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THE AGE AND THE GOSPEL;

FOUR SERMONS

Preached before the University of Cambridge

AT THE HULSEAN LECTURE, 1864.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A DISCOURSE ON FINAL RETRIBUTION.

BY

DANIEL MOORE, M.A.

INCUMBENT OF CAMDEN CHURCH, CAMBERWELL, AUTHOR OF
"THOUGHTS ON PREACHING," &c.

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TO
THE REVEREND THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
AND
THE OTHER TRUSTEES OF THE HULSEAN LECTURE,

THE FOLLOWING SERMONS

ARE INSCRIBED WITH MUCH RESPECT

BY THEIR OBLIGED SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

A FEW words of introduction seem necessary to the present volume of Lectures, in order to explain some points of difference in it from the Hulsean publications of former years.

Until within a recent period, the Lectures preached on this foundation were expected to be at least eight in number. By a recent statute, they need not necessarily exceed four. Originally the subjects treated of were almost exclusively those of the polemic or controversial class; and the Lectures, some of them very able and profound, were, in accordance with the will of the Founder, required to be printed. By the later statute, this compulsory condition has been removed;—the design apparently being, that the Preacher, while not entirely overlooking the original purpose of the Lecture, “to shew the evidence for revealed religion,” should be at liberty to give to the Sermons a less formal and scholastic character than had been customary; and perhaps to introduce more freely those practical appeals to the conscience,

which seem needful to give effect to our pulpit teaching, and, as a rule, are found to be most welcome to the hearers themselves.

Such, at least, was the present Lecturer's interpretation of the intention of the statute. And he has acted upon it. Anxious as he was, in the choice of his subject, to have respect to the avowed object of the Founder, yet he confesses to a far deeper anxiety, that he might promote the spiritual benefit of those whom it was his privilege to address.

On the general subject of the Lectures he has little to remark. While not shrinking from the admission, that there does exist, among all classes of the community, a strong tendency to infidel, or, at least, latitudinarian thought, and while not hesitating to repeat some boastful statements in reference to it, resting on adverse authority, the Lecturer holds fast by the persuasion that, as compared with what seemed to be apprehended a few years ago, the faith of the nation is gradually, but surely coming round to a more healthy state. The friends of our Zion have nothing to fear from, even if they do not "love this rocking of the battlements." To any who will "mark well her bulwarks" they will be seen to stand the more firmly when this transient rocking is over. England, in consequence of the attacks of an ill-advised Bishop, adheres more confidently to the truth of the OLD TESTAMENT. France, by the travestie of a recreant or reckless priest, seems likely to discover, that there is more truth than she thought of, in the NEW.

The Lecturer has not thought it needful to make any direct reference to the late Pentateuchal controversy. The

book which gave rise to it has become one of those dead things, which society is glad to bury out of its sight. The two-points, therefore, which, in the present state of the infidel argument, seemed to claim attention in a Lecture of this kind, were, first a general survey of the course and method of sceptical procedure, more especially in relation to the Old Testament; and next, a review of the several humanitarian hypotheses, by means of which it has been sought to account for the moral facts of Christianity,—for the problem of a triumphant Gospel, or for the mystery of a still loved and worshipped Christ.

Illustrations of the method and policy of modern unbelief are supplied abundantly in the writings of a class of theologians, who are perhaps fairly represented in the volume called *Essays and Reviews*; the writers of which, as controversialists, are remarkable for nothing so much as this,—that they advance much, in the way of sceptical allegation, which they do not even attempt to prove; and hint at a great deal more, which, in the form of positive disbelief, they have not the honesty or the courage to avow.

With regard to the other chief topic selected for notice,—the several humanitarian theories of the personal Christ,—a prominence is naturally given in the Lectures, to that “patronizing novel,” as Dr Pusey has well termed Rénan’s *Life of Jesus*, “in which the supercilious insolence of superiority which makes allowance for its God, is more sickening even than its hinted blasphemy¹.”

The Lecturer has added a Sermon, preached, in sub-

¹ Dr Pusey : Preface to *the Prophet Daniel*.

stance, during his month of office, at one of the parish churches in Cambridge, on the solemn subject of "Final Retribution." Even as one of the unhappily vexed questions of the AGE, the topic would have come in suitably as a pendant to the Hulsean course. But the theme is congruous to the general subject of the Lecture on other accounts. A part of the argument, in the University Sermons, is designed to shew that many of the objections urged against our revealed system arise out of inadequate conceptions, first of the rectitude of GOD as a Moral Governor, and next of our own relations to Him, as beings under condemnation, and depraved, and fallen. The mistake will be found to underlie most of the exceptions taken against the doctrine of Final Retribution. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself," is the saying of the Psalmist with regard to some in his day; and it is no less true of some in ours. They try all the Divine arrangements by their fallible human standard. Their recoil is not more against the judgement Revelation threatens, than against the way of escape it reveals. They hate, equally, the righteousness and the grace; the Sin-bearer and the Sanctifier; the justice which will by no means clear the guilty, and the holiness which, without a renewed mind and changed affections, will allow no man to see the LORD. Hence they seem to feel that no course is left but to break away from law, and Law-giver, and Saviour too,—until with regard to the Almighty Ruler of the universe, the inward thought of their heart is, "Let us break His bonds asunder and cast away His cords from us."

The preacher has only further to remark that he be-

believes the Founder of these Lectures to have been guided by a holy and far-seeing wisdom, when he resolved to consecrate his substance to objects connected with the maintenance and defence of revealed religion. For we may be assured that the adversaries of the faith have not yet done with us, nor we with them. They may be overthrown: but a pestilent brood will spring up, even from the blood-drops which fall from the heads of the slain. Our true wisdom, therefore, is to shew that we are neither blind to the stealthy advances of infidelity nor afraid of them; that we are friendly to the closest examination into the principles upon which our faith is founded; assured that, for a religion like ours, no investigation can be too searching, no argument too manly, and close, and free. We welcome all the winnowing processes of time, and research, and scientific scholarship. The confidence of Gamaliel is still our confidence: and even when, as in some recent instances, the assaults upon the faith come from new and unexpected quarters, we comfort ourselves with that sentiment inscribed on the statue of Luther at Wittenberg:

Ist's Gotteswerk, so wird's bestehen :
Ist's Menschenwerk wird's untergehen.

Is it God's work, 'twill always stay ;
Is it man's work, 'twill pass away.

As intimated already, it is a part of the new arrangement that the Lecturer should be under no obligation to publish his Sermons. And, in view of other urgent engagements, the present Lecturer would have been most glad to have availed himself of such a permitted exemp-

tion. But the desirableness of publication was urged upon him by many: and by some to whose judgement he felt bound to defer; while the fact that much of his prepared matter was, from want of time, either abridged or entirely omitted in the delivery, made him not sorry for the opportunity of presenting his argument in a less mutilated and imperfect form. At all events, in the kind reception of his Sermons, he cannot deny himself the gratification of seeing a testimony to one fact which is most encouraging: namely, that there is nothing the University of Cambridge welcomes more than an honest and painstaking effort to uphold the authority of the Bible, and to vindicate the claims of the world's Redeemer.

D. M.

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ALAS! what can they teach and not mislead,
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
 And how the world began, and how man fell
 Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
 Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
 And in themselves seek virtue; and to themselves
 All glory arrogate, to God give none;
 Rather accuse Him under usual names,
 Fortune and fate, as one regardless quite
 Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
 True wisdom, finds her not; or by delusion,
 Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
 An empty cloud.—MILTON.

Δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα οἱ δοκιμοὶ φάνεροι γένηνται ἐν ὑμῖν.
 Ac si diceret: Ob hoc hæresion non statim divinitus eradicantur auctores,
 ut probati manifesti fiant; id est, ut unusquisque quam tenax, et fidelis,
 et fixus Catholicæ fidei sit amator, appareat. Et revera cum quæque
 novitas ebullit, statim cernitur frumentorum gravitas, et levitas palearum:
 tunc sine magno molimine excutitur ab areâ, quod nullo pondere intra
 aream tenebatur.—VINCENTIUS LIRINENSIS.

SERMON I.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE.

I CHRON. XII. 32.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

Introduction—Children of Issachar—I. General features of the Age—Intense activity—Widely diffused knowledge—Intelligence of the working classes—Of the mercantile classes—Social Science movement—Sceptical tendencies of the Age—In the lower classes—Effect on national character—Progress of infidelity in Europe—II. Our duties—To uphold the intellectual claims of Christianity—To watch the tendencies of the popular literature—To put ourselves in harmony with great social movements—To be thoroughly acquainted with the evidences of revealed religion—Conclusion.

No mean accomplishment is that which is here attributed to the children of Issachar. A right estimate of the state of the public mind,—of the forms of social life and influence which characterize the days in which we live,—of those signs, indications, tendencies which together make up what we call the ruling SPIRIT OF THE AGE—has always been accounted a mark of true wisdom, in those who occupy any place of public trust. With many of these tendencies themselves, we may have little sympathy: may possibly, on principle, object to them. But

if we would influence the Age, we must first understand it;—in measure, must allow ourselves to be drifted along with the current; and, as far as we can, must make our agencies fit in with the course which we see it takes. To place ourselves in needless antagonism to the prevailing bias of the day would be useless, and something more. Whatever the benefit we design for our fellow-men, there must be no coercion,—no hot-house forcing. The lawful is not always the expedient: and they who have to guide others, must consider not only what things are good, in themselves, but what may be best for the present necessity. “The children of Issachar were men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do:”—and the consequence was that “all their brethren were at their commandment.”

Limited, but not without significance, is the information about this particular tribe, which is to be gathered from the sacred record. That their territory was situated in the richest part of Palestine; that the majority of them were especially given to the quiet pursuits of husbandry; that their numbers at the time of the Sinaitic census were inferior only to those of Judah and Dan: that others of them were deeply addicted to studious investigations and pursuits, by their eminence in which they attained great influence among the other tribes; and that, on the occasion referred to in our text, they were the means of bringing over a large armed force to the side of David,—would seem to represent the sum of what has come down to us in the form of authenticated history. But, in relation to the particular fact of their having “understanding of the times,” we may accept added information from

other sources. Thus Jerome notes a prevalent Jewish tradition that the tribe of Issachar took an active part in promoting the reforms of Jehoshaphat. Josephus declares that they had "the faculty of knowing things that were to happen." Whilst the testimony of the Targum runs, "they were astronomers and astrologers: skilful also in the doctrine of the solar periods and in fixing their lunar solemnities to their proper times: that they might shew Israel what to do: and their leaders were two hundred chiefs of the Sanhedrin: and all their brethren excelled in the words of the Law, and were endued with wisdom, and were obedient to their command."

At all events, on the testimony of Ezra alone, and from their intimate relations with the brother tribe of Zebulon,—“out of whom went they that handle the pen of the writer,”—we may fairly conclude the children of Issachar to have been men, not only conversant with all matters pertaining to the Jewish Church and Commonwealth, but men also, to whom, on account of their known wisdom, and judgment, and experience, the nation would be the first to resort in troublous times. Whether any, or what particular office they held in the Jewish hierarchy, it may not be easy to determine. Enough that, as a tribe, they evidently enjoyed the confidence of their generation;—were regarded as men who took a higher standpoint than their fellows, in their view of the phenomena of the outside world;—in a word, were looked upon as Guides and Teachers for the Age¹.

¹ There is a parallel passage to the text in the Book of Esther i. 13: “Then the king said to the *wise men which knew the times* (for so was the

The mention of such a class may not unfitly introduce a subject, which, in humble dependence upon Divine aid, I am anxious to bring before you in regard to the present relations of the AGE and REVEALED RELIGION; as well as our own DUTIES with respect to them;—my purpose being, as far as my limits will allow, to investigate those facts and phenomena of social life around us, which, as casting their lights or shadows on the Christianity of the age, no public teacher is at liberty to neglect. It is not enough for a man, put in trust with the Gospel, that he have a thorough comprehension of its general suitableness to the wants and endowments of humanity. He must lay himself out to bring all his teaching face to face with the mental and moral specialities of his generation;—must adapt his exhortations to the ever-shifting phases and developments of current thought. “O ye hypocrites,” was the stern reproof of our LORD to the Pharisees, “ye can discern the face of the sky: but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”

Only, before entering upon my task, let me bespeak for my subject a spirit of reverent and solemn thoughtfulness. Momentous are the issues which are involved in

king’s manner towards all who knew the law) &c.” The beautiful lines of Tennyson, in relation to a Royal Personage, will be recalled in this connection:

“ And statesmen at her council met
 Who knew the seasons, when to take
 Occasion by the hand, and make
 The bounds of freedom wider yet
 By shaping some august decree
 Which kept her throne unshaken still,
 Broad-based upon her people’s will
 And compassed by the inviolate sea.”

the truth or falsehood of Revelation. To any, under anxious or awakened convictions, we may well say in the words of Moses ;—"It is not a vain thing for you : because it is your life." If GOD have not spoken to man, let it be proved that He has not :—proved to demonstration ; for on this side of the argument, it is manifest, we ought to be satisfied with nothing less. But if GOD have revealed Himself, as all the ages attest, then let us bend at His footstool and ask light. In the spirit of our great Sir Isaac Newton, let us search the Scriptures on our knees :—too sensible of our need of Revelation to be ever fretting against the yoke of its authority, and too thankful for the blessed hope it gives us, to complain that we cannot enter fully into the plans of an Infinite mind. "O God who, at the first, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit ; grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I. In considering these relations of the Age and Revealed Religion, our first business lies with an enquiry into the Age itself,—what is there peculiar in it? What are those attributes or characteristics of it, which, in a general history of civilization, will mark off our times from the times which have gone before? Particular ages of the world have such leading characteristics, as much as particular peoples have : and, in their settled form, they become a part of the operative forces of the times ;—constitute an essential feature of the national life, as much as did any of the typical endowments of ancient nations,—as

did that of sympathy with the beautiful in the Greek, or that of passion for power in the Roman, or that of veneration for the sacred in the Jew.

What then is the distinguishing Age-characteristic of our own times? To this question we should probably most of us respond, an intense, earnest, unresting ACTIVITY;—a pressing forward, whether for good or for evil, in all commercial, intellectual, and scientific pursuits;—the whole national mind fired with a very passion for progress. Especially is this seen in the present INTELLECTUAL condition of our population;—in the observed infusion of a higher element of thought into all the arts and competitions of life:—knowledge advanced to one of the chief powers of the state, and all orders of the community being ready to do homage to the commonwealth of mind.

i. But this intellectualism of our age has its special characteristics also. Thus it is marked by a more *equable distribution of knowledge among all classes*.

The principle by which the intellectual life of former ages seems to have been mainly governed, was that of *centralization*:—that by which ours will be hereafter distinguished is that of *diffusion*. The mental guides and guardians of former times seem to have favoured a discipline of reserve; to have desired to retain the keys of public instruction in their own keeping;—making knowledge to be the monopoly of a few privileged classes, and doling out information to the masses by little and little. With us, knowledge of every kind is exoteric, open, free, the common right and property of the race. And in keeping with this spirit among us, is the multiplication of agencies and channels for imparting knowledge. If the

invention of printing formed a new era in the history of civilization, the discoveries of modern mechanical science may be said to form a new era in the history of the press. Our typography is one of the marvels of the age. Its cheapness, its beauty, the rapidity of its production, and the transfer to the printed page of the most beautiful creations of the pencil, have all tended not only to bring the treasures of our national literature within reach of the humblest classes of society, but also to present them for their acceptance in the most interesting and attractive form.

Nor less marked has been the effect of these increased facilities on the character of the literature itself. The author-class has multiplied as much as the reader-class, and with mutual benefit to both. Not to compare our school-book compilations with those of fifty years ago,—or our books of travel, or science, or fiction,—what an unique creation of modern thought,—an institution and engine of power of itself—is the periodical press of our day;—articles being thrown off by the month, the week, and even by the day, which would have sufficed to have made the literature of any former age, and have secured for the writers a place in history.

And the effect of all this as seen in the intellectual aspects of our large towns, will be attested by those of us whose pastoral labours lie in the midst of these vast hives of human industry. The direction of the popular mind is onward,—steadily, resolutely, in every department,—onward. Look at our poorer classes. Time was when the library of thousands of families in our land rarely extended beyond the Bible, the Prayer-book, and one or two antiquated volumes of reference,—the dusty heir-

looms of a generation that had gone before. It is not so now. The skilled artizan is a reader. A higher type of literature is demanded for our parish libraries. The cheap weekly or monthly serials, hawked through our streets and cottages,—the bad productions as well as the good,—are all prepared upon the supposition of an advanced condition of popular intelligence; whilst, among assemblages of workmen in some of our manufacturing towns, a marked partiality is being evinced for those higher forms of mental and moral reasoning, which we have been accustomed to suppose none but the trained and practised thinker would be able to appreciate.

Still more is this mental progress of the Age observable, if we come to those who are higher in the social scale,—namely our middle and mercantile classes. The rising educated merchant of our day is one of the intellectual forces of the times. He is to be met with in the senate, in the popular lecture-room, and among the contributors to the periodical literature of the day. And, in degree, the observation applies to the class generally. Their tastes are no longer limited to the narrow demands of commercial or professional life. An extensive acquaintance with the best productions of our home and foreign literature; a ready appreciation of the questions mooted among conflicting schools of art; a watching, with keen and observant interest, the progress of scientific discovery; and a sympathy wide, large, and generous, with all the topics most interesting to human thought,—these are among the intellectual characteristics of that large class, which, as lying between the base and the apex of our social edifice, may be considered as fair exponents of the tone of intelligence

among us, and affording a gauge of the mental stature of the times.

ii. Another mark by which this intellectual tendency of our age is distinguished, even as it constitutes a large element of its coherence, and life, and strength, is that it is *self-supported*:—that it maintains itself, as a distinct power in the community, by a system of combined and reciprocated action among the members themselves.

In former times, when authors were few, and readers were few, and when such books as were written were little, if at all, addressed to the popular mind, the masses were necessarily dependent for the most part upon the professional teacher. The parent, the schoolmaster, the minister of religion,—the age had no other instructors than these. The marked feature of our times, on the contrary, is that society is its own teacher:—that, without neglecting the more formal or professional aids, either of the school or the church, men trust more than formerly to a principle of self-help;—every man becoming a teacher to his neighbour, and the separate classes of the community being made schoolmasters to themselves.

Illustrations of this might be cited in the practice of many who live in the metropolis or other populous towns;—in the manual labour class, for instance, giving up their recreation hour to self-improvement,—to conversations upon the latest literary accession to the reading-room, or the last topic debated at the club;—or in the tradesman's assistant class, turning their Athenæums and Institutes to account, in the acquisition of languages, and so equipping themselves for the competitive examinations

of the day. But that which, more than anything else, brings out this self-assisted feature of modern intellectualism, is the tendency to bring together, from all parts of the country, and even from abroad, large aggregations of thoughtful men, who shall take counsel together on matters pertaining to the cause of civilization and human progress. The annual gatherings of the Congress and the Association have become an institution among us. Social Economy has taken a permanent place among the sciences. And the foremost men in their several departments,—of art, of language, of antiquities, of education, of morals, of law,—are exercising an influence over the tone of national thought which entitles them to a prominent place among the teaching appliances of the age.

iii. But I pass on to that which I chiefly design to insist upon in the intellectual characteristics of the age, namely, the adverse attitude which is frequently taken against *the claims of revealed religion*.

The tendencies to scepticism in the present day shew themselves, more or less, in every direction. Much especially have we to apprehend from the prevalence of these tendencies among our poorer classes. No doubt among the eight and twenty millions of infidel and vicious tracts computed to be annually circulated among our English poor, many are but reproductions of the coarse accusations of Richard Carlile, and Taylor, and Paine. But, mixed up with them, are attacks upon our Christianity of a more dangerous kind,—made up from the infidel philosophy of America, or the admissions of the writers in the *Essays and Reviews*, or in some instances, of translated extracts from the subtle scepticism of the Continent,—so that, in

the case of large bodies of persons working together, as in shops or factories, men who never heard the names of Hegel, or Schelling, or Strauss, can retail, with flippant tongue, their mischievous theories of unbelief¹.

But not by the agency of tracts only, do the promoters of popular infidelity carry on their work. They have their Sunday meetings for holding discussional or Deistical services. Weekly or monthly periodicals are open to receive and deal out the freshest contributions of infidel thought. Associations are formed, ostensibly with a scientific purpose, but really to place the conclusions of science and the statements of Revelation in array against each other; all being so many painful proofs how much the recent advances of the national mind have been unaccompanied with a healthy religious influence, and shewing what a tendency there is in all unsanctified knowledge to foster "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living GOD."

The sceptical tendencies, among the more educated classes, of course take a different and more covert form. Getting away from the narrow issues raised by the recent Pentateuchal discussion, the direct set of the popular current now is against an authoritative revelation and a superhuman Christ;—a binding dogma in the Word, and a reigning and Almighty Saviour in the heart. We seem to be getting back to the philosophical theology of Priestley, only with the more recent importations into it of the American Parker, and the rest of the humanitarian school. These points however will fall more properly under notice in a future discourse. In connection with

¹ See Note A. in the Appendix.

the social life and characteristics of the Age, our reference to the subject here may close with some remarks on the genesis or geographical course of infidel opinion, during the last century and a half.

The first outgrowth of the mischief we must, with all shame, charge upon our own land. We may say of England as the prophet said of Lachish:—"She is the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion¹." Vent our displeasure as we may against the Encyclopædists and their frantic blasphemy, on the one hand, or the Rationalists and their pantheistic systems on the other, we may not forget that both these noxious growths came of the bitter root of the English Deism, originated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The historic progress of the mischief can be tracked. With whatever differences of scientific form, there is no break of mental continuity in the scepticism, as it travelled from us to France; from France to Germany; and from Germany back to us again. Bolingbroke was the infidel father of Voltaire: and there are features, both in modern English and Continental misbelief, which bear traces of this common ancestry. There is a practical lesson however to be drawn from the progress of European infidelity, which concerns us closely,—namely, to observe how commonly this progress of unbelief has been allied with a debased and degenerate condition of national life;—how the two things have acted and reacted upon each other, in dragging down liberty, morals, religion, all that constitutes the social dignity and happiness of a people, to the darkest and most abysmal depths. The English Deism of the 17th century, like the

¹ The sin, *i. e.* of idolatry: Micah i. 13.

Atheism of the first French Revolution, was both a cause and an effect. It was the offspring of a bad age, and it made that age worse. It grew out of political convulsions, which it fostered,—out of a popular ignorance, which it pandered to,—out of a reckless libertinism and dissoluteness, which it promoted, by releasing all who practised them from the restraints of moral law. Whilst, of the Atheism of the French Revolution, it is not too much to say, that principles were originated in that memorable convulsion, and mental and moral tendencies encouraged, which, both in that country and elsewhere, are bearing their noxious fruit until now.

Thus, it is to be feared that the bitter and envenomed spirit which distinguishes a good deal of our modern infidel criticism has come down to us from those times. Such virulence is not demanded by the exigencies of argument. It bespeaks rather the enmity of dread; fierce resentment against a power that is feared;—as if the mind were haunted with some terrible apprehension that what it was rejecting might, after all, prove to be but too true. The language of Burke is not too strong to be applied to many modern infidels, that, as a moral Governor,—that is, as One demanding the absolute subjection of the whole man to His word and will, “they hate GOD, ‘with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, and with all their strength.’ He never presents himself to their thoughts but to menace and alarm them¹.”

¹ “Letters on a Regicide Peace,” *Lct. i. Works*, Vol. VIII. Montesquieu has a kindred sentiment: “The pious man and the Atheist,” he observes, “always talk of religion. The one speaks of what he loves, the other of what he fears.”

The revolutionary blasphemy of France may be said to have culminated, when the goddess of Reason, as a shameless courtesan, was presented as an object of worship to the people. But who shall say how far the foundation was then laid for that sneering contempt for the wisdom of the past,—that supercilious sweeping away of the ancient landmarks of truth,—that revolt and impatience of the mind against all external authority, whether from GOD or man, which distinguish so significantly the scepticism of modern times. The goddess of Disbelief is enthroned in the midst of us, and he, among us, shall have the palm of superior wisdom who is the first to bow the knee.

II. But on these more general characteristics of the Age I cannot dwell further, as a few words must be said on our DUTIES in respect to them. “The children of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.”

i. And first, in view of the widely diffused popular intelligence I have referred to, we shall be careful to exhibit the claims of Christianity *in accordance with the principles of man's intellectual nature.*

Christianity always claims for itself the distinction of being a reasonable service, and this claim we must uphold,—at least, so far as not to leave room for the reproach, either to religion that it is the nursed child of ignorance, or to its advocates that they follow slowly in the rear of an enlightened age. The caution is the more necessary, because the staple of infidel and unitarian objection to the Christian dogma will be found to rest,

in large degree, on ill-considered and uncareful statements, by some Christian teachers, of what that dogma is. There has been a want of caution in the presentment of evangelical doctrine which has led to an apparent clash between truth and truth, between theory and fact,—a seeming want of compatibility in the teacher's views of religious obligation, either with the perfections of the Divine nature, or with the intellectual and moral powers of man. At many points of the Christian theology, will a deficiency of clearness and exactitude, in our verbal statements, lay us open to the objections of the philosophical Theist. The relations between the Old and New Testament, so presented as to imply a change in the moral procedure of GOD, rather than a development,—the use of a harsh terminology in speaking of the work of the Atonement, as a necessity forced upon an Almighty Ruler by the demands of a punitive justice,—a bald presentment of the doctrine of the Sovereignty of the Divine elections, as if it were an arbitrary exercise of will, without regard to these eternal principles of wisdom and goodness which we know must rule every decision of an Infinite mind,—may all furnish illustrations of truth taught by halves; dogma presented out of its right proportions; the Gospel scheme viewed so exclusively from some one side, as, even to a candid mind to wear an air of paradox, and, by an adverse critic, likely to be held up as something worse.

Let us never forget, therefore, that Christianity has a philosophy, and that all our most cherished verities are in harmony with it. An able modern writer has asked, "why should we vex ourselves to find out whether deductions are philosophical or no, provided they

are religious¹?" We disallow the possibility of a disagreement, such as this question seems to contemplate. In relation to matters upon which philosophy is competent to decide, no deduction *can* be religious which is not philosophical also. No doubt there are many things we believe, and which we must require others to believe, solely on the authority of a Divine statement. And it is in accordance with our most exact laws of thought that we should do so. We lay down this axiom with regard to man,—that reason as he may, and conjecture as he may, the province of his certain knowledge is the province of sensible observation,—so far, and no further. Revelation professedly deals with topics which lie outside this province ;—with spiritual facts, with a spiritual government, with a spiritual world. Belief in these is, and must be, the belief not of knowledge, but of testimony.

A careful regard to this principle will be found to foreclose many forms of modern objection to the truths of Revelation. Rationalists, we know, have attacked, by turns, all the fundamental doctrines of our faith,—the Incarnation, the Atonement, the work of the Spirit, the sacred mystery of the ever-blessed Trinity. Let the canon be recognized which determines the limit of all possible knowledge, which defines what does belong to our intellectual economy, and what does not, and we shall feel that there is a large range of subjects upon which God may speak or may be silent: but upon which, if He speak, all further speculation must be at an end, and all abstract

¹ Dr Newman. See motto to the *Bampton Lecture* on "The Limits of Religious Thought."

philosophy must hold its peace. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

ii. Again, the self-sustained character of this popular intelligence will make the Christian teacher very slow to obtrude, and very unwilling to rely on any claim to public respect and confidence, on the score of *mere professional or prescriptive right*.

No undervaluing of the sacred office, it will be supposed, is intended by this caution, nor any denial of the fact that oral teaching has, from the first, been among the chief agencies devised of God for the instruction of the world. So far otherwise, we gladly recognize proofs in the New Testament, in the history of the first Christian centuries, in all the annals of civil and religious liberty, both at home and abroad, of the power which the professed religious teacher has been able to wield over the convictions and moral sentiments of mankind. In the great religious revival of the fourth century, when Chrysostom and Augustine arose to change the face of Christianity and to shake the world; in those mighty struggles with the papacy which ended in securing to us the benefit of a pure and reformed religion; in the last days of the Stuarts, when men were trembling for the ark of our endangered Protestantism,—we meet with testimonies in abundance that it must be his own fault if the accredited religious teacher be not a mighty power in the state. Still, between those times and our own, there is an important difference. We are teachers of the age, but not the *only* teachers,—even of religion. The secular guides of public

opinion cannot be kept off our ground. There is a large domain of subject necessarily common to us both. And when we meet them there, our relative ascendancy over the popular mind will be determined, not by the stronger official right to teach, but by the greater competency for the office. At all events, if we resolve to rest on ecclesiastical authority alone,—the patent of priority conferred upon us by the laying on of hands,—the unaccredited instructor will be sure to retort upon us,—“shew me thy patent to teach without thy power, and I will shew thee my patent by my power.”

iii. Again, in view of the wide circulation of books among all classes, we shall do well to note carefully the *tendencies of the popular literature*,—to acquaint ourselves, from time to time, with the general quality of that mental food, which is supplied to meet the stimulated and unhealthy cravings of a reading age.

We should err greatly, if we were to limit the danger to be apprehended from modern scepticism, to the reading of books written ostensibly with a theological aim. The mischief lies deeper, more concealed, is more subtle in its working and more widely spread. Thoughts, like those by which all devout minds have been so greatly shocked of late, especially as coming from members of our own body, have been at work in the popular imagination for some years past: and that mainly in consequence of the sceptical insinuations,—shreds and patches of old misbeliefs,—which have been scattered up and down the pages of a miscellaneous literature. We may be slow to allow the boast of one of the chief sceptical organs of the day, that the whole literature of our times,—science, history, morals,

poetry, fiction and essay,—is prepared by men who have long ceased to believe. But we fear it would not be difficult to name writers of eminence, in most of these departments, whose pages bear traces of a lightly esteemed Christianity,—the smouldering embers of an out-dying faith in any thing which professes to be revealed. Painful it may be to have, in our literature, examples of an attractive poetry, written only to corrupt; of the polished essay, calculated chiefly to mislead; of the scientific theory, which would strip man of the dignity of his Divine original; of the philosophic history which would cast God out of His own world. But to be forewarned is to be forearmed. “Watchman, what of the night¹?”

iv. Furthermore, we should know and consider what we ought to do in relation to that other intellectual note of our times; the endeavour to bring all measures for advancing the physical, intellectual, and moral life of our country within the operation of some uniform and comprehensive *scheme of social philosophy*.

