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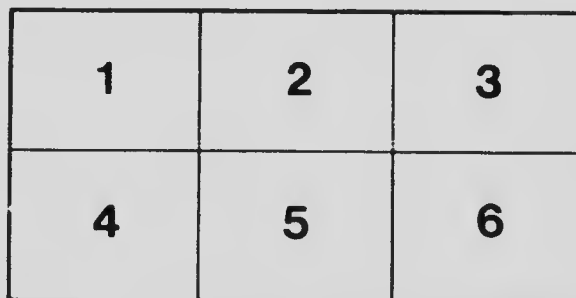
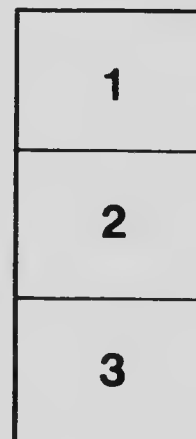
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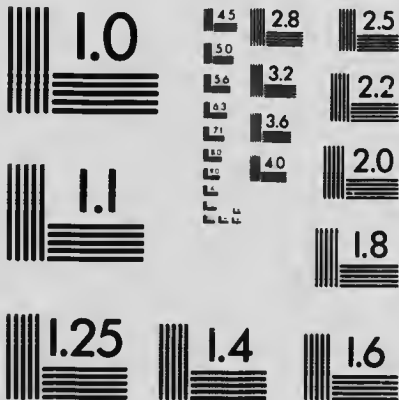
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OF THE BIBLE

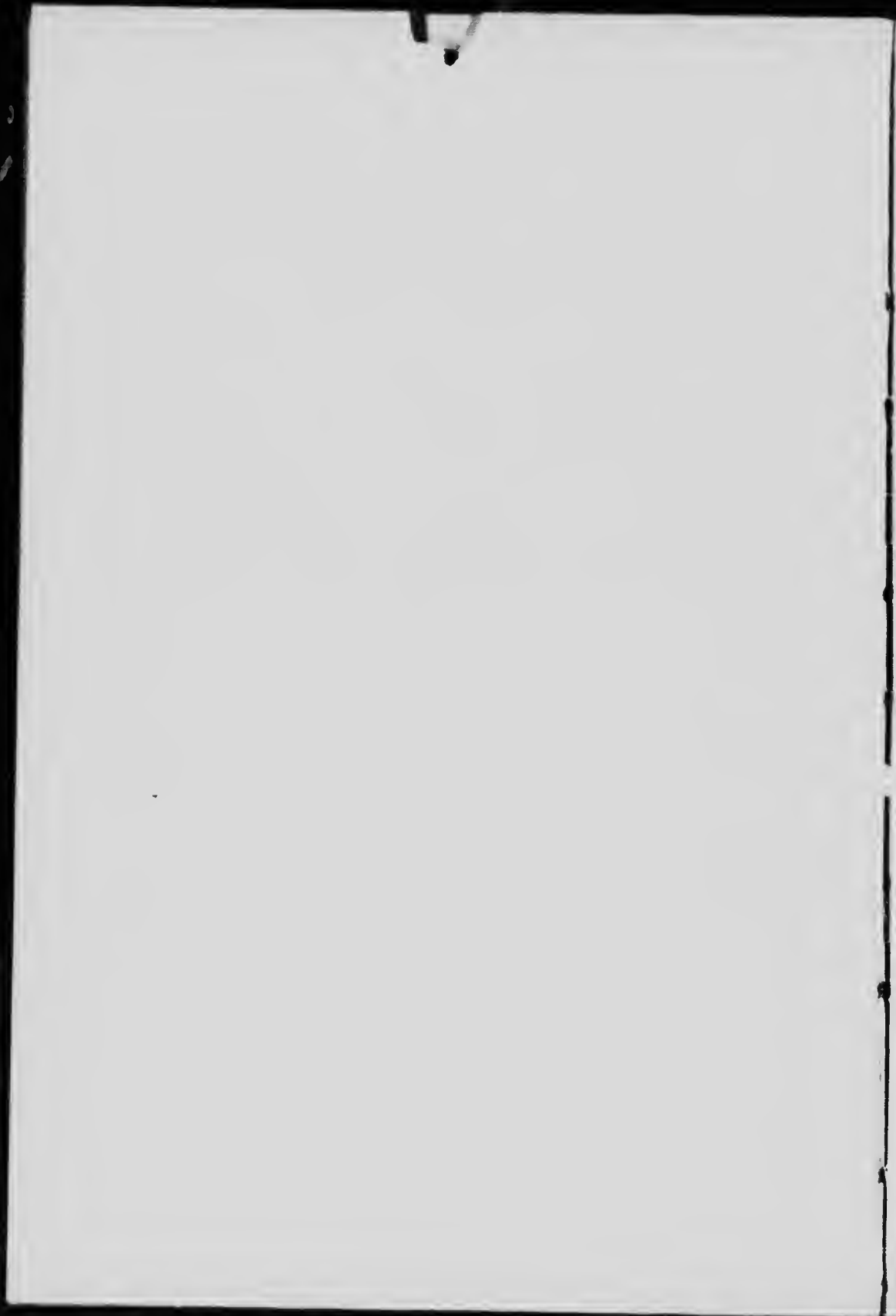
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ORIGIN OF LIGHT AND DEFENCE
OF THE BIBLE



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Origin of Light

AND

Defence of the Bible

BY
CANON REINER, M.A.

Author of "Sermons," (Swan Sonnenschein, 1891)
"Restoration," (Skeffington & Son, 1892)

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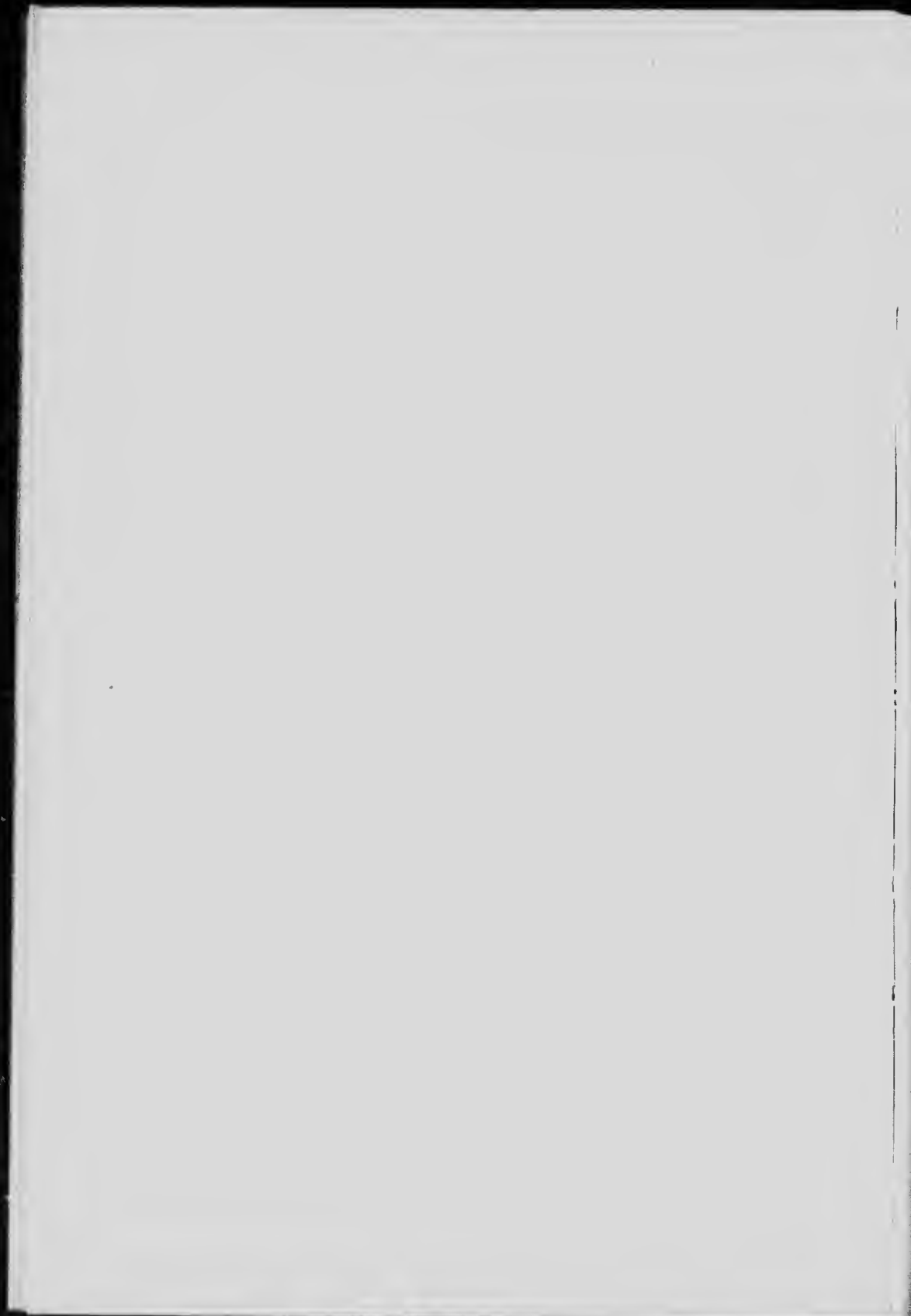


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Origin of Light and Defence of the Bible

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BEFORE approaching or venturing upon any enfolded evidence that may be found written in the pages of the Holy Bible itself vindicating its claim to be the Word of God, it is necessary to remove and lay aside all the aids to vision which invert, magnify, distort or diminish the secret-rayed picture of sacred Truth. These aids to vision are the laborious offspring of human thought and dangling aspiration, beautiful to look upon, difficult to pursue, and dangerous to possess. Their parents by common compact dub them "Science." Pride in the father, and a twinge of caprice in the mother caught at the name and made it stand for all their children.

In those vast realms where "human thought" and "dangling aspiration" never go, their millions bow the head and bend

the knee in gaping awe and blindfold admiration whenever the wonderful "science" children throw the shadows of their gambols across the films of *their* horizon. And so our literature is crammed with scientific advice and scientific writing and thinking, scientific eating and drinking and exercise, scientific play and recreation, how this and that ought to be done, why this and that should not be done, glossing all this over with the contemptuous air of one who knows when speaking or writing to one who does not know. This, of course, is pleasing to the patronizing few—the scientific men—who know so much, and does not generally displease the multitudes who know so little. Indeed they like from time to time to watch and wonder at the shifting scenes and startling changes of attitude that pass before them in the misty regions of scientific thought and writing.

There is, however, wherever we may be in civilized lands, a vast multitude of people, indeed, the sturdy-minded bulk of society, of good solid education, whose combined opinion sways the country more than any other. How does scientific dogma, and liter-

ature affect them? is the question; because from them the general mind is moulded, by them the general course of living is regulated.

