Christianity to heal; or from the terrible sense of loneliness which falls on some spirits; or from the strangely un-Christian lives of Christian men. But doubts just now are the weakness, or the temptator, or the fashion of the age. This is

no longer an age of faith. Unbelief within the Church and disbelief without form the prevailing and portentous disease of the times. Doubts are therefore to be treated tenderly. There are thousands of doubters among young men at this hour, and they are not to be denounced, but helped.

On the other hand, there is a pretence of doubting which is the simple outgrowth of flippancy or conceit. We hear Tennyson quoted, that there "lives more faith in honest doubt than in all the creeds." Let me, however, remind you, that Mr. Tennyson did not mean *resting* in doubt; he meant an "honest doubt," that was bent upon inquiry, and was open to conviction. He therefore thus speaks, in this same passage, of one—

"He fought his doubts, and gather'd strength;
He would not make his judgment blind;
He faced the spectres of his mind,
And laid them: thus he came at length

"To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone."²

Observe, a great character is not built up by doubting. There is weakness, not strength, in doubts. There has been a terrible force in utter disbelief, and oftentimes the hero's daring and magnificent achievements have sprung from strong Chris-

² In Memoriam, p. 143.

tian faith. But it would be difficult to find energy and effectiveness springing from the bosom of the doubter. When in the cool morning the sun is shining cloudlessly, there is vigour in the step ; but when the night has come, and darkness oppresses, the limbs and heart grow weary. The sad-heart, says the proverb, tires in a mile ; and there are ten thousand fine young men in Great Britain in these days who are smitten with a paralysis of moral power by the blight of unbelief which is passing over the age.

Observe this also, as an important preliminary thought to this discussion : Christian faith carries with it a moral quality. It is a profound utterance when Shakespeare says in his King Lear—

“ Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile.”

Paradoxical it sounds : even wisdom may seem vile, and goodness also, if *we* are vile. I know no more degrading nor more comprehensive mistake than that which regards Christian faith as a mere matter of assent or opinion. Christian faith carries with it candour, ingenuousness, humility, persuadableness. But the awful canker of these days is not doubt as to Christian themes merely, but doubt as to all that is high and glorious in human life. Men abound who indulge a sort of presumption against what is grandly noble and unselfishly generous. They are always ready to believe in what

is flat and mean in men. They have an ear always open for detraction, and they listen to any man who can pick holes in character. God only knows who is responsible for this immeasurable evil of these days. He only knows the hypocrisy of profession that has given birth to this all-blighting distrust in men and in goodness. But the habit is a fearful and an invincible barrier to Christian faith. How can they believe in the glorious goodness of God, who have come to a universal doubt in nobleness among men? How can they believe in the grandly unselfish in Christ if they always doubt the reality of this unselfishness in human beings? If Christ in bodily presence were among us now He would not parade the evidences for the truth of Christianity before this age, but would look into the face of men who carry in them a cold, prevaricacious unbelief, and would say to them, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

There is another consideration to which I invite your careful attention. You say the leaders of science in this age are sceptical: the men who have investigated nature the most are, you say, disbelievers in the supernatural. I shall have something to say shortly on this assertion about the leaders of science. I wish you now to note that

any man will come to disbelieve in the supernatural, who has allowed himself to become estranged from communion with that divine light whereby all things become luminous and harmonised. Let a man cease to commune with God, and the path of scientific atheism lies straight before him. While science was humble it glorified the Creator; when it became ambitious it became a falsehood, because it had no aim but to glorify itself. When science limited itself to the discovery of the phenomena and order of nature, it blessed humanity; but when it left out of view the spiritual realm, and rushed eagerly to the denial of creative acts, it became a blind guide to the age. Such illustrious men of science as Newton, Linnæus, Kepler, and Charles Bell, studied the works of nature to adore the Creator; there are later scientists who intentionally ignore the Creator from the beginning of their investigations; and how can nature help them to find God? They leave the living spirit and take material stuff as the origin of all organisations, and what can the outcome be but selfdom and atheism? As an able scientific writer has said, "This lust of the scientist to know everything on his own terms supplants true science, and mockingly gives oracles out of its abandoned shrine. So have we seen an aggressive young cuckoo overfilling a small bird's nest, and the true brood lying about

dead on the ground. If such a man goes on in this career, he will in time care for nothing about science, *and everything about himself*. He will soon be more dexterous in getting rid of God out of his own mind than in studying creation. And the end of him will be, '*Ego, et natura mea.*'" These are terrible words of one competent to speak, and they have a terrible significance in relation to our days.

You say that all scientific men are disbelievers in Christianity. This is a huge mistake. In the two great universities of Oxford and Cambridge there is not a single professor of science who teaches it antagonistically to Christian faith. In Scotland, Ireland, and America there are illustrious scientific writers, and not a few of them adore Christ and recognise the supernatural as the origin of all things. No doubt there are distinguished scientists who indulge in the contemptuous and supercilious towards Christianity, and it is unhappily the fashion of the hour to regard them as leaders. But it is such men as Dalton, Davy, Herschell, Faraday, Lyell, who laid the foundation of modern science, and they worked in a Christian spirit; they were neither arrogant nor supercilious towards Christian beliefs; and they would have said it was only a little they had read in "nature's infinite book of secrecy." It is with the same reverence for Christianity that men of consummate learning now

realise that their physical investigations are conducting them to a grand reconciliation between science and revelation, and they find themselves approaching what Professor Balfour Stewart, in the meeting of the British Association in 1875, nobly termed "A great generalisation, a mighty law, we cannot tell what, and we cannot tell when."¹

"We are all in the dark together as to the origin of species," were some recent words of the *Times* newspaper. The sentence occurs in a powerful leader on the yearly address of the President of the British Association, and they were preceded by this remarkable sentence: "While modern science can boast of certainty, truth, and sound good sense, there are mixed up inextricably with all this, *uncertainty, falsehood, and specious nonsense.*" This is the common-sense view of Englishmen of that theory of evolution which has been supposed to be so fatal to ordinary beliefs. That theory is, that in the infinite ages of the past cosmic gas developed sea-slime, sea-slime, life in the protozoa, and so the development, by a natural process, produced at

¹ The words of Professor Huxley, in the *Nineteenth Century Review* for Sept. 1877, deserve quoting here. He spoke of not having reached the faith of Christians as to a future life, when he added that he would make the best of the brief span of existence which is within his reach without reviling Christian believers whose "faith is more robust, and whose hopes are richer and fuller," than his own.

length the intellect of Plato, of Jesus Christ, and of Shakespeare. Such an astounding and degrading theory, which sets aside creative acts, ought to be supported by overwhelming evidence. But it is about this very thing that the *Times* says "we are all in the dark together." As a matter of fact, there is not a single incontrovertible proof to support the tremendous conclusions of this theory. There is not a vestige of evidence of an intermediate link between apes and men. Let me quote for you a sentence from an able investigator. In the introductory lecture in the autumn of 1876 to the Natural Philosophy Class, in Edinburgh University, Sir Wyville Thomson affirmed, "The passage from one species to another, as the evolution theory demands, is entirely outside our experience. *There is not a shadow* of evidence of one species having passed into another during the period of human record and tradition. The geological record gives no traces of transitional forms from one species to another." Mr. St. George Mivart, equally a scientific investigator, calls the theory "a puerility of science," and uses these strong words: "The doctrine of the evolutionists is not supported directly by any one single fact in the whole domain of nature; it is wildly improbable, and it appears to me strange, monstrous, unnatural, and portentous, that the doctrine

HOW TO SOLVE THEM.

should occupy the attention of the scientific world."

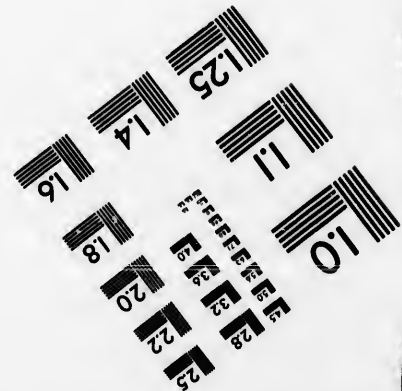
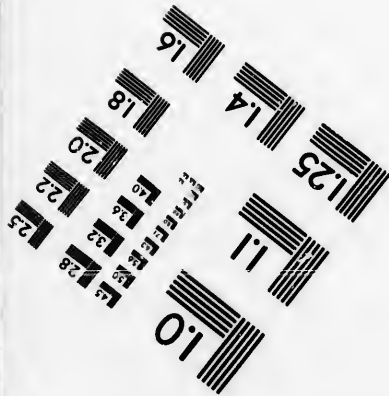
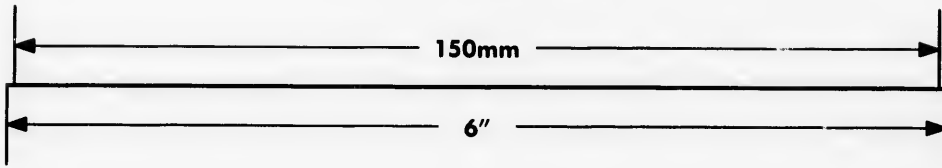
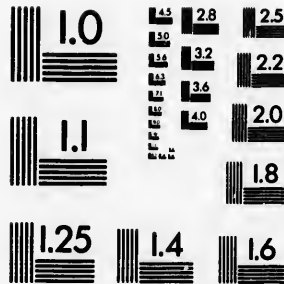
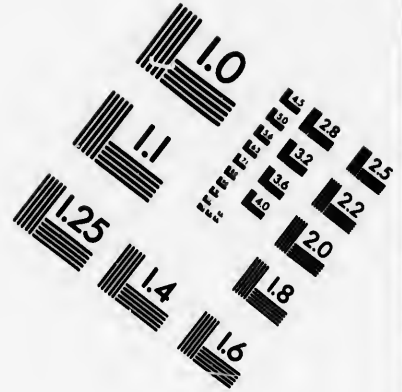
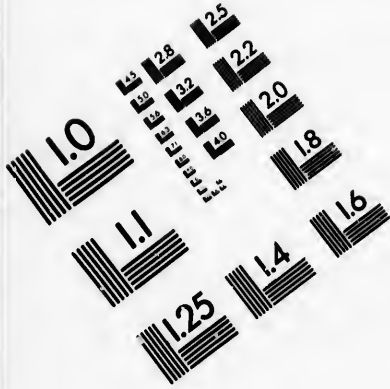
These quotations are clothed in weighty language. They painfully suggest that this doctrine of evolution would not have become the fashion of the hour had there not been a motive. Doubtless eminent men are superior to their own hypotheses; "but," says Dr. Wood, who is himself a great naturalist, and late tutor of Queen's College, Oxford, "I cannot conceal from myself that there are many others who eagerly enrol themselves as disciples in these new schools, not because they are impatient of the cosmogony of the Bible, but because they would gladly get rid of the teaching there which is unpalatable." I must bear witness that I have observed among these "disciples" a dogmatism and a contemptuous treatment of opposite theories that are utterly unlike the modesty of true science, and stand in very painful contrast to the spirit of the illustrious men whose labours they inherit.

It has been well asked, "How can selection account for the whale?" The whalebone in this creature's mouth is a sieve, which, when it swallows water, retains the minute marine creatures on which it feeds. Of what use would be the *rudiment of a sieve*! How then did the whale get selected? A similar argument has been drawn from the tubal larynx of the kangaroo. The fact is, as investigation proceeds, it more and more proves *design*, and not the blind resultant of natural selection.

It is indeed admitted by evolutionism that there



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is no incontrovertible proof of one species having passed into another, but it is contended we have not all the page of nature's operations before us. But why are men to believe that natural processes originated species in ages when investigation is impossible if there be no adequate evidence of these transitional forms in the ages that are open to human inquiries? A supposed derivation of the horse was lighted on recently; but the supposed genesis has scarcely added to the reputation of the propounder. It is admitted that man differs from the ape in his intellectual nature. Whence came the difference but from the will of the Creator? How is it that there is not a shadow of evidence of the uniting link? Until this be found, we must prefer to classify man, not with the ape, but with the Son of God, and we must remind ourselves of the language of the *Times*, that with truth and good sense, in these investigations, there have been inextricably mixed up "falsehood and specious nonsense."¹

¹ There are one or two additional facts demanding notice. The silurian are, as our readers are aware, among the lower palæozoic beds: *i.e.* among the earliest where traces of life occur. But in those beds a species of shark is found in fossil. This has been justly termed by Professor Williamson, F.R.S., "a seriously awkward fact," and "a serious hindrance to the evolutionary theory." This shark bears a singular witness. It is found in beds containing the first forms of life, but its scale of fish-organisation is among the highest. Here is no

But the objection to the evolution theory becomes much more serious. So long as it remained a doctrine of scientific inquirers and was not brought into the life of men, it was left to finish its evidence. But recently the doctrine has taken a form which demands a firm attitude on the part of young men. The logical conclusion of evolutionism, as now proclaimed, imperils the very existence of civilised society. It is nothing less than this,—that men who have come from sea-slime, through monkeys, are merely sentient automatons—mere machines who must obey irresistible impulses; that man is bound and held fast in an iron mill of necessity; that burglars and forgers have merely, like clocks, been following a force they could not withstand; that the “robber, the ravisher, and the murderer,” must be treated as men would cage wild beasts, not because

gradual development, but nature has taken a prodigious step forward. A very “awkward fact” indeed is this. Moreover, it is not unfairly asked, if there has been one series of developments constantly going on, so that according to Mr. Darwin a *species* has no real existence, how is it that the protophyte of the dawn of creation is the protophyte still? How is it that there exists in the first forms of life the same formation we see to-day? The chalk beds abound with foraminiferous shells called Globigerina. But the recent Atlantic dredgings bring up these same unchanged Globigerina, still found after measureless ages, unchanged, undeveloped, in the mud of the deep sea bottom! (Lyell's Elements of Geology, p. 318.)

there is any hope of reforming them or of checking their crimes in the young who might irritate them, but that society may protect itself. Such is the logical outcome of evolution as propounded by Professor Tyndall in the presidential address of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Oct. 1st, 1877, and since published by him in the *Fortnightly Review*. I once met with an excellent German pastor at Schwalbach, who was converted by reading the Life of Jesus, by Strauss. He had been on an incline of Rationalism, and Strauss showed him the abyss to which he was descending. It is probable that this "logical conclusion" of evolution will have the same beneficial effect. Men will open their eyes when they find that truth, honesty, and rightness are to be relegated to the category of worn-out beliefs in virtue. They will affirm that the "ravisher and the murderer" are to be restrained, not because they were troublesome beasts who must obey their impulses, but because they were *not* wild beasts, and would not *deny* the bestial in themselves. I congratulate pure-minded young men that the antidote of scientific atheism comes with its last unfolding. They will guard against these doctrines spite of the "specious" language in which they are clothed, and they will set against these cravings for a passing popularity the brave, strong words of the grand sage—Thomas Carlyle: "A good sort of man is

this Darwin, and well meaning, but with very little intellect. It is a sad and terrible thing to see well-nigh a whole generation of men and women, professing to be cultivated, looking round in a purblind fashion, and finding no God in this universe. And this is what we have got to: all things from frog-spawn; the gospel of dirt the order of the day. The older I grow—and I now stand upon the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the sentence which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes: 'What is the chief end of man?—To glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.' No gospel of dirt, teaching that men have descended from frogs through monkeys, can ever set aside that."

We may therefore thus sum up the objections of common-sense against this doctrine of the Evolutionists. According to their own admissions, spontaneous generation has never been known to occur, and Professor Tyndall candidly admits, after the most careful and elaborate experiments a scientist ever attempted, that, so far as we see, life cannot be originated from matter. They also admit that no new species has ever been formed by selective breeding, and that at present the sterility of hybrids must be accepted as a fact. Professor Dana affirms that no remains of fossil man bear any approach to the ape type, and that "the

molecular law is the profoundest expression of the divine will." Further, the term "evolution" has now been given up by Mr. Herbert Spencer as a wrong name, and "involution" is now to be the word. Further still, between the Involutionists and the Mathematicians there is a difference, wide as the poles asunder, as to the time required for the creation of the universe on the natural history of creation theory. The Evolutionists require infinite time for the working out of their theory, but the scientific mathematicians of our period affirm that the teaching of astronomy is in the teeth of any such notion; that, instead of even 500,000,000 millions of years, mathematics as applied to the stellar forces can only give fifteen million of years. Lastly, we may quote the words of Professor Clifford, written one thinks by him with a touch of humour— "It is probable that the doctrine of evolution fills a somewhat larger space in our attention than belongs to its ultimate influence. In the next century men will not think much about it. They will be paying attention to some new thing!" Therefore, with such unutterable confusions, admitted oversights, irreconcilable contradictions, we leave the whole doctrine of development, and fall back upon the magnificent sentence with which the Bible opens,— "IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH."

But a source of doubt, to which a marked reference is necessary, is that which springs from the supposed difficulties found in the Bible. Some persons have expected that the Bible, being called a revelation from God, would be like a book written in heaven, and altogether different from human works. But, in infinite wisdom and mercy, this has not been God's mode of revelation. The earlier books of the Old Testament are the most ancient writings in the world. They were written long before Greece was heard of, and in a most illiterate age. I am not astonished to find the marks of a rude antiquity on these writings: I am astonished that in that dim morning of history these writings should so immeasurably surpass the miserable legends of other ancient peoples, and should possess a charm, picturesqueness, and facility of translation which have interested men in all nations, and for thousands of years. It is an infinite condescension that God has been pleased to reveal His dealings with the human race through writings that are the genuine product of these ruder ages, and that He has revealed the method of His providence through the history, the infirmities, the virtues, the sins, and struggles of men. This history is both Human and Divine. It is Human, for the men who wrote it carried into it the peculiarities of their age and their culture. It is Divine, for it truly and faithfully tells the

dealings of God with the first races of men, and afterwards through Christ. In the one Book you have unfoldings of God's mercy, compassion, and righteousness, and in the other the unfoldings of His love. In the Old Testament you have records of men who lived in an earlier period of humanity ; but the writing or the compilation of these records has been controlled, not always in letter, but in substance, so as to teach the awfulness of sin, the safety of righteousness, and the faithfulness of Jchovah. Dreadful is it to be told of the incest of Lot ; but it is merciful that we have a justification of the warnings against the licentious nations of Moab and Ammon, whose origin is thus narrated. Through all the records of men in the Old Testament, you are taught, as in the life of such a rude shephard as Jacob, that every wrong act has a seed of evil in it, whose bitter fruits the doer has to eat, and that God's providence is perpetually controlling the good and the evil for the education of men and of nations. So with the prophets. They taught their own times, but their message was for all times. The separation of these two elements is the fruit and the reward of human study.

Look at the Book of Psalms, the liturgy of prayers and praises for all ages ; the sacred ballads for humanity. There is much that is human in these Psalms ; but if God had sent down to us songs

composed by the angels, they would have been valueless by the side of those in this incomparable book. While I am in this world of fierce temptation, of suffering, and of moral weakness, what I want is not so much angelic musings and raptures, as the prayers of a man, sinful, tempted, struggling, suffering, fallen, as I am; and yet a man ever reaching with such sobs of penitence and intense heart-cries after God. I mourn David's sin and sufferings, but I feel grateful that the Scriptures have preserved to me his Psalms, which interpret the fiercest beatings of my heart, the lowliest confessions of my moral besetments, and the deepest aspirations of my nature.

Look, again, at the Epistles of the New Testament: you have here the records of churches which fell, some into one error, others into another. But these errors are such as are common to humanity. Admirable, therefore, is the wisdom whereby inspired doctrines and consolations are conveyed not in any abstract method, but in their relation to the very tendencies of our nature. Your objection therefore, to the Bible, that it is so human, is from an utterly mistaken impression of the mode in which revelation could be best made to men, and from forgetfulness of its deep, profound, and marvellous adaptation to human life.

You ask, What is to be said about the first chapter

of Genesis? I assure you I have read that chapter again and again for thirty years, and its interest grows with every perusal. The primeval record of the formation of the world has about its language a simple, matchless grandeur that makes this first page of the boundless literature of after times the most precious document we have. This cosmogony of the Hebrews, compared with those of the Hindoos and Persians, is like comparing gold with copper of base alloy. Our English version conveys an impression of six natural days of creation, but the original gives a much more pictorial and wider latitude. That the day is not one of twenty-four hours is evident from the statement that God rested on the seventh day. The rest-day was clearly a period which has lasted for at least six thousand years.* And the record gives a picturesque view of the *order* of creation that astonishes for its approach to scientific accuracy.

* It may be supposed that it is because of the demands of modern science the theory of indeterminate periods, instead of natural days, is applied to the record of Moses. But this is not the case. Philo said, "It is a piece of clownish simplicity to think that the world was made in six days." Origen argues against those who hold the six-day theory, and interpret the record literally. Father Ryder says that Augustine regards the Mosaic record as "a leaf taken from an angelic record, in which time, properly speaking, has no place." See a little book on Natural Theology, "Proteus and Amadeus," C. Kegan Paul and Co. 1878.

The venerable record affirms the late date of man upon the earth ; so does modern geology. Sir C. Lyell says : " No discovery has shaken our belief in the extremely modern date of the human era." It teaches that the world was once covered by water ; so does geology. " It is concluded as a fundamental maxim in geology," says Professor Philips, " that the whole area now occupied by dry land was once covered by sea." It teaches that God made the dry land to appear ; and geology affirms that the rocks, or dry land, have been upheaved from the waters.

Science in its most recent developments has been thus anticipated by the grand pictorial view of creation with which the Bible opens.

When we come to the second chapter of Genesis we meet with that which the highest philosophy has taught,—that there is a measureless distance between man and all the lower animals, and it is most impressively shown that it is to the workmanship of God Himself we must ascribe the formation of man ; then how touchingly beautiful is the parable of the formation of woman, and the lesson of the tenderness of her union with man ; then how remarkable that in all parts of the world nations have retained a tradition of the Deluge ; and recent times have brought to light a fragment of Chaldæan tradition which is so like and so unlike the Scripture

history of the Flood as to furnish striking proof of the genuineness of the Bible record of that event.

Let me assure you that instead of the Bible history being discredited by research among Babylonian, Chaldean, Egyptian, and Syrian mounds, the evidences for its accuracy as to names of places and of events are being multiplied beyond all anticipation. Silent witnesses are finding a voice in most unexpected places. Corroborations are being found on stones, bricks, and ancient documents of the truthfulness of the venerable records we read in our childhood. It is easy for prejudice to ignore these great confirmations. But if men are candid they must be profoundly awed and impressed by them. Let me add a few other confirmations of the narratives of Genesis. This ancient book tells of a fall of man, and Greek legends tell of a "golden age." It speaks of "the serpent" as the tempter of man, and the serpent has been in all Eastern nations held in abhorrence as the emblem of the evil principle. It tells of the longevity of patriarchs, and the traditions of the nations speak of the same fact. It teaches that after the flood there were three heads of the human race, and such scholars as Prichard, Bunsen, and Max Müller find a triple division, and that the human races are Semitic, Aryan, or Turanian. It speaks of a "confusion of tongues" at Shinar, and

the monumental language found on this spot in Babylonia is unique for its *mixed* elements. It says Abraham emigrated from "Ur," and modern research in the mounds of Chaldea has revealed for the first time in our days a city of this name. It speaks of an Elamite dynasty that carried war into Canaan, and Babylonian documents are found which describe these Elamitic conquests. It tells of the state of the Egyptian kingdom in the times of Abraham and Joseph, and the most minute references are shewn to be in harmony with what is now known from other sources of the Egypt of that period. But these confirmations not only relate to Genesis, they might be adduced of every later historical book of the Old Testament. If the Bible records had not been true, confutation would be easy now that stores of antique learning are brought to bear upon them, and when they open such an immense scope for criticism. It is the sheer ignorance of infidels which ignores these remarkable verifications. To a candid and instructed mind they are absolutely overwhelming. If a young man would pursue this line of investigation, let him do so by means of "Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament," by Rawlinson, the Camden Professor of Ancient History, Oxford.

Then consider the research that is being given to the New Testament Scriptures. Learning such

as the world has never seen equalled ; philological knowledge vast and accurate ; devotion of time on the part of a host of able inquirers in Europe and America—are all pursuing investigations into the questions of the authenticity, credibility, and genuineness of the Gospels and the Epistles. The style, the testimony of adversaries, the nature of the language, the evidence of ancient manuscripts,—are all brought into court to test the truths of these writings. A blaze of light is being shed on them in our times, under whose myriad rays falsehood or imposture must long ago have been detected. Nor can it be said that they are biassed scholars who are pursuing these inquiries. They are being pursued by critics whose honesty of purpose is beyond all question ; men who, instead of being shaken in mind or troubled by the fulness of light poured over these New Testament writings, have a conviction forced upon them of their genuineness which approaches in our times an absolute and unflinching certainty.

There was, it may be, a period when Christian believers were illiterate. It is just the opposite now. The acutest lawyers of this age are firm believers. Statesmen of consummate genius bow reverently before the claims of Christianity. Men of the largest scholarship, and the foremost advocates of education, are men who are not

ashamed of avowing their admiring love for the New Testament Scriptures. It would be easy to mention names occupying the highest judicial, legislative, and literary positions in proof of this.

On the question of *the antiquity of man* I will add a few words. The question has come to a stand-still. There has always been a haze of uncertainty around it, and this remains what it was seven years ago. There have been cave excavations pursued eagerly and expensively, but their results during the last few years are *nil*. I have explored the two great caverns at Ingleborough, Yorkshire, and Kent's Hole, near Torquay. In the former case the measurements of the stalagmites seemed to show that the blocks were increasing before the eyes of this age at a far more rapid rate than had been assumed for their growth in the latter. In relation to the so-called flint implements, the confident assertions of their human workmanship are being seriously questioned. No less an authority than Dr. Carpenter says, "No logical proof can be adduced that the peculiar shapes of these flints were given to them by human hands." No doubt very learned and candid men are in favour of their human origin. But we have yet no certain evidence that the forces and powers of nature have not been adequate to their formation, and there

are difficulties on either side. They are found in caves and river beds along with the bones of extinct animals ; but there is a very singular absence of human bones, which are quite as capable of preservation as those of these mammals. The flints are found in the drift beds, but not a bone of man's frame, not a fragment of his pottery, not a trace of his dwelling. To affirm that the flints incontestably prove that they were of human workmanship, without a shred or relic of the presence of man, must be held to be doubtful reasoning. Nor can it be said in reply that the few savages who chipped these flints were little likely to leave these traces of their presence. If there were human makers of them they were not a few. These flints are to be counted by millions and shovelled by spadefull. Professor Huxley once read a paper before the Geological Society which was sent to him by a civil engineer, N. Whitley, Esq., and written after embanking, making roads, and draining land in North Devon ; and he found these flints thickly scattered over an area of twenty miles in length and ten in breadth. It was argued that this must have been a place for the manufacture of flints by the savages. A rather extensive manufactory at Keyham for this hour, the place of manufactory at Keyham for the whole of the British navy covers just one square mile, whereas Mr. Whitley contended that these

flint flakes covered an area of two hundred square miles ! There must have been a considerable colony of savages in the region, and yet those savages have left not one undoubted relic of their existence ! Surely men may be forgiven doubting whether these chipped flints came from human hands, and may be allowed to wait for more logical proof.

A little more than ten years ago a "human jaw" was said to have been discovered at Abbeville, France. A workman found it in the gravel. It was a great godsend. The puzzle of the absence of the organic remains of the flint-makers was solved. Learned men at once pronounced on its high antiquity. The Anthropological Society of London stated that it was "a marked example of the Papuan type." Mr. Prestwich, a high authority on quaternary geology ; Mr. Evans, the greatest living expert in flints ; Dr. Falconer, an eminent physiologist, went over. They examined the precious fragment. Dr. Falconer was satisfied. A M. Dubois, physician to the Infirmary of Abbeville, and Dr. Herquet, an eminent medical writer, came to the conclusion that the jaw was that of a man who "belonged to another race than ours." There was a stain on the jaw which could not be effaced ; there were filmy, calcareous incrustations. The two geologists, Messrs. Prestwich and Evans, were doubtful. The question was debated. Letters ap-

peared in the *Times and Athenæum*. French savans met English deputies for discussion for three days. Alas! this "Papuan" jaw of the anthropologists turned out to be exactly like the mortal remains of some Saxon Christians in Picardy, and it was found that a workman had imposed on the learned world and had fraudulently inserted the "precious fragment" into the bed of gravel.

And now, are we to attach infallible authority to scientific opinion? Will it not be the wiser course to regard this antiquity of man question as not proven?

Moreover, do you think Christianity rests on a chronology, and a chronology derived from writings of an antiquity which never pretended to a method of writing figures which approached the numerical accuracy of five thousand years later? There may possibly be evidences in Gen. iv. 14, and vi. 1, 2, of a pre-Adamite race. But why should I perplex myself with what has not been revealed? Why may I not be perfectly trustful, awaiting further light? Lord Bacon says: "I had rather believe all the fables of the Talmud and Koran, than believe that this universal frame of nature is without a mind."

I am aware that *the mystery of the Divine existence* is a profound difficulty to every thoughtful

person. But would not the conclusion that there is no God be a more appalling mystery? As to the disproof of the Divine Being, that is impossible. Dr. George MacDonald's word on this subject is not too strongly put: "As well ask a fly, which has not yet crawled about the world, if it can prove that it is round." And who is man, to stand up in this great universe and to affirm that he has proved there is no God? When you have lived longer in the world, if you have watched and noted the history of families and individuals, I promise that you will then say there is a power governing the universe in the interests of righteousness, frustrating the machinations of the wicked, and making the shelter of falsehoods roofless in the end for those who have sought refuge there. Mr. Froude is among the greatest of living historians, and he finely says that you may go "to the past history of the world, and prove diverse theories from its ample pages according to your disposition. But one lesson, and one lesson only, history repeats with emphatic distinctness and without the least ambiguity. There is no possibility of diverse theories here, and that lesson is, that the world is built on moral foundations, that in the long run it is well with the good, and in the long run it is ill with the wicked; and that one lesson is the old doctrine taught long ago by the Hebrew prophets, that the fear of the

Lord is wisdom and to depart from evil is understanding." If this be so, and that it is so is incontrovertible, there is no possibility of escaping the conclusion that there is a governing Mind.

But let me ask you not to exaggerate the difficulty of the existence of God. Look at the light of the sun. It sends its rays through every cottage, every stream, and over every living thing, and yet it never contracts a stain, and takes no soil. It awakens the germs of life in organic nature, and they emerge in an endless variety of forms; it clothes the forest with a robe of verdure, paints the fields with countless flowers, and calls forth the song of thousands of birds. It unchains from their icy bands the mountain snows, and sends myriad rills to make music through the valleys. It makes the gladness of childhood, and cheers the gloom of age. At the same time it can photograph every mental emotion and every change of moral feeling. No subtlety can deceive it; it pierces beyond the false look; it images the character with startling justice. It is no labour to the sun to do this. Endow this sun with mind; conceive that its rays not only pervade and photograph every object, but do so consciously. Have you not here an emblem of Him who takes this image of light?

Do you not further see myriad proofs of design in the atmosphere, the soils, the foliage, and your own

frame? Out of ten thousand proofs equally remarkable, let me mention one or two. Think of the egg of a bird, so made that wherever it is placed the chick shall float uppermost, so as to be near the warm bosom of its mother. Think of the adaptation of the camel to its life in the desert; its feet, not like the hoofs of a horse, but cushioned with elastic pads, that do not sink into the sand, but spread over it; its stomach set round with water sacs, from the supplies of which it can journey for days without coming to fresh water; its eyes overhung with eyebrows, and nostrils that can be firmly closed, whereby it is not incommoded with either the hot sand-clouds or the glare of the desert. Think of a gulf-stream, sixty miles broad and three thousand feet deep, which comes from the tropics every winter, which secures an equable temperature for the fishes, and prevents the seas at Stockholm and Norway from becoming a block of ice. While this is so, there is a polar current, which rises in Greenland and hastens to cool the tropics. Think of the constant demand for lime in the ocean to form the bones of the countless millions of fishes born every hour, and recall the fact how there is not a river that is not pouring into the sea perpetually millions of tons of lime for this purpose, and every brook and tributary of the great rivers is supplying it. Do not all these things point to a directing intelligence?

Are we to conclude that this marvellous and mighty mechanism of nature is the chance development of a nebulous cloud? Is there not in nature everywhere a beautiful unity of design? Is there not a wondrous adjustment of complicated powers and elements for one common end? Is there not a most precise interworking of correlative forces in one harmonious co-operation? Are there not traces everywhere of an all comprehensive law that is controlling movements the most mighty, and governing the organic formation of creatures the most minute, so that they all proceed upon a fundamental plan? Is it not a wilful blindness or proud conceit that sees no design in all this?

You say it is difficult to realise a Power unseen? You nevertheless admit the *force* of the unseen. There is a gravitating force perpetually proceeding from the sun and moon. The sea-tides twice every twenty-four hours are the palpable proofs of that unseen action of the two luminaries. Here is an unseen agency affecting every day of your life all the waters spread over five-seventh parts of the globe. Gigantic is that force, and it contributes to the well-being of everyone of the twelve hundred millions of the human race. Why, with this fact in your view, should a mighty stream of influence proceeding from the Deity be such a difficulty?

I admit to you that if we did not know God in

Christ, these evidences of His existence would not counterbalance the doubts awakened by the terrible sights and sounds of a tearful and wretched world.

But, when you come candidly to the Scriptures, you find the proof of a great and mysterious Power of evil that has been struggling for the possession of the human race, and you learn that Jesus came forth from God to interpret for us His Divine pity and His helpfulness. Because, as I hold, the origin of the supreme power of evil, and of the demons over whom he rules, is entirely concealed from us, shall we deny their existence? Are not the terrific and measureless temptations of men the palpable proofs of such a malign power? Christianity has no meaning if you deny human miseries. The great promise of the Bible is that of a Deliverer. We needed this most. I assure you there are myriads who have found God in Christ. The revelation of love in His incarnation, His atoning death and His resurrection, becomes to them, as years go by, an unflinching certainty. The depths of wisdom which that love discloses, the power of it to comfort and elevate man, the rest which it gives to intellect and to conscience, are felt to transcend all probability of human invention. A transient or cold impression of what the Gospel reveals may admit of doubt. But when conscience is listened to

with its testimony of sin ; when life's burdens and sorrows and infirmities press on the spirit ; when this dread enigma of temptation is pondered, as its proofs appear among men in such countless and awful forms ; when the lonesome journey is anticipated into the great unknown to which death opens the door ;—then there are hours when the testimony of Christ as preserved in the New Testament Scriptures comes home to the heart with an infallible conviction of truth. We revolt at the idea that man could ever have invented the Jesus of the Gospels, or the Cross of Atonement for human guilt. Our reason, our heart, our judgment, and our conscience all cry out, "These are the true sayings of God." "We *know* that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

I am aware that I have no right to offer this as a proof of the truth to others. But I testify that if you have a right intent to learn what is the truth, and will read the New Testament, you will not remain in doubt. As you love the truth you will attain to the truth. Inspiration is that which is more to be felt than proved. Even now there is much you can comprehend. It is not fiction but indubitable history which affirms that eighteen

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105

hundred years ago, in a strip of fair and sunny land in Asia—a land which for two thousand years had been the theatre of events which marked it out as the scene for some grand evolvement of historic import—there appeared a Teacher from Galilee, just rising into the maturity of manhood. He unites in Himself the most unusual varieties of character. He has vast intellect and the tenderest sensibility; the calmest judgment and the keenest feeling. He is lowly, but always magnanimous; He is meek, and yet majestic; He is most compassionate to human frailty, but abhors human vice; He is despised, but never fretted; insulted, but never ruffled; never is He charged with sin, yet by a strange and precious sympathy He draws to Himself the sinful and outcast. He is essentially human; is found at the marriage feast and the evening meal. He speaks parables which childhood can understand, and over which genius wonderingly lingers. He is a Jew, but, unlike a Jew, is "dominated by the passion of humanity." His teaching is so profound, wise, and novel, that it for ever shades all the teaching of the wise men of antiquity. He did works which none other man had ever done. He invited all heavy-laden ones to come to Him for rest, and declared that He would give this rest. During a very brief ministry, five hundred men and women so believed in Him, that afterwards

many of them laid down their lives for His sake. Very soon after His death upon the cross, when He startled His enemies by the loud cry, "It is finished," a "*vast multitude*" in Rome itself enrolled themselves as His disciples. This fact comes to us on the testimony of the heathen historian, Tacitus; and Gibbon admits it must be received as unquestionably genuine.

This Jesus Christ we affirm to be the Son of man and the Son of God. He is the Revealer of God. He pierced to the core of human misery, while He wielded the resources of Omnipotence; He wound about His heart human sympathies, but now sits at the right hand of God exalted. My brother, I solemnly tell you that to refuse to believe in Christ after the evidence afforded will violate your candour, will trample on the rectitude of your reasoning, and will bring on you consequences which you will hereafter deplore. I cannot utter words that deserve comparison with those of Christ Himself: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not abide in darkness." "He that rejecteth me hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

You may ask, Can a man be lost for *sincere* doubt? If a man clings to his doubt, if he will not candidly inquire, if he refuses to receive testimony,

he will *remain* lost, not because of his doubt, but because of his obstinacy. This talk of sincere doubting is often very unreasonable talk. A man may sincerely doubt whether it is well to sow corn in the autumn or spring, and he may sow his fields in July; but his sincerity will not save him from bankruptcy or the workhouse. A schoolboy may sincerely doubt the necessity of learning Euclid, history, and geography; he may refuse the testimony of wiser heads; but his sincerity will not save him from going into mercantile or professional life a dunce, and the chances are that he will rue his so-called sincere doubt to the end of his days. You, my brother, will soon pass into a world shrouded in impenetrable darkness. There is but one voice which can tell you of a way whereby your spirit hereafter may reach a region of light and felicity. Should you close your ear to that voice, and nurse your doubts, and refuse to investigate, then let me tell you that the Scripture speaks of a "shame and everlasting contempt."

Miracles are made an occasion for doubt to some. Let us examine this objection candidly. Why are miracles not believed? "*They contradict experience.*" A few years ago, M. Boutigny, at a meeting of the British Association, caused ice to be produced from a red-hot crucible. Surely this contradicted experience. "*They are incredible to*

reason." So is the fact that the sea once covered the beds of sea-shells on the tops of the highest mountains. "*The enemies of Jesus attributed miracles to magic.*" The very proof they were wrought ; else they would have denied the facts, and not resorted to this pretence. "*They are impossible, for they suspend inflexible laws of nature.*" To this modern objection I reply, there are no laws of the universe except the direct agency of God. If, then, He interposes to arrest a subject-law, there is no suspension of the law of nature ; it is still the supreme law in operation. For example : By the inflexible law of gravitation, a ball dropped from the top of a tower falls to the earth. But suppose a man catches it in his hand, is the law of gravitation suspended ? Not at all. A controlling law is brought into operation, to which that law is obedient. Thus you have the agency of God in miracles. Do not, I implore you, be swayed by writers who find it the easiest of all things to multiply objections when they are utterly indifferent about finding replies. Remember that in the first ages miracles must have been worked, else Christianity, with the tremendous sacrifices it demanded, could not have gained a footing in the earth, much less have changed the religion of the Roman empire. Gibbon tried his strength to dispute this ; but never did a great writer so signally fail.