This movement will go on, whether we take part in it or not. And, as a crusade against the ignorance, the improvidence, the foolish prejudices, or the bad passions of men, we ought to wish it should go on. The avowed object of the advocate of social science is to promote the civilization of the world. Our object is the same, with the single qualification that we desire to make that civilization Christian;—to make education, Christian; sanitary regulations, Christian; international relations, Christian; law and jurisprudence, Christian. We wish to guide all developments of the national power into a Gospel chan-

¹ See Note B in the Appendix.

nel,—into a studied agreement with its spirit, and into harmony with its eternal laws¹. We cannot but be afraid of any schemes of civilization which rest only upon statistics; upon tabulated results, and the assumed recurrence of the same social conditions. They throw us back upon the old theories of philosophical necessity, and involve conclusions which depose man from his freedom, and Providence from its moral rule. Let however the Christian element be recognized,—in social economics, in education, in legislation, in commerce, in every thing which affects the strength and dignity of nations,—and, with every plan for the social amelioration of our race, we should be ever ready to concur. We are stewards for men's happiness for the life that now is, as well as for that which is to come. And in order to our having proper influence in our day and generation, men must look upon us, not as the adversaries but as the friends and pioneers of progress;—one with our countrymen in all their social schemes and sympathies, whilst, in all their higher aspirations, we are going with them, and going before them, for their good.

v. Our last answer to the question as to what Israel ought to do, has reference to the duty, obligatory upon all of us, to make ourselves *thoroughly conversant with the claims and evidences of revealed religion.*

Teachers should do this for their own sake. We live in an age of doubt. The foundations of the great deep

¹ Worthy alike of the place and of the man, was the sentiment put forth by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his recent eloquent oration at Oxford. He is reported as saying: "It was of the highest consequence in these days that the commanding influence of Christianity, *the highest power of civilization*, should be brought to bear on the *material tendencies of the day.*"

of thought are being broken up; and we must not wonder if our own faith should sometimes feel the shock. But this should not be with any permanent hurt. Of a certainty will not be, if it set us upon a manly search into the source of our difficulties; if we resolve to meet these involuntary "spectres of the mind" bravely, and to rest not till, in the strength of God, we have laid them low. There is a Nemesis of faith as well as of unbelief: and never will truth charge disloyalty upon those who, in simplicity and godly sincerity, challenge her to bring forth her proofs.

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds¹.

But this thorough acquaintance with the Christian evidences is needed for the sake of others also. It is well observed by the late Archbishop Whately, that modern infidelity is made up of "objections against Christianity,—not of answers to the arguments for it." This witness is true. Butler's *Analogy* has never been answered. Paley's *Evidences* have never been answered. The testimonies, collected by Leland, and Lardner, and Leslie, have never been answered. And yet, as defences against the assaults of modern scepticism, it seems well to urge that we should not rely entirely upon these older manuals of Christian evidence. So far as relates to our perceptions of revealed truth, there is a progress in theological science, as in science of every other kind. In the departments of history, criticism, antiquities, products of soil and clime, secondary and corroborative lights are constantly let in upon the sacred volume, all of which may

¹ Tennyson. See Note C in the Appendix.

be helpful to us in dealing with some of the keenly agitated moral questions of the day. At all events, without undervaluing an anti-Deist literature, which carried conviction to the mind of a Locke, or a Newton, or a Milton, it seems only fair to admit, that, to the great majority of our critical and scientific doubts, our older works on evidence supply no direct answer. In form, at least, these doubts are the creation of the Age; and, only by solutions derived from the growing intelligence of the age, can they be met and silenced. New wine must not be put into old bottles. If phases of adverse criticism are constantly coming before us, which our fathers knew not of;—if we are required to prove that the Mosaic record is not a patch-work of ill-assorted legends; that the facts relating to the personal Christ, are not a poetic myth; that the writings of David and the prophets are something more than the inspirations of religious genius; that the controlling influence, by which the words of the sacred writers have been preserved to us, was sufficient for all the purposes of a Divinely authenticated revelation,—it is clear that, instead of depending exclusively upon the literature of the past, or the defences of the past, we must put ourselves abreast with the ripest knowledge of the times, and engage the objector with weapons, equal at least, if not superior to his own.

I conclude with one remark, addressed to an important section of my auditory. Obligated by my limits to deal chiefly with the *intellectual characteristics* of the age, the fear with me is natural, that some of those who are looking forward to the sacred office, may be chiefly concerned

to come up to the literary or controversial requisitions of the times, and care for little else. Can it be necessary to remind such, that, in taking upon themselves the ministry of the Gospel, they will have to watch for souls?—"watch for them as they that must give account." Notable words these of the Apostle. For if, while logically equipped for the strifes and controversies of the day, we be found wanting in the higher qualities of ambassadors for Christ;—if there should be nothing, in our message, either to build up the believer in his faith, or to cast down the formalist from his false hope;—if there be no pungency in our appeals to the conscience; nothing heart-stirring in our word of exhortation; no fulness in our exhibitions of the great mystery of godliness to draw all men to Christ,—to His footstool, to His cross, to His heart, to His throne,—in a word, if our whole ministry be permitted to degenerate into a hard, soul-less, dialectic exercise,—of body without spirit; of intellect without devoutness; of Christianity without Christ,—fearful, most fearful will be the reckoning, taken with us by the Eternal lover of the souls of men: and fearful will be the recoil upon our Church and ourselves. No; all around us is life, in sad and solemn earnest;—evil principles sown broad-cast; sin and misery burdening the earth; all the aspects of social life reflecting the signs of a dislocated and disordered world; the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now. And the remedy for this is to be found in the holding up, to the faith of men, not so much a dogma, as a PERSON;—not so much the testimonies to the Revelation, as the perfections of the august and GLORIOUS REVEALER.

Brethren, it is Christ the masses of our population want, though they know it not. And, if we be careful to hold Him up, in all the dignity of His person, and nature, and work, and offices;—in the power of His blood to cleanse, in the sufficiency of His grace to support, in the completeness of His righteousness to justify, in the might of His intercessions to prevail;—if everywhere, and to all who will come to Him, we preach Christ, as the only peace of the heart, as the only repose of the spirit, as the one refuge of the fearful conscience, as the one all-filling, all-satisfying object, upon which the thoughts of man could be exercised, or towards which the affections of man could be turned;—then, for the triumphs of His truth in the world, we need have no fear. We would not omit seasonable defences of the faith: but our confidence would be not in *them*, but in HIM. The truth of Christ, we know, is imperishable. Schisms may abound. Error may wax bold. Systems of human philosophy may live through their little day: and the oppositions of science may perish by their own suicidal hands. But the word of the Gospel will live on,—unchanged in its contents, unshaken in its evidences, unmutilated in its integrity, and unfailing in its fulfilments:—“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” AMEN.

SERMON II.

THE AGE AND THE WRITTEN WORD.

PSALM CXXXVIII. 2.

Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name.

Twofold object of infidel attack—I. Method of sceptical procedure—Appeals to popular suffrage—Is very complimentary to Christianity—Intolerant of well-defined dogma—II. Points in the Revelation usually selected for attack—Miracle—Alleged incompatibility with the discoveries of modern science—Geology—Language—Antiquities—III. The large and varied claims of Revelation—Its reasonable claims as inspired—Its historic claims as authenticated—Its moral claims as congruous to the nature and circumstances of mankind—The difficulties of Revelation the difficulties of natural religion also—Conclusion—The busy mocker—The right heart and the right creed.

THE Bible is a wonderful book if it be true. If it were *not* true, it would be a more wonderful book still. Tens of centuries have passed away since some of its human authors lived. And, in the interval, decay or change has passed upon all earthly things:—upon kingdoms, which have perished; upon peoples, which have disappeared from the earth; upon institutions, the choicest products of the human intelligence, which yet, being made subject unto vanity, neither on the character of nations, nor on the hearts of men, have left evidence or trace behind. But the Bible remains, a living and mighty power in

the world. All time has had it in charge to keep it. All providence has been bowed to subserve its gracious purposes. And now, in its grand old age,—its “silver cord not loosed” nor its “golden bowl broken,”—it holds, as by magic spell, the hearts of unnumbered millions of our race,—their light, their hope, their comfort, for the life that *now* is, their sure foundation for the life which is to come. Can any be found who are ready to disparage this word? to undervalue a book, which God, and angels, and all good men have conspired to magnify? If there be, “O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.” Truth and truth only could have given to the Bible its ever-during life: and the God of truth alone could have preserved it. “Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name.”

The text, on the most commonly received interpretation, may be considered as evidencing the Psalmist’s profound estimation of the importance of the revealed word; his habitual persuasion that, in the reverent study of Scripture, were to be obtained our noblest views of the Divine character; its rich treasury of promise far surpassing the highest human expectation, and causing its contents to be magnified “above all that is famed, or spoken, or believed of God¹.”

In a like spirit of bowing reverence to the revealed will of God, I desire to enter upon my task to-day; when,

¹ See Hammond, *in loc.* Dr Phillips also observes that the Hebrew word denotes “*the word of promise*.” The force of the passage may therefore be that God’s promises are so great and his performances so exact and true, as ever to surpass all previous expectations, notwithstanding His great name.” *The Psalms in Hebrew.*

in accordance with an intimation already given, I am to call attention more particularly to some of the sceptical tendencies of our age,—whether as manifested under the older and outspoken form of *freethinking*, or as veiled under the modern euphuism of *free thought*. On a theme so wide, we must have *some* principle of selection: and therefore, while leaving to be dealt with by the more elaborate treatises of the press, the minute objections of a critical or scientific scholarship, I shall aim to take up only those more familiar forms of unbelieving thought, with which we are brought face to face as religious teachers, and which therefore it falls within the province of our public ministrations to meet fairly and to expose.

Now this scepticism of our age may be considered generally, as having a TWO-FOLD object of attack;—namely, the WRITTEN REVELATION and the PERSONAL CHRIST;—the word inspired, and the Word Incarnate;—the message which “God, at sundry times and in divers manners,” has sent to us by the Prophets, and that same message, as it has been Divinely authenticated and developed by His Son,—the Christ of prophecy, the Christ of the Gospels, the Christ of God.

Our business to-day will lie chiefly with the WRITTEN REVELATION: and in relation thereto we shall proceed, first,

I. To take a glance at the general COURSE AND POLICY OF INFIDEL OBJECTORS;

II. To notice some POINTS IN THE REVELATION most commonly selected for attack;

III. To urge the LARGE AND VARIED CLAIMS of the Revelation itself.

I. First, it may be convenient to some of my younger

brethren that I direct attention to the general COURSE AND PROCEDURE of modern scepticism,—the covert method of its attacks, and the insidiousness of the guise it wears.

i. Thus, we observe, that as compared with the infidelity of a bygone age, modern unbelief appeals more directly to the *favour and suffrage of the popular mind*.

Our older English Deists, from the time of Lord Herbert down to Gibbon, were accustomed to address their arguments to men of culture and refinement. With many of them, disbelief was a mere efflorescence of literary vanity. They spread their net to catch the thoughtful intellects of the age: and would have looked upon the masses of the uneducated as a spoil not worth the capture. Modern sceptics deem it well to cover with their meshes a much wider surface. They aim to be popular in their writings; are proud of addressing themselves to the practical English mind; claim the merit of using great plainness of speech. And, when it suits their purpose, they *do* use it. Our last infidel importations, as I have said, have come to us from Germany. But there are essential differences between the English and the Teutonic mind. Our people, it was known, would never take kindly to the Continental Rationalism, as such,—to *à priori* speculations about the nature of God, and “the philosophy of the Unconditioned.” As a nation, we are averse from abstractions: and prefer that whatever is to be said on such subjects should be said, as far as possible, in easily apprehended, tangible, and concrete forms. Hence the mischief of the recently revived attacks on the Pentateuch. It was infidelity made easy. All the positive evidences for its

authenticity were studiously kept in the background. History with its facts; miracle with its proofs; prophecy with its fulfilments; heathenism with its testimonies, were witnesses not even cited in the controversy. The artifice attempted was, that the claims of the Mosaic record to be considered a history or a myth,—a Revelation or a fraud,—should be made to appear determinable on issues, which the school-boy could work out on his slate, or the mechanic verify with his line and rule.

And these popular forms of appeal have well served their purpose. Never has the infidelity of the lower orders presented itself in such systematized and scientific forms as it exhibits now. It is a negation no longer:—an obliteration of old faiths no longer. In outward form and pretension, at least, it is a science; a philosophy; an articulate creed. The secularist will quote his formulae to you with as much precision, as if they were the dicta of an ecumenical council¹. True there may be nothing new in the system,—nothing which had not been foreshadowed in the Positivism of Comte, or in the social and secular philosophizing of Owen². But the ready acceptance of such Atheistic teaching, among the masses, should be a lesson to us how impossible it is for the mind to rest in an eclectic Christianity;—on a professed abjuring of the facts of the Old Testament, to save the credit of the

¹ See note D. in the Appendix.

² Robert Owen, of Lanark, founder of a system called "Socialism." His proposed aim was to raise the condition of the industrial classes; but his theology, or rather his negation of it, consisted chiefly in the deification or fatalism of circumstances. For an account of his system, see Farrar's *Critical History of Free Thought*, Lect. v. 284. Comte's chief work is the *Philosophie Positive*, and has been translated by Miss Martineau.

New. Indeed the leaders of infidel thought, among the poorer classes, make no secret of this. They deem it better that religious reforms should be effected slowly, and therefore they are content to take the uprooting of Christianity as an instalment. But not there do they intend to stop, nor anywhere, until they have landed their deluded victims on that dark shore,—a land of darkness as darkness itself,—from which are banished all hope of immortality and all belief in a personal God.

ii. I note another feature in the policy of modern scepticism, namely, that in relation to so much of Christianity as it chooses to admit, it assumes to be very *complimentary and smooth-spoken*.

Against all that is vital in the system modern Rationalism can be bitter enough. But the Bible is a book of large and varied contents. And it would be strange indeed if, in the exquisiteness of its poetry, or the beauty of its narratives, or the lofty reach of its wisdom, in the grandeur of its conceptions of the Divine nature, or in the matchless perfection of its code for governing the relations between man and man,—unbelievers could not find matter for their qualified and worthless praise. And they have found it. Not far should we have to search into the pages of the sceptical literature of the day to find testimonies to the fact, that, to the Bible the world is chiefly indebted for all that is pure in morals, all that is sublime in thought, all that is noble in legislation, all that is dignified and refined in the usages of social life. The greatest of human institutions, it is declared, seem built on the Bible, neither can there be found in any other book a like aptitude for meeting the desires and aspirations of the universal heart

of man¹. Such things I say are told us by men, who yet seem to have no other object in reciting them, than that they should serve as a foil to the conclusion to which their monstrous impiety and perverted logic brings them, that yet this book, of which they speak, is “a human work, made up of some things which are beautiful and true, but of others which no man in his senses can accept,—the work of various writers capriciously thrown together, and united by no common tie but the lids of the book-binder².”

To the same spirit of disingenuous, though affected reverence for our revealed scheme, must we refer that tendency in modern sceptical writers to take the fundamental terms of Christian theology,—faith, inspiration, atonement, enlightening influences of the Spirit,—and, utterly ignoring their familiar and long accepted use, to combine them into a theological mosaic of their own. In this way, a masked portraiture of Christianity is put before the unwary by which his eyes are blinded:—only leaving him to say in utter bewilderment;—“The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” Surely, in speaking of this subtle and misleading use of Christian phraseology, we cannot express ourselves in too plain language. It is a deception, an artifice, a high misdemeanour and offence against the statutes of common honesty³.

Of course, the danger, even as it is probably the design of much of this conciliatory and fair-seeming attitude towards Revelation is this,—that people should be led to

¹ See note E. in the Appendix.

² Theodore Parker, *Discourses on Religion*, p. 243.

³ See note F. in the Appendix.

think that the difference between vital Christianity and the so-called philosophical Christianity,—in other words, the difference between faith and unbelief,—is of much less moment than it appears. And therefore, by us, the true conditions of the case must be put fairly and boldly. The modern neologian may claim to be very far removed from the Deism of the seventeenth century: but he is much nearer *that*, than he is to the Christianity of the Bible. In the main, perhaps, he professes to be a believer in the Scriptures: and, as one having strong moral and intellectual sympathies with much that he finds in the Gospel system, he claims to be considered a Christian. But he is not so. Men are Christians, in the higher sense, not by the exercise of a selective faith in the Scriptures,—taking that which may be common to Christianity and a multitude of merely human beliefs besides,—but only as they accept the holy volume in its entirety; and are prepared to recognize, in its every precept, and every prophecy,—its every doctrine, and its every fact,—a direct message from God to the souls of men.

iii. We notice one other part of the policy of modern scepticism, namely, its endeavour to rid the professing Christian Church of *all dogmatic certainty or definiteness*.

One of the writers of the Essays has observed, “In the present day a godless orthodoxy threatens as in the fifteenth century to extinguish religious thought altogether, and nothing is allowed in the Church of England, in the present day but the formulæ of past thinkings which have long lost all sense of any kind¹.” This language reflects

¹ *Essays and Reviews*, p. 297. Mr Pattison. So also, in relation to our more strongly marked dogmatic formularies, we have Professor Jowett ex-

but too truly a condition of mind which has obtained very extensively among us;—namely, a fretting against the yoke of theological absoluteness and finality; a feeling that some coercive influence is being employed against the freedom of human thought, if for the Christian dogma, in any form, there be claimed a permanent jurisdiction over the religious conscience. Minds of this kind ask for a wide margin of belief; a plastic, flexible terminology which may mean anything or nothing; scope for the exercise of the sentimental, and the poetic, and the emotional;—in order that, under cover of that paradoxical mental condition, which is half faith, and half infidelity, they may believe as much or as little as they please. Hence a good deal of the haziness and cloud which marks the style of our neological writers. They shun, as it were an adder in their path, anything that commits them to a distinct theology. You take up one of their books,—perhaps a sermon. The thought is tender, the image is graceful, the appeal is fervent, the rhetoric is flowing, but all is indefinite,—a nimbus of golden mist. From beginning to end there is no *doctrine*¹.

pressing his “hope for the future that these distinctions of theology are beginning to fade away.”

¹ Dr Newman, an acute observer of the state of religious thought, has recently reminded us of his words in 1839 in a contribution he had furnished to the *British Critic*. “In the present day mistiness is the mother of wisdom. A man who can set down half-a-dozen general propositions, which escape from destroying one another by being diluted into truisms, who can hold the balance between opposites so skilfully as to do without fulcrum or beam, who never enunciates a truth without guarding himself against being supposed to exclude the contradictory.....this is what the Church is said to want, not party-men, but sensible, temperate, sober, well-judging persons, to guide it through the channel of no-meaning, between the Scylla and Charybdis of Aye and No.” *Apologia*, p. 193. See also note G. in Appendix.

Now apart from the danger that this nebulous and indeterminate theology may soon become no theology at all, and that the dimly discerned and twilight forms of truth may soon lose all shape in the night of unbelief, it seems well to warn any, who may have begun to be fascinated by this air-beating and impalpable teaching, that they stand already on the sloping ledge of Gospel condemnation. The obligation of religious belief, as laid down by Christianity, was a new principle in the ethical systems of the world. But of the new religion it was the distinguishing mark. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." "I came that I should bear witness to the truth." "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." Such words contain a strong protest against all undogmatic Christianity,—against all teaching which we are either afraid to express, or are not able to express in plain and intelligible terms. To set lightly by a doctrine which claims to have been sent from heaven; to be content with misty and undefined notions concerning it; to relegate all that is distinctive about it to a limbo of myth, and incertitude, and doubt, cannot but be a dishonour to its infinite Author. The charge commonly brought against our time-honoured formularies is that they bind us to a severe and exact terminology in relation to truths, which, from their nature, we can only know imperfectly. Surely this can be no reason why the little we do know should not be determinately expressed. Whatever revelation God has seen fit to make, must have been designed to become the object of a rational belief; and, as such, must admit of

being expressed in some of the intelligible forms of human speech; whilst as to the mystery, construct or reconstruct creeds as we may, and make them broad and facile as we may, it is obvious, from the subjects dealt with, that we can never bring them absolutely within the limits of human thought, and that it is no reproach to Revelation, but rather a recommendation to it, that in some of its disclosures those limits should be overpassed.

Against all schemes, therefore, for a theology drawn up in the language of a charitable and elastic vagueness, we contend that the question at issue is, whether, in relation to truths which we confessedly know but in part, we ought not to be careful to know that part clearly? and whether on subjects, which all must comprehend imperfectly, it is not the duty of every one to be right as far as his faculties enable him to go? "He that abideth not in the doctrine of Christ," it is declared, "hath not God." How can we abide in it, if we know not what the doctrine is? If there be a "faith which was once delivered to the saints," we must contend for it, and that earnestly. A Christianity without dogma is a nullity. It is not "the Word of God magnified above all His Name:"—but rather His Word, having all the parts which most magnify His Name, cancelled and blotted out.

II. But I pass on to the next part of our subject, or the POINTS IN THE WRITTEN REVELATION which are more commonly selected for attack.

i. First among these are the MIRACLES. These have been attacked with a virulence, with an industry, with a

keen and persistent logic, which shew but too plainly what an impregnable fortress of revelation this evidence is felt to be. It seems as if Rationalists were conscious that if they did not succeed in overthrowing miracles, they must become Christians. Hence the forms of attack have been various. First, the existence of the miracle, as a fact, was denied. The work wrought was no miracle at all: but an effect produced according to some occult physical law, which, being known only to the worker, would make the phenomenon appear like a miracle to the ignorant looker-on. Then the *literary reality* of the miracle was brought in question. It was never meant to be read as history. It was an inserted legendary graft upon an otherwise true narrative, and which might be detached from the record, without the slightest damage to its integrity. We answer confidently the separation is impossible,—as impossible as would be the elimination of the vein from the sculptured marble, or that of the interlacing and embedded fibre from the leaf of a tree. Every page of revelation, of the Gospel history especially, sparkles with miracle. The book is a firm, hard conglomerate of fact and prodigy,—the two things, like web and woof, forming one entire fabric. Bolingbroke admitted this long ago. “The miracles in the Bible,” he says, “are not like those in Livy,—detached pieces that do not disturb the history. The whole Bible history is founded on miracles. It consists of little else: and if it were not a history of them it would be a history of nothing.”

Then there was the objection of *incredibility*. Could any amount of testimony prove a miracle true? To this one answer is supplied in the admitted indissolubility of

the two parts of the narrative, the historic and the miraculous. The Exodus and the passage of the Red Sea rest upon the same basis of historic evidence. And if we accept the one, as a well authenticated fact, we must accept the other also. But besides this, it is to be urged that testimony lies at the foundation of all our knowledge. Upon it, when carefully weighed and sifted, philosophy builds her inductions, legislation its judgments, the whole commerce of human life its confidences and its laws. And hence to foreclose the argument against testimony, in the case of any visible fact, by an *à priori* canon of incredibility, is the very caprice of argumentative despotism:—hardly exceeded, in its irrationalness, by that usage of some African chiefs, who, to save themselves from being troubled by evil tidings, made a law that any man who brought them, instead of being listened to, should be put to death for his pains¹.

Then there is the objection profanely put forth by some modern unitarian writers, as represented by an able periodical, and expressed in such words, as, “A miracle looks upon God as a ’prentice Creator changing his mind,” “improving with practice,” obliged to mend upon the original constitution of things, the world being shaped in so poor a way that it “does not answer His intentions,” and He therefore must alter its laws to meet new con-

¹ Parker, a bitter enemy of miracles, disclaims all sympathy with these modes of disposing of miracles antecedently and without enquiry. He says “the question of miracles is one of fact to be settled by historical evidence only.....I think miracles are entirely possible. I think God can manifest Himself in a thousand ways that He never did reveal Himself in, and I can’t say that he won’t to-morrow.” *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. I. p. 47.

ditions¹. Who sees not, in this, an assumed definition of a miracle, which it is known every intelligent theologian would repudiate? No doubt it may suit the purpose of Hume and the Essayists to speak of a miracle as “a suspension of the laws of matter” or a “violation of the order of the material universe²,” but, in its received theological acceptance, a miracle is no more than an effect produced by Divine power in some way, that is out of the observed course of ordinary and sensible operations; or as Dr Thomas Brown describes it, “a new effect, supposed to be produced by the introduction of a new cause³.” In so describing it, we say nothing about the laws of nature being interrupted; but only that the manner of its visible operations is changed: which change, however, we presume to be effected by some other law that we are supposed to know nothing about. The miracle is no more contrary to nature than the ordinary phenomenon is. It is something in addition to what we know of nature;—the introduction of a higher element of power which we do *not* see, into a lower element which we *do* see.

The last form of the objection to be noticed and probably the more common one, in our day, is that a miracle is in its own nature impossible; in other words, that the Omnipotent is fettered by His own laws; that conditions, developing themselves according to an order

¹ See *Westminster Review*, Oct. 1864.

² “The enlarged critical and inductive study of the natural world cannot but tend powerfully to evince the inconceivableness of imagined interruptions of natural order, or supposed suspensions of the laws of matter.” B. Powell, in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 110.

³ *Enquiry into the Relations of Cause and Effect*, quoted in Mill’s *System of Logic*, Vol. II. c. XXV.

of eternal sequence, have been impressed upon the physical universe, and that, even by Him who first gave them being, they are now beyond recall. Very difficult is it to see how any but an Atheist can take this ground. For every Deist, of whatever school, believes in the fact of creation. And, creation, begin when it may, and be brought about how it may, innovates upon the constituted order of things; is a deviation from the observed law of sequences; is something contrary to all antecedent experience; in a word, is a miracle¹. The Atheist is not troubled with this difficulty. Matter is his God: and, as its laws are eternal—to him, there can be no miracle. But to none but the Atheist: so that, in regard of their proper theological status, we can see no difference between the philosopher that says with his lips, “There is no miracle,” and the fool that saith in his heart, “There is no God.”

ii. Another objection commonly taken against the written revelation is the alleged disagreement of some of its statements with the *facts and discoveries of modern science*.

By some persons, it seems to be supposed, that Revelation and science must always be afraid of each other; and always jealous of each other. But surely they ought not so to be; because what Kepler beautifully calls “the

¹ M. Guizot in his recent work observes, “what is creation but a supernatural fact, the act of a power superior to the actual laws of nature, and which has power to modify them just as much as it had power to establish them. The first of miracles is God Himself: there is a second miracle—man.” *Meditations on the Essence of Christianity*, p. 100. See the same form of argument admirably worked out in the *Eclipse of Faith*, pp. 245—260.

finger of God and the tongue of God," can never be contrary the one to the other. Whatever the appearing discrepancy be, it must be one of our own making; and proceeding either from our too hasty generalizations upon the facts of science, or else from some ill-considered and mistaken interpretation of the words of Scripture. This remark will not unfitly apply to some of the objections taken by scientific men to the Mosaic record of the Creation, and especially to the commonly assumed date of our world's beginning. The interpretation was undoubtedly a hasty one which assumed this date to be coeval with the creation of man. The Bible nowhere affirms this; and a contrary inference, favouring the existence of a pre-Adamite world, will be found among the conjectures of the early Christian writers, long before the scientific difficulty involved in the popular assumption had been thought of¹.

This may serve as an instance of hasty conclusions drawn by the friends of *Scripture*; but have not the advocates of *science* sometimes drawn hasty conclusions also? Of course this pulpit is the very last place in which a man would have the temerity to undervalue the results of scientific investigation of any kind: whilst, with regard to geology especially, we are all prepared to hail it gladly as one of the noblest fields ever opened for human research. Still, when successive theories, in relation to this science, are urged as being at variance with Scripture, is it not competent to us to ask, Have all these geological hypotheses been in accordance with one ano-

¹ See references to Jerome, S. Basil, S. Greg. Nazianz. in Dr Pusey's *Prophet Daniel*, p. xvii.

ther? Has not system risen against system, and theory displaced theory, till the disciple of a science, itself but of yesterday, finds himself already walking over the graves of defunct philosophies, and not knowing how long shall be in the ascendant the system which he is adopting now? Science itself is waiting for a matured and fully developed geology; until it comes, there is as little room for timid misgivings on the one side as for an over-forward confidence on the other¹. At all events, in relation to any of these alleged disagreements with modern discoveries, all we are to look for, in Scripture,—all that, on its own shewing, we are entitled to look for,—is, that wherever scientific subjects enter into the narrative, there be found, in it, that general harmony with observation and phenomenal fact, which shall make the document intelligible to all readers, and, in its leading and essential features, true to all times. And such with all confidence we aver it is².

The same form of reply will avail in the case of other scientific objections to the contents of revelation, taken from the department of language, and history, and antiquities. Experience has shewn that the source of most of these objections is to be found in hasty deductions, or superficial observation, or in some form or other of in-

¹ One who will not be suspected of disloyalty to the best interests of science has well observed: "I can only say that in my judgement doubt and delay are better than headlong haste and baseless confidence, on questions so large and deep; and that as we shall never entirely get rid of our ignorance, there seems to be some advantage in not throwing off the consciousness of it. And we shall be able to bear our ignorance the more patiently, if we have not looked to science for that which science cannot give." Dr Whewell's *Indications of the Creator*, 2nd ed. p. 29.

² See note H. in Appendix.

exact or imperfect knowledge. The utter refutation of the charges brought by Volney against the Scripture records, founded on his mis-reading of the ancient inscriptions at Denderat and Thebes, as well as the discovery, by Laplace, that the Indian records, supposed to be fatal to the historic claims of Moses, involved an astronomical impossibility¹, may fairly be quoted in support of this view. Other instances might be easily cited. And if, on the one hand, they suggest to an objector the lesson of scientific modesty, on the other they should suggest to the believer the duty of a patient and trustful waiting. Time and human progress will be found to be great interpreters. Difficulties which a century ago would have been given up as hopeless, are every day yielding to the solvent of a well-ripened scholarship, or the more advanced condition of historic science;—thus not only turning to the account of a corroboration of the sacred record, the mistakes of the superficial sciolist, but shewing how ready true science of every kind is to become the handmaid of religion, and lay her offering at the footstool of the revelation of God². Science claims, and claims justly, to be a preacher of the great Name of God. But behold, a

¹ See Dr Wiseman's *Lectures*, pp. 69—73. Other examples will be found in Hamilton's *Pentateuch and its Assailants*, *Introduction*, p. xix; and in Garbett's *Bible and its Critics*, *Boyle Lecture*, p. 117.

² Akenside's Hymn to Science will be recalled:

Then launch through being's wide extent,
 Let the fair scale with just ascent
 And cautious steps be trod:
 And from the dead corporeal mass,
 Through each progressive order pass
 To instinct, reason, God.

greater than science is here. "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name."