In spite of the fact that most "scientific truths" are either paralleled or contradicted by others, the popular mind is nevertheless shaped age by age by what it hears and reads and learns concerning the conclusions of eminent men of science.

These conclusions are never such. They are always one-sided, incomplete, suspicious of or guesses at truth. All honour to those recluses who, with good intention, pass their lives spinning and weaving possible facts into probable theories; but what is to be said of those whose intentions are either nowhere, or misplaced, or hostile to the general good, when casting the sperms and germs of *their* brain-storms into the dancing waters of public opinion? We have the right to differ from them, to dispute with them, to contradict them and to quarrel with them. But we waive our right—we quarrel only with their sheltering name—"Science." This word has no business to exist. It should be banished from our speech, torn and pelted out of our books, and erased

from every dictionary. "Science" indeed! Nothing is known. Or nearly nothing, if that be possible. Call it "Nescience," and our "Savants," "Agnostics," if you will.

Inasmuch as the dicta of some "sciences" either clash with, or throw doubt upon what is written in the Book of Books, it may be well to remind ourselves upon what one or two such "sciences" rest.

The backbone of Astronomy is Gravitation. This law was put forth with some hesitancy by its illustrious discoverer. The cause of it is unknown. It may be true. Newton himself said it was by no means final. It is therefore possible for higher laws to lie concealed which, when found, may throw a wonderful light upon the few words of biblical astronomy. Even the possible possibility of this cancels all cross-ideas between what is written and what has been so far found out.

The only question that Geology can raise is "The antiquity of man," the "days" of Genesis being recurring days, *i.e.*, unlimited epochs of time. Admitting that remains apparently human have been found, antedating Genesis by long intervals, the solution evi-

dently is that they belong to an extinct race, living and dying prior to man, but not human (and not Simian). Adam was the first being on earth with a soul, and he had no ancestor but God. The periods and ages of Geology are of necessity undefined and vague and conflicting even in the minds of its ablest exponents, and therefore have little value when confronted with the terse and authoritative record of our sacred Book.

The study of Mathematics surely ought to be left out when thinking of those studies which from time to time have opposed themselves to what is written. There is, or ought to be, much sympathy here. It is well to remind ourselves that although mathematical truth is for the most part relative truth, it approaches the absolute in some of its aspects. Hence the more reason for a parallel course between its splendid career of analysis and achievement and the Truth absolute as found in the Holy Bible. The most daring and vicious attack ever made upon the Old Testament, with mathematics as its background, occurred some 50 years ago, when a master-craftsman, instigated from below, turned his mind and hand in that direction.

Who now reads Colenso's "The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined"? The book is dead long ago; it died itself out.

And the same fate awaits Darwin's "The Origin of Species." Within two or three generations the festering story will have consumed its own vitals, and the wreckage of Faith that lies upon its bosom be the only weight it carries. As to the ink and paper of the book itself, perhaps a future book-worm may rummage out a dirty copy in some old curiosity shop, and read a page here and there to smile and marvel at the passing credulity of an age, now reposing, which whilst living was the most active and progressive the world has ever seen. No caution can be too cautious when dealing with appearances, or even probabilities. Their deceptive power has given rise to many a proverb, shaking its finger at us all, as we look and listen and feel our way along the strangeness ever in front of us. Some grow weary with the strain of eye and ear and sense, and think to ease themselves by jumping at conclusions. In purely bodily contests such tactics are almost always disas-

trous. The man who wearies with his hands, and losing his temper rushes upon his foe-man, rarely wins the contest. Disaster is almost certain to meet the swordsman who ventures upon the same incautious tactics. This jumping at conclusions seems right at the moment, but evidently is not so. How much more is self-constraint to be practised when the conflict is between mind and mind, first one, then the other, plucking and prodding at the pips and core of that apple of discord that lies between them! There is still a greater folly that can be committed—a mental folly—when the arena of contest is bounded by a man's own brain, and his mind acts and re-acts upon itself; to jump then at conclusions from appearances is very likely to jump the wrong way.

O, these appearances! The sun appears to go round the earth, but it doesn't! Man in some of his aspects appears to be an enlarged monkey, but he isn't!

When dealing with probabilities a wise man is almost as cautious. An indefinitely large number of cases must be supposed and considered before any law can be formulated; and even then, although the theory may be

good and seem perfect, it seldom works well in practice, as many a wise fool at the gaming table knows to his cost! Testing the Bible by this law, it must be taken as a whole, and the very fact of its existence goes a long way to support the probability of its truth. It never could have been imagined or evolved out of mystic contemplation of good and evil, because there is an unbroken thread of history in it. Linked with this chain of history is a single purpose running round it and through it—the life of the coming Christ in the Old Testament to look forward to, the life and sayings and death of Him who came in the New Testament to look back upon. Upon these two grounds alone its probability might rest, but there are many others.

I have now touched upon some of those researches which from time to time dig so deep, so they think, as to undermine all information coming from another and a higher source, but the citadel built upon the Rock of Ages has not yet begun to tremble. It stands on and towers far above the world. It is our link between earth and heaven. That it will continue to stand is made cer-

tain by this fact—that no amount of scholarship in any direction, or of combined scholarship, would venture to propose the cutting out of any book of our Bible. The whole Christian world, rapidly increasing in numbers, standing would shout its “veto”!

Next to learned attacks come those of fiction writers. Some of these are very bold, denying this, substituting that, sneering at the other. Of course they are liable to do great harm among the millions who nowadays bury their minds in novel reading. Beautiful as this craft has been during the last 50 years, and still is, though it has passed its zenith, it merely represents private opinion, or a very loose phase of popular opinion, and so what it makes its puppets do or say is not likely to cut deep either in the domains of sociology, morals, or religion. And the same may be said of the stage. Both of these sometimes go out of their way to have a fling at Christianity, or draw their plots to picture Mohammed and Buddha as rivals of Christ.

Before approaching the Bible itself to open its pages that they may speak for themselves, though a glance may be taken at the opening chapter of Genesis, I purpose in the following


essay to write down a few thoughts as to Light and Sympathy, both of which bear upon my subject of the validity and integrity of our written revelation.

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CHAPTER II

LIGHT AND SYMPATHY

N opening the Bible a serious and apparently hopeless difficulty faces us immediately. It certainly reads, as far as the words go, that God made light before He made the sun. This difficulty is now so worn and hackneyed that one seldom sees it in print, though you may rub against it from time to time in out-of-the-way corners where men assemble to ask questions in a serious way, or else to cavil at and denounce everything, from the lord of the land and his officers and government to the Lord of the Universe and His Church and religion. It is a legitimate objection. No amount of quibbling and juggling with words, no amount of theological ingenuity wonderful as it sometimes is, no amount of direct or indirect thinking can get over it. First came light, then the sun. The Bible says so. Is there any way out? Certainly. First, if we wish to get perhaps as near as

we can to the meaning of words, we read the Revised Version of the Bible instead of the Old Version, which is full of inaccurate translations. Here we notice that the catalogue reads "one day," "*a* second day," "*a* third day," "*a* fourth day," "*a* fifth day," and finally, when man came forth from the finger of God, "THE sixth day." The order of succession, therefore, of the five days, if not positively interchangeable, is not so strictly preserved as the absolute position of the sixth wherein man first appeared, to be succeeded by the seventh, wherein mankind is still living.

Bearing this in mind on the Bible's side, there is a peculiarity or caprice that has always clung to all literature on our side, from the earliest days to the present, that is, of inverting the order of events. So much is this the case, that grammarians have given it a name; they call this figure of speech or writing "*husteronproteron*," which means last first. To give an instance familiar to us all, a supreme and all-sacred instance, we read and speak of "The Death and Passion of our Lord." Putting these two facts coming from both sides together, the

argument is all in favour of a halt in judgment as to whether Revelation declares that light existed before the sun or not.

And now we come to consider that question from another point of view. What is the origin of light? Who can tell us? The cause of it, who knows? Would it be very wonderful if the Bible told us this? The man of science would say, "Yes, it would be very wonderful!" Would it be very wonderful if the suspicions of the writer long entertained were found to be rooted in what is written? Not at all, he would say, the roll of religious "cranks" is increasing every day, and doubtless the writer is one of them. And if he were very condescending he might add—Well, and what is your theory?

Before answering that question, one or two others might be asked. Is there any theory to account for the fact (so astronomers tell us) that the universe holds vast numbers of dark bodies as well as those that can be seen? Is there any theory to account for the fact that a dark body and a light one revolve round a common centre in some of the binary systems of stars, causing periodical eclipse? Let the answer come by in-

ference from the Word of God in its positive meaning—the “and God said.”

When the cosmic time was come that the shapeless earth—“the earth was without form”—was to begin to take its present form, it began to rotate, and the instant it began to rotate Light flashed upon it. Light is due to rotation. Without rotation there is no light. The play of rotation upon the “stress” of ether, which binds and holds the universe together, is the cause of light, whether stellar or planetary. Concerning the latter, I shall venture to say something later.

And now let us turn to that wonderful verse (Gen. i:3): “And God said, let there be light, and there was light,” and (v. 5): “And there was evening and there was morning, one day.” Evening and morning we all know are caused by the earth’s rotation. The first rotation, therefore, brought the light, and the light made the evening and the morning of the first day. The statement is plain, there is no possibility of misunderstanding it. It is a Divine word-picture, without so much as a “hidden detail” in it.

And thus we can understand why dark

bodies exist in space, and some binary systems of stars are composed of a light orb and a dark companion. The dark bodies do not rotate.

Lord Macaulay, in one of his essays, makes the statement that in all the classical authors, both Greek and Latin, there are only two quotations from the Jewish Scriptures, and remarks too, that both of them are quoted erroneously. I do not think he gives the quotations, but he expresses surprise at the fact. Either Lord Macaulay had never read Longinus, or else he did not consider him as coming within the category of classical writers. Longinus quotes this verse from Genesis: "And God said, let there be light, and light was," giving it as an instance of one of his sublimities. An instance! There are no words to measure the Divine omnipotence of its sublimity. It is only paralleled by the three words of the Son of God—"Lazarus, come forth!"