Attention has just been called with admirable discrimination to what is termed the *specific appropriateness* of the miracles of Scripture. They occur in groups or series. They cluster round certain great crises of history. They bear a specific character adapted to the epoch when they occur. For example: The miracles of Exodus are adapted to the end of prostrating in ignominious ruin the gods of Egypt. The miracles of the wilderness proclaimed that God was no mere national deity, but entitled to obedience and trust as the one only living God. The miracles of Elijah and Elisha sustained the testimony of these great reformers against national apostacy. The miracles in the book of Daniel were the proof that Israel would emerge unconsumed from a fiery furnace of Babylonish captivity, and that God had not forsaken them. The miracles of Jesus dealt with men's private life; they presented Jesus as the Saviour of individuals, and warranted personal faith in Him as man's Deliverer. Miracles in this light are not merely *evidences*; in their marvellous grandeur and their unearthly beauty, they are profoundly significant, and are an essential part of the religious education of mankind. †

Observe, also, if you want demonstration that will

† Condensed from E. R. Conder, M.A., on "The Basis of Faith."

overbalance all difficulties, you will never find it. In the affairs of this life men act on the *preponderance* of evidence. If there should appear twenty reasons for a course of action, and only five against it, he would be reckoned a fool who became swayed by the five, and refused to inquire further. In mercantile life, the men who will never decide and act till they have reasons which exclude all doubt, are left behind in the progress of society, and become the poor and despised. Your condition in this world is a test whether you will be true and docile. If you want light, there is abundance to guide you ; if you choose darkness, God will not compel your belief.

Note further two facts. A prince once asked his chaplain to furnish him with evidence of the truth of Christianity, but to do so briefly. He received a brief reply,—“The Jews, your majesty.” Yes, here are the Jews among us. Without a king, without a centre, and yet preserving a mysterious identity. Will you study the problem, whether any key to the history and fortunes of the Jews fits the lock of their strange sufferings and dispersion like that the Scripture gives? And here is the Church. Intrigue and falsehood you can find in it. The base designs of its members would long ago have discredited any other association. But through more than eighteen centuries the Church has been

a witness for purity, self-denial, benevolence, and saintliness. None but a bigot will deny this. Will you ask how came a Church with such a history into being? Could lies have given it its lofty benevolence, its wide-spreading conquests, and its imperishable sway?

And observe, the end will come. A nurse recently was summoned to a sick bed in Paris. The invalid was a young Englishman. Before she would enter upon her duties she asked if the sufferer was a Christian. Upon being answered in the affirmative, she said, "I have seen such horrible sights, and heard such wailings, in the dying chambers of ungodly and dissolute men, that I dare not now undertake to nurse another such a one." Trunchan, in his memoirs of Voltaire, says: "I wish that those who have been perverted by his writings had been present at his death. It was a sight too horrid to witness." These are awful facts and foreshadowings after a life of infidel pleasure.

While these sheets were passing through the press, I read the memoirs of two men whose lives ran side by side, but in whose end the contrast was deeply instructive. Both were born in the year 1800; both lived unto the third quarter of the century; both were men of genius and culture; both had access to the first literary circles of Europe; both were writers of celebrity. One was

a sceptic ; the other a firm believer in Christianity. The one, John McLeod Campbell, closed his days in a calm evening of serene, unbroken repose. His last words were, "What a rest to know that I am in my Father's hands!" The other, Heinrich Heine, wrote before his death, "I am very wretched ; I am almost mad with vexation, sorrow, and impatience." His last letter contains these words : "My brain is full of madness, and my heart of sorrow ; never was poet so unhappy in the fulness of fortune *which seems to make a mock of him !*" Thus died the sceptical poet of the gay world of this era !

Let me add a test of your sincerity. One of the most accomplished and gifted of authoresses has told us that dark doubts on divine subjects once shrouded her spirit. As she looked up at midnight to the vault of the heavens, and saw the stars moving in serenity and order, the thought came over her troubled spirit—"The Creator of those orbs must take an interest in me, His rational creature. I hold to nothing but a dim hope of His existence. I will take my dark mind to Him, and ask Him for light. Prayer shall be with me the '*test of truth.*'" To that sincere cry the answer came. Her heart, intellect, and conscience found rest in Christ ; the Bible became to her an exhaustless fount of wisdom ; in mathematical culture and in musical taste she

became distinguished, and her life became signally useful and saintly. Two eminent men were lifted out of their doubts by the promise in Luke xi. 13. "If the Bible be true," they reasoned, "the Lord will give His Spirit to them that ask Him. We will put this promise to the proof." The one—John Newton—became the most influential preacher of the Gospel in the British metropolis: the other—William Wilberforce—became one of the best, most useful, and most honoured of statesmen.

My brother, let this be the test of your sincerity. Will you earnestly and perseveringly ask God to fulfil His promise in you?

I shall close this address with thirteen articles which may be termed **THE CREED OF THE INFIDEL.**

1. That Book is to him an imposture and pretended revelation, which furnishes the only explanation ever offered of human misery, suffering, and death; which responds to man's universal craving for immortality, and gives transcendent glimpses of a future state; which presents the sublimest views of the compassion of the Creator; which paints a picture of man which has had an exact transcript in the history of all nations, and on behalf of which myriads rise up to testify that it has been a ceaseless impulse to aspirations, a comfort in their trials, and has taken away the fear of death.

2 He believes that the earlier narratives of the

Bible were fabrications intended to glorify the Jewish nation : but somehow these fabrications are totally unlike the legendary traditions of Greece and Rome, for instead of making their ancestors gods and heroes, they make them slaves, and tell a history of Jacob and his sons which covers their progenitors with infamy ; and, strange to say, these fabrications imposed upon later prophets who were the sternest denouncers of falsehood, and are now imposing upon six millions of Jews, who with a tenacity unparalleled, and sacrifices ceaseless, cling to the ritual and history of their ancestors.

3. He believes that by some unaccountable species of literary deception, unlettered or fanatical men have pretended to give four narratives of the Founder of Christianity, which the greatest modern critics confess are "the very gold of simplicity, integrity, and truthfulness," and which present an image of Jesus Christ, that brings most vividly into view the very perfection of humanity, that has furnished a model for the noblest spirits among men, and that surpasses in beauty and grandeur all that poetry ever sung, or human genius ever conceived.

4. He believes that the writers of the New Testament were either knaves or fools, and yet they taught the purest, wisest, most elevated, and most self-sacrificing system of morals the world has ever seen.

5. He believes that in the most enlightened and sceptical age of the Roman Empire, thousands of men were such arrant fools as to give credence to a history of Christ which was full of lies, and to a record of miracles which had never been worked, and this at a time so near to the events that an imposture could not have escaped detection for an hour.

6. He believes with M. Renan that the Resurrection of Christ rested on the testimony of a sentimental woman; or with the author of "Supernatural Religion," that the deception had its origin in a "notoriously superstitious age;" and yet that men of the noblest intellect have held for eighteen centuries that no historical incident has ever received such ample and powerful support; that it completely revolutionised the bearing of the original witnesses who affirmed that they had seen Christ after the Resurrection; and that that Resurrection has offered the most magnificent consolation to sufferers and martyrs for truth, has never been disproved by the ingenuity of opponents, and has been felt to raise the whole sum of human life to a loftier, sublimer, and enduring attitude.

7. He believes that "a vast multitude" of Romans, Greeks, and Jews deserted, a fanatical superstition, the splendid temples of their fathers, the schools of philosophy of which they had been proud, and the religion of their ancestors, which

had been enriched by the grandest historical associations.

8. He believes that the early propagators of Christianity, and the believers in it, acted altogether contrary to ordinary motives of weak or bad men; they embraced a creed which, instead of gaining them aught, exposed them to the most diabolical cruelties, and held their testimony in the face of tortures, banishment, and a shameful death.

9. He believes that, although Christianity is a lying system of priestism or fanaticism, it nevertheless, according to irrefutable testimony, abolished the ferocious deeds of the amphitheatre, overthrew the horrid rites of Paganism, introduced an era of benevolence, and marked a new starting-point of progress for the human race.

10. He believes that twelve obscure, penniless Jews, with a higher wisdom than was claimed by Socrates, Cicero, or Plato, taught the only religion which has been proved to be adapted to every country and every condition of man on the surface of the wide globe.

11. He believes that the Christian Sabbath, or the weekly seventh-day rest, is an institution indispensable to the present physical condition of men and animals; that without it modern civilisation would bring to myriads of men and beasts unbroken toil, disease, and premature death, but that this seventh-day rest is a purely human institution,

having come, he scarcely knows how, from men who were foisting on the world false and illiterate traditions under the name of Divine revelations.

12. He believes that the writings of the Christian Scriptures, although an ill-constructed collection of falsehoods, have been most firmly held to be true by men of the profoundest intellect, of the most resolved and persevering investigation,—the very scholars, thinkers and master spirits of humanity, such as Newton, Bacon, Milton, Boyle, Locke, Pascal, Davy, Selden, and a host beside.

13. He believes that those great nations of Europe which are immensely in advance of all the nations of antiquity, and of all the heathen and Mohammedan nations of Asia at this time, and which are distinguished for their liberty, wealth, culture, arts, schools, asylums, charity, and beneficence, have become so while under the sway of a miserable system of religious superstition, which a few unlettered fanatics palmed upon the world eighteen centuries ago, or which was the lying cutcome of a superstitious age.

Sceptic ! is this thy creed? Then, O man, great is thy faith !

Trifler ! who callest the Bible "weak folly," take heed ! Thy despising of Christianity and thy influence against it may be shown to be thy folly

and culpable weakness, which will have to be deplored by thee in ages to come.

My doubting brother, you may turn the tables when reproached with the beliefs of Christians, and point to the absurdities involved in **THE CREDULITY OF INFIDELITY.**

IV.

*The Christian Young Man's Place
in the Age: how to fill it.*

I PURPOSE in this chapter addressing Christian young men. To them I would say it does not become us to adopt an apologetic tone in relation to Christianity. There are, unhappily, those who have professed the supremacy of the religion of Christ, and whose life and intercourse are carried on in such a way to keep their conviction out of sight. They are like the fashionable lady who communicates at the popular conformist or nonconformist church, and who places on her drawing-room table the last Parisian novel of doubtful character, and hides away the book distinctively Christian. No, no: we have not thus to excuse our Christianity. The one and only power that has been bearing upon men with results of perfect satisfaction for

eighteen centuries has been our holy religion. When we think of its brilliant line of magnificent history : when we recal the names of the noble confessors whose witness against the falsehoods and unspeakable evils of the world it has inspired ; of the courageous patriots whose unselfish consecration to the welfare of nations it has evoked ; of the illustrious men, endowed with immortal genius, and adorned with the loftiest character, whom it has enrolled as its disciples : when we reflect upon the saintly lives it has produced in every social circle—the men rich and poor who left everywhere indelible traces of their sanctity, and the women who moved through domestic circles beautified by the holiest virtues : when we remind ourselves of the depths of misery into which it has penetrated with healing compassion, and of the savage tribes it has rescued from revolting barbarism and introduced to the comity of civilised nations : when we think how it has elevated woman, broken the fetters of slaves, taken orphans under its protection, and originated myriad machineries of philanthropy : when we remember how it has taught nations justice, has striven against tyrannous selfishness, has instructed the rich to be liberal, and demanded a reward for the industry of the poor : when we reflect upon the long line of transcendent scholars who have bowed to its claims, and never were doing this more notably

than at the present hour : when we bring into view the millions of Christian workers who now are teaching ignorance, assuaging wretchedness, carrying consolations to the sick and dying, and doing this with a heroism and persistency which the blessed angels might emulate,—when we recal all this, we are not disposed to apologise for Christianity, but to glory in it with exulting thankfulness, and, instead of craven fear and distrust, to hold it forth, with the overwhelming proofs of its Divine origin, as the only hope of the world and the only safeguard of society.

We must remember that Christianity has been conferring these incalculable and transcendent blessings on the human race not by touching the springs of selfishness, but by the force of its own heavenly motives, and by the impulses it has awakened not among any special class, but wherever it has found a true disciple.

Neither must we forget that numbers of otherwise excellent persons are altogether unable to estimate the vast benefits Christianity is now conferring on the world. They never enter distinctively Christian circles ; they never visit the scenes of Christian labour ; they are profoundly ignorant of the distant climes, where among barbarous tribes the blessings of civilisation have been diffused ; they never enter an orphanage ; they know absolutely nothing

of neighbourhoods of misery and vice, where wretchedness has been changed by Christian efforts into contentment and purity. They bear in their hearts a doubt or scorn that blinds their eyes and dulls their ears. They share the advantages of this noble Christian service, and they are like men who drink of the refreshing water and ignore the hidden springs whence it issues.

I affirm that the religion of the Son of God was never struggling against wickedness, ignorance, selfishness, vice, and misery, as it is at this present time. It never was sending forth such a host of resolute workers to fight with the demons of sin that waste the race. It never numbered among its followers men and women who were marked by such a self-renouncing benevolence of effort, and such a saintliness of life.

Among these works of a living Christianity, must be reckoned the service rendered to this age by young men who are enrolled as members of Christian Associations. Recently in Toronto a Convention of representatives of these organizations was held, which showed that 821 Young Men's Christian Associations had sent in reports from the British American Provinces and from the United States, and this was an increase of no less than 266 of the Associations in one year. These Societies embraced a membership of avowedly evangelical

believers numbering no less than *one hundred thousand* young men, and they held property for the purposes of literary culture and Christian agencies amounting to just upon two millions of dollars, exclusive of annual current expenses, which, with the cost of furniture and books, are of the estimated value of more than six hundred thousand dollars.¹ How lamentable is the self-concentration of our age, which keeps vast numbers of persons in ignorance of these facts. Feebly is it apprehended how Christian young men by their voluntary unity and combination are forming in our days one of the noblest armies which the world has ever witnessed. It is not a mere sentimentalism that binds these young men together. It is a practical and benevolent principle. They are found in the cells of State gaols to teach prisoners a true freedom; they bend over the beds of sufferers in hospitals to whisper words of blessing; they gather in school-houses and every available place the outcast; they walk the streets at midnight uttering words of warning, and ready to guide back the strayed and lost ones to homes of virtue; they touch with friendly hand the staggering young drunkard, and

¹ There were present at Toronto as representatives from England, Mr. George Williams, the Founder of Young Men's Christian Associations, and Mr. M. H. Hodder, a member of the London Committee.

do valiant battle with the awful and all-destroying curse of strong drink which is blasting the age, and hurrying to death and darkness myriads of men and women. They are among the foremost workers in evangelistic services. Nor is the stranger overlooked; they open homes in leading seaports for the young Europeans drawn to their continent by adventure, or driven thither by the desperation of ruin at home. They draw to themselves in the Southern States the coloured young men, and burying the old prejudices of race, seek to prepare them by education for the free citizenship to which they have been introduced. Perhaps their noblest mission just now is that of organising an effective and adequate system of visitation for the eight hundred thousand men employed on American railways, and many of whom are out of reach of the Christian Churches. At every great railroad centre of the land they form a branch association, and charge themselves with a brotherly care for the young porter and clerk. By personal conversation, by mass meetings, and by the circulation of books, Christian newspapers, and a healthy literature, they are seeking to awaken a religious feeling, and to bring these otherwise neglected ones into contact with the strong moral life of great cities.

Surely a man is not to be envied who hears of these associations in the other hemisphere without

a thrill of interest and hopefulness. No statesman or journalist of mark is there in any European city who is not impressed with the spectacle the United States of America present at this hour. Never before in the history of mankind has there been seen the working of such a problem. There over enormous territories, amid diverse races, among elements apparently irreconcilable in their heterogeneity, is witnessed a perfect political freedom; and there is witnessed also a national self-restraint which calms popular tumults, secures the ascendancy of moral sentiment, and preserves that boundless country from the dismemberment and convulsing revolutions which the wisest statesman thought inevitable. Unquestionably it is the livingness of a Protestant Christianity which is guarding the autonomy, and establishing the predominance of law in that enormous Republic, and which, amidst the tremendous commercial temptations of new conditions of society, is laying deeper and broader foundations of righteousness. But it must be admitted that these modern Christian Societies of Young Men have done much to educate citizens, to prepare their members for public life, and to diffuse in the great cities of the land the leavening restraint and impulse of a vital Christianity. These Associations are being remarkably prospered. They bear witness before all men to the success of their

efforts. The report presented in Toronto affirms of the year which was closing,—“*It has been a year of extraordinary blessing from God upon the associations and their work.*”

On the Australian continent the same organisations are springing up, are hailed by the best men of all Protestant Churches, and are destined to exert the widest and most beneficent sway in those rising communities. It is true that in England Christian laymen are sorely hindered by the disintegrations which society suffers through the prejudices and partisanship of religious sects. Yet even in the United Kingdom a noble host of young men have associated themselves together on the basis of the following simple, unsectarian, and comprehensive principle:—

“The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding the Lord Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His kingdom amongst young men.”

In London, according to the report for 1877, no less than 5,575 young men have been received into membership, of whom one-third are in active service, and there are about 10,000 associates. In Liverpool there are 1,030 members ; in Manchester,

2,500 members and associates; in Leeds, 860 members; in Bristol, 485 members; and were I not unwilling to fill this page with statistics I might show that these figures, impressive though they are, present a meagre view of the cities and towns in Great Britain and Ireland where young men, without separating themselves from Christian Churches, are uniting to give expression before one another of their discipleship to Christ, to strengthen brotherly devotion, and to promote by distinctively Christian work the cause of righteousness among men. It is probable that mechanics' institutes have disappointed men of distinguished name who assisted in their formation. They seemed to need the salt of a purifying faith. Young Men's Associations are taking their place, and they are safe and grow as the Christian sentiment is maintained inviolate. The members of these associations in large cities are consecrating themselves to the noblest mission which ever engaged the attention of Englishmen. With the love of Christians and the daring of heroes they are devoting their prayers and personal labours to the recovery to Christianity of the lapsed masses of our people. Not content with the efforts to strengthen their own faith in Scripture by studying together the marvellous Book, by reading-rooms and literary classes, they are organising arrangements for informal, free, and

vigorous efforts to recover the millions of men who have, alas ! been alienated from Christian Churches, and so many of whom have been dragged into an abyss of drunkenness and pauperism by the tremendous allurements of profligate pleasure which our age has been multiplying. May the great God bless these young brothers ! In the darkest strait of the Church's distress they have come to the rescue. They are fitted even better than pastors for this work. They know the snare that is spread for men's feet. They are not ignorant of the immense expenditure and efforts made to corrupt leisure hours ; nor of the tides of temptation which sweep round young men ; nor of the poisoned cup stretched out for their hand. It is therefore to be hoped that these young men may still be regarded without jealousy, and may find in Great Britain that which they receive in America, "the hearty co-operation" of the clergy, of all teachers of religion, and of all Christian Churches.*

And now I would offer to these and other Christian young men of our times the following counsels.

* I will place a passage in the Appendix on this last point. The state of Christian society is clearly very different in this country from what it is in the British Provinces and the United States of the American Continent. I am assured, therefore, that a note on the subject is demanded, and lest it should encumber the text, I place it in the Appendix, No. 1.

The only religious life that can be effective in this age must bear a character of intensity. What force and fulness of energy in these days does worldliness command! How strong its current! How attractive its fascinations! How it invites attention! How it appeals to every social class! How consummate the cleverness of its programmes! How extravagantly gross is their adaptation for one class, how arrestingly sensational for another, and how subtly refined for a third! And will anything less than out-and-out Christianity meet this new state of things? There are young men who go to worship on Sundays in churches and chapels, and some of them go to sacraments, who are without enthusiasm for Christ. Astounding paradox! Theirs is a degrading view of Christianity, as though it saved by a faith unaccompanied by courage and self-surrender, and as if the end of Christ's coming into the world was to make people comfortable. Christian young men, whose will is nerveless in the clutch of avarice. Christian young men, whose only idea of leisure is to make it a pastime. Christian young men, who, like Samson, are delivered over to the Philistines to grind the mill of the world. Christian young men, who mingle in the pleasures of those who are without God, and help them to forget Him more effectually. Christian young men, who are skilled in what is absurdly termed a muscular Chris-

tianity, but cannot utter a public prayer to Christ ; and whose lives, instead of producing the impression that religion is the one thing needful, produce the conviction that religion is to be hidden away like base coin, which must be passed surreptitiously.

What a weak dream to suppose that such unmanly Christians can turn back the flood-tide of worldliness that sweeps on so broadly and strongly in our era. As well expect, in the rapids above Niagara, a listless rower, whose boat is borne on to the falls, to stem its terrible current.

No language is forceful enough to describe how this miserable standard of religious profession is robbing life of its development, and is traitorous to the cause of Christ among men. Ye young men who have taken on you the name of the thorn-crowned Saviour, and are partakers of His glorious resurrection, behold the results of this compromise. See scepticism, atheism, rationalism, superstition, intemperance, and impurity. And is this a time for what men term the *aurea mediocritas*? Is this a time for a mediocrity, which is a procrustean bed for those who fall on it, and which robs Christian living of all its witness? Is this a time for toleration of every practice and opinion except a Scriptural standard of Christian living? Men are decided enough in their universal pleasure-hunting ; shall

you not be whole-hearted in your confession of the Lord? If *your* testimony is silenced, who can give one in the days at hand? I know that there never was an age so ready with the sarcasm thrown at "the pious." But is there not a cloud of witnesses of those who in other ages bore this cross for the Master, and who saved the world by denying it? If religion is to sway these times it must be through you. If the beauty, the majesty, and the noble unearthliness of Christianity are again to awe, to reprove, and bless men they must be seen in you. You, by the Spirit's grace, can repeat the impressive testimony of the days of the Reformation and of the last century's great revival.

Use your life as far as you can for others. Self-abnegating love is the law of Christianity. No character has ever been great without this mark. To nothing does God give such abiding fruitfulness as self-sacrifice. It matters not if human gratitude does not immediately follow the sacrifice. Though now serving in a lower room there will come an hour when your ear will catch the blissful words of your Master, "Friend, go up higher." The life inspired by self will make you dependent on the smile of others, and will inevitably bring future disquietude. The life of loving service for others—service not because others even ask for it, or are entitled to it, but because they need it, will bring you into one-

ness with the Son of God, and will cause Him to join Himself unto you in your daily work, and bring you ultimately to the glory and magnificence of that celestial place where, He says, "my *servant* shall be."

Forget not that the law of Christ's kingdom is one of separateness. Palestine was geographically positioned so that while it touched the lines of traffic between the great empires of the world, it lay separate from the nations, and was bounded by the sea and deserts. It was to influence all the ancient world, and be separate from all. Wondrous and significant sign of God's selection and of Divine intention! You mistake, however, if you think the New Testament law of separateness is to mar human happiness. It is the safeguard of the world. What is the world's law of pleasure? Self-indulgence, shameless license, detestable selfishness. These things are not the happiness of the world; they are its degradation, and they open the door to myriad sensualities, cruelties, and sufferings. Look at France at this hour. Those who best know that otherwise noble, vivacious, and thrifty race, tell us how the abolition of the Sabbath, and the habit of universal pleasure, has been followed by the deepest social alienations and hatreds. Look at Germany, that has gone down the incline of Rationalism to Nihilism and Pessimism, and to an utter discontent with life, and all human

things. Look at the worldly professors of Christianity in England; the men and women who have joined what God hath put asunder; who, as far as in them lay, have married the Church and the world, and caused them to shake hands together; as they never did before in this Protestant realm; who count as lawful practices which other generations of professed believers condemned; who have silenced scruples about the most worldly amusements; who have broken down all the fine old distinctions. Are they blessing the world? Are they teaching their households righteousness? Out of such households servants go forth to scoff at religion, and sons to join the hosts of unbelievers. These professors help on the course of this world, which from the days before the flood hath carried on its skirts wasting, godlessness, contempt of righteousness, and miseries which no angel in heaven could count. Christian young men, it is your mission to repair the wastes, to mark again the healthy lines of separateness, and to give to the testimony of the Church in these days of bewilderment a voice of direction and attractiveness. It is yours to build up a grand, godly life, which the world hath not belittled nor defiled.

One method for asserting this distinctiveness of Christian character I can only hint at. That method is communion with God through the Revealed Word.

Yes, we hold communion with God through the lessons of Scripture. "How can God bless me," said one, "if He has nothing to bless to me?" Even such a writer as Charles Dickens charges his son on going to America to read the New Testament daily. The *Times* newspaper—and the testimony of the ablest secular journal may have weight on this matter — said not long ago in a leader, "We question if any person of any class ever read the Scriptures regularly and thoroughly without being, or becoming, not only religious, but sensible and consistent." The calmest, holiest, and most effective Christian men of this generation are the men who are the most prayerful and diligent students of Holy Scripture. Having bathed their souls in the elevating light of the Word, they cannot wound their consciences, nor silence their Christian testimony for truth and purity by a *voluntary* ingress into the false and doubtful atmosphere of the world. Many a man have you known who has gone into circles of the gay, under the pretence of extending religion, but he has provoked the inward reflection, "Art thou also become one of us?" He who for the sake of gratifying a selfish indulgence enters the companionship of the godless, will find himself regarded ere long not as a missionary, but as a hypocrite, and will come off in the end with unspeakable shame and loss.

Be not impatient with the opposition which comes to you as the test of character. If you are living out a true Christian character, opposition will come. This is not to be shunned, but welcomed as the test of a true state. I do not plead for fanatical invitation to persecution, nor for the uncouth or presuming assumptions of uninstructed zeal. But if you shape your character by the Word of God, your life will be a correcting and rebuking conscience to some, and this will irritate them into a course of hostility. But it must be yours to bear yourself with a godly straightforwardness. A great living historian has said that the characteristic of true Protestantism is a hatred of falsehood. You rank with the witnesses of bygone days for truth and righteousness. You follow Him who in His infinite knowledge of mankind bade His disciples "beware of men." If opposition therefore arrays itself against you, be not impatient. No doubt this cross brings often the keenest wounds, but there is a losing of the life which gains it, and there is a faithfulness learnt in the ways of suffering, which is the grandest endowment God can impart.

"O fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong."

Do not therefore quiet your conscience by a subterfuge when the duty is clear. Very grand, impressive, and significant is that title which Jesus takes in the Revelation which He gave to His servant John, "The faithful and true witness." He faithfully uttered the words He had heard from His Father; He faithfully lived the life which has blessed the ages; He faithfully testified against the wickedness of evil men; He faithfully endured the cross which has become the world's salvation.

Be on your guard against a false intellectualism. The intellect in man is often warped by prejudice, swayed by pride, and fettered by conceit. Instead of asking what has God taught, it enquires what is proper and meet for God to have taught? Instead of bowing to the authority of Revelation, it sits in judgment upon it. It erects a throne which, instead of being subject to that of God, is vainly striving to be above God. There *can* be no revelation to a man while in this temper. Quite true is it that the rational powers must be used; but if a man has satisfied himself that a revelation has been made, and that is authenticated by adequate evidence, it is the highest use he can make of intellect to bow to its authority. Revelation is not a discovery. A discovery can be altered, modified, expanded by man. But revelation is immutable. I do not of course mean that we are to follow blindly the mere human

interpretation, or that we are to follow those who merely *assume* that they are following Christ. A man's believing he is right is frequently quite apart from the honest effort to *discern* whether he is right.

And this is to be noted : if we accept the New Testament as a revelation we shall hold "the Faith" it reveals in its entirety. What shallow talk is it that Christianity must be moulded in its interpretation by every new age! No doubt the world's developments will modify the *forms* in which Christianity is presented, and the language on this subject of some able men of our era means no more than this. But the cardinal truths of Christianity are unchangeable, just because they were not at the first received of men, but by "revelation of Jesus Christ." Probably we no longer read the Soliloquies and prayers of Augustine in the language in which they were written, but they embody, after fourteen centuries, the deepest convictions of Christian men to-day. The noblest hymns of the middle ages express our holiest emotions at this hour, even though such as were moulded by the theology of the times are forgotten. Theology is changeable because it expounds and defends the human system and school. "The Faith of God's elect" is unchangeable; and your power, your strength, the motives of your life, will be found to lie in abiding in what the Scripture sublimely designates "THE FAITH once deli-

vered to the saints," which the faithful in all past Christian ages have confessed, and in which the holiest men of all Christian denominations have gloried.

Regard faith as the foundation of the whole inward Christian life. Because of its importance I will dwell on this more fully. You hold the first and fundamental truth of religion, which is that "Salvation is of God." So far as we can see, there is no link to connect man with God but that of faith. This is that by which Adam stood at the first: he fell when distrust of God snapped asunder the link of faith. You have believingly come to God for pardon and adoption through Christ. You have found your rest as a sinner in the atonement of the Son of God. Be sure you give that place to faith which the Scripture does. There is a teaching which loses sight of the faith of the sinner as an indispensable condition of salvation. Christ has taken on Himself the sins of the world. The sinner must include his own sin in that of mankind as he looks to the crucified One. No offering for sin is now needed, since the Lord atoned once for all, but our faith must associate ourselves with Christ in adoring trust and gratitude for that great expiation. Oh that I could tell you what an all-constraining motive and inspiration will be given by the apprehension of the love of the Lord Jesus to you! The entire and habitual trust in His grace

and merits will not hinder your consecration, but become its mainspring, impulse, and stimulus.

But faith is the foundation of the inward life of holiness. Let me take a parable from nature. How does nature grow?

The secret is in one word—*receiving*. The flowers grow by receiving. Place them where they can neither receive sunlight nor moisture, and they will droop and die. As the sun arises by morning in the heavens, they turn to him their expanded bosoms, that his warm beams may fall there. They spread out leaves to take in more rain; they fold themselves in restful quiet at night, that dewdrops may settle on their buds and stems. After this manner man grows. Among the sentences of Scripture there is one of the Baptist which deserves to be written on the walls of a young man's chamber in letters of gold: "*A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.*"

I do not mean to affirm that you are to be passive. Go again to nature to learn her parable. The plant grows by receiving, but it is not like rocks and stones, dull and inert; it avails itself of its advantages for growth. It co-operates in working out its perfection. It opens its ducts; it builds upon itself new lengths of wood; it is faithful to its gifts, and makes every new attainment a plea for larger blessings. The acorn, having found its place in the

favourable soil, puts out feelers, and sends them into the earth for more moisture. Modestly it breaks through the ground to take its place among its compeers of the forest ; drinks in the air, rain, and dew of heaven ; extends its little branches, twigs, and leaflets, that its receiving power may be greater. Its beauty is the charm of the woods in May ; its topmost leaves quiver in the breeze of summer ; its strong arms beat back the storms of autumn ; and for generations and centuries it grows in its magnificent completeness.

Dear young man, study *your* nature. In the truly developed man there are three powers ; body, soul, spirit. The threefold distinction which is made in the Bible, remarkable to say, is also that of the latest and maturest philosophy. The *body* grows up from childhood by receiving, and even in mature strength it builds up a ceaseless waste by the same process. The *soul* or *intellect* grows by receiving. It receives information ; allows itself to be cultured, avails itself of the stores which other times have acquired. It never creates. What seems so is only reaching the full meaning, or placing in new combinations what it has received. There is, however, a *spirit* in man. To this I turn your thoughts. Deep in your nature is the grandest of all your endowments. There, unthought of by many, is that divinely given faculty which separates man from the

brutes, and allies him to the seraphim. There, smouldering in darkness and depravity, is a spirit which nothing earthly can satisfy; which sends forth aspirations after God; which protests against that filth of animal indulgence under which it is often buried. But that spirit on the other hand can be quickened by the life of God. It can scorn the earthly. It can spurn low desires. It can feed its strength on the breath of heaven which kindled life at the first. It can grow, and expand, become the dominant principle, bring all evil into subjection to itself, and become elevated in wisdom and ascendancy, till, shaking off every encumbrance of corruption, its powers are free, glorious, and triumphant.

That spirit in you has found its Father. Let your faith apprehend the boundless grace of the Father. He will feed the strength of the new life He has given. There is an actual contact of God with your spirit on which you may calculate. Break with sin not so much by your struggles against it as by union with God in childlike trust. Regard prayer as that state in which you unite yourself to God in faith and hope. There are times when the calm, silent looking up to God through Christ is better than words. To *realise* that your "expectation" is from Him,—that to Him you *owe* all, that He is perfectly reconciled to you, has in it all the elements of sanctification. I

would recommend you morning by morning to repeat to yourself that first great word of the ninety-first Psalm. Kneel, look up confidently, and believe that for the new day on which you have entered you may "*dwell* in the secret place of the most High." Let quiet faith apprehend that in this union of trust in God you will throughout the day, and amid life's exigencies and temptations *abide* under the shadow of the Almighty. Oh restful place of security! I promise you that these great words of the Psalm attributed to Moses may be uttered by you morning by morning, and instead of losing their meaning by repetition, the Divine secret of their blessedness will more and more be opened unto you.

I do not say there should not be petition in prayer. But our danger is of substituting copious words for the act of faith by which in our weakness, ignorance and dependence we realise our reconciled and blissful relation to God. Copious words are often the sign of a holy state, but they may have in them an element of self-confidence which is a fatal barrier to communion with God.

In this exercise of faith *surrender yourself* to God. The essence of your personality is your will. It vacillates between self and God. Life must be a perpetual and absolute decision on the side of God. Repeat sometimes those words of Joachim Neander :—

"O Israel's God, I bring Thee now my will,
That would be Thine whate'er it cost ;
I love Thy gifts, yet love Thee most ;
This is my prayer while yet the morn is still,
Take Thou my will."

The will on the side of sin gathers day by day strength of rebellion and involves future doom. The will identified with God moves in God's order and becomes free and glorified. Let there be special seasons for your devotement. Never doubt that as you surrender yourself you are accepted through Christ, and then regard all you have and all you are as *consecrated*.

Some of you are serving by public prayer, and by speaking to your fellow men. It is faith which will give you as a speaker or preacher ease of manner, and which will affect the hearers. A show of manner, a declamatory tone, a mere abundance of words will leave your hearers cold, and will fatally hinder incisiveness. It is the soul language that touches men, and the soul can be under Divine emotions only as it realises its relation to the Divine. How often a few words in public prayer, coming from the soul, thrill and melt us, as prayers apparently intended for the ear of man never do ! An assumed warmth of manner which is not in the heart is soon detected, and sorely offends. Reality, simplicity, are the elements of melting prayer and useful preaching ; and these can come from no

other source than the soul's fellowship with the Spirit in faith.

This guidance of faith will help you in the *business* of life. Men say they find it hard to carry their religion into buying and selling. The answer is—*do* they carry their religion there? Do they not carry greed and selfishness there? Augustine says, "Love and do what you please." Let a man love God, and his neighbour *as* himself, then the buying and the selling will be regulated by an adequate principle. "Ah, this is romantic," men say; "business *is* business, and religion is religion." If this is what you mean, do not deceive yourself with the talk of inability to carry religion into business. You never intend to do it. The buyer and the seller need the holy light in the heart quite as much as a preacher needs it. Jesus probably sold ploughs and harrows, and bargained for wood. He did not carry a set of maxims into such transactions. He carried a heart of love, and in the shop and market would have said He was about His Father's business quite as much as when He said it in the temple. "*The kingdom of God is not set up in rivalry with worldly business, but is a Divine law regulating, and a Divine temper pervading, the pursuits of worldly business.*"

And do not question the possibility and success of a Christianly conducted business. A man who

surrenders himself to God with the purpose of serving his generation by commerce or trade, will find that there is "added" to him a wisdom a caution, and an executiveness which commercial sharpers never possess. Cunning is rarely clever, and rarely sees far ahead. The man who is more concerned about what he gains in business than the spirit which he carries into it, becomes belittled by his business. A man who will not carry a mean thought or a thought of greed into his avocation comes in the end to possess a fuller and grander nature. This it is which inspires confidence, and makes the merchant princes of our times ; and this is what Jesus meant when he said, that by seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness there should be *added* "all these things" to a man.

But in a world in which the devil has wide rule, let us guard against making mere abundance of prosperity an aim. Men do grow rich without God, but they carry a dissatisfaction in their hearts which embitters all possession. We are only prosperous as we draw from wells deeper than our own wisdom, and receive blessing from heavenly fountains, and as we ever bear in mind that profound utterance of Jesus, that "a man's life consisteth not in the *abundance of the things* which he hath."

Have faith in the doctrine of growth. The difference between one man and another lies here. Of the young man who does not believe in the doctrine of moral growth, or is indifferent to it, you may safely affirm that waste or perdition is being invisibly inscribed upon his forehead. On the other hand, let a young man be thoroughly persuaded of the possibility of the highest moral and spiritual progress, and he not only has hold of a truth that is saving, but if faithful he will reach a majesty of character, a force, and a beauty of spirit which no mortal can conceive.

One of the grandest mornings of my life was when I made the pass of St. Gothard across the Alps. Having ascended above the sultry airs of an early Italian summer, and slept three thousand feet above the sea-level, I rose at four in the morning, and begged the privilege of sitting on the roof of the diligence by the side of the conductor. How invigorating was the fresh mountain air of the morning, like the first love of a young heart to Christ. But as the road toiled upwards, more and more ravishing was the joy. The mountain pines now began to open vistas of wondrous beauty; the graceful tops of the larches waved in their uninvaded home; the granite rocks, with a thousand precipitous forms, stood like sentinels to nature's most majestic domains; the Ticino poured down

to the sultry plains below its rushing sound of waters. There behind was the river, gliding on like a silver thread of light ; and there before were glimpses of giant peaks, with the light burnishing the peerless white of their eternal snows. But for nine rapturous hours we went higher ; and as we ascended fresher grew the air, more beautiful the leaping waterfalls, more sublime the pass through galleries of rocky labyrinths, more thrilling the transition from gloomy defiles to spots of pastoral loveliness, and more exciting the emotion as we stood at length about nine thousand feet above the valley below, amid the sinless silence of the everlasting mountains.

In a loftier sense than this, higher and ever higher may be your future course. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," may in a two-fold sense be the prophecy of your life. Yours being now this character of decision, of separateness, of fidelity and of faith, your future through the Father's grace may be foretold. Thank God the outlines have, in thousands of young men, ripened into a glorious reality. You are now active and devoted in all that blesses man, and rise you will in harmony of character and effectiveness of influence. You will come soon to have a name in the community of men, and be a man of mark among your fellows ; to those coming on the stage of life you will become the pattern-man,

and those who once sneered at your decision and aspirations will be glad to catch the skirts of your garments. "Not yet," you may say, "have I reached the stature of growth." Fruits of goodness will ripen in your life; wider will be the sphere you will fill; you will be yet more loved, trusted, and honoured, till at length you will see the gate and the glory of the city you are going to; above the sounds of conflict you will breathe supernal air, and listen as there reach you from afar the sounds of heavenly music. And when the golden gates have been thrown back to give you entrance, and the angels have welcomed you, and the great and good of other times have clasped hands with you, even then growth in power and blissfulness shall be the law of your being. You will rise to be a companion of the mighty spirits of the universe. Higher, stronger, wiser, freer, mightier, more capable of knowing, of blessing, and of enjoying, will be your glorious and eternal career.