III. On objections against the written word I have not time to insist further; being anxious to offer a few observations on the LARGE AND VARIED CLAIMS OF THE REVELATION ITSELF.

i. Thus, looking at the evidences from their positive side, we are entitled to urge the *rational* claims of the Revelation;—as answering to the demands of right reason, as affording scope for the exercise of an intelligent faith; as meeting that irrepressible craving for certainty on moral subjects which is the first need of the awakened mind. This, no revelation could be to us unless we could regard it as infallible; that is, unless it were, in some unique and transcendental sense, "God's word written,"—the actual inspirations of the Everlasting intellect, adapted to the mental and moral constitution of man. And we may so regard it. We claim for the Scriptures only what they claim for themselves,—that they are the oracles of God; very truth of very truth; a collection of utterances, proceeding direct from the excellent glory, and reproduced, in all their Divine purity, on a written page. We bind ourselves by no theories of inspiration. Grant that the controlling influence on the minds of the sacred writers was sufficient to authenticate their message as a revelation sent from

There, Science, veil thy daring eye,
Nor dive too deep, nor soar too high
In that divine abyss;
To faith content thy beams to lend,
Her hopes to assure, her steps befriend,
And light her way to bliss.

God, as well as to secure an infallible directory to us in all things pertaining to salvation, and with speculations as to the nature or extent of the influence employed,—we have nothing whatever to do. On some subjects in the Revelation, we must suppose the highest degree of Divine illumination would be employed, interdicting the writer from setting down a word or syllable of his own. In other departments of the record, it is conceivable that room should be left for the limited intermixture of the human element. Our faith requires the Divine element chiefly, as we have intimated, on this account—that we may be assured of the certainty of the things revealed. Without defining inspiration therefore, and without theorizing about it, it seems a good rule to suppose so much of the supernatural in a revelation, as was needful for the ends proposed, and no more.

In furtherance of the same view, we are permitted to urge the *historic* claims of the word. If history and documentary evidence can be believed in any thing, it can be believed in this, that, fifteen hundred years before the Christian era, the Jews had a religion given to them which they believed to be a revelation from God: and as either from necessity or from choice, this people became, in the course of time, to be mixed up with the most celebrated nations of the earth, their annals may be said to have points of contact with universal history. Hence, in support of the truth of the Old Testament records, we are able to adduce the consenting testimony of all history, all time, all races, and all tongues: to bring corroborations from the earliest documentary sources it is possible to consult;—from the most cultivated ages of Greek and

Roman literature; from traditions however distorted and disguised, culled out of the mythologies of all nations:—insomuch that we may say boldly that, to deny the claims of the Old Testament, would be to make documents a nullity, authorship a fable, testimony a lie; would be to acknowledge that we could have no certain canon of literary authenticity to guide us, and in effect would overturn all history.

But especially ought we to urge the *moral* claims of Revelation as the only system which meets man in his ruin, and the deep exigency sin has brought upon him; as proving its Divine original by its marvellous adaptation to all the circumstances of human nature; as making the most august disclosures of the character and perfections of God, both as the moral Governor and gracious Redeemer of our race; as providing for the recovery and restoration, as well as for the pardon and acceptance of a fallen world; as training the Church for all its responsible duties to the end of time; as throwing open to us the doors of the heavenly kingdom, and shewing how we may be made fitted for its joys. It is in this aspect, especially, that David in all his Psalms delights to magnify the Word of God. Let one instance suffice. In his matchless description of the planetary heavens, in the nineteenth Psalm, we have a contrast between the teachings of natural and revealed theology. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork.” This is nature’s mission, and all her mission;—of the method of a sinner’s conversion she is able to teach us nothing. But when in the next strophe, the Word of God is brought in, effects of a higher kind are assumed to be wrought, and the

triumph of grace appears in the new life of the souls of men. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul¹."

ii. Once more, we hold ourselves entitled to urge as a strong argument in support of the claims of Revelation, that there are no difficulties chargeable upon it which do not press *with equal, if not greater force, upon the systems of natural religion.*

Christianity has its distinctive difficulties, no doubt. Its doctrine of a personal Tempter; of the fall of humanity by the sin of Adam, of its recovery by the Incarnation of the Son of God, of its restoration to Divine and heavenly fellowships by the agency of the Holy Spirit, whilst meeting, if true, all the aptitudes of our moral nature, and throwing a flood of light on some of the deepest problems connected with the destiny of our race,—yet does not leave the revealed scheme entirely free from some perplexing considerations. The question is, of what kind are these perplexities? And can any system of pure Theism plead entire exemption from them?

Now these perplexities arise, for the most part, out of our relations to God as a moral Governor:—relations, which necessarily suppose the existence of sin, of a revealed law, of an adequate satisfaction to the Divine justice, or failing that, of a righteous retribution to be visited on the moral agent. Of these, as being ultimate facts of the Divine existence, Christianity offers no explanation.

¹ Lord Bacon has well observed: "As concerning Divine philosophy or natural theology, it is that knowledge or rudiment of knowledge concerning God, which may be obtained by the contemplation of His creatures.....The bounds of this knowledge are that it sufficeth to convince Atheism, but not to inform religion."

It takes them as the pure Theist is obliged to take them,—(that is if he believes in a moral government at all,)—as congruous to the first principles of right reason, and yet beset with some insoluble problems, approach the question from what side you will. Sir William Hamilton has well observed “no difficulty emerges in theology, which had not previously emerged in philosophy.” It is not by sweeping away the Christian dogma, that you can sweep away that which gave occasion to it. The doctrine of atonement, for instance, may be a great mystery, but is it a greater mystery than its alternative,—the whole legislation of heaven set at nought by the unconditional forgiveness of sin? In entering upon such speculations, men seem to forget that the real difficulty lies further back; that they must begin at the beginning; and enquire, whence it is that evil ever came to have place amidst the works of a Being who must have hated it, and must have had power to exclude it, if He would? The Christian goes back to the Satanic rebellion, as accounting for the first historic manifestation of evil, but not as solving the mystery of its beginning,—a mystery, which he believes to be hidden in the depths of the Infinite counsels, and before which therefore it is the highest philosophy to bow.

And yet it is out of this mystery of evil,—around us, within us, lying at the centre of our very being,—that nearly all our moral perplexities arise. They are not the product of Revelation at all. Revelation did not *create* the necessity for a daysman between us and God; or *create* the consciousness of unfitness for the fellowships of the heavenly state; or *create* that haunting Nemesis of transgres-

sion which pursues man to the border-line of his earthly being, and which, if he is immortal, he feels must pursue him still. All these are facts of his moral condition, existing wholly independent of the Bible, and which would continue to embarrass and perplex him, if every vestige of Revelation should be swept away. The only thing to be charged upon Christianity is that in relation to all this moral disturbance, both in the world and in the hearts of men, "it plentifully declares the thing that is;"—what it is, whence it is, why it is, and how it is to be taken away. If, in its methods of relief, there be some things which are above our comprehension, it should be remembered, that when the evil is an unmeasured mystery, we naturally look for something of mystery in the cure. From the depths of an unfathomable abyss, had come up some awful influence, having permission given to it to damage and derange the moral universe of God,—whence, but from the far-back recesses of the Infinite Intelligence, could be evolved a scheme of such searchless profundity and wisdom, as at once to restore the harmony, and to counteract the sin? In rejecting this scheme because of its attendant moral difficulties, the infidel is only thrown back in utter and more unrelieved abandonment on the difficulties he had before. He cannot get rid of them; and he cannot explain them. On his principles, the evil he is conscious of is an effect without a cause. The immortality he looks forward to is a gloom without a gleam. The Moral Governor he acknowledges is a sceptreless, a limited, and even an inconsistent God.

Time allows not that we pursue our argument further. The permission of difficulties, in a revelation from the

Infinite mind,—whether those of a moral kind in relation to the general scheme of Christianity, or those of a critical kind, connected with the contents of the sacred volume itself,—not only affords no valid reason for doubting the truth of Revelation, but supplies a positive argument in its favour: because “he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties as are found in the constitution of nature¹.” Nor is this all: the question is, to say the least, an open one, whether even had such a thing been possible, a Revelation, entirely free from difficulties, would have been expedient for ourselves? For, as Burke has well observed, “this amicable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial².” We desire not, therefore, that the things pertaining to God should be made too easy to us. On the contrary, we believe that the absence from the sacred page of every obscure or perplexing statement would have caused to be lost to the believer, many supports to his faith, many incitements to his diligence, many motives to his prayers for Divine guidance and illumination,—while yet, it is morally certain, that such freedom from difficulty would

¹ Bp Butler, quoting from Origen. On the logical relation between doubt and difficulty, a writer, whose psychological experience of *both* has probably exceeded that of most men, thus expresses himself: “Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt, as I understand the subject. Difficulty and doubt are incommensurate.” Newman’s *Apologia*, p. 374.

² Burke introduces the line from Virgil:

“Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit.”

neither have restrained the objector from his cavils, nor have cured the unbeliever of his pride.

Again have I to ask of the younger part of my auditory to suffer from me the word of exhortation—two words.

The first is, beware of *the busy mocker*; of the man who delights to fling heedlessly the seeds of unbelieving thought; of him who, like the mad man in the Proverbs, casts about him “firebrands, arrows, and death,” and then exclaims, “Am I not in sport?” Many such persons there are: and, for the most part, they are as unscrupulous as they are heartless. Armed perhaps with difficulties which they have been at no pains to look into; with objections which have been answered again and again; with arguments they know to be specious, and hypotheses in which they do not believe themselves,—they hesitate not to sow, in the heart of a young man, that first seed of religious doubting, which though it be the smallest of all seeds at first, may, in the end, become a great tree; a tree which will continually spread forth its branches till it has destroyed, by its withering and wasting shadow, all reverence for a father’s teaching, and all faith in a father’s God. And what will the mocking scorner have left you as compensation for that pile of cast-off beliefs, which tells the story of his triumph? He calls it a peace. You find it a solitude—a dreadful solitude:—a dreary blank of soul with no truth in the past, no solace in the present, no hope for the future. You look up; but the God is silent—if there be One! You listen for some voice from the spirit within you, but you catch nothing but the murmur of an almost desired annihilation, or the low moan of unutterable despair. Say not, I am dealing

with mere alarmists' fictions, in speaking thus. By many of you will have been read that picture of an overshadowed grave, described, in such thrilling words, by a living prelate, when preaching before the sister University¹. Whilst if further proof be wanting of the insupportable loneliness of soul, which comes when faith in Revelation is gone, let one testify who knows what the experience is. "Having given up its belief in Divine revelation the mind is haunted by a sense of deprivation....It is useless for reason to convince itself to weariness that Christianity is a fable, while the heart keeps protesting that it contained a response to her need, whose absence leaves her cold and void. It would be much better for reason to cease its claim to be solely attended to, till her wants have been supplied²." Oh! who sees not that there is a chastisement of unbelief even in this life: and that, apart from the retributions of a future world, there is awful truth in those words, "He that believeth not is condemned already."

The other practical observation I wish to leave with you is, that a right understanding of the truth will always be found in connection with right affections towards the God of truth. "If any man will do His will," said our Lord, "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." You cannot be ignorant of the fact that, on the principles of Christianity, all unbelief is sin, and all faith is the gift of God. Scripture always assumes the sufficiency of its own evidence to convince, if conviction be honestly desired, and if the means for arriving at conviction be earnestly and devoutly employed. The uncertainty or the darkness

¹ See note I. in the Appendix.

² *Thoughts in Aid of Faith*, by S. Hennell, p. 57.

is not in the Scripture: "'tis man's dim eye creates the obscurity." Of a celebrated divine in Pope's day, and deemed worthy of honoured mention in his verse¹, it is related, that when a young man, on one occasion, entered his study, saying that his mind was sorely perplexed with some Scripture difficulties, he said to him, "Before I hear your difficulties, let me ask you one thing, did you take them in humble prayer to God before you came to me?" With a natural shame, the young man confessed he had not. "Then," replied the divine, "I must decline to hear you. Prayer is one of the first duties of natural religion: and he who lives in the neglect of *that*, must not expect to solve the difficulties of a religion that is revealed." The reproof was just; and proceeded upon a supposition, which all observation goes to confirm, that the common seat of infidelity is in the heart. Until the moral obstacles to the reception of the Gospel are taken away; until a man has come to feel, in his own soul, the adaptation of the Bible disclosures to all the exigencies of his moral condition,—to feel, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the sufficiency of the Word to enlighten, to console, to guide, to sanctify,—magnify that Word as we may, he will never be able to discern in it all the traces and handwriting of the living God. The characters indeed are there, graven as with an iron pen, distinct and clear as the stars of heaven,—but the veil upon the heart remains untaken away, and there-

¹ The divine referred to is Dr James Foster, a preacher in the City, of some eminence, as appears from Pope's lines :

Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well.

Epilogue to Sat. Dial. I.

fore the man reads in vain. Such a man is a subject not for our reproofs, but for our compassions; not so much for the convincing argument as for the subduing prayer:—prayer that he may be brought under higher and more effectual teaching; prayer that the fetters of an intellectual pride may be broken; prayer that he may be led by the Spirit into all truth,—that truth which Christ has revealed, and the only truth which can make him free.
AMEN.

SERMON III.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST, AS INTERPRETED BY MODERN CRITICISM.

MATTHEW XVI. 13.

Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?

Change in the form of modern sceptical attack—Science of historical criticism—I. The claims of Christ—Views of older infidels—Of Priestley and Belsham—Modern Unitarianism—Mythical theory of Strauss—The neo-Christianity of America—The “Life of Jesus” by Rénan—Its inconsistencies—Unfair dealing with the New Testament—II. Insufficiency of all humanitarian theories to solve the problems of Christianity—Of the personal life, circumstances, or character of its founder—Influence of Christ over his own countrymen—Success of Christianity in the first ages—Admission of Gibbon—The Divinity of Christ the only adequate solution—Conclusion.

THE Church of Christ will be a militant church to the end of time. Her enemies can be driven out only by little and little. The victories she achieves, however great, are never final: and even at the moment when she is flushed with a recent triumph, she must gird herself for the strife again. Our own times supply us with a proof of this. The infidelity of the age is “like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest.” Repulsed with shame, in its attempts against the inspired authority of the Old Testa-

ment, it revives the bygone attacks on the Divine original of the New:—gathers up the spent and blunted arrows, which had fallen harmlessly before the stronghold of Judaism, to point them against the central doctrine of Christianity,—the majesty, and might, and glory of the Eternal Son of God. In relation to both these parts of our revealed system, however, it is note-worthy that our adversaries have assigned, to one form of argument, a distinguished prominence,—the argument, I mean, supposed to arise from an application of the modern science of “historical criticism.” The object of this science,—that of enabling us to eliminate the residue of truth to be found in any legendary or fabulous materials, in the department of history, so as to part off the respective territories of fact and fiction,—we should all allow to be good. And, in the case of documents, where the materials are doubtful, and the presence of imposture is, on good grounds, really to be apprehended, the principles of such a science might be most profitably employed. But no such doubtful character can be proved to belong to the writings of the New Testament. These records have been proved to be *generally* credible, again and again,—sealed by the blood of martyrs, and accepted by the scholarship of all ages,—and we therefore protest, at the outset, against the right to class our Gospel narratives among those legendary and unreal creations of a dark age, which, until filtered through a new critical process, we are not at liberty to accept.

Still, in considering that phase of scepticism which we enter upon to-day,—that which has respect to the personal claims of CHRIST,—it may be expedient, in

accordance with the tendencies of modern thought, to approach the question from its purely historic side; to contemplate the Founder of Christianity just as we should any other personage, who had performed a conspicuous part in the world's history;—waiving, for the moment, the claims of the New Testament to be considered a Revelation from God, and putting the Evangelical record on the abstract footing of a trustworthy historical writing of the period. The enquiry will bring us face to face with the different theories which have been propounded in relation to Christ,—who He was, what He was, whence He obtained the authority He uniformly claimed to make laws for the consciences, and to give life to the souls of men. “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” Let us proceed to consider,

I. THE VIEWS put forth by MODERN RATIONALISTS on this subject; and

II. The UTTER INADEQUACY of them to explain the FACTS OF HISTORY, in relation either to CHRIST or to CHRISTIANITY.

Our first duty,—and in view of the solemn thought that we are dealing with the claims of the Lord of Glory, the Author of life to souls immortal, above and below, of necessity a painful duty,—is to take a glance at the impious answers which unbelievers, of different schools of thought, have returned to that question of the Holy One, “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?”

These answers are both many and diverse. On no side of the evidence for the faith, has the ever-shifting form of infidel attack changed more completely than in

relation to the person and claims of Christ. Audaciously consistent with its own principles, the older infidelity sought to emancipate itself from the encompassing difficulties at a bound, by declaring Christ to be an impostor,—His miracles a cheat, His doctrines a plagiarism, His sanctity a simulated appearance, His whole mission and life a lie. Against such a view all the demands of historical probability protested; and the ground has been long and very generally abandoned. Then followed the speculations of the Socinians, and the more modern Unitarianism of Priestley and Belsham: and this latter system, as somewhat less repugnant to the feelings of reverent and pious minds, still lingers among the traditional varieties of a so-called Christian belief. But the system, if system it is to be called, has hardly ever got beyond a fasciculus of evangelical selections. It has never consolidated into a settled scheme of faith; and has never sought to confront itself with the practical problem, how a supernatural Christianity came to be originated by a humanitarian Christ. Hence nothing has come of this theory. Without effort to make proselytes, and without seeming to care whether it were even holding its own, English Unitarianism has been hitherto content to live on, in cold and segregated respectability,—numbering some ingenious men on its side, but, as a religion, neither endangering the nation's belief, nor reaching the nation's heart¹.

¹ Coleridge says of this system that it “never did and never can subsist as a general religion, for, 1. It neither states the disease on account of which the human being hungers for revelation, nor prepares any remedy in general, nor ministers any hope to the individual. 2. In order to make itself endurable on Scriptural grounds, it must so weaken the texts and authority of Scripture, as to leave in Scripture no binding ground of proof in any-

Coming down somewhat nearer to our own times, we are met by the mythical theory of Strauss, according to whom Christ was a real person, possessed of the most commanding qualities, grand and god-like in His enthusiasm, and therefore easily raised to the rank of a Divinity by His credulous and admiring followers. The Gospels, on this shewing, were neither to be rejected as false, nor received as historically true: but as consisting for the most part of myths, embodying the conceptions of Jewish enthusiasm in relation to the kingdom of the Messiah.

That in this separation of the fabulous from the historic, in the Gospel record, this bold theorist should relegate, to the region of myth and fable, all that was vital to the faith and hope of the Christian, was to be expected. Accordingly, in the mythical system, nothing is left us of Christianity but a fleshless and unbreathing skeleton. Every thing that savours of the supernatural is cleared away with remorseless sweep; and wherever with Peter, or Mary, or Thomas, we would prostrate ourselves before the author of our Redemption, the Christ of the Incarnation vanishes out of our sight, and there appears nothing before us but the work of an enthusiastic Jewish imagination, revelling in visions of a Messianic kingdom, and seeing in Jesus Christ a worthy occupant for its throne.

The system of Strauss startled by its ingenuity and boldness, but, in its original form, it had but a short-lived success. Calm investigation soon discovered that, as an

thing. 3. Take a pious Jew, one of the Maccabees, and compare his faith and its grounds with Priestley's: and then for what did Christ come?" *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*, p. 181.

explanation of Gospel phenomena, it was inadequate; as the rationale of a great religious movement, was not borne out by facts; and as an application of the science of historic criticism, was a mistake. Hence the important modifications introduced by the author, into his recent edition, now declared to be "the most complete and satisfactory solution of the great religious problem of the day." In this work, profiting, as he alleges, by the learned researches of the Tübingen school, the author gives up the application of his mythical theory to large portions of the Gospel, choosing rather, at the bidding of his new allies, to regard them as deliberately fabricated statements. We need not stay to expose the fallacies of the several Tübingen theorists. Their own hands are red with the blood of the slain. Strauss overthrew the scheme of Paulus, and now Bauer has reduced to a nullity the scheme of Strauss; so that we have only to leave these learned dreamers to themselves, and the work of destruction will go on fast enough. Our concern is chiefly with the proof furnished by their recent agreements, that the terminus to which all these Rationalistic criticisms do, and must lead, is no other than that, which the more outspoken Deist had reached a hundred and fifty years ago,—namely, that in all its essential particulars the New Testament is both a falsehood and a fraud¹.

The theories of Parker and the rest of the modern American School, in relation to our present subject, have

¹ Strauss's own account of the change in his views is, that he had merely pressed his mythical hypothesis too far. He says, "True, I have been refuted: but only as one who thinks he owes a thousand pounds is refuted when it is shewn he owes only a hundred."

scarcely enough to distinguish them from the more extreme forms of English Unitarianism, as represented by Hennell and Martineau,—to entitle them to any very particular notice. Christ is declared to be “the greatest person of the ages;” “the proudest achievement of the human race;” “the greatest fact in the whole creation of man.” That He should be “worshipped as a God is no wonder, because good men worship the best thing they know, and call it God;” and the moral attainment of Jesus was as much above “the hierarchical conception of Jehovah” at Jerusalem, as it was above “the sacerdotal conception of Jove” at Rome or Athens¹. All these praises are accorded to Christ, however, because He is thought to be the worthy exponent of that new American Christianity, to which has been given the name of “the absolute religion;” or as its advocates describe it, “the absolute morality; the obligation of absolute love to God and man.” In this fact alone,—the transcendent excellence of the teaching of Christ as an absolutist,—they find a reason for all the success which the Gospel has met with in the world. “The Word of God grew and prevailed.” “The new doctrine passes from its low beginnings on the Galilean Lake, step by step, through Jerusalem, Ephesus, Antioch, Alexandria, Corinth, Rome, till it ascends the throne of the world, and kings and empires lie prostrate at its feet².” No answer is provided to the question, How it spread so rapidly,—with pagan power against it, with Jewish hatred against it, with the pride of philosophy

¹ *Selected Sermons* by Theodore Parker, p. 33.

² *A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion*; T. Parker: p. 233. See Note J. in the Appendix.

against it, with everything against it, in the condition of the world at large, or in the universal heart of man?

Of recent attempts, however, to make out a consistent human Christ, the most remarkable, and, on the score of literary attractiveness, the most dangerous, is that contained in the *Life of Jesus*, by Ernest Rénan. Hardly, I think, could the difficulties of the problem involved in the life and character of Christ, be made more forcibly apparent, than in the reckless and extravagant shifts to get rid of them, resorted to by this accomplished writer. The merest tyro in the history of the sacred canon stands amazed, on finding the authority of a great European scholar pledged to such a statement, as that "the three synoptic Gospels were the issue of an obscure and entirely popular elaboration:"—the early Christians "having each his copy of the fragmentary biography of Papias," which, swelled by accretions of the reported sayings and doings of the Master, inserted in the margin, became the foundation of our present Evangelical narrative¹!

More desperate, if possible, because more directly against all evidence, is this writer's attempt to account, by human means, for the excellency of the doctrine of Christ, and the world-wide acceptance it has received. For, against all the information that has come down to us of the intellectually sunken condition of the Galilean population, we are gravely assured that Jesus was brought up in a part of Palestine, where the national faith was more pure, and robust, and healthy than in any other,—the moral teaching of the Galilean synagogues being altogether of a higher cast than that which was commonly

¹ See note K. in the Appendix.

inculcated at Jerusalem. And these outward advantages, combined with a genius of transcendent order, and a character of unrivalled dignity, and strength, and sweetness, enabled Him, it is alleged, to give forth those lofty precepts, which have since been accepted as the guide and moral text-book of mankind. But this was not all. The temper of the times, as well as the whole tone of Messianic thought, clamoured loudly for the miraculous, in any one who should aspire to be a leader. Jesus must be a wonder-worker, or He could never succeed. And, sorely against His will, He at length yielded to the demand. He persuaded others, and probably persuaded Himself, that certain apparent cures, wrought on the sick, and the possessed, and the epileptic, were the real effects, as possibly they were, of personal contact or converse with Himself. The concession to this popular avidity for miracle, however, it is declared, became too strong for Christ. "He was no longer His own master." "His conscience gave way;" until at length, (profound and sincere is the apology offered to a Christian audience for repeating such blasphemy,) in the pretended miracle of the raising of Lazarus, He becomes the unwilling conniver at a fraud, got up for interested purposes by His friends!

Such is the last humanitarian theory, with which a man reputed to be a scholar, and still professing to be a Christian, has shocked the religious feelings of France, and Europe, and the world. Hardly can we account for the putting forth of such a production, except upon the supposition of the writer being inoculated with that inordinate vanity, that passion for notoriety at all cost,—which both Burke and Robert Hall have noted as the characteristic

feature of French infidelity. Intent only upon astonishing by the audacious novelty of their speculations, men of this class feel that the more sacred the interests they trifle with the better. Distinction in the secular departments of literary enquiry, even if they could obtain it, would not appease their insatiate appetite. They prefer to thrust their flesh-hook into the hallowed vessels of the sanctuary, and to pour profane contempt on the things that men most revere and love¹.

Great, however, as has been the sensation created by this work on the Continent,—even to the extent of attracting to the same field of inglorious labour a writer who has all the vanity of Rénan without his power², it may well be doubted whether, after the first impressions produced by its fascinating style have worn off, the book will retain any practical hold on the minds of our own countrymen. The entire spirit and plan of it do not fall in with our national aptitudes. We are not so easily captivated by the picturesque, and the sentimental, and the dramatic, as our Continental neighbours are: while a point of comparison with them, still more fatal to the success of this new “life of Jesus,” will be found in this,—that, as a

¹ An elegant writer has well observed: “Nothing tempts the mind so powerfully on, as to have successfully begun to demolish what has been long regarded as most sacred. The soldiers of Cæsar probably had never felt themselves so brave as after they had cut down the Massilian grove: nor the Philistines, as when the ark of the God of Israel was among their spoils: the mind is proud of its triumphs, in proportion to the reputed greatness of what it has overcome.” Foster’s *Essays*, Essay I. p. 39.

² Michelet, in his new work, entitled *Bible de l’Humanité*. See note L. in the Appendix. “The gross profits of *La Vie de Jesus*, in two years, came to £17637 16s. 8d. and the demand for it is still very great.” Paris correspondent quoted in the *Guardian*, Dec. 22.

rule, our people have, at least, some knowledge of their Bible¹. Hence, probably, the very little of direct refutation which this work has elicited from the scholars of this country². As an attack upon Christianity, it seems to be considered beneath criticism. We cannot employ grave dialectic weapons against the fictions of a romance: and a writer would seem to put himself out of the pale of controversy, who draws upon the credulity or ignorance of his readers for his arguments, and upon his own imagination for his facts. Moreover, it is probably felt, with regard to all intelligent readers, that even if they should not consider themselves insulted by its unscientific dogmatism, or trifled with by its utterly unsupported statements, or outraged by its irreverent and ribald sneers³, they could hardly fail to see how entirely inconsistent the book is with itself: and how utterly impossible it would be for it to abide the condemning ordeal of its own contradictions. Thus, Christianity is allowed to be “the grand inauguration of a new era of religious thought,”—“the promulgation of a universal and eternal religion for humanity,” “the one sublime system that has fixed for ever the idea of pure worship,” and yet, at the same time, is declared to contain little that is original in itself, or which might not have been gathered from pre-existing documentary

¹ It is satisfactory to learn from the agents of the Bible Society on the Continent, that a great interest has been stirred up in the French people to read for themselves a book which has supplied to their countrymen the materials for such an exquisite romance. See last paragraph of Note M. in the Appendix.

² An able article has appeared in the *Edinburgh* upon the work, and a powerful exposure of some of its inconsistencies will be found in *The Christ of the Gospels and Modern Criticism*, by Dr Tulloch, of St Andrew's.

³ See Note M. in the Appendix.

sources. Whilst of the author's portraiture of Jesus, all that can be said is, that it furnishes the strangest example of the moral grotesque ever penned. It is a misshapen human solecism, from which the common intelligence of mankind turns away, and to which no sober history would give a place in its page. For, we are asked to look upon one, "in whom was condensed all that is good and elevated in our nature;" one who "amidst the assemblage of low common beings rises as a pillar towards the sky, to bear witness to a nobler destiny;" one, to whom "the universal conscience has decreed the title of the Son of God, and that with justice;" one who, "by the strength of his heroic will, conquered heaven;"—and yet, in another page, this same being is presented to us as a cunning Thaumaturge; a weak enthusiast; something between a fanatic and an impostor;—in a word, a mere adventurer, content to urge proofs in support of his mission, which, in his heart, he despised, and sanctioning the use of dissimulation, and chicane, and evil, so only that good may come. God of all truth and righteousness! What do some men think of Christ?

We might now pass on to consider the inadequacy of these rationalistic theories in relation to the person of Christ, even if freed from contradictions. But, before doing so, it seems competent to us to protest determinately against the whole style of criticism, adopted by these sceptical writers, in dealing with the gospels. Criticism, indeed, it is not. It is rather a succession of arbitrary and illogical assumptions, forbidding that criticism should be employed. Enquiry is fore-closed,—absolutely interdicted by the most unwarrantable and unheard of postulates. For thus stands

the case. A collection of writings has passed into the province of history. The wisdom of ages has put its seal upon them. The laws and institutions of the most enlightened governments are framed upon them. But we are asked to reconsider this consensus and verdict of the whole civilized world. And we are told how we must proceed. The book, though coming to us as a homogeneous and closely compacted whole, must be disintegrated. The chaff must be separated from the wheat. First, the Acts of the Apostles must be left out of the enquiry. Then the Epistles. Both these may form parts of a continuous chain of evidence; and, with the general structure of the narrative and with each other, may disclose minute coincidences which fraud or falsehood would never have thought of. But, in dealing with Christ and Christianity, it is dishonestly assumed, our business lies wholly with the four Gospels. How much of these shall be taken? Well, first there must be an elision, from Matthew and Mark, of every thing which involves the preternatural,—accounts of miracle, or prophetic fulfilment, or a superhuman Christ. Luke must not be accepted without larger deductions; because, ill-done as his work is at best, the materials for it were obtained at secondhand. As to John, his book is no gospel at all. The whole tone and character of it is in flagrant contradiction to the synoptic Gospels, and the composition is a mere attempt to pass off, as the utterance of Christ, the bad philosophy which the writer had learned in the Gnostic schools. A selective option being thus left to us, in dealing with the different parts of the Gospels,—to relegate to myth some, to misinformation some, to ignorance and conceit some,—

the poor residuum is reserved for impartial study and investigation.

We ask, does the history of literary criticism furnish anything parallel to this? Would any scholar think it fair to deal thus with the writings of Herodotus or Thucydides? And must there not be an end of all documentary tests, of all canons of authenticity, of all rules for ascertaining the certain, and the credible, and the true in history, if men, on sitting down to examine into the veracity of a written document, are to have the permission conceded to them beforehand, that they may take so much of the book as pleases them, and reject the rest?