There are, however, other lights than light. Ethereal and mystical as it is, its purpose is the enlightenment of matter. There are at least two other kinds—light for the mind, and light for the soul. The latter

always comes from heaven; mental illumination may possibly have a counter-tension in its struggle for birth and life and sustenance. However, removed from earth there is a watcher with flint and steel who strikes and strikes. His sparks fly and fall, and nearly all go out. But now and then there is a tinder one lights upon, and then comes a smouldering, and a flame and a fire. This is a very old and very subtle process, and where it happens things more lasting than smoke are born. The minds of men, intertwined as they are, are the network spread out to catch what falls, and wherever the spark catches and takes fire, *there* the winged flamings of Intellect rise and fall, and send their beats throughout the empire of solid thought and critical and popular understanding. The meaning of these heavenly sparks is, that some day one will light upon a human mind in sympathy and perfect accord with voices and whisperings from above, and then our inward eyes will see what they had never seen before, we shall become aware that ordinary human life is not so ordinary; this chosen mortal will tell us that there are worlds within and around

us all, wrapt in a mystic veil which can be lifted, latent in cloistered chambers to which keys can be fitted.

Looking backwards at least some 25 hundred years, what points of light dot the centuries one after another with the glow of intellectual brightness! Some swing their lanterns to throw a swathe of light upon the past; others look around them, peering this way and that, hoping to find a way into the future—a few look upward. Some of their names we are taught at school, some we pick up afterwards, but turning the pages of a dictionary of biography would shame most of us to discover our ignorance of many works full of intellectual talent, of many names of men and women who wrote them that we had never heard of. Talent of mind is of course a powerful means of impressing good or bad thoughts upon our reading fellowmen, and thus they filter through the multitude. Speculative thought is perhaps the most delightful, and when it does not clash with Truth coming from the highest source, is often the genesis of what ultimately grows into established fact.

There was a man whose mind was thus

set aglow. He lived and died in one place, with a placid brain and steady pen. To him the ordinary routine of things was not so. It was a combination. All that appeared around us was the combined result of our vision and the things themselves, and had our powers of vision and perception been other than they are, we should be living in a world very different from what we now suppose it to be. Out of this he evolved a scheme, a veritable Colossus, that is studied by all who try to think, and will be to the end. Is he right? Let this thought help us in our criticism. Suppose we had eyes with the penetrating power of radium, what would things look like? Long before Kant, the mystics of the middle ages, and long before them here and there a man, and ancient and modern esoteric Buddhism, and other crafts have peered this way and that into Arcana not meant to be concealed for ever; but Kant gave a new turn to thought and speculation, and worked out step by step a process which by its very hypothesis subverted much that had gone before, and has left much for all who cannot resist the allurements of speculation to ruminate.

The idea that phenomena are the result of double action, is one to be pondered and entertained more than it is. For instance, the origin of light and heat is scarcely explained by any present theory. To suppose that the sun is a stupendous furnace, built and maintained to supply heat and light to a score or so of planets spinning round it, is not a rational hypothesis, however much it may seem to be true. Such an unfathomable waste as this supposes is nowhere else to be found in the workshop of Nature, for what becomes of all the energy hurled into interplanetary space? Lost, is no answer. Because a few miles off there is probably intense darkness and intense cold, "Lost" seems to be the answer, and such an answer surely falsifies the premiss. Ten miles has now been reached, we read, and the cold registered. How far off is the probable darkness, one wonders? But let light and heat be the combined result of a telepathy between the great orb and the small one, and then the "furnace idea" vanishes, and a theory more in accord with modern thought and discovery takes its place.

About a century ago the elder Herschel

said that he had entertained the idea all his life that there are forces other than gravity which are concerned in the construction of the universe, thus agreeing with Newton; it may be we are not far off alighting upon some of these. The mathematical possibility of the existence of space of more than three dimensions has been worked out, but not exhausted.

As a matter of transcendent fact, our Written Record opens and closes with a vista of conditions lying behind and beyond our present consciousness. All that happens between these two epochs, that is, the waiting time of human life, therefore passes with relations out of gear. Because of this, sympathy with our surroundings is wanting. Hence there must be easy workings of which we are ignorant, harmonious sounds that we do not hear, things not seen that ought to be seen, fittings of mental gropings that ought to be solid thought.

And it is just the struggle to overcome the false motion, to stay the jars and jolts, to drown the resultant noise that has ever produced the best that mind in such an uncongenial tumult can produce. This can

only be done by passing into the regions of abstractions. Here, just as with attenuated vapours and gas, the rarer they become the less they are inclined to obey the laws we suppose to rule more solid matter; so here in the regions of abstractions the mind is freer, the noise below is shut off, the mind can be ecstatic and pierce more and more the ether of pure thought, where all the keys are hanging that open the mysteries within and around us. The first of these was absolutely placed in our hands by Christ a long while ago in this very abstract world of which I speak. Religion, faith, hope, charity, prayer, The Way, The Truth, The Life—Himself the Word—are all abstract words and ideas. But these abstractions are the great Realities. In fact, the next higher world, the spiritual, we may suppose to be intensely solid, instead of visionary; and as sympathy makes Life and Light, and controls that which is, so it is also the origin of that other life and light beyond, begotten and nurtured by the all-holy Christian rites, and kept aglow by the words of Jesus Christ. The flowing mystery in which Christianity is clothed trails both heaven and earth, and

is a secret as profound as height and depth can make it. We men see but an attenuated outline of its shadow, and the whole of our written Teaching is scarcely more than a series of hints.

There is, however, a thought which will bear the thinking, and that is, that the stupendous means taken by God to neutralize the sin with which we are affected must be unique and once for all. This being the case, there are only two ways of approaching the "why," to understand it.

One is, that we men are so supreme in God's sight as to be vitally the centre of the universe. The other is, that Evil is here, and here *alone*—all the rest of the universe is free from it. The former of these ideas has been discussed in many ways of late, and is scarcely tenable; the latter (as far as I know) has never before been broached, but it is possible.

The theology of this guess at Truth would be as follows: When Satan was vanquished and cast out of heaven, he and his alighted upon Earth, as one of the most out-of-the-way of God's creations. He is chained here, just as we are. God created Adam with

power scarcely less than angels' for the purpose of completing his overthrow. Adam failed, and God's purpose was foiled for a time. We men are all tainted by what took place in Paradise, and Satan's power instead of being crushed, has greatly increased by the rapid fecundity of our race. Hence God sent His Son to do what Adam was designed to do, and failed. Christ's first coming was for the double purpose of rescuing men, and limiting Satan's power. His second coming will be for the expulsion of the devil and his altogether, and the reception into happiness of those who accepted His Atonement. The bond that chains Satan and his angels here is not gravity, but *sympathy*; as long as the human heart beats in concord with his suggestions Satan *cannot* leave. The ancient possession by legions of devils thus becomes somewhat more intelligible, but with the intervention of the Cross this absolute possession is forbidden.

There is nothing in this outline that contravenes any fact or teaching of orthodox theology, as far as I am aware.

Other worlds than Satan's are here too. There is one that he of old fought against,

still curbing and effacing and opposing, else we men should be worse than we are. I mean the Angel world. This is in sympathy with heaven and in touch with earth; it may be nothing intervenes. Whether Satan is aware of their presence, we do not know. The angels have great power. A good deal is told us in our Sacred Writings about them. More than forty-five thousand angels would have instantly appeared to rescue Christ, had He prayed for them. The last angel probably seen by men brought Peter out of prison. However slight it may now be, there is, nevertheless, a sympathy between us and them. We may more than believe that these two worlds of angels and demons co-exist with us during human life, although the conditions of their being are concealed. Are there others? What of the hosts of the spirits of men? The waiting-place called Hades may not be so far off. Of old forbidden witchcraft, in sympathy with some past spirits, seems to have had the power of communication. The peopling of all sorts of places by all tribes of men with sprites boding good or evil must have had some origin, one would think, especially as chil-

drea take to it so easily, and old people never quite get over it. Call it superstition if you will, but next to Fear, Love and Hate it is perhaps the most natural of all the emotions.

What, again, of the world of life just below us? Is *all* life everlasting? Do these forms of life retain their forms after death, as probably mortals of the human standard do? If so, we live not only in a world of shams, but in a world of forms. This fact or assumption was never before so keenly enquired into by a section of the public all over the world; and this among the thinkers, else it were of no worth. So-called "Occultism," with its ever-increasing volume of literature, is the natural offspring of the many dives into the scarcely known, yet more than suspected, which "Spiritualism" and its votaries have taken, prying into these invisible worlds around us.

Whether pushing these enquiries be lawful or not, does not seem to disturb those who are addicted to them, and certainly does not hinder the following up of one research after another. Appearances, voices, presences, tokens, flittings, sounds, guided hands and writings, we are told follow one

another, invoked by specialists in the work, who 100 years ago would have been indicted for magic or burnt as witches.

One or two things seem fairly well established as up-to-date facts, viz., that there are unseen worlds encircling us, and that material places and objects under certain conditions become imbued with events transpiring in them or around them, and retain these impressions, and can give them forth visibly or audibly when challenged by sympathetic minds. The second of these may be something new, the first is not. The Old Testament Scriptures are studded with examples of belief in and contact with invisible worlds, and the Christian religion in its highest Rite, and throughout its teaching, lives and grows by a like assumption and assurance, especially in the ritual and practices of the Roman and Greek churches.

All this kind of thought is not mere whimsical speculation; it has gone through and passed that stage. Neither is it positive fact: it has not yet reached that over-the-mountains paradise where Fact and Truth are the twin pillars that front and point the entrance to what lies within the Temple of

Omnipotence. It is simply on the way to this—a long way off—and this we call “transmontane,” not ultramontane. If these worlds exist, and we are with them and in the midst of them, it stands to reason that there must be intersections. None of these worlds lie in the same plane; no motion is parallel; there is a libration everywhere. This being the case, there must be not so much points as lines of intersection. And it is just along these lines that “things” occur. We may note, too, that the nearer parallel positions may be, the longer the periods of near contact. There seems to be thus a possibility of occasional closeness, not only for life as a whole in its two divisions of life on this side and life on that, but each thread of life can also have its close counterpart. Of course it is not only possible, but easy to pass through life quite unaware of these proximities—and then the repellent movement comes from both sides. The eating and drinking phase of life is repulsive to that which lies beyond, and full and overflowing mortals turn their backs upon their mystic neighbours; there is and can be no sympathy between them. And

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thus it comes to pass that sometimes a man may be the very football of Fate, kicked to and fro right across the field from one corner to the other, and never be awake enough to know or suspect or learn what is going on.

Possibly the first of a series of revelations as to the virtues of sympathy has lately chained the attention of the world by showing us that when two principles are in unison there is a very subtle and powerful sympathy between them, independent of earthly distance, and perhaps distance itself. Is not wireless telegraphy due to perfect duality and concord? Nature in love with itself is made to speak by sign-language the many tongues of men. Are we getting nearer to the "one language of the immortals?" Perfect duality is everywhere a mystic source; from it spring life and light; things are born of it, some of earth, some not of earth, to die when sympathy itself is dead.