I am dealing in no figures of speech. This is the grandeur of man's destiny. This is the true law of life; and none the less true that so many miserably fall short of it.

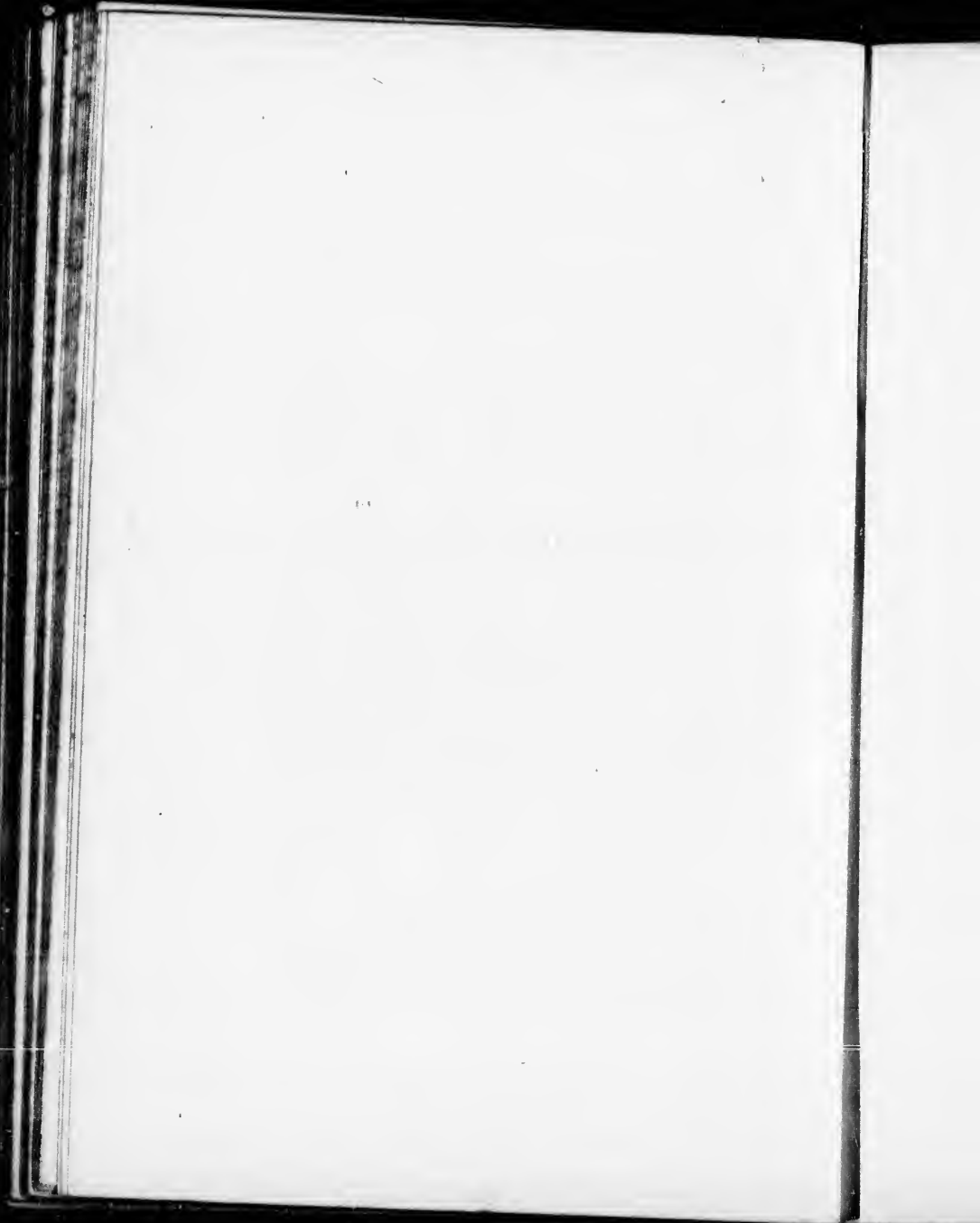
Thus do I lay these counsels before you, as you enter upon public life. They are the outpouring of a thankful and anxious heart. Looking back upon

the past, I feel that the great boon of existence was the disposition to ally my nature with Christ's when eighteen years of age. From that time with what inexpressible benignity, patience, and sympathy has Christ helped me! But you live with a grander era before you. The world's history has been ever marked by advances and retrogressions. A moral retrogression has marked the past thirty years of English life. A few superficial teachers have been allowed to shatter the faith of many in those grand Christian motives which made England so majestic during the second quarter of this century. Thank God the receding tide has reached its limit. The returning wave will carry humanity further God-ward than it has ever been. The age is wearied of its unbelief and its denials. It is sick at heart with its pleasures. I am sure, and speak after travelling much in English counties, that there are hundreds of men moving in the highest social and commercial circles who are pining to witness a Christianity like that of the New Testament. The working men, though estranged from churches, are less so from a despising of religion than from other causes. Through the silent breathing of the Spirit of Christ there is a widespread yearning for a religion unprofessional, less sectarian, and which bears on its brow the one eternal law of love to God and man. Adored be

God, spite of anti-Christian teaching and its unwarranted assumptions, Christianity was never surrounded with such proofs of its value, and of the truth of its central facts, as at this present hour. Now it is that a voice comes to the young men who are believers in the incarnation and resurrection of the Son of God to prepare the way of the Lord. Refuse, dear young brethren, to occupy that neutral territory between the kingdom of Christ and that of the devil which has so lamentably enfeebled Christian testimony these last years. Satan has come down with great power. He has worked desperately to be the master of the race. But Christ, who by His incarnation identified humanity with Himself, is claiming the race for which He died. He will do it through the Christian young men who will be the teachers and traders in the days at hand. Let their place be unequivocal. Let their faith be rooted not in the doctrines of men, but in Scripture. Let their prayers ascend. Let them warn the heedless, succour the tempted, grasp with a brother's love the wavering, and gird the wicked round with the bands of persuasive urgency. O ye young men who love Christ, will you, God helping you, shape the character of the coming age? Only young men are equal to the deliverance. I anticipate your answer. As you with loving heart, undimmed eye, and steadfast tread take your true place, the age

will be saved from its falsehoods and its hopelessness, and for you hereafter there will be lavish acknowledgment from Him who condescends to tell you of the "kindness of your youth" which He will "remember" for ever.

One final word : The remission of sins through Christ is the first element of the Gospel ; the life of separation and of sanctity through the perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit with the faithful is the second element ; in this trinity of God's great love for man the third element is "the glorious appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ." The Incarnation is the instalment, the Grace of the Spirit is the "earnest," of the complete Redemption. The whole creation is travailing in pain for the final consummation. Towards Christian young men, in this day of waiting and of conflict, the hopes of the age are turned. A cry comes to them from all the by-gone times to be LOOKING FOR, AND HASTING THE COMING OF, THE DAY OF GOD.



APPENDIX I.



FEW things could be more to be regretted than a spirit of distrust between the rapidly developing organisations termed Young Men's Christian Associations and the Christian Church. There must be strenuous watchfulness against this on both sides. That young Christian men can strengthen each other's fidelity, and stimulate one another to efforts for the unsaved, by such association, does not admit of question. Their duties moreover create a necessity for hours of meeting outside the ordinary arrangements of Christian Churches. But anything like a drifting into separate ecclesiastical organisations would open the door to manifold evils. The connection of a young man with the Church to which he belongs should be strenuously and unmistakably made manifest. Even in the case of those young men who cannot express approval of teaching which is rationalistic or sacramental, it would be a serious loss to Christianity for the devout element of their consecration to be withdrawn from Churches. They would withdraw a most important factor at future times of the appointment of Church officers and pastors. They would by such separation exclude themselves from entering upon official positions. But this is a supremely difficult question. Direction in cases of this nature can be obtained from the Master only.

On the other hand, mistrust must be guarded against by Churches and their officers. I must bear witness that when I was pastor of a large church in London I found the young men of these Associations my very best helpers. I could rely on them for prayer and Christian work without any experience of disappointment. It may appear a weakening of Churches that devoted and intelligent young men should move in another line as well as the appointed one for the culture of their own spiritual life and for evangelistic labours. But adaptation to the necessity of the age is a part of the Church's duty to her Head. Here I touch, and can only touch, on our weakness. On the American Continent the relations between pastors, Churches and Young Men's Christian Associations is one of a cordial co-operation which strengthens both sides. But we in England have less of the informal than they have. We are more rigid and inflexible in our services. It scarcely admits of doubt, however, that the spirit of wisdom may be looked for to perpetuate the happy relations which have hitherto obtained, and to teach both sides to adapt their arrangements to the new and startling developments of social life in our era. Any way let the purpose be that the Church shall not bind its young men as to their mode of action, and that young men will work for the Lord as far as possible through the invaluable agencies of Christian Churches. They can ill be spared in many of those Churches.

APPENDIX II.

I HAVE spoken of the prevailing modern habit of smoking. On such a point I am not now called to write. I often question however the kindness or wisdom of teachers in Sunday-schools smoking among little boys at the times of a Sunday-school excursion, and of young gentlemen going among boys in the playground of an orphanage with pipes in their mouths. What they can do safely may be full of peril to those who are led to imitate them. I have also been painfully impressed in the streets with the evidence of poor health in young men who smoke, as shown by their thin and sometimes cadaverous looks. Let me, however, put in this note a passage from a man the very furthest removed from austerity and precisianism :—

“I must be permitted to specialise still another danger from the general head of dissipation. I mean the danger of using tobacco. Do not think that I propose to deliver an indiscriminate tirade of abuse against this practice. I wish to speak

moderately, and to give the result of my reflections, founded upon much observation. I do not deny that there are many temperaments that seem to be able to use tobacco all their life long with comparatively little inconvenience—to themselves. I do not mean that every young man who addicts himself to smoking will of necessity take on other vices, or let this habit run to excess. But the economy of society tends to develop the brain and the nervous system unduly. As a matter of fact, it is true that smoking is apt to lead to thirst and drinking. Not always, not necessarily; but frequently, and naturally. The cup and the cigar are well acquainted with each other. The use of tobacco always tends to waste the nerve-force and the brain-force, and in thousands of cases there can be no question but that it squanders life by leakage right from the centre. And you do not know whether you are the one in five that will be poisoned and prematurely destroyed, or not. If there was one single reason for this habit, there might be some excuse for those that indulge in it, but it is a thing which is utterly without any reason whatever. You have to make superhuman exertions, in the first instance, to persuade yourself to touch tobacco. It would seem as if God, when he made that weed, said, 'I invoke all spirits of nausea and nastiness to stand around about and defend it from any touch.' For it seems to me that if anything would be secure from human meddling, that would. It is repugnant to every feeling. The whole nature revolts from it. You

are not drawn to it by anything that is in you or in it. Not one single element of health does it give you; and the pleasure that is derived from its use is, in the main, illusive pleasure. And such is the effect of it as a poison upon many constitutions, that the struggle of breaking away from it is next only to the struggle of breaking away from the cup. And it has led many and many a youth to the cup. If you have but just begun to smoke, ask yourselves what earthly good it will do you; and if you fail, as you will, to find a good excuse for continuing the habit, leave it off. On grounds of simple common sense, I ask every young man who is addicted to the unwholesome practice of smoking, Is it worth your while to spend your means, and to entail upon yourselves an unnecessary expense, for the sake of keeping up a habit that incommodes others, that annoys those about you, that will probably have a bad influence upon your health, and that will possibly injure your morals? While I would not seem to be extravagant, I cannot fail to give a solemn and affectionate warning to the young people of my charge on this subject. If you have not learned to use tobacco in any form, I beseech of you to abstain from it. The young often acquire the habit because they feel that it will be a distinction. Now, unfortunately, smoking is so common that it is not a distinction. If you wish to have a distinction, refrain from smoking; that will make you rather remarkable."—*H. Ward Beecher.*

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A YOUNG MAN'S
DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS BIBLE.

BY THE REV.

D. W. FAUNCE, D.D.

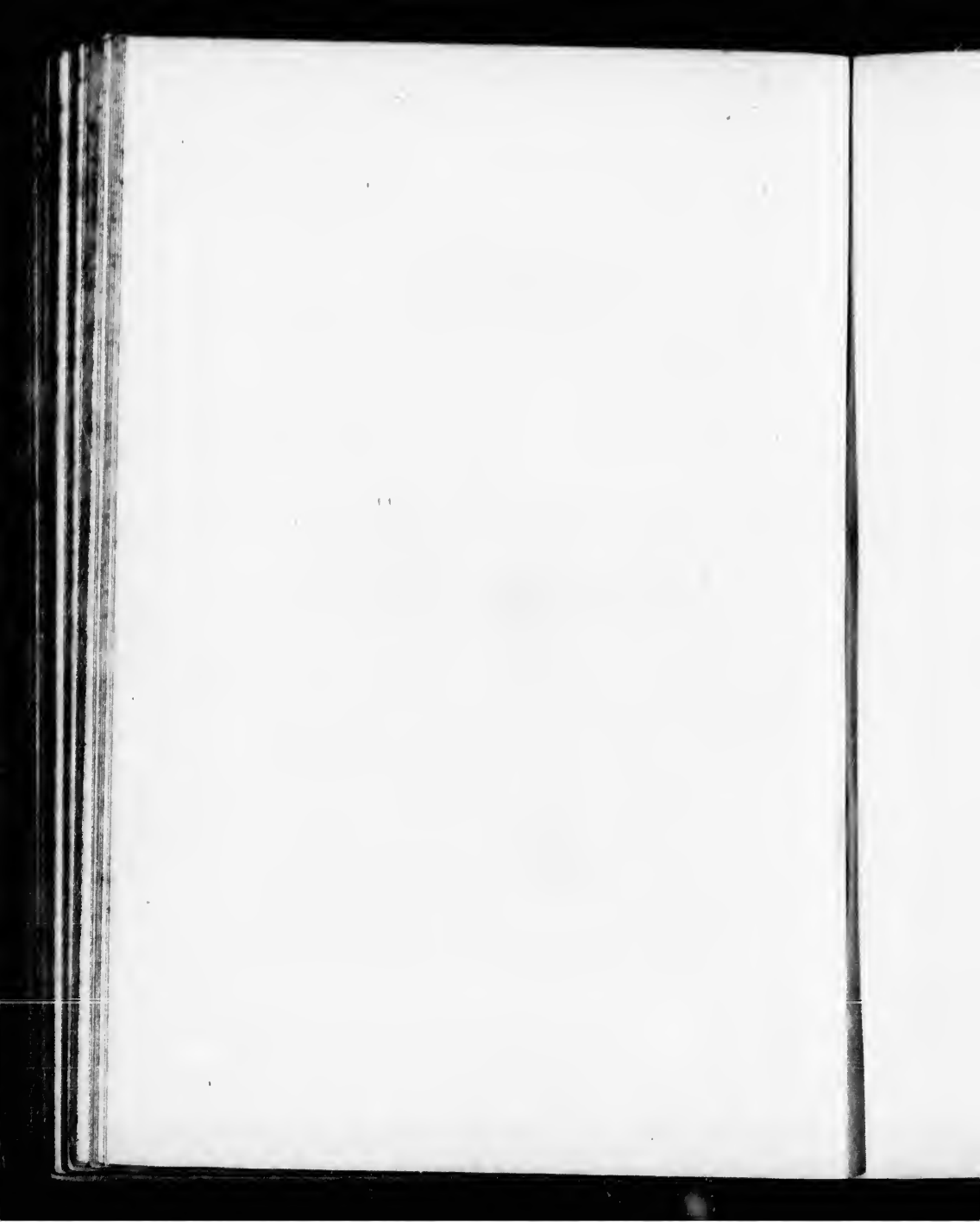
Sixth Edition, completing Thirteenth Thousand.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.	
THE YOUNG MAN'S BOOK	PAGE I
CHAPTER II.	
IS THE BIBLE TRUE?	35
CHAPTER III.	
IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?.....	71
CHAPTER IV.	
DIFFICULTIES AS TO MIRACLES AND TEACHINGS	107
CHAPTER V.	
DIFFICULTIES FROM GEOLOGY	141
CHAPTER VI.	
DIFFICULTIES FROM ASTRONOMY	173
CHAPTER VII.	
DIFFICULTIES ABOUT HISTORIC FACTS.. ..	193

THE PROPERTY OF
SCARBORO MECHANICS
INSTITUTE.

The Young Man's Book.



CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG MAN'S BOOK.

IT is told of a certain publisher that he was in despair because a rival firm had issued so many excellent and successful books of advice to the young. He confided his perplexity to a friend. That friend advised him to select the finest paper and the clearest type, and then to reprint that book of the Bible known as "The Proverbs of Solomon" under the new and startling title of "Counsels for Young Men by a King." Whether the advice was followed, and whether if followed the venture was successful as a business speculation, is not known. But this is certain : that if some would be disappointed at their first opening of such a volume, on further reading they would be compelled to admit that the old book was new, and that the new book

was the freshest and richest of all the many volumes addressed to young men.

Solomon had the advantage of knowing thoroughly of the things about which he wrote. The son of a king, inheriting wealth, with princely tastes, with a love for learning, and a natural shrewdness in dealing with men, with manners courtly, elegant in person, a close observer of all the things and all the men about him, he gathered up the wise sayings of the ages, and passing them through the mint of his own mind, he issued them, newly coined, for the moral and social and spiritual currency of all the world. The Psalms of David his father were for closet use and for temple service on the Sabbath. The Proverbs of Solomon, the son, were for out of door life on all the weekdays of the year. David helps us sing and pray, but Solomon tells us how to live wisely when the prayer and the worship are ended. His proverbs are the condensed and portable wisdom of the ages. The versatility of the author is amazing. He seems to have listened to the prattling of childhood and to the whispered accents of youthful lovers; to have put himself into sympathy with the trader in his store and the wife in her home, with the priest at the temple altar and the beggar at the temple gate; to have heard the

grumble of the disappointed man and the chuckle of the man who has just seized on worldly success ; to have heard all the haughty tones of the prince and the lowly words of the peasant ; to have stood by manhood in its developed strength, and by age tottering under the load of buried hopes towards a willing grave ; and to each one of all these classes he interprets, better than the man himself could do it, the peculiarity of his wants and the needs of his life, and then he offers by way of practical commentary some quick pithy sentence of sanctified wisdom. He fused the older proverbs of the world, extracted the dross and retained the gold. He took up the selfish shrewdness of mere worldly wisdom, and where the proverb was wrong he made it right, and where it needed the salt of religion he always added it, as a power to purify and save. One idea, that of *godliness*, runs through the book. Wisdom is godliness ; and by godliness he means "the love of God" and "the fear of God," the sense of the "eyes of the Lord as in every place," and of God as one who "will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil." This intense godliness is the golden thread on which all these pearls of proverb are carefully strung.

Nor was his Encyclopædia, for the book is really

such in its character, the result alone of observation and learning. The author had known the *experience* of life. Written near the close of a singularly varied and extensive career, in which he touched heights and depths seldom visited by one and the same human soul, with memories of the widest possible contrasts of physical, mental, and moral position, an outcast at one time, a king at another, here heading a rebellion, and there the most loyal of men, at one time fascinated by philosophical speculations, next tossed to and fro by the dreariest scepticism as to God and the immortality of the soul, and again be-draggled in the mire of heathenism through the persuasions of his idolatrous friend, Hiram, king of Tyre, and then leaving his thin philosophy, coming out of his scepticism, and up from the slough of the lowest idolatry, we see him emerge upon the high ground of religion, humbled by his fall, penitent for his guilt, and resting, at length, as the result of the broadest experience of life, the climax of all his wisdom and knowledge, in the conclusion of the whole matter, that to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man.

His fall was indeed a sad one. For only one who stands so high can fall so low. Another has said of him that "he sinned with a high hand, on a

large scale, and with a certain royal gusto. He drank of the cup of corruption deep and large, emptying it to the very dregs. His fall is instructive. The pinnacle overhangs the precipice. And any great proportion between gifts and graces renders the former fatal as is a knife in the hands of a suicide, or handwriting to a forger. His misery became something wonderful. And thus, on all sides, bright or black, he was equally and soundly great. Like a pyramid, the shadow he cast in one direction was as great as the light he received in the other." In the Ecclesiastes we have his spiritual biography. We go with him through the changes of his infidelity, of his sensualism, of his ambition, of his disappointment in them all, and we see him in his return to God. And then, revising all his former work, recasting his maxims in the crucible of his own experience, and setting, in the purified wisdom of his later days, the seal of a divine inspiration upon them, he writes in his maturest years this book of "The Proverbs," which is addressed to the thoughtful and earnest men of the world.

Such is the book which commends itself to the study of young men. On further, we are to take up the matter of a young man's difficulties with his Bible. Objections are to be considered. The

gravest questions about the volume which is popularly called by those who know it best and love it most "the Word of God," are presently to be discussed with what of fairness and candour we can bring to the consideration of them. But as every building must be in some way approached, as the architect plans always a portico to his edifice, so we will enter upon our work, through this royal gateway of ancient wisdom, by our study of Solomon—the wise man of the olden time.

Let us be sure that we get clearly before our minds the object of the author in this book of "The Proverbs." There is indeed one general design running through all these books of the Bible. And yet, under this general purpose, there are as many subdivisions as there are books. No two cover the same ground. For we have here a history and there a biography; in one book a direction as to what to believe, in another as to what to practise; now a collection of devotional psalms, and then an epistle to a Church, or a letter to a prominent man. But in each of these books there is a specific design to be accomplished.

What, then, is the aim of the author in the Proverbs? A very brief examination of the book will convince us that its specific purpose is to show men

their *duty in practical life*. It ferrets out men. It shows the eye of God's omniscience to be upon all the minutest thoughts and feelings and acts of our mortal existence. If other books concern themselves with the questions of our immortal life, this has to do chiefly with our present conduct as citizens of God's world. If any man says the Bible talks as if we had nothing to do but to die, talks as if "our life were all to be passed in a monastery or a church," we say to him, Here, at least, is a book which follows you to your business, goes into the shop, comes behind your counter, sees the weights as true or false, looks over your shoulder at the ledger, goes back to your family, has a home-thrust at every part of your daily life. There are no metaphysics here; for all is intensely practical.

If a young man with earnest heart comes to ask how he can gain the earlier inward experiences of religion, we would not point him to this book, unless we knew that some outward wrong had kept him from right feeling. It is true that we find the elements of every truth in this Book of Proverbs. But who would go into a well, that he might read by the starlight that penetrates to its depths, when he can have the full sunlight without that trouble? To the Gospels, to that especially of John, would we

send him; to the Acts of the Apostles he should go, and see how inspired men answer the great question of the ages, "What must I do to be saved?"

But if a man is already a Christian, and would know how on that foundation to build a noble structure—if he would do the best with himself, and make the utmost out of life—we would point him to the Book of Proverbs.

So, too, if there be any young man who has supposed that the ordinary social virtues are all the religion a man needs, and if he has an impression that the Book of Proverbs favours this idea, let him come and study these pages. He will find that no book is so at war with the idea of the merely ornamental virtues when not attached to a holy heart. God is in this Book of Proverbs. It insists in its opening chapters that sooner or later, in time or eternity, utter ruin will overtake the character that is not built upon "the fear and the love of God." Wisdom, moral wisdom, that which takes God's claims into account—is the basis of the morality it enjoins. This, the foundation stone, once laid, the book shows how every stone is to be hewn and every course to be placed as we build the edifice. And so all private life and public life, all

social, domestic, and political relations, all moralities and courtesies and charities, are here separated and then combined and illustrated, their shape and colour all given, and the whole commended and commanded to the young men of all ages and climes. Or, it may be, that one has imbibed notions which he thinks more especially broad and free. He cares less for the right ordering of outward life, thinking it more a matter of custom, convenience, or education. He has become interested in the speculations of the hour as to the origin of all these things about us, and as to the laws of this wondrous nature that is engaging the attention and awakening the keen interest of the thoughtful and intelligent young men of the day. He is becoming less stout in his assertion of what man can do, and more aware of the mighty forces of the world. He is smitten by the majesty of law. He comes to think of this force, compared with which man's power is so feeble, as impersonal. Solomon became at one period absorbed in the thought of the objects of the natural world, as a modern young man is in danger of becoming absorbed in the thought of its laws. As the one found himself drawn to be an idolater, so the other is drawn towards fatalism in the presence of the vast powers of the universe. But there comes

a time when a man sees the tendency of things. He has to own an impersonal nature, or else a personal Creator and Sovereign. Fatalism says It, exactly as religion says God.

Each of these excludes the other. If there be a *God* who rules His universe, there is no room for the fatalistic *it*. If there be, in the smallest event, anything outside the divine control, then there is no more an infinite God. Fatalism, a century ago, loved to talk of all things as coming by chance, as if everything were too loose for a God. To-day it would insist that everything is so fixed, so bound by law, that there is no place nor need for God in the working of events. They work themselves out in definite ways. Buckle, with scholarly phrase, will have it that even moral actions are as fixed as physical events. And in social life a frivolous fatalism is constantly heard, saying, "It is all fixed, all fated. It happens so. It can't be helped. It is a thing of destiny. What is to be will be."

Now, how is this fatalism to be met? By asserting the truth of man's free will? But that is simply meeting the vastly lengthened line of fatalism at one point. It is opposing an avalanche by the brandishing of a pin. Within certain limits man is free. But his circle is as that of a peck-measure to the

orbit of the most distant planet. A thousand things touch every man over which he has no control. His birth, in its time, place, manner, circumstances, and, usually, his death also, are not matters of his own will. First and last, and midst and always through his life, he encounters powers and events that are beyond his control. There is, then, no sufficient answer to fatalism in the undoubted truth of man's free will. There is one and only one answer broad enough to meet all the facts. It is the answer of religion. Religion insists upon a God, all-wise, all-just, who, through fixed law, and, if need be, over fixed law—who, through man's freedom, and if need be, over that freedom—can and does control all things according to the counsel and purpose of his own eternal intelligence and will. Strangely enough, some men always confound these two things—fatalism and the divine election. But they are as far apart as the poles. They exclude each other. Both cannot be true. One of them must be. And the only reply to the fatalistic *it*, is that furnished by the being and rule of a personal *God*.

Fatalism may be compared to a vast revolving iron wheel. It goes round remorselessly, pitilessly, crushing all before it. It can have neither intelli-

gence nor purpose, neither justice nor compassion. It shrieks with every revolution, "It can't be helped. It must be endured. It is all fixed and fated. There is no purpose, no reason, no result. *It* is the only God." Before these awful revolutions of this terrible and monstrous lawless law—for law without a God is really lawless—all the light and love and joy of the divine Paternity are crushed out, and man seems to be the mere mote imprisoned in the mountain. "Oh, how widely different in all its power on human life is that great solar fact that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

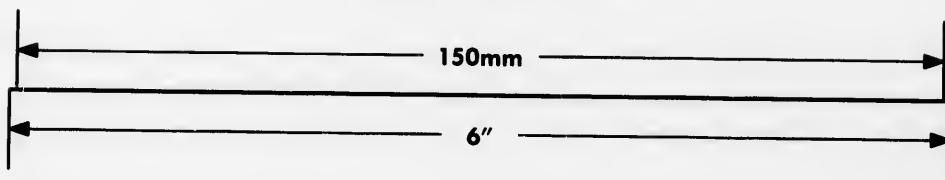
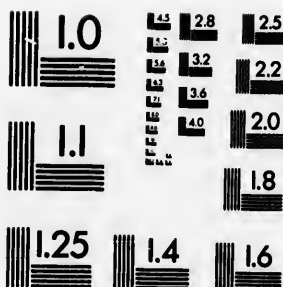
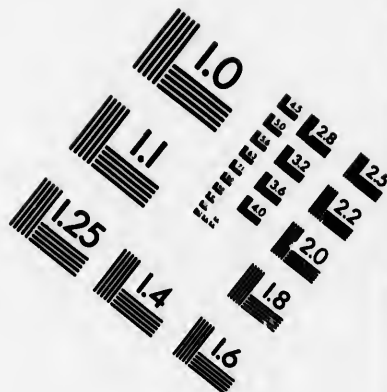
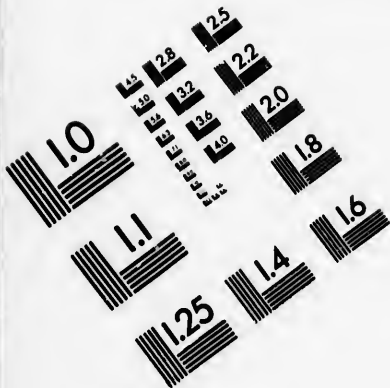
There is an ante-war incident that shows the power for despair of the one and for hope of the other view. A dark cloud hung over the interests of the African race in our land. There seemed no way of deliverance. Frederick Douglass, at a crowded meeting, depicted the terrible condition. Everything was against his people. One political party had gone down on its knees to slavery. The other proposed not to abolish it anywhere, but only to restrict it. The Supreme Court had given judgment against black men as such. He drew a picture of his race writhing under the lash of the overseer and trampled upon by brutal and lascivious men. As he went on with his despairing words, a

great horror of darkness seemed to settle down upon the audience. The orator even uttered the cry of blood. There was no other relief. And then he showed that there was no relief even in that. Every thing, every influence, every event was gathering not for good but for evil about the doomed race. It seemed as if they were fated to destruction. Just at the instant when the cloud was most heavy over the audience, there slowly rose, in the front seat, an old black woman. Her name, "Sojourner Truth." She had given it to herself. Far and wide she was known as an African prophetess. Every eye was on her. The orator paused. Reaching out towards him her long bony finger, as every eye followed her pointing, she cried out, "*Frederick, is God dead?*" It was a lightning-flash upon that darkness. The cloud began to break, and faith and hope and patience returned with the idea of a personal and ever-living God. Such is always the result, whether we look out on the broad scenes of human history, or in upon the lowering events of any one human life. Everywhere *it* is the word of despair, and *God* is the word of faith and hope.

And as the divine plan of things is the true view of them, so there must be, unto the complete answer of all fatalism, an emphasis put upon the *eternity* of



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this divine plan of things. For are not all our thinkers pushing their inquiries backward? Are they not asking whence and when this established order of things? They go back before man to find his origin in some vast process of development. They push back their fatalistic *it* until they come virtually to make an *eternal* it. And the only answer possible is that furnished by the Scripture doctrine of an eternal God, who from "before the foundation of the world hath chosen" the things that shall be. It is Solomon's doctrine that the recognition of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom and the sum of all knowledge. And Christian thinkers are being driven anew to assert this doctrine by the fatalistic tendency of certain lines of modern thought. As nothing less than the thought of an eternal and personal God meets the demands of the intellect, so nothing less than this meets the yearnings of the heart. How justly and beautifully has Faber said:

"O Majesty, unspeakable and dread!
Wert Thou less mighty than Thou art,
Thou wert, O Lord, too great for our belief,
Too little for our heart.

But greatness which is infinite, makes room
For all things in its lap to lie;
We should be crushed by a magnificence
Short of infinity.

Great God ! our lowliness takes heart to play
Beneath the shadow of Thy state ;
The only comfort of our littleness
Is that Thou art so great."

And when an inquiring young man is driven back to recognition of God, as a logical necessity of all thought, as a demand alike of brain and soul, of the outward nature that surrounds him and the inward nature that is made to know and judge of these outward things and to trace back facts and laws to their only possible origin in the personal thought and personal act of a personal God, he has come to stand not only upon a broad and lofty ground, but beside all the best thinkers of the world. For some of those thinkers whose philosophic theories are often regarded as tending towards the denial of a personal God, make haste to deny the inference. Herbert Spencer claims that the doctrine of the correlation of forces does not exclude that of God, and Tyndall hastens to correct the inferable Atheism of his Belfast address.

And so the world's experience of philosophy and even of speculation leads a man back to the place where Solomon was brought—the place, beneath the fear, love, and service of God, from which he never should have wandered, and which he entreats every young man never to leave.

Or, if one has been tempted to think it brave to doubt about God and the soul and immortality, this book will serve as a tonic for his faith. One book of Solomon, the Ecclesiastes, is the book of doubts, or rather, the book of doubts solved. In that book Solomon recounts the old arguments used when he was a sceptic, when he was a pleasure-seeker, when he was astray in idolatry. We see him, hear him at his worst; and then, with him, go back to the "conclusion of the whole matter," in the devout recognition and the earnest service of God. But in the "Proverbs" there is a strong joyous faith which the writer not only possesses but commends to the young men of the world. The young man is addressed as *capable of* God made man to believe. The great difference between him and the higher animals is very largely in the fact that he has the capacity for faith, the ability to believe upon testimony. The beast has no such power. The brutes can remember, can do many acts singularly like reasoning. But they cannot collect and compare evidence, and believe and so act upon it. The men of fifty years ago collected various items of knowledge, and the boy of to-day starts where they ended, for he is able to believe. Not so the colts of to-day; for their sires collected no testi-

mony. There is neither capacity to believe nor amassed material on which to exercise faith. something can be done by interbreeding to develop other powers. But no capacity for faith in testimony can be developed in the brute creation. Hence progress for them is impossible. They have no faculties adapted to faith in others' testimony. They are made to know what they can through eye and through ear, by touch and by taste. Man alone is *capable of faith*. He receives most of his knowledge by credence. He believes it on the testimony of others. Man, unlike the brutes, is by his nature a believing animal. When he has no faith in testimony he is no better than a brute. A man's great characteristic is power to believe—to believe the testimony of his fellow-man and the revelation of his God.

Some young men are tempted to think that, since we have the power of doubting as well as the power of believing, we are to work both by doubt and by belief. But we have the power of doubting just as we have the power of sinning. We sin by perverting our powers. They were given us not for sin but for service. So we have eyes for seeing, but we have power to put them out. Nevertheless, God gave us eyes, not that we might be blind with

them, but see with them. Seeing is the legitimate use of the eyes, just as believing is the legitimate use of the faculties of the mind and soul. And what blindness is to eyes made for seeing, that doubting is to a mind made for believing. When shutting the eye and closing the ear are the best ways of seeing and hearing, then doubting will be the best way of gaining knowledge about truth and duty. That young man who supposes that if he is just a little sceptical, he shall be more likely to know what is truthful, makes a terrible mistake. The habit of doubting is the least reasonable of all habits. For a man was made to believe; and he had better believe wrongly on some subjects, than to believe nothing on any.

There can be no progress by doubt and negation except in error. "But," says one, "would you not have a man doubt an error? and is not such a doubt a help toward coming to the truth?" We answer that if a man doubts an error because he is in the habit of doubting, he will doubt the truth for the same reason. We would have him see and believe the truth, and then whether he doubts or does anything else with the error is of no consequence. Let any young man see that the believing and not the doubting spirit is the guide to truth. For God

made us, and Jesus commands us to believe. So, too, if we are made to believe, there is *something to be believed*. God made the eyes to see something. If the feet are to stand, there is provided an earth to stand upon. If man is a believing animal, there is somewhere truth to be believed. Truth must be a positive thing. It is of God. For God is the "God of truth." It is sometimes said that the truth to any man is what he honestly believes it to be. "It is truth to him, though error to another." If that were so, truth would not be truth, but only each man's fancy. But God made the mind to believe, and the truth to be believed. When a young man says, "I cannot decide among so many religions," he says either that God has not given him brains enough to believe, or else has withheld the truth, so that he cannot know it. If he says the first he denies his own manhood; if he says the second he condemns his God for so making the mind, and not making the truth which the mind was made to believe.

In dealing with his doubts a young man should also be careful, and not deem doubting the sign of a stronger intellect. It is far from that. Anybody can doubt. And a man who is floundering in a sea of doubts has no right to call out to others to

come and see how brave and strong a swimmer he is. The strong and brave swimmer is he who gets through and gains the other shore, and stands firmly on the rock. He who can never quite make up his mind on any subject is not usually praised for vigour of intellect. The young man who begins a trade, a business, a profession, and then, speedily doubting his ability or taste for it, turns to another, only again to doubt his ability, is a young man who awakens only pity for his want of perception or of purpose. He who cannot make up his mind on any public question, who always doubts how to vote, gets no praise for manliness. Doubt and indecision are marks of weakness rather than strength, and this Book of the Proverbs breathes all through it a bracing atmosphere of faith in truth, in right, in manhood, and in God. It shows on every page the native nobility of the man who is strong alike in the integrity of his outward virtue and his inward faith.

The *plan* of the Book of the Proverbs is in harmony with the design of its author. Its sayings are often used by us in disjointed fragments. For it is portable wisdom. But then any separate part is richer when seen in its connection with the scope of the entire book. It is not a chance medley of

miscellaneous remarks. It is no mere scrap-book. It is far from being a confused mass of apothegm and epigram. The casual observer of the heavens on a winter's night might at first think the skies were full of bright disorder. To him it might seem as if God had scattered here and there the dust of stars carelessly over the firmament. But his friend bids him observe the lines of gigantic boundary, tells him of the order and place of each constellation, and shows him that instead of chaos there is plan in the skies. So it is with these proverbs. They seem like a whole firmament of gems. Such is their point and brilliancy, that the very things that make them proverbs give them also their seeming abruptness and lack of connection. But the plan is there, and study will bring it out, until we admire the setting as much as the gems themselves.

The first part of the book comprises nine chapters. In these the importance of a well-grounded and firmly-settled piety is insisted upon for every young man. The dangers and duties of early life are pointed out so clearly that this portion of the book has been called the "Young Man's Directory." The second part, comprising the next fourteen chapters, supposes that the clerk or apprentice or student has acquired his business, his trade or

profession, and is ready to step forth into actual life. It tells him how to deal with men in such a way as to be prosperous and at the same time please the Lord. This second part may be called the "Merchant's Directory." The third division, though endorsed by Solomon, is the work of the son of a noble mother, who, with that mother in mind, sets forth the glories of true womanhood. It is the finest word-painting in literature; and that too in a line where the poets of the world have woven their choicest garlands and sung their sweetest songs. But if these are the main divisions of the book, it comports well with its plan that all through it there should be delightful episodes; the bowers of fancy where the poet may sing his verses, and the gardens where the philosopher may walk without interruption while talking to the admiring disciples, who, after the manner of Eastern scholars, love to call some veteran in wisdom by the name of master.

In a gallery of art there are large and even colossal objects in one picture, while another is a miniature of not more than a hand's breadth. And here in this gallery are pictures with a solitary figure—a single proverb; and there are also pictures of broadest artistic grouping. Here is a brief

sentence, and there a long allegory. At one turn we see the gilded coverings stripped from some sin, and at the next the polished and barbed arrow goes home to the heart of a cherished wrong. And the whole is so condensed and pithy, so full and yet so keen, with outward duty mentioned and yet the right heart so insisted upon, piety blended with morality and morality so enforced by piety, that the book is always venerable but never stale, can always be consulted yet never exhausted. The oldest finds in it food for thought, and the youngest a diversion and a delight. Those who enjoy the sketches of character, and those equally who love to see a condensed argument in a single sentence, can find in this book the thing that suits their taste. Will that single proverb ever grow obsolete while men love their holy dead—the proverb that says, "The memory of the just is blessed"? or will men ever cease to own the aptness of the saying, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joys"? And who has not been compelled to say, as he has met the experiences of life, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"? And how pertinent the sentence, "The beginning of strife is as the letting out of water; therefore

leave off contention before it is meddled with." What convert coming into the peace of God's forgiveness has not repeated those words, "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace?" Lord Bacon has been applauded for his saying, "Knowledge is power." But put the word wisdom for the word knowledge, and Solomon had said the same thing ages before.