II. But, apart from this unfairness in the method of building up a theory, we proceed to shew the INSUFFICIENCY of the various theories themselves, whether German, American, or French, either to solve the historic facts of CHRIST AS A PERSON, or to account for CHRISTIANITY AS A GREAT POWER IN THE WORLD.

i. And, first, we observe of these theories that they are irreconcilable with the position which Christ always occupies *as the centre, and life, and sustaining power of His own system.*

Of the founders of many false religions we do not even know the name. The institution has outlived the man; has spread itself by accretions of influence from extraneous sources, without any continuous support from its author, or any further indebtedness to his name. It is far otherwise with the religion of the Gospel. There is, and can be, no such thing as Christianity without Christ. He is its Alpha and Omega. All truth is in Jesus. He has not

come merely to shew us the way to the Father. He is HIMSELF the way. He is not a Divinely accredited Teacher of the truth only. He is HIMSELF the truth. As we read through the Gospel narrative, we seem to be conscious of nothing but of one living, moving, all-pervading presence. The Divine philosophy, which underlies the teachings of the book, we seem scarcely aware of,—so completely do all faith, love, veneration, trust, cluster and crystallize round the one sublime personality,—the Teacher of Nazareth, the Christ of God. Nor is it an accident, arising out of the structure of the narrative, that the mind is thus absorbingly taken up with the individual, rather than with what He said, or what He did. The Master himself meant it so to be. Above the Gospel as a system, or the teachers of it as men, the central figure towers loftily. The *doctrines* laid down were to be had in remembrance of the disciples because HE delivered them. The *works* wrought were to be grand in their eyes, because they were wrought in HIS NAME. In going forth to preach, they were to consider themselves witnesses, not so much for the truth of the Gospel, as for the person and glory of its AUTHOR. “Ye shall be witnesses unto ME both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”

So much appears on the face of the sacred narrative. It is borne out strikingly by other testimonies. We cannot read the account of the early persecutions, without seeing that it was not so much with a view to attest faith in a system, that martyrs laid down their lives, as it was to declare their faith in a *person*. This comes out plainly in the well-known correspondence between Trajan and

the younger Pliny. Even after their apprehension, the Christians were to be let go on one condition; namely, that they would speak injuriously of Christ; that they would utter that name, which to them was a name above every name, with the required formula of malediction. But nothing, we are told, could induce them to do this. They were witnesses not for a theory, not for a principle, not for an abstract theology, but for the personal Christ; for one whom they believed to be the worthy object of all adoration and worship; for the ascended, living, and enthroned God¹. Some forms of proposed recantation which were offered to them, as the price of release, they could and did recite; because they could recite them in their own sense,—as Polycarp did, when the proconsul required him to pronounce the words, “Away with the Atheists.” But when to this was added the further condition that they should revile Christ, then, like the same faithful bishop, the Christians felt that the time of martyrdom was come, and that they must palter and concede no more².

Not without weight, we submit, should these considerations be, in estimating the personal claims of Christ. Neither Trajan nor Pliny, in themselves, had any wish to be persecutors. Subject to certain reasons of state, there was, in both of them, a desire to shew to the Christians the utmost leniency;—whilst to so much of the new teaching as accorded with a philosophical theism, there is reason to believe they were both favourable. But when, for belief in a speculative theology, the new religionists held up for

¹ See Note N. in the Appendix.

² See Note O. in the Appendix.

adoration a personal God,—one who would brook no rival, share no worship, rest not in His triumphs, till the shivered simulacra fell down before the cross of the crucified,—the amenities both of emperor and proconsul were forgotten. They feared not Christianity but Christ. They succumbed to the power of an invisible personality. They assisted unconsciously in the apotheosis of Jesus of Nazareth, and confessed to the magic power of His name, as much as if they had believed in His resurrection from the dead.

ii. We note further that, viewed apart from all miraculous intervention, the history of Christ presents a problem incapable of being solved by the *limited opportunities and circumstances* of His earlier or later life.

A man may make for himself a place in the world, or have a place made for him; but we are generally able to trace the causes which have led to his success. He may have been endued with a native force of character, which enables him to “grapple with his evil star.” Education or family connection may have given him great advantages above his fellows. The age may have been in a state of ripeness for great changes, waiting only for some strong mind or will to turn the occasion to account: while strange conjunctions in the political heavens—events fitting in so curiously as to look like the very caprice of history—may have favoured the inauguration of a great social crisis. Still all is human, historic, easily accounted for on the known principles of moral causation, and the observed dependencies of human events.

We ask, can the place which Jesus of Nazareth made for Himself in the world eighteen hundred years ago, and the influence which His name has exerted ever since, be

thus accounted for? Apart from miracle, and apart from prophecy, and limiting our view exclusively to the accepted facts of His earthly life, are the means and conditions supposable, under which an ordinary human personage, even though possessed of the highest natural endowments, should be able to teach what Christ taught, and to do for the world what Christ has done?

To answer this question, we take the facts as they lie on the surface of the history. In the reign of Augustus Cæsar, a man is born into the world, in an obscure province of the Roman Empire. His parents are poor,—his reputed father being an ordinary mechanic. Nothing noticeable occurs either in his infancy or childhood, if we except the visit to Jerusalem, at twelve years of age. His deportment on this occasion is remarkable, no doubt, exhibiting a ripeness and strength of thought above his years, and in advance of the moral intelligence of the times. But still no condition of humanity is transcended; and the light which had flashed forth for a moment, as far as the world at large is concerned, goes out again in darkness. Another long interval elapses, and manhood is reached; yet all passes without mark, without observable preparation, without a single inch of ground being cleared away for the erection of that mighty platform,—soon to be the scene of transactions which should convulse the world. Suddenly that platform is raised. It comes up, as it were, in a night,—like the gourd over the prophet's head, but not to perish or pass away. Nations flock to the shadow of it. Unbidden and unknown, Jesus comes forth. Without patronage from the rich, without countenance from the learned, without sympathy from the men of His own

nation, he emerges from the deep seclusion of Nazareth,—a friendless artizan-prophet, to bear his resistless testimony against superstition, against hypocrisy, against a corrupt priesthood, against all falsehood, and against all sin. He gathers a little band around him,—obscure in station like himself. And having travelled with this handful of disciples over the cities and villages of Palestine, and having, in the course of his journeys, given to them a body of teaching, unsurpassed for the purity of its precepts, and the sublimity of its doctrines, and the augustness of its disclosures,—after a ministry of three short years, and, under a ban of infamy and disgrace, he dies.

Such are the mere external facts of Christ's life. Can we account, by means of them, and according to the ordinary developments of man's work in the world, for all that He said and did? Assuming Him to be human only, and to have done nothing to show that He was anything else, will the supposition account for the effects, whether adverse or friendly, produced by His own personal ministry?—for the restless apprehensions of Herod, the sore perplexities of Pilate, for the inveterate malice of the chief-priests and rulers, or for the self-sacrifices of those who had courage enough to espouse His cause? Not easily, and not soon, does a man acquire an ascendancy over the popular mind, such, that in a time of profound peace he can shake to their centre the foundations of social life and order. He must, as a rule, have time to develop his plans; a strong party to espouse his cause; the assurance of a sympathy, wide and deep, with the object he is endeavouring to accomplish. Christ was destitute of all these secondary appliances, yet He was loved, feared,

envied, hated, adored. Let us look at these adverse circumstances a little more closely, in order to see, how utterly inadequate any humanitarian hypothesis must be to account for the influence acquired by Christ over all classes of His countrymen.

Thus His social position was against Him. Born in poverty, brought up to a trade, He had to go forth to His ministry, without purse or scrip, and, even for the necessities of daily life, was obliged to trust to friends to "minister to Him of their substance." All this must be vastly hindering to the prosecution of a great undertaking. Even the poor will rarely take a beggar for their leader: and it seems to be a part of our nature's mammon-worship that we should hardly acknowledge a benefactor if he be born of poverty. "There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man¹."

Especially must these lowly antecedents be a great barrier to a man who comes forward as a *public instructor*: as the founder of a new school of thought: as one bent upon overturning the traditional belief of his age and nation, and setting up a new religion in the world. No reputation for great natural abilities will, of itself, recommend a man in such a case. He must be able, at the outset, to urge, as a claim upon our confidence, that he is possessed of all the advantages of learned experience, and

¹ Eccles. ix. 14, 15.

high mental culture. Tell us that he is a mere handicraftsman,—that almost up to the day of his claiming to be considered as the light of the world,—the very leisure for study had been denied him by the stern conditions of working-life, and the taunt of scorn is instantly cast upon his pretensions, “Is not this the carpenter?” “How knoweth this man letters having never learned?”

So again the extremely limited time for accomplishing the objects of His ministry, must be unfavourable to success. Three years only, and very little of that period spent in Jerusalem, represent the space during which Christ originated and placed upon a basis of time-enduring strength a system of moral teaching, the most perfect, our enemies themselves being judges, that has ever challenged the acceptance of mankind. We ask confidently, Does the history of philosophy, of legislation, of any achieved success of the human mind furnish any parallel to this? Did Abraham require no more than three years to prepare for the setting up of his dispensation? How long was Moses in educating himself to be the leader, and lawgiver of his people? What had three years been to Pericles, in building up the polity of Athens, to Justinian in framing a code for the empire, or to Aristotle, or our own Newton and Bacon, in maturing those mighty philosophies, which were to guide the intellects of ages? Such familiar illustrations force the question upon us,—is it possible, upon ordinary human conditions, to explain how an obscure, unbefriended mechanic, beginning his teaching labours at thirty years of age, and dying at thirty-three, could, in that brief interval, secure the establishment of a system, which should effect an entire revolution of human thought, and

sweep the most hoary superstitions from the face of the earth?

And then, once more, the *nature of the truths* Christ had come to announce, was adverse to His success. A prophet may often ensure large and ready acceptance for his message, if he will be content to “prophecy smooth things;” if he will stoop to humour the prejudices, or appeal to the passions, or extenuate the follies and vices of those whose suffrages he is seeking to enlist. Mahomet owed much of his success to a policy of this kind. His heaven was a thing of sense, and climate, and gross materialism,—a paradise for oriental natures, not an immortality for mankind. The preaching of Christ, on the contrary, was a crusade against the pride, the folly, the wickedness of the universal heart of man. It spared neither age, nor sect, nor calling. It deferred neither to prejudices, nor established usage, nor traditional forms of faith. Towards the world, and the hurtful things that are in the world, it exhibited the same posture of unvarying antagonism,—often, to the superficial observer, appearing as if its hand were against every man, and every man’s hand against it. The fact led to the shortening of His career. The land could not bear His words. The Gospel was seen to be a spiritual religion: and men were intolerant of any thing spiritual,—the Pharisees of a spiritual worship: the Jewish people of a spiritual kingdom: the Sadducees of a spiritual God. Even the little band of disciples that were attached to His person had little sympathy with a good deal of His theology. They understood it not: were offended at it: and it was in their hearts often to go back. Yet, in spite of all this, the religion increased. Its Founder became more and

more formidable. A mighty spell was seen to be at work on the spirits of men, and Christ was the magician who held the wand.

And as the influence which Christ obtained over His countrymen can never be explained, on the supposition of His unassisted humanity, so never, on such a supposition, shall we be able to account for the absolute impeccability of the *character*, on which much of that influence was founded. We need not hesitate to say that, regarded in its absolute and unimpeachable faultlessness,—its freedom from those infirmities, and mistakes, and overtakings of natural passion, and mixtures of selfish motive, found more or less in the most perfect of mankind,—the character of Christ is not human; is not of this world; proclaims in Him the presence of some inhabiting Divinity, which could only have been imparted to a Being coming down to us from the upper world. We must have believed in an incarnation of fact, if not of dogma. The testimony of our opponents to this lofty sinlessness of the Saviour is expressed in language, which borders very closely upon worship. Their homage to the superior moral stature of Jesus above other men is as open as the kiss of Judas,—is it a breach of charity to add,—and as sincere? But then look at the dilemma into which men are forced by this admission. This faultless character was either a reality, or an invention. If it were a reality,—an embodied fact of history, a mental and moral development, witnessed in the acts and conversation of a living personage eighteen hundred years ago, then the owner of this *faultless character* could have been a teacher of nothing but *faultless truth*. Neither

deceit nor error could be found in Him. So that in regard of the prophecies which he professed to fulfil, or the miracles which He declared He had wrought, or the Divine honours to which He claimed to be entitled, there is, on this recognition of His moral perfectness, an entire end of the argument. He is Divine, if He ever lived at all.

What then are the difficulties which beset the alternative hypothesis? that this exquisite portraiture of majestic excellence was a fiction of the New Testament writers,—a sublime creation of Galilæan thought? These difficulties are many. First, the disciples did not comprehend this character themselves. They more than once took exception to some of the most beautiful and characteristic acts of their Master's ministry; whilst the prophecies, out of which they might have adumbrated some approximation to the Messianic portrait, were so little understood by them, that they could have the fulfilment of them set before their eyes, without knowing it. "We thought that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done."

Again then, we ask, Whence did this company of unlettered men derive the materials for this character of transcendent perfectness? Where found they the original for Christ, the faultless One? Could the records of history have furnished it, even with all the colouring with which hero-worship loves to invest the objects of its idolatry? Could the fictions of the poet have furnished it, with all the license given to him to roam in the most cultivated gardens of humanity, and to cull from them

every creature's best? Assuredly not. The power to create such a character would be as great a miracle as the character itself. This conclusion is accepted, almost in so many words, by one, who with all his enmity to the doctrine of Christ, and with a keen perception of the moral sublimity of His character, saw the hopelessness of denying to Jesus a real place in history. "Shall we hold," asks Parker, "such a man never lived? the whole story is a lie? Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived, but who did their wonders, and thought their thoughts? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but Jesus!"

The problem of the historic Christ, considered as human, and human only, will be hampered with yet more insoluble conditions if we look at the posthumous effects of His teaching. We are not at liberty to assume the fact of the Resurrection, in our present method of argument, and therefore we will leave out of the account that great fact, which yet, if it be not true, the voice of testimony should never be listened to again. Enough for our purpose, however, that the Man Christ Jesus is cut off: has passed away under a cloud:—his history, as we

¹ *Life of Jesus*, p. 363. The admission of Rousseau on the same subject is familiar, but is worth repeating. "Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without obviating it. It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality, contained in the Gospel; the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing man than the hero."

should expect, to become the property of a swift oblivion, and his name, in the next generation, to be clean put out. But we pass over an interval of two centuries, and the fleeting image of a three years' life stands out as a central figure in Imperial history. His religion has spread over the three great continents of the civilized world: and caused the leaven of a Christian influence to penetrate into the philosophy, the commerce, the laws, the arts, and all the institutions of the Empire. "We are but of yesterday," is the uncontradicted challenge of Tertullian, "and we have filled everything that is yours. We have left you nothing but your temples. We can out-number your armies. There are more Christians in a single province than in all your legions¹."

And what becomes of this Christianity in after ages? To this question we can return no better answer than is contained in the candid admission of Gibbon himself: who says, "While that great body (the Roman Empire) was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men; grew up in silence and obscurity: derived new vigour from opposition: and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol...Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to this period, or to the limits of the Roman Empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of the human kind, in arts and learning, as well as in arms. By the

¹ *Apol. c. xxxvii.* See other testimonies in Chevallier's *Translation*, note, p. 431.

industry and zeal of Europeans, it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa...and, by means of colonies, has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients¹.”

We pursue this view of our subject no further. Our position is, that separated from the preternatural, the uncreated, the Divine, Jesus of Nazareth is a phenomenon, in the annals of the world, which never has been accounted for, and never can be. We have had brought before us the conditions of a personal life. They are contracted; unpromising; to anything great or good, adverse in the extreme. It is required, on the assumption that there was no Divine interference in the matter,—that the life of Christ was, in all respects, a natural life, and in no degree assisted by miracle,—to account for all its subsequent developments;—for the character of faultless purity; for the doctrine of transcendent grandeur; for the mission of resistless success; for the Name, a precious thing, and a life-giving, and a tower of strength to all true believers unto this day. The doctrine of a Divine Incarnation, with its concomitants of miracle and prophecy, will sufficiently solve this mystery. But will anything else?

With strong confidence we answer, No. The heart of the problem will be found to lie in the infinite perfections of the Lord Jesus; in the immutableness and eternity of our Divine Emmanuel,—tabernacling in the flesh, for a season, in order to quicken to new life our fallen, diseased, and darkened manhood, and yet as “Head over all things to His Church,” remaining “the same

¹ *Decline and Fall*, II. 265. See Note P. in the Appendix.

yesterday, to-day, and for ever." In this view we take up the language of our immortal Hooker and say, "Let it be counted folly, or fury, or phrenzy whatsoever, it is our comfort and our wisdom, we care for no knowledge but this that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered,—that God hath made Himself the Son of Man, and that men are made the righteousness of God." Yes; this mystery of godliness it is, that solves, satisfactorily and sufficiently, the grandeur of the Saviour's triumphs, whether in the world or in the Church,—whether among the assemblies of the glorified, or in the hearts of the sons of men. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come." We know whom we have believed. We are persuaded there is a sure refuge, and we flee to it. We see a hope set before us, and we lay hold on it. We behold the golden sceptre held out, and we advance, without fear, to the footstool of the eternal throne, to pour out our sins and sorrows into the ears of a personal Saviour, and a personal God. We feel that we are subjects of Christ's world; members of Christ's body; children of Christ's grace; heirs of Christ's glory. We acknowledge, with Peter, "Unto you which believe He is precious;" precious for the dignity of His nature; precious for the infinite reach of His atonement; precious for the sufficiency of His grace; precious for the aboundings of His compassion, and sympathy, and love. All the needs of humanity centre and find their rest in Christ. We are conscious of wanting a way, a truth, a life;—a prophet, a priest, a king:—a wisdom, a righteousness, a sanctification, a redemption;—but if asked to whom shall we seek for

these, or "to which of the saints wilt thou turn?" the response of the grateful Christian heart is, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living GOD." AMEN.

SERMON IV.

THE CHRIST OF GOD.

MATTH. XVI. 15, 16.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Importance of right views of Christ—His own jealousy upon the subject—**I.** The transcendent mystery of His nature—Modern thought and the supernatural—**II.** The miracles of Christ—Not accepted without scrutiny—Alleged familiarity of the age with miracles—Inconsistent with the effect of them on the multitude—**III.** The claims of Christ and Jewish prophecy—Testimonies to the truth of Old Testament predictions—The Messiah of prophecy and of the Gospel history—Christ the complement of the revealed system—**IV.** The fitness of a Divinely-human Christ in order to the work of redemption—In relation to the Law of God—And to the peace and happiness of man—The Christ of modern criticism an open blasphemy—Conclusion.

WHETHER as a trial of a man's creed, if it be sound,—of his personal religion, if it be deep,—of his hope of final salvation, if it be well-grounded, and sure, and scriptural,—no question can be imagined more searching and decisive than that proposed by our Lord to the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ?" If a man be wrong in his views of this fundamental fact, so far as relates to his own moral state before GOD, he will be right in nothing else. Whether as a cause or an effect, with light views of Christ will be

conjoined light views of sin, light thoughts of the Divine holiness, a light appreciation of what is due to the claims of a righteous government, a light estimation of that true conversion of heart without which no man shall see GOD. All things take their colouring from this first mistake. The doctrine is wrong. The practice is wrong. The heart is wrong. The man is yet under the power of a blinded mind; and must be content to take rank with the most ignorant of those, concerning whom the Saviour said, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

The fact is not without significance, that our LORD was very solicitous on this point of a just recognition of His claims; that He always expected to have conceded to Him, the possession of a moral and intellectual pre-eminence which was more than human. The advancement of such a claim may be cited as another of the problems, involved in the Saviour's life and character. For there is nothing men scrutinize more jealously, and resist more determinately, than lofty pretensions; the boast of superior wisdom and intelligence; the demand, on the part of one who aspires to be a leader, to have every utterance that falls from him regarded as infallible and oracular. We have only to suppose the case of a human teacher, first introducing himself to the learning and philosophy of the age with such language, as "I am the light of the world:" "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life:" "Ye are from beneath, I am from above,"—to perceive that, were it only for his arrogance and vanity, such a man, instead of being gladly listened to, would be received with the most unmeasured disgust and scorn. Yet when we read of Christ saying such things, we never

seem to feel,—it may be doubted whether the bitterest opponent of His Divinity ever feels,—that there is any overstepping of the modesty of true greatness. We see nothing to compromise “the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” even while He is assuming an attitude of supremacy above the whole race of mankind. Whence comes this absence of any jar or discord in the character? Why is not its unity rent or injured by the display of such opposite qualities? The answer is obvious. As we read the history, we are impressed irresistibly with the persuasion that we stand in the presence of a Teacher sent from God. And, in this view, that setting up of a claim to universal deference, which would be offending to the last degree in an ordinary human teacher, becomes, in Christ, nothing more than the dignified and natural assertion of a rightful authority. In proclaiming Himself to be greater than Jonas, wiser than Solomon, older than Abraham, we see Christ sought not His own glory. “If I honour myself,” he declares, “my honour is nothing. But my Father honoureth me:” and that honour I must both myself vindicate, and see vindicated before men. “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias or one of the prophets.” The answer does not satisfy. ‘The world at large may make these blind and ill-considered guesses as to my person,’ intimates the Holy Speaker. But ye, my witnesses, my messengers, the torch-bearers to the uttermost parts of the earth of a heaven-kindled flame,—“whom say YE that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

We resume the enquiry entered upon in our last discourse,—namely, Can the facts of Christianity be accounted for, apart from the Divinity of its Founder? Our method, on the former occasion, you will remember, was to take the low ground of our LORD'S earthly life,—the familiar and accepted facts of Christian history,—holding in abeyance the supernatural parts of the narrative, and, from the basis of a veritable human record, to work up to the conclusion, that Christ must be something more than man,—that He *said* more, *did* more, *was* more, than was possible to a being, constituted according to the highest type of manhood. We have now to try to reach the same conclusion by a different process: and, taking the whole body of revelation as it stands, and accepting the records for what they profess to be,—to see whether, in the Divine personality of Jesus Christ, viewed in connection with the purposes of His mediation, we have not an adequate solution of those perplexing phenomena, which the hypothesis of the human Christ is found to be wholly insufficient to explain.

In this further vindication of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, there are four principal topics on which it will be necessary to insist; namely

- I. THE TRANSCENDENT MYSTERY OF HIS NATURE;
- II. THE GREATNESS AND ALMIGHTY POWER OF HIS WORKS;
- III. THE ACCORDANCE OF HIS LIFE AND HISTORY WITH THE REQUISITIONS OF JEWISH PROPHECY; and

IV. THE PRE-EMINENT SUITABLENESS OF HIS QUALIFICATIONS FOR UNDERTAKING THE WORK OF MAN'S REDEMPTION.

I. We begin by going up to the fountain-head of all our revealed mysteries,—the DIVINE INCARNATION OF JESUS.

We feel justified in this course. The position we claim to have made good, in our last discourse, is, that the super-human element of the Gospels denied, there is as yet no adequate solution of the mere historic facts of Christianity in the field. Men have been found, in every age, and of every school of thought, prepared to reject the message of Christ, and yet not one among them has been able to surmount that first stumbling-block, the moral problems involved in the personal history of Jesus of Nazareth. To make out a consistent human Christ, theory after theory has emerged,—from Germany, from America, from France, each destructive of the one that had gone before,—and yet all unable to stand before the inexorable logic of the historian,—the accepted credibilities, whether of Matthew and Mark on the one hand, or of Pliny and Tacitus on the other. Our business, therefore, is to shew that the only theory which can stand before these witnesses, is that which accepts, in all its sublime and simple truthfulness, the Gospel narrative of the LORD JESUS as a DIVINE personage,—as One placed above the conditions of ordinary creature life. Here, as it seems to us, we have a cause adequate to the effect; the marvellous, explained by the marvellous; an Infinite Agent interposing for an infinite need, and therefore with proportionate success. The two-

fold nature of our Blessed LORD is the key-note to the whole Gospel-history. Itself an unsolved mystery, it solves all the mysteries of the narrative besides. The mystery of Divine perfectness in the character; the mystery of heavenly wisdom in the doctrine; the mystery of superhuman power in the works; the mystery of triumphant success in the mission, with all the benefits it has achieved for mankind;—this, and much more than this, we can satisfactorily account for, if, as we look on that obscure prophet of Galilee, our faith enables us to say, “Thou art the Christ the Son of the living GOD.”

But in so saying we are met, at the outset, by an objection, closely allied to that already adverted to, in relation to the miracles of the Old Testament. ‘Your position,’ it is alleged, ‘involves the existence of a supernatural person, interfering in the affairs of the world in a supernatural manner, and claiming to be the object of supernatural predictions. We deny the possibility of all this. We hold it to be an imperative intellectual duty to reject the supernatural in any form. The impossibility of it is the final, irreversible sentence of all scientific philosophy. We maintain that it has no conceivable existence in fact; and, consequently, no hypothesis, of which such an element forms a constituent part, can have any place in a rational belief.’ The form of the objection, it will be seen, is not unlike that which by some has been applied to specific miracles. But it is now sought to push the principle of the objection much further:—the ground being taken by unbelievers of all schools, that from history, from dogma, from the whole universe of God, we must at once and for ever banish the supernatural.

Let us glance at the reasoning. The fundamental assumption common to all these objectors,—whether Positivists, Pantheists, or Rationalists,—is one, namely, the universal supremacy and eternal fixedness of nature's law. In this system, no place is left for the intervention of a moral Ruler, of a subordinating Providence, of a spirit-power above and beyond nature's power. We are thrown back upon the inexorable fatalism of Lucretius. Anything different from that which exists,—whether sight given to a man blind from his birth, or a different collocation of two grains of sand,—would involve an interference with the established causations of the universe¹. And the *nexus* which binds these, it is alleged, cannot be broken. Out of a far-back eternity, and unguided by any personal power, comes forth, in silent march, the long train of physical and historic sequences:—into the developments of an eternity future, alike uninterfered with, we are to suppose, will the train of all coming things pass on, and pass away. In the way of moral intervention, there appears to be no GOD in the past, no GOD in the present, no GOD in the future. A high and impersonal abstraction governs all things;—gathering up, and inclosing within a rigorous and unalterable system of causes and effects, the forces of nature, the distributions of providence, the history of peoples,—in a word, whatever pertains to the bodies and the souls of men.

What have we to urge against such a theory? Much every way. The common instincts of humanity are against it. Nature herself, the voice of that “inner consciousness,” to which it is so much the fashion to appeal, pro-

¹ See Note Q. in the Appendix.

tests against this deification of the mere forces, and properties, and tendencies of things. The primitive theology of all nations shews an intense yearning in man for the superhuman,—a belief in the intervention of some personal agency to avert calamity, or hear prayer; to bless the harvest, or control the storm. Some of the maladies of our nature are strong things. What was the inference which the men of Lystra drew, on seeing the manifestation of a power stronger than the strong? Did not their instincts foreshadow the idea of a Divine Incarnation? They said, “the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.”

Again; the first rudiments of philosophy are against these necessitarian theories. We all know that the system of the universe consists of two great kingdoms or departments;—the one material, in which every thing is regulated by a scheme of orderly successions,—an unbroken chain of causes and effects; the other spiritual, not governed by this apparatus of necessary causes, but ruled and administered by higher laws of its own. Still, there is no possibility of keeping the territory of these two kingdoms apart. They overlap each other at all points where moral agents are found. Man himself, as not being under the law of cause and effect in his choices, is, in that respect, outside the realm of the necessary or the material. In the freedom of his moral determinations, he is a supernatural being; and, in each notable scientific discovery, when he sets the existing forces of nature at work in combinations which were not known before, he may be said to break in upon the existing causations of the universe, as truly, though not to the same

extent, as a visible miracle does. Hence, so far from allowing that the supernatural conflicts with the system of the universe, we hold it to be an essential part of that system:—nature and the supernatural being complementary the one to the other, and both entering as common factors or co-efficients into the physical and moral administration of GOD¹.

Once more, in relation to this resolution of all things into a catena of preordained and eternal laws, we observe that it strikes at the root of all our conceptions of GOD, as a MORAL GOVERNOR. These absolutely forbid us to divorce nature from Providence;—the power that evokes a world into being, from the wisdom that shapes its destinies, or the goodness that upholds its life. To look upon GOD as the mere initiative cause of our created system, but taking no care or thought of it afterwards;—delegating to a mechanical impulse the sceptre of the universe, and leaving the fortunes of humanity to revolve upon it as upon a wheel,—may do very well for a follower of Epicurus, but surely is not in accordance with the first principles even of a pure Theism. Natural religion scorns at the abdication, by the Creator, of the throne of this lower world. “He who believes in GOD,” says Guizot, “takes His providence for granted,”—takes for granted that there is an unslumbering eye watching over the moral interests of the human race;—and therefore supposes that, when an extreme need occurs in the affairs of the dependent creation, the Infinite Ruler will not stay His hand from supplying a proportionate remedy. The supposition

¹ See some able remarks upon this subject in Dr Bushnell's *Nature and the Supernatural*, c. II. pp. 24—35.

of Christianity is, that this extreme case has arisen, and that the Incarnation of the Son of GOD is a Divine contrivance to meet the difficulty,—heaven's response to the aspirations of the universal earth. Hence foreordained of GOD from the foundation of the world as this Incarnation was, and gathered up by Him into a scheme, extending, it is likely, to other beings and other worlds, yet, to us the Divine life of Jesus must take the form of a miraculous intervention,—an intervention, justified by the exigency it was intended to meet. For man had fallen. By falling, had passed into a condition of enmity against GOD:—enmity to the holiness of His being, to the perfectness of His law, to the principles of His moral administration, to the enjoyment of His presence in the life of the world to come. By what, short of an Almighty power, could the bonds of this enmity be broken, or who, but our Divine Emmanuel, could make us again the sons of GOD¹?

Christ then, is a supernatural person, and His religion, a supernatural institution. The laws of the moral world, if left to their eternally impressed consequences, would have caused man to perpetuate his own misery, without redemption, and without a hope,—seeing that character, of itself, never changes. He that is unjust will be unjust still, and he that is filthy will be filthy still. But Chris-

¹ In limiting the argument to that aspect of the mission of Christ which has relation to man as fallen, no opinion is supposed to be offered on that larger question of philosophical theology, not unfamiliar to the ancients, but much revived in our own times, especially by some of the more learned and orthodox divines of Germany, namely, whether Christ would not have come if man had not sinned. See remarks by the Editor of Lange's *Life of Christ*, Vol. I. p. 64.

tianity is a supernatural dispensation of healing and restoration, coming down upon this apparatus of moral causes, and over-riding the law of mundane sequences by higher laws of its own:—thus vindicating the supremacy of GOD, as a Moral Governor, and, by means of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, making a way for the return of our sinning race. Of the method of such an intervention we have no particular account to give. Limited knowledge, in relation to it, is not our shame but our rejoicing. “We preach the wisdom of GOD in a mystery.”