If then we are not alone in our journey, but encompassed by "a great cloud of witnesses," what power of direction have we? Very little deliberate choice is given us. We all go about with a loadstone; some carry it in their pockets, and some in their brain,

and all in their hearts. And wherever with concurrence we fly with something else along the footpath, or by intersection meet it—this thing is ours. A watcher far from earth strikes his flint and steel, his sparks fly, one of them has caught.

These meetings or overtakings, whether in person, thought or sentiment, seem to be haphazard, but the chance about them is more in the missing. Much has been written (especially by Carlyle) about the whirling chaos of things, and were the humdrum unrelieved by points and lines of interest, life for some of us would be very dull—for routine cloy. It is, however, just the open mind of intelligence, ever on the alert to recognize where Light falls and has fallen, that lifts the man who does so out of himself first of all, and then out of that jumble of ill-turned cranks, broken bolts and misplaced gear that makes so much noise, and is doing its doubtful work wherever we may be. Putting on one side now all ideas of social, mental and literary sympathy, the highest and best remains, viz., religious sympathy. It would be altogether useless to attempt any defence of the Bible from any

point of view without being a Christian at heart, because the play of Faith alone can illuminate its pages.

Staggering facts meet us in the Old Testament, staggering doctrines meet us in the New. Left to himself a man will not believe them. The difficulties of the Bible are there on purpose; without them it would be a doubtful Book. From very early times probably every nation outside of the Jewish tribes established its own religion, the priests of which we may suppose told and acted the same series of lies so often, that at last they came to believe them themselves. This, we may remark, is now a feature of social life rather than religious.

The religion of the Jews differed in very many respects from that of any other nation, but still there were points of resemblance. And it is just these points of resemblance that make the real difficulty in proclaiming Judaism and Christianity to be the only heaven-inspired religions upon earth. Outsiders point to these resemblances, and maintain that one is a development from the other, *i.e.*, that Judaism and Christianity are a development of heathenism. A sort

of Darwinism in religion—as false in one case as in the other. How do we know? The Bible settles that point. The Old Testament burns up the idea that Moses got a wonderful power of deception as well as his learning from the wise men and magicians of Egypt. The New Testament in its teaching, from beginning to end, falsifies the blasphemous thoughts which from time to time appear in print that our Blessed Lord derived hypnotic power from the same mystic land. But still these thoughts and others worse float hither and thither. They and all their like can only be quenched by Faith. This is now such a hackneyed word that it does not convey much meaning, though it really means everything in every phase of ideal and actual Christianity.

There is no doubt about it that a heaven-bestowed gift of mental and spiritual sight is necessary to accept as fact and truth the many marvels of our sacred Book. But we Christians believe that this is bestowed on the Christian Church and every member in answer to the faith of asking, *i.e.*, prayer. There is as well a profound intellectual substratum to such an attitude of mind. A

wise man (I forget who) says that "it requires far greater intelligence to believe in miracles than to deny them." A very pithy aphorism! But after all, it is the heart and soul that are the real hosts of all religious messengers, and these are far more to be trusted in their heavenly influence than the loftiest human thought, however serene and beautiful, for they are born not of that mundane dual sympathy which brings life to matter, and brooding upon its other self thoughts to the mind, but of that Divine sympathy which is the author of all spiritual life.

I have no intention of drifting into sermonizing. We all get quite enough of that, but it is necessary to approach sacred things with the mystic functions of our souls prepared to vibrate to their influence. Least of all should our attitude be that of him who with contempt and anger in his heart let the vicious cry escape him, "Oh that mine adversary would write a book!"

From what one reads in periodicals and newspapers and current ephemeral literature the modern world seems pretty well divided into those coarse minds who, feeling

as it were into the heap of jingling gold in their pockets, reject all mysteries, even the mystery of how it got there, and on the other hand, those who want to know too much on the mystic side of things, and are trying to force a kindly heaven to reveal what she thinks it best to conceal. Of course we are born, live and die in a vale of mysteries which none of us can solve, and instead of helping us in this direction, the Bible, I think, only adds to the mysteries. There is, however, a train of palpable mundane fact running right through it, the narrative of events with their date. In the early portions of the Bible these dates are given with rigid exactness, a purpose being in them; not the purpose of one man or a combination of men to deceive, but the purpose of Almighty God to instruct. Later on comes the story or history of the Jewish nation, interspersed with biography and leavened with mysterious words of prophecy from the mouth and writings of men who were in sympathy with heaven. The incredulous world may call this Jewish "folklore" if it pleases. In one sense it is so, but not in *their* sense. It is a record never

to be lost of the doings and sayings of a people selected by God to keep themselves free from the worship of images, and to begin and continue a very symbolical worship of Himself—thus purifying the whole race, as it were, for a Divine purpose. This purpose was that Jesus Christ might ultimately be born of a pure Virgin of their stock.

This is the culminating point of their history. For nearly 2,000 years since that time chaos has ruled them, but they have not lingered on as a separate people without some purpose being in it. Their own writings tell of this purpose in words more or less hidden as to their meaning. If language be given to man to conceal his thoughts, as some cynic or merely listener has said, writing can be easily made to do the same; only it is fixed, it cannot prevaricate as some talkers do. There is a good deal of this concealed writing in the Bible, which therefore is mystic in its character.

In now coming to the direct purpose which forced me as a religious duty to write something in defence of the Bible, when one reads and hears doubts of many kinds thrown upon its pages even, alas, from the pulpit,

I rely for the most part upon internal evidence, and the foundation I select to build something upon is the one word "Continuity." This ought to be a pretty solid base. I hope that what I try to build upon it may not be out of line, however usual or novel the architecture.



CHAPTER III

DEFENCE OF THE BIBLE



O criticize the Bible is an undertaking both arrogant and impious, and one looks around with an uncomfortable feeling to ascertain whether what used to go by the name of reverence exists, or is extinct. Outside of church ritual, which, of course, preserves decency of demeanour, and invites, if not absolutely compels, attention to mind what we are saying and doing in the immediate presence of God—outside of this, where is reverence to be found? “If you mean a certain open-mouthed awe about things, it has gone with the religious fakirism of past ages,” some will tell you, and add with a forced attitude, “that they hope it never will return.” We do not all agree with them about the reason, but the fact remains—old-fashioned reverence has fled! Has the *fear* of God been banished, and a daring indifference as to His very being taken its place?

The breaking down of bars and barriers that used to stand in the way to hold men back when they would venture too near, has something to do with the prevailing lack of reverence; children of course not knowing and not being told that they used to be there.

This same disposition of mind is not confined to the approaches that lead on the way to the Almighty, by which we mean the Christian church and religion, and the wonderful Book that God Himself has handed down to us, but it finds pleasure in pulling down the bars and barriers which Nature itself suggests as proper and decent between man and man—hence the very fences of our private dwellings are taken away, that all the passing world may see what we do and hear what we say.

But to return, I repeat that any criticism of the Bible is arrogance and impiety, and I add that any Defence of the Bible is great presumption. It needs no human apology. As, however, the former exists, Defence becomes a point of honour. Let us hope that both sides may be forgiven.

It is conceded everywhere that the literary

criticism of the last half-century was designed from its methods to be destructive, and that it probably went further in its iconoclastic and tradition-breaking praxis than was at first intended, thus happily showing that our greatest analytical thinkers are but more polished specimens of ourselves, and just as given to hold a loose rein and let galloping Thought run away with them as the youngest quill-driver amongst us.

This is far easier to understand with the sentimental methods of the orator than with the philosophical composure of the life-long student, but it is so apparent, that, but for the well-known perverseness of the animal it sometimes strides, solemn and profound criticism might easily be overcome and dismounted by the gibes and jeers of rustic witticism. The analysis of something visible or tangible, the analysis of past or present thought, the analysis of result and many other analyses commend themselves at once to the mind as its rational exercise; but from the nature of the case analysis of records of long-passed events can be but guesswork. Guesswork as to causes is of course commendable, but guesswork as to events when

one depends upon another is, to say the least of it, dangerous work. This chain-work, this one depending from another, is the irrefragable plummet-line of all revelation; and in the case of the Bible it is a veritable Jacob's ladder, one end rested upon earth and the other piercing the very skies. If there be a flaw anywhere in this chain-work, connection is lost, and such an argument must be cast aside; because patch-work, even by the ablest of human experts, will not do with the "and God said," the Word of God. Jacob's ladder must not even be an extension one. But there is no such flaw and disconnection. Thanks to the pen of the greatest general the world has ever seen, the man who led 3,000,000 people for 40 years through a wilderness and desert, relying upon Heaven for supplies. Thanks to the same hand, guided of Heaven, that wrote the earliest records of our race, we have a beginning told, and a continuity begun that never breaks. There is indeed quite enough in the Pentateuch alone to show that God had not forsaken and did not intend to forsake the race of men.

Judged as a narrative of history and biog-

raphy alone, it is very marvellous. It culminates, I think, in the stupendous scene at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

No mature man could read it for the first time without being altogether disturbed and overcome by what he read. He would put the Book down and say out loud, Is this truth or fiction? If fiction, it is about as deep a literary plot as possible to deceive men, and it surely will not be difficult with a little patience and critical study to find some flaws in it; into these we will ram our powder and soon blow the whole thing to pieces. But if truth be before me and not fiction in these five books of Moses, it is possible, and even probable, that what follows in the writing of the so-called Prophets, and towards the end what they call the New Testament, may also be true.

And looked at with a perfectly frank and open mind, this is just about the position which the Bible, as a history and literary composition, occupies. The Prophets dovetail into the Pentateuch, and the New Testament dovetails into both. With regard first of all to the Old Testament, there are at least two chains running through it which

bar the idea of collusion or fraud. One is a continuous chain of narrative stretching, through a period of several thousand years, back into the mists of primeval man, and forward into the brightness of the Presence of Christ; and the other is a continuous chain of prophecy running parallel with this narrative from the same beginning to the same end.

It is this double chain that, to my mind, is conclusive; and it continues to hold together in spite of all ancient and modern critical attempts to break it.

These two chains of narrative and prophecy girdle around, and are fastened into, the eternal Rock of Ages cleft for all mankind; and then narrative runs on to the end of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, and there it officially ends. A sequence, then, of ten names is given us by Moses, which is an exact chronology, because in every case the father's age on the birth of the son is also given. The eighth of these names is that of Methuselah, who was 243 years old when Adam died, and therefore must have heard him tell all he had to tell many and many a time. Shem was 98 years old when Me-

thuselah died, therefore he must have known him well, and must have heard him relate over and over again all the wonderful things that Adam had told him. Abraham was 52 years old when Shem died, and therefore he certainly knew all the wonderful story that Shem had to tell; and after Abraham comes the Jew with his accurate register for 2,000 years till the Christian era. Thus Christianity rests upon a connected historical foundation, which will not admit of any names or dates being altered. The chain is complete, and no link can be taken out or put in. No so-called religion has anything of the kind.