Observe also that many of these proverbs get their power from some picture in them. A comparison of a single word in the heart of a pithy sentence has made it easy to remember and pertinent for quotation. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth;" "He that watereth shall be watered;" "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city;" "The slothful man saith there is a lion without;" "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." And if any man thinks these proverbs are mere truisms, let him pause over them and study them till they reveal themselves. He will find that there is a heart behind them. For they rise higher and strike deeper than the mere surface of our ordinary life. I never knew a man of sagacity, of practical skill in dealing with men, who was not fond of this Book of Proverbs. Such men have often these

proverbs close at hand, an exhaustless treasure for daily use.

The moral sketches that are scattered through the book are worthy of our study. They are exceedingly graphic. Perhaps there is no more terrible sketch in the Bible than that given in the opening chapter. A young man is warned not to go out into actual life without true piety. If he shall do it, all will go wrong. If he shall do it, God will be angry. God against him, calamities will sooner or later gather about him, and destruction come like an armed man, and there be none to deliver. "They shall call but I will not answer. They shall seek but not find." To the young man that laughs at religion and mocks at piety, who goes the voyage without the chart that God has given, he saith, "I will laugh at your calamity and I will mock when your fear cometh; when distress and anguish come upon you." And the reason for all this is given in these words, "*Because they did not choose the fear of the Lord.*" So that in the opening chapter we have the keynote of the whole book, and nowhere is there any declining from this grand and lofty tone with which the book begins, *viz.*, that the fear and love, the trust and the joy of the Lord, are the essential things in a true and noble life. The high

and beautiful severities of morality and religion stand forth, the glorious mountain summits that are never to be lost sight of in all our climbing. The air grows purer, the vision broader. The very precipices of doom are for a salutary warning that we venture not too near the shelving edge of any evil, lest we provoke God to leave us. And thus alike, by warning and by wooing, by words that startle and those that encourage, by the fear of God and by the love of God, we are instructed, admonished, profited. The ruin of the godless man is made in this opening chapter a minister of salvation to all who propose to "walk not in the way of the wicked and refrain the foot from their path."

Another of these character-sketches is peculiar to Eastern life as seen to-day among the unaltered customs of the Orient. There, enervated by the climate, by lack of general enterprise, by the ease with which the few necessities of life are gained, men will doze away a lifetime in an idleness that has no prosperity to excuse it. The idle man in the East is not a retired rich man, but often one who has need of daily labour. And Solomon's picture of the idler is drawn so sharply that we can almost see him in his sloth. There he is, prone on his bed, though the sun has risen and others are at

work. His fields are grown over with weeds. "Yet a little more sleep," he says drowsily when one would rouse him,— "Yet a little more sleep, and a little more slumber, and a little more folding of the hands to sleep"—and he has gone again. Roused once more, he turns lazily on his bed and says, "There is a lion without in the way; yet a little more sleep." Do *we* need to study this picture? If we had lived in the former ages, before industry had become a passion of the nations, some exhortation towards worldly thrift might have been needful for us. But industry is the New England virtue, and a lazy man is the contempt of the community. And yet this outward thrift is often unattended with any inward aspiration. "To get on in the world" becomes the great aim. The intellect is often untilled, and the soul is a luxuriant wilderness of weeds, the chance growth of accident on a soil that needs to be reclaimed and redeemed for God. Idlers on one field we despise. Then must there be care, lest, looking on the picture which Solomon has placed before us, we should fail to see his twofold meaning; fail also to see that we may have escaped from the one to be ensnared in the other and the sadder peril.

And the drunkard is also sketched by our royal

artist. The twenty-third of Proverbs has been called the "Drunkard's Looking-glass." "*Look not upon the wine when it is red; when it giveth his colour in the cup; when it moveth itself aright.*" Do you see the man in the picture as he balances daintily the cup, as he looks lovingly upon it, lifts it carefully, then drains it off deliberately, with the gusto of the finished drinker? He does not look within. He does not see the bottom of the cup. But Solomon—and he had seen it in a sad experience—will allow us to look through his eyes. And now, looking closely at the picture, you will see that Solomon has painted a *serpent* in the cup. How plain it is. It is visible to every one except to the drinker himself. And as he drinks "it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." The deadly wine begins to circulate. Through every part of the system it is borne. And now comes the result. "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?" "Who hath contentions,"—is ever quarrelsome? "Who hath babbling?"—that word "babbling" is the very word, for the silly besotted man has now become a creature to whom blasphemy is wit and nonsense wisdom. "Who hath wounds without cause?"—received of course in some low drunken brawl. "Who hath redness of eyes?" "*Those*

that tarry long at the wine." It seems then that a man may become wretchedly, boisterously, filthily drunk, though he may only drink wine. He continues,—“Thine eyes shall behold strange women.” Strong drink feeds the flames of a raging lust. “Thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea; thou shalt be as one that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.” Is not that an exact description of the staggering gait of a drunkard? “They have stricken me, thou shalt say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not.” The poor inebriate has been kicked and bruised by the men who induced him to drink, and he did not know it at the time. And when he comes to understand it, instead of resolving never again to touch the maddening draught, he cries out, “When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.”

Such is Solomon's picture. And, if I could get every young man who reads this volume to look fairly upon that picture in its faithful lines and its terrible colours, and then could show him that there was the remotest possible danger of such a fall for himself; or that some friend might thus fall; or that there is one solitary man on earth who might come down into this misery; and if, on the

other hand, I could show him that by total abstinence he could certainly preserve himself, could prevent his friend, could hinder even an *enemy* from this result, I should have an argument of no small force to press upon him for signing at once the most stringent of pledges to avoid all that intoxicates.

And surely there never was a more strict pledge than this of Solomon. "*Look not,*" he says. We think it enough to say, Drink not. But he knew the force of the temptation. The colour, the sparkle, the very sight, may awaken the demon of appetite that is never allayed. "*Look not on the wine.*"

There is also in these proverbs a picture of true and noble *womanhood*. And it stands right over against a vivid portraiture of her whose house goes down to death. In the latter sketch, the wiles, the tempting words, the whole process of allurements are described; and then the folly, the wretchedness, the miserable and accursed end of him "who goeth after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter." "*Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.*" But the other portrait, how beautiful—beautiful in itself and beautiful in contrast. It is the portrait of a noble woman—the picture of a mother by her son. "*The*

heart of her husband doth safely trust her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." "She worketh with her hands." The writer had no idea of a human doll too dainty for labour and fit only for show. "She riseth and giveth meat to her household." She is domestic, and yet, while domestic when there is need for it, she is skilful in trade. "She considereth and buyeth a field." She is industrious—for it is said, "her hands hold the distaff." She is charitable. "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor." But mind and heart are not neglected. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom." "Her children rise up and call her blessed." She has helped and not hindered her husband's prosperity; for it is said, "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land."

I would have a young man believe in God with a practical daily faith. I would have him believe in good men, and keep company with them. But next to this, I would have him believe in a pure, noble womanhood. There are doubtless base women. There are frivolous creatures, who live with no plan but to see and to be seen. And such women a young man should avoid as he would the plague. But there are those whom God sends for

a man's help and guidance. He who believes in noble womanhood can find it. He who sneers at woman's virtue only proves himself to be base. A true man shows the nobility of his nature by his high ideal of womanhood; and in turn they who are to meet that ideal have need to be careful of purity, honour, intelligence, and religion.

Enough has been said to show the general spirit and tone of this book of the Proverbs. Its peculiarity above any other one Book of the Bible, is in the fact that it is directly addressed to young men. And this sketch of its contents is placed here at the beginning of the discussion as a sort of a portico, royal in its origin, attractive in its form, through which we may enter the temple of revelation, and mark certain mysteries, certain wonders, even certain difficulties that have perplexed many a young man and kept him from joining in the worship. It may be that we shall find some of them to be less embarrassing, less difficult than we had thought. It may be that, visiting this temple at first from a natural and laudable curiosity, we shall find ourselves inwardly persuaded to be more than spectators, and shall remain to share the service, our voice rising in the song and our heart uttering the Amen.

Is the Bible True?



CHAPTER II.

IS THE BIBLE TRUE?

"**Y**OU believe in the Bible, I presume?" said a man to his fellow-passenger in the railway car. "Certainly I do," was the instant reply. "I presume you believe in it because of your mother's teaching?" said the first man, in a sneering tone. "Precisely so," was the answer; "I do believe in the Bible for that among other good reasons." "I don't see," was the reply, "how that can be a good reason. Suppose your mother had been born a Hottentot: you would then have believed in idolatry; or if she had been an Indian woman, you would have had faith in Juggernaut." "I probably should," replied the other. "I am surprised to hear you own it. Nine-tenths of the people who believe in the Bible have no better reason for their faith than just this: their fathers taught it to them and their mothers made them say their prayers, and so they believe in religion. I am independent.

I don't mean to believe anything because somebody else does so." "Stop," said the other; "stop right there, and hear me a moment. I was taught the Bible by my mother, by her life as well as her lips. The Bible made my mother the best, the sweetest, the noblest woman I ever knew. It was her strength in life, her comfort in sickness, her all in death. I saw what it did for her, and I started with every presumption in its favour. I have other, and perhaps to you they would be stronger, reasons for believing in my Bible. But let me tell you that for myself, the strongest of all reasons is that my mother, and she was such a mother, taught me its truths. I had a Christian home. I have travelled some, and I know that there is not a Christian home on the continent of Africa, there is not one in Asia, aside from what this religion of the Bible has done within a few years just past. In the hut of a Hottentot, or in the tent of a Bedouin Arab, I should have been taught in another religion, exactly as I should have been taught in another kind of astronomy, and natural philosophy and geology. What then? Shall I think less of the true system of astronomy, because I was educated to believe it in Christian New England, or doubt the facts of

natural history because Agassiz taught them to me in America? Shall I believe less firmly the facts of science because I learned them under circumstances most advantageous, in places where they could best be learned, and from the best of teachers? And as for you, sir," turning to the other, "let me say just this; either you had or did not have an early Christian home. If you had a pious father and a praying mother, and were taught the biblical truths, and now have turned away from the Holy Book, you are, I am certain, far less of a man morally for it. For you have not the sanctions of that book when you do right; nor its warnings when tempted to do wrong. You are not so pure, so strong in principle. Right and wrong, good and evil, are not words with so much meaning as they would have had if you had read your Bible and striven to shape your life by its directions. Or, if you had no Christian home, if your parents were not devout people, then you started in life under a terrible disadvantage, a disadvantage to your moral nature as great as it would have been to your physical nature if you had been born without feet or without hands. And instead of you reproaching me for my mother's religion, I am the one who should pity you for the terrible

calamity under which you commenced life—the calamity of not having a Christian home. Yes," continued the young man, "I do believe in the Bible, in part at least, because my mother did. And it is dearer because it was *her* Bible, and my God is more revered because he was my mother's God, and Christ is loved because he was my mother's Saviour, and heaven is more precious because the heaven of the Bible is my mother's heaven."

And the sceptic was silent. What was there for him to say?

Many a young man educated to believe the Bible is entirely satisfied for himself. He knows that the book, which, universally obeyed, would bring universal joy—for that is its result as far as its precepts are followed—must be God's book. His Bible is true. And yet, he is disturbed sometimes by the objections brought against it. He wishes to be more familiar with the outward evidences of the integrity of the Bible, that he may answer the sneers of opposers, and also that he may feel sure, on other and independent grounds, of the truthfulness of the Scriptures. And there are some young men about whom, early in life, were thrown hosts of difficulties and perplexities; and

these were accompanied with sneers and innuendoes against Christians. Such young men have no appreciation of the moral argument from the elevation of a Christian home, nor can they understand the moral power of those benign influences which make up the moral atmosphere into which the more favoured young men of this country were born. So that the argument to be presented in this chapter, having these two classes of young men in mind, must needs be both historical and moral.

We will ask two questions. One of them is this: "*Is the Bible true?*" The other, immediately following it in logical order, shall be: "*Is the Bible inspired?*"

In asking whether the Bible be true, the question is of the same kind as that raised when we inquire whether Macaulay's or Motley's or Bancroft's histories are true. It is an inquiry whether the persons who wrote these books of the Bible were eye-witnesses of the facts, or, if not, whether they had access to documents which they used so fairly that we can trust them as we do other historians. When they state facts in their narrative, we propose to ask first, as we do about any other writers of history, *Are they credible men?* Are they men whose character, opportunities for knowledge, whose presumed

motives and whose conduct in life warrant our confidence? Finding them reliable historians, men who state actual historic facts, it is indeed possible that we shall be compelled to go further. It may be that if true, they are true about such things and in such a way true, that we shall be obliged to go on and to own their inspiration. But the inquiries before us now are with reference to their truthfulness, their integrity, their credibility.

Nor can we here take up in order the vast number of facts they state, and examine them in detail. That would be to write a commentary on the Bible. Nor can we quote at length the testimony of travellers in the lands of the Bible, nor recite the evidence accumulating every year from Assyrian, Babylonian, Judæan, and Egyptian tombs and monuments—that vast mass of corroboration of many of the more important statements which are given in the Scriptures. This is a field of unspeakable richness and of unfailing interest. Nor can any man spend an hour with such a book as Rawlinson's "Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament" without wonder at the new evidence, reserved for the investigations of the present generation, of the minute accuracy of many portions of our historical Scriptures. To enter on this field is impossible for

us in this volume. Nor is it needed. For the strictly historical argument is really very simple ; is narrowed down to the establishment of a very few facts, which any man of ordinary judgment can easily understand, and about which he can easily make up his mind. The whole inquiry concerns the New Testament. And of the New Testament we need only to consider the integrity of the Four Gospels. For if these biographers of Jesus are to be trusted, our Lord indorsed the Old Testament, and *promised* subsequent books of the New Testament similar to those which we have now in the Epistles and the Revelation. So that the whole inquiry for us is just this : Have we reason to believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have given us a fair and correct account of what Jesus Christ said and did? To this inquiry the whole matter comes at length, and on this thing depends the historic argument.

Nobody doubts the existence of just these sacred books which we call the Old Testament in the days of Jesus. He quoted that volume, citing those very facts to which most objection is made, *viz.* : the fall, the flood, the attempted sacrifice of Abraham, the descending manna, the lifted serpent, and the story of Jonah. Sometimes he quotes the volume itself ;

sometimes he gives the name of the special book from which he quotes. To a people venerating their sacred writings to the verge of bibliolatry, he said, "Search the Scriptures," and he continually was saying that certain things were done "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." So that the whole question of the integrity of the Old Testament, though abundantly capable of defence on independent grounds, for us, in our present argument, may be said to be involved in that of the truthfulness of the New Testament. And as the Gospels indorse the Old Testament, so they also carry with them the integrity of the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. Assured that we have a fair record of what Jesus did and said, we find among his undoubted discourses direct promises of a superhuman guidance, not only in bringing to mind what he had said to his disciples, but in guiding them into all truth, even that which he could not tell them while he was in the body. He had more truth to reveal when the Holy Spirit should be given and they were to be shown the things to come. And assuming that these Gospels accurately report him, where shall we find the fulfilment of his promise except in these later New Testament books? These later writers make the claim, and they are the only serious

claimants to-day. If Jesus spoke truly in the promise as recorded in the Gospels, then these other New Testament books are the fulfilment of his words.

The whole matter comes down to very narrow limits. A thousand incidental questions may be raised which have only an incidental bearing. The decision as to *three vital questions* will decide the whole case. They are these. *First*: Did books substantially like our Four Gospels exist in the earliest Christian centuries? *Second*: Did the authors of them enjoy opportunities for knowing what they affirmed? and were they such persons that we can trust them to tell us the truth? And *Third*: Have these four histories of Christ been preserved with as reasonable a degree of integrity, and have they been as fairly transmitted to us, as have the works of other ancient historians?

As to the first of these inquiries, *viz.*, the early existence of the books, little need be said, for the unanimous verdict of scholars is well known.¹

¹ Those who desire a full discussion of this matter can find it in the elaborate work of Tischendorf. "When were our Gospels Written?" See also Westcott's "Introduction to Gospels." In these lectures I have endeavoured to give the results reached in the present state of biblical scholarship, without entering at all into the processes by which those results have been gained. This is true both of this and the following chapter.

Volney and his school, in an unfortunate hour, ventured to utter doubts as to whether Jesus and his apostles had ever lived. It was instantly shown that heathen and Jewish, as well as Christian *historians*, testified to the existence and influence of him and his religion. And in the face of the fact that Christ's religion, as recorded in these books, had named an era in human history, this class of sceptics saw that they had blundered. And no decently informed man repeats these absurdities to-day. Rousseau, himself belonging to another school of scepticism, published an answer to Volney, in which he insists, that if Jesus did not live, those who invented such a character as that given in the Four Gospels, putting such words into the lips of an imaginary being, have performed, in so doing, a greater miracle than any that they ascribed to Jesus. To-day the assent is uniform as to the existence of these biographies in the earliest Christian centuries—a fact allowed by Strauss and Renan. No matter, here and now, for the way in which these two distinguished authors account for the fact. No matter for any theory, once attracting some notice and now vanishing, of myth as mingled with historic truth. No matter, so far as the present part of our inquiry is concerned, as to whether the books contain only

a mere substratum of truth; no matter if any one should have the hardihood to venture again the absurdity of Volney that the very basis was false. The argument now is about the early *existence* of these books,¹ the Gospels. And here there is an absolute unanimity; all admitting that such documents, the basis of appeal for both friends and foes as to the alleged facts, did exist in the earliest Christian centuries.²

¹“The strictest historical investigations bring this compilation—even by the admission of Strauss himself—within thirty or forty years of the time when the alleged wonders they relate are said to have occurred.”—*Henry Rogers, in "Reason and Faith."*

²On this point see the exhaustive treatment of Westcott in “Introduction to the Study of the Gospels.” He shows that the “Oral Gospel” was the first Gospel—the story of the facts as told by word of mouth, the apostles repeating the facts. And he shows why it was so for years in Palestine; and how, at length, out of this came the Four Written Gospels; the apostles committing their facts to writing when in the course of nature they must leave their work—a work in which they could have no successors. Jesus himself wrote no line. Not that he was unable so to do; for his knowledge of “letters,” *i.e.*, languages, amazed some of his hearers. He knew the Aramaic, his native speech; he quoted the Hebrew; he used Latin words, again and again, with the precision as to derivation which marks the scholar; he quoted from the Greek language the very words of the Septuagint. In adopting the oral method rather than the written, he did exactly what other teachers of his age were wont to do. And so far from an objection, it is a confirmation of Christianity, that it represents our Lord as adopting at the outset the usual oral method

These four histories of Jesus Christ began to be read in churches as they became known; John's Gospel being thus indorsed and employed last, because last written, and because one early sect deemed the teaching of John's Gospel to be in opposition to their peculiar views.* But these objections were soon removed, and the Christians of the early Christian centuries received the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, as the authentic documents of the new religion.

The second inquiry is as to the authorship of

¹ For an account of this sect, the Alogi, see Westcott's "Introduction," etc., in which there is shown the reason why this heretical sect hesitated for a time to acknowledge this Gospel as *inspired*. But the point *here* made in my argument is not the inspiration but the *existence* of the book. And as to its genuineness as history, it is perhaps a stronger proof of the carefulness of the early Churches, that while there was the least doubt they hesitated. But doubt for the reason given by the Alogi—that it condemned their doctrine—is a doubt which is an evidence of the integrity as well as the existence of the Fourth Gospel. Not one solitary fact was ever alleged against the genuineness of the book, save this that I have named. The hint which was thus furnished 1700 years ago has been taken up and used by unbelievers within the last fifty years. And the decision of 1700 years ago is now reaffirmed. Ewald, the great German critic, who has devoted immense labour to the matter, sums up the whole discussion as follows: "Every argument, from every quarter to which we can look, every trace and record, combine to render any serious doubt upon the question *absolutely impossible*."

these books. All accounts represent the authors of them as once residents in Palestine. All accounts represent them as plain men, in part Galilean fishermen; with one only of them, Luke, the physician, a man of professional education. The writers were plainly not scribes of the law; they were not ecclesiastically educated men. But it is equally sure that they were not untutored peasants. They show a peculiar but an untrained ability. They see things clearly, and have the mastery of a style of description that in its simplicity is at a world-wide remove from that of the elaborate historians of the age. They had just keenness and culture enough to make the very best class of witnesses to a question of fact, and to enable them to state that fact in honest, unadorned, but accurate language. That they were men of either the ability or training required to *originate* such a character as that of Jesus Christ, is too absurd for any man's belief. What! Galilean fishermen describing such a character, putting him into the most trying positions, in which he never once failed; placing words in his mouth that have led the wisdom of the ages,—*they* giving us the only ideal of perfect manhood that is found in all the literature of the world—and doing this out of their . . . a brain—mere

novelists depicting an imaginary hero! To believe *this* is a far greater demand upon our faith than to believe any or all the miracles that are found in the Bible. Our Lord must have lived, and these men must have been with him in the intimacies of social life as well as in his public teachings. They must have been witnesses of his miracles and so his historians.¹ An actual life, and the historians of that life his friends, intimates, disciples—these two things are demanded by the whole scope and the entire detail of the books themselves. Nor is there another claimant to the authorship of them. It is they, or the authors of books that would have made a world-wide reputation for anybody are unknown. The verdict of the world is given in favour of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as the writers of the respective books which are everywhere known under their names.

As to the theory once defended, but now entirely abandoned, that they were impostors, it is enough to remark that the ordinary motives to imposition are wanting, and that it is not possible to imagine

¹ Mark's Gospel is an exception only in appearance. For (1) the *internal* evidence that it is the work of an eye-witness is stronger in Mark than in any other Gospel. And (2) the Gospel is Peter's Gospel as to facts, while it is Mark's as to arrangement and verbal authorship.

motives for such a kind of deception, much less that these men could have done it, and then could have succeeded in foisting their imposition upon the keenest age—the Augustan age—which the world has ever seen. Impostors could not if they would, and would not if they could, invent such a character as that of Christ.

The theory of imposture surrendered, is that of *self deception* any more plausible? Enthusiasts with fancies for facts would have fared ill in publishing their pretended histories to a keen generation in which not a single false or even exaggerated statement could have passed unquestioned. Names, dates, places, references to streets and to persons, to public facts and private details, are scattered through these Gospels with lavish hand. And with such means of detecting the error furnished to them in the very documents themselves, it is certain that the skillful opponents of Christianity would have seized upon any alleged fact, and have proved it false, if that could have been; and in this way they would have inflicted such a serious blow upon the new religion as to have crushed it at the outset. For in no way could they have so destroyed the force of the new faith as by showing an error in its authentic documents on a question of public fact.

Had such error been detected it would have been at once published to the world; and once published, the work containing it would not have been allowed to perish. But no such work exists. Keen opponents there were, who, if Jews, ascribed the Gospel facts to Satan, and if Gentiles, ascribed them to magic; in either case owning the facts, and always quoting the facts from these accepted narratives of the Evangelists.

And as to the theory that these Gospels *might have been* written and placed in their present form partly by good men and partly by bad men—a theory just now most popular with objectors, and a theory the most desperate and the least plausible of any—it is enough to say that what might have been is not a proper matter of historic inquiry. No absurdity can be greater than to imagine the doings of this singular conclave, where pious saints and impious knaves have met for the purpose of foisting Christianity on the world,—one party supplying a miracle and the other furnishing the teaching to match it, and the two woven together so firmly in one narrative, that, like the seamless robe of Jesus, no men may part it. Or, if the good men and the bad men are supposed to have worked separately, what more incredible than that bad men should

retouch the draft of good men, and their patchwork of evil be undiscernible from the original fabric, unless it is the still more incredible supposition that good men should consent to retouch the draft of evil men, knowing it to be the evil work of such men, and yet endorsing it! Strange good men, those!

The *third* point of vital importance is as to whether there has been a fair transmission to us of these Four Gospels. They were at once earnestly sought and highly prized by the friends of the new religion. The doctrines founded upon these facts which they state were made instantly matters of controversy. Every one can see that it would be impossible to interpolate a new miracle or new sermon into these Gospels to-day. And for the same reason it would have been impossible fifty years after the books were written. Enemies were alert, and friends were already divided in their views of doctrine and duty. To have added anything of importance, any new fact favouring any particular school of belief, would not have been allowed any more than it would be to-day. In the second and third centuries, amid the divergence of beliefs, it was wished by some of the sects to obtain if possible the attestation of the apostles to the new doctrines

and practices. But mark one universally conceded fact. The heretics, not daring to tamper with the recognised documents, invented others, *new Gospels*, to some of which the more bold ventured to affix the names of the apostles. But to all the Christian world, by the close of the second century, the fraud was as apparent as it is to us to-day. A few persons were deceived for a time. But the imposture is as evident as would be the interpolation of a sentence of Jefferson Davis's speech on secession into the Emancipation Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln. In a subsequent discussion this matter will be named again. It is mentioned here only to show that the very existence of such fraudulent books is a positive proof that the accepted documents could not be then altered by the insertion of any new miracle or doctrine.¹ They could no more have been purposely corrupted or changed then, than they can be to-day. Of course, no miracle is claimed for the preservation of the Scriptures. In printing the Bible, even with our splendid facilities, there occur typographical errors. Indeed, it has

¹ Westcott, in his "Introduction," etc., has shown that in the second century the *whole New Testament*, as now we have it, Epistles and Acts and Revelation—the Gospels of course much earlier—was accepted with the same reverence with which Christians regard the Scriptures to-day.

been claimed that no volume of the size of the Bible has ever been printed without some mistake. But these errors do not harm the substance of a volume. The most of these are of about the same importance as the omission to dot an *i* or cross a *t* on the written page. They are never alleged as against the integrity of an author's work. Changes in languages, differences caused by thousands of various readings, as in other ancient works, have had their influence upon the text of the New Testament. But these things injure the integrity of the books just as little as they do the works of Cæsar and Sallust and Virgil and Demosthenes. These verbal variations are merely curious questions of nice scholarship, and do not affect any one of the great Christian facts.¹

The Gospel writers are unimpeached. The records are fairly preserved. For the jealousy of friends as well as the hostility of foes has combined to preserve these documents from any considerable error. They are trustworthy histories of actual events. And these true, as has been shown before.

¹ "By all the omissions and all the additions contained in all the manuscripts no fact is rendered obscure or doubtful."—*Pres. Hopkins*. "By none of these variations, etc., shall one be able to extinguish the light of a chapter or disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will be the same."—*Bentley*.

they carry with them the truth of the Old Testament which they endorse, and the remaining portions of the New Testament which they promise.

It would be of interest to note how the Gospels once ascertained to be true, and so the other parts of the Scriptures also true, that they in turn yield their evidence to these Four Gospels. Given the books that go before, given also those that follow, and somewhere there must be such books as these Gospels; and it is these or none that can fill the condition of the question. The Hebrew ritual obliges us to find somewhere the New Testament Christ. And the Acts are impossible apart from the Christian facts which they indorse and out of which they grew. And Paul takes up every main fact, not by any special purpose, but incidentally, in his epistles, so that he has been called our Fifth Gospel.¹ But all this is incidental proof, nor need it be entered upon.

The vital points of the historic argument have been presented, and the proof given that we have in the works of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John trustworthy histories, and that in a fair degree of purity these books have come down to our own

¹ See this idea developed in an article, "Paul as an Argument for Christianity," in "Baptist Quarterly," October, 1873.

times. And it is clear that, these points proven, we may turn a deaf ear to a hundred minor questions, even if they have difficulty in them. For these questions are of side issues, and they bear only remotely on the subject. The opponents of Christianity have skilfully raised many a discussion on these side issues, and the friends of a historic religion have allowed themselves to be seduced from the main question to engage in controversy on points not vital to the main argument. Says Isaac Taylor, "The subjects of debate in the Christian argument have come to us in inverted order. The logical order is this: Are the *principal facts*, on the reality of which everything rests, real or not? If *they* are true, the conclusion carries with it all we need. If they are untrue, then a laborious discussion concerning such things will barely repay the few who abound in leisure and learning."

In a very simple way elsewhere we ascertain a question of common fact; as, for instance, of the sailing of a ship from Liverpool to New York. There are a thousand incidental questions that can be asked about that ship, all of them of interest, some of them highly important for other purposes, but none of them having the least bearing on the inquiry, "Did the ship actually make the alleged

voyage from Liverpool to New York ?" Questions might be raised about her hull, as wood or iron ; about her cordage and cable, as wire or rope ; about her capacity, as so many or not so many tons ; about her engines, as American or English ; about her cargo, and of what proportion was dry goods and what hardware ; of her officers and her crew, as capable or inefficient ; and of her voyage, as smooth or rough. And it is possible to conceive of men as exercising their ingenuity so sharply on these things about that ship, and raising thereby such a multitude of difficulties, that some would be inclined to express a doubt as to whether there was such a ship and such a voyage. And this is exactly what has been done about the Bible. Opponents have seized upon minor matters and pressed them. They have drawn off public attention from the very few vital facts, against which, once established, all objections are useless. They have discussed questions as to sails and hull and course and cargo. Meanwhile there are just a few facts which can easily be settled, as to the voyage of the ship, and which decide fully the whole matter. They are these three : Did she sail ? And the record on the books of the Custom-House at Liverpool settles that inquiry. Did she arrive in New York ? And the record on the books

at New York is the evidence. Is the record correctly transcribed and faithfully forwarded? And this third inquiry can be easily made, and an exact answer be given. And this closes the evidence. Precisely so in the case before us. The three questions we have discussed as to the Four Gospels cover all that is essential. Nor should any young man allow himself to be confused by inquiries not vital to the historic argument for the integrity of these books. The argument stands unimpeached. And the religion of the Bible is able to make the high claim that it is a *religion of facts*, and a religion that presents these facts as proof that it is from God.

2. To the *moral argument* we now turn. The general influence of the Bible on men is a fact that one cannot overlook. The question is not whether any perfectly obey it, but whether any are made better by it; whether its tone is healthful. Does it elevate society to have the Bible circulate in the homes of a community, to have the Sabbath it enjoins devoutly kept, to have the religion of the Bible studied and practised in some fair degree? I need not ask these questions of any young man. They scarcely admit of being stated, for the whole thing is almost self-evident. There is not a piece

of property that is not worth more, nor an industry that does not thrive the better, for the practice, however partial and imperfect, of the precepts of the religion of the Bible. The church building increases the value of the property in the town; and purely as a means of general thrift, of public virtue and moral education, in more than one New England community, men of sceptical views have given liberally towards the erection of the sanctuary and the support of the Sabbath School. It is true that some have insisted upon charging the wars and persecutions unfortunately too common in human history to the influence of the Bible. But this is to confound its pure teachings with man's perversions, mistakes, and hypocrisies. As reasonably might an argument be constructed against all government on the ground that men had wrested it from its purpose and used it as an instrument of tyranny. If every crime has been at some time perpetrated under the name of religion or of government, we are not to attribute that fact to anything that belongs to pure religion or good government. Surely we are able to make the distinction between the Christianity of the Bible and man's corruption of it in human history. And the good influence of Christianity—good in exact proportion to its purity—is seen everywhere. It is

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Is the Bible True?

61

the strength of law. It gives purity to public sentiment. It favours learning. It extends the domain and strengthens the motives of all sweetest and most blessed charities. It gives sacredness to social life. Everywhere it is the friend of truthfulness, of honesty, of purity, of every noble virtue. Could bad men have given the world such a volume as the Bible, even if they would? or would they if they could?

It is, moreover, a singular fact that those who *know this book best love it most*. They are best qualified to judge of it. The devoutest students of it are just those most thoroughly persuaded of the divine origin of the book. True, some persons of intellectual eminence have rejected Christianity. But in nearly every case they have not known intimately the New Testament. For it by no means follows that because one is eminent as a naturalist, or as a mathematician, or as a historian, or as a literary critic, he is therefore a biblical scholar. A mathematician and not a poet is the best judge of a question in the calculus. Indeed, the poet's opinion may be worthless. And so on these questions of the integrity of the Bible, an array of great names is sometimes quoted on the side of unbelief. The eminence of these men in their own de-

partment, so far from qualifying them for authorities in such biblical questions, is often the very thing that renders their opinions on this matter almost valueless. Hume's historical inquiries were confined to a certain secular line. Huxley's naturalistic studies are not of the slightest value in questions of religion. Large attention elsewhere hinders necessarily large attention here. Hume gave himself to history and philosophy. His works would stand substantially as now if he had never seen a New Testament. For his arguments are directed against all religions, and indeed against all actual knowledge of every kind. He aimed to sever the relation of cause and effect. He needed no acquaintance with the New Testament to construct a metaphysical argument which strikes a blow equally at all religion and all science. Voltaire's name has been quoted among those whose scholarship has been arrayed against revelation. But he had no scholarship at all on *this* matter. He made blunders that would have disgraced a Sunday-school boy of a dozen years in quoting Biblical incidents. He gave his life to other books, and did not know the book he denied. And Gibbon at twenty-two years of age or thereabouts says, "Here I suspended my religious inquiries." And he confessed to an idle life

before this time. Surely such a man, however eminent in other lines, has no weight at all as against the sentiment, "They who know the Bible best love it most." There are men of majestic intellect, and of calm, careful, profound scholarship, men who have made this book their study for years—men like Newton and Pascal and Leibnitz and Edwards and Chalmers; and these are the men competent to testify in the domains of scholarship. Nor scholars only. There are tens of thousands of honest, careful, sound-minded men in every walk of life, who have just lived mentally and morally on this book. They have thought of it on the week-day and studied it on the Sabbath. *They know the book.* If an imposture, they would be the first to discover it. If it did them harm to practise the directions of the book, they would long ago have renounced and denounced it. They are honest, trustworthy men, if there are any such on earth. And they say that they read it with more and more interest and admiration and love with every year of their life. Such evidence is not to be set aside.

There is also a wide difference between the *morality* taught by the writers of the Scriptures and that expressly taught by the leading sceptics

of the century now ending. Some of these writers of the Bible were certainly men all of whose acts no one defends. And here is the thing to be noticed: they do not defend themselves. In wrong-doing they do not go with but against their own teaching. They condemn their own mistakes and confess their own sins. We had not known those sins but for their honest confession and condemnation. Their precepts and the vast preponderance of their personal conduct are certainly on the side of virtue. But what of the *teaching* of men like Herbert, who declared that lust and passion were no more blameworthy than hunger and thirst? like Hobbs, who maintained that right and wrong are but mere quibbles of imagination? like Bolingbroke, who insisted that the chief end of man was to gratify his passions? like Hume, who declared that humility is a vice rather than a virtue, and that adultery elevates human character? Paine was in his last days a drunkard, and Voltaire was found by his friends to be so often a liar, that his word was worthless. Let a company of men believing these teachings organise themselves into a society for putting them into actual practice in any community, and that community would be compelled to rise and expel the foul plague from their borders. In

short, let a company of men undertake to obey such teachings exactly as a church is organised to obey the teachings of Christ, and let them do it as far as Christians obey the precepts of the Bible, and who could or would endure it? And while the biblical precepts perfectly obeyed would bring almost the old Eden days to our sorrowful earth, these precepts of sceptical writers perfectly obeyed would make a very pandemonium of wretchedness and abomination.

The moral argument for the Bible plants itself upon the substantial agreement of its different parts. Revelation is progressive. There is a progress of development from first to last. And truth is given in forms more crude in the earlier, and more finished and comprehensive in the later books of the Bible. Hence here and there those merely verbal and temporary discords which serve, as musicians say, to heighten the whole effect. Those who would make capital of these things, playing off a partially revealed truth of the Old Testament as in some sense antagonistic to the full-orbed truth of the New Testament, only show their lack of appreciating the breadth of God's plan in His Holy Word. And as to the slight discrepancies of the Evangelists, it is enough to say that they are just

such and so many as a lawyer likes to have among the witnesses on the side of his client. For they prove that there was no collusion, no agreement to support a fraud. These little discrepancies are exactly in those things necessarily omitted in the mere sketches and fragmentary notices of Jesus Christ which these writers profess to give us. As between any two of them, often a single word supplied incidentally by the third gives us the missing link that was needed to make the story coherent. And some difficulties remain on the face of the narratives when we would make a perfect harmony of the order of the events, which doubtless one word would solve—a word that, needless then, would be helpful now. It was indeed no part of the work of either to endorse the others. When they do it, it is not of design. Each had his own work to do, and did it. Had they been careful of their own harmony, mutually endorsing each other, their evidence would have been terribly weakened. But their carelessness in that matter, their “abandon” to their work, by which they go each straight to his own mark, without one thought that Peter’s facts may cross Matthew’s, or John’s narrative injure Luke’s story—their perfect unconsciousness of any suspicion—these are among the evidences of their

divine commission. And the agreement not only in the facts, but, what is far more important, in those great ideas that run through the Bible as to God, as to immortality, as to the way of salvation, as to a judgment, as to future awards—the agreement as to the *ideal* of Jesus Christ shown by the four writers of our Gospels, shown also by the writer of the Acts, shown also by Paul, by Peter, by John, in their Epistles—*this* is the highest and best possible agreement, an agreement deeper than that of mere words. We see the blended rays of the same great solar truth, whether beheld in the promise of its dawning, in its onward march up the sky, or in the full glory of its midday completeness.

There is a powerful moral argument in the *ideal of Jesus Christ* which the Scriptures present. Reference has been already made (See page 65) to the fact that the writers of the Four Gospels are in substantial accord, as between each other, in their portraiture of the character of Jesus Christ. But here the argument is drawn from the *ideal* itself. Whence came the thought of such a person? If he is a fiction, existing only on these pages, somebody originated the fiction. And whoever that person or that company of persons, it is certain that the creation of such a character was too great

an achievement for the party or parties to remain unknown. But where are the claimants of this greatest of honours? Who originated the idea? Even Rousseau, himself in some respects a sceptic, was struck with the moral majesty of the conception. He writes as follows:

“Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred person whose history it contains could be a mere man? What purity, what sweetness, what sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What truth in his replies! Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? It bears not the marks of fiction. The history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ: the marks of truth are so striking that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.”