II. But the claims of Jesus have to be vindicated further by a reference to the GREATNESS AND ALMIGHTY POWER OF HIS WORKS. “Ye men of Israel,” said Peter, “hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of GOD among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which GOD did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”

To the argument against miracles in general, as well as to the unscientific method by which it is sometimes sought to foreclose all reasoning upon them, on certain *à priori* grounds, I invited attention in a former discourse;—my aim then being to shew that the nature of the reasoning employed to extrude miracle from history, would avail equally, if true, to banish a moral Governor from the world. But, in regard of His claims to be considered a messenger sent from GOD, the miracles of Christ stand on an entirely different footing from those of Moses or Elijah. The miracles of the old Testament prophets were wrought in virtue of a *derived* power,—are never supposed

to be any thing else. The miracles of Christ were His *own*; flowing directly from Himself as a miraculous person; from His will, as a miraculous energy; from His life as a miraculous life. His works are a true and natural and proper efflux of His Godhead;—as much a part of a Divine manifestation as His Incarnation was, and appealing to the same supernatural proof as that appealed to, that He must be the Christ of GOD. “Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.”

Hence a special line of argument is taken with regard to the miracles of Christ. There seems a disposition to grant, for argument's sake, the possibility of miracles, but it is required as a condition of belief in them, that they should have been subjected to an ordeal of scientific scrutiny,—to a proper investigation by a “commission, composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists, and persons trained in historical criticism.” Of course the object of bringing forward these unreasonable scientific tests, as necessary to establish a miracle, is to bring out in bolder relief the very *unscientific* conditions under which, it is alleged, the miracles of Christ did take place, and the facilities afforded thereby either for delusion or imposture.

We seem almost to trifle with the intelligence of a Christian auditory, when we recite some of these pretended facilities. To be told, as we are by M. Rénan, that the miracles of Christ were accepted by the spectators “without scrutiny,” is surely the very wantonness of

assumption. Did the enemies of Christ accept His miracles without scrutiny? Would the Pharisees, shrewd, sceptical men as they were,—have lost any opportunity of exposing any pretended miracle? Did one answer, or two, or three, satisfy them, before they desisted from their attempt to disprove the cure which had been wrought on the man blind from his birth?

But the age generally, it is argued, was in favour of the miraculous. “To do a miracle was then thought nothing extraordinary.” “Theurgy was an esteemed and widely spread art.” “Magic was a lucrative profession: asleep or awake, men’s minds were familiar with miracles¹.” But does not this argument prove too much? If the Jewish people were so very familiar with miracles, how came the power of Christ to work them, to produce such a strong impression alike on friend and foe?—on Nicodemus declaring, “we know that no man can do these miracles which thou doest except GOD be with him”?—or on the chief priests, afraid that, if the miracle of LAZARUS should obtain much wider credence among the people, “the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation”? Surely, if Christ, in coming among them, had done no works but such as other men did, there was no reason to suppose that He would be treated differently from the manner in which other men were. But how contrary was the fact? Witness the miracle brought before us, in the Gospel of this day². The feeding of the five thousand presents no difficulty to sceptical expositors, who see in it nothing beyond “an extraordinary frugality”

¹ See *Westminster Review*, Oct. 1864. Art. Strauss.

² Preached on the Sunday before Advent.

on the part of the disciples, and “a willingness in those who had provisions, to give to those who had none.” Yet see how the incident operated on the minds of the five thousand themselves,—those persons to whom a miracle was an every-day occurrence. “Then those men when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.”

But we will not press further this argument from the works of Christ. Allowed, as they are, by all exact thinkers, to be amenable to the law of evidence,—to the law which tries their reality as facts and to nothing else,—if miracles are rejected, it may well be asked what fact in history are we expected to believe? The infidel Gibbon, whether by design or according to his wont of

“Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer,”

has well put our case for us, when, in relation to some strongly attested marvels of a later period, he observes:—“The witnesses of the fact all lived within the compass of a century: they all appeal to their personal knowledge, or the public notoriety for the truth of a miracle which was repeated in several instances, displayed on the greatest theatre of the world, and submitted during a series of years to the calm examination of the senses¹.” The force of this kind of contemporary evidence we must all acknowledge;—especially, when, as in the case of the Saviour’s miracles, so many of the witnesses were themselves partakers of the benefit. When Christ made His frequent challenges to the multitudes to be believed for His work’s sake, His appeal lay not to those who had been

¹ *Decline and Fall*, c. xxvii.

uninterested spectators of some striking but useless prodigy. He was surrounded by the blind He had enlightened, by the sick He had healed, by the lame He had restored, by the demoniac delivered from his phrensy, or the dumb whose first utterances were dedicated to his Redeemer's praise. Such men needed no further witnesses. They saw, in the works of Christ, the most convincing attestation to His claims, the seal of Heaven set to His whole mission, and life, and work. And they bowed themselves in the mighty Presence. "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified GOD, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That GOD hath visited His people¹."

III. We advance to a further stage in this vindication of the claims of Jesus, as found in the accordance of His entire life and history with THE REQUISITIONS OF JEWISH PROPHECY.

The predictive prophecies of the Old Testament, stand alone in the literature of the world:—alone for their antiquity; alone for their lofty imaginings; alone for the corroborations which all history has furnished, and continues to furnish of the accuracy of the predictions. Especially, in regard of their continuous developments, are these prophecies without any parallel. A prediction which should deal only with things near at hand, might have been humanly accounted for, as lying within the range of human prescience to foresee, or, it might be, a skilful forecasting of natural agencies to bring about. But Hebrew prophecy ranges over the entire expanse of history. It is constantly germinating and gathering strength with age.

¹ Luke vii. 16.

Every century that passes puts the predicted facts further and further out of the reach of human causation: and, in the existing circumstances of climes, and races, and national habitudes, we stand in the presence of a daily repeated miracle.

The proofs of these continuous prophetic fulfilments,—as seen in the malediction of heaven, pursuing the children of Ham through all the successions of human history; or in the fierce independence and sullen isolation from his kind, of the descendants of the Ishmaelite; or in the shivering to pieces of ancient dynasties, till they became like the chaff on the summer threshing-floor,—would admit of indefinite illustration. But the argument reaches its climax in the present condition of the Jewish people. The continued existence of such a nation, without extinction as a race of themselves, and yet without amalgamation with other races, is an unique fact. They are a people to be accounted for. Hence we hold that the best witness for a supernaturally predictive element, in the Jewish Scriptures, is the Jew himself,—the Jew as we see him now. We cannot look upon one of GOD'S ancient people, without seeing one, whose history, whose institutions, whose very countenance must carry us back to the cradle of civilization, and to the infancy of the world. His features cast in a mould of unaltering ancestral type: his vicissitudes a connecting link with the facts of universal history: his laws the same as they were delivered three thousand years ago from the burning fires of Horeb,—“the very seal not railed from the bond,”—make the Jew the central fact of the prophetic system to all time. It is his to have seen the birth and death of nations. Race after

race of his oppressors have disappeared without leaving any trace of their national existence. Deeply buried in the earth are the cities where his fathers sojourned in captivity: and only the broken column of the desert remains to tell the story of their magnificent decay. But the Jew is as a column unbroken,—standing indeed among the vestiges of forgotten nations, and seeming to be as one of them,—but, in truth, miraculously preserved of GOD, to be a witness to the nations of a moral Providence; a proclamation to all humanity, that the Scripture cannot be broken. “The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field....The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of GOD shall stand for ever¹.”

We hold fast then by the Word of Old Testament prophecy. The enquiry arises, What is the testimony it bears, when viewed in connection with the facts of New Testament history, to the Divine mission and authority of Jesus Christ? How far, if we examine the double record with diligent and honest scrutiny, shall we be led to say at the end of it, as Philip said on finding Nathanael, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write”?

Now the primary and distinguishing feature of revelation, it will be admitted, is the declaration of a Great Deliverer from sin and misery, promised under one dispensation, and given under another. It will be further allowed that, in the ages antecedent to the appearance of Christ upon earth, a widely prevailing expectation of such a Deliverer obtained, not among Jews only, but among some

¹ Isa. xl. 6—8. See Note R. in the Appendix.

of the most enlightened thinkers of heathen 'antiquity'¹. We have to enquire, therefore, What form did this expectation take, or what form *ought* it to have taken among those, who, as possessors of the oracles of GOD, alone had any authoritative information to give upon the subject? And how far does the Messianic type of a Deliverer, as set forth in the Old Testament, find its correlative in the person of Him, who, in the New Testament, claims to be this Deliverer, and to have been so ordained from the foundation of the world?

Discussions of particular prophecies, of course, we have no room for². We can but gather up the substance of the Messianic predictions, as they lie on the surface. Let us class them in some kind of order. A series of prophecies, reaching from the commencement to the close of the ancient dispensation, foretell the coming of some Great One, "the Desire of all nations." They describe Him generally, by His nature, His office, His mission, and the results which should follow. With regard to His NATURE, these prophecies, while, on the one hand, declaring Him to be a real human being; a descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David; the true offspring of a woman, though after some supernatural manner,—yet, on the other hand, speak of Him as, in some special and peculiar sense, the Son of

¹ See this point illustrated in Archbishop Trench's *Hulsean Lectures*, entitled *Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom*. He shews that there are prophecies of Christianity running through all history. See also Hardwick's *Christ and other Masters*, Part IV. c. iv. and elsewhere.

² Of those which bear more directly on our present subject, some striking examples are given, and discussed with his usual ability, by Dr Pusey, in his last noble contribution to English theology, *The Prophet Daniel*, Lect. VIII. and IX. pp. 467—491. See also Dr McCaul's *Essay on Prophecy in Aids to Faith*, p. 82.

GOD ; as having a real and operative existence in the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even from all eternity ; as the proper object of worship, and trust, and love ; and finally, as being, of right, invested with titles, which it is a primary belief of our theology to consider as restrictedly and incommunicably Divine,—such as Jehovah, the Creator, the Everlasting Father, the Mighty GOD.

With regard to His OFFICE, it is declared He shall be a Messenger, pre-eminent above all others, in rank, and power, and authority ; a Teacher, inspired with the largest measure of Divine gifts and qualifications ; a Lawgiver, authorized to inaugurate a new code for informing the consciences and elevating the characters of men ; a pacificator and mediator between GOD and His rebellious children ; and, to all who should receive Him, a Saviour from all the sin and misery that are in the world.

Once more, of the MISSION of this Messiah, and its results, these prophecies inform us, that, though in the execution of His benevolent design, Messiah will undergo the severest extremes of suffering, until He shall at length have to lay down His life for a ransom ;—yet that, from behind that dark cloud, He shall emerge to a condition of glory, and honour, and triumph ; shall be exalted to a seat at the right hand of power ; and finally, shall set up a kingdom, holy and spiritual in its nature, world-wide in the reach of its blessings, indestructible and eternal in duration, as a kingdom that shall know no end.

Such is the outline of the Messianic portraiture, as it appears on the page of ancient prophecy. The striking peculiarity of it, as we shall all acknowledge, is the strangely opposite, and apparently incompatible elements it appears

to combine. If the coming of Christ were still the object of expectation to us, our natural enquiry would be, "How is this new thing in the earth to be created? How is it possible that there should meet, in one and the same Being, the finite and the infinite, the abased and the exalted, the humanity with all its experience of suffering, and sorrow, and defeat, and shame; and the Divinity, able to wield, and all the while actually wielding, the powers of the uncreated and unchangeable GOD?" Thus, antecedently, and before a single chapter of the New Testament is opened, we are confronted with the only possible solution of the prophetic problem; namely, that in some way or other, we should behold "GOD manifest in the flesh,"—should be made to look upon some occult and mysterious union of perfect Deity and perfect humanity; in a word, that either from earth or from heaven, there should come forth a being, concerning whom it might be said, that he was "of the seed of David according to the flesh," and yet "over all GOD blessed for ever."

These, I say, are the conditions of the problem, which prophecy had put into men's hands, and which we know *were* in men's hands, before Messiah appeared. Our next position is, that they are met in the person of Jesus of Nazareth,—met in those very preternatural conditions, which modern thought is so unwilling to accept. For we take His history by itself. And, keeping entirely out of view the prophecies which had gone before, we find, presented to our notice, the portrait of One, who, "in all things had the pre-eminence;"—in His NATURE, in that, though descended of David's line, and born of a pure virgin, He allowed Himself to be the object of worship, as

being One with the Everlasting Father; in His OFFICE, in that, as a Teacher and prophet, He proved Himself to be possessed of superhuman endowments, penetrating with an Omniscient clearness into the secrets of all hearts, and the hidden things of all coming time; in the ATTRIBUTES ascribed to Him, not only as the Author of creation, and the Omnific Governor of the whole dependent universe, but as having at His supreme disposal the most inestimable spiritual blessings,—the pardon of sin, the renewal of our moral nature, the resurrection of the body from the grave, and the gift of spiritual and eternal life; in the TITLES bestowed upon Him as, “the image of GOD,” “the Lord from heaven,” “the Blessed and only potentate,” “the great GOD and our Saviour,” “the King of kings and Lord of lords.” The question arises therefore, if the requisitions of Jewish prophecy are thus satisfied; and if two independently pursued lines of investigation,—one based on an analysis of the testimonies of prophets as to what Messiah SHOULD be; the other, on the collected testimonies of Evangelists and Apostles as to what their Messiah WAS,—are found to run, side by side, in close and never diverging parallel,—can any doubt exist, that one and the same Being was in the contemplation of the writers, under both testaments, and that Peter expressed the mind of both when he said to his Lord, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God¹”?

¹ For a complete list of the Messianic prophecies, arranged with his accustomed clearness and precision, see Dr Pye Smith's *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, Vol. I. c. 4. For the corresponding fulfillments in the New Testament, see the same work, Vol. II. Books III. and IV. The full force of the argument from this source the mind does not at first apprehend. Simpson (*Plea for Religion*) reckons up one hundred and nine prophecies relating to some particulars in the life of Christ. Upon the doctrine of

It would be easy to supplement this view of the claims of Christ, based upon His fulfilment of particular predictions, by a reference to His place in that large prophetic scheme, which takes in the whole of the Divine communications to our race.

According to this scheme, the whole period of time, from the Creation until now, is occupied by three principal dispensations, which we usually denominate as the Patriarchal, the Levitical, and the Christian. Of these the characteristic feature is, that they are all marked by unity of design; that they constitute, of themselves, a gradually developing and harmonious scheme; and are occupied, especially, with the coming of a Divine person into the world, in whose work and mission, all that was distinctive and external, in preceding systems, was to have its accomplishment and consummation. Hence, of all these economies, whatever be their differences of dispensational form, the central object is CHRIST. He is conspicuously introduced under the patriarchal dispensation; is more fully shadowed forth under the law; covers the whole field of view under the Gospel. This, as we all know, is the great argument of the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, and elsewhere. The doctrine of a Divine Incarnation, taken in connection with Christ's redemptive work, is the key which unlocks the ark of all Old Testament mysteries. In the person of Christ, who is "the brightness of the Father's

chances, Bishop McIlvaine has shewn that taking only a *single event* predicted in the Old Testament, the chances against its occurrence at the time and place indicated, are as twelve millions to one. We leave to the mathematician to compute what this ratio would become, when the operation has to be performed, not upon a single event, but upon one hundred and nine vents. See more in Garbett's *Boyle Lectures*, 1861, Lect. II. p. 48.

glory," "the worshipped of all the angels of GOD," "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," at the same time that "He is partaker of flesh and blood," "tastes death for every man," is "tempted in all points like as we are,"—Paul beholds "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched and not man." In this view, every part of the ancient service became, after his conversion, invested with a new and sacred significance. Never had he been without reverence for these outward ordinances: for he knew them to be "patterns of things in the heavens." But in the light of the Gospel, they became something more than patterns. They were a parable to the eye. And the dumb things spake: and shadows stood out in defined and visible form: and, like as when Moses was hid in a cleft of the rock, it seemed as if the glory of the LORD in redemption was made to pass before him,—Christ Himself being the central radiance of the scene, and His sacrifice the clue to all that had been obscure before. From this time forward he beholds Christ everywhere. He beholds Him in history,—in the fire, and in the cloud, and in the sea. He beholds Him in ritual,—in the hyssop, and the sprinkled blood, and the scarlet wool. He beholds Him in type,—in the uplifted serpent, and the falling manna, and the smitten rock. All is enigma without the Divine Christ: all, in the light of the Divine Christ, is manifest as a blazing star. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy¹."

¹ The Author has attempted to work out the prophetic argument more fully in his *Divine Authority of the Pentateuch*. Lect. vii.

IV. The last ground on which we proposed to rest the majestic claims of Jesus has respect to the PRE-EMINENT FITNESS of His qualifications for UNDERTAKING THE WORK OF MAN'S REDEMPTION.

i. Consider this fitness in the *infinite perfectness of the sacrifice*, by means of which Christ obtained this eternal redemption for us. We stay not to reply to the cavils which human philosophy has sometimes urged against the principle of propitiation, as a means of bringing GOD and the sinner together. Let it first be shewn that the question is one which philosophy is competent to deal with. Till then, we take our stand upon facts. The doctrine of vicarious sacrifice,—of some victim to be offered up for man's sin, is known to be of the highest antiquity. Fallen man has never been without it. It never appears, on the face of Scripture, as an expedient to meet an un contemplated moral exigency,—as the peculiarity of a dispensation, or the accident of an age or Church ;—but rather as an ultimate fact of revealed science, which has been the basis of all economies, and has shaped the religious institutions of all times. Hence, throughout Revelation, throughout successive religious economies, throughout man's whole moral history, in an enlightened state, or in a dark, we never entirely lose sight of the idea of propitiation. It may be obscured. It may be overlaid. It may be mixed up with some disparaging human element : but its normal type, the just suffering for the unjust, is indestructible ;—whether as inscribed on the rude pile of patriarchs ; or as pervading all the parts of a sacrificial ritual ; or as given forth in the utterances of prophetic vision,—in the case of those who had the knowledge of GOD ; or, in the

case of the heathen,—as leading men to incarnadine the river, to rear the altar, to kindle the pile, to offer up the holocaust,—because, even without any revealed intimations of an atonement, they were unable to eradicate the persuasion from their minds, that the Great Spirit of the universe could be propitiated in no other way¹.

In the New Testament, of course, the principle takes its defined and developed form. It culminates in the sacrifice of Him “whom GOD hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,”—the truth everywhere brought out, being, that the recovery of our lost race by means of sacrifice, is part of an everlasting purpose; that the atonement of Christ is the one harmonizing element of moral government; the great central fact in the Divine administration, in which alone all the perfections of a holy nature could blend and meet.

The enquiry follows, Do they so meet in the sacrifice of Christ? or could they meet in Him, if He were not both human and Divine? Consider this sacrifice only in relation to the legislative authority of GOD. The moral law we know is a holy thing. It is the expressed mind of GOD: and, like Himself, can neither alter, nor relent, nor suffer any abatement of its claims. To suppose that it could, would be to charge awful reproach upon the wisdom

¹ Examples from all parts of the known world will be found in Archbishop Magee *on the Atonement*, pp. 99—131. “In the number of human sacrifices offered up to propitiate a Being who ‘could pardon the guilty only in consideration of the blood of the innocent,’ no nation perhaps exceeds the ancient Mexicans. The amount of victims immolated on its accursed altars, would stagger the faith of the least scrupulous believer.” Prescott’s *Conquest of Mexico*, Vol. I. c. III. p. 43.

of its Author. For any law whose penalties are unconditionally remitted, is thereby confessed by the Lawgiver to have been needlessly or unjustly rigorous at first. The mere suspending of a solemnly declared enactment would almost compel the dishonouring inference, that there had been something in the moral circumstances and liabilities of mankind, which the Almighty had not contemplated:—in fact, that, convinced of the impracticability of the service which He had required of His creatures, He has seen fit to release them from the obligation of perfect obedience, and to put up with their repentance instead. The devising of some method, therefore, whereby to magnify the law, and make it honourable, we may confidently put down as a Divine necessity. All the perfections of a holy nature would be compromised, and all the foundations of moral government loosened, if the mercy of GOD could be extended to the sinner, without some form of moral equivalent; or even if He should accept, as that equivalent, the sacrifice of a *finite* being to atone for the breach of an infinitely perfect law.

Hence, with all its searchless mystery, the doctrine of a Divine and Incarnate sacrifice is the only one which appears to vindicate the authority of a heavenly legislation. For Christ to have taken upon Him “the nature of angels,” or of any created being, however exalted, would have availed nothing as a satisfaction for the law which man had broken. The mere fact of creation would vitiate the sacrifice. For, by this very condition of being, all the faculties of the surety are pledged to GOD,—pledged to their utmost exercise. It is plain that he who is to satisfy the law for others, must be above the claims of

law himself. But this no finite creature can ever be. Christ, therefore, must be an Infinite Saviour, and His atonement an Infinite atonement. For if He be not, the law remains still dishonoured; the curse against our race is still impending; Heaven's gates are still barred against us; and the blood of Calvary has not touched that kindled fire, which threw out everywhere its sword of flame, to keep the way of the Tree of Life. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" was the question, put by the Holy One, to the disciples journeying to Emmaus. He ought. "Die He, or Justice must."

ii. And then, once more, it is only in the recognition of the Divine claims of Christ, that we see His fitness to become the world's Redeemer, in relation to ourselves,—in order to inspire us with *love for His person*, and give us confidence in His *infinite ability to save*.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living-GOD." This belief in the essential Godhead of Him who undertakes for us, is our life. It stamps all His teaching with the impress of infallible truth. It gives to His promises the force of a present and felt reality. It lowers the depths of His humiliation. It expands the heart of His compassions. It widens the embrace of His redeeming arm. It adds infinity to the vast, and omnipotence to the strong. Tell me that the blood of atonement is of finite worthiness, and my heart sinks within me. To say that it will cleanse from *much*, will never gain my confidence, unless you can say it will "cleanse from ALL sin." If, in its application, that blood could leave one offender hopeless, one heart desolate, one soul with its Æthiop's stains upon it to

be confronted with the face of GOD, who shall say that *mine* may not be that one blemished soul; *mine* the guilt of that unreached, and unpardoned sin? No: the blood by which the Church has been purchased,—we may not shrink from the sublime literalness of inspiration,—is the blood of the Infinite,—“the Church which He has purchased with His own blood¹”. Oh! who, on reading such words, does not feel how vital it is to all peace, all hope, all happy prospects of immortality, that we be able to answer aright, that question of the Saviour, “But whom say ye that I am?”

Thus, brethren, I have endeavoured to bring before you, the portraiture of Christ, presented to us in the Scripture records, as contrasted with that monstrous and mis-shapen counterfeit, to which the sacred name of Jesus has been given by modern critics. The Revelation picture stands out as a great mystery, no doubt. But it is a MYSTERY OF GODLINESS:—having GOD for its Author, infinite rectitude for its rule, the salvation of man for its end. The Christ of modern criticism is not a contradictory thing only, not an inadequate thing only, but involves conclusions, which, if they hold at all, must hold to the utter extermination of the Christian system. Any theology which denies the Godhead of Christ, the miracles of Christ, the fulfilment of the prophecies in Christ, does a great deal more than reject these parts of our revealed system. It dooms to eternal dishonour the character of the Saviour, either for goodness, or truth, or honesty. It makes Him to have introduced into

¹ A pardon bought with blood, with blood Divine,
With blood Divine of Him I made my foe.

the world, an idolatry worse than any He came to destroy, in that, being a man, He made Himself GOD. It writes on that brow, whereon truth ever sat radiant as the sun in his strength, that title of liar, which is odious in the estimation of GOD and man. It holds up as an impostor and a cheat, the all-holy and spotless Lamb of GOD!

We challenge the possibility of escaping from this tremendous conclusion. Christ *claims* to be equal with the Father; *claims* to be the terminating object of ancient prophecy; *claims* to have given sight to the blind, and life to the dead;—where, but on the lowest ledge of debased humanity, can we place Him, if at the very moment of His throwing out the challenge to the multitudes, He knew these claims were false? And if this be so, what follows? Why then, all the Evangelists, and Apostles, and confessors, and martyrs, have been found false witnesses of GOD. Then have the hopes of humanity, and the trust of all ages, no better foundation than a vision of the night. Then they that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished: and we, who are yet alive, must perish also. And we are baptized into the name of—what? And we refresh our souls with the body and blood of—what? And we hear the command given, Let all the angels of GOD worship—what? Nay, the myriads of the glorified, tuning their golden harps, and chanting their alleluias on the crystal sea, fall down before the throne of—what? why, either a *pretender*, falsely alleging that He did perform mighty works; or an *enthusiast*, so weak as not to be quite sure whether he did or not! Away with the terrible courtesy, which accords to the authors of such theories the name of Christians; or which hesitates to number them with that blaspheming throng,

for whom we can only pray, in the words of Him they have reviled,—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do¹.”

In bringing these Lectures to a close, I am deeply anxious to leave, on the minds of my younger brethren especially, a full impression of the inevitably progressive tendency of all indulged religious doubts, and, if the principles of this neo-Christianity be allowed, the one terminus to which they will naturally, if not necessarily, lead. Let us not be deceived. The real alternative with which modern thought is now confronting us is, Christianity or Atheism,—that narrow issue, neither more nor less. The halting places which are supposed to lie between,—whether an eclectic Christianity, or a refined spiritualism, or a kind of theistic philosophy,—are only sloping ledges. When we find dogma gone, historic certainty gone, belief in a righteous moral government gone, we bethink ourselves that the residuum of belief is hardly worth the keeping. And we slide down a little lower. The mist of incertitude thickens. Holding off convulsively from what, we fear, may be the next stage of an ever-darkening descent,—the disbelief of a personal GOD,—we catch at the first interjected shadow ; and we resolve, either with the Positivist to erect an altar to necessity, or, with the Pantheist, to worship the Universe. By this time, the edge of the chasm is reached. We gaze ; we lean over ; we start back. But the treacherous guide, who has dragged us to the brink, whispers ‘Why thus far and no further? Revelation, providence, miracle,—resurrection, angel, spirit,—a heaven

¹ See Note S. in the Appendix.

for the blessed, or a hell for the lost,—you have put all these parts of a worn-out creed away,—what more certainty, than for these, have you for the solitary belief you would still cling to,—the fact of the Divine existence? Demonstration is the scientific condition of a rational belief. That withheld, an universal scepticism is the mind's repose. "Cast thyself down." Oh! is there not as much of prophecy as of poetry in that description of Wordsworth,—

So I fared,
Dragging all precepts, judgements, maxims, creeds,
Like culprits to the bar: calling the mind
Suspiciously to establish, in plain day,
Her titles and her honours: now believing,
Now disbelieving: endlessly perplexed
With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
Of obligation, what the rule and whence
The sanction: till demanding formal proof
And seeking it in everything, I lost
All feeling of conviction: and in fine
Sick, wearied out with contrarities,
Yielded up moral questions in despair!

But, brethren, I have done. You will believe in, and allow for the anxiety,—the almost oppressive anxiety—which weighs upon me, as I quit this ever-honoured pulpit, lest, in anything I have said, or have left unsaid, I should have failed in magnifying the name of the Lord Jesus, whether in relation to the profound mystery of His INCARNATION, or the Infinite glory and prerogatives of HIS GODHEAD. I have been bringing before you no unpractical schoolman's subtlety. The doctrine of the Divinely-Human Mediator is our life. We love to think of Him as He was revealed to the prophet Ezekiel by the brook; as the enthroned presence of the upper world,—Light of Light,

GOD of GOD, Very GOD of Very GOD,—and yet withal a glorious similitude, which mortal eyes might look upon,—a GOD-man administrator of a subject universe. He that sat upon the throne was “the likeness as the appearance of a man.” Brethren, be this our rock, this our refuge, this our rest, for ever. The Lord reigneth. The Lord Jesus reigneth. The tender, sympathizing, Incarnate Mediator fills the throne. Eternal power and Godhead, as an abstract truth, is a lesson which we may learn from Nature’s Bible. She has written it upon her chained lightnings, and her bounded seas; upon the stars obedient in their courses, and in the stability of her everlasting hills. But that power and Godhead embodied in a personal manifestation,—a Sovereign, a Benefactor, “a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,”—this we can never know till, by the enlightening and converting influences of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to say with Peter, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living GOD.” This view, without lowering the majesty of the Godhead, adapts our conceptions of it to the conditions of mortal thought; in prayer especially, brings the object of worship nearer to us; relieves the mind in its gropings after an incorporeal abstraction, and enables it to lay hold on the concrete reality of a personal and redeeming GOD. Nor is this all. It is by means of this ineffable descending of the Godhead,—stooping, till it should come within the grasp of a reverent religious imagination, that we are enabled to feel toward the Divine Being, in the character of our Emmanuel, the sentiment of personal love, personal gratitude, the fervid glow of a holy and heavenly friendship. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” We love to be in frequent meditations on His glorious character

and offices ; love to sit at His feet, and learn wisdom from the written word ; love to lift up the heart to Him amid the world's "crowded loneliness;" love to realize His nearness to us in the closet, in the sanctuary, in holy sacraments ;—nay, love to feel that heaven itself has no higher prerogative than this,—a sight of the Redeemer in His glory, and power to worship, without a veil, before His throne. "Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." AMEN.

Not man alone,—all rationals, heaven arms
With an illustrious, but tremendous power
To counteract its own most gracious ends ;
And this, of strict necessity, not choice :
That power denied, men, angels, were no more
But passive engines, void of praise, or blame.
A nature rational, implies the power
Of being bless'd, or wretched, as we please ;
Else idle reason would have nought to do :
And he that would be barr'd capacity
Of pain, courts incapacity of bliss.
Heaven wills our happiness, allows our doom ;
Invites us ardently, but not compels.
Heaven but persuades, almighty man decrees ;
Man is the maker of immortal fates,
Man falls by man if finally he falls ;
And fall he must, who learns from death alone,
The dreadful secret—that he lives for ever.

YOUNG. *Night Thoughts.*

“This belief is necessary to teach us to make a fit estimate of the price of Christ’s blood, to value sufficiently the work of our redemption, to acknowledge and admire the love of God to us in Christ. For he which believeth not the eternity of torments to come, can never value sufficiently that ransom by which we were redeemed from them, or be proportionately thankful to his Redeemer, by whose intervention we have escaped them ; whereas he who is sensible of the loss of heaven and the everlasting privation of the presence of God, of the torments of fire, the company of the devil and his angels, the vials of the wrath of an angry and never-to-be-appeased God, and hopeth to escape all these by virtue of the death of his Redeemer, cannot but highly value the price of that blood, and be proportionately thankful for so ‘precious a redemption’.”—Pearson’s *Exposition of the Creed.*

A DISCOURSE

ON

FINAL RETRIBUTION.¹

REVELATION XXII. II.