The chronological world would smile a smile of contempt at such a statement as this. It considers sacred chronology, as it is called, as unreliable and unimportant, and to be altogether thrown aside when compared with the certain data which relics of the past afford.

Considering that the earliest authentic date outside of the Bible is that on a foundation stone dug up in 554 B.C., which is supposed to date back some 3,000 years, does it seem so altogether foolish to take an occasional

look at the biblical record and register of dates, and to indulge an idea that after all there may be some correctness in them in spite of certain discrepancies. There are three sets of biblical chronology—the Jewish, the Samaritan and the Septuagint. From Abraham to Christ they all agree, before that there is a discrepancy of some 600 years in their reckonings.

This latter period is a long while ago, but when archæology can map it out century by century with perfectly sure dates and data, and then go back into the more and more undefined past step by step, age by age, as the Book of Genesis does, then a man who wants the truth and nothing but the truth, would have far more right to waver in his judgment when placing what is written on one side and what has been dug out on the other.

Moses neither wove nor manufactured his dates in any way; there was no reason why he should, and yet they are interwoven in a marvellous manner, as I have just attempted to show.

As a matter of fact, the biblical chronology, instead of being unimportant, has this im-

port—that it is the only time-table in existence. Outside of the Jewish world counting was not one of any nation's characteristics; how far they could count in the higher numbers at all in these remote times is a question, I believe, among those who have studied the subject. Accuracy now and two or three or four thousand years ago has a different meaning, brought about by the developing preciseness of the Western world contrasting more and more with the loose and general chaos that had gone before in the East.

It is evident from the nature of the case that this chronological chain of which I am speaking must be a cast-iron one, and can neither be contracted nor extended, and the period it covers is about 4,000 years.

This, of course, at once confronts us with the side-difficulty that I have just touched upon. Have remains of human work been found which without any doubt date back more than 6,000 years? If they have, or ever are, there are only two ways of reasoning out the matter. Either the continuous narrative of the Bible is a continuous falsehood—which is an impossibility—(not even

the father of lies could have strung together such a dovetailed array of them), or, the supposed relics are the work of beings anterior to Man, but not human.

The "living soul," made of earth and "breathed into" of God, is the highest life of this Seventh Day, which has now possibly passed its meridian; intelligent life, however, may have existed before this in the undefined æons of the previous Days' work, not as ancestors of man, but as predecessors. However, there will be time to theorize when such a buried city, such a relic apparently human, is with certainty pronounced to be seven or eight thousand years old.

The exceedingly weighty words of Christ to Peter on the eve of His Crucifixion, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels? But how then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" are lasting witness to the Divine guidance of the human minds and hands that wrote the Old Testament Scriptures on the one side, and to the Divinity of His all-holy Mission, on the other.

The one long chain of circumstances,

running through a period of some thousands of years, tallies with its end in the circumstances of the Life of Christ. And it is just this tallying that is, I think, the crowning argument which stamps our holy Religion as God's truth, and the Jewish Scriptures as the stepping-stones provided by God to lead up to it. It would have been impossible for a succession of schemers to carry on their fraudulent intentions through such a series of centuries, on the one hand; it would have been impossible for anyone who was not the Christ to play the part of Christ, and thus carry out their schemes, on the other.

Regarded thus (and there is no other way to regard them), the two Testaments of our Holy Bible stand or fall together. If they stand, they are an unique whole, there is nothing like them, and it will not do to hamper God's intentions and break out links in the chain that He Himself has woven by rejecting portions here and there altogether, or drawing the line of specious hypercriticism so fine as almost to destroy the unity and continuity of the Record. And if they fall, they fall together; and the man who

rejects them commits himself by accepting two impossible frauds, one persisted in and made to grow century after century for some 4,000 years, and the other personating a character to complete the fraudulent design, simulating a Christ to help the Prophets of old out of their prophetic difficulties.

Intellectually and logically there is absolutely no way out of this dilemma. The only way out of it is that adopted, surely with good intent, but as surely with evil consequence, by one holding high ecclesiastical office, viz., the plea that "Educated men have at their disposal a means of escape from the perplexities stirred in their minds by reading the Bible." One asks with amazement whether it be Classical, Mathematical or Philosophical study that disposes a man to juggle with his intellect? After listening to the whole gamut of doubtful tones, after veering round the compass of intellectual doubt, many an honest listener and reader and thinker, perhaps with reluctance but with righteous determination, puts most or all aside, and returns after long years—with a placid mind and joyous heart—to the simpler view of things that

early days untarnished by prejudice offered him.

Such an epithet as the Scriptures have taken to themselves is not without its meaning—they are holy—and as such they are not to be tampered or trifled with. Taken as an unique whole, they are, as it were, a sort of symbol of the life and the world to come. St. Paul, the great Jew, was full of this great and beautiful thought, and in his Epistle to his brethren, he elaborates it step by step. The Candlestick, the Table, the Shew-bread, Aaron's rod, the tablets of Commandments written with the Finger of God, the Cherubim, the Holy of Holies, these things, he says, are the patterns or copies of things in the heavens. And as we remember that the directions for their making were given by God Himself, and that they rested first in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in the Temple (which was the Tabernacle made solid in stone), the pages on which this information is stamped partake of their sanctity, and coupled with the idea and fact of continuity they unfold themselves in our minds more and more, and bid us approach and read and think

with all the reverence that is in us, and with all that Heaven may graciously bestow.

Josephus, in writing on these things, tells us that the sacred furniture of the Temple and vestments of the Priests were symbolical of the starry heavens, and he fits them one by one to represent the visible heavenly bodies. St. Paul, a Christian Jew, looks farther, and carries on their mystic meaning into the confines or very centre of Heaven itself. There is such an idea possible as double-symbolism. The sacred things we are speaking about may represent both of the heavenly realities; in which case the material universe itself is a casting of the stupendous spiritual realities which surround the Throne of the Almighty! It was breathed out of the mouth of God, and Light is His Countenance looking upon it!

What a very powerful method of teaching the symbolical is! Whether it paint great things or small, it is a sort of centre of "suggestion" round which endless series of thoughts and feelings cluster and circle; and "suggestion" has a subtle influence over us all even more potent than that of sentiment itself, which some tell us rules

the world far more than Matter of Fact and solid Thought.

It was this picture-language that Our Lord chose to teach us in His exquisitely simple parables our duty one towards another, and initiate us into the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Jewish symbolisms, indicating in their highest rite of sacrifice the great and all-mystic Sacrifice still future to them, and alas, still future to the bulk of their race, are now of the long past. The veil of the Temple was rent long ago. But we retain their sacred record.

Since Christ all religion has centred in The Cross, and we Christians love to make It our one great symbol, and so we build our cathedrals and churches with It as their ground-plan, cruciform in architecture: and we each of us have It signed upon our brow, and wear It, some of us in fact, and all of us in figure, upon our hearts.

The sequence of continuity goes through the mystic spot of Calvary that gave us the sacred token, and trails in several ways, side by side, a-down the Christian ages.

The life of Christ, and the commentaries

upon it in the Epistles, the one prophecy of the New Testament, viz., His Return, dilated upon in the divine rhapsody of St. John, (the apoealypse of the end, just as the opening Book of Moses is the apoealypse of the beginning), is one of these ways.

Another is that string of stupendous mysteries, beginning with the mystic "I," and ending with the transeendent "everlasting," which we repeat so often; I mean the Apostles' Creed. To disjoint this, and think over every article separately, ought to be a cure for those who, skipping over the surface of things, look neither up nor down in their frantic desire to get away from the apparent or concealed meaning that lurks in everything.

The God of Nature ever stands sublime, pleased, not angry, when we mortals look and think and hope to reach Him. The God of Revelation, the same Lord God Omnipotent under a different and opposite aspect, rules and sways the minds and hearts and actions of mankind, not by natural law, but by laws opposed to Nature. For the whole drift and meaning of Christianity is hostile to the natural man (as St. Paul

takes so much pains to show). As we should expect, therefore, Nature is an open secret, Revelation a closed one. There has been no new public revelation since the Day of Pentecost. The God of Nature, therefore, is a continuous development, the God of Doctrine a permanent fixture.

If this be true, and I think it is, all the wonderful outpourings of hundreds of volumes century after century, on the development of Christian dogma, do not amount to much in value, inasmuch as what *you think* about a doctrine may develop, but what *it is* stands still. The Apostles' Creed stamped Christian doctrine for *what it is* in the very earliest days, and that short but wonderful string of stupendous mysteries remains, and will always remain in its complete acceptance, the test and touch-stone of unhesitating, heaven-bestowed faith in God's revelation to men through the appearance of His Son on earth, and the redemption and reconciliation that followed.

Another unbroken chain of continuity, and a more palpable one, is in our own persons, *i.e.*, us of the Priesthood; for, however unworthy some or all of us may feel, we are

lineal descendants of those elect and exalted men whom just before His Ascension Christ "breathed upon," and thus and in words conferred the priestly power.

And a still more striking evidence of this sequence of continuity stands out before the world, supremely exalted at Rome as the undying head of a sister Church, a Church which possesses a version of the Holy Scriptures with a history attached to it of very great interest. Dating in revision from the end of the 4th century, from the hands of St. Jerome, it has passed through a series of critical recensions since it was pronounced "authentic" by the Council of Trent. And we are told that the present Pontiff has some still farther designs upon it with regard to comparisons with the very numerous manuscripts and sources from which it emanated.

In view of the attacks upon the Bible from so many sources, we cannot but admire the genuine faith which has lately pronounced that it is an inspired Book, and incapable of error, although not rashly to be put into the hands of the laity, because it is an exceedingly difficult Book to understand.

That goes without saying. It is. The

contention, however, that the Church would exist in all appearance as it does now, had the New Testament never been written—requires so much blind faith, that many of us who try to think what it means are too startled to think at all. On the other hand, there is no doubt at all that the evil habit of putting a finger upon a verse here to promote one pet idea, and a verse there to upset the pet religious fad of somebody else, has split the Christian Church up into all the numerous sects which cluster round the ancient Christian altar, and to say the least of it are not an alluring feature of our holy religion to draw the Mohammedan and heathen world towards it.

Theoretically all disaffection from a central guiding line is traversing the order of succession or continuity, which is a long and well-laid cable running right through both volumes of the Bible, and stretching out into the world of men as a life-line to hold on to in bad weather.