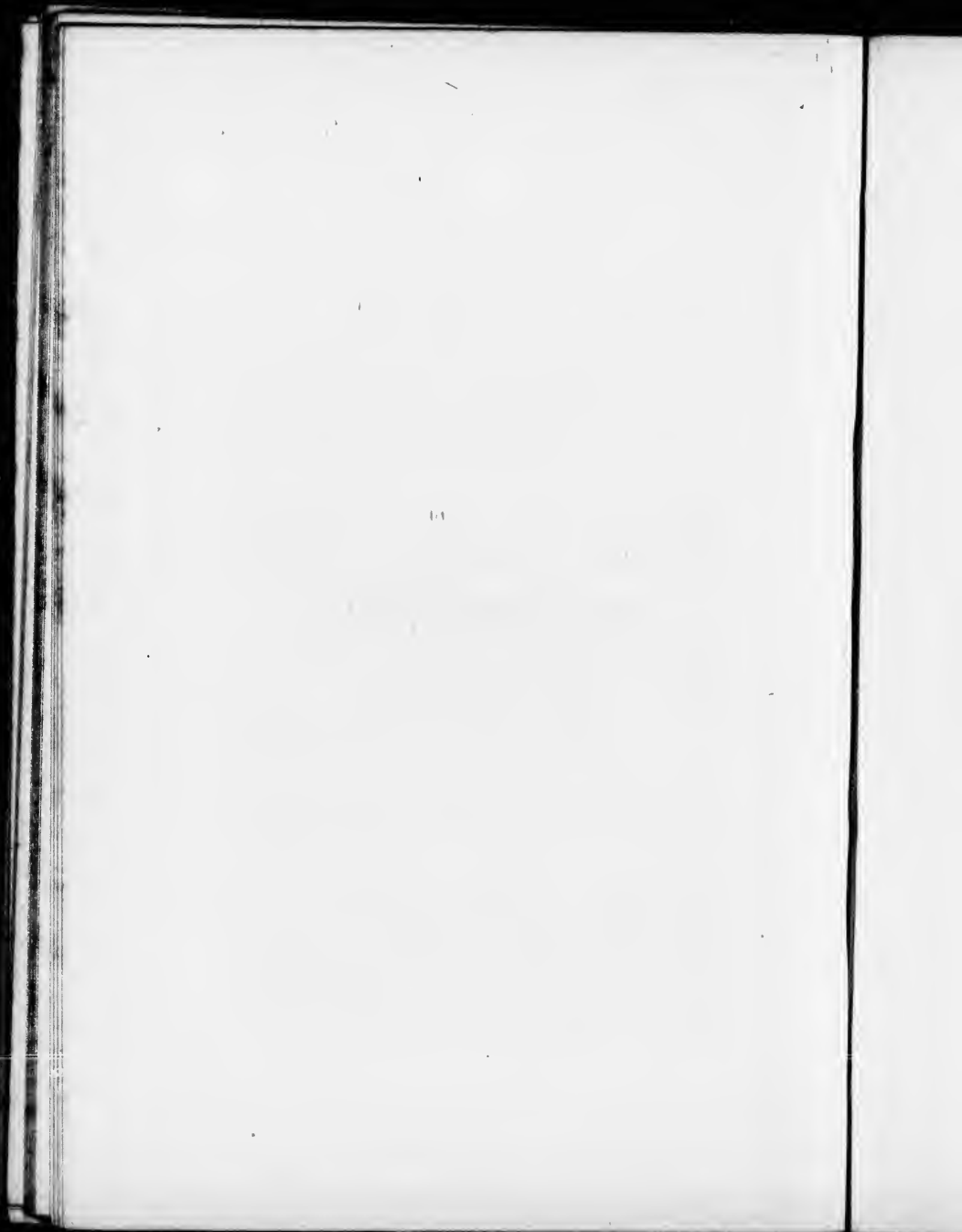
Again I ask the question whence this idea of Christ? Did a knot of plebeians in Galilee, the most despised portion of a far-off Roman province, themselves unskilled in the grand conceptions of Grecian or Persian or Arabian poets and philosophers—did they *invent Christ*? Setting aside, now and here, the absolute impossibility that they should

have perfectly depicted him—depicted him with just enough of diversity to give unity to our impression of him, where did they get the ideal perfect man? There is one, and only one explanation. *Jesus must have lived.* His disciples saw him, listened to him, reported him. The Roman hero was no such character. An educated Roman would have made Jesus say, Blessed are the brave, the heroic, and the noble. A brutal Roman would have said, Blessed are they that can strike back; the men of nerve and muscle for the combat. But Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek." A Grecian would have made him say, Blessed are they who, wrapped in the contemplation of divine philosophy, forget the common herd of men, above whom they stand. But Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The Pharisee would have had him say, Blessed are the exact and careful in the ritual law. The Sadducee would have had him say, Blessed are they who care for this life, as the real life, and leave the future, if there be a future, to care for itself. The Essene would have had him declare, Blessed are they that conquer the body with stripes well laid on for righteousness' sake. But Jesus, turning from every form of Jewish ideal, said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see

God." Hillel, the first Rabbi of the age of Christ, would have said, Blessed are the educated in the Levitical law; "for no common person is pious." * But Jesus said, "Come unto me *all* ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How is it that here we have a character absolutely perfect? Whence came the *idea* of Jesus? There is only one possible answer. And that answer owns that the one great miracle of Christianity, its sun, to which all other miracles are but the stars, is the *character of Jesus Christ!*

* His very words. And yet the Jews, to avoid the force of the powerful argument in support of Christianity of the *character of Christ*, have intimated that some of his sayings might have come from their Rabbi Hillel; a hint not lost on Rénan in the French novel which he has called "The Life of Jesus."

Is the Bible Inspired?



CHAPTER III.

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED ?

PILATE'S question, "What is truth?" has been called the question of the ages. For we are made up in such a way as to believe in truth. And no matter how many wrong answers have been given, the fact remains that men will believe that truth is *real*, and that the *truth can be known*. This is so, of course, only about what can be proven. And we have seen how careful is the Bible to appeal to evidence. Christianity is a question of fact. It offers proof of its truthfulness in miracle, in prophecy, in peculiar teaching, in the person of Jesus Christ.

But every young man opening the pages of his Bible can see that, true at all, the book is peculiarly, grandly true—a kingly book among men's books. The tone of it is unlike anything else in all the literature of the world. It asserts. It speaks with authority. It does indeed give proofs. But it

does it easily, incidentally ; never with labour, as if men were hesitating and so it must hesitate ; never as if doubting somewhat its right to the most direct and positive speech ; never as if its absolute authority could be questioned. It is a book that, allowed to have any claim, must be allowed all its claims. True at all, it is true in such a way, and about such things, that there is not nor can there be any other such volume on earth. Nor is this claimed for the Bible simply on the ground of its literary character. It has indeed poetry that is sublime, history that is dramatic in its form and careful in its fact, and narrative that is unequalled in simplicity and dignity. These are the indubitable marks of human genius. It needs no proof that some of these writers—the claim is not made for all—were men of exalted ability. They have made a book that is without a peer. It stands up alone, apart, peculiar in its claims, giving evidences of its truthfulness, and compelling homage for the genius that irradiates its pages.

And now comes the further inquiry as to this book, the truthfulness of which we have already ascertained, whether besides human genius there is also divine guidance ; whether God had anything to do with this book in a sense in which he

has not had with any other; whether the book has not only the human inspiration of exalted genius, but also the superhuman inspiration, not of angel or of seraph, but of God's Holy Spirit. And the inquiry is whether, obliged to admit as much as we have already seen with reference to the book, we are not compelled to go on, and to admit that the book is divinely inspired.

Let us ask what is meant by the *inspiration* of the Scriptures; next consider some of the *objections* to this claim; and then let us attend to any direct *proof* that this human book is really a divine inspiration.

We are sometimes asked to define inspiration. Let it, then, be at once conceded that it is easier to describe than to define what we mean by that word. Even as to those sudden intuitions, discoveries, disclosures, those revelations of the mind to itself as to the way in which a given thing can best be done, that surprising insight which in some gifted moments enables us to see what was dark before, that quick flash of sunlight on the perplexity that had baffled our study for days and weeks, that unravelling and clearing of a tangled skein of things, that glad heart-throb when an idea is born, a thought struck out, an invention perfected—even

as to these inspirations of human genius it is not easy to offer any careful and exact definition. The great inventors and discoverers and poets and painters and orators cannot tell you what it is they feel. They can only give us some very general account of the state of mind in which they are when seized upon with the idea which they have given to the world. They say it must be felt in order to be understood.² But we have no man living to-day who is under a *divine* inspiration; the inspiration not only of one's own genius, but of a divine guidance for the communication of new moral truth to the race. We have no man who has the peculiar consciousness of speaking "the words, not which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And only incidentally did those who once were thus inspired tell us of the state; nor do they inform us how they knew when they were and when they were not under the influence of this inspiring Spirit. Evidently it was not

² Mozart, describing the state of mind in which musical composition was to him most lively and successful, says: "Then, the thoughts come streaming in upon me most fluently, whence or how is more than I can tell. Then follows the clang of the different instruments; then, if not *disturbed*, the thing grows greater, broader, clearer. I see the whole like a beautiful picture. This is delight."

their ordinary and normal state as Christians. For they often distinguish between the sanctifying and the inspiring influence. But if they do not define they describe; and if they do not tell us specially of the state itself, they tell us of the results of that inspiration in the production of the volume which we call the Bible.

As we look upon these pages, we see that there must be a great variety in the forms and degrees and kinds of inspiration. The inspiration where a man is an eye-witness of events which he is to record must be very unlike that needed when a man is uttering prophecy, the full meaning of which it may or may not be needful for him to comprehend. And yet in all of it there may be needed that superintendence which preserves from actual error, even in the recording things that have fallen under the direct notice of the narrator himself. And besides the evidence furnished in the volume itself, as to the kind and degree of this guidance, we must take the testimony of the writers of a book which we have found to be truthful, with reference to the fact of their inspiration. They claim, and their work proves it as well as their words, that their work is twofold in its character. It is human, they say. And they say, just as distinctly, that it is the work of God's inspiring spirit.

Beginning, then, on the *human* side, in our description, we should say that we have here in the Bible a book written, not by angels, not by God, but by *men*. Their own description of the human element is given in the words of one of them as he speaks of his work and that of the others. It is this: "Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Notice the recognition of the human element.

"*Holy men* spake." They were voluntary agents, using their own human language. But they "spake as moved by the *Holy Ghost*."

And in this combination of a human element and a divine element, we have not partly the one and partly the other; not one text fallible and the next infallible. But all of it is of man, and all of it is of God. God penned not one word. Man wrote it. Man wrote not one word by himself unwatched, unassisted of God. So that it is both man's word and God's word. It is the work of Moses, Isaiah, John, Paul, and the rest of them. And yet at the same time it is God's inspiration of man's thought as he was "moved," and of man's word as he "spake."

Or, approaching this matter from the *divine* side, as do these men sometimes in their descriptions, we

hear them say, "All Scripture is given by *inspiration of God.*" So that we have an instance in which God takes up frail and imperfect men and human language in order to come near and reveal himself in human *literature*, even as he has done in human nature by his Son Jesus Christ.

And just as a superior overworks and absorbs an inferior power, so God infuses his thought into men, and secures its accurate expression by them. And thus they become his voluntary or his involuntary instruments. When they are bad men, as in the case of Balaam, the inspiration is involuntary. These cases are few. And when they occurred, it was to confront and overwhelm evil prophets and evil men. But the Scriptures, it is claimed, were God's inspiration through good men to teach the world authoritatively the truth it needs to know. There is a human element, and so we see various styles and methods of writing. But there is, we claim, a divine element, and this overspreads and animates the human; the stronger using the weaker. As God is true, so his word is true. It is without admixture of error, and is thus a final authority in faith, in doctrine, in duty; and it contains all about religion that we need to know or can know on earth. "The word of the Lord is perfect."

Two men, intimate friends, are seated together at the same table. One of them will write a narrative of certain events on which he has a considerable degree of knowledge. It is necessary that the narrative should be accurate. The first shall write; but the second, whose knowledge is full, accurate, perfect, will help the first man. He names no new items of information. But he corrects the impressions of the first so far as they are imperfect. If a wrong word is about to be used by the first, the second man suggests the right one. If the preposition *to* will convey the thought to be expressed better than the preposition *of*, he suggests that word in place of the other. He writes not a word himself; yet, on the other hand, not a word is written but he weighs its meaning and indorses or corrects it. In the narrative, as corrected and published to the world, you have the style of the first man, his peculiar methods of expression. It is his book. But it has also all the accuracy, all the thoroughness, all the *inspiration* of the second man.

Put God's Holy Spirit in the place of one of these men, and Matthew, Mark, or Luke in the place of the other, and you have the very case before us. And the result is a human book and a divine inspiration, a book all of man and also a book all of God.

Let us consider, next, some of the popular *objections* to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

The *individualism* everywhere apparent in the volume has been urged as antagonistic to its claims. Paul does not write like John, nor David like Moses. And this fact has been alleged to be inconsistent with a divine revelation. To which it is enough to reply that there is no reason why God's inspiration through a man should change his style of writing any more than it should alter the features of his face. Indeed, these peculiarities are fresh proofs of the divine wisdom in the selection of fitting instruments to do a given work. To know men is kingly. To know them so as to use them, each in the best way, is proof of superior genius. A wise general employs subordinates according to their gift. Grant had his Sheridan for the valley of Shenandoah, and his Sherman for the march from Atlanta to the sea.

And when, in his providence, God has a work to be done, he has always a man to do it. In like manner, when he has a revelation to give to men about matters touching eternal salvation, he selects not weak or unsuitable men. That would be to ignore his own infinite wisdom. But he has a Paul to write the Epistle to the Romans, and a David to

sing the songs of holy experience, and a Luke, the physician, to chronicle the life of Jesus, and a John to reason, not through the brain, like Paul, but to enwrap all truth in the roseate hues of his own loving heart. God makes no mistakes. Paul never has John's work to do. The inspiring spirit adapts means to ends.

Another objection is drawn from the scientific allusions of the Bible. "A perfect volume," it is said, "should be perfect in its science." Yes; we reply, if it attempts to teach exact science. But the Bible makes no such claim. It is a religious book, recording facts from a religious point of view, and teaching men about God and duty. When it alludes to science, it adopts the scientific language of its various eras. No other course was possible for such a volume. Had it used the terminology, had it declared the discoveries of the centuries since it was written, the book would have been loudly denounced in all former centuries as false. A volume claiming to be five hundred years old that described the modern steam-engine and the telegraph would be likely to awaken not only suspicion but derision. Indeed, had these scientific truths been here stated, the fair inference would have been that the Bible was a forgery. Then, too,

if it had used the words of exact science, the world would in many things have utterly failed to understand it. And as to "exact scientific accuracy," about which so much is said, who will pretend that we have come to the era of perfect science? We are, in our turn, to be laughed at a thousand years hence, for our mistakes in astronomy, in geology, in chemistry, and in all the other sciences. Perhaps allusions to exact science, as it is to be in some coming time, would be riddles to us.

"But does the Bible teach scientific *error*?" asks one. No; it teaches nothing about science.² It names the facts of the physical world and the

² What the writer would assert is, that science, in its classified and arranged form, is not distinctly taught. There are biblical *facts* of Cosmogony, of Geography, and of Ethnology. The Bible goes not out of its way to state them. Some of our Christian scientists have been at great pains to show that when it is said, "He hangeth the earth upon nothing," there is the *scientific* statement of a fact; similarly some have dealt with the Mosaic account, which, in advance of modern science, they say, has put the light before the sun, the plant before the seed, the period of fishes and plants before man. It is not intended, in the above, to assert that when the Bible teaches a *fact*, scientific, geographical, or ethnological, it is of no authority. Far from that. But as against objections, it is claimed that, in the mode of statement, its usual language is not that of scientific theory, deduction, and classification. "Science," says Webster, "is a collection of general principles or truths *arranged in systematic order*."

mental world as illustrations of moral truth. To-day we find, in the most careful writers, even upon astronomy, allusions to the "rising and the setting" of the sun; to "the ends of the earth;" and to "the revolution of the heavens." To deny the accuracy of such writers because they employ the popular phraseology of their times, is absurd. A revelation from God in our human language must use the modes of speech, scientific, literary, or even religious, which men commonly employ at the time when its writers are living. It can do nothing else. The attempt to do otherwise would awaken suspicion. And no course can be more unfair than to demand that a revelation from God shall tally with "the latest form of science," whatever that phrase may mean. For who shall tell us which of the conflicting theories of eminent geologists is to be taken as the standard on any question they have raised; say, if you will, on the question of the age of the earth. They differ from each other by tens of thousands of years. But if they agreed in placing the age of the earth at any vastly distant period of the past, there would be no conflict with the Mosaic story. For interpreters there have been, even from the second century, who have stoutly insisted that the opening verses of Genesis describe an indefinite past age in

which God created the matter out of which he subsequently shaped the earth, as recorded in the succeeding verses of the sacred story. And not only are geologists divided among themselves, but they are in conflict with leading naturalists, like Agassiz, and especially with leading astronomers, like Thompson, who deny the immense age of the earth which is claimed by the theories of leading geologists. The "latest phase of science" is a difficult thing to be ascertained; for these phases chase one another like cloud-shadows across a mountain side, so that it requires a nimble eye to keep even some general knowledge of them as they come and go. ¹ It may be that the Darwinian theory of the "survival of the fittest" finds its real application when applied to the multitudinous theories of scientists. And yet all truth that is really gained, from what-

¹ Lamark held to spontaneous generation. The author of the book, "Vestiges of Creation," so celebrated thirty years ago, but utterly fallen out of the popular notice to-day, took even more extreme views. Darwin denounces both. Huxley is at swords' point with Darwin on the question of a Creator who breathed life at first into one or more beings. Wallace insists that Darwin's great doctrine of natural selection is not proven, and if proven would be entirely inadequate to account for the origin of man. Owen contends for the physical unity of the race, and Agassiz, while granting the *moral* unity of the race, contends for different pairs in different geographical centres.

ever source, is gladly welcomed by intelligent believers in the Scriptures. For they hold that the facts of the world of God and of the word of God will stand. Science is the name we give to the interpretation of the one ; theology is the name we give to the interpretation of the other. Neither science nor theology can add a fact or change a fact. There are the facts in the world and in the word. We simply classify, and, as best we can, explain them. They often are mutually explanatory, for they show in many things that they have a common origin in the mind and heart of God. When after the clash of theories the truth has obtained the victory, when that has survived which was not always the most confident and most noisy in its claims, it has always been found hitherto that science and religion, the interpreters of God's world and God's word, were not aliens, but friends.

We can afford to wait when adverse theories rise with eminent men as their defenders. For the history of science, while it has its living achievements, is also a strand sown thick with opinions once earnestly defended and honestly believed, but now regarded not only as untrue but absurd. The truth about a created nature and the truth about an inspired Bible will survive ; and all the record

of the past warrants the belief that these truths will be found evermore in essential agreement.*

Another objection to the inspiration of the Scriptures is drawn from the *history* of our usually received sacred books. It has been alleged that the selection of these books was arbitrary; that uninspired ones may have been included and inspired ones admitted; that what is called the "Canon of Scripture" was made by men, their taste and judgment deciding what to accept and what to reject from a multitude of writings all professing to be inspired.

The reference is to the fact that about two hundred years after the death of Christ a Council or Convention of churches made public declaration to the world as to what books had been believed from the first to be genuine Scriptures. For there were forgeries in that age. Heretics, unable to introduce new verses into the well-known documents, devised new Gospels; and here and there a man had been

* "The grand old book of God still stands, and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned over and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the sacred word."—*Dana*.

"All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming the sacred Scriptures."—*Herschel*.

"In my investigations of natural phenomena, when I can meet anything in the Bible, it affords me a firm platform on which to stand."—*Maury*.

for a time deceived. But these apocryphal Gospels have come down to us. And any man who knows our Four Gospels, and then compares these apocryphal books with them, will not wonder an instant at the rejection of writings full of puerilities and absurdities—writings that carry, by their allusions to manners and customs absolutely unknown in the days of Christ, their own refutation; writings the whole tone of which is utterly unlike that of the New Testament. And this is so evident, that if these rejected books are true, our Gospels are false, and if ours are true these are an imposture. The inventors of these apocryphal Gospels never designed them as substitutes, but only as additional Gospels. But they go not together; “the new agreeth not with the old.”

It is customary for some church creeds to make declaration as to the books they hold to be inspired. Churches did the same in the second century. This is done to-day where Romanism prevails, to show that Protestants do not regard the Jewish books called the “Apocrypha” as having divine inspiration. A church of Christians at Salt Lake City would be very likely to make a statement of their belief in this matter, so that none should suspect them of believing in the pretended

revelations of Joseph Smith. But he who should assert that such a declaration, made to-day, was an arbitrary or accidental settlement of a question that was not settled as much before, would hardly be more wide of the truth than those who insist that a similar declaration in the second century was accidental and arbitrary; and that it was then, for the first time, claimed that these books were inspired. God's people are intrusted with his Word, and it is their duty to make statements to the world of their belief. So did the early churches; so do those of to-day.

The alleged *discrepancies* of the Scriptures have been urged as an objection to its inspiration. It is admitted, nay claimed, that there have been and still are things in the Scriptures "hard to be understood." But their number is rapidly diminishing. Under discoveries in sacred geography, under explorations in ruins where long-buried inscriptions give the missing facts that have explained hundreds of apparent discrepancies and have thrown light on verses of the Bible that seemed almost contradictory, under researches in natural science and ancient history, the things once thought to be stones of stumbling are many of them among the strongest confirmations of the truth of Holy Writ. And when

larger investigations have been had, other difficulties without doubt will vanish, and in their place shall stand new evidences.

And when it is remembered that these books of the Bible were written by men who lived in lands widely distant from each other, in different ages, in different languages and dialects, in centuries in which there were different ways of computing time and also different eras from which to date the years, in which periods of time of the same name were of different lengths, and even days were differently arranged as to their hours, the only wonder is that we do not find more difficulties of this kind—difficulties that do not seriously impair the confidence of any candid man in the integrity of the religious teaching of the Bible. These writers, in giving lists of families, quoted from public official documents, and any error in official tables that did not affect their immediate purpose it was not theirs to examine and expose; they used here Jewish and there Roman methods of computation; and probably sometimes Assyrian and even Grecian methods. The inspired Ezra re-edited Moses, and gave, exactly as is done in modern works, a word or two as to the author's death. Different writers, living years apart, give in different words, and from different

points of dating, the facts of Jewish history. They copy public documents in one case, or rely upon personal memory in another, with exactly such small disagreements as might be expected. The differences touch nothing vital; and all of them may be yet explained by our fuller knowledge, as has been the case with other difficulties in the past.

Our ignorance must not be set down as against the Bible itself. In nothing, perhaps, is our ignorance so great as in this matter of chronology,² and we have exactly the same trouble in making out the figures of Josephus and other ancient authors as in the case of the Bible. The ease with which mistakes may be made when, as in all the older records of the race, letters are used for numerals, is acknowledged by every scholar. That such errors in matters not vital may have crept in,

“Chronology is peculiarly difficult when we have to do with Oriental modes of computation, which are essentially different from ours.”—*J. R. Thompson*. Hebrew and Arabic permit one to write first the units and then the tens and then the hundreds, or to *reverse the order*, and write the highest first. Hence confusion and the liability to terrible over-statements in translation. The case in Samuel is an illustration, where “fifty thousand three score and ten men” are mentioned. Literally it is “seventy” and “fifties” and “a thousand,”—which *may* mean either as in our version, or it may mean one thousand one hundred and seventy.

would not be denied by many fast friends of revelation. And yet others, after the most careful study of years, find no need of admitting that there are such errors. In either case they never affect the reality of Christian fact or the substance of Christian doctrine. For the truth, which, as its friends claim, is here given, is not the truth of inspired science, as of Geology or Astronomy or Chemistry. It is *moral* truth as supported by the great historical facts of the dispensations which culminated in the advent of Jesus Christ. Nor do the friends of the Bible claim any miracle in its preservation, but only such providential care that the books shall not become worthless for the purposes for which they were given. For we may be certain that the God who guides the fall of the sparrow would not allow an inspired book which was of any use to the world to-day to be lost. For this age needs, as does each age, a directory reliable and sure; a volume without admixture of error in its statements of moral fact and human duty.

In short, all the objections ever urged have one defect. They forget that the book is professedly *human*. They forget that the presence of the human element, so far from being an objection, is the very thing for which the friends of the Bible contend.

No matter if Paul uses bad grammar, if Jesus speaks the impure Aramaic of his time, if Matthew writes with Hebrew idioms ; no matter if Luke uses round numbers rather than exact figures. These men are men, and it is *men* for whom we claim inspiration. But they are men used of God as the stronger uses the weaker, God's inspiration preserving them from error when they utter religious truth. Did you ever stand beside the pilot of a noble ship as she bounded over the billows, a thing of life? Did you ever watch his eye as it glanced at the compass, then up at the sails, then over the side, as he saw the coming wave? If everything goes right he stands motionless. But if he sees that a flaw of the freshening wind is about to change his vessel's prow but a trifle from the true course, how quickly he turns his wheel to meet the new deflecting force. Or if a broad wave, gathering on her quarter, is about to strike his ship from the line of her progress, swiftly he reverses his wheel. And thus, amid all the disturbing influences of wind and wave, the pilot, with hand on the helm, guides the ship surely and safely in her unchanged path. So God guides the men through whom he will make known his will. The helm governs the ship. God is the helmsman, and this is the bark. Amid all human

imperfections, amid the veering of winds and the tossing of the waves, the helmsman never steers wildly, never loses his control, never is deflected from his course. Man's book, we most fully believe, has God's inspiration.

There is proof that this volume is the inspired word of God.

1. *It is reasonable* to believe that God will give somewhere an inspired volume. No one has any too much light about religion. The wisest man, the loftiest soul among the Greeks, declared that "the great want of the race is a book inspired of God." See the failure of men without it. They are like the dove sent from the ark, unable to find rest for the weary feet. Some tell us that reason is enough without revelation. But the keenest and most philosophical mind of the ancient time, the Greek mind, was busy at the problem of religion for centuries. And the result of the study of the finest, clearest, most penetrative thought of the race is seen everywhere else. In literature, in the plastic arts, in oratory, that mind leads still the world. But how about its religion? What is the result here? Just this: that the traveller seated on one of the prostrate columns of the temple of Jupiter Olympus at Athens, is compelled to re-

member that "Jupiter, king of the gods," has not a worshipper on earth to-day!

Is reason then of no avail? Very far from that. We only say it is no substitute for revelation. It teaches just this: the need, and so the probable supply, of the great want of our race, *viz.*, a revelation of God in human literature. It is reasonable to believe that God has revealed his will and our duty somewhere in the course of human thought. He has revealed himself in other ways. Why not here, in the line of human literature; and as a man discloses his thoughts in a book, why not God use the same simple and obvious and expected method in revealing *his* thought unto the race? Indeed, such a book is a necessity for us as much as light for the eye and air for the lungs. God made the want in us, and God has made the supply. Otherwise we are left to men's conflicting guesses, and inevitable weaknesses, and perpetual mistakes, in matters most vital to our souls' interests. There are things we need to know, and which we never can know unless God tells us; for only God can know them of himself.

And if God must reveal himself in literature, we may expect it in inspired documents concerning his Son Jesus Christ. And if this Bible is not that

revelation, then somewhere in connection with the record of these facts it must be found. There is no competitor. It is this or none. There is not even the resemblance of a claim anywhere else. Even Mahomet claimed no revelation directly from God. It was through the *angel* Gabriel that his pretended inspiration came. Outside this Bible I do not know a book on earth claiming *divine* inspiration.

The *intuitions* of our hearts teach us this need, and also prepare us to expect that somewhere there is a revelation from God about religious truth. Some have said a man's own intuition or spiritual insight is enough. But how is this? Theodore Parker's insight affirms "man is immortal." But Mr. Newman, over the sea, declares that his consciousness says nothing about it. Mr. Herbert Spencer "thinks we cannot know anything by our consciousness, insight, or in any other way about God, whether there is or is not such a being;" while Mr. Parker thinks that "we are all directly conscious of God."

The truth is, that left alone to their own consciousness or insight, men can never come to an agreement as to the beliefs at the basis of religion. Their divergences on first truths show the need of

a revelation from God to take us up just where our feeble intuitions fail, and to carry us on and out of the twilight into the perfect day.

God is. But who save he himself can tell us what he is? For who but he knows? Man is immortal. But where, and in doing what, is that immortality to be passed? Who can tell save God? For none but he, with omniscient eye, can see the interminable future. Is there a heaven and a hell? and are they eternal? God must tell us. What will men do in eternity? God only can see and know as of himself. We know only as he tells us. We are sinners. It is the consciousness of the race. Can sin be forgiven? God only knows on what terms he will forgive. We know from him, and if he has told us; not otherwise. The soul of man can never rest except in some authoritative expression of God. Our great soul-want is for something more certain than guesses about religion, or the differing conclusions of reason, or the partial intuitions of our hearts. We need something reliable, and sure; we need "the truth without any admixture of error." All the vast systems of ancient belief proclaim this want; all the struggling of men's souls to find a resting-place declares it. It is one of the most unmistakable wants of the race.

We claim that God has undertaken to supply this want. And will he be likely to do it by an imperfect book? Will he give us a revelation with error in it, when the only purpose of giving it at all is to save us from error? We can err and guess without a Bible. What we need is not the mere afflatus of the poet or the dream of the enthusiast, but a book of certainty with the divine stamp upon it.

It is worthy of note that every man has a final authority in this matter of religion; if not the Bible, it is something else. The Romanist declares that the Bible alone is not enough; it must be interpreted by authority of the Church—a company of men. The modern sceptic seeks his authority in his own reason. He says, "This or that thing in the Bible is unreasonable to me; I cannot believe it. This fact, plainly, is impossible; that doctrine goes against my convictions." And so he sets his own private authority higher than God's word. But mark it: sceptic and Romanist agree in trusting human authority; one trusts man, the individual; the other trusts men, the church. But both have something they call authority, though it is only human authority. For there must be some final ground for rest. We take God. They take men.

We claim that there is an absolute need of *divine* authority if men are to *know* about religion. We want a revelation from God;—inspired, too, in every part, by God's spirit. For a book sometimes true, sometimes false, is worse than none; just as a guide sometimes trustworthy and sometimes treacherous is more dangerous than no guide at all.

Again, the *early Christians* received these books as inspired. We have the writings of persons who conversed with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And these uninspired but honest men always quote our sacred books with marks of respect, putting a wide difference between these and all other books. These early Christian writers call them the "Divine Scriptures," "Scriptures of the Lord," "Divinely inspired Scriptures," "Sacred Books," "The Ancient and New Oracles," "Gospels," "Divine Oracles," "Holy Scriptures." Surely these names are significant. Moreover, they quote not from general tradition, but from these books, when they wish to state the facts and the doctrines of religion; quoting them as final authority. So frequently did they quote the New Testament, that scholars have said that the whole volume could be collected from the citations in the writers of the few earlier centuries.

Again, the book *claims inspiration*. A former chapter has been devoted to the question of the general truthfulness of the Bible. In the book itself we find that God promises divine guidance. He said to Moses, "I will be with thy mouth." The prophets were to speak "in the name of the Lord." And these prophets themselves claimed this inspiration. "Hear the word of the Lord." "The Lord hath spoken." "Thus saith the Lord," is their usual formula. Moreover, our Lord and his apostles indorsed the Old Testament. "Search the Scriptures," said Jesus. And he was continually saying "as it is written," and "that it might be fulfilled." It is said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." If it is possible by any words to enter the claim of inspiration from heaven, it is done in these declarations. Nor is this all. Jesus promised to inspire his disciples. He promised the Holy Spirit, who should "bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said, and should also guide them into all truth." Can anything be more decisive than such a promise? If, then, we have not an inspired volume, containing "all truth," Jesus spoke not truthfully, or his biographers have mis-

represented him. His disciples, after his death, claimed this promised guidance. Says one of them, "Ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God." How sharp the distinction made by the apostolic pen between words which possess only human authority and those which have also that of God! And this is only a single instance out of the multitude of similar claims.

Something must be done with such claims. They are too frequent and too broad to be ignored; they occur continually in the Bible. They are either quietly assumed or expressly declared in the whole volume. Open the Epistles anywhere you please. Hear the writers announce the most momentous truths. Do they reason as with human logic? Do they offer to prove them as do ordinary writers? On the contrary, they generally announce them in a way which shows insufferable arrogance if they are not inspired, but which is just what we should expect if their authority was the divine guidance they claim. And thus it comes to be true that these immense claims are either very arrogant and wicked, and I had almost said blasphemous, or else they are rightful and just, and demand reverence as coming from heaven. Very bad men, and

very wretched enthusiasts, were these writers on the one hand; or else, on the other, they were good, honest, and righteous men—men who were imperfect in themselves, but, as they claim, infallible when, under God's inspiration, they were teaching religious truth. In this claim of inspiration they were outrageous liars, whose pretensions should move our ridicule, if not our indignation, or else they were true men, "chosen of God" to speak "as moved by the Holy Ghost." Scepticism in our day compliments the Bible as an excellent book with many valuable things in it; but hesitates to allow it to be inspired of God and an infallible guide. We rejoice that this ground has been taken. It is a slippery ground. No man can stand long upon it. For the Bible claims to be inspired. That claim is true or false. If false, can we trust anything in the book? If false, this is a most prodigious falsehood. A little error in a man's words may not vitiate the main sentiment, even when it awakes a degree of suspicion. But if the error be of large import, and lie at the very basis of the whole statement, it is far otherwise. Now, here is a claim continually made in the Bible, and a most important claim; nay, the most important of all its claims. If false, the whole book is radically

false ; if true, it is "the word of God." There is no middle ground. It insists not that it is simply a very good book, with excellent sentiments ; not that it is, like any production of good men, of merely human authority. It disclaims this in claiming to be very much more.

We believe the volume is true. We accept it as written by man, but written under divine guidance. They who have received it "not as the word of man but as it is in truth the word of God," have felt the more sure of its inspiration as they have studied it, and have yielded their hearts and lives to the control of the facts and doctrines. It has done them good to take it as an inspired book. They make it their final authority. "Thus saith the Lord," is the basis of their confidence in any religious belief.

And there is one thing about this book by which, over and above all our reasonings, we may settle the whole matter of its truth or falsehood. We may use the Baconian method with it—the method of experiment and trial, and then of inference as the result of our experimental method. "If any man will do his will," said Jesus, "he shall know of the doctrine." This is perfectly fair. We are not asked to do things evil that good may

come ; but only to do what is obviously right ; to begin with the nearest duty ; to practise at once on precepts that commend themselves. The book asks you to *try it*. "Come and see," its grand message. Here is a personal test that a man may make for himself. As far as it commends itself, obey it. It bids you pray for wisdom. Do it, as you would be a fair-minded man and prove yourself desirous of knowing the truth. Enough has been shown in the argument thus far on the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the Scriptures to convince every thoughtful reader that this book is worthy of a very careful examination. Can you give it so much as this, without prayer for guidance and the solemn determination, just here, to *do right in regard to your Bible and your God?* For as you would not call him an honest man who used carefully his ears and would not use his eyes in investigating the common things of life, so in these higher things, it is needed that a man use not only brain but heart, not only the method of ordinary search, but the peculiar method that befits this kind of investigation—the method of prayer.

Yes ; God has spoken to man. And there are thousands of the race who have listened with the reverent ear of the soul. And the utterances of

God in his Word have made them men of a higher purpose and a better aim. The lowly have come and made God's truth their comfort and hope, and it has lifted them to a higher manhood. And think of how many of the most lordly souls the world has seen have brought their treasures of learning and of science to the feet of him to whom the Magi bowed. For the world's scholarship and science and art and culture are on the side of the Bible.¹ Little eddies of opposition there are in

¹ "Who founded Prague and Vienna and Heidelberg and Leipsic and Tübingen and Jena and Halle and Berlin and Bonn? Who founded Salamanca and Valladolid and Oxford and Cambridge and Aberdeen? They were Bible men. When the rest of mankind were caring for the mere necessities of the physical life, Bible men were holding the torch of science; and these men were the predecessors of the Bacon and Newtons. Who founded American colleges? With very few exceptions, they were Bible men. Newton was only one of hundreds, who, given to science, loved his Bible. From his day to this the succession has been complete. And the science that in our day boasts such Bible men as its Faraday, its Forbes, its Carpenter, its Hitchcock, its Dana, and its Torrey, cannot be considered as occupying a position hostile to the Bible."—*Howard Crosby, D.D., LL.D., Lectures before New York Association for Science and Art.*

"Now, if Christianity is the foe of science, has she not taken a singular method of demonstrating her enmity? Christianity was the first, as she still remains the fast and fostering, friend of science. The devotion of the Christian church in this century to education is one of the notable facts, and it points with pride and satisfaction to its educational institutions."—*J. G. Holland.*

every age; "the opposition of science falsely so called." But the little eddy near the bank could not exist if there were not further out, even in the broad and deep channel, a vast volume of water floating steadily down towards the sea. And these great souls, the real leaders of the world's thought, have weighed all the difficulties that any sceptic has ever raised; for the modern objections have little of newness. And these men have gone through all this sea of difficulties, and did not stay weak and floundering in that Slough of Despond, as feebler souls have done. They have landed on the further shore of a careful belief. They know why they believe the Bible. But, over and above every other reason, they can say with Coleridge—and men in every grade of intellectual and moral development can join in the utterance—"I know the Bible is inspired, because it finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book."

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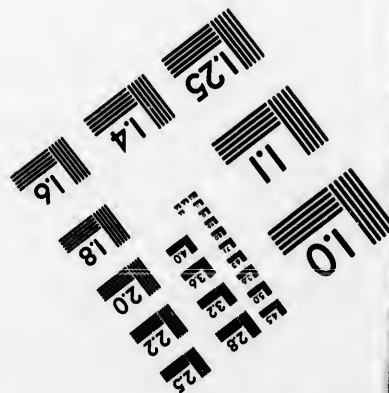
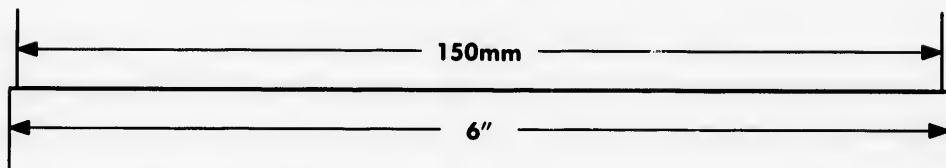
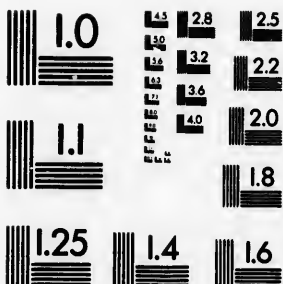
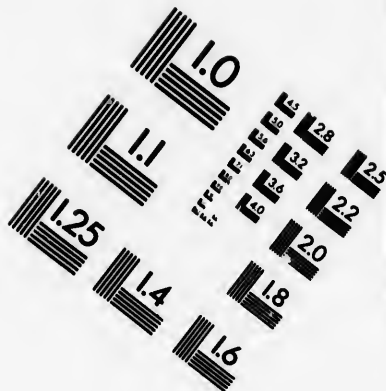
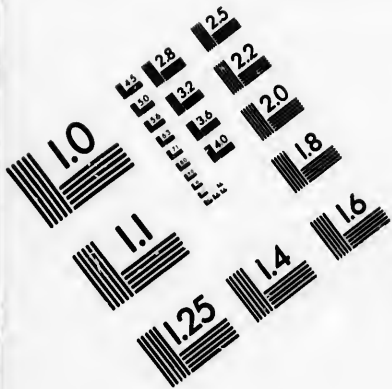
CHAPTER IV.

DIFFICULTIES AS TO MIRACLES AND TEACHINGS.