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."

Introduction—Difficulty of treating the subject—I. Antecedent probability of the doctrine—Course and constitution of nature and providence—Tendency to finality in human character—Retribution incidental to all moral agency—II. Revealed testimonies to the doctrine—Christianity a remedial scheme—Direct affirmations of Revelation—Scripture assumes that all probation ends with the present life—Metaphysical relations of eternity and duration—the hypothesis of annihilation—III. Alleged inconsistency of the doctrine with the perfectness of God—His benevolence—His mercy—His justice—Difficulties of the contrary theory—The revealed doctrine urged by Christ, the tenderest of all preachers.

THESE words are among the last of those which John heard in heaven; the last of those inspired utterances which constitute God's message to the souls of men; the last of that series of Divine communications which were never to be re-opened; never to be added to; never, by angel's or by prophet's voice, to be urged or proclaimed again. The

¹ Preached, in substance, at St Sepulchre's, Cambridge, on the evening of Nov. 20, 1864.

thought may well lend an added interest to the passage. Permitted, as we have been in the former chapters, to accompany the Apostle in his visions of things not seen as yet ; to ascend with him to those prophetic heights, whence we could look out on the broad stream of time,—agitated ever, turbid ever, uncertain ever, till it reach the fair haven, the calm deep ocean of eternity,—we treasure up, among sacred remembrances, the last scenes of the closing pageant ; the last folds of the falling cloud ; the last words which came from the uncreated glory, as, for ever and for ever, the vision passed away. And what words are they? Oh! they are full of admonition, full of profit, full of awful truth. They tell of the Divine unchangeableness. They tell of the uniformity of law. They tell of the perpetuity of moral character;—“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book,”—at least, until there has been a declaration of that truth which is reason’s dictate, revelation’s burden, heaven’s immutable and everlasting law:—“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

Brethren, I have selected a solemn topic for our meditation; a topic, “to be handled,” as Hooker says, “with a bleeding heart;” and I ask your prayers that, whatever I may say upon it, may be in accordance with the teaching of the Spirit, and the mind of Christ. The great difficulty in the treatment of such a subject, we shall all feel, is how to hold the balance rightly between tenderness on the one hand, and fidelity on the other; between the natural compassionateness of the teacher, and the stern logic of an

investigator of moral evidence; between the sorrow, even unto tears, which must be felt for the lost children of our race, and the loyalty which we all owe to the majesty of the truth of GOD¹. No doubt the sight is a sad one,—to GOD, to angels, and to men,—when a man takes up the affirmative side of a theme like this, in the spirit of theological partizanship; intent only, like a hired advocate, on bringing out such considerations as may tend to sustain a foregone conclusion; and, in the harsh severity of his indictments, appearing to stand forth as one, who holds a brief against the sinning family of man. And yet, scarcely less sad is it to see a teacher, one who is put in trust with the Gospel, yielding so far to the impulses of a criminal leniency, as to be afraid to declare openly to those whom he addresses, the facts of man's moral condition as they are; or the exact case of Christianity as it stands; or the true principles of the Divine administration as we see them in operation, in the world, in nature, and in human life.

Surely, in all our teaching, we are bound to begin with man where God begins with him;—as a sinner, as “very far gone from original righteousness,” as having his whole heritage of moral happiness forfeited by an ancient sequestration, and as having no hope of deliverance but in the

¹ Paley observes in this matter, “It is very difficult to handle this subject properly; and one cause among others of the difficulty is, that it is not for one poor sinner to denounce such appalling terrors, such tremendous consequences against another. Damnation is a word which lies not in the mouth of man, who is a worm, towards any of his fellow-creatures whatsoever; yet it is absolutely necessary that the threatenings of Almighty God be made known and published.”—Vol. VI. Sermon on the *Terrors of the Lord*.

mission and sacrifice of the Son of God. Men will never have right views of God, or of themselves, until they have realized Christianity as an extreme remedy for an extreme need;—a remedy which, if not applied, must leave the need to continue in unending and ever-increasing force. Not that, in the case of neglect, there is any coming down of a new agency or a new law to make the misery of this felt need the greater. The retribution, such as it is, is the immortality of a refused benefit; the undying fruit of a tree of the sinner's own planting; the perpetuating of that estrangement from GOD, which it was the design of Christ and His Blessed Spirit to take away. And this seems to be the proper force of the words recited in our text. They speak not of punitive retribution, as such, at all. They merely imply, that without any force exerted on the freedom of the moral agent, the dispositions and tendencies which have been the object of fixed choice in this life, will be left to continue, and from the absence of any influence to change them, cannot but continue, the confirmed dispositions and tendencies of the life to come. Whatever is done, is done by the sinner himself. Revelation only puts the case as it is,—given, an eternity of evil character, what can be looked for but an eternity of evil consequence? “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.”

Our subject, as will be perceived, is the **ETERNITY OF THE RETRIBUTION** to be visited hereafter upon the ungodly; and therefore, with a chastened awe upon our spirits, and with earnest prayer for Divine guidance and illumination, let us give our attention to the three following considerations:—

I. The ANTECEDENT PROBABILITY of the doctrine, as deduced from the method and course of GOD'S moral government.

II. The force of the REVEALED TESTIMONIES to the doctrine, when taken in connexion with the origin and avowed design of Christianity.

III. The insufficiency of any OBJECTIONS to the doctrine, on the ground of its SUPPOSED INCOMPATIBILITY with the Divine attributes.

I. We are first to shew certain ANTECEDENT PROBABILITIES for the doctrine in question, based on the ascertained facts of moral government; on the observed law and constitution of the economy under which we live; on those uniform teachings of reason and conscience, which, equally with revelation itself, must reflect the mind of GOD.

“The first principle of religion,” says Bacon, “is right reason.” We must not, in upholding the doctrine under consideration, leave it to be supposed that we are shut up to the wording of Inspiration; that we dare not go further back; that we are afraid to ask, ‘What doth nature itself teach, or the GOD of nature, in His every-day dealings with mankind?’ We believe that, in nature, in providence, in revelation, GOD is one;—that He never does conflict with Himself, and never can. I do not say that it is, in all cases, incumbent upon us to *shew* the harmony. It were most unreasonable that it should be. For we have not all the constituents before us of the things which must be made to agree,—not the whole facts of science, not the entire scheme of providence, not the conditions and cir-

cumstances of other accountable agents, to whom, as much as to ourselves, the principles of a revealed legislation must apply¹. While, therefore, we aver, with all confidence, that the agreement between the statements of Revelation and the well-sustained conclusions of human philosophy will become more apparent, the more rigorously our inquiries into both are pursued, we do not hold ourselves bound to prove more than an agreement of general principles—a parallelism of procedure and method in these two departments of truth, close enough to indicate a common authorship. In other words, it is enough if we can point to indications, in the world around us, that GOD was *likely* to do that, which, according to our interpretation of the written Word, He says He *will* do. In relation to the case of future rewards and punishments, we leave room for the supposition, that the principles of legislation may be carried much further under the spiritual, than they are under the temporal economy; and that things may take a defined and consummated form in the next life, to which they are but continually *tending* in this. All we can be expected to prove is unity of direction, likeness of administrative plan, evidence that the present and the future world are formed for the same subjects, and are ruled by the same GOD.

What, then, are the facts of our actual condition? We are under the government of a superior Power. He

¹ Dr Whewell observes, “This universal consistency of truth with itself must be assented to; but it by no means follows that we must be able to obtain a full insight into the nature and manner of such a consistency. Such an insight would only be possible if we could obtain a clear view of that central body of truth, the source of the principles which appear in the separate lines of speculation.” *Indications of the Creator*, p. 113.

is wise. He is good. He is powerful. We offer no proofs of this. The earth is full of them—no spot being found so barren as not to shew footprints of an unslumbering and presiding GOD. But what is He more than this? How further does he vindicate His title to be considered a *moral* Governor,—ruling for moral ends, administering His power by moral means, and assuming, in the subjects of His empire, a moral nature, with all those sensibilities, tendencies, instincts, powers, which, rightly employed, would enable them to refuse the evil and to choose the good? Of this the proofs are multiplied. To go no further than the general constitution of this world's government, no one could deny that it is, upon the whole, favourable to virtue, and adverse to wrong-doing; that, with all the permitted exceptions inseparable from a state of probation, the more marked aspects of providential government are yet towards the encouragement of the just, and the pure, and the lovely, and the things of good report¹. Good men have suffered for their mistakes, and bad men have run their career of successful crime; but, in some way or other, the retributive element of moral government has always made itself felt. GOD has “never left Himself without a witness;” never allowed it to be supposed that He looked with throned indifference on the moral issue of things. In nature, in providence, in every law He impressed, whether upon matter or upon mind, He has made known abundantly the uniform tendency of His administration. Whatever He might permit, everything was against sin. He would spare it neither in

¹ See Bishop Butler's chapter on the Moral Government of God. *Anal.* Part I. ch. III.

small nor great. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

Yet more does this recompensing feature of Divine government discover itself, when we extend the inquiry to the facts of our individual consciousness; when we look into the several adaptations and tendencies of our moral organization,—taken in connection with their obvious relation to a punitive economy, as their proper sphere of exercise, and to the production of a holy character, as the design of their bestowment. Thus, among such universal facts or phenomena, we put down the sense of accountability for our actions. The law, the rule, the enforcing sanction of such accountability, for the present, we say nothing about. We are now looking at man as we find him,—trying to bring together the most ordinary and admitted facts of human experience. And we set it down as one of them, that every man has the idea of moral right and wrong; that he judges his own conduct by it, that he judges the conduct of others by it, and that, according to it, he expects to receive his award of praise or blame. All human magistracies appeal to this feeling. Its existence is supposed in such words as "law," "rule," "obligation," "duty,"—terms finding their correspondent in certain original susceptibilities of the moral agent. The introduction of the term did not create the susceptibilities. It *could* not create them,—any more than directions where to look for an object could give a man the power of sight. The idea of accountability must be there first,—a primal instinct of the human consciousness, at once telling a man that he is under law, and consenting to the law that it is good.

But hereupon follows another fact of our moral experience. This law being in the heart,—its own interpreter, its own vindication, its own witness that the obligations imposed by it are of Divine and unchanging force,—we find that, for our own sake, we must live in harmony with its requirements. We cannot be inattentive to them without uneasiness. We cannot violate them without misery, and the utter loss of our own self-esteem. The impunities of society for the transgression afford no relief. We are under an economy of unseen retributions. There is no avenger from without. The worm of remorse that feeds upon us is self-engendered, and we kindle the fires of our own hell.

We advance to another stage. The misery of remorse continuing, self-respect gone, the authority of conscience set at nought, relief is sought in renewed transgression. The man has lost the peace of obedience; such as they are, he may as well have the “pleasures of sin.” What will happen now? Sin will, in time, become the formed and fixed habit of his soul. “Evil men wax worse and worse.” We cannot while life lasts, assign any end to the progression¹. Each repeated act of disobedience exerts an influence upon character; tends to its consolidation and settlement in evil; helps to bring about that which, as far as can be seen, will be its final and everlasting form—that of hatred of GOD and of all good. We can hardly have failed to observe that there is, in all our habits, be they good or be they evil, a tendency to perpetuate them-

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Nam quis

Peccandi finem posuit sibi? quando recepit

Ejectum semel attrita de fronte ruborem?

JUVENAL, *Sat.* v. 13.

selves; to reproduce their own like; to appear again and again continually, and always in more confirmed and vigorous form. Of course the law acts uniformly; and, therefore, while it becomes a conservative element of character in the case of those who have chosen the right path, it serves only to accelerate with more destructive speed the ruin of him who has chosen the wrong. "Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way; but wickedness overthroweth the sinner."

And, co-ordinately with this moral deterioration we have spoken of, is the *retributive* process going on. There is an unseen parallelism kept up between the sin and the misery; the guilt and the remorse; the ripening character and the maturing shame. To the end of their days, sinners are constantly finding out that "they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same." Many, in the most literal sense of those words, may say in their hearts daily, "My sin is ever before me." For some great transgression haunts them with its retributions to the end of life. They never escape from its revenges. It tracks their path like a bloodhound. It holds them firm in the iron grasp of destiny. To close every door of hope against them, it fixes upon them everywhere the Cain-brand of Heaven's anger,—the cleaving leprosy of a lost name. This, however, is but the retribution of an outward Providence. They may escape it. But if they do, there is another. They shall be pursued by the reflection that life, character, conduct, prospects,—all took their sad complexion from that first false step. The motives to piety had become withdrawn, the rewards of piety were forgotten, the principle of piety had become extinguished and destroyed: and now they must stand in their

lot; abide by their choice. Having sown the wind, they must reap the whirlwind; having sown misery, they must reap despair. Without ever having been taught it by Scripture, the cry had gone up from ten thousand desolate hearts, "There is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked¹."

Let us now consider the bearing of all this on that part of the argument which is under consideration. We proposed to investigate an *antecedent probability* of what GOD *would* do in a future world, derived from our knowledge of what He is *seen* to do in this. Now, by this knowledge—not supplied by Scripture, observe, but by the patent facts of human observation—we get to find that this our world is constructed upon a system of recompenses; that retribution is a law *incident to all moral agency*; that the course of nature, as well as the constitution of the human mind, are so arranged as that sin should always bring with it its own punishment. We find further that, apart from religious influences, this law of retribution pursues man to the very boundary-line of the present state; that it must continue to do so, if that boundary-line were removed indefinitely further off; insomuch that, owing to the misery increasing as the sin increased, and the sin increasing as the evil character took deeper root, if Judas himself could have had an earthly immortality given to him, he would as surely have found a hell in this world, as he found one afterwards in going to "his own place."

Now, this being so, we are obliged to concede to the

¹ This self-avenging and self-perpetuating tendency of sinful habits will be found discussed with great ability, in a work entitled *The Revealed Doctrine of Future Rewards and Punishments*, by Dr R. Winter Hamilton. See Sect. II. pp. 86—132.

doctrine of eternal punishments, apart from all the teachings of Revelation, this apparent corroboration to begin with. It harmonises with all the facts of moral government. It is the actual extension and development of principles, already seen to be in operation. It is the very rule of dealing with us, which, if the nature of GOD be immutable, and the principles of His administration be eternal, would, far beyond any other, satisfy the anticipations of enlightened reason, and commend itself to the moral approval of mankind. In dealing with responsible agents, we feel that a righteous governor can have but *one* righteous rule; and to suppose Him to lay down any other in the awards of the future world, would be as impossible as to suppose that that world might be under some other GOD. As far as we can see, all penalties are visited upon *character*; and character, after this life, is immortal. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."

II. I pass on to our second head, or a consideration of SCRIPTURE TESTIMONIES to the doctrine of Final Retribution, taken in connexion with the origin and avowed design of Christianity.

What is Christianity? As intimated already, it is GOD's remedy for a lost, diseased, sin-smitten world. If all had been well with us, there had been no need of such an intervention on our behalf: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The supposition of revelation throughout, is that we are fallen from our created dignity; are suffering from some violence done to the original purpose of our being; are wrestling and struggling

with the rudiments of a once-nobler nature,—that we are formed for immortality, and are awaiting it. Such suppositions fall in with all the facts of our personal consciousness; are adapted to our antecedent expectations of what a revelation from heaven would be; put the seal of Divine authenticity on conclusions, which reason and nature had drawn before.

Still, while insisting upon it as a strong corroboration of the truth of Christianity, that its statements coincide so exactly with the facts of our present condition, we deem it important to enforce an observation, already urged in relation to a kindred topic¹, that revelation is but the *witness* to these facts, and not their initiative *cause*. Save that it heightens the amount of a man's responsibility for the use or misuse of its own disclosures—a result inevitable in every case of benefits conferred—Revelation makes no difference in his state whatever. If it declare him to be “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;” to have his lines fallen unto him in a toiling and suffering world; to have a sense of condemnation upon his spirit; to be living under a law which he has broken, and to be training for an immortality which he must meet—yet this is no more than he was before the revelation came,—no more than what, if the revelation were taken away, he would continue still to be. The Bible does but hold up the mirror to our moral nature; and we acknowledge that its witness is true. We feel that GOD would have brought “every secret thing into judgment,” though the Angel had not lifted the veil from “the great white throne;” and are conscious that a law of perpetuity would

¹ See Sermon II. p. 47 of this work.

still have inhered to human character, though that axiom of heaven's jurisprudence had never been laid down;—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

The remark seems important, because there is a way of looking at the eternity of future retribution as a detached and dismembered doctrine of the Christian system:—unconnected either with the suffering and misery which that system found in the world, or with its own beneficent provisions for their removal. Now, if Christianity had first *made* man a responsible being, that he might be amenable to punishment, or had first *endued* him with a capacity of endless life, that this punishment might be eternal, there had been some plausibility in such a view. But it is manifest that Christianity did no such thing, and could not have done it. Man knew he was responsible before; knew he was immortal before; knew, before the disclosures of revelation, and apart from them, that he had forfeited the favour of GOD. All the sufferings that he endured were but a consequence of this. And he could see no end to them, because he could fix no boundary to the guilt out of which they sprung¹. Christ came to put an end both to it and them;—to remove the guilt, to sanctify the suffering, and to cut off that doom which must otherwise have followed both—the bitter pains of eternal death. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

¹ How plainly has Lucretius set this fact before us as part of a heathen's consciousness:—

Nec videt interea, qui terminus esse malorum

Possit, nec quæ sit pœnarum denique finis:

Atque eadem metuit magis hæc ne in morte gravescant.

De Rerum Nat. lib. III.

Such, I say, is the design of Christianity, and whatever it reveals must be considered as revealed in furtherance of that design. Does it reveal the doctrine of punishments in the future world? does it say that these punishments shall be eternal?

First, Does it reveal punishments? And if so, of what nature are they? We can only say of them, that in description, they are intensely, ineffably, inconceivably awful. They suppose, in the case of the wicked, new capacities of suffering supervening upon the resurrection state; body, soul, and spirit raised to new powers of anguish; and the offender, after a righteous trial, cast "into the great wine-press of the wrath of GOD." Take only a few texts: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Or take a few detached expressions—the awful poetry of retribution:—the "furnace," the "lake," the "mist," the "tempest," the "smoke of torment," and the "undying worm," the "wandering stars," and the "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." We may look upon these as figures. But why, in the exposition of great truths, does Scripture have recourse to figures? Not surely to reduce and weaken their proportions, but to present them with more of intensity, and breadth, and power; to eke out the deficiencies of the human intelligence; to help the mind in its graspings after an infinitely removed reality.

And, in all descriptions relating to the eternal world,

we feel that this must be so. Hell must have its poetry, as well as heaven; Tophet, as Paradise; the region of the lake that burneth, as the city of the crystal sea. The things which GOD has prepared, whether for them that love, or for them that hate Him, are alike far above out of our sight. "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" asks the Psalmist. But there is no response. Conjecture fails; analogy is baffled; tired thought gives up the despairful task, and imagination folds her wing. Be still; inquire not; enough that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD."

We insist not then, too particularly, on the precise nature of the future retribution. There may, or may not be material fire; there may, or may not be a local torture-chamber; there may, or may not be living ministries of wrath and vengeance, ordained to visit on the immortal body unheard-of measures and varieties of pain. But we may leave out these, and think of the cup of wrath as containing *moral* ingredients only;—the sinner left to make his own hell and to live in it—his fierce passions an unconsumed "fire," his guilty remembrances a never-sated "worm," his mist of darkness the gloom of unending despair, the slavery of sin his everlasting chain, and his curse his immortality. Let the supposition be made that character has taken its fixed and imperishable type; that his lot is thenceforth cast in a prayerless, hopeless, Christless world; that his future fellowships must be with evil, only evil, and that continually,—and all the elements for the most fearful retribution we could think of, are to be found in the sinner's own breast. Like as with Pharaoh, the heart will become harder under each avenging stroke.

There is no limit to his obduracy, till he becomes wild with remorse, and fatuous with despair. "And they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the GOD of heaven because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their deeds¹."

But then, are the Scriptural intimations beyond gainsaying which suppose this state of retribution to be eternal? Is the testimony clear and decisive that the condition spoken of is unalterable, without abatement, without intermission, without possibility of deliverance under an economy which shall know no end? We answer, as far as we can put a definite meaning upon words, it is. To admit the contrary, would be to make the Bible unsafe for our guidance, inspiration to have failed of its design, truth a thing still to be sought for,—a mystery yet hidden in the Everlasting Intellect, and which we must wait a new revelation to unfold. Our grounds for speaking thus confidently, are based on the generally acknowledged import of the words employed²; on the ascertained interpretation which would be put upon those words by the persons to whom they were addressed³; on the pervading supposition of *finality* which Scripture makes whenever it alludes to the allotments of the future world; and on the *determinateness*, which the New Testament always claims for its own economy, as disclosing the last remedial effort GOD

¹ Rev. xvi. 10, 11.

² On the word *αιωνιος* and its cognates in relation to this subject, see Dr Pusey's recent sermon, pp. 20—23.

³ See on the prevalent opinion of the Jews in relation to this subject, Pearson on the Creed, Art. xii. and note; Campbell's Dissertation on *γεννα*, on Gospels, Vol. I. pp. 184, 185, note; and Whitby on 2 Thess., Appendix 40.

would ever make for the restoration and recovery of man¹.

Time allows not of my following out this reasoning. With regard to verbal interpretations, when we read such passages as, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" or, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of His power;" or, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever;" or, "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched,"—it seems little better than theological trifling even to try to invent for such plain words a second meaning. The Bible would be the most misleading book that ever was written, if, either by the mists of hypothetical conjecture, or the adroitness of verbal criticism, it could be shewn that, when it spake of a worm that should "*never* die," it meant a worm that *should* die;—that by the fire which "*never* should be quenched," it meant a fire that, after a time, should *go out altogether*;—nay more, if it could be shewn, that the very form of expression, which Inspiration has selected to describe the eternity of the Divine Being himself should, when applied to the duration of future punishments, represent no more than a measurable interval of days, and weeks, and months, and years.

Equally conclusive against the possibility of a reversed sentence, or even the extinguishment of it by means of the

¹ The following admission, considering the quarter from which it comes, is noteworthy:—"On this point I acknowledge that my convictions are strong. I have long searched with anxious solicitude for a text in the Bible that would even seem to favour the idea of a *future* probation. I cannot find it."—Moses Stuart, *Exegetical Essays, &c.*, Andover, 1830, p. 60.

destruction of the offender, is that uniform assumption of Scripture, that, in the life that now is, the final overtures of mercy are made to us, and the last opportunities of salvation given. The alleged facts of our moral condition are shortly these:—that we have broken the laws of an Infinite Being; that we have made ourselves liable to an infinite condemnation; and that only by an acquired interest in some infinite atonement, can that condemnation be taken away. Now, the supposition made in the case of every lost spirit under the Gospel is, that he has allowed his interest in that infinite atonement to lapse; that he has failed in those moral requirements of faith and penitence, by which a part in Christ's sacrifice was to be secured¹. In order, therefore, to such a man being eventually saved, one of two things must take place; either he must find *another* sacrifice in the world of retribution, or there must be a way of satisfying the righteous demands of GOD without *any* sacrifice at all. Will any, in the face of that Scripture, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," have boldness to affirm the first of these alternatives? or, whilst reading such words as, "Without shedding of blood is no remission," admit the possibility of the second? Hence, I think, it must be obvious that any possible change in the sinner's condition, when the time of his earthly probation is once passed, would involve the recasting of our whole theology. We should have to look out for another Bible, another law, another GOD. There would be nothing

¹ Bp Jeremy Taylor has beautifully observed "Mercy is like a rainbow, which God sets in the clouds to remember mankind: it abides here as long as it is not hindered: but we must never look for it *after it is night, and it shines not in the other world.*"—*Miracles of Divine Mercy.*

but jar and conflict in the principles of the Divine administration. Rewards would be bestowed according to one rule, and punishments according to another. And other conclusions must follow more contradictory or awful still. GOD must deny Himself; Christ must have died in vain; the Spirit would be no longer the source of holiness; characters could of themselves change from evil to good; hell would be no punishment, but a remedy; and, since the succeeding eternity of happiness would compensate for even milleniads of anguish, it would be no longer true of him that betrayed the Saviour, "good were it for that man if he had never been born." Oh! in what sublime contrast, to these unauthorised and baseless theories of men, is that self-acting and self-perpetuating law of heavenly legislation, which, penetrating to the remotest departments of moral government, infixing itself deeply in the heart of the human consciousness, combining, as an integral part of one extended scheme with all the teachings of revelation, and reaching to all worlds where moral beings are found—to men in their probation, to fallen angels in their chains, to saints on their thrones of light, and to lost spirits in their estate of remediless and unchanging woe,—commands the suffrages of the universal conscience, and attests, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a GOD that judgeth in the earth."

But here would seem to be the proper place for advert-
ing to two modes of evading the force of the Scriptural proofs of this doctrine, which have been put forth by modern writers. The first is that contained in the metaphysical argument of a theologian of some repute, maintaining that the word "eternity," or its cognates, is not to

be understood of "duration" at all. The argument of this writer may be difficult to present in a condensed form; but the following sentence is perhaps the best for the purpose. He says,—“If it is right, if it is a duty, to say that eternity, in relation to GOD, has nothing to do with time or duration; are we not bound to say that also in reference to life or to punishment, it has nothing to do with time or duration¹?”

Surely there is something questionable in the premiss of this argument. If it mean—as, to be of any argumentative value, it should mean—that “eternity,” in relation to our *apprehensions* of GOD, “has nothing to do with time or duration,” or, that ideas, borrowed from time or duration, are not to enter into our attempted realizations of such an attribute, the position cannot be admitted: In the Prophet Micah, we have it said of Christ, “Whose goings forth have been of old, from the days of eternity” (chap. v. 2, margin); where the Holy Spirit appears to be assisting us to some conception of a foregone eternity, by sending us back to a period before time was. It is admitted that by eternity, as applied to GOD, we mean independence of the revolutions or conditions of time,—that which is without beginning, or change, or end. But this does not make the quality spoken of less positive in itself. The negation of all limit or restriction on an attribute does not make the attribute itself a negation; but, on the contrary, affirms its positive nature to be of the most absolute and perfect kind. By *immensity*, every one would understand us to mean a negation of limited extension; but that would not alter the positiveness of the

¹ Maurice's *Theological Essays*, 2nd Edit. p. 450.

accident spoken of, as affirming *infinity of space*. And, in like manner, to negative all restrictions of time or limited duration, in relation to the Divine Being, is only, in other words, to affirm the positive infinitude of His existence. Indeed the untenableness of the position we are controverting will become apparent, if we propose one question, —Would any definition or theory of eternity, in relation to GOD, hold good, of which this negative idea of unrestrictedness did not constitute a part, or with which it would not consist? or, to put the question in another form, Could any explanation of eternity, in reference to the Divine nature, be true, if it allowed the possibility that there might be either a time past when GOD *was not*, or a time future when GOD would *cease to be*? If not, then, upon the objector's own reasoning, since eternity, as applied to the Divine nature, may be associated with ideas of that which had no *beginning*, so eternity, “in reference to life and punishment,” may be associated with that which shall never have an *end*. We are quite willing to accept the position advanced, that eternity must describe a condition which is independent of the accidents and limitations of time; but we submit that, in affirming that very independence, we exclude all possibility of change or end.

As a startling verbal paradox, it seemed expedient to advert to this modern view; but, as the tenor of our argument has gone to shew, the received doctrine does not rest merely on the word “eternity,” nor even upon the many texts which embody, as plainly as words can, the idea of endless duration; but on the fact, that the doctrine pervades the entire system of our revealed theology, and is an involved necessity of the moral Government of GOD.

The other mode of evading the force of the plain statements of Revelation on this subject, is that which makes all the terms in Scripture, expressive of future retribution, to be so many modes of describing the absolute annihilation of the sinner;—death everlasting in the most literal sense. This theory it is known has been advocated in the writings of an accomplished layman, formerly a professor in this University. After describing the doctrine of eternal retributions, as one from which “the hearts of most men turn aside, not only with an intuitive horror, but with an invincible incredulity,” the late Professor of Modern History proceeds to raise the question, “Whether all the words employed by our LORD, or by His Apostles, on the subject, are not satisfied by understanding that the punishment is eternal only inasmuch as it involves the ultimate destruction or annihilation of those on whom it is to be inflicted¹?” Now, we submit that, even restricting the inquiry to this narrow philological issue, the words of Scripture, in which this subject is alluded to, would *not* be satisfied by such a view. The portion of the wicked is described in language which must imply conscious existence and will consist with nothing else. “They shall be *tormented* day and night for ever;” “They have no *rest* day nor night;” “They were cast *alive* into a lake of fire,”—are forms of expression which we all feel to be utterly inconsistent with any other supposition than that of the continued sensibility and passion of the impenitent in a future world. But even if it were possible, by any “alchemy of words,” to make these expressions stand for extin-

¹ Epilogue to *Ecclesiastical Essays*, pp. 489, 496.

guished being, the advocate for annihilation would find his task very far from done. He would have to get rid of the most ineradicable and universal instinct of the human soul, testifying to its own immortality. He would have to prove it a possible thing that spirit can be destroyed at all,—a possible thing that you can kill mind. He would have to suppose a line of procedure, on the part of the Almighty, utterly at variance with all the analogies of moral government. He would have to gainsay the avowed design and provisions of the Gospel system, as a scheme for the salvation and recovery of man. And above all, he would have to shield the great name of GOD from the reproach of being obliged to put forth mere *power* to uphold a moral attribute ; of putting out, by violence, a communicated spark of His own immortality ; in a word, of being so embarrassed by the conditions of His own laws, as that, finding no way consistently with them, either to pardon the sinner or to punish him, He resolved, after the fashion of perplexed human legislators, to blot him from existence altogether ! Well might our Christian poet exclaim—

“Heaven starts at an annihilating God.”¹

III. A few words only remain to be offered on some alleged OBJECTIONS to the doctrine under consideration, on

¹ Further on the poet says :—

“Nature’s first wish is endless happiness :
Annihilation is an after-thought,
A monstrous wish unborn till virtue dies.
And oh ! what depth of horror lies enclosed !
For non-existence no man ever wished,
But first he wished the Deity destroyed.—*Night VII.*”

the ground of its INCONSISTENCY WITH THE PERFECTIONS OF THE DIVINE NATURE.