The earliest contention about the New Testament do not appear to have been so much about the Books themselves and the matter contained therein, but as to whether

... we have them, should be once
... and authentic at a general Council.
... of the Epistles and the Book
... Revelation were the disputed points on
one hand, and on the other certain writings,
some of which are still extant in part, as
to whether they should be included in the
Canon or not. Recalling Our Lord's assur-
ance to His Apostles that the Holy Spirit
would bring to their remembrance all that
He had said to them, we may be sure that
this assurance was not only for their own
satisfaction, but for the enlightenment of
the future world; and we may rely upon it,
therefore, that the same Holy Spirit was
present when the final selection was made.
This is conclusive with regard to two of
the Gospels, and as to St. Mark there is no
doubt that St. Peter's mind is in it, St. Mark
having been his amanuensis; it is also gen-
erally understood that St. Paul's influence
can be detected in St. Luke's Gospel. And
where the Holy Spirit was present to guide
men's minds as to the Gospels, we may be
sure also that the rest of the Canon, as we
have it, was accepted by them at the same
time under the same Holy Influence.

This kind of argument has, of course, no weight with modern hostile critics. They apply all the resources of their art to demolish, and perhaps a few fragments here and there, derived from some unknown source, to which all four had access, would be all they leave us as to the Gospels. And as to the Epistles, not one of them was written by the name it goes by, they are simply literary curiosities!

Intellectual hostility runs much in the same groove as personal antipathy. The best of men can be misunderstood and misjudged and maligned and worried in effigy out of all semblance of his real self by any one whose sole reason is "I do not like thee, Dr. Fell." Even Our Lord Himself did not escape this kind of criticism!

The Canon of the New Testament was finally arranged and settled and declared authentic at the Council of Carthage, in A.D. 397, and the Western Christian world has ever since held to it. Some of the Eastern churches omit in their Canon the disputed Books mentioned before. Hostile criticism, or indeed, criticism of any kind, seems to have been wanting for at least

some fourteen centuries, but since that time we have had it with a vengeance. However, it has passed its culminating point. It had done all it could 50 years ago. Only a few doubtful leaves were then left us of the New Testament not worth thinking or troubling about. So perhaps we Christians shall be left alone with our Books for some time to come. We don't even mind being caught reading them sometimes.

The passing of certain lines of history and prophecy and revelation of several kinds right through the Scriptures, has a meaning attached to it, and that is that they are leading to something. Hence their significance. Jewish history leads to the history of the Christian Church as far as it has now gone. Ancient prophecy culminated in Christ, who renewed it with the one prophecy of His Return.

And still these and other lines of continuity hold good. The Christian Church holds one that binds it age by age to Jesus Christ in a mystic tie. Her Lord promised His ever-Presence with her, and her Priests invoke It at the Christian altar, where all Christians assemble on bended knee to par-

take of the Holy Mystery. This is a matter, however, too sacred to write about.

Another unbroken line that unites us with the remotest times is that of the Jewish Sabbath, which the earliest Christians shifted into our Resurrection Sunday. This, too, has a meaning in it—it is leading somewhere. It has been, and is, one of the greatest boons that toiling men and women bless and look forward to as week follows week; and it is symbolical of the rest of happiness beyond, which we all timidly long for and hope to enjoy.

Almost coeval with the institution of the Jewish Sabbath, or not so very much later, begins one more strand in the chain of continuity, and a very remarkable one. 3,219 times without break have the Jews, all and everywhere, celebrated that wonderful night when the Angel of Death passed over their houses in Egypt. This continuous yearly act and fact closes the door effectively, one would think, in the face of any critic who would enter this still mystic land with the note of Query (?) in his hand as to many things reported by the Old Testament Scriptures to have transpired there, and shows

unmistakably that the children of Israel *did* dwell in Egypt, even in spite of the clearest critical evidence that they did not.

It is well to hesitate before passing judgment upon circumstantial evidence. Eye, ear, bias of mind sometimes give witnesses false impressions; and when these witnesses are not living ones, but dead monuments of various kinds staring us in the face, how we love to throw our own ideas and impressions into their stolid gaze, and make them speak sometimes the very opposite of the truths they were designed to tell! How much more, how far longer, should we hesitate to decide when there are no witnesses in court, and all evidence is simply subjective, *i.e.*, fanciful creations of the mind working upon itself. And is not this the position of the Higher Biblical Criticism? Modern Judaism in its persistence, in spite of the efforts of some factions to break it up, is a phenomenon to pause before and think about. There is a purpose in it, but neither Jew nor Christian knows what that purpose is. National restlessness and the appearance of strong advocates in favour of national government, whether by distant colonization or absolute

re-possession of the land of their fathers, appears to be working as a sort of leaven and motive power amongst European and Western Jews just now. Whether the Zionist movement will subside or take such a definite form as is meant by the title, is a matter of intense interest to both Jews and Christians.

To gather up now these various threads that have been laid out for our inspection:

1. Historical narrative, both personal and ethnical, reaching backwards to the remotest human past and forwards to the Coming of Christ, with very little break in it, the longest interval being immediately before the sacred Advent. Considering the number of authors and the length of time covered, some design must have been at work prompting one man to go on where the other left off long before the art of history-writing, as such, was born. And when the great atonement for men's sins had been made, the same prompting gave us the four narratives of His holy Life, and the subsequent deeds of His Apostles.

2. Running even with the story of men and things is a series of hints and forecasts as to the future. Nearly all of these have one

fixed point in view from which they never swerve—the coming of someone. This idea breaks out over and over again in places both expected and unexpected. Sometimes it is fashioned in plain prose, and sometimes it is concealed in florid Jewish imagery. The purport of this Coming with singular shortsightedness in a race as keen as the Israelites they misunderstood, and after all these ages their children still persist in misunderstanding, even after the event! However, what I wish to point out is, that when He came who fulfilled the predictions of the Law and the Prophets, that was not to end all prophecy. Like all other ideas in the Bible connecting men with God, prophecy was carried on past Calvary, where its wonderful description of the Crucifixion might be supposed to end it. He who on the day of His Resurrection had gathered all prophecy into Himself, and “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets” had explained this to two men who were sorely perplexed at the Crucifixion of Jesus, has not left us men blindfold as to the future. He has passed on the prophetic word by foretelling the awful climax towards which we all are drifting.

This is the one prophecy of the New Testament.

3. However difficult to understand, the fact remains that God has been nearer to men at particular times and in selected places than His universal Presence would seem to permit. To Moses He was nearer from time to time than to any other human being of the period. To the High-Priest of the later Jews the special Divine Presence was indicated by the symbolical light of the Shechinah between the Cherubim on the mercy-seat of the Ark. And this was continuous for ages and generations. There can be scarcely any doubt at all that later on, in troublous times, the Jewish Priests concealed the Ark. It is quite possibly concealed at the present time. However that may be, there was of old one hallowed spot upon earth where a Temple was raised, by Divine command and instruction, in which a selected few could worship; and in the inmost recess of this Temple was an all-sacred resting-place for the Ark, where the Divine Presence was and remained. Nor have we Christians lost this nearer approach to Divinity. It was transferred by Our Lord. It

passed through Calvary. The first Christian altar that was raised continued the Special Divine Presence. The Temple has been thrown open as it were, and from it have issued the countless Christian altars of to-day, where the all-holy Sacrifice is commemorated which they of old anticipated. The Sacred Presence is not now between the Cherubim on the mercy-seat of the Ark concealed behind the sacrificial altar, but above a wooden Christian Holy Table that is fashioned somewhat like both, and has taken their place.

4. The Priests of old were of one family. No one not of the tribe of Levi could officiate at the Jewish altar. Our Lord enlarged this sacred privilege and conferred the Priesthood upon His Apostles, each of whom became a Father in Christ, and they handed it on by actual transmission. Thus again the idea of designed continuity comes evidently forth in reserving and restricting the transmission of public officers for the functions of Divine Service, and the propagation of the Faith. The priesthood of the Sons of Levi in the Temple Service has been changed and multiplied into the suc-

cessive Holy Orders of the Christian Church.

5. The original of the Christian Sunday, again, is the Day of Rest prescribed in the fourth Commandment, which divided the year into weeks. Many meanings lie in it, religious, political, social, beneficial. Why some people persist in calling it the Sabbath shows heredity in all its adhesiveness. It is an institution of the Bible; the strictness of its Jewish observance being somewhat overmastered by the Christian joy on the Resurrection Morn, which assimilated and passed on this double phase of religious thought and worship. Here continuity is self-evident.

6. The Feast of the Passover was chosen by Our Lord to draw His Apostles first, and all Christians afterwards, into the closest union that men can have with God. The sacrificial blood saved the household of old; the Divine Sacrifice about to be accomplished was to be the salvation of the Christian Church of the future. What took place on that all-solemn night transformed the Feast of the Passover into the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The sum of the evidence of these six illus-

trations alone is, I think we may say, quite enough to show that a something runs through the Bible and holds it together that is not to be found in any other book. The array of men who wrote this selection of books called the Bible, do not conform to the universal axiom, "As many men, so many opinions," but oneness of opinion with regard to things human and divine, and that the former are governed by the latter, is there, and prominent throughout. I think we may go farther and say that the minds of these men were directed by a superhuman influence to bring about this concrete result, for it is beyond human probability or possibility. I think, I am sure, we may go farther still, and say that this Influence must have been a heavenly one—which is equivalent to saying that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and is therefore the Word of God.

In making the assertion, as I have done, that there is no flaw or disconnection in the Bible, I am, of course, aware that there are difficulties, and passages subject to opinion, and doubtful passages, and probable misunderstandings, and spurious words, and tampered words and letters, and at least

one continuous verse put there with intent by the boldest hand that ever held a pen, and room for question here and there, and room for discussion everywhere. It seems as if the craft of the human hand is powerless to resist the more potent spell of meddling. Here, of course, criticism is to be commended, for it is not of that whose one bias is to find fault, but of that whose only fervour and direction is to find truth.

One of the difficulties of the Old Testament that one hears or reads about from time to time, is concerning the death of Moses. It is asked, How could Moses have written the Pentateuch when his own death is recorded there? This seems unanswerable. It may be that Eleazar, the high priest, or else Joshua, the general, added the few words that record his death and the mourning of the children of Israel to the manuscript that Moses left behind him. In which case, however, such an addition can scarcely be held to invalidate all that goes before. Only a hostile and very captious critic would maintain that it did. However, the priest Josephus, than whom there is no greater authority in Jewish antiquities

and tradition, says that Moses *did* write the record of his death. Here are his words: "As he (Moses) was going to embrace Eleazar and Joshua, a cloud stood over him on a sudden, and he disappeared in a certain valley, although he wrote in the holy books that he died, which was done out of fear, lest they should venture to say that, because of his extraordinary virtue, he went to God." From which it appears that knowing his departure was at hand, and perhaps also the manner of it, Moses himself closed his literary record by writing it down. This final manuscript was then, at his request, placed by the Levites (in a pocket) in the side of the Ark, where no one would dare to tamper with or even approach it. In fact, a large part of the Pentateuch is simply Moses' journal, and in this manner it was kept inviolate.