IN Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," midway between the city of Destruction which Christian must leave and the wicket-gate opening into the narrow way where he would enter, there was a certain bad piece of ground called the "Slough of Despond." Into it every pilgrim must go. Some retreated after a few steps, coming out on the same side on which they had entered. Some remained hopelessly fastened in the terrible quagmire and perished there. Some, also, went on, went through, and came out safely, nor did the mud cleave to their garments when they stood once more on the firm ground. In like manner there is a period, more or less definite and continued, in every young man's life, which may be termed the *period of natural scepticism*. It is the time when doubts come up like thick banks of cloud in the eastern horizon from a wintry sea; the time when



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a young man sees and feels the force of the objections to religion ; when he finds grave and serious difficulties in his Bible.

A young man has been tenderly and carefully trained. He has religious parents. He has every advantage of Sabbath-school and sanctuary. He hears indeed of objections to religion. But they are mainly answered in the books he reads, and in the family conversation to which he listens. He believes his Bible. The men about him who live it and strive to practise it, though imperfect men, are widely different from the noisy profane crowd that he occasionally encounters. He is a believer in religion. He holds fast to his Bible. But there comes a change. He feels the strength, the vigour, the impatience of authority, the natural independence, which is inevitable as the young man takes his place in life. He feels competent to undertake almost anything. He hears new objections to particular portions of the Bible. It occurs to him that a good deal of his faith in the Scriptures is the result of education. He has taken many things for granted. He is beginning to think that, had he been trained up a Turk, he might have been a Mohammedan ; or educated a Hindu, he might have revered the Shasta. This is all true enough ;

and it amounts simply to saying that if a man had been badly trained the results would be likely to be bad. As an argument against a correct religious belief, it is as poor as would be the argument against sound learning that bad text-books would tend to make poor scholars. Right views of science are none the less correct because a man was trained up to know them. But our young man is independent, self-reliant, able now to investigate for himself. And he is tempted to think it only fair to do what sceptics assert is the mark of independence; that is, to let all *education in religion count for nothing*. And, afraid that he may be unduly balanced in favour of the Bible by his education, he leans the other way. Now, he harbours every difficulty. Early training must not solve it. He will meet these things himself. He falls in with some one who suggests that religion, especially as a father and mother believed in it, has had its day; that it is old, puritanic; that the march of mind has left it far in the rear; that it is independent and manly and strong-minded to doubt. Objections to this miracle, to that doctrine, and the other duty, get a good deal of force in this state of mind. And the way is prepared for listening to one of those oily-tongued men who affect to pity

persons who still hold to the Bible, and still believe in Christianity. "They wish they could," so runs their conversation, "believe in the Bible with the simple faith they had in childhood; but they regret to say they cannot. They have very grave doubts; would like to have them solved; but have no hope that they ever will be." They tell the young man, "Ah! when you know more of philosophy, and of the progress of free-thought, you will feel differently about your Bible; and a young man of sense and spirit and originality like yourself will never be content to believe a thing is true because your mother told you so."

Now, in this state of things the appeals of religion are not felt. The young man's faith is more thoroughly undermined than he himself suspects. He does not exactly disbelieve. But he does not feel sure. He asks himself whether there may not be some mistake; whether there may not be error in the Bible after all; whether it may not be true that religious men over-state Christian doctrine. At least, one must not be in haste to commit one's self for or against religion. And this is the point at which the scepticism of our day is all directed. It does not ask that a man be a disbeliever, but only an unbeliever; not that a man deny, but only that

he should doubt. For if there be such objections to religion, such difficulties in the Bible that its truths are neutralized, it is all that scepticism can expect to gain in an age like this.

I want to put out a helping hand to any young man who has entered in any degree into this Slough of Despond, and who feels embarrassed by the difficulties he finds in his Bible.

There are two ways of meeting these difficulties. One way would be to state each of them at full length and then answer it. But this would require volumes. There is another way. It is Peter's way when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Some were leaving Christ because of their difficulties. Peter stops a moment and bethinks himself. I seem to hear him as he reasons with himself, "Suppose I leave Christ and his doctrine, what shall I gain? To whom shall I go? Sha! I find no difficulties in rejecting the miracles and teachings of Jesus? What account can I give of all these evidences of his religion? for these will be prodigious difficulties to me as an unbeliever." And then, turning again to Christ, I seem to hear him say, "Lord, to whom can we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." To every young man troubled with difficulties in

114 *Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings.*

his Bible, I say, Stop, and think a moment as to what would you gain by rejecting the Bible. Are there not prodigious difficulties in taking that position? There are difficulties *with* the Bible; but there are ten-fold more without it. There are difficulties in believing; but there are infinitely more difficulties in the position of the sceptic and even of the doubter. Let a man magnify these difficulties a thousand-fold, and it would be still true that the difficulties of unbelief are far more formidable.

We shall see this, first, if we name certain Scripture *facts* in which men have found great difficulties.

I name *miracles* as one of them. The Bible certainly contains a narrative of miracles. They are interwoven with the whole texture. It is impossible to believe the Bible and interpret it fairly without believing that miracles have been wrought by God in former ages of the world. Some join issue just here, declaring that miracles are incredible in themselves, and some asserting that a miracle is impossible.

But when a man asserts that a miracle is impossible, he should stop and ask himself if he is aware of what he assumes, of the prodigious difficulties he takes upon himself. "Miracles are impossible," he says. *How does he know?* Is he omniscient?

Is he omnipresent? Does he know all the things that have transpired or that are now transpiring in this universe? If not, then the thing he does not know may be a miracle. There is a prodigious difficulty in the way of a finite man who would acquire infinite knowledge. And one would think there would be some difficulty in finding a man whose modesty had been so far forgotten as to allow him to make the assumption implied in the statement, "A miracle is impossible,"—the assumption of omniscience; the assumption that one is himself God!

Is it said again, "That if not impossible, miracles are very *improbable*; that the laws of nature are uniform; that God would not be likely to institute an order of nature and then arbitrarily break through the laws he has established"? To all this the reply is instant; *viz.*, That no one alleges miracles to be common; that, common, they would cease to be miracles. It is admitted at once that they are not probable as every-day occurrences. Nor is their commonness claimed. But only this: that at certain periods of time, when they were needed, God thrust in miracles for man's good. In all those great crises of human destiny, in all those eras when a new dispensation was to be inaugurated, when

116 *Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings.*

Moses was to be God's instrument in introducing the legal dispensation, when the prophets were to appear with divine credential, when Jesus was to come from heaven to give testimony of a new way of salvation—at each and all of these points of intense interest, we urge that it is not only probable that God will thrust in his hand of miracle, but without such miracle the world would have been more astonished than with it. For God made man to expect miracle, to demand miracle, and, when the miracle comes in the very hour of greatest need, to believe in it and to magnify the name of the Lord for what he has done. Has God put this expectation of miracle in man, as a deep and vital thing, on purpose to disappoint it? The absence of miracle under such circumstances is far more improbable than its presence.

And here, a word about the laws of nature, to which, as has been alleged, "God has bound himself." But where has he bound himself thereto? Surely no man can show the pledge that God will never override physical law when he shall choose so to do. What is a law of nature? It is God's usual way of doing things. What is a miracle? God's unusual way of doing a thing. Is it any more difficult for God to do his will in the one way

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Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings. 117

than in the other? Surely no law binds him to do it in a particular way. For in that case God would be imprisoned in his natural laws. And these laws would be the grave of his omnipotence. Even the silkworm, that spins its own winding-sheet, at length bursts through its prison. Is the Infinite One entombed in his own world? Besides, what are these "laws of nature," considered as a restraint upon a Being endowed with will?

It is a law of nature that my arm shall hang down at my side. It weighs just so much avoirdupois weight, and is attracted by just so much force to the centre of the earth. When I lift my arm I overwork the law of gravity. My will, practically, and within a limited range, suspends the results of law. The law exists. It acts. But I counteract it. A new force, supernaturally, is thrust in. My will is above nature, is stronger than nature, is *supernatural*. Now if I can work right over nature, right above her laws, cannot God more also? If I am not a prisoner of law, is he bound thereby? If there is a human supernatural, according to which I act above nature, thrusting in a new force, is there any difficulty in believing that there is a divine supernatural which can work *miracles*? It would be strange that a man having the power of

118 *Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings.*

will should never use it by lifting an arm or leg; and it would be even more strange if God, with the power to work through law or over law, by law or in spite of law, should not, when miracle is called for, work the needed miracle. The real wonder is that miracles are so few; that God so holds himself to law, *i. e.*, does things so much in similar ways. The entire absence of miracle under these circumstances is the most improbable of things. If God had not, at the fitting time, thrust in his hand and wrought marvellous works for signs, wonders, tokens unto man, and if the Bible had not contained this record of miracles, the omission would be a greater hindrance to our faith in God and in the Bible than any other that I know.

That God should perform miracles is, then, not only possible but probable. And he who says that God cannot, or that he will not do it, involves himself in a host of difficulties any one of which is overwhelming.¹ That the Bible should record miracles is only what it professes to do. For, just as ordinary histories record for the most part ordinary facts, so God's word records those extraordi-

¹ "I will not believe a miracle."—*Voltaire*.

"I will not believe that water becomes solid in winter, and men walk on it."—*Japanese Prince*.

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Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings. 119

nary instances in which divine love and power have spoken in the language of miracle to arouse attention, confirm truth, and overthrow the powers of evil. Nor let any man, when in his Bible he meets the record of a miracle, say, "Oh, that is a miracle"—as if a miracle were somehow less credible and less certain. Who objects to a book on mathematics that it contains figures, or to a book on botany that it describes plants? It was intended to do so. And God's word describes, among other things, those deeds which men recognize as miraculous. It was intended to do so. Ponder these wondrous works, these mighty miracles. They are not freaks of power. They do not stand up apart. They are a portion of a mighty structure. They have an appointed and an estimated moral value. As one studies them in their place, they exactly meet the needs of the hour when they were wrought. They exactly fit into the edifice that God is rearing. They are divinely given object-lessons for the instruction of the human race. The moral ends of miracle are the greatest things. For moral ends are final ends. Again, there are objections to these facts of the Bible because of their *remoteness*. "They occurred so long ago; there is so much opportunity for mistake; they do not come home to us like the things

done in these last critical centuries ;" so runs the objection. It is replied that it is impossible to thrust all events into one century. This nineteenth century cannot spread over more than one hundred years. A man's difficulty on this score with his Bible is a mere impression, and is unworthy of him. And as to the antiquity of the events, of course they are ancient ; that is what the record asserts. And as to the authenticity of the more ancient of them, we have to go back only to Christ's day, to the time which all allow to be far within the period of authentic and reliable history. *He authenticated* Moses, and David, and Solomon, and Isaiah. He endorsed the Old Testament miracles, reasserting their truthfulness, confirming the most difficult things in Moses' account ; so that now we believe them, not only on Moses' testimony, but on the comparatively modern and also superhuman testimony of Jesus Christ himself. There are difficulties, it is said, in the narrative of these ancient events. Well ; be it so. But the difficulties are absolutely insuperable in the way of believing that our Lord Jesus Christ sent men to the Old Testament, saying, "Search the Scriptures," when he knew the first pages of Genesis to be false, and the prominent events of creation and early human

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Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings. 121

history to be misstated. It is said "that even eighteen hundred years is a long while ago, and that since that time there have been opportunities for falsification of facts." The reply is that all the world believes in events recorded hundreds of years before Christ's day by ordinary historians. Those were for the most part ordinary events. But here in the New Testament are extraordinary events, recorded in solemn and authentic documents. Within a few years after the events are said to have occurred, the writers gave names, dates, and places. They said that in a certain town just over the hill from Jerusalem Jesus raised a dead man; and his very name, Lazarus, is mentioned; his sisters' names given; their house specified; the very sepulchre described. They said that yonder he fed five thousand men in the wilderness: they gave these facts in all this minuteness of detail. Anybody could examine the facts. These things were not done in a corner. They were noised abroad. They created intense interest. If there had been any mistake, the able and acute focs of the new religion would have proclaimed it. The Jews said the miracles were done by Satan. The heathen said they were done by magic. But both admitted that the things were done. And both appealed to

our Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John, as the historians of the facts. Here are the records in the Bible,—a book existing to-day. The sceptic is just as much bound to account for the book as it now exists as is the Christian. But the sceptic has the most prodigious difficulties in his way. And if any young man attempts to stand between the two, to stand as a doubter, neither believing nor rejecting, then he is swept by the batteries of both sides. For, whoever is right, the man who is undecided is certainly wrong.

With reference to many a *speculative question* often associated with the discussions of Christianity, nothing is gained but much lost by leaving Christ's teachings. There are the inquiries about the introduction of sin ; the transmission of diseased moral natures ; of the prevalence and cause of sorrow and death ; of how so much suffering can exist either here or hereafter, and yet God be good ; of the sovereignty of holiness, and yet the allowance of sin ; of God's all comprehending plan ; and yet how evil can come in as an ordained part, while infinite holiness is unstained ; of God's supremacy and man's freedom, and so accountability—these are examples of the questions to which I refer.

I am free to confess that on these and kindred

subjects there are great difficulties. But will there be less difficulty if we reject the Bible? Did the Bible originate these questions, and will the rejection of the Bible solve them? These questions have been discussed by all thinking men, whether heathens or Jews, whether Mohammedans or Christians, whether Infidels or Believers. Outside of religion they have been debated as earnestly by sceptics as ever among devout and prayerful men.

He who rejects the Bible is as much bound to account for the origin of evil, as really bound to show how man's free agency and the divine sovereignty can coexist, as is any other man. For if he is a Deist he holds to a belief in a Sovereign God; and, on inspection of his own powers, he finds himself free. If he is not a Deist, he has other and more formidable difficulties; he leaves doubt for darkness, difficulty for impossibility; he plunges into depths which, fairly considered, would turn the brain of a sane man.

All these inquiries belong really to another domain; they are questions of philosophy. They would rear themselves with the same frowning aspect if the Bible had never been given. Sir William Hamilton has said, "There is no difficulty in religion that has not first emerged in philosophy."

Only as we have all been reared among Christian influences, we have heard these questions discussed in their religious bearing, until we associate them with religion itself, and so unconsciously we transfer the difficulties in the one to the charge of the other. This is unfair. Hume spent his life over these very questions, looking upon them as a philosopher. Let no man present as his reason for the rejection of Christianity those speculative difficulties which undeniably exist, which are as formidable without the Bible as with it, and which, if not completely solved by revelation, are, in not a few respects, relieved and mitigated.

If we reject the explanations of Christ so far as he gave them, what then? To whom shall we go?

As with speculative questions so with *practical facts*. There are perplexities about them. But one gains nothing by rejecting Christ's religion on this account. Certain things the Bible finds in the world. It did not make them. It is not responsible for their continuance. It simply records the things it finds to be the actual facts. Who thinks of charging a historian with the crimes he narrates, a writer on jurisprudence with the violations of law which he discusses, or a writer on medicine with the diseases he describes? Common history as well

as sacred history records the fact of human guilt. Could a man write a pretended history of a nation who were not sinners, and get our belief that he was describing actual *men*? What, men—a nation of men, and not sinners! No! The world over, men distrust their race. Bars and bolts and heavy safes and careful locks guard property.

Sin is a fact. The denial of Christianity is not the disproof of human sinfulness. Nay, if the doctrine of Scripture depravity seem at first view to be harsh and repulsive, think a moment whether the fact is more awful if surveyed outside the limitations and alleviations of the biblical presentation. The mass of the world's sin has been actually lessened by the conversion of millions through the gospel. Christianity has been an elevating power over against this depravity. I can think better of the world with than without the Bible, see less depravity if the Scripture is true than if it is false. For if religion is a delusion or a cheat, then not only do we behold the depravity of wicked men, but the added depravity of good men, who, in that case, are miserable pretenders or else are most sadly deceived; in other words, are either mentally or morally depraved beyond all the rest of mankind. And in addition to all other cheats and shams and

lies under which men have groaned, we shall have, if we reject the Bible and take the infidel view, the most stupendous cheat and lie and delusion of Christ's religion. We must have some doctrine of depravity. It must be either the Christian or infidel doctrine, and the infidel doctrine is far more harsh and awful than that of the Bible.

And the sorrow of this world and the other world which men charge against religion is not due to it, but is true in spite of it and in opposition to it. It is often urged that much suffering of conscience is endured by persons who believe in religion but do not actually obey the commands of Christ. This is true. But religion does not ask a man to disobey and so to suffer under an accusing conscience. Religion asks this man to go on unto "peace in believing." And it is unfair to charge the reproaches of conscience and the agonies of fear and the dread of losing the soul, which some endure in their theoretical belief but their practical rejection of Christianity, to that religion which offers to the penitent calmness of conscience instead of agitation, and love and hope instead of fear and dread. If a man disobeys, and so is made sorrowful, let him complain not of religion but of himself.

But men have felt anguish of soul who were far

Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings. 127

enough from being influenced, even in opinion, by religion. Men have felt remorse who never heard of Christ or saw a Bible. In mid Africa or on the shores of further India men have had deep soul-sorrow as the conviction has forced itself upon them that they were sinful and depraved; and these men have made efforts almost superhuman to quiet, through worship and penance and sacrifice, the voice of inward reproach. Sceptics have died in sorrow, cursing the hour of their birth; or, where great despair has been absent, there has been sometimes a puerile levity, or an insensibility which seemed befitting only to a beast; and the want of all that is comforting and elevating has been more sad than any despair, to the thoughtful beholder.

Did any man ever hear of one who died cursing the religion of Christ because it had led him into sin, because it had defiled and ruined him? But thousands have died with bitterest maledictions on the infidelity which destroys both soul and body. And in regard to the dire calamity of death, surely the gain is in the Christian view. Some insist upon associating the ideas of death with those of religion. As they turn instinctively from the thought of the grave's loneliness and corruption, so, since the thoughts are connected to them, they turn

also away from religion. Death is indeed a stern *fact*. All must meet it. It comes to the swearing as well as to the praying man. Oh, in this matter we are all brethren, and all of us must go down into the dust of death. If there is or is not truth in Christ's religion, this is true, we must all die. But, rejecting Christianity, we refuse the light from beyond which gilds the gates of the grave. And as to the sorrow beyond the grave, religion names it that we may avoid it; discloses the gulf, that it may show us how to escape the unending grief and gain the unending joy. Even if it were a thousand-fold greater, no man need endure it. Even if it were unjust, he who does right has nothing to fear. The more terrible the future sorrow, the more reason for not being among the wrong-doers against whom it is threatened.

If we leave Christ and his doctrine we shall give the lie to all the best impulses and deepest intuitions of our nature. There are instincts, there are voices from reason and conscience. True, our voluntary nature does not always obey them heartily, but the voices are there. The words may be somewhat indistinct. For the voices of our voluntary nature are louder, and we obey the wrong heart rather than the right conscience, and therein stands our sin.

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Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings. 129

But the other voices speak, and sometimes the man must listen. "We are immortal," says a voice within us. Guilt may wish it were not so. But the reluctance to admit this inward testimony of men has not availed, and men for the most part believe in a life after death.

This belief the Bible assumes. It does not so much prove it as take it for an accepted fact. But the doctrine standing in outline only, or perverted by false teaching, is comparatively uninfluential. Christianity takes it, develops it grandly, clears it of all error, lifts it up from a dead belief to a living motive and a thrilling hope. It teaches every man how to make his immortality the grandest of blessings.

Now, suppose we leave Christ, what then? We fall back upon our general intuitions; definiteness is gone; all influential motive has departed. It is said that intuition gives us more than the bald and bare fact of immortality. I must deny it. Men rejecting the Bible have widely various beliefs about the kind and character of this immortality. It will not do to trust self; for other people's reasons teach them, as they say, differently, and they may be as keen as we. It will not do to trust others; for how collect the world's opinions and balance them in

search of truth? It is Christ's teaching or none. It is to him we must go, that the intuition may become an influential faith.

Another of these great ground-principles of human thought and action is this; that what we do now bears upon all our future. The belief is instinctive. We act and reason upon it daily. Few persons deny it, and they only in the matter of religion. All men see how results follow character and deeds. To-day you and I are experiencing partially the result of all former days. It will be so down to the last day of life. It will be so the day after death, the year, the eternity after death, if man continues to be man.

The Bible owns this principle, and carries it out more fully, bids us act daily upon it, and tells us definitely what the result will be of certain courses of action. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

And now, if any man objects to such a result—if, wishing the doctrine not to be true, he shall throw aside his Bible—what will he gain? He will not have annihilated this belief in the principle which all men naturally entertain, whether believers in any religion or in no religion, and which all men

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Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings. 131

act upon in daily life. The Bible indeed extends the application of the principle further than we, unassisted by revelation, can do, just as the telescope extends our vision deeper into the heavens. The Bible tells us of two future eternal states—of the holy joys in the one, of the sinful sorrows of the other. And before any man denies these utterances of the Bible, let him ask what he will gain by the denial. Thrown back upon the general principle, he must own that; and Christianity simply sheds new light along the old line of man's natural and instinctive conviction of immortality.

If we leave Christ we shall do the greatest violence to our reasons by rejecting the immense amount of testimony which has *convinced thousands of the best minds* of the truthfulness of Christ's religion. Look at the fact that the mass of men who have given deepest and most earnest thought and study to religion for eighteen hundred years have received the religion of Jesus. The men of most knowledge on this subject accept the Bible as God's revealed will. They are intelligent enough to know all common and some uncommon objections, and yet they see where is the overwhelming weight of evidence. That great mass of educated mind which, as presiding over colleges teaching in seminaries,

132 *Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings.*

has made Christianity a specialty, a single undivided object of investigation, is more than satisfied with the evidence of these books of the Bible. Intelligent men have indeed rejected the Bible. But general intelligence is one thing, and the special study of a lifetime by thousands of the best educated men of each Christian century is quite another thing. The overwhelming mass of ability and learning has had but one voice. Here is a stupendous difficulty for the sceptic, a fact absolutely unaccountable by those who would have men leave Christianity.

It is the same with the *interpretation* which the holymen of all centuries have put upon the doctrines of religion. They are really one in this thing. They differ in explanations. The errors of their times influence their modes of statement. But the deeply religious, the really holy men of all the centuries, are one in essential belief.

They all agree as to man's sin and ruin and exposure to God's displeasure ; in redemption by Christ's death ; in salvation only by faith in him ; in the inward change of the Holy Spirit ; in the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ for those who believe ; in the resurrection, the judgment, and eternal awards. This is the Christian faith. The

mass of devout men since the Reformation, three centuries ago, hold this as the truth. The mass of holy men in the Romish Church have held to these verities of our religion. Time was when the Roman Church was a simple gospel Church on the banks of the Tiber. In subsequent centuries she was corrupted, not essentially in her creed, but in her rites, in her forms, which overlaid and well nigh, for many, extinguished her creed. And the reformers protested not against her creed, but against the mummeries which to many usurped its place. Her creed to-day is essentially right. Thousands in her communion think only of the mummeries and forget the creed. But many, we believe, have thought of the creed and have forgotten the mummeries. She has nurtured holy men. It is the same with that vast body, the *Greek Church*. Some have caught at the deeper truth and held it in spite of the tradition which stands to so many in place of the gospel. And in those old Syriac Churches, older than the Churches in Rome or Constantinople, it is the same. The holy, the truly Christian men, those who give noblest evidence of piety, have clung to these few central doctrines of faith; they are one in this interpretation of Christianity. And here is a fact which those would do well to ponder

who are tempted to give up our Christian doctrines. These holiest men are in essential agreement. They hold one language about sin's ruin, and Christ's atonement, and the change of grace and the way to heaven. These are truths which they have tested by experience. These are the ground-work of their religion. And these are the pious men, if there have ever been pious men. Leaving Christ, in this matter, where shall we find genuine piety? These holy men, the Edwardses, Paysons, Judsons of America, the Luthers and Calvins of the Protestant Churches, the Thomas à Kempises, the Quesnels of the Romish Church, the Chrysostoms of the Ancient Greek Church, the Jeromes and Gregories of those old Syrian Churches, the men who prayed and thought and preached on the hills and in the valleys that had seen Christ and his apostles; all these holiest men, out of the depth of *one* experience, have had *one* faith, and were *one* in their proclamation of the essential facts and doctrines of Christianity. We will not leave these men. To do it would be to leave the united conviction of Christendom.

And, further, to cast off Christ's religion would be to leave all the dearest hopes both of our personal advancement and of the world's moral progress.

Intertwined with the facts of Christianity are our dearest affections. So that we must say with Paul, if the facts are not as presented in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, "we are of all men most miserable." We hear men sometimes with flippant tone announcing their belief that Christianity is false. But if that be so, say it sadly, and with tears, as you would tell a loving child of the death of the mother that bore it and nourished it and loved it. Say it as the most sorrowful thing that human lips can utter, that the credentials of Christ—his mighty deeds and more mighty words—are not enough, and so never can God give a proven revelation to man. Say it with mourning, that the perfect purity and elevation and stainlessness of Christ's character in the New Testament is all a mistake; that he did not live, or that if he did, his disciples devised his words and imagined his deeds, and that such deception has led the world's enlightenment, and so that we are all a duped race led by dupes, a race of maniacs led by fools and knaves; and yet that these fools and knaves have wondrously helped men to be better, and made men holier, and broadened their views, and informed their intellects, and enriched their moral natures, and made them to live nobler and more self-denying

lives, and to die sweeter, holier, happier deaths, looking onward to a still holier state; and yet that all this is delusion, deception, mistake, imposture! In striking at Christianity with iconoclastic hand one strikes at humanity as well as its dearest hopes, its sweetest consolations, its best ideals, its strongest impulses, its most praiseworthy charities and moralities. If it must be said at all, say it with bated breath, that Christianity is untrue; for if untrue, it is the most awful of untruths, and we ought at once to weed it out of human literature, out of common language and common life. We ought to begin with childhood, and stop it in its repetition of the Lord's Prayer, to forbid infant lips from ever again uttering the words, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" we ought to stop the rites of burial, and cast out of them the words, "I am the resurrection and the life," to tell the mourner, though it will make him twice a mourner, that he has not only lost his friend but his Saviour; we ought to assure age, though it will tremble all the more to know it, that there is some mistake as to the Bible which has been the staff on which it leaned, and that the Heavenly Father did not say, "I will never leave nor forsake thee," nor Christ promise, "He that believeth in me shall never die."

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Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings. 137

And as with personal hope, so with the inspirations of genius and the progress of art and of learning; for, the support of Christianity gone, there is for them a mournful future. Before the advent of Christianity, how much of art was too abominable for description. But the single conception of the Virgin and her Child, cut in a thousand marbles, painted a thousand times on canvas, in every variety of detail, has revolutionised and elevated art. Nothing blotted out the old ideals until Christianity flooded the realms of painting and statuary with a new and tender beauty. So always through the centuries this religion of Christ is purifying everything it touches, and is doing it exactly as far and as fast as men take into mind and heart the great facts and doctrines which are its distinction and its glory.

Nor art and literature, but the common impulses of common life, would be ruinously affected if the religion of Christ were left as untrue. All the higher motives that lift men from a merely physical condition would droop.¹ With it would go all

¹ That this is not a mere speculation, the following quotation from the elder Pliny will show: "The vanity of man, and his insatiable longing after existence, have led him to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures, since the other creatures have

138 *Difficulties as to Miracles & Teachings.*

higher views of God, of duty, of the nobility of man, of just and humane law ; and society must inevitably decline, since the great teachings of morals which have extorted the world's admiration have been connected with a system called Christianity, which the world now leaves because false—and if the one part false, how the other true ?

It has been thought by some that we might drop all the miracles and the doctrines that are distinctive, and still have all the impulses and moralities of Christianity. Yes, if moralities are mere outward things, mere wax flowers from milliners' shops, instead of genuine flowers growing on stems and out of seed and soil as God made them to grow. There is a natural belief in immortality. But it is inoperative aside from the light of revelation. And as it has never been efficient apart from the biblical disclosures, so it never will be for any length of time after the biblical doctrine of it has been left. For a single generation, possibly for two, if Christianity was discarded, there would remain a little of the Christian sap in Deism ; but it would soon depart. It is doubtful if mere natural religion

no wants transcending the bounds of their natures. Among these two great evils the best thing God has bestowed on man is *the power to take his own life.*"

would live long enough to draw another breath after the going out from it of all that is distinctly Christian in thought and feeling and belief. Says one of the best thinkers and best known educators of our day: "The course of things, if Deism should be the ultimate religion, can be easily foretold. As long as the recollections and influences of Christianity survived its fall, earnest souls would hope on; they would stay their souls' hunger on the milk drawn from the breasts of their dead mother. But a new age would toss about in despair. If a sense of sin remain, the life of all noble souls will be an anxious gloomy tragedy. Or if that burden be cast off, then the standard of character will fall and the sense of sin grow faint, so that pardon will not be needed, and the utmost frivolity be reached in life and manners." *

Nothing, absolutely nothing, is given us in return if we surrender either our theoretic belief in Christianity or our practical obedience to it. What else can do anything for the deepest yearnings and largest wants of the soul? Giving up Christianity is giving up the thing that ought to be true, just as there ought to be light if there are eyes, and sounds

* Pres. Woolsey, in "Religion of the Present and the Future."

if there are ears, and air if there are lungs. And as the bodily organs are furnished with that on which they can best thrive, so the faculties of mind and heart can best be developed by the religion of him who came "that men might have life, and might have it more abundantly." For the deepest and most important intuitions man possesses are seized upon by religion and are made clear and influential. The germ of these truths is developed by the scriptural doctrine, and they are made potent for man's good. All the difficulties are at least as great without as with the Bible; as great in the germ-truth, as in its form of growth and bud and blossom. And then there is the added difficulty of accounting for this fact; how it is that if Christianity is false it can so singularly, powerfully, beautifully, take up and develop these germ-truths in the mind and these most blessed hopes in the heart, and thus purify, elevate, and ennoble the man who believes and practises it.

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Difficulties from Geology.



CHAPTER V.

DIFFICULTIES FROM GEOLOGY.

IT has come to be believed by many persons that there is a direct conflict between Genesis and Geology; that the scriptural account of the creation of the world and of man is entirely at variance with the results of the best modern scientific study. And there has been not a little doubt awakened in the minds of many young men as to the accuracy of the Scriptures on this particular subject. It is believed that these difficulties, stated so often in newspaper and magazine, in popular lecture and scientific volume, are the result of the ignorance of some scientists as to the actual teachings of revelation; and also of the equal ignorance of some biblical scholars as to the actual teachings of science. There is undue haste on the part of some men of large, but exclusive acquaintance with science, to denounce the Scripture story; and equal haste on the part of some

friends of the Bible to denounce science as atheistic. Crude theories in the interpretation of the book of nature or of the book of revelation are often at blame for the apparent antagonism of things in which, rightly understood, there must be unity.

Our best biblical scholars who have a fair knowledge of scientific facts gladly welcome any light that science gives to religion, acknowledge gratefully their indebtedness for the past, and express their fervent hope and belief that more light is to come from every department of human knowledge in aid of the study of that book which they hold more and more firmly to be the attested Word of God. "All knowledge," said Cicero, "is of use to the orator." And every student of the Scriptures will say the same about the interpretation of that volume. And, on the other hand, the geologists are indebted, as some of them gladly and reverently own, to the biblical story for the wonderful help it furnishes toward the explanation of the facts which they cull from the natural world. Truths never disagree when you get at them and bring them together. The outer court of nature and the inner court of revelation were built by one hand; and the architect and builder is divine.

I propose that we read together the *first chapter of Genesis* in the light of modern science. To do this, it will be necessary to ask, first, what the author of that chapter really teaches us about the origin of nature and of man ; to inquire next as to the settled facts of science as substantially agreed upon by the best modern authorities in the scientific world ; and then to note the points of agreement between the two.

1. Of the Mosaic record. At the outset it should be very carefully remembered that the *methods* of science and of revelation are entirely different. One goes backward, the other forward. One starts with facts, and asks the cause. The other starts with a great First Cause, and then speaks of the facts as they proceed from his creative hand. In the arithmetics we used to study, there were examples in which now one factor and now another was wanting. If one was gone, it was sought by multiplication ; if the other, the answer was sought by division. In like manner the methods of science and revelation are exactly opposite. Compare them at any point, until the problem is solved, and they may not agree. But in the end, when the grand result is reached—as it is not yet—the two methods, the reverse of each

other, like multiplication and division, are mutual proofs of the correctness alike of science and of religion—of the book of Nature and the book of God.

Then, too, the *language* of the Bible is popular, while the language of science claims to be exact. The popular language is just as true for its own purposes as that of science. It states facts as they appear to be. When I say "The sun rises and sets," I speak optical, but not scientific truth; and the man must want to quarrel with me who would convict me of falsehood because I speak of sunrise and sunset. I could not be understood in a popular lecture if I used any other phrase, though other terms might be more scientific. Moses does the same. Indeed, no other way was possible. If he had used the scientific terms of Egypt—and they were the only scientific terms with which he was familiar—they would be false terms to-day. If God had inspired him to use *our* scientific terms, Moses himself, and all those who have lived during thirty centuries, could not have understood him. If he had spoken in the language of the science of twenty centuries to come, his words would have been riddles to us, as well as to all former generations. It is not the object of the Bible to teach

science, but religion. Its references to the facts which are now called scientific are few, and given only in popular language; and the facts are named only in their religious bearing.

In studying this first chapter of Genesis, we must not forget that it does not fix *any time* for the creation of the matter out of which the earth was formed. We have two verses in which the origin of the *substance* of the earth is named. Moses is careful not to say whether the heavens and the earth were created six thousand or six million years ago. He says, "In the beginning." The time is expressly indefinite. If the geologist can show proof that the creation occurred a thousand million of years ago, Moses in the first two verses of Genesis does not contradict him. No age or date is given. It had a beginning. It was not eternal. It had a Creator. God created it.¹ That is all these two opening verses say about it. What millions of centuries were passed in chaos before the world was finally fitted up for this race of ours in the last six days' work, no man can ever know; for God has nowhere told us. Nor is this inter-

¹ Moses uses a word signifying *created* in the first verse of Genesis. Afterwards, as in the fourteenth, he uses another word signifying *fashioned* or *shaped*, as out of materials already created.

pretation of the two opening verses of Genesis anything new. Justin Martyr, and Basil, and Origen, who were among the fathers of the Christian Church, over fourteen hundred years ago, gave this interpretation. All the best modern commentators say the same thing. Lange, Stewart, Murphy, Conant, and others, all agree that the opening verses of Genesis describe the creation of the original matter out of which the earth was subsequently through vast convulsions fitted up, shaped and formed anew, for the abode of the pre-Adamite creations, and at length for man.

And as the period of chaos is indefinite, so is the length of each of these six "day-periods" of Moses. It cannot be proved that they were days of twenty-four hours each. It is certain that the sun had not shone upon the world to make the first of them such days. The writer Moses is a prophet. He elsewhere uses the term "day," just as we do, to describe any period which had a beginning and an end. Any limited time in which a thing was commenced and finished is "a day." The whole six days' work in the first chapter is described in the second chapter as the work of "one day;" the writer thus using the word as we do, both in the definite and the indefinite sense. A Christian pastor

said to his congregation these words, "I bring you as a text for *to-day* the words, 'Behold, now is the accepted time: Behold, now is the *day* of salvation.'" In one part of the sentence the pastor used the word "day" to denote a particular Sabbath, a day of twenty-four hours; in the other part of the sentence he used the same word to signify a day-period covering now eighteen hundred years, and to cover, it may be, centuries more—a day, or a period, in which God will receive returning sinners to salvation. So Moses uses the word "day." When he talks of the "tenth day of the month Nisan," we know that he means a day of twenty-four hours. When he talks of a day of creation, we can see that he is not so limited. It may cover thousands of years. It is of *periods* in which God began and finished certain parts of the creation that he speaks.

Nor must we forget that Moses describes creation *optically, i. e.*, as it would have appeared to an eyewitness on the earth.¹ God made these things to

¹ Is not this also the fair and honest way of interpreting the passage about the sun and moon as standing still, which is incorporated, evidently from a poetic composition or ode, into the Book of Joshua? It is optical language. Says the great astronomer Kepler, "The only thing that Joshua prayed for was that the mountains might not intercept the sun from him. Besides, it had been *unreasonable to think* of astronomy or of the errors of sight; for if any one had told him that the sun

pass before him. Some have supposed that he was permitted to behold an inspired vision of these creative scenes. He describes them as a man would have done had he been there. Such a man would have seen the actual things exactly as Moses was permitted to see the vision of them. In the Midian desert it may be, on six successive week-days followed by a Sabbath,—each of these week-days beginning and closing with “the evening and morning,” which made the one literal day of twenty-four hours—on these literal days, God may have allowed the vision of those vast day-periods, in the great characteristics of each, to pass before the mind of Moses. No human eye saw the actual creation. But Moses is to see the vision of it, as if he had

could not really move in the valley of Ajalon, but *only in relation to sense*, would not Joshua have answered that his one wish was to have the *day prolonged by any means whatsoever*.” That the Jews understood the language not scientifically, but phenomenally, is also plain from the words of Josephus, “That the *length of the day* did then increase, is told in the books laid up in the temple.” The Samaritan copy of Joshua says, “The day was prolonged at his prayer.” Similarly, Dr. Chalmers says, “I accept it in the popular sense, having no doubt that to all intents and purposes of that day’s history the sun and moon did stand still, the one over Gibeon and the other over Ajalon.” To those in the conflict it so seemed, and a Hebrew poet put it into verse, and a Hebrew historian quotes a stanza of the poem.

been the eye-witness of the earth's wondrous changes under the creative hand of God.

And thus the account of creation, declaring as it does God's glory, was to be transmitted, through the leader of the chosen people, to the entire world. He sees at first the elements, created indeed, but still in wildest chaos. There was dim light. It was not sunlight, but nebulous light. It endured for a time and then came darkness. The first day of Moses' vision, corresponding it may be to the first *great day-period* of God's creative work, was ended. Next, the mists are partially lifted. The beholder would have seen vast masses of cloud, or portions of the firmament above the earth. It was the second day. Then comes the dry land, followed by herbage vast and gigantic—growing, not by sunlight, but in the steaming heats of the earth now cooled down so far as to allow of plants and trees, which were afterwards to be turned into coal for man's use. It was the third day. Next, Moses sees for the first time the light of the sun shining clearly on the earth. That sun might have existed for untold millions of years. But through the mist and the murky atmosphere of the world its rays had never before pierced. Now it appears in the heavens, the appointed ruler of the day. Then come into view

the huge monsters of the deep, and the fowls of the air, the vast dynasties of the fish and the beast and the bird. Last of all, at the close of the sixth great day-period, comes *man*, created in the image of God. Such is the order in the first chapter of Genesis. It is the spectacle of creation as vouchsafed to Moses. It was not intended to be scientific. It was the general order, described by the *characteristic of each great period*. Nor is it needed that we understand each day-period of creation as exactly matching the prophetic period of the inspired vision. The general object is to describe the creation, as it would have appeared to an observer had there been one present to watch the earth as God was preparing it for the abode of man.¹

Turn, now, from the book of Revelation to the book of Nature, and let us ask, next, What does science, and especially the science of geology—the science of the rocks—say about this same creation?