Thus, it is thought to war with the *infinite benevolence* of GOD. The question is, in what sense we speak of Deity as possessor of such an attribute? If it be meant to imply that benevolence is the absolute and paramount rule of moral government—not regulated in its exercise by any law of rectitude, not qualified by any considerations of truth or wisdom, but over-riding the whole constitution and course of nature just to bestow happiness, we have a right to ask, Where see we the proof of such a rule? where find we any trace of this exclusively benevolent GOD? The “depth,” heaving with volcanic fires, says, “It is not in me.” The “sea,” mingling its wild roar with the cries of the drowning, says, “It is not in me.” “Not in me,” says History, as she shews on her every page some record of misery and triumphant wrong. “Not in me,” says Revelation, who know of no GOD but One—One “all whose ways are judgment: a GOD of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is He.” No, brethren, we know nothing of the goodness of GOD, except as it is exerted in harmony with His other attributes; except as it is guided and controlled by the conditions of infinite righteousness. We dare not set GOD against Himself, or attribute against attribute, or the law which regulates the succession of moral causes and effects, against another law which would break that succession, and set the first aside. This were to make GOD the author, not of peace, but of confusion, of anarchy, of feeble and inconstant rule. Moreover, a moral Governor, to be simply and absolutely benevolent, in the sense of always conferring present enjoyment, must reward

evil, must favour ungodliness, must lay down that "sceptre of righteousness," which is the proper sceptre of His kingdom; and, in favour of a blind and indiscriminating pity, must abdicate His throne. But "the righteous LORD loveth righteousness," and can love nothing else. We claim for Him infinite benevolence, as much as those who deny the revealed doctrine do. But it is in a higher and worthier sense; namely, as the benevolence of eternal rectitude, as the benevolence that "will not clear the guilty," as the benevolence which, instead of making for itself a throne on the ruins of other perfections, combines with and magnifies them all. "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

To the same effect, and admitting in substance of the same reply, is the objection to the revealed doctrine which is based on the MERCY of GOD, as the special and distinguishing attribute of the Gospel revelation. For the objection overlooks the fact, that if the Gospel reveals "grace," it reveals "truth" also. And a part of that truth it is that, in exact proportion to the freedom, and largeness, and condescension of the proffered amnesty, must be the heightened sin of those who, by their impenitence and unbelief, put the offers of a gracious GOD away. "How shall we escape if we neglect so GREAT salvation?" The Gospel must necessarily have a condemnation of its own, as well as the law. The law condemns us for the neglect of its precepts, and the violation of its laws. And shall not the Gospel condemn us for treading under foot the SON of GOD? for counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? for despite, renewed and repeated, to the Spirit of Grace? in a word, for crucifying the SON of

GOD afresh, and putting Him to an open shame? Besides, how could this indiscriminate exercise of mercy take place without injustice to the rest of the universe of GOD? GOD has other worlds to govern besides this, and other offenders to punish besides man. Where is this display of leniency to stop? If you say, in the whole world of humanity, nowhere. Then we answer, righteous measure has not been dealt out to the fallen angels, higher than man in the scale of created intelligence, and “yet doomed to be bound under the durance of an everlasting chain.”

Once more, the doctrine in question, it is sometimes contended, is inconsistent with what we should conceive of *the justice* of GOD. But who made thee, O man, a judge of this matter? Is the criminal always the fittest person to pronounce on the expediency or wisdom of the law? Has the creature the necessary faculties for determining, in what proportions severity and clemency should enter into the retributive arrangements of the Creator, that without fear or mistrust he should

“Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge His justice, be the God of God¹!”

But the presumption of such a revision of the Divine arrangements apart, what form does this exception to the revealed doctrine, on the score of moral equity, most con-

¹ “And then as to the duration of this punishment; no man can presume, in our present state of ignorance and darkness, to be able truly to judge, barely by the strength of his own natural reason, what in this respect is or is not consistent with the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of the Supreme Governor of the world; since we know neither the place, nor kind, nor manner, nor circumstances, nor degrees, nor all the ends and uses of the final punishment of the wicked.”—Dr Samuel Clarke’s *Evidences of Religion*.

monly assume? Why that there is a disproportion between the offence and the punishment, the one being limited to time, the other being extended to eternity. Now, in the first place, before we can judge of this alleged disproportion, we must know what the real magnitude of sin is. And this we are unable to define. Owing to various forms of social restraint, the more aggravated features of sin are rarely seen; and if they were, our impaired moral sensibilities would not apprehend their full enormity. Moreover, without committing ourselves to that canon of Hooker, that "all sin is infinite because He is infinite whom sin offendeth," we yet cannot be blind to the fact, that such is the inherent and spreading malignity of sin, that to no one act of committed transgression can we assign a limited measure of resulting evil. In their consequences, and as far as the present economy is concerned, they are all, to our conceptions, infinite. The taint of corruption is propagated from breath to breath in never-ending succession. Infidelity and falsehood are immortal. From the youthful pretenders to an intellectual scepticism are still heard the covert sarcasms of Gibbon, and the productions of Voltaire and Paine are as destructive now, as they were in the day when the foul brood came forth of their empoisoned brain. Immorality and crime are immortal. The deeds of infamy our journals are daily teeming with will project their darkling shadow over generations yet unborn; and the impure or blasphemous word, which fell yesterday from the sinner's lips, has caused a vibration in the moral atmosphere, of which the ends of the earth may feel the shock. Tremble we, then, before we speak of sin as a light thing.

But 'is there not a disproportion between a temporal offence and an eternal punishment'? it is said. Not more, surely, than there is between a temporal probation and eternal blessedness; and if a GOD of recompences may ordain the one, it were no incongruous thing that He should ordain the other also. Besides, how comes sin to be related to duration at all¹? In human tribunals, we do not judge a man by the length of time he took to commit an offence, but by the inherent turpitude of the offence itself; and it is but reasonable to suppose that GOD will deal with the sinner upon a like principle. The man sinned as long as he could. He died with sin reigning in his heart; and when he awakes to consciousness in the future world, he will find it reigning still.

And there it will reign for ever. For this, after all, is the real answer to the objection, and one as easy to understand as it is impossible to gainsay. The same doctrine which supposes a man to be doomed to *endless misery*, supposes in him such a fixedness of moral character, that he will live in *endless guilt*. The one is strictly relative to the other. It is useless to speculate upon what would happen if he were afterwards to repent, or turn, or pray, or look to Jesus, because he retains a fixed aversion from every one of these things². All the springs of holy

¹ On this point Bishop Horsley observes:—"Qualities are not to be measured by duration; they bear no more relation to it than they do to space. The hatefulness of sin is seated in itself,—in its own inherent quality of evil; by that its ill-deservings are to be measured, not by the narrowness of the limits, action of time and space, within which the good Providence of God hath confined its power of doing mischief." *Sermons*, 8vo. p. 143.

² "For never can true reconciliation grow

Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."—MILTON.

influence are dried up. Every agency for conversion is gone. To him, Christ is not, the Holy Spirit is not, the Bible, angels, holy ordinances are not. Not that GOD *compels* a man to sin even in hell. He does but permit moral laws to take their course; character to develop itself according to its fixed bias; progression to follow its eternal order. In a word, He leaves undisturbed that tendency to continuity which belongs to all the dynamics of the universe, and in virtue of which, he that is unjust, will be unjust still: and he that is filthy, will be filthy still.

Solemn, awful, inscrutable, therefore, as we must allow the received doctrine of Final Retribution to be, I believe on any fair and rational investigation, it will be found to present fewer difficulties, fewer incongruities, fewer deviations from the analogy of the Divine procedure, than any other hypothesis which could be suggested in its stead. If it affirm that sin and misery go together, this is no more than, in degree, we see taking place now. And, therefore, under a perfect moral system,—such as we are taught to look for in the future world,—it seems to be of necessity that a fixed character of evil should be connected with a misery coeval with itself. Mystery on such a subject there must be, because of its relation to an earlier and greater mystery—the existence of evil at all. But the postulate granted, that it was quite competent to the Almighty to make an accountable being—that He was not bound to limit Himself to the creation of *necessary* agents, who could do neither good nor evil—all the rest of the mystery follows. The creation of moral agents involves the possibility of their committing sin; and the authority

of a Moral Governor makes it necessary that, having committed it, they should bear the consequences. What those consequences are we have seen. There is a tendency in human character towards the permanent, the irreversible, the everlasting. A period of probation is assigned,—a most mercifully considered and righteous period, during which the mind has to make its choice of good or evil. Fixed in their choice of evil, and dying in it, the wicked are exposed to a punishment proportioned to their desert. That such punishment is of eternal duration, is not so much a part of the sentence, as an involved necessity of their actual circumstances and condition. For they are *naturally* immortal; cannot lose their immortality; and therefore must continue in the misery attached to their adopted and final choice.

And if the wicked *are* to live on, how natural for us to ask, WHERE? Hell is not, you say. Purgatory is not. What then? Will heaven open its doors for the reprobates? Must the regions of the blessed be unparadised by such polluting presence? The question is one for the Deist, observe, as much as for the Christian. There goes down to the grave, and there rises up from it, a man having immortal hatreds in his heart, immortal rebellions in his will, immortal fires of lust in his bosom—WHAT IS TO BECOME OF HIM?

Men of every age and clime have asked this question, and, without Revelation to guide them, have inferred, in substance, the answer which Revelation has given. Paganism has had its Tartarus; Endless torment could find a place in the Platonic philosophy. Hinduism has its ages of hopeless penance; and Mohammedanism its hell,

its seas of fire, its irrevocable destiny¹. What mean these consentaneous testimonies, if they witness not, either to some original tracing upon the human conscience, which no infidelity has been able to obliterate, or to the echoes of some primeval revelation, making their voice to be heard in all the theologies of mankind?

Easy would it be to strengthen the view we have taken of the doctrine of FINAL RETRIBUTION, by a reference to the consentient voice of Christian antiquity,—the pervading and all but uncontroverted persuasion of the universal Church². But it seems better that we fall back on the plain and unequivocal statements of the New Testament; because there the doctrine appears in harmony with a revealed plan,—stamping upon the warnings of the Gospel an impress of unutterable solemnity, and heightening our gratitude to Christ, by shewing us the condemnation from which He came to set us free. Nor should it fail to give to our convictions upon this subject a yet deeper reality and intensesness, to remember that, if there be any Scriptural presentments of the doctrine more awfully graphic and appalling than the rest, they are those which proceeded from the lips of Christ Himself; from Him whose sensitiveness and compassion were more than human; from Him who came not to destroy men's lives, nor yet to make them sad, but to redeem us from the

¹ See note T. in the Appendix.

² A belief in the doctrine, it will be remembered, is put down by Gibbon as among the subsidiary influences in promoting the spread of Christianity. *Decline and Fall*, c. XVI. For Ecclesiastical testimonies, see note U. in the Appendix.

power of the destroyer, and to save us with an everlasting love.

And if, in order to this, He dwells sometimes on the portion of the ungodly—the worm, and the fire, and the darkness, and the gnashing teeth—yet is this only to prevail with us to look at the future world on its other side, and see the spiritual glory of the righteous—fellowship with angels, a seat on the throne, a sight of GOD. Jesus knows what is in man, and whatever *will* be in him; knows that the bitterest ingredient in the cup of undying anguish, will be the remembrance, by the impenitent sinner, of the salvation he has refused, and the grace he has resisted, and the calls he has disregarded,—the thought of the Saviour who besought him earnestly to accept forgiveness, and of the Spirit who strove with him mightily that he might repent and live. Hence the urgency with which, both in the Old Testament and in the New, we are exhorted to “flee from the wrath to come.” In some of these passages, the mystery of the Divine compassions well-nigh confounds us. It seems as if deep were calling unto deep in a fathomless profound of love. “O, my people, what have I done unto thee? Wherein have I wearied thee?” “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim?” “And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

“But now they are hid from thine eyes”—said the weeping Saviour, and in this sentence, we hear the con-

clusion of the whole matter. For the words remind us that the great choice of a rational nature is put before us, and that, whether for weal or woe, the decision must be made NOW. Very soon the powers of immortality will be upon us; and we shall stand in our lot in the realms of a changeless world:—changeless to the lost, for where in the midst of that demon throng should they find One “mighty to save”? changeless to the saved, for not all the powers of eternity could make a redeemed saint to fall.

One thought more. We began by saying that the words of our text were *among* the last of those which John heard in heaven. They were not *quite* the last. The older Revelation may conclude with the sentence “lest I come and smite the earth with a curse;” but the dispensation of grace must close with the offers of grace. Love lingers on the Angel’s tongue as the last strains of the inspired music are dying away. And while it is needful to make the proclamation before all worlds, that the resurrection-character changeth not,—that he that is holy shall be holy still, and he that is filthy shall be filthy still,—yet shall not the vision be sealed up, without another, and another, and another earnest entreaty of the sinner to accept a present salvation, and to lay hold on eternal life;—“AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME. AND LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY, COME. AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST, COME. AND WHOSEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.” AMEN.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. Page 11.

INFIDEL TRACT LITERATURE.

IN an article on Book-hawking, which appeared in "The Times," sometime ago, is the following statement: "It was proved in evidence given before the House of Commons, in the year 1851, that the sale of immoral and infidel publications amounted to 29,000,000 annually." Perhaps for "it was *proved*," in this extract, we ought rather to read, "it was *stated*." For the evidence supposed to be referred to is that of a Mr G. S. Bucknall: and it has been shewn to rest on conjectural and very insufficient data. At all events, if the witness have only *overstated* the circulation of infidel tracts as much as he has been proved to have *understated* the sale and circulation of religious tracts, his statistics of infidel literature will not be found so very appalling. (See the whole question discussed in the *Religious Tract Society's Report for 1857*. Append. pp. 3—5.)

With regard to the literary quality of these insidious publications, many of them are the production of men of high mental culture. Of some knowledge of the more learned infidelity of the Continent, on the part of such Tract-writers as Barker and Holyoake, no one acquainted with their writings will entertain any doubt. But to every intellectual movement, capable of being turned to infidel account, these writers are keenly alive. At the first debate in Convocation on *Essays and Reviews*, it was stated that an epitome of that mischievous

work had been already prepared by the Secularists at Leeds. Besides this, a clever essay on the book has been written by the atheist Barker. It is not only a skilful *résumé* of the general tendency of the essays, supported by lengthened extracts, but it points out the inevitable necessity, that the writers, if true to their own principles, must go further in the same direction: and therefore confidently anticipates the time, when 'the seven' shall be hailed by the partisans of Atheism, as it were in the words, "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?" Still the writer of the tract is very apologetic for the Essayists, and only hopes they may not be "urged or harassed." He observes, "The Essayists may speak more plainly by and by. They may both have new thoughts to utter, and be so circumstanced as to feel free to utter them in the plainest words they can command. That which would now be sin, may be hereafter duty. Give them time and leave them free. It is better for others that religious reformers should move slowly. They are better able when they move slowly to draw others after them.....For ourselves we are under great obligations to the authors of *Essays and Reviews*. They have, in our judgement, done the cause of truth and of freedom good service, and laid their country and their age under great obligation." *Essay on Essays and Reviews*, p. 96.

Of course these Bible-haters were not slow to make large capital out of the Colenso admissions, and therefore the Writer was not surprised to find the shelves of the great Emporium of infidelity laden with ware, for which the materials had been supplied by an African Bishop. Less prepared, however, was he to have a tract put into his hand, founded in no inconsiderable degree upon the admissions of a recent Bampton Lecturer—the tract itself being designed to throw doubts upon the being of a God. Of its sixteen pages, more than one-third is dedicated to extracts from Professor Mansel's Lecture on *The Limits of Religious Thought*. Such a fact may at

least serve to shew, that it was not without reason that, in a discourse preached before the University on Trinity Sunday, 1860, the present writer felt it a duty to make the following cautionary observations in reference to some positions in the Bampton Lecturer, liable to be made use of in a way which its accomplished author would be the last to intend.

“Neither in relation to this mystery of the Godhead, can we regard as without danger some recently suggested restrictions upon the exercise of religious thought, put forth with much ability by a Lecturer at the sister University. We would do all honour to the vigorous and unanswerable eloquence which has mapped out for the rationalist his proper and legitimate domain, and shewn the hopeless obscurity which awaits him if he presume to cross its border-line. But we must be very careful lest the sword which we use to drive an enquirer back from forbidden ground, do not equally deter him from standing with any confidence on ground that is lawful and sure: in other words, lest that ‘speculative knowledge’ of GOD, which is affirmed to be impossible to him by the use of his unassisted faculties, be not, on these assumed conditions of human thought, impossible to him under a revealed system also. Without pretending to discuss the large questions, opened by the able Lecturer referred to, we cannot withhold an expression of our belief, that the theory contained in his work very much overstates the extent of our ignorance of the Divine Being: that it reduces to an abject and impossible submission the most important functions of the rational nature; that it makes the necessarily inadequate conception which the mind forms of Godhead all one with blank and blind uncertainty, and instead of the clearly defined statements of Christian belief, contained in our creeds, appears to leave us with nothing but a ‘*regulative*’

fiction ; a phenomenal falsehood : a meaningless Athenian symbol for an unknowable and unknown God.”

The Atheistical tract closes with these words. “What, then, is the sum of all that Mansel says? It is this. That reason and religion are incompatible,—that if you would believe, you must not reason,—that if you reason, you cannot consistently believe,—that all you have to reason about is, whether the Bible be God’s word, and then take all it says in faith, nothing doubting. And he is right. All religions are irrational, childish, foolish ; and the Christian religion is as foolish as any,—and rational religionism, Philosophical Theism, and Unitarian Christianity, are as untruthful, as much at war with the facts of consciousness and the phenomena of nature, as the poorest and lowest forms of savage Paganism, and even more so.”

NOTE B. Page 19.

THE ALLEGED PREVALENCE OF SCEPTICISM AMONG THE
EDUCATED CLASSES.

The allusion in the sermon is to an article in the *Westminster Review*, Oct. 1860. The writer says—

“It must be a profound evil that all thinking men should reject a national religion. It is almost worse that they should falsely pretend to accept it. In what a net-work of contrary influences is our daily life passed. All the tenderer and holier of our ties lead one way ; all the stronger and more rational, another. The home, the school, and the Church touch chords in our hearts. Life, thought, and society nullify and dispel their teaching. The newspaper, the review, the tale by every fire-side, is written almost exclusively by men who have long ceased to believe. So also the school-book, the text-book, the manuals for study of youth and manhood, the whole mental food of the day ; science, history, morals, and politics, poetry, fiction, and essay ; the very lesson of the school, the very sermon from the pulpit. And all this is done beneath a solemn or cynical hypocrisy. How long shall this last?” p. 331.

In the same article are statements, which we cannot but think are still more over-coloured, in regard to the prevalence of unbelief in our Universities. The writer says, speaking of *Essays and Reviews*, "Indeed, no one that knows the religious state of the Universities could doubt that such a book would be eagerly welcomed, but welcomed only as a partial instalment. Few, perhaps, are aware how far the decay of belief extends beneath those walls." p. 330. And again: "This volume draws a sad picture of the prevalence of intellectual doubt within those cloisters. That picture is far short of the reality. 'Smouldering scepticism,' indeed! When they are honeycombed with disbelief, running through every phase from physical interpretation to utter atheism. Professors, tutors, fellows, and pupils are conscious of this wide-spread doubt." p. 331.

Happily we have only the writer's *ipse dixit* for all this, even as being the case four years ago: and, putting authority against authority, we may not be unwilling, on the general subject of the prevalence of infidel thought in England, to take comfort from the strong affirmations to the contrary, put forth in recent articles by the leading journal of the day.

NOTE C. Page 21.

THE EXCESS OF FAITH.

On this subject see an admirable sermon by the present Bishop of Lincoln, called "The Nemesis of Excess in Faith and Worship." He wisely warns us that "Faith overstrained till it has passed into the boundary of unreasoning or ill-reasoning credulity shrinks back into doubt, scepticism, or infidelity." "Sometimes," he observes, "faith accepting, on authority without evidence, tenet after tenet, strikes against one which staggers and revolts. It is brought to a stand, perplexed and in doubt. It is forced to examine its footing, and to question the

stability of its premises.....It becomes more distrustful of assertion, more exacting of proof, more on its guard against fallacies. It suspects the logic of its former conclusions, and admits by degrees a feeling of uncertainty as to the objects and grounds of its belief." The melancholy issue of all this overstrained or unproved faith is that "A general suspicion of doubt pervades the whole subject of Revelation. The discovery of unsound inferences discredits those which are sound; and he who finds that he has believed too much, is fearful whether there be anything to be believed at all."....."What wonder if the disappointed, discontented soul yields to the congenial temptation [of modern scepticism:] and if unreasoning credulity finds its dreary Nemesis in a cold, critical, self-satisfied unbelief?" Bp. Jackson's *God's word and Man's heart*, pp. 149, 152, 157. See also some excellent remarks on the same subject in Farrar's *Critical History of Free Thought*, p. 368. The entire passage in Tennyson, from which the two lines in the text are taken will bear quoting:

"You tell me doubt is devil-born.

I know not; one indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but not in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

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

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

In Memoriam, xcv.

NOTE D. Page 29.

THE TENETS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE SECULARISTS.

In the "Report on Religious Worship," as given by Mr Mann, 1851, the following is put down as the principal tenet of Secularism:—"That as the fact of a future life is at all events susceptible of some degree of doubt, while the fact and necessities of a present life are matters of direct sensation, it is therefore prudent to attend exclusively to the concerns of that existence which is certain and immediate, rather than waste energies on a preparation for that which can hardly be considered more than a remote and merely possible contingency." *Report*, &c. p. 93.

In the Tract "Secularism the one thing needful," we have the following account of its teaching. "The leading maxim of Secularism is to make the best use of this world. And as the reality of this life is more apparent, and the duties more clear, than a future life and its duties, Secularism teaches the prudence and wisdom of making this life our first consideration." p. 5.

The account by Holyoake is given in these terms: "Secularism commences not in Atheism, but Cosmism. It acknowledges that Nature is—it does not declare why it is. It traces the order of the universe, but does not pronounce upon the cause. It studies manifestations, but does not pledge itself to account for them. Guided by the principle of Materialism, which we define as the search, not after primary, but after calculable causes, it labours in the inexhaustible field of positive philosophy. A Secular Society may contain classes for the study of Atheism, as it may of Theism, but the Society is not compromised by such pursuits. It neither proposes to define, nor to limit, nor to answer for the opinions of its members. Its function is to indicate to its members reliable methods of form-

ing their opinions, and to defend their right to acquire them, to hold them, to utter them, to debate them.”

Secularism is probably the most complete infidel organization which has yet been attempted in this country. It has its monthly magazine, now extending to many volumes:—its separate series of Tracts, called the Secular Propagandist Tracts:—its school-books for the use of children:—and even a form of prayer! The affairs of the Society are regulated by a Central Federation, in London, called a Council of Friends: and they have lately commenced publishing “a Library of accredited works,” of which the first volume, “The Task of to-day” is just published. See Holyoake’s *Organization of Free-thinkers*.

NOTE E. Page 31.

ENCOMIUMS ON THE BIBLE BY INFIDEL WRITERS.

The following eloquent passage is from the pen of the late Theodore Parker; and forms part of a discourse in which he nevertheless avows that all his faith in the Bible as a Divine Revelation is gone. “This collection of books has taken such hold of the world as no other. The literature of Greece, which goes up like incense from that land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book from a nation, despised alike in ancient and modern times. It is read in all the ten thousand pulpits of our land. In all the temples of Christendom is its voice lifted up week by week. The sun never sets on its glowing page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man, and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colours the talk of the street. It enters men’s closets, mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. The Bible attends men in sickness, when the fever of the world is on them. The aching head finds a softer pillow, when the

Bible lies underneath. The mariner, escaping from shipwreck, seizes it the first of his treasures, and keeps it sacred to God. It blesses us when we are born, gives names to half Christendom, rejoices with us, has sympathy for our mourning, tempers our grief to finer issues. It is the better part of our sermons. It lifts man above himself. Our best of uttered prayers are from its storied speech, wherewith our fathers and the patriarchs prayed. The timid man, about to awake from his dream of life, looks through the glass of Scripture, and his eye grows bright; he does not fear to stand alone, to tread the way unknown and distant, to take the death angel by the hand and bid farewell to wife, and babes, and home. Men rest on this their dearest hopes. It tells them of God, and of His blessed Son, of earthly duties, and heavenly rest."

"There must be in the Bible, mind, heart, and soul, wisdom and religion: were it otherwise, how could millions find it their lawgiver, friend, and prophet? Some of the greatest of human institutions seem built on the Bible: such things will not stand on chaff, but on mountains of rock. What is the secret cause of this wide and deep influence? It must be found in the Bible itself, and must be adequate to the effect." *Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion*, pp. 239 seq.

NOTE F. Page 31.

THE MIS-USE BY RATIONALISTS OF THE LEADING TERMS OF
CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

Although the origin of this disingenuous use of Christian language is referred by Hagenbach to Fichte and Schelling, the readiness to adopt it, by the writers of the Essayist school, may be seen from the Essay of Dr Williams, who, as usual, makes Bunsen carry his burden for him. "For though he (Bunsen) embraces with more than orthodox warmth New Testa-

ment terms, he explains them in such a way that he may be charged with using Evangelical language in a philosophical sense." And then we have some hypothetical specimens of Christian nomenclature as read with the Bunsen-Williams gloss. *Justification by Faith*, may mean, "that peace of mind, or sense of Divine approval which comes of trust in a righteous God, rather than a fiction of merit by transfer." *Regeneration* is a "giving of insight, or an awakening of the forces of the soul." *Resurrection* would mean a "spiritual quickening." *Salvation* would be "our deliverance from darkness." *Propitiation* would be "the recovery of that peace which cannot be, while sin divides us from the Searcher of hearts." The "hateful fires of Gehenna may serve as images of distracted remorse." And "heaven is not a place so much as a fulfilment of the love of God." Well might the *Westminster Review* taunt these writers in the language, "How far is this solvent process to be carried? Are all formulæ whatever to be discarded, or what materials remain to form new? In their ordinary if not plain sense, there has been discarded the Word of God,—the Creation—the Fall—the Redemption—Justification—Regeneration, and Salvation....It may be that this is a true view of Christianity, but we insist in the name of common sense that it is a new view." *Article on Neo-Christianity*, p. 305, Oct. 1860. See some able remarks on the subject of this Note in Garbett's Boyle Lectures, *The Bible and its Critics*, p. 357.

It would almost seem as if the Secularists were emulous of the success which has attended this clever artifice; for one of their leaflet Tracts (for Railways) is headed, "WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?" And then comes the answer. "A Christian free from Superstition accepts the word Christ not as the name of Jesus, but as meaning the Philosophy of Truth and Righteousness, that is Knowledge and Good works, that is Civilization, so that Civilization is to be the Saviour of Mankind, from Barbarism, Ignorance, and Superstition...."

Christianity free from Superstition would free Mankind from these Evils, lead to perfect Civilisation, and the World would become a Paradise."

NOTE G. Page 33.

THE NECESSITY OF WELL-DEFINED DOGMATIC FORMULARIES.

On this subject we have an able minister of the Church of Scotland thus expressing himself: "It is not for me to say what should be the measure proposed by that commission which has been appointed by Her Majesty to settle practically what should be the nature and the place of tests in the Church of England. I may be allowed, however, to give it as my own opinion, and the opinion of many others, both within and beyond her communion, that a more responsible trust has not been committed to any public body for the last two centuries. I feel that it does not belong to me to say how the creed of the Church of England is to be guarded. But as loving all that is good, and receiving all that is great in that Church, and being convinced that a departure from the faith in that Church would be followed by tremendous consequences throughout universal Christendom, I may be permitted to express my wish and prayer that she will come out of her present trial, retaining for Christ and His Word the high place which they have hitherto held in her Articles. I hope she will be able to do so, notwithstanding the opposing influence of very learned, very intellectual, and I believe very good men."—Dr McCosh, *Aspects of Infidelity at Home and Abroad*, p. 13.

NOTE H. Page 41.

THE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE IN RELATION TO SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS.

Dr Whewell has well shewn, in relation to this subject, that differences between Scripture language and Scientific

language, in describing physical phenomena, are inevitable, in consequence of the progressive character of Natural Science. He observes, "Science is constantly teaching us to describe known facts in new language, but the language of Scripture is always the same. And not only so, but the language of Scripture is necessarily adapted to the common state of man's intellectual development, in which he is supposed not to be possessed of science. Hence the phrases used by Scripture are precisely those which science soon teaches man to consider as inaccurate. Yet they are not on that account the less fitted for their proper purpose: for if any terms had been used, adapted to a more advanced state of knowledge, they must have been unintelligible among those to whom the Scripture was first addressed. If the Jews had been told that water existed in the clouds in small drops, they would have marvelled that it did not constantly descend; and to have explained the reason of this, would have been to teach *Atmology* in the sacred writings. If they had read in their Scripture that the earth was a sphere, when it appeared to be a plain, they would only have been disturbed in their thoughts, or driven to some wild and baseless imaginations by a declaration to them so strange. If the Divine Speaker, instead of saying that He would set his bow in the clouds, had been made to declare that He would give to water the property of refracting different colours at different angles, how utterly unmeaning to the hearers would the words have been! And in these cases, the expressions, being unintelligible, startling, and bewildering, would have been such as tended to unfit the Sacred Narrative for its place in the providential dispensation of the world."—*Indications of the Creator*, p. 176.

NOTE I. Page 51.

THE BEGINNINGS OF RELIGIOUS DOUBT.

No apology is offered for re-producing at length the incident referred to in the text. Those who are familiar with the description will be wishful for its insertion, in the hope of benefit to others. The Sermons are entitled, *The Revelation of God the Probation of Man*; and, after some awakening and solemn warnings in relation to "seeds of doubtfulness" ripening into "the seed of death," the preacher proceeds: "It is not from the imagination that I have drawn this warning. I can tell you of an overshadowed grave which closed in on such a struggle, and such an end, as that at which I have glanced. In it was laid a form which had hardly reached the fulness of earliest manhood. That young man had gone young, ardent, and simply faithful to the tutelage of one, himself I doubt not a sincere believer, but who sought to reconcile the teaching of our Church, in which he ministered, with the dreams of rationalism. His favourite pupil learned his lore, and it sufficed for his needs whilst health beat high in his youthful veins. But on him sickness and decay closed early in, and, as the glow of health faded, the intellectual lights for which he had exchanged the simplicity of faith began to pale; whilst the viper brood of doubts crept forth from their hiding-places, and raised against him fearfully their envenomed heads. And they were too strong for him. The teacher who had suggested could not remove them; and in darkness and despair his victim died before his eyes the doubter's death."—*Sermons by the Bishop of Oxford*, p. 37.

In relation to the power of doubt over the mind in a time of sickness, the words of the poet also may be remembered :

“Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust,
 And Time a maniac scattering dust;
 And Life a fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
 And weave their pretty cells and die.”

In Memoriam.

NOTE J. Page 60.

THE CHARACTER AND OPINIONS OF THEODORE PARKER.