The manner of the departure of Moses and also of Elijah was different from that of other mortals. The one went in a whirlwind and chariot of fire to heaven, and the other was received in a cloud. The circumstances of their deaths were, therefore, somewhat similar. Whether they died at

all in the usual acceptation of the word is, I suppose, a matter of doubt. Josephus, in the extract given above indicates that Moses did not die, but "went to God." Connected with this, perhaps, in an unknown way is the mysterious appearance of both these Prophets to Our Lord and three of His Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration. The Apostles at once recognized the mystic appearances. It may be that both Moses and Elijah are not so far off as the otherwise dead are supposed to be, and that neither of them has ceased to be interested and concerned in the affairs of men. However this may be, their names are coupled together in the closing verses of the Old Testament, with the promise of the return of Elijah before the final catastrophe.

In speaking of the prophet Elijah doubts, I remember, used to be thrown upon the sublime scene of his sacrifice on the ground that after such a prolonged and terrible season of drought it would be impossible to obtain such a copious supply of water as he demanded at a moment's notice. It came into the mind of some one, however, to remember that Mount Carmel was not far

from the Mediterranean, so that plenty of water was at hand. This objection is no longer heard.

Leaving aside much contested matter in the New Testament as to the authorship of some of the Books themselves, the relative dates of their composition, their value in support of doctrine and ethics, apparent conflict in words and expressions, whether the writers had access to each other's compositions, whether they all had access to a primitive lost Gospel or collection of Sayings and Doings of Our Lord, and many other questions and speculations, some of them very old and others conceived but not yet born, there remain two verses which challenge all students and readers by their daring pretence to define the mystic metaphysics of doctrinal Christianity.

The first of these we all know. It is found in I John v: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." That verse is spurious, and ought not to be there. It was evidently inserted by someone, some very bold scribe, to settle once for all the doctrine of the Trinity,

which naturally caused so much dissension and discussion in the early ages of the Christian Church. Without this verse it is a doctrine of inference, but of inference just as conclusive as the unapproachable and unfathomable nature of the great mystery will permit.

The second is perhaps not so generally known. It is not a verse that was interpolated, but a word that was changed. St. Paul is made to write to Timothy, "*God* was manifested in the flesh." Here some very daring hand made "ho" into "Theos," *i.e.*, made "which" into "God," thus settling once for all the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, as he thought. The verse should read "Great is the mystery of godliness, *which* was manifested in the flesh." The Divinity of Our Lord was discussed for a long while in the early days as the question upon which the whole structure of Christianity rests; and when it became too prolonged and acrimonious, and began to take fantastic forms, our daring scribe in his cloister, seeing such an opportunity, thought to end it with a stroke of his pen. With regard to the first of these there can be

scarcely any doubt at all. In all the most authentic manuscripts the verse is wanting, we are told. The second is almost as doubtful. The above plausible supposition, or something like it, is to be found in a foot-note in Gibbon's "Decline and Fall."

If the millions in their climb of the ladder of Faith have now and then found a dirty hand among them that left its lasting stain upon the shaft, can that affect or weaken the ladder itself? Such stains, as soon as recognized, are easily avoided; we can go up by the rungs. Truth is always the "*via media*"; it goes *through* those inaccuracies that stand *in front of it* to bar its passage, and those *on either side of it* it simply leaves unnoticed and untouched.

These two flaws in our New Testament are, of course, bad enough in their own way, but that way has nothing to do with destructive criticism. It tells in the opposite direction. It is to be noticed that both of them were inserted to force the doctrine of the Church. One to force and thus enforce the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the other that of the Divinity of Christ.

Either with or without these two attempts

at "pious fraud" the doctrines of Christianity stand as stamped for ever in the Apostles' Creed. Other discrepancies there are, and various readings, and displacements in the order of events, and omissions or additions according to which manuscript is accepted as the standard; none of these, however, affect either Christian doctrine or ethics. These latter, the morals of the New Testament, have also come to us by a continuous flow from the Old Testament, only that Our Lord by concentrating the stream caused it to break out in all directions, showing again that there is a determined, unvarying Divine Intention pervading the whole Bible. These many streams mean large-heartedness, which is pre-eminently a Christian virtue.

Before the bud of the Old Testament religion had blossomed into Christianity, limited love towards a limited neighbour was the calyx that held the blossom enfolded in its grasp. When Jesus Christ at the beginning of His ministry uttered these words, "But I say unto you, love your enemies," it began to burst: and when the dying Saviour said "It is finished," "the veil of the temple

was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," and Christianity, the beautiful flower of humanity, began to bloom, with Love to God in its centre and the perfume of philanthropy breathing from its every petal.

The exaltation of spirit necessary to yield compliance with this command was at first an inexplicable mystery, both to the debased populace and to the cultured philosophers and voluptuaries of the countries in which the Christian religion first began to flourish. They ascribed it to everything but its true source; to obstinacy so determined that its very determination was under all conditions worthy of punishment; to fanaticism so infectious that the state-religion and the state itself were liable to be subverted by it; Hence the zealous Saul thought he was doing God service by persecuting its votaries, and many a mistaken patriot thought he was serving his country by striving with all his power, by fair means and by foul, to crush and extirpate the spreading new Religion.

But Christ had promised! never to forsake His own, and converted His persecutor into His great preacher among the heathen, and the boastful heathen mistress of the world

into an empire whose sway was soon to be offered to the highest bidder, and of which there remains now but the city and the name.

With the advent of Christianity two new words were added to the vocabulary of Greece and Rome; before that there was no word in either language to represent "Sin" or "Righteousness." The ideas themselves came from the Jews, but what a meaning Christ put into them!

To enlarge upon Christian morals would be out of place here, their beauty and beneficence being the theme of countless pulpits week after week to persuade most races of men to adopt them and try to live them. We can only say that no right-minded Jew, Turk, Infidel, Buddhist or Heretic can possibly find fault with them. They are the culmination of that benign purpose of goodwill towards men which began before the first of men was born without the gates of Paradise, and which can be easily traced and seen in every Book of our two sacred volumes.

Without, however, being too diffuse, one perhaps might be allowed to point out how "Sin" and its antidote "Righteousness"

worked against each other in the early days of Christianity, and do so still; the one indicating the presence of the Evil One, and the other the Presence of Christ.

It is not difficult, then, to recognize this evil that is around and with us; we are accustomed to witness its fruits from infancy; but in this it differs from the other wonders that surround us; *these* court enquiry, investigation and research, and reward us by increasing our knowledge of the ways of God; *this* is obtrusive and leads by easy lessons to a deep knowledge of the ways of Satan.

It requires but little observation to admit that an active and subtle spirit of evil is ever present without and within us. It is the inheritance our fathers have bequeathed us in the historic record of their words and deeds; it is the inheritance which we feel that we possess in the involuntary thoughts and cravings of our hearts within. And did we not possess the sacred Book to tell us of our Divine origin and immortal destiny, the nearly obliterated stamp of God's Image might yet be deciphered by this very knowledge, this spark of the Divine that

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still remains to kindle the smouldering ashes of the primeval holy fire within.

For long centuries, for thousands of years it seems to have been the deliberate object of mankind to extinguish the sacred flame of love to God, and try to stamp its very embers out. Satan helped them in their work, and turned the highest aspiration of the soul—the worship of its God—into its lowest degradation—the worship of himself. Thus did he think to secure an easy prey and claim earth's teeming millions as his own. But God, who rules over all, the devil not excepted, limited his power and left a two-fold witness of Himself—a sacred record, and a chosen people to guard it. And when the mysterious time was come this sacred record pointed to, and God's Son became a man, He left, ere He ascended into heaven, a parting word of consolation addressed to His Apostles and recorded by St. Matthew in the last words of his Gospel, for the comfort of His Church and every member of the same to the end of time: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

With these words ringing in their ears,

“the glorious company of the Apostles” commenced their God-appointed task, and after their endowment with Power from on High they called upon men everywhere to repent and cast the idols from their homes and hearts—and thousands listened to their words, took Christ’s yoke upon them, and learnt of Him. They called upon the philosophers to awake from their mazy dreams, to relinquish their exquisite conceits, and preached the Divine philosophy of the Son of God. “To love their enemies, bless those that curse them, and do good to those that hate them,” and their preaching was not vain. They summoned their stiff-necked brethren to “Rend their hearts and not their garments, and turn unto the Lord their God,” and worship Him they had just crucified, and many hearkened and believed. The glad tidings were so welcome to the erring sons of men that ere the last eye-witness of our Saviour’s life and Passion returned to His Bosom, the 3,000 Christians of the day of Pentecost had increased (it is computed) to 500,000 souls.

And when our conquered but not annihilated foe poured out his vengeance on the

infant Church of Christ, by dropping thoughts of hatred into the bosom of Rome's rulers, by ripening these thoughts into deeds of atrocity, the realization of which requires no ordinary effort of the mind, of which the page of history *can* furnish but an outline. When he put into the hearts of many the intention of evil that possessed King Herod at our Redeemer's birth, and the murder of the babes of Bethlehem, was but a token of the anguish suffered by the infant Church. What was it that turned ordinary men and women into heroes, and enabled them to suffer all that man possessed by Satan could inflict? "*The noble army of martyrs*" had heard or read these words, "Lo, I am with you alway."