¹ "The seven days are not literal days of twenty-four hours, nor yet seven *definite* historical periods. But as the seven seals, vials, trumpets of John's Revelation represented human history by a typical representation of each of its grand divisions, without any one of them being chronologically defined, so these seven days of Moses represent in a dramatic or typical form the changes at creation, each grand feature being boldly sketched out in one scenic representation *characteristic* of that period."—*Primeval Man Unveiled*.

Here, too, a few preliminary words are needed. One is, that the science of geology is yet in its infancy. It is not a hundred years old. Instead of making the boldest assertions of any of the sciences, and so drawing down upon itself their condemnation, it should be modest. It is also to be remembered that geology has changed its fundamental theories again and again. A book that was an authority twenty years ago is no authority today in geology. The next twenty years may witness greater changes. New facts are discovered. But new theories are made even faster than new facts are obtained. Nearly every leading geologist has abandoned his own most startling theories, and some have gone through a dozen of them. Lyell has discarded his former views about the age of the world, and the time of man's appearance on it.¹ Huxley, who had claimed millions of years for the earth, under the telling blows of Sir William Thompson, the first mathematician of Europe, has just been compelled to own that the claims of geologists about the tremendous age of the earth are not proved. It is the same with the age of man on the earth. Huxley thinks that as star dust

¹ "The life of this eminent man is a history of retracted opinions."—*Recent Origin of Man*; Southall.

is the material out of which the earth was formed, so there is a *physical basis* for all plant, animal, and human life. Agassiz denounces Darwin's theory of "natural selection," and then, in turn, is denounced by the whole scientific world for insisting upon the *moral* unity of the race, and yet holding that man sprang not from one centre but from several centres—not from one human pair but from more than half a dozen human pairs.* Herbert Spencer denounces all the rest of the scientists, deeming his theory about force sufficient to account for the world as it is, and for the origin of the human race; while Miller, Dana, and Guyot—names that equal any—hold most zealously to the theory of one human pair, and on scientific grounds indorse the Scripture statements as to the origin of the race.

The scientists are not agreed in their theories. They agree only on some general facts. What are these facts?

Modern science now almost universally adopts the doctrine that the earth was first of all in a fluid, gaseous, or nebulous state. This gaseous mass was intensely heated. Somehow, motion was communi-

* "A few years since the preponderating opinion was in favour of multiple centres. Now (1875) it is in favour of a single origin."—*Recent Origin of Man*.

cated to the mass. This brought out heat, and this heat was attended with a feeble light—scientific men call it cosmical light, to distinguish it from sunlight.¹ Thus, without intending so to do, the scientists exactly describe the first of the Mosaic days of creation.

Next came, according to modern scientists, the huge rocks called Primary,² the granites and the

¹ "How could there be light before the sun?" So cried Voltaire, and a thousand voices have echoed the question. And this objection has probably done more to unsettle the minds of young men in past generations than any other difficulty of the Bible. Those who believed in revelation had no other reply than to ask men to wait. The waiting has been richly rewarded. For now no respectably informed man ventures the question. Humboldt's words about cosmical light are well known. He claims the existence of light "which is a similitude of the dazzling light of the sun. The existence of this illuminating power we discover also among the other orbs." And Proctor, in writing of a late solar eclipse, says, "We recognise the existence of envelope after envelope around the sun, until our earth is reached and over-passed."

² Nomenclature has been cast and recast so many times, and on so many different systems, that no one of them may be followed exclusively. Twenty years ago, naming them according to their supposed order of strata, the division of the rocks was into Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary; next, with regard to the appearance of life, it was into Azoic, Paleozoic and Mesozoic, &c. Subsequently the nomenclature made popular in America by Lyell was employed. But he has himself reconstructed his vocabulary, at least as to the Pliocene and Post-pliocene ages.

different ingredients of granite. They settled as the boiling mass slowly cooled down, and are the natural basis of all the rest. No animal or vegetable life is ever found in them.

Then came the deposit called Secondary, the sandstones, the slates, and some of the limestones. Huge vegetables that could only grow in a steaming air, and without direct sunlight, appeared. These were followed by the carboniferous periods, when these vegetable forests were turned to coal by means of some tremendous change, through fire or water. Then came periods when vast sea-monsters and huge birds roamed through the oceans and the airs.

And these ages were followed by convulsions in which those monstrous creations were destroyed, and their remains are found to-day embalmed in the rocks. But during all this time no man appeared. Ages seem to have gone by in which the earth was cooled down so that it could be inhabited by vast birds, the fossil remains of which are often found, but no single species of which now exists. Those fishes, those beasts, those birds, were like and yet were unlike those now living. But not one of them could have lived an instant in our air; nor could one of our living creatures have existed a

PROPERTY
SCARBORO MECHANICALS
INSTITUTE.

Difficulties from Geology.

157

moment in their atmosphere. No more in those untold periods could man have lived on the earth.^{*} Those beings in the old geologic ages were not the fathers in *lineal* descent of any beast or bird or fish now on the earth. "There is," says Dana, "no lineal series through creation." Those were the ancestors of these only in that, at each successive creation and destruction, God kept the type; but the new creation was usually nearer the perfect type than the one it replaced. Always it is in one of the four forms of Mollusca, Radiata, Articulata, or Vertebrata.

Then came another vast convulsion. The temperature fell. The continents were buried

^{*} "In the distant past, not a trace of man's presence has been found. He is 'of yesterday.' While the stone volume has preserved for us the slight impressions of the Annelid and the foot-trail of perished Molluscs in the soft mud over which they crawled; while it has restored to us in perfect shape the delicately-constructed, many-lensed eye of the Trilobite, and has kept exact record of the death struggles of fishes on the sands of olden seas; while it has delineated, on carboniferous columns, fern-leaves exquisitely delicate in structure as the finest species of modern times; and while the rain-drops of long bygone ages have left imprints which reveal to us the course which even the wind followed; not a trace of man is visible. Only at the close does he appear; science finds him where the Scriptures placed him, and sees in him the crown which continuous type had long fore-shadowed."—*Frascr*,

beneath the sea; and vast fields and even mountains of ice were formed over the face of the desolated world. This was followed by the drift period, so called, when, this whole North American continent submerged, the great icebergs floated from the north-west, dropping from their bases those vast mountains of gravel and those vast boulders which are found all over the continent to-day. Says Humboldt, "The Alps were beneath the ocean." Says Lyell, "All land has been under water." "The highest mountains," says Tenny, "have been the ocean bottom." And then came the last great act before man. These continents were all lifted out of the sea, and the waters drained into the rivers and gathered into the present oceans; and at length, on the last of these great day-periods, man was created.

Such is substantially the course of creation as our scientists now hold it. A few of these points are still disputed. But these conclusions are all but universally held, and are as certain as any scientific facts can ever be.

And just here a few words, thirdly, as to the general agreement of the record in the Bible and the record in the rocks.

First, all science says that there was originally a

Creator. Even Darwin, often called an atheist, says, "Life was originally breathed by the *Creator* into a few forms or into one." Owen says that "law is only secondary cause," but he holds that law is guided by the intelligence of the Creator. Herbert Spencer leaves a place for God as the author of force; while Agassiz, Hitchcock, Dana, and Guyot all insist that science no less than revelation declares those grandest of words, "*In the beginning, God!*"

Secondly, all science declares that originally the earth was chaotic, sunless; its vast boiling, surging masses of melted rocks, surrounded by clouds of steam and mist, were lit at first not by sunlight but by cosmical light. Exactly so says Moses. A hundred years ago men said, "Moses is surely wrong in not making the sun to shine upon the earth until the fourth day." But no carefully read man now makes that objection. The huge forests, which are now turned to coal, grew then in the steaming atmosphere as they could not have grown in the sun's light. Astronomers, geologists, and chemists all agree that there was light before the direct rays of the sun touched the earth. How strikingly is Moses vindicated, or rather God, who spake through Moses in the sacred narrative.

"Let there be *light*," was said on the first day. "Let the *sun* rule the day," was said on the fourth day.

Thirdly, all science agrees that the lowest strata, the rocks first formed, have no vegetable and animal remains. The granites are before the vegetable and animal forms in the order of creation. And so, too, Moses does not mention them in his version until after he had seen the creation of the substance of the world.

Fourthly, science, with almost entire agreement, declares that there have been successive eras of creation. Vast forests existed. Then subsequently they were destroyed. Vast sea-monsters existed. And these also ceased to be, and another race of them were created to exist in new conditions, and these too, in turn, have been destroyed, and new ones again created.* No less than seventy-seven of

* The more pronounced of the defenders of the Darwinian form of the development theory do not of course admit this conclusion. But others of them would see everywhere a superintendence of God, and such a combination of circumstances as needs only the divine touch at the ripe hour. Some Christian thinkers are ready to admit that if the missing links of proof, confessed by the leading advocates of the development theory to be now wanting, should ever be found, there will still be place for these eras of creative power. Of vast changes in which the great mass of existing life was destroyed,

these distinct creations and destructions are insisted upon by some of our best geologists.¹ Professor Owen claims that some species survived across these tremendous convulsions. But Agassiz, and with him the great mass of more careful scientists, insist upon it that these eras have come and gone. Agassiz says, "There was a succession of beings on the surface of the earth. But the *fishes of one age are not the descendants of those in the former geological age.* There is no parental descent among them. God has created all the types of animals that have passed away, to introduce man upon our globe." How wondrously is this in accordance with the chapter in which God is said to have made the fishes, and made the birds, and made the beasts, and then made man.²

all naturalists speak ; but as to the suddenness of them, the sharp ending of their epochs, some stand in doubt. The *type* is unchanged. We have the same great ideas, the four great foundation-plans of animal life. All existing and all extinct creatures are or were molluscous, radiated, vertebrated, or articulated. The type never changes in the successive eras of creation. Related in form, they are not related in descent.

¹ Alcide D'Orbigny and C. H. Hickcock are quoted by Southall in his *Recent Origin of Man.*

² "There is not an existing stratum in the body of the earth, there is not an existing species of plants or animals, which cannot be traced back to a time when it had no place

Fifthly, the general *order* of creation is another remarkable fact. The order of the scientists is in outline—we could not expect agreement in detail, for science is not yet perfect—is in outline, that of revelation. There is steady progress from chaos up through primary rocks, then on and up through secondary rocks with traces of vegetable life; thence upward still by new creations unto the mammal age, and then into the highest created forms of the mammal age,¹ when man himself appears.

Sixthly, science also teaches of the classification of plants according to their "seed" and "kind," or structure. The Linnæan system had obtained for years a place in the scientific world. But it was felt, after all, that a classification by flowers was incorrect. And to-day the botanists of the world have gone on to their new classification, which is only the old classification in the first chapter of Genesis. in the world. The forms of organic life had a *beginning in time*."—*Lyell*.

"Species appear suddenly and disappear suddenly."—*Agassiz*.

¹ "The waters were re-peopled with beings which were not repetitions of the forms just exterminated, but original conceptions; and yet not *fundamentally* different, but united to the old by such identity of the fundamental plan as to convince us that the intelligence which brought death to all terrestrial existence continued to prosecute his own unchanged purpose through all succeeding epochs."—*Winchell*.

"Let the earth bring forth the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree after his kind whose seed is in itself."
"This new trophy of science" is only an old laurel from the wreath woven so many years ago by Moses.

Seventhly, science puts vegetation before animal life. Scripture, likewise, in describing the day-periods, places the plant kingdom before the animal; and here again the two records agree.

Eighthly, science puts man as the last of the beings that has appeared on the globe. He did not appear until the close of these tremendous convulsions by which the earth was shaped. Revelation makes man appear at the close of the sixth great period.

But when was that? When did he appear on our earth? No man can tell us. The Scripture on this point is silent. We have no definite chronology in Genesis, but *only historic periods in their general order*. Attempts have been made to ascertain the age of man from a purely historic basis, but this method is clearly unreliable when taken alone. For the Hebrew method and the Samaritan method and the Septuagint method are widely divergent. In one, the period from Adam to the flood is sixteen hundred years, in another thirteen hundred years, in another it is more than two thou-

sand years. In the period between Adam and Christ they differ by fifteen hundred years. What wonder that we have different systems of chronology by men like Ussher, Hales, Poole, and Bunsen, none of them agreeing in the age of the human race. The system which, until within a single generation, has obtained most widely, is that of Ussher, which places the creation six thousand years ago. But the Scriptures say nothing about six thousand years. And if the time of Ussher should even be doubled, there is nothing to prevent it in the Mosaic record. The tables of genealogy in the Bible were constructed to show the descent of Christ from Adam. And the word "generations" is plainly used in the older Scriptures with the same indefiniteness as the word "day"—a usage found also in the New Testament, and common also in our own century and language. "The extreme uncertainty," says Dr. Hodge, "attending all attempts to determine the chronology of the Bible, is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that one hundred and eighty different calculations have been made by Jewish and Christian authors of the length of the period between Adam and Christ. The longest make it six thousand nine hundred and eighty-four years, the shortest three thousand four

hundred and eighty-three years. If the facts of science or of history should ultimately make it necessary to admit that eight or ten thousand years have elapsed since the creation of man, there is nothing in the Bible in the way of such concession. *The Scriptures do not teach us how long men have existed on the earth.*"

It is well known that on the subject of man's age on earth the geologists have taken the lead of all other scientists in demanding that we extend into an almost immeasurable past the time of man's appearance. Wallace talks of "ten thousand centuries," and supposes "a time when man possessed no powers of speech nor those moral feelings which now distinguish the race." Others think two hundred thousand years enough. There was also much talk about pottery found at the mouth of the Nile, which, reckoning in a certain way as to the deposits annually made by the river mud, was thought to be twelve thousand years old. But since that day, at a greater depth, in the same deposit, Sir R. Stephenson found a brick bearing on it the stamp of a modern ruler of Egypt. And more recently it has been proved that the said piece of pottery is of *Roman* origin. Of the so-called fossils at Natchez on the Mississippi, said at first to prove man's ex-

istence one hundred thousand years ago, Sir Charles Lyell, an advocate for the longest times, declares "it is allowable to suspend our judgment as to its high antiquity." So, too, it is of bones in European caves, and of Swiss dwellings submerged in lakes, and of arrow-heads and flint-hatchets which have been found mixed with bones of extinct species of animals, and with human bones. Lyell says they "were probably not coeval." And some of the most eminent geologists declare, in the words of one of them, "It cannot be proved that these remains may not have been washed up, drifted, and reassorted from earlier deposits, dating back at the utmost but a few thousand years."

It is the same with the immense age claimed for the Egyptian Pyramids and other monuments—viz., seventeen thousand years before Christ. Recent discoveries have effectually banished the old illusions. Champollion declares "no Egyptian monument is really older than two thousand two hundred years before Christ." Wilkinson decides that "Egypt has nothing older than a century or so before Abraham's day."

But if geologists have demanded immense periods for the past history of the race, and have been followed by a few orientalists, their claims have been

disputed strenuously by another class of scientists. Astronomers, with Sir W. Thompson at their head, while desiring to extend the period further than Ussher and the mere historians, have dealt severe blows at the geologists; for they have proved that, not many thousand years ago, such was the temperature of the earth, that man could not have lived upon it. It is, then, a settled thing that the sciences cannot determine accurately the period of the existence of man on earth.

The historians generally favour the shorter, the geologists the longer, and the astronomers the middle ground. The general drift, however, of scientific and philosophic thought inclines to the extension of the period of man's existence by a few thousand years. If the development theory should at length be shown to have a scientific basis, if even that particular form of it which is called the Darwinian theory should be accepted—a theory less brilliant and less popular than that of the "vestiges" which it supplanted, only in turn, as we believe, like it to sink out of sight—it would not be necessary to reconstruct a single verse of Genesis. If more than one *physical* origin for man is ever proved, nothing in the Bible can be alleged against it. *Moral unity for our race* is all that is really re-

quired. The doctrine of "diverse origins for man" was defended by a theologian on theological grounds, and as a necessity of interpretation, more than two hundred years ago. If it should ever be proved that, before Adam, there were creatures having man's physical form, and that at length it pleased God, in Eden, to take this being, whose body centuries before had been "formed out of the dust of the earth," and then and there to breathe into him a higher kind of life, in which he became endowed with new capacities for moral character, with a new sense of right and wrong, with an immortal and responsible soul—all this would not be in any necessary conflict with the Scripture story. For nothing is said as to how long a time elapsed between the formation of man as a creature of mere body with an animal life in it, and the subsequent inbreathing of a responsible and immortal spirit by which the race became what we see it to-day. It would, in that case, be just as true that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth;" just as true "that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." In that case, the moral unity of the race, taught as a historical fact by Moses, and by Christ, and also incorporated doctrinally with the teaching of Paul, could be held

and defended just as firmly, though on other grounds, as Christians hold and defend this fact and this doctrine to-day.

Indeed, in so recent and authoritative a work as Lange on Genesis, we have a note of the translator which reads thus: "This does not exclude the idea that the *human physical* was connected with the previous nature or natures, and was *brought out of them*; that is, that it was 'made of the earth,' in the widest signification of the term, he having an earthly as well as a heavenly origin." Without adopting any one of these theories, nay more, holding that the time is not ripe nor the evidence all in for a careful verdict about any one of them, a Christian may rejoice that no truth will ever displace that of the Scripture record; that, positive as to some statements, the Bible is purposely left elastic and uncommitted about many a minor question. The agreement is clear of the two records as to a Creator, and as to one race. Equally clear is the statement that only a few thousand years since man did not exist, and as to that other fact, that the time will come when this earth will be no longer his abode, says Sir W. Thompson: "Within a finite period the earth must have been, and within a finite period to come the earth must again be, unfit

for the habitation of man. There is a process of events toward a state infinitely different from the present." Who can fail to recall, in listening to such testimony from scientific lips, those words of the Scriptures, "The elements shall melt, and the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." "Heaven and earth shall pass away."

Science, again, declares that men are *a race*. This is regarded as proven by bodily structure, by human language, and by mental and moral likeness. Says Owen: "Men form one species, and differences are but indicative of varieties." Max Müller declares "language has one common source." And above all other proofs is that of mental and moral science; showing, as it does, the capacity of man, and man alone, for faith; the ability for moral ideas; the powers for knowing God and duty, for loving the pure and seeking the heavenly. For, no matter what theory of man's origin be adopted, this at least all grant, that man's soul to-day is not an ape soul, or a swine soul, but a human soul—a soul capable of faith in the unseen, capable of love to God as "our Father in heaven." And here Scripture comes in, declaring that "through faith"—faith in testimony being a human characteristic—"we understand that the worlds were made,"

and that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth."

And thus young men are taught to hold fast to their confidence in the Bible. Scientific theories for a time may oppose the statements of it. A fact here and there may as yet appear strange. Wait a little. Let the men who run their theories against biblical facts have time enough, and they will be compelled to alter their theories. The *settled facts* are so many illustrations of Scripture truth. Let no man be afraid of Scripture; no more let him be afraid of science. God's handwriting is never contradicting when truly read.

And we can also see that we have each our duty as members of the race of men out of which Christ came. Adam has sinned. The taint comes on us. We inherit it, as we do diseased bodies, as we do the liability to physical death. But after all we are voluntary in yielding to any sin; for *any* sin is a sin "after the similitude of Adam's transgression." And so we are responsible for being sinners before God. But as we receive taint from Adam through the race-bond, so we receive gracious offers through Christ, the second Adam. Here, too, it is our voluntary act to believe, and to accept the Holy Spirit, whereby we are recreated in the image of

God. Paradise can be regained. The race-bond in Jesus Christ is the hope of the world.

We are prepared, by the thoughts already presented, to welcome the scriptural idea of the "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Vast have been the convulsions of the old earth, both through flood and fire. But the floods shall come no more. The next great convulsion is to be, according to God's word, by fire. The earth and the things in it are to be burned up. Then every mark of man's sin shall be obliterated. Every trace of evil shall be destroyed. And the purified earth is to be visited by a higher form of life than ever before. Steadily has the earth gone on. Fit only for coarser and lower forms of life in the old geologic six day-periods, it has been now for a few years the home of sinful man. Beyond the great day of God, it shall be reformed and remodelled, and become the spot that holy souls from heaven shall love to visit. Thank God that the old world—now the type of hollowness and deceit, so that worldliness is another name for sinfulness—is to be so changed as to become an outlying borderland of God's holy heaven !

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Difficulties from Astronomy.

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CHAPTER VI.

DIFFICULTIES FROM ASTRONOMY.

A YOUNG MAN states to the writer his belief as follows. "I believe in a God who has a general superintendence over the affairs of the world. I believe in the immortality of the human soul. I believe that what a man does here affects generally his condition after death. Anything farther than this I doubt."

Urged to tell why he doubted, the reply was that, substantially, of thousands. "God seems too great to concern himself minutely about our human affairs. It is too much to believe that he who has the care of the whole universe will condescend to notice all the thoughts of a being so insignificant to him as a single and separate man : too much to believe that he will hear him pray, and do anything because he prays, that he would not have done just as soon if the man had kept silent : too much to believe that this infinite God had such a care for this world—

a mere dot among the starry worlds, a mere grain of sand in a corner of his universe—as to give his Son to die for those dwelling upon it, whole nations of whom are but as the invisible dust in the balance.”

And when this argument is pressed at night, and out under the vast canopy of the winter heavens, with unnumbered worlds in view, and when it is remembered that new telescopes and larger glasses are multiplying these worlds, each as worthy, so far as we can see, to be visited by a Saviour, each as worthy of the divine care and providence as our world, the impression, to some minds, grows stronger, that we must not be too definite in our belief about the minute care and providence of God. “Is not a man’s creed best when it is briefest—when he ventures only on a mere outline belief as to God, the soul, and the future life?” So say some. Others feel it. And they hold to Christianity but loosely, because of the starry worlds, and the planetary spaces, and the vastness of the universe.

It is believed that these doubts are without foundation; that the vastness of the universe confirms faith rather than suggests doubts, when carefully considered; that, since God is nowhere general in

ordering the stars, but everywhere special in the realms of astronomy, the inference is in favour not of a general and outline creed, but of a special and distinct and Christian belief. David's song, "When I consider thy 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?" was not the minor strain of doubt, but the song of holy wonder and thankful praise. Others might doubt, but he must believe and adore and pray.

Look at the *minuteness of the arrangements* in the starry sky. The first impression is vastness. World upon world, sun upon sun, system upon system, crowd each other to the very verge of space. But where is the verge of space? Through the best telescopes, counting a little patch of worlds in the distant star dust where they are sown with only average thickness on the sky, and then multiplying the whole horizon by that star patch, astronomers count billions of stars. And when larger tubes shall be pointed against the sky, it is believed that the number now known will be but a mere fraction of those then to be seen. Figures get to be meaningless as we try to number the stars. The universe is immensity. Think, too, of the spaces through

which these worlds are distributed. Our world spins its annual round of two hundred million miles, and never gets within thirty million miles of a neighbour star. Our sun has for its nearest neighbour sun a star forty-six million miles away. And if this is nearness in the skies, what is distance? Looking only on this vastness, we are abashed and confounded; and we are almost ready to say that God's care can be nothing beyond general over the worlds, and especially over man, the minute insect here, in a mere outpost of the universe. But then this temporary feeling yields in a single moment to our firmer and calmer reason. For surely all this immensity tells of an infinite God. It is exactly what might be expected of him. It scatters atheism, driving it beyond the stars. There must be a God of immensity, when the universe, the work of his hands, is so immense.

Now mark the fact that this God of immensity is *great in the minuteness of his arrangements*. These planets are racing through the sky at the rate of thousands of miles each moment. But see how carefully God keeps time on this race course. Jupiter never gets in at his goal at any given point a moment too late or a moment too soon. One mistake of a second here would wrench the system

past all computation. The most unwieldy of the stars comes exactly to time. Turning from the evening sky the astronomer said, "God is a mathematician." And as the *motions* are exact, and timed to the millionth of a second, so the *masses* are arranged and guarded with the minutest care. God stands with scales more exact than those of the goldsmith, and weighs out to each planet its grains of sand, never one too many to Jupiter or one too few to Uranus. A handful of dust in the wrong place would upset the machinery of the heavens. God is minute as well as vast in his universe. If his lines and angles stretch across the universe, the measurement is exact. Nothing is simply and only general. Everything is carefully poised and specially considered. God has its vastness, because he has the minuteness of the universe in his hand. What, then, is the religious inference from these heavens? Is it that God is simply a general God, who has made only the cast-iron frame of the machinery, and has left the exact fitting of each cog of every wheel pretty much to itself; that he is to be believed in as having only a *general* care for mankind, who in turn are to have only a general faith in his existence, a general idea of religious duties, which duties are only the general

doing of things that are about right? Nay! Nay! Is not the inference in favour of the special belief in a God ever near, who hears prayer, who has cared for man, and who reveals the moral glory of his grace in Jesus Christ, even as the glory of wisdom and power are displayed in these radiant worlds above us. The stars do not say Christ. But they tell of a minuteness of God's care for worlds that is exactly matched in God's care for the souls of men.

The young man whose doubt I am discussing argued in a very similar style from the revelations of the *microscope*. And since the reasoning—that from the immensity of minute things, as in astronomy from the immensity of great things—is very similar, the answer to it is found in the same line of thought.

The microscope is simply the inverted telescope. That looked upon the mighty orbs, this looks down on the minutest things which God has made. It discovers insects so small that twenty-seven millions of them would make but a single inch. It finds vast families of various kinds of them in the cavities of a common grain of sand. In each drop of stagnant water is a world of animate beings, who have as much room in proportion to

their size as have the whales in the Pacific ocean. In a single leaf it finds swarms of insect life grazing as cattle on a hill-side. It finds a down on the butterfly's wing, every fringe of which is so exact, that human art in its nicest and evenest productions is only clumsy and bungling. God has finished off and elaborated the wing of an insect that lives only a single day. Surely no man can doubt God's minuteness in his care for man, after seeing through the microscope what he does for beings lower than man. If the telescope humbles us, when we invert it in the microscope it exalts us. Little in one view, we are large in the other. Shall God care for the polish on the beetle's wings and have no care for an immortal soul? Doing nothing slightly, but all things well in nature, has he no concern for the greater as well as for the lesser things of man's life? I can better understand Christ's splendid example of a special providence in the numbering of a hair and the falling of a sparrow, when I see what God does down among the living insect world as the microscope reveals his handy work.

Then, too, when we think of the myriad races lower than ourselves, is man quite so contemptible a being? Compared with God, man is feeble. But

compared with the insect, he is almost a God. His world is small among the starry worlds, but it is vast as compared with the world of the insects that live in a sand grain. If God has guided the instinct of those minute beings so that each does his appropriate work, will he refuse to hear a man's earnest prayer for guidance in doing a work that involves the eternal interest of a priceless soul? If he has cared so much for their bodies that they may be saved to fulfil their destiny, will he have no plan of salvation for man's soul, that the highest and noblest being that walks the earth may not through sin be utterly ruined?

Then, too, these manifestations of God in nature, so far from awaking doubt, prepare us to believe in his manifestation in *humanity*. In the midnight sky he reveals his skill and his power. He does not launch worlds into space as boys throw their snow-balls into the air, from the mere feeling of sport and the exuberance of power. He has the motive of *revealing* before intelligent beings his wisdom and his might. But why stop there? Why skill and might displayed, and all else hidden? Ah! but mere things will not show the deeper perfections of God. Yet, being God, he must desire to display these movings and motions of his heart. He can

only do this to man *through man*. Yet a *mere* man cannot show it. He himself must then be incarnate in man, God manifest in flesh. Grant me this only, that the worlds of the midnight sky were not made in sport; that their maker, God, desired to reveal himself in these, that only a part of his nature could shine in them, while he himself could be enshrined in man, his image—and the inference is clear that he may, that he probably will, come among us as Immanuel, "*God with us.*" The stars do not hinder me, as I study them; they help me to believe that, manifesting his glory and power in them, he will also manifest himself in a human form. They prepare me to accept the great fact that Jesus is the God-man—who came to show us the beating of his heart, even as these stars show us the working of his hands.

Again, turning from the works themselves to the attributes of God as indicated by them, doubt is lessened rather than increased. "He is so great that he has greater things to do than to notice each man," says the objector. But is that the true inference from the fact? Why not state it thus: He is so great, that, doing all things else, he can also notice each man. He is great at condescension. He is great in providing for the things that men

would call trifles. In this universe the smallest things are the hinges on which turn the gravest events. Any trivial thing not carefully worked, the least accident in a trifle, may unhinge every broadest plan. An insect of an hour may inflict a fatal sting upon an emperor, and his death may destroy a nation and change the map of a continent. A God everywhere or a God nowhere is the alternative. He must have every event in his control, or he will loose the reins, and cannot govern his world. He must, then, care for man. And if he have any care, it must extend even to man's *thoughts*, for these are the sources of his acts. And so, because he is God, and therefore cannot be ignorant, even if he would, about any minutest thing, and because if ignorant of the lesser he could not govern the greater, we feel sure of the Christian doctrine which teaches that God is near man, watches every deed, marks every purpose, and will bring every thought into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Surely there is no general care for man that is not first special; no general providence that is not particular; no superintendence for the whole earth that does not take in every particle of its dust; no watchfulness over any man's soul which does not include the

minutest things that touch his mortal and his immortal life.

And as we reason from God's works in the starry skies to his nature, and to the manifestations of himself he will be likely to exhibit on other fields, so we reason from *man* and from his capacities for understanding something of the divine ways and works. The stars are mere masses of matter. They do not know themselves. They do not know God. They do not know man. But man knows them, and looking on them, can thank God for them. They have no likeness to God. God is their Creator, not their Father. God is Father only to souls. Shall he have such interest in those stars that know not anything, and only a general outline care for a human soul, which alone can know of his works? Is there no evidence that God loves to be appreciated in his world? Did he not make man his highest work to understand and interpret the other works of his hands? One soul is worth more than all the stars of the skies. Those stars are burning out. Year by year astronomers discover a star on fire. It burns on its months and then vanishes—a token of what God says is to be done with our earth at the final day.

But souls do not cease to be. They have an

immortality. God has done so much in endowing them already, that we should be surprised if he did not do more. We have seen why he who reveals his power and glory in the stars should also reveal himself in humanity; why God should manifest himself in Jesus Christ. But this spiritual nature of man carries us further. The great thing about a man is not his *avoirdu pois*. The mind makes the man; the soul stamps him as of worth. Shall God reveal his thought in the stars, and shall he refrain from revealing it likewise in man's realm of thought, *i.e.*, the *literature of the world*? Shall men reveal their thought in books, and shall God have no book? Shall his thought shine in every department except that where man's thoughts shine brightest? Is it not of all things most reasonable—nay, so reasonable as to be absolutely certain—that God will reveal himself in a book, a Bible, a revelation in human thought and language about himself. There must be a Bible, a book of God, given through men, and having a *divine* inspiration, as all the great works of human genius have a human inspiration in them.

A few years ago astronomers said that there were strange perturbations in the motions of certain planets. What was the trouble? Some one sug-

gested that if a planet existed between two of those already known it would account for the disturbance. The disturbance was carefully calculated and the position of the supposed planet ascertained, and when they pointed the iron tube at the spot, there stood the waiting star. There was need for it, and so the star itself was there.

I reason in the spiritual astronomy of religion in the same way. I find a deep want. Here is a God whose notice of me is exact and minute. He will require of me a strict account at the last day. But I cannot do the duties of this life without some knowledge of the life to come. If that life takes on any complexion from this, I must in some way know about that coming life. No one but the eternal God can tell me certainly about that future world: what it is; how to escape its terrors, if it has terrors; how to gain its joys, if it has joys. I must have, not the inspiration of human genius, but the divine inspiration of God's thought in my human language; in other words, I must have an inspired Bible to teach me of the future and so of the present. If I do not know about that life, I cannot in this world get ready for the future. I do not go upon the journey of a week without preparing for it. Can I go the eternal journey without

making any special preparation in this life? How can I know in what way to prepare for a journey so solemn, and on which I may start so suddenly? If there be a God with any care for me, he will tell me. He will not leave me to be tossed on the ocean of human guesses. He will give me my directions and instructions. And so I reason with heart and head that there must be a Bible; just as, to those astronomers, there must be a star. The need of it is the proof of it.

We may go further. Man has deeper needs than those requiring direction. He needs *redemption* from the guilt and bondage of sin. The stars are guided in their courses by one whose skill provides for every inch of their course and every second of their time. Their every want is supplied. A thousand influences would draw each of them from its orbit. But God provides for them that they dash not off their track to ruin. Unlike them, we can and do turn away from our appointed duty. But shall we think that the God who would rescue a star from its ruin could look on and see men lost in sin, and make no effort at their salvation? I see him give Jesus Christ. I see Jesus Christ dying, the just for the unjust, that we may be saved. And I feel that he who cares so closely for the stars in

their orbits, and who holds them to their course, is doing all this work of redemption for man, his child, the being with an immortal soul—doing it because it is like him to do it; like him *here* to show his heart, as *there* in the sky to show the wonders of his hand.

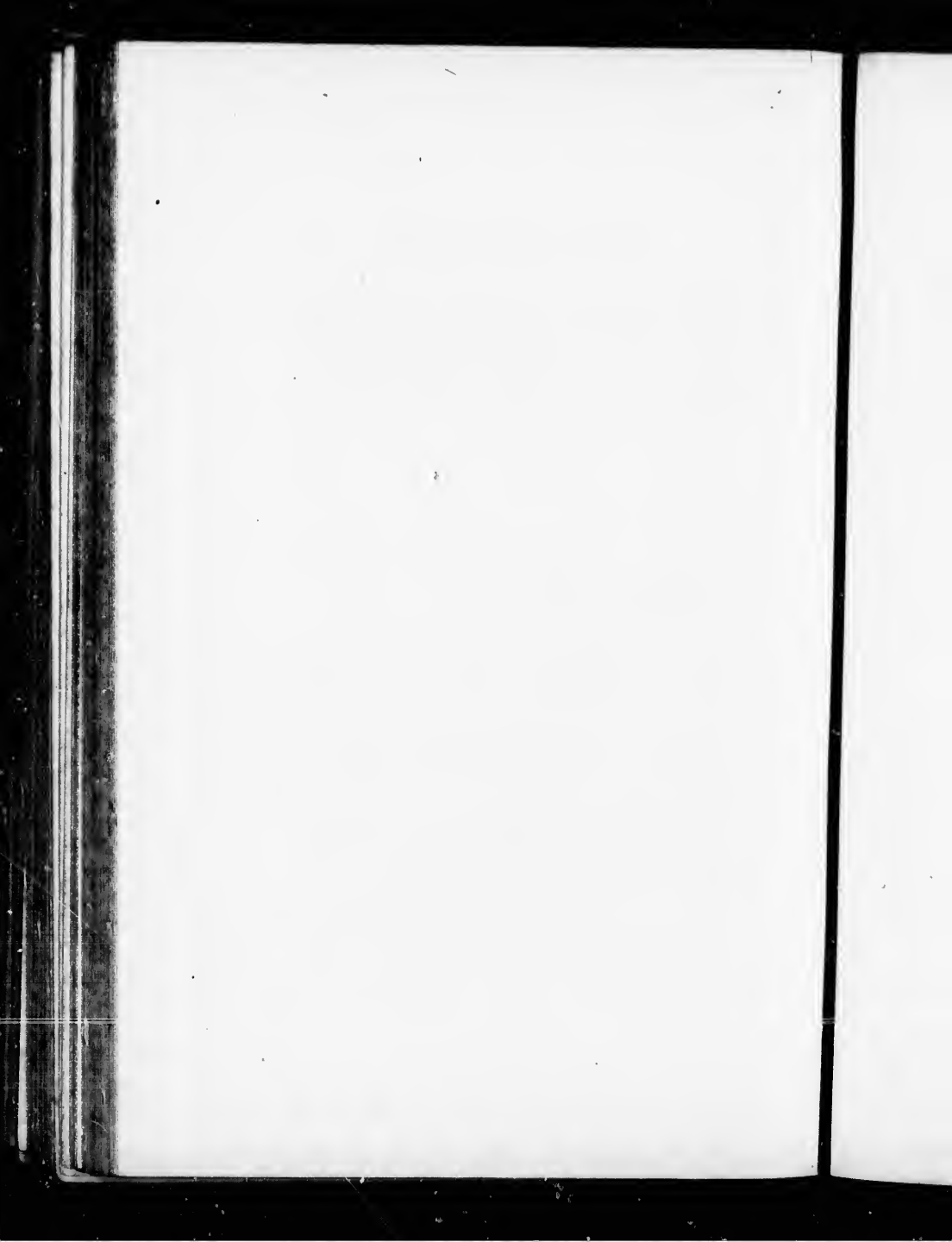
In short, I am compelled to feel that he who has so garnished the evening sky, so carefully settled the paths of the stars, so timed each planet, and weighed to a grain of sand each orb, who is never general but always special in his care for everything great and small, is a God who has not left me any poor general outline creed in the infinite matter of religion. He is—thanks be to his name, as becomes him, and as becomes man, his child—especially careful and exact, especially full and explicit in telling me what to believe and what to do in religion, and how to gain a holy heaven. The stars do not make me doubt. They help my faith. They intimate, they more than intimate, a Bible which teaches me all I need to know.

Thank God that we are not left to any man's guesses in religion. I ask you, young men, to come to no uncertain science in this matter of religion. God is our authority here. The clear

doctrines of his Word shine out in the moral as do these stars in the natural firmament. Nay, these stars are only for the eye. But God's truth is for the soul. We can prove it to the intellect. That is well. But, young men, the God of those heavens and of this Bible asks your hearts. He has worlds enough. But he wants appreciative and loving souls. He stamped its radiant glory upon these overhanging heavens. The vast spaces of the ether blue were the groundwork on which he wrought out the pattern, so brilliant, so gorgeous, for the gaze of the worlds. He has another firmament, higher, grander than this of the evening sky. Souls are the stars studding that firmament. They have a peculiar lustre. Coming into existence at first, as the world was created, in chaos, the Spirit of God, which changed that old earth-chaos into the orderly and beautiful world where we dwell, has called these souls "out of nature's darkness into his marvellous light." They are destined for the higher firmament of heaven. They are to be at length stars, not for man's gaze, as are these evening orbs; but they are for God's delight, for the garniture of his own heaven.

God wants hearts. He can take the weakest and

most guilty, if it be freely given to him, and out of it he can make an orb the radiance of which shall shine when these "heavens are rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with the fervent heat."



Difficulties about Historic Facts.



CHAPTER VII.

DIFFICULTIES ABOUT HISTORIC FACTS.

VISITORS at the White Mountains are taken to see that great natural curiosity which is known as the "Old Man of the Mountain," or "The Profile." On the front of a lofty cliff, hundreds of feet above him, the traveller is shown a great stone face with its gigantic features sharply cut against the morning or the evening sky. But the perfection of the resemblance is discerned only when the spectator takes his stand on a specified spot. Seen half a mile in either direction, nothing is visible on the mountain side save a rugged mass of uninteresting rock. Everything depends upon the right approach and the correct position of the man himself as he comes to the study of this great natural wonder. What if it be the same with other things—with wonders in the *moral* as well as in the physical world? What if it be a very especial need when a young man comes to his Bible, that he

should approach it in a peculiar way and occupy a certain definite position?

We have seen that the book which we call the Bible is a peculiar book; that its claims are unlike any other volume in existence; that it is a great moral wonder. Is it, then, out of analogy that it should demand a peculiar mood of mind, a certain suitable state of intellect and heart, in those who approach it? The poetic mood is needed for the poem. The philosophic mood is needed for the study of the volume on philosophy. The scientist claims that a peculiarly calm and patient mood is needed by him who would come aright to the great problems of science; that not the poetic spirit, nor the philosophic spirit, nor yet the theologic spirit, can be any substitute for this mood. And he is right. By all means, the scientific spirit for the scientific problem. So, too, the philosopher, devoted to the broadest inquiries, insists that there can be no substitute for the philosophic spirit, if one would study the volumes of Leibnitz or Descartes, of Hamilton or Hickcock. And he is right. Are we, then, out of analogy when we insist that here, in the study of the great moral problems of the Bible, there is needed a definite mood, a certain reverent and devout tone of mind; and that

neither the scientific nor the philosophic spirit can be substituted for this obvious and necessary requirement. Everything depends upon the position of the beholder in looking up to this great moral wonder of a Divine Revelation. For the Bible is not made for the scientist as such, nor for the philosopher or poet as such, but for them all as men with moral wants, and for all other men, young and old, as *moral beings*. For it is not our scientific or philosophical capacities, but our moral capacities, that are to be awake and receptive as we come to the book the grand object of which is moral teaching.

And yet I can understand how it is that exceedingly shrewd men, overlooking this very necessary condition, should make such sad work when they come to the more wonderful facts of the Scriptures. They are puzzled, confounded, and led on to infidelity by their wrong ways of approaching these things. They would come to "the feeding of the five thousand," or to any other miracle of the Bible, just as they would come to any alleged fact on the purely natural plane of common things. But that miracle does not profess to be a common fact, nor to have been wrought down in the plane of nature. It refuses to be questioned by the agriculturist, by

the chemist, or by any man either of vulgar or of learned curiosity. It was not wrought for wonder-seekers. It declines to let the philosopher talk to it of "laws of nature" and of fixed principles. It is its own principle. It is a physical fact with a moral meaning, and coming in under moral laws, in a system higher than nature. It is a moral doctrine incarnate in a physical fact. No man has any right to consider it out of *moral connections*. It is to be studied only in its relations to the Christ who performed it, to the time when it occurred, to the place it filled, to the truth it taught, to its bearing on the development of the Messiah's plan and aim, and above all, to the niche it was to fill in the great temple which God through Christ was building for the reverent worship of reverent men. To put these moral connections aside and out of sight in judging of "the feeding of the five thousand," is to ignore all the reasons that made the miracle a possibility, and all the conditions furnished by its author to us for our investigation of the meaning, the character, and the reality of the event itself. There are men who come as scientists with a profound reverence for "nature" and little for God, ready to refer anything to *it*, but receiving the suggestion to refer anything to *him* with the shrug of

impatient and irreverent unbelief. And these men, in this mood, would apply their methods to the miracles of the Bible! Nothing can be more absurd, unless it be the proposition of those who, with a confusion of terms which would be amusing if the theme were not so serious, propose to ascertain "the scientific value of prayer;" as if anybody ever thought it had a scientific value; as if any Christian thinker had ever dreamed of measuring moral values by physical standards; as if one could ask of his grocer a bushel of right or a peck of wrong, of his tailor a yard of truth or of error, to leave with his apothecary an order for the chemical analysis of a man's love for his child and the likelihood of a father to grant his child's petition! Christianity requires tests. Men are "to prove all things." But it suggests there is a proper way to do it. It says, put your crucible and scalpel where they belong in nature. Study your laws, whether of the physical world or of the mental world, in the obvious and appropriate ways that are open to you. And when you come to religious facts, come also in appropriate ways, and seek moral truth by moral methods. We object to the claim of any set of men, that we are to take their methods, excellent elsewhere, in the study of the miracles. For the

miracles are not mere phenomena, mere freaks of power for vulgar curiosity or for scientific and philosophic inquiry. They are parts of a mighty moral system, and they are not to be approached except from this point of advance. They are to be studied with reference to moral ends; and this neither the scientist nor the philosopher, as such, proposes to do. The miracles are for man as a moral being.

And the same is true of many an incident of the Old and New Testament which is not miraculous, but which nevertheless is very strange, and it may be almost absurd when seen alone. But when studied in its place, and seen as an object-lesson of God for the moral teaching of men, it becomes not only credible but instructive; not only probable but morally certain, as an event needed for its moral impression at the very point of time, at the very place, and in the very circumstances described. So that if there had not been some such event occurring in the process of the divine tuition of the race, we should have wondered more than we wonder now, the absence of such events being more remarkable than their presence in human history. Considered simply as a method of healing human bodies, how absurd the "raising of the serpent in the wilderness." But seen in the setting of the

story, seen as God meant it to be seen, as a teaching and a prophecy of Christ's uplifting on the cross; seen as a renewing of the primal promise given after the primal sin; as the palpable objective demonstration of the great moral fact of an atoner and an atonement; seen as a lesson set to the whole world as to the place and the value of faith, the incident is not only redeemed from littleness, but it shines in such grandeur that its light is thrown across all the separating centuries. The entire language of the religious world has been coloured thereby, and men everywhere have been led to associate the idea of the lifting up of Christ with the lifting up of the brazen serpent. Nay; the Great Teacher himself has interpreted for us the prophecy, has explained the object-lesson of God. He has said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

I would have every young man who approaches the Bible come to it with the true idea of *God's method of revelation* in his mind. For this is the key to the volume. That method is easily gathered from even a general perusal. God's method is to *reveal himself to mankind through a particular race,*

the Hebrews; and this revelation he will have to culminate in a particular person, Jesus Christ.

The Hebrew race were fitted to become the medium of this revelation by certain peculiarities.

One of these peculiarities was their *capacity for moral ideas*. True of all Oriental as compared with the Occidental nations, this capacity to receive and express such truths was pre-eminently a Hebrew trait. They were quick beyond any nation of the olden time in what may be called religious receptivity. They were spiritual symbolists. They thought in figures and talked in metaphors. They went down naturally to the spiritual base of things. It was not poetry, but religious instinct and the moral insight, which made them see in all things the broad shadow of God's thoughts. They saw Him everywhere. And He was uttering to them spiritual truths where others saw nothing but bald, bare, physical facts. To the Hebrew mind material things were shadowy and fleeting, their main use being to remind man of the spiritual world so near, so potent, so helpful. This physical world was the world of the dying; the other world, overshadowing this, was the world of the living. The real world was the world of God and angels and souls, of love and of hate, of duty and of destiny, of heaven

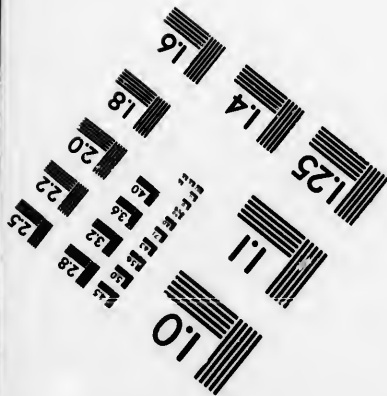
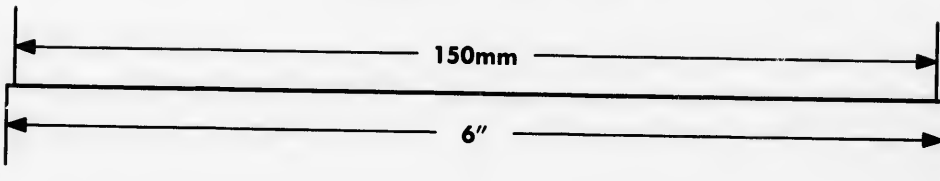
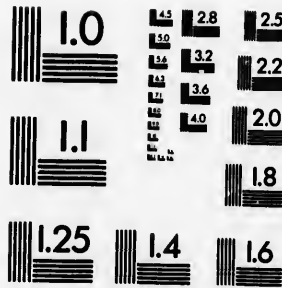
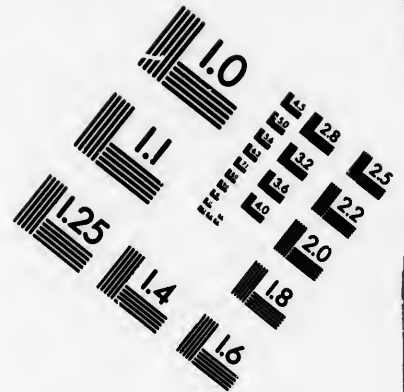
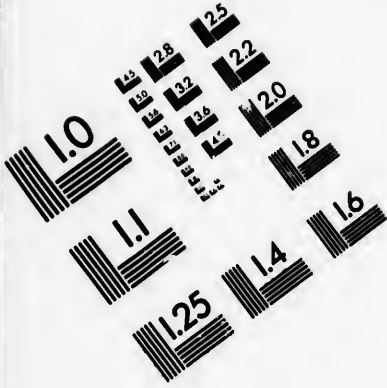
Difficulties about Historic Facts. 173

and of hell. Outward things were just the images seen in a mirror—not the realities, but only representations of the realities. And so everything in Palestine was a shadow, a type, a semblance, a prophecy of some moral fact, a representation of some deep religious idea. Each object was bursting with moral meanings, and the whole world was alive with God's thoughts revealed unto man through temporal objects.

This religious idealism shows itself in all the Old Testament story. The biblical history is unlike every other on this very account. Says Stanley: "Every incident and every word of a narrative is fraught with a double meaning, and earthly and spiritual things are put over against each other—hardly to be seen in the English version, but in the original clearly intended." Take the promise on the strength of which the Hebrews went out of Egypt and became a nation. It reads, literally rendered, that they should come to "a land of rest." To us there would be just this meaning: that after being vexed in slavery they should come to a land where there was no taskmaster. But that was the very least of all the things which it meant to them. The physical was the mere alphabet for the spiritual idea. So, to a child, the mere letters of the word

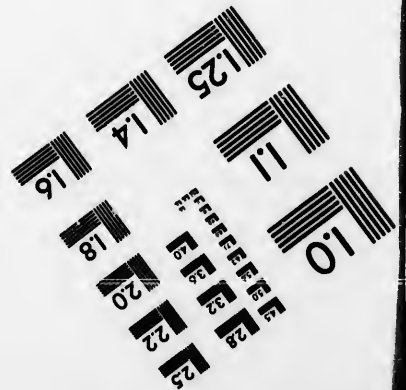


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"men" take the attention. He says to himself that the first letter has three lines with curves, and so it is "m;" that the letter curved at the top is "e;" and the last with two lines and curves in it is "n;" and that all together they spell the word "men." But a full grown man, seeing that word on the page, does not stop upon the letters as letters, still less upon the word as a word. There is a *thought* in it for him. He grasps at once the idea of a broad race of mankind, with unity in their diversity, with their social, their political, their moral relations.

The ancient Hebrew went through no lengthened process of logical deduction. No idea had he of reasoning by analogy. He did the thing instinctively. He did not set up the outward object and extract laboriously the metaphor, and then mechanically apply it to moral truths. To him the two were one. If either led it was the spiritual.*

* In this fact may be found the removal of a difficulty which some have felt as to "Solomon's Song." It has seemed to them too *sensuous*, as it sets forth the ecstasy of religious feeling under the allegory of a bride and a bridegroom. It may be too warm for our cooler and Occidental tastes. But the Bible is for the Eastern as well as the Western nations. A distinguished English orientalist has declared that, whereas once the book of "Solomon's Song" was to him a great trial on the ground above named, his residence in the East, and his

And when Moses gave the promise of "a land of rest," every Hebrew mind went backward to "God's rest," at the close of creation, and took up the idea of "Sabbath rest," that is, of heaven itself, the serene abode of God. Nor backward only, but forward the word carried every one of them. "Rest" was not to them simply a state of bodily repose. The word was broad enough to denote God's smile, favour, blessing, in every form of political and spiritual enjoyment. It meant to them the best of earth and the best of heaven. They seized on the moral idea of the physical fact. And this was their great characteristic as a race, and the leading element of that national feeling which fitted them to be a peculiar people.

And here is the answer to the question pressed so often upon the young man who keeps his faith in the Bible, as to why such prominence is given to the Hebrew history. God selected the best instrument for his purpose. The plan of revealing himself through men once chosen, this was the race foremost in moral capacity; the nation who, not only by inheriting the traditions of the best

notice of the fact that the religious ideas of the people found constant expression through nuptial figures, had removed from his mind all his former feeling.

ancestry, but by their natural constitution of mind, were best fitted to do his work in this thing.

And there was also to be a distinct moral lesson in the *development* of the Hebrew nation. Born in the wilderness, the nation had a unique training for their mission. Nothing like it before or since in human history. The escaped tribes go out of Egypt under circumstances without a parallel, and for a journey that was as singular as was their mission peculiar. Why that long journey of forty weary years? Some will hasten to say that it was for the sins of the people. But the sins usually named as the reason for this journey were not committed until after the journey had begun, and there were indications at the outset that the journey was to be long, tedious, and difficult. The course taken at the very commencement led them away from Palestine. The Land of Promise was but a little distance, had they gone in the direct way. There were fewer obstacles. They would have met no foes. Most of the brief journey would have been through a region of country desolate enough now, but then watered by "the river of Egypt," and connected by a grand system of canals with the Mediterranean. Had they taken this, the natural and direct course, forty days,

instead of forty years, would have sufficed for the journey. But they go away south-east towards the desert, rather than up north-east towards the fruitful plains of Southern Palestine.

There is a reason for this thing. May it not be found in the *teaching* God would give that people? He would leave such a stamp upon that race, by his communications to them in this wilderness, that all through human history they should be "a peculiar people." Such laws he would impose upon them that no contact with any other race should ever entirely obliterate the impression. Left in Egypt, this teaching could not have been given. No more could it had they gone at once into Palestine. They must be separated from heathen nations for a time. They must be under direct tuition. On the one hand, they must be purged from the defilement of Egyptian ideas; on the other, special revelations must be given, and special discipline be received. The wilderness was their university, and God was their teacher. They were to cease to be tribes and become a nation. It was their period of childhood,—the period when what is learned abides, when a single year tells on a lifetime.

The most magnificent ritual the world ever saw

was introduced, every rite of which was eloquent with the truths of the coming gospel. New ideas as to God, his holiness, his justice, and his mercy were put before this people. Every minutest thing, even down to the fringe on a priest's garment, was significant; while the grand feasts and festivals, the appointed sacrifices, the more marked celebrations of the nation, were intended to make them acquainted with ideas to which all other Oriental nations were utter strangers. Nor by laws alone, but by providences often miraculous, did God give them teaching. But the providences would have been of little worth for this end aside from the laws. Ordinary and extraordinary observances, days of atonement and of passover and years of jubilee, all were to make them familiar with the root-ideas of the gospel time. It was designed to indoctrinate a people in religion as never before. They were to be directly trained of God, with no contamination from any surrounding nation. Taught of heaven, apart from all that could hinder the force of that teaching, and under the most favourable circumstances for that end that can be imagined, they spent those years in the wilderness.

And this teaching was not alone for the Hebrew nation. It was the human race that was in the eye

of God. The tuition of the wilderness was to be written out. It was to be a story for the world's study. And so it has been. For Mahometan and Jew and Christian alike have pondered it. Thousands who know nothing of general history know of the wilderness wandering. Thousands who could not give a connected story of the battles of their own land, can tell of the battle-fields and camping stations of the Hebrew host on the way from Egypt to Canaan. And when any young man is pressed with the objection that "too much space is occupied in the Bible by the story of an old race which has now lost its importance in human history," let him be ready to reply that such an objection shows not only narrowness of view, but an entire mistake as to God's plan of using that Hebrew race in their historical development as the medium of his revelation to mankind. Seen in its true relation, seen as an intentional lesson-paper for the world, the old story of that peculiar nationality is not a Hebrew idyl, nor a scrap of antiquity to be preserved by those curious and careful about the olden time. It is for us as well as for them—a thing of to-day in meaning, though of yesterday in fact. Its minuteness is not trivial, but intentionally careful. Its incidents are not accidents, but they

are put into the record to be pondered, as they have actually been, by the most thoughtful and advanced souls of the race in their search after God's will.

Nor, again, can we overlook the *geographical* position of this Hebrew race. The land of Canaan stood out fronting other lands. It was a part of Asia, and yet was separated from it by a distinct geological formation that is without a parallel on the globe. In some convulsion of the crust of the earth, there has been formed a depression running north and south, so that the great Jordan valley lies a thousand feet, in some places, below the Mediterranean, thus cutting off Palestine from its own continent and thrusting it forth into the presence of the world. Along its eastern shore stretched the "great and wide sea," the Mediterranean, with its Joppa the oldest, and its Tyre the grandest, seaport of the ancient civilization. Waves that washed Europe on the one side and Africa on the other came dashing in upon the long sea-beaches of Palestine. It was central to the commerce of the world. It invited the ships of every clime to bring their treasures for exchange upon those fruitful shores. That grand old sea gives us the means of making accurate the division

between ancient and modern history. For if modern history is the history of lands washed by the hoarse surges of the stormy Atlantic, then we may define ancient history as the history of the lands washed by the white surges of the blue and beautiful Mediterranean. But if Palestine stood fronting the sea and inviting its commerce, no less was the situation propitious on the landward view. If ships brought commerce over the sunlit waves of the Mediterranean to her western coasts, the caravan, rich in treasures, on its way from Arabia and the lands of the more distant Orient, must pass through her eastern gates, and over the Jordan valley and up and into Palestine, on its way to the wealthy cities of Symrna and Ephesus in Asia Minor.

So, too, on the south lay Egypt, the most fertile land on earth; and north lay Assyria and Babylonia, prodigal of gold and gems, boasting of mineral as Egypt of agricultural wealth. In the rivalries of trade or the fiercer rivalries of war, this land of Palestine was directly on the highway between the two. None could pass east of it, for there was the pathless desert. They must go directly through for trade. They must march their armies directly across the plains in time of war. In days of peace—and Solomon saw that “the empire was peace”

—the heaviest tolls might be exacted and were gladly paid. Hence the immense revenues of Solomon. Hence the riches that built the Jerusalem temple. In time of war—and this was nearly all the time—between the vast northern power and the vast southern kingdom, it was policy in the Jewish nation to take part with neither, but to furnish, at a regular commercial price, supplies to both. So that, in a strict neutrality in war, and in a careful trade with the contestants, the advantages to them were nearly as great as those of peace. The great cities were back upon the spine of hills which runs up and down the land. And the Egyptian armies seeking their Assyrian foe, or the Assyrian hosts seeking their hereditary enemy of Egypt, always attempted to pass at the foot of these hills and between them and the sea. There were two plains along the sea-shore, varying from one to twenty-five miles in width, and thrice that length from north to south. Both of them led into a vast valley-plain of twenty by thirty miles running directly across the country from east to west, the great plain of Esdraelon, the battle-field of the world. On this field armies of every ancient and of nearly every modern nation have met in deadly conflict. It has been trod by Babylonian armies

under Nebuchadnezzar, by Assyrian armies under Sennacherib, by Jewish armies under Gideon and Saul, by Egyptian hosts under Necho, by Moslem hordes under Saladin, by crusaders from Spain and Portugal, from Germany and Italy, by English troops under Smith, and, less than a hundred years ago, by Frenchmen carrying the imperial eagles under the personal leadership of Napoleon I. of France. The world's history has been written in blood on this plain of Esdraelon in Palestine. Those great conquerors whose disastrous fame has filled up with sickening fulness the records of human history have all seen that Palestine was geographically the pivot of empire, and that the Esdraelon plain was the great field the winning or the losing of which carried with it all they hoped or all they feared. To this plain they have come either in person or by their armies. Here came the Persian Cyrus, the man whose rise to power is the most wonderful exploit in history; that Nebuchadnezzar who, when he died, left behind him "more buildings reared by his hands than any man who ever stood on this planet;" that Macedonian conqueror who wept for other worlds to subdue; that Roman Cæsar who by his vast hordes overran Palestine, giving imperial names to her cities and to her

beautiful inland sea ; that Richard of England whose fame is world wide ; that Godfrey, at once the pride of Europe and the boast of his own France ; that great Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, whose ashes are buried in the ruins of the old Christian temple at Tyre, near by this plain where he fought so nobly ;—these are some of the men who have seen in Palestine the very central spot of geographical position, the possession of which in their day was essential to their plans of empire.

And when any young man hears a sneer thrown at Palestine, as if it were never of any importance, as if it had always been an out-of-the-way land, and had no right to such an eminence in the Bible, let him recall the fact that it has been coveted more than the gold of Ophir and the mines of Golconda by the great conquerors, statesmen, and rulers of the world. And instead of heeding the sneer, let him pity the man whose knowledge of the history of the human race leads him to undervalue the importance of the land which geographically was the most important land of any on earth to the older nations. Let him recall also the fact that when the older nations faded out and their lands were occupied by newer peoples, there was still the same ambition to possess Palestine. Assyria and Egypt, broken and retired

from the stage, there arose west of Palestine two empires, one that of Greece, the other that of Rome. Both coveted the East, the far East. Between them and that far east stood Palestine. It was necessary to their project of universal empire to gain a foothold in Palestine and make it their base of operations. They came, a vast host, marching across Asia Minor, and whitening the Mediterranean with their vast fleets of transports. They effected a landing in Palestine. But when they attempted to advance inward, they were met by the hosts of the far East, who swarmed in upon the plain of Esdraelon from over the Jordan and gave them battle. In a hundred fights the Greek and the Roman had a sort of success. They occupied, partially, and for a very brief time, the country, holding it in military duress. But in the end both were routed and retired discomfited from the land. They had dashed against this rock, and their dreams of universal empire were rudely broken. And then, too, when other centuries had come and gone, and the Holy Land was the possession of the Moslem of the East, there went forth a cry through the West of lamentation because the Crescent instead of the Cross held Jerusalem. The cry of lamentation became one of angry warfare, and the crusades were organized. It

was the whole West warring against the whole East. It was a continent rising against a continent for the possession of a strip of land not larger than the State of New Hampshire, but which had been for long centuries not only the best known but also the most coveted land on earth. The last blow ever struck by the crusaders was vainly given on a little eminence of the Esdraelon plain, a few hundred feet only from the spot where Jesus uttered the "Sermon on the Mount." And from that hour the victory of the East has been secured, and the Moslem has held Palestine in his merciless grasp. And as with religious wars, so with those prompted purely by ambition. Napoleon, in the fulness of his lust for power, craved the mastery of the East. He saw the worth of Palestine as the only possible base for further conquests. And he must try his hand at the task, only to find his dream of eastern empire melt away on these shores, where others before him had met a similar fate.

And thus God's choice of Palestine as a home for his people, as a place second to none in all the old world in its geographical importance, has been endorsed by the world's statesmen and warriors. It was no secluded spot. It fronted the continents. It took the eye of the world. All done there was

done for the gaze of the race. And God's wisdom selected not only the people so keenly receptive of moral ideas, but the land for them to inhabit, that his purpose might be accomplished of giving to the race through them, as they dwelt in this central position, a revelation of his will.

The *historic* position of the Hebrew race in their home at Palestine is worthy of study, as showing another feature of God's plan. There were centuries before them. There have been centuries after them. But had they appeared sooner or later in the calendar of historic time, they would have utterly failed in their mission. Back of them were the two great historic peoples of Babylonia and Egypt, but both were waning when the Hebrews appeared. After them the Romans were the world's masters. Parallel with them was the Assyrian empire in the days of its strength. A few centuries earlier the documents of Moses would have been impossible. A few centuries later the necessary tuition of the Hebrews in the arts of Egypt could not have been had. Their geographical position was not more striking, as they fronted the continents, than was their historical position as they stood conspicuous in the world's thought. They took from the wisdom of

Egypt all that was valuable, just as Plato took his philosophy from the old city of On near the banks of the Nile. But Plato and the Greeks developed what they took in one way, and Moses and the Hebrew hosts in another. From Egypt came ideas of agriculture and the arts of embroidery and of letters for writing; the knowledge of astronomy by which the Hebrews fixed their numerous festivals, and the history by which Egypt became the second, as Palestine the first, of the Sacred Lands. And they left behind them in Egypt a moral impression, which was, in part at least, a revival of the more ancient Egyptian faith in the eternity of God and the immortality of man. From Pharaoh's reluctant lips they forced a confession of partial faith in Jehovah as God. When settled in Palestine, their distinct belief was known to all the nations, and obtained respectful recognition. Hiram, king of Tyre, a hundred miles from Jerusalem, sent workmen to Solomon to assist in building the Temple on Moriah. Cyrus gave a decree which shows that Hebrew ideas had penetrated the Persian mind, and that the enslaved race were masters in the realm of ideas of their captors. And so, in war and in peace, in victory and in captivity, now by voluntary and now again by involuntary teaching, the Hebrew

ideas were slowly but surely working their way among the nations, and thus carrying forward the divine plan. And as God was ordering their historic position, so he was arranging the nations to receive the influence they were to exert. Parallel with them, during an important part of their history, was the Medo-Persian power, under which flourished those sects nearest in religious belief to the Hebrews of any known to history. One of them, the world-famed "Magi," sent its deputation to Palestine at the birth of Christ. And when Jewish history culminated in the advent of Jesus, God had ready the one great empire of Rome, then the mistress of the world. Thus it was that the unity of peoples in one sovereignty made them, willing or unwilling, God's messengers to spread speedily the story of the cross over the inhabited earth.

And here, too, we find the reason for those peculiar *incidents* which appear in the Scriptures. These incidents are intended to be *object-lessons*. Mere words would be forgotten. But facts with a moral meaning in them would be remembered. We cannot imagine any better way, or, indeed, any other way, in which God could teach the primitive tribes and nations. A fact, a striking occurrence, a phenomenon singularly unlike any other, which

these olden nations would at once connect with the finger of God, was surely the most impressive, most natural form of moral teaching, and the one most to be expected. If Hebrew history were without its examples of striking incidents used as divine object-lessons, we should have wondered at it. Their absence would try our faith more than their presence. To a people apt in receiving this kind of teaching, God gave these object-lessons; and the fact that they were accepted so readily confirms our faith in the wisdom that selected the method.

Take the story of the first man's first sin. The whole series of circumstances seems to be contrived for their moral impression. No need, so far as man's actual fall was concerned, of the events which took place in the garden, of the serpent's agency, of the sword at the gate. But the occurrences were to be for the world's teaching. The garden not only does symbolize, but was intended, as we know by Christ's use of the word Paradise, to symbolize the state of happy holiness, the fulness of which is heaven. And sin was to be made loathsome and foul; and temptation to be seen as stealthy and mean, a crouching serpent, with slimy tongue and insinuating motion and beautiful form, to charm and

then destroy men. And the historic fact of Satan's temptation through words that seemed not his own but the serpent's words, is not only named by our Lord long centuries afterward, but the moral teaching of it is enforced by him when he says, "Ye are of your father the devil. He was a *liar* from the beginning." The whole series of facts was to be rehearsed in the earliest centuries by the patriarchs, and thus handed down through the generations, until written language came to the rescue of an oral tradition, and Moses must put the story on the imperishable pages of Revelation.

And the flood is in the same line of object-teaching. It taught the world of the sin of attempting to do without God. And no less was the deliverance given to Noah a designed instance of palpable teaching. For it has so stamped our whole mode of thought, that, in the religious language of the world, *the ark* is the symbol of salvation. So, too, we can understand the overthrow of Sodom only when we see it as God's teaching of retribution. In the pathway of the great caravans, on the world's broadest highway, situated where its destruction would be as conspicuous as its wickedness had been notorious, sure to be the theme of remark as an example of divine

wrath in its singular overthrow, in its doom first by fire and next by burial in the sea, the mists of which are a perpetual reminder of the "smoke of her torment," that old city, living in story, though long dead in fact, has stood out on the sacred page as a solemn warning, the lurid light of which has caught the eye and alarmed the wickedness of all generations of men. And, in after ages, the deserved destruction of the wicked Canaanites who were usurpers in Palestine, who had abundant opportunity to repent and to leave the land, but who made the approach of the Israelites a pretext for a war in direct defence of idolatry—this destruction, so often condemned, is to be seen in the same light. It is no isolated event to be judged by ordinary rules. The nations that then existed and that were to be born needed to understand that denying God and attempting to thwart his will was sure to bring ruin. And so, all through the prophets, we hear those iron-tongued men ring out the threat that, as God destroyed the nations in Canaan, so he would destroy the Jews if they walked not in his ways.¹

¹ As to psalms which contain prayers for the destruction of David's enemies, it must be remembered that he was not a private man, wishing for private vengeance, but a king, and as such the rightful head of authority and the executive, whose

But probably the incident in the Bible which the young man will hear most earnestly denounced is that concerning the proposed sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Though the act was not done, and was not intended to be done, yet there stands the command. The objector urges that such a command, though God intended at the last moment to stay the fatal knife, must have been an outrage on the moral sense of Abraham and of the whole world; that it seems a blur upon the moral character of God himself for him to order the death of a child at a father's hands. It is true that the popular answer vindicates God from blame. It is true that we are to look at the "whole transaction, the command and the counter-command; and that Abraham afterwards saw the scope and compass of it, which cleared up every difficulty."¹ But is it enough that we simply clear God and his servant Abraham from blame? This would leave the matter in its negative aspect. It would perhaps excuse, but would it duty it was to punish evil-doers. And, above all, he was, before the surrounding nations, the representative of the Jehovah worship. Hence the enmity of idolatrous princes was directed not only against his throne, but against his God and his religion. See the fifty-eighth Psalm, where we have in the eleventh verse an explanation of the malediction in the tenth verse.

¹ "Moral Difficulties of the Bible."—*Hessey*.

justify the transaction? Nor does it tell us the deep reason for this command, so unusual; nor does it give us any hint as to why the story is so prominently recorded in God's Word. There must have been some great reason, lying back of all this, for allowing such a transaction as the attempted offering of a son in human sacrifice by the hand of a father who was the most righteous of all men in his day.

Now, what if we have here *God's object-lesson in redemption*—the "preaching of the gospel"? What if the full justification of the transaction, not only to the patriarch's moral sense, but to that of the whole world, is to be found in that which it was intended to teach men of God's love in its method of saving them by the sacrifice of the only-begotten Son? Put it thus: There had come to Adam, in the garden, the primal promise, hard after the primal sin. It was no general declaration of a redemption, but the special promise of a Redeemer. This promised Redeemer was the one object of all the ancient faith. The belief in his coming was the one article in the creed of the "youthful world's grey fathers." Further on in history, the mass of the race had lost out the belief in the promise, and so were doing "only evil."

God sent Noah, who, in the very form of deliverance granted his household, preached the gospel in a figure—the ark being not only a type of salvation, but of its method by special divine interference for those who believe and obey. Years go by. The faith in the promise is again almost lost. There is needed once more—this time for all the centuries—a *great palpable object-lesson* that shall stand up and out and take the eye of the world. But who should give this lesson if not this man Abraham, “the father of the faithful”? He was to set the world a lesson of human faith in obeying a divine command. Why not also a lesson as to the Divine Fatherhood, as it was to show itself in making sacrifice for human redemption? Can any other way be imagined so awful, so tender, so impressive, as that of a father giving up his only son? Now, what if God, the atoning idea ever present in his thought and ever craving expression, took this man Abraham, as it were, at his word? What if he appoints to him such a lofty proclamation of this fact as was allotted to no other “preacher of righteousness”? Abraham shall, in a sense, represent God. He shall show what God’s love is like. He shall help prepare the world for the Calvary scene. Through this father’s devotion of his son to death, and through

his receiving of Isaac "from the dead, from whence he received him in a figure," there was set forth, as nearly as could be done by any human transaction, the great fact of God's gift of the Divine Son to die and to rise from the grave for human redemption. And so this whole scene is to be judged not at all by our ordinary rules of moral judgment as to right and wrong. And if we fail to see how, as a merely human transaction, we can quite justify it, we are happily delivered from all difficulty when we see in it a divinely-ordained setting forth of the great redemptive fact. That it has been looked upon generally through the Christian centuries as our greatest illustration of that fact, is no small evidence that it was *intended* so to be regarded by God. And thus it was a prophetic scene, a great objective *representation* to those who lived before the Messiah's day. Only thus can we understand this transaction, or justify it, or admire it. The Messianic idea is the key to many an event in the Old Testament. And nowhere do we more need it, and nowhere, when seen, is it more instructive, than in this great object-lesson of redemption which is here furnished to the world.

And a young man's difficulties are removed and his faith is established by noticing what may be

called the *timing* of the miracles and "wonderful works" of the Scriptures. This thing grows on one who studies the volume. The miracles are no longer a confused jumble of strange events. Each takes its place—its *own* place—and it is seen that it could not have come in at any other time. No two of these miracles can change places. The flood does its work at its own epoch. Abraham's attempted sacrifice is the event for that hour, and for no other. No Old Testament miracle could have occurred in New Testament times. Those that appear somewhat alike are so only in appearance. The New Testament miracles are exactly ordered as to the point when they occurred. They are progressive. The "raising of Lazarus" could not change places with the "turning of the water into wine," except by an entire destruction, not only of the Gospel story, but also of the harmony of Christ's own character. He could not, being the Christ he is, have inverted this order, if he would be understood by men. Embosomed in a family known only in the social circles of a Galilean province, it was exactly fit that his first miracle should be the *consecration of domestic life*. But the grand resurrection miracle was best done near Jerusalem, just when all teaching and all miracle were culminating at the close of his ministry.

And this element of time is to be noticed in an event mid-way between the two just named—the transfiguration. It grew out of a want that did not exist either at the outset or at the close of Christ's earthly life. It was needed alike by the state of mind in which the immediate disciples found themselves, and of the scheme of his own life as shown by what preceded and followed the event. He had just told them of his coming death. It surprised them more than all his miracles. Eight long weary days they pondered the strange fact, so unlikely if he were really "the Christ." He told them that they might also have to lay down their own lives. They think of him as failing, of his mission as ending in defeat, and of their own utter loss as those embarked in a ruined cause. Never was their faith so low. In this condition they fail utterly to do the mighty works they had performed so easily a month before. He takes a part of them up Tabor, or, it may be, a spur of Hermon. They are weak in faith in him as "the one sent of God." But in the Tabor manifestation they see at once *who Christ is!* The heavenly glory is about him. They can doubt no more. The conversation of the denizens of the other world is about that death which these disciples thought so shameful, but which now is so

glorious. Their faith needed a palpable object-lesson. Tabor gives it. They accept his death, perhaps also their own, as an event connected with the eternal glory. And how much the transfiguration meant to the world at large as the completion of its idea of Christ! He had shown his power over nature in stilling the tempest, in feeding the hungry thousands; over man's body by healing his diseases, by giving sight to the blind and tongues to the dumb; over man's soul by forgiving sins; over the lower world of evil spirits by casting out demons from those who had been allowed to receive that peculiar visitation. But there remained one other department in which there was need that he should show his sovereignty. Had he power over the world of holy souls? Was heaven also allegiant to him? Would it acknowledge him? Would those who do God's will in the highest places of the universe, the most select spirits, come at *his* bidding, as demons had gone at his command? See! The heavens open. Moses, the greatest of lawgivers, and Elias, the greatest of prophets, who for centuries had been serving in heaven, *came at his word!* When works are done that show power over nature, the world thinks, though incorrectly, of physical might. When works are done that show power over

the world of evil souls, men can say that Satan has them in allegiance. But none save God himself can command the allegiance of the holy and have them obey. More striking was the Bethany miracle. More impressive to the general sense of the world was the resurrection of our Lord himself. But no event of all his eventful life so exhibits his power, his majesty, his glory, as does this obedience of the souls so long disembodied, so long serving in the interior service of heaven—the souls standing nearest the Great White Throne.

And it will help a young man's faith if he will see the *setting* of these miracles and these wonders in their moral teaching. In the miracles of Jesus this is very evident. The feeding of the five thousand grew out of three things which occurred together at that very point. There was, first, the multitude physically hungry. Ordinarily they could have gone to the city and bought bread. So, too, they were hungry for truth. One of those movements, inexplicable except by the theory that God's spirit sometimes moves peculiarly on men's souls, was in progress. Truth had impressed, but not yet done its whole work in conversion. Should the process be stopped in the soul for want of a few loaves? So, too, there was a lingering doubt about

him in their minds. He meets at once the physical, the intellectual, and the moral want of these men.

And, more, he is shown to the world, when the event goes upon the Gospel page, as the master of nature, able to perfect in an instant its processes; and at the same time, while so great, he is also shown as caring for man's "daily bread." And yet the fitness of miracle to teaching, and of them both to the idea of Christ which the world was to receive, is not more striking in this than in the case of every miracle of the Bible.

And the miracles, especially of Jesus, are not merely accompanied with teaching, but they have *a meaning in themselves*. They are not separate wonders, but orderly facts in the development of Christ's doctrine. Hence their prominence. They stand right out. They strike the eye. They are not only signs and evidences of Christ's authority, but divine object-lessons, to which our Lord appeals. He told men that, if they were doubtful about his words, there were his works. If they did not understand the one they could the other. He did not look upon his miracles as merely physical facts. They had moral relations. And so, too, the apostles regarded them. The resurrection of their Master was

the great miracle—so great that, if true, there could be no objection to the other and lesser miracles which they proclaimed everywhere. It is to them no pretty fable, no beautiful myth. In their way of telling it it was *a fact with a moral meaning*. It carried with itself the whole moral system of Christian facts and doctrines. And when the lesson of each miracle is seen, it is no excrescence to the growth of the fair tree of revelation. Its teaching is the most miraculous thing about any miracle. No miracle was simply a "sign" in the physical world. It was chiefly a "wonder" in the moral realm. The miracles carried with them an eloquence most convincing. Their light went out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. They are stars in the moral heavens that declare the glory of God and show his handiwork.

The miracles have not only moral ends, but they are themselves teachings. There is the marrow of some gospel doctrine in every miracle of Jesus. A miracle is a doctrine incarnate. And the old-time miracles, in the destruction of Sodom, in the crossing of the Red Sea, in the healing by a look at

the lifted serpent, in the descending manna, in the divided Jordan, in the thrown-down walls of Jericho —what are these but God's great object-teachings, even if no word be uttered in explanation ?

And only as one sees the grand setting of these miracles, their place, time, order, purpose, in God's great unfolding of his redemptive plan, do these things that, all alone, to merely the philosophic or scientific eye, appear like blemishes, become beauties; these hindrances helps; these difficulties of faith its best arguments and supports. The keystone of the arch standing alone would be an impossibility. But then it does not stand alone. It is to be seen in its place with other stones. And in the temple of God's revealed will these miracles are no hindrance to the use, and no excrescence upon the beauty, of the structure, when one shall rightly come to see and to hear and to worship with reverent heart. They have their place. There would be here a weakened arch and there an unfilled niche without them. Not one can be spared. There is no blemish as of a single useless thing. Nothing can be added without harm, nothing taken away without loss. Each thing was in the plan of the structure as drawn by the architect. And the archi-

52
234 *Difficulties about Historic Facts.*

tect and the builder were one. So that each thing adds in its own way to the strength or to the beauty of the edifice which God has reared. It is a structure, the foundation of which is his truth, and its top-stone his praise.

THE END.

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