Although it is not permitted us to discover the inscrutable connection which exists between physical and spiritual progress in the world, and our perplexity is almost as great in meditating either upon what has transpired which is called History, or upon what is occurring before our eyes which is called "grasping the spirit of the age," or upon the history of the future which is called Prophecy—yet this we can observe, that had

not Christ been always with His Church, it would have come to nought long ago. All human weapons have been launched against it from without, and ceaseless dissensions have harassed it within. From Apostolic times it has seemed a house divided against itself, and yet it has stood, and does stand, and will stand, a living witness to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And *now* we have before our eyes the anomalous appearance of a vast society, rent into numerous sects, disrupted by contending factions, often distracted by internecine strife, not to say holding as many separate creeds as there are individual members, and yet, for all these apparent elements of instability and decay, a House not divided against itself, to which our Saviour's words do not apply, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Whence, then, comes this stability? How is it that a Society which has within itself so many obvious elements of decay, not only exists, but grows and thrives, and shoots out great branches that are destined to overshadow the whole earth, and fill every land with the sweetness of Jesus' name? I apprehend the answer to be, that the whole struc-

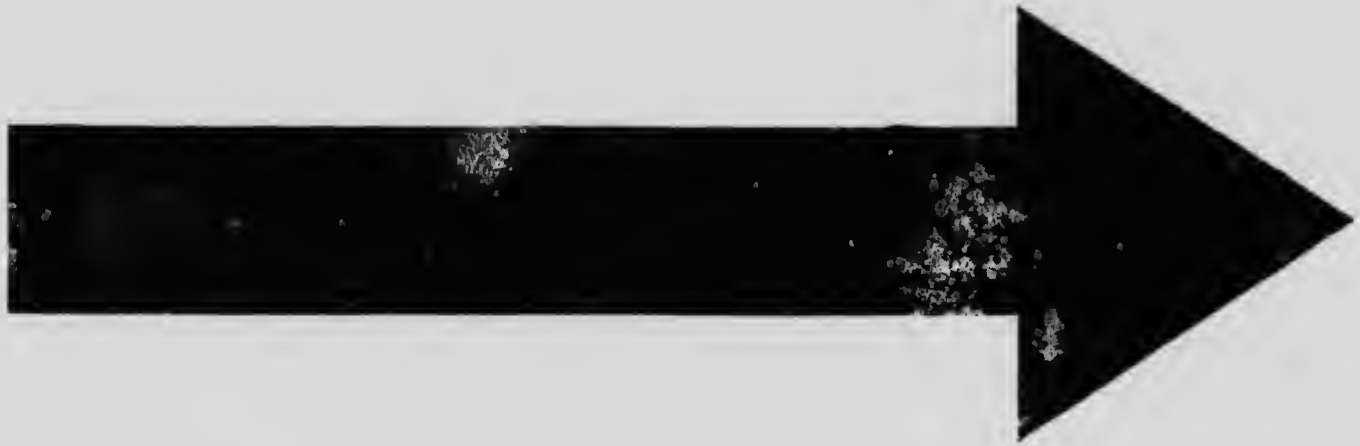
ture, though on earth, is not of earth. It is *Divine* in its origin, Christ Himself being its foundation. It is *Divine* in its workmanship, the Holy Spirit being the architect; and the *souls of men* that have been breathed upon, and kindled and fired by the Holy Spirit of God, are the immaterial essence of its fabric.

And where Christianity has flourished *there* has been light, selfishness has been supplanted by philanthropy, life has assumed a higher meaning and a reckless waste of it is disallowed, and thus in every Christian land are means and methods for its conservation. The amphitheatre's barbaric heathen splendour, feasted yet never sated with human sacrifice, is transformed into the hospital or asylum for the infirm and aged. The right that belongs to man as such is more respected, the right of freedom from his brother's yoke. The inherent good and truth and aptitude of Christianity are felt and acknowledged, and prayers unceasingly ascend to heaven to bless and prosper all human devices for its propagation and dissemination among the nations of the world. And that the holy promise of Christ's ever-

Presence is true, we can confirm our belief by calling on our knowledge, and comparing the world of men as it is now with what it was 1,800 years ago, and "*the Holy Church throughout all the world*" lauds and extols God's Holy Name for the ineffable benefit.

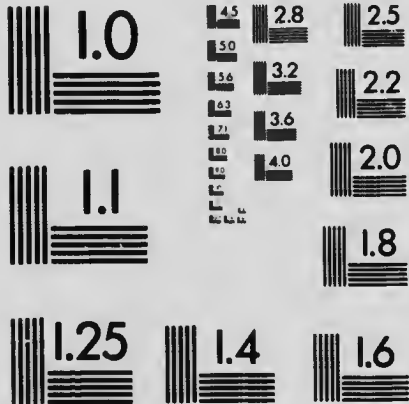
What is universally true as a feature and characteristic of the whole, must of necessity be true also of the part, and had Immanuel spoken but these words, we each could claim the promise as our own. The Presence of God with us is an idea so full of awe that the human of us makes it very difficult to realize.

But there is an intenser passion than that of fear—Love—and all the words of our Great Master to His own tend to make the lesser wane and die, and bid the greater live and grow. Love and adoration of Him who is with us always, should be the passion of our lives. Love the holier and the stiller the deeper that it is. Not the paroxysms aroused by human words in feeble minds and vague imaginations, which soon pass by and leave a void behind, stirring the imagination in hopes that the sediment may



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be faith, but the soul's love to its Redeemer, a calm and silent ecstasy that cannot be spoken, can hardly be thought, but is surely enjoyed by those who feel the invisible, loving God making His abode with them.

Thus do the powers contend, and the reading man, and reflecting, who only sees an endless jostle and turmoil in the background of human history, misses the grandest sight of all that lies far and deep under the very centre of things, the two stupendous motive-powers that set the wheels a-going. One of these, the lesser, is ever present where the power of God is at work, undoing much that He does, running the woof across the warp of things, so that human history, like private biography, presents at almost any stage a very complex and many-coloured fabric. And so much do the glaring colours of evil stand out in standard historical writings, that after turning chapter after chapter, a feeling akin to disgust comes over the reader to think what men and women can do. Nor does the oldest of all histories slur these matters over, but human nature at its worst, as well as at its best, is spread out before us. *There is no*

concealment of national sin. *There* is no concealment of individual sin. It does not require much tracing to follow the course of evil through the Bible. That is a matter of course. In fact, evil is the shadow of good.

This aspect of the Bible, therefore, has nothing to do with my contention that a Divine purpose runs through the whole of it, and every Book of it; it is simply a consequence or shadow of this. Now and then, when the sun was low on the horizon of earthly things, these shadows of evil lengthened and broadened so as to become a sort of grotesque travesty of the uprightness they pursued and clung to. Think of the intermittent rebellions of the nation. Think of part of the private life of some of the Old Testament heroes. But the sun rose again. The kindly light of God's countenance led on, and it never entirely ceased to shine from Moses to Malachi, from St. Matthew to the last of St. John.

This Bible of ours is therefore something more than paper and ink covering in a solemn and stately way the most tortuous freaks of human imagination, as were some of the first attempts at history-writing, long

after the some 20 volumes of the Jewish Priests, which we call the Old Testament, were lying written and untouched in their well-guarded repository.

Among these volumes are to be found the loftiest flights of poetic afflatus and mystic word-building, sometimes not easy to follow, and anon breaking out into imagery as distinct in its outlines and clear in its meaning as the exalted theme of things beyond the hills will permit. And what is very remarkable, these poetic chapters and the splendid hymns of praise to be found in the Psalms and elsewhere, suffer less when translated into modern languages than the most expert linguist could ever have hoped for. The ciii Psalm in our Prayer Book version, for example, is simply sublime from the first verse to the last. However much we welcome the revised version in all the other Books, it is difficult to conceive an alteration for the better of a single verse or even word in the magnificent Prayer Book translation of the Psalms. There is, too, a something, too subtle to be described or defined, that underlies and enfolds all the life-stories to be found in the Bible. It

makes the men stand out, and march on. Children catch it at once and almost see Moses, and Abraham, and Joseph, and the Prophets passing before them as plainly as the coloured pictures of their story-books. And this "something" is not wanting in the Gospel narratives of the life of Christ. That Divine Story is painted and moulded and chiselled for us so as to make it the only Story that never wearies in the telling by artists ignorant of their powers. Who lived in their souls? Who filled their mind? Who moved their hands? Who made them and the Prophets of old to leave their lasting legacy to men in fashion as of Christ Himself, all human and all Divine, so that the double impression of this seal is stamped for ever on their work? There is only one answer, the highest spiritual Influence from above.

To touch upon the consolation of the Bible is to tread upon very private ground. For the bulk of Christians, however, the sympathetic, silent answer to their prayers and tears is the reason of reasons why they love its pages. In adversity we all take to it, and we see meanings in its words then that we never saw before. Who with a broken

heart cares for any of the philosophy of ancient and modern times, beautiful as some of it is? Why, then, should this Book be the only one that consoles? Because it stands by itself, isolated from all other literature. Because the words of the Lord God Omnipotent are in it. Because the reciprocal love of Jesus draws and holds a sorrowing mortal and whispers hopes and promises that none may tell. Because the very purpose of its existence stands out when one by one we believe its Divine message, and rest in hope of the very great things it promises.

Those who, relying upon their limited powers of thought and mental vision, would nevertheless pit them against what stands written, and flourish their assumed victory in books and lectures and essays in face of a listening public, are not in an enviable position. They are unspeakably responsible. To shake the faith of one man is Satanic work. For shaking the faith of millions there is no word.

The time has come for the whole Christian hierarchy to repel these attacks and show that it is impossible for any so-called Science to approach, much less come in con-

flict with, any of the revelations of God's concern for men to be found in the Bible. They come from different directions with an infinite gulf between. The one is an attempt to climb the unknown, the other is from the unknown, and concerns chiefly the invisible souls of men, with which science has nothing to do.

The Bible is a gift from the spiritual world, wrapped in human words and ways of thinking, but not so tight as to deform its beauty, and not so loose as to display it. All that enemies can do is to scratch and tear at the wrapper, which still and always holds, but mortals with the gift of spiritual sight look through this covering at the splendour of the grace and love of God.

And I think this simile holds good with regard to the highest gift of God to men. All that Christ's enemies could do was to tear at the spotless robe of human nature that clothed and enfolded His Divinity. This at last they did. But in face of what followed who would dare to call them victors? "This is your hour," said Christ to them. But it passed. And it gave us the Christian religion that slowly but surely is conquering the world.

And so, too, the Scribes and Pharisees of modern Science have dinned the ill-informed, and perhaps unwittingly played upon the multitude, till both unite apparently in crying against the Bible, as of old they cried against the Christ, when ridding the world, as they supposed, of His sublime teaching and example. Perhaps their hour, too, has come. It may be long passed, and that the Bible will be looked upon for a time, though public teaching in certain quarters scarcely points that way.

In spite of all and everything this Star of Humanity, aglow and brilliant with the Cross of Christ, will shine in the minds and hearts of men, age after age, till the Return He promised is at hand. And when the earth itself shall have become one stupendous mortal tomb, and the heavenly signal is given for bursting the bands of death, and the consummation of all things approaches, we may suppose that the Word of God which records the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, will have a sublime resting-place in the holiest archives of heaven, there to witness for ever and ever the amazing love of God towards our race.

I have now had my say, and eased my mind. It is to be hoped that others may follow, and by delving in other directions bring facts and thoughts and hidden things to light that may counteract the mischief done by modern doubt and criticism, and place the Bible once again in that lofty and isolated position of public veneration and esteem which it held, say, a hundred years ago.

My theme has been chiefly that of "continuity," and I have endeavoured to show by examples given, and others no doubt to be found, that thus and in other ways does a thread of Divine purpose run through our Scriptures, that thus and in other ways does a Hand not human seal what is written with the stamp of Truth.

Evidence there is, internal evidence of the clearest for him who will take the Old Testament in one hand and the New in the other, and joining them together before him, bend his mind upon them, that we poor sons and daughters of men have not been left without a guide, have not been left without a Hand-book of Instruction, have not been left without a Word from God.