This eminent American writer was born in 1810, and died in 1860; and though we may hesitate to subscribe to that language of his biographer, “that he was a representative man, with conscience and humanity enough to feed a generation, to warn and to save, to build up with healthy tissue, to repair the degenerate waste of a noble people, and to pull down and trample on their crimes also” (*Life and Correspondence*, Preface, p. viii), yet there can be no doubt that his influence over the tone of religious thought in America was greater than that of any man of his day. He began life as a Unitarian minister at Boston, casting his theology at first pretty much after the model of that taught by Dr Channing, with whom he was on terms of personal intimacy. Very soon, however, his teaching took the form of a sort of sentimental Deism,—something like what Isaac Taylor calls “impiety scented and got up for ladies,”—attacks upon all the fundamental truths of Revelation being mixed up with testimonies to Christ and Christianity, which, for beauty, and truth, and pathos, might challenge rivalry with the productions of the most orthodox literature. As intimated in the text, the name he wished his religion to be known by was, “The Absolute Religion,”—the obligation of absolute love to GOD and man. He placed the ground of

religion chiefly in personal consciousness; in certain emotional intuitions which all men have of GOD, of moral law, and of a future life. He utterly disbelieved in miracles, though he did not deny their possibility. On the same principle he denied the existence of a special Providence. He allowed no kind of inspiration, save that which is common to all the higher forms of human genius: and while looking upon Christ and Christianity as the best exponents of man's moral duties and obligations *at present*, he saw no reason why the authority of both should not be superseded by some higher development of the human intelligence yet to come.

He ministered for some time to the Unitarians at Boston; but he went too far even for them; and the connection was dissolved. From this time, his Deism took not so much a more outspoken form,—for that was hardly possible,—but became intermingled with much more of abuse, and sarcasm, and coarseness than would be found in the writings of his earlier life. Thus, in one place, after saying of our LORD,—“I look on him as a man of vast genius, a great mind, a great conscience, a great heart, a great soul;”—he goes on, “but when he was a boy, I suppose he stumbled in learning to walk: mis-called the letters in learning to read: got wrong conclusions in his thoughts,” &c. *Life*, II. p. 226. But one of the most painful passages occurs in a letter from Rome. “The Roman religion is addressed only to the senses, and must ere long go the same road as the Egyptian and its successors. Protestantism will in due time follow, it being a little less absurd than Catholicism. Thus the tree of religion drops its leaves continually, after they have done their work, and itself grows greater and greater by the half of each of them. I wonder ministers don't see that Christianity is one leaf of this immense tree, and must fall when its work is done. But they don't and won't. But the men of Science and Philosophy throughout Europe have utterly broken with the first principles of what is historically called Christianity, *i.e.* the supernatural

Revelation, the Incarnation of God in a Virgin's womb, the Atonement, the Eternal damnation of mankind (all except a few miserable creatures), the devilish character of the Deity. These are the essentials of the 'revealed religion,' of the Christianity of the Church: and they will go to their own place." *Life*, II. 330. The thought is surely a very solemn one, that soon after penning this letter, Theodore Parker died. Did he realize what he hoped to do, when, some time before he wrote, "If my life should close to-morrow—

"I have the richest, best of consolations:

The thought that I have given

To serve the cause of heaven

The freshest of my early inspirations"? Vol. I. p. 194.

NOTE K. Page 61.

M. RÉNAN AND THE FRAGMENTS OF PAPIAS.

Papias was Bishop of Hierapolis (A.D. 120), and the slenderness of the foundation on which M. Rénan has raised his novel hypothesis, may be inferred from the following particulars, extracted from a Sermon by the Rev. Dr Irons, "My words shall not pass away," preached at St Paul's Cathedral, Jan. 3, 1864. "In Routh's *Reliquiæ* (I. 7-38), we have the fragments, partly Greek and partly Latin, of the Five Books, of Papias *Δογίων Κυριακῶν Ἐξηγήσεως*, to which Eusebius refers. The notes are somewhat copious, but valuable; but the nature of the book itself and its bearing on the question, what *λόγια* of CHRIST were known generally in Hierapolis and the churches of Asia Minor, the following passage will show. 'I shall not tire of mentioning to thee, together *with the interpretations*, whatsoever things I have at any time heard, and well remembered, from the Elders, being confirmed as to their truth. For I had no pleasure in those who speak many things—as the

generality—but in those who teach truths; and not in those who make mention of the commands of others, but in those who give faithfully the commands of the LORD, and the things which proceed from the Truth itself. And if at any time one met me who had accompanied with the Elders, I enquired into the words of the Elders also;—what Andrew, or what Peter said; or what Philip—[Philip's four daughters (*Acts* xxi. 9) are said to have lived at Hierapolis]—or what Thomas, or what James; or any other of the Disciples of our LORD. Also what Aristion and John the Elder, the Disciples of the LORD say. For I took not the things from the Books to be so profitable to me, as those from *still living oral testimony*”—(ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης.).

“St Irenæus (at the beginning of the third century) also preserves fragments of now-forgotten writers, who report *sayings* from those who were known as ‘Elders,’ *i.e.* ‘Disciples of the Apostles.’” (Routh, I. 40–65.)

“In another passage of Papias (preserved also by Irenæus) some Miracles are mentioned of which we have no account in the New Testament; and other Parables and Discourses of our SAVIOUR,—some of them ‘*μυθικώτερα*,’—referring to the Millennium. Papias (as Irenæus says), adds, that Mark wrote a Gospel correctly, as the interpreter of Peter, but *did not preserve the true order of events*, since he had *not himself been a hearer of CHRIST*, and did not therefore give an exact arrangement of the λόγια.”—*Sermon*, pp. 8 and 25.

NOTE L. Page 63.

THE RECENT WORK OF M. MICHELET.

The following sketch of the scope and style of the *Bible de l'humanité* is taken from the *Athenæum*, Nov. 12, 1864:—
‘Inspired by M. Rénan's success, M. Michelet has taken the

Bible in hand, read some parts of it carelessly, and come to the conclusion that there is not much in it: nothing to compare with what he finds of beauty, goodness and originality in the divine poems and legends of Persia and India. It chanced that during the past year, M. Michelet heard for the first time of the Râmâyana, one of the two sacred poems describing the exploits of Vishnu; and, like the old gentleman who picked up the 'Age of Reason' on a stall, he fancies he has made a discovery which will shake the world. M. Michelet has just learnt to his amazement that Vishnu, at the request of the inferior gods, took upon himself the form of man, in order that he might combat the demon Ravan'a. Is it not easy for a professor of paradox to jump to the conclusion, that in this Vishnu legend we have the original source of our Christian tenet of the Incarnation? M. Michelet, elated with joy at his great discovery, exclaims: 'The year 1863 will remain to me for ever happy and blessed; for in that year I read for the first time the grand sacred poem of India, the divine Râmâyana.'

"Having traced the first Christian mystery to its source in Vishnu, he travels towards the west, through Persia and Babylonia; glancing at the wayside poetry and legends, finding the Messianic idea in one place, the Virgin-motherhood in a second, and so to the end of his nine chapters. From two or three classical authors and from some of the early Fathers he quotes and misquotes anything found to his purpose. He tells with fervour the legend of Olympias and the Serpent; tells it as a fact, and as an impious illustration of an Article received in every Christian church. He trifles with the legends of Adonis, Leda, Aphrodite and Apollo. In every impure region of the old mythology he finds historical analogies and illustrations, damaging, as he dreams, to the Christian system, in its foundation. Indeed, the whole of his pretended historical exposition is an attempt to show that the Christian church is an institution—not of sages, free men and philosophers—but of women and slaves."

In reference to the vanity which we have referred to as the actuating motive of such men as Rénan and Michelet, we may as well quote the words of Burke in speaking of Rousseau. He says, "We have had the great professor and founder of the *philosophy of vanity* in England. As I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day, he left no doubt on my mind that he entertained no principle either to influence his heart, or to guide his understanding, but *vanity*. With this vice he was possessed to a degree little short of madness. It is from the same deranged, eccentric vanity, that this, the insane *Socrates* of the National Assembly, was impelled to publish a mad confession of his mad faults, and to attempt a new sort of glory from bringing hardily to light the obscure and vulgar vices which we know may sometimes be blended with eminent talents. He has not observed on the nature of vanity who does not know it is omnivorous; that it has no choice in its food; that it is fond to talk even of its own faults and vices, as what will excite surprise and draw attention, and what will pass at worst for openness and candour.....Under this philosophic instructor in the *ethics of vanity*, they have attempted in France a regeneration of the moral constitution of man."

NOTE M. Page 64.

THE CLAIMS OF M. RÉNAN AS A CONTROVERSIALIST.

We have not applied the harsh terms of the text inconsiderately, or without having specific instances in view. As examples of what we have called this author's "unscientific dogmatism," we might quote the few complacent and even contemptuous sentences in which he disposes of the whole argument from miracles. "In the name of universal experience we banish miracle from history." "A supernatural

account always implies credulity or imposture." Or, again, we might refer to the strangely illogical way in which, without offering a shadow of proof, and as if there could be no doubt upon the matter, he takes it for granted that St Luke is altogether wrong in his chronology; and that it is a mere invention of the lovers of prophecy to suppose that CHRIST was born at Bethlehem, His real birth-place being Nazareth; and that it may be accepted as a fact that JESUS was *not* descended from David at all.

Of "unsupported statements," not to apply to them a stronger term, we have examples in such sentences as these. "All confessions of faith are perversions of the idea of Jesus. We should seek in vain for a theological proposition in the Gospel." (On chercherait vainement une proposition théologique dans l'Évangile.) "We should seek in vain in the Gospel for one religious rite recommended by Jesus." (On chercherait vainement dans l'Évangile une pratique religieuse recommandée par Jesus.) Or, again, in his versions or rather perversions of some of the parables, as when referring to the parable of the Unjust Steward he has recourse to a most obviously fallacious interpretation of his own, in order that he may have the opportunity of saying, "here a steward is praised because he has made friends with the poor at the expense of his master;" or when of another parable he tells us Dives is in hell, simply "because he is a rich man, because he does not give up his property to the poor, because he does well while others have done ill." As if it were not patent on the face of the parable that the sin of Dives consisted not in his *possession* of wealth, but in his abuse of it to his own selfish gratifications—in the fact of his leading an idle and useless life—and above all, in that he, a Jew, should have so wantonly violated that great commandment of the Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Lev. xix. 18.

Examples of the "irreverent and ribald sneers" of this blasphemer we should not deem it well to multiply. Two instances

may be cited, which, on account of their incredible baseness, we prefer to give in the writer's own words. The following passage occurs in his reference to the penitent woman in Simon's house. "Des femmes faibles ou coupables, surprises de tant de charmes, et goûtant, pour la première fois, le contact plein d'attrait de la vertu, s'approchaient librement de lui, on s'étonnait qu'il ne les repoussât pas.....Des femmes, les cœurs plein de larmes, et disposées par leurs fautes aux sentiments d'humilité, étaient plus près de son royaume que les natures médiocres, lesquelles ont souvent peu de mérite de n'avoir point failli. On conçoit, d'un autre côté, que ces âmes tendres, trouvant dans leur conversion à la secte un moyen de réhabilitation facile, s'attachaient à lui avec passion." The other passage exceeds anything to be found in Paine or Voltaire. The writer is speculating upon the various forms of painful reflection which might have contributed to intensify the mysterious agony which the Holy One experienced in the garden. And the following revolting passage occurs: "Peut-être quelques-uns de ces touchants souvenirs qui conservent les âmes les plus fortes, et qui par moments les percent comme un glaive, lui vinrent-ils à ce moment. Se rappela-t-il les claires fontaines de la Galilée, où il aurait pu se rafraîchir; la vigne et la figuier sous lesquels il avait pu s'asseoir; les jeunes filles qui auraient peut-être consenti à l'aimer?"

These examples will suffice. We extend this note only to quote with all thankfulness a proof how this miserable romance of *The Life of Jesus* has been already over-ruled of God to create a wider demand, among the French people, for the true Life of the SAVIOUR, as contained in the Scriptures of the New Testament. The following is from M. de Pressensé's Report, as contained in the last *Monthly Reporter* of the British and Foreign Bible Society. "The attention of our population is at the present moment turned in a truly extraordinary manner, as has never previously been the case, to the life, and consequently also to the person of Jesus Christ. In a manner which is surprisingly wide-spread, as soon as ever a Colporteur accosts any

one, all that he has to say about the Saviour is listened to with attention. Very lively discussions arise: very frequently ignorance or impiety is openly displayed. This is doubtless very sad, but, taking all things together, this is far to be preferred to that stolid indifference which, for so long a time, was the brazen wall which prevented any Gospel appeals reaching men's consciences and hearts. A considerable number of our agents now send me information similar to the following:—‘*The Life of Jesus*, by Rénan, is increasingly facilitating my efforts in the sale of New Testaments.’ ‘*The Life of Jesus*, by Rénan, opens more than ever the way for conversations respecting the person and work of the Redeemer.’ ‘*The Life of Jesus*, by Rénan, is certainly promoting the reading of the New Testament.’—*Monthly Reporter*, Nov. 1, 1864.

NOTE N. Page 69.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN MARTYRS AND THE NAME OF CHRIST.

Familiar as we are made, from our school-days, with the letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, written at most not above forty years after the death of St Paul, it may be doubted whether the importance of it is sufficiently appreciated in its bearing on the point for which it is cited in the text, namely, the place which Christ occupied in the minds of the first Christians, as being in himself a DIVINE BEING, and demanding that the religion which He had given to the world should be irrevocably bound up with the honour of His OWN NAME. Both these facts, however, it will be seen, come out strongly in these celebrated letters. Thus nothing can be more conclusive than the words which the proconsul puts into the mouth of the faithful Christians who were brought before him for punishment. “They affirmed that the whole of their guilt, or error, was that they met on a certain stated day before it was light,

and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ as to some God," (quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque *Christo quasi Deo dicere* secum invicem). In like manner with regard to their veneration for the name of Christ, and their inflexible determination, as religionists, to be known by no other designation. "The method," says Pliny, "which I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians is this:—I interrogated them whether they were Christians: if they confessed I repeated the question twice again, adding threats at the same time; when if they still persevered, I ordered them to be punished: (Interrogavi ipsos an essent Christiani. Confitentes iterum et tertio interrogavi supplicium minatus: perseverantes duci jussi.) He then proceeds to specify the crucial tests by which he was able to ascertain the moral sincerity of some who appeared anxious to equivocate;—such as repeating an invocation to the gods, or performing some religious rite before the Emperor's statue, or *reviling the name of Christ*,—compliances to which none of the sincere among them could be induced to submit (præterea maledicerent Christo, quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt revera Christiani). The answer of the Emperor is to the same effect, putting in the forefront of the conditions of a proffered pardon, that the accused should deny himself to be a Christian: 'ita tamen ut qui negaverit se Christianum esse, idque re ipsa manifestum fecerit, i. e. supplicando Diis nostris, quamvis suspectus in præteritum fuerit, veniam ex pœnitentia impetret.'" *Epist.* x. 97 and 98.

NOTE O. Page 69.

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.

The term Atheist was a name constantly applied to the early Christians, on account of their refusal to offer worship to the heathen deities: so that "Away with the Atheists" really

meant "Away with the Christians." Of course, taking the word in its proper etymological sense, the Christians compromised no principle in repeating the required formula, and many it is likely escaped martyrdom by doing so. Polycarp, however, while repeating the words, guarded himself from all suspicion of mental reservation by telling the bystanders to whom *he* intended the offensive word to be applied. The following is the account taken from "The circular letter of the Church of Smyrna" concerning his martyrdom. "Now as he was going into the lists, there was a voice from heaven, 'Be strong, Polycarp, and quit thyself like a man.' No one saw who it was that spake to him: but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice. And as he was brought in, there was a great disturbance, when they heard that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the Proconsul asked him, whether he were Polycarp. And, when he acknowledged (that he was,) he persuaded him to deny (the faith,) saying, 'Reverence thy old age;' with many other exhortations of a like nature, as their custom is, saying, 'Swear by the fortune of Cæsar; repent, and say, Away with the wicked.' Then Polycarp, looking with a severe countenance upon the whole company of ungodly Gentiles who were in the lists, stretched forth his hand to them, and said, groaning and looking up to heaven, 'Away with the wicked.' But the Proconsul urging him, and saying, 'Swear, and I will release thee: reproach Christ;'
Polycarp answered, 'Fourscore and six years have I continued serving Him, and He hath never wronged me at all; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?'

"The Proconsul said unto him, 'I have wild beasts ready; to those I will cast thee, unless thou repent.' He answered, 'Call for them, then: for we Christians are fixed in our minds, not to change from good to evil. But it will be good for me to be changed from my grievous sufferings to their just reward.'"

After a few more fruitless attempts to persuade him to

recant, the holy man was led out by the executioners, and perished at the stake. Chevallier's *Translation of the Epistles of Clement*, &c. pp. 154—159.

NOTE P. Page 80.

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF ALL HUMANITARIAN THEORIES TO ACCOUNT FOR THE MORAL FACTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

In the working out of this part of his argument, the writer is indebted for some very useful suggestions to two works of great value, *The Christ of History*, by John Young; and *The Restoration of Belief*, by Isaac Taylor. The following extracts will illustrate the manner of these writers, in setting forth some of the historic difficulties of Christianity, regarded as a human institution only.

“History tells of warriors who reached the summit of their fame in comparative youth; it tells of men of science also, and of scholars, and of statesmen, who in youth rose to great and envied distinction. But the difference is obvious, and it is wide, between the conquest of territory, and the conquest of minds; between scientific, literary, or political renown, and moral and spiritual influence and excellence. Is there an instance, not of a man acquiring fame in youth and preserving it in old age, but of a man who died in youth, gaining vast influence of a purely spiritual kind, not by force of arms, and not by secular aid in any form, but simply and only by his principles and his life—of such a man transmitting that influence through successive generations, and after two thousand years retaining it in all its freshness, and continuing, at that distance of time, to establish himself, and to reign almightily in the minds and hearts of myriads of human beings? If there be, or anything approaching to it, where is it? There is not such an example in the whole history of the world, except Jesus Christ.” *The Christ of History*, pp. 33, 34.

“Remove from Christianity everything in it which is supernatural and divine, and then the problem which we have to do with is this.—A revolution in human affairs, in the highest degree beneficial in its import, was carried forward upon the arena of the great world, by means of the noble behaviour of men who command our sympathy and admiration, as brave, wise, and good. But this revolution drew the whole of its moral force from a belief, which—how shall we designate it?—was in part an inexplicable illusion; in part a dream, and in large part a fraud. This, the greatest forward movement which the civilized branches of the human family have ever made, took its rise in bewildered Jewish brains! Indestructible elements of advancement to which even infidel nations confessedly owe whatever is best and most hopeful within them, these elements of good, which were obtained for us at so vast a cost, had their source in a congeries of exaggerations, and in a mindless conspiracy, hatched by chance, nursed by imposture, and winged by fanaticism.” *Restoration of Belief*, pp. 109, 110. In a new edition of this work, we find advertised a Postscript in reply to Rénan. We may confidently predict it will repay perusal.

NOTE Q. Page 89.

THE THEORY OF A SERIES OF ETERNALLY IMPRESSED
CONSEQUENCES.

The allusion to a “different collocation of two grains of sand” is not an imaginary example, cited to show the extravagance of the theory referred to, but is taken from a grave argumentative illustration of this law of necessary sequences, as found in the work of a great German philosopher. “Let us imagine, for instance, this grain of sand lying some few feet further inland than it actually does. Then must the storm-

wind that drove it in from the sea-shore have been stronger than it actually was. Then must the preceding state of the atmosphere, by which this wind was occasioned, and its degree of strength determined, have been different from what it actually was, and the previous changes which gave rise to this particular weather, and so on. We must suppose a different temperature from that which really existed, and a different constitution of the bodies which influenced this temperature. The fertility or barrenness of countries, the duration of the life of man, depend, unquestionably, in a great degree on temperature. How can you know—since it is not given us to penetrate the arcana of nature, and it is therefore allowable to speak of possibilities—how can you know that in such a state of the weather as we have been supposing, in order to carry this grain of sand a few yards further, some ancestor of yours might not have perished from hunger, or cold, or heat, long before the birth of that son from whom you are descended; that thus you might never have been at all; and all that you have ever done, and all that you ever hope to do in this world, must have been hindered in order that a grain of sand might lie in a different place.” Fichte, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*. Werke, II. p. 178. Quoted in *Aids to Faith*, p. 17.

NOTE R. Page 99.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE JEWS, AN ARGUMENT FOR THE TRUTH OF PROPHECY.

On this subject the reader would be well repaid by the perusal of a tract, cited in the “Transactions of the Sanhedrim of Jews assembled at Paris, in 1807,” by order of Buonaparte, and entitled “An Appeal to the Justice of Kings and Nations,” written by a Jew. The author, after describing, with much pathos and eloquence, the sufferings of his nation, especially

at the hands of Europeans ; and after declaring, that it seems as if they were allowed to survive the destruction of their country, only to become a mark for the insulting finger of scorn, and a sport to the most inveterate hatred,—asks, “What is our guilt? is it that generous constancy which we have manifested in defending the laws of our fathers? But this constancy ought to have entitled us to the admiration of all nations ; and it has only sharpened against us the daggers of persecution. Braving all kinds of torments, the pangs of death, and the still more terrible pangs of life, we alone have withstood the impetuous torrents of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course nations, religions, and countries. What is become of those celebrated empires, whose very name still excites our admiration, by the ideas of splendid greatness attached to them, and whose power controlled the whole surface of the known globe? They are only remembered as monuments of the vanity of human greatness. Rome and Greece are no more! their descendants, mixed with other nations, have lost even the traces of their origin ; while a population of a few millions of men, so often subjugated, stands the test of 3,000 revolving years, and the fiery ordeal of fifteen centuries of persecution.”

The following passage also, from their own historian Basnage, will be read with interest : “We here behold the greatest prodigy, in the preservation of the Jewish nation, in spite of all the calamities it has sustained for 1700 years ; we here see a church, which has been hated and persecuted for 1700 years, still subsisting and numerous: kings have often employed the severity of edicts, and the hands of the executioner, to destroy it ; the seditious multitude has perpetrated massacres and persecutions infinitely more tragical than the princes ; both kings and people, heathens, Christians, and Mahometans, however opposite in other points, have united in the design of ruining this nation, and have not effected it. The bush of Moses surrounded by flames, has always burnt without con-

suming. Dispersed through all parts of the civilized world; driven from or persecuted wherever they have appeared, they have from age to age endured misery and persecution, and waded through torrents of their own blood; yet they still exist in spite of the disgrace, and hatred, and suffering, which attend them; while there remains nothing of the greatest monarchies antecedent to the era of their destruction, but the name." Basnage, Book VI. c. I. s. I.

In relation to their belief that they shall one day return to their own land, Dr Buchanan observes, "I have had many interesting conferences with the Jews, on the subject of their present state; and have been much struck with two circumstances, their constant reference to the desolation of Jerusalem, and their confident hope that it will one day be rebuilt. The desolation of the Holy City is ever present to the minds of the Jews, when the subject is concerning themselves as a nation; for, though without a king, and without a country, they constantly speak of the unity of their nation. Distance of time and place seems to have no effect in obliterating the remembrance of the desolation. I often thought of the verse in the Psalms, 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.' They speak of Palestine as near at hand, and easily accessible. It is become an ordinance of the Rabbins in some places, that when a man builds a new house, he shall leave a small part of it unfinished, as an emblem of ruin, and write on it these words, *Zecher Lachorcham*, i.e. IN MEMORY OF THE DESOLATION." Vide Buchanan's *Christian Researches*, 2nd Edit. p. 212.

NOTE S. Page 112.

CHRIST NECESSARILY A DECEIVER IF HE WERE NOT DIVINE.

Obvious as would seem to be the conclusion set forth in the text, that in the denial of Christ's claims to the Messiah-

ship, with all the Divine prerogatives attached to it, is involved, of necessity, a denial of His claims to anything like moral integrity,—by one modern rationalist only, as far as we know, does the conclusion seem to have been boldly accepted. Francis Newman utterly repudiates the eulogies pronounced by Parker, Strauss, and others, on the character of Jesus: and that on the ground taken in the text. Thus, after speaking of the unapproached pre-eminence with which the Jewish imagination had always invested their Messiah, and which Jesus must have been aware of, he goes on, “If He did not intend to claim this, it was His obvious duty to *disclaim* it, and to warn all against false, dangerous, or foolish conceptions of Messiah; to protest that Messiah was only a teacher, not a prince, not a Divine lawgiver, not a Supreme judge sitting on the throne of God, and disposing of men’s eternal destinies; nay, why claim the title Messiah at all, if it could only suggest falsehood? Since He sedulously fostered the belief that He was the Messiah, without attempting to define the term, or guide the public mind, He could only be understood, and must have wished to be understood, to present Himself as Messiah in the popular, notorious sense. If He was really this, honour Him as such. If His claim was delusive, He cannot be held guiltless.

“Every high post has its own besetting sin, which must be conquered by him who is to earn any admiration. A finance minister, who pilfers the treasury, can never be honoured as a hero, whatever the merits of his public measures. A statesman or prince, entrusted with the supreme executive power, ruins his claim to veneration if he use that power violently to overthrow the laws. Such as is the crime of a statesman who usurps a despotism, such is the guilt of a religious teacher who usurps lordship over the taught, and aggrandizes himself. It is a bottomless gulf of demerit, swallowing up all possible merit, and making silence concerning him our kindest course, if only his panegyrists allow us to be

silent. A teacher who exalts himself into our Lord and Saviour and Judge, leaves to His hearers no reasonable choice between two extremes of conduct. Who is not with Him is against Him. For we must either submit frankly to His claims, and acknowledge ourselves little children—abhor the idea of criticizing Him or His precepts, and in short become morally annihilated in His presence—or, on the opposite, we cannot help seeing Him to have fallen into something worse than ignominy.”—*Discourse against Hero-making in Religion*, p. 23.

NOTE T. Page 148.

MISCELLANEOUS TESTIMONIES TO A BELIEF IN THE ETERNITY
OF FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

Of the classical testimonies referred to in the text, examples will be remembered easily. Lucretius reflects truly, while he ridicules the popular teaching, when he represents Tityus as feeling the *eternal* vultures tearing his inexhausted liver :

“Nor could e'er
The fierce devourers find a feast so vast,
A feast that through eternity should last.”

Or when he speaks of Sisyphus, bound down by the huge stone's perpetual burden :

“Still doomed to strive, and still to strive in vain.”

See also the passage referred to in the text, thus rendered by the translator from whom we are quoting :

“Nor sees the wretch a boundary to his grief,
Nor one consoling prospect of relief :
Fears after death these ills will heaven tell,
And proves on earth the torments of his hell.”

Busby's Lucret. *De Rer. Nat.* III.

Other examples will occur, taken from the punishments of Ixion, Prometheus, and the unhappy Theseus.

“Sedet æternumque sedebit
Infelix Theseus.”

Virg. *Aeneid*. Lib. vi.

Of the place the doctrine held in the Platonic philosophy, the following may serve as an example. Having allowed that there are *ἰάσιμα ἀμαρτήματα*, remedial offences, Socrates says: “But they who shall be found incorrigible on account of the enormity of their crimes, their many and foul sacrileges, or their unrighteous slaughters, or for the perpetration of similar acts,—they, as a fitting doom, shall plunge into Tartarus, whence they do never escape: ὅθεν οὐποτε ἐκβαίνουσιν.” In answer to an opinion advanced by Warburton, that these things were not really believed, Dr Pusey, in his recent Sermon, quotes a passage from Plato, *de Rep.* i. 5: “Know well,” he said, “O Socrates, that when any one is, or thinks he is near dying, there entereth into him fear and anxiety as to things, in regard to which they never before came into his mind. For those myths too, which are told about those in Hades, that he who has been guilty of injustice here must pay the penalty to justice there, which had been laughed at thus far, then torture his soul lest they should be true.”—*Everlasting Punishment*, a Sermon, p. 7. For other examples, see Alley’s *Vindiciæ Christianæ*, c. x. § 1.

With regard to the theology of the Hindus, mingled as all their views of immortality were with the monstrous extravagancies of their transmigration theory, yet in the case of the worst class of offenders, no portion was left but one of endless retribution. “By all the sacred books of the Hindus,” says Alley, “a heaven and hell, the scene of eternal recompense and retribution were uniformly and explicitly announced. The doctrine was authoritatively communicated to the people, as confirmed alike by the deductions of reason and the voice of religion. It was a truth which the inspiration of the gods

had unerringly proclaimed, and the faith of men universally embraced." *Vindiciæ Christianæ*, c. x. § 2.

The penalties of the wicked, according to the Mahomedan theology, surpass, in their wild and terrific extravagance, any thing to be found in classic writers of the Pagan Tartarus. After undergoing the most dreadful torments in the grave, "where they had been ceaselessly gnawed and stung by dragons with seven heads," they rise to be subjected to a more grievous punishment. "Placed on the bridge Sirat, which is built over hell, and is sharper than the edge of a sword, they shall be precipitated in their endeavours to pass it into the gulf below." "And they shall be chained to devils, and dwell amidst burning winds, and scalding waters: and they shall moreover abide in the darkness of a black smoke, which shall cast forth sparks as big as towers, and shall in no wise shelter them from the heat, nor be of service against the flame."... "And they shall be beaten with maces, and clothed in garments of fire: and as often as they shall attempt to escape from their torments, they shall be dragged back again by evil spirits, who shall say unto them, Taste ye the pain of burning." See Sale's *Koran*, *Prelim. Diss.* Sect. IV. p. 120, and *Kor. Chr.* L. LVI. and LXXVII.

NOTE U. Page 148.

ECCLESIASTICAL TESTIMONIES TO THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

The effect of the recent Judgment of Privy Council, in relation to this solemn subject, has been to bring together such a mass of testimony, and even to cause the reproducing of it in the columns of our daily and weekly newspapers, that we might almost have omitted from our Appendix the testimony of the Universal Church in affirmation of the view taken in the Sermon. A few selections, however, from the early Christian writers, may not be unacceptable.

Beginning with the Apostolic Fathers, we may cite first the testimony of Clement, who, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, says, "If we do the will of Christ we shall find rest. But if otherwise, He will in no wise rescue us from endless punishment;"—*οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς ῥύσεται ἐκ τῆς αἰωνίου κόλασεως*.

Ignatius says in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "He that is thus defiled shall depart into unquenchable fire."

Polycarp, at his martyrdom, appealed to the Proconsul in this language: "Thou threatenest me with fire which burns for an hour, and in a little while is extinguished: for thou knowest not the fire of the future judgment, and of that eternal punishment which is reserved for the ungodly." (See Chevallier's *Epistles of Clement, Polycarp and Ignatius*, p. 157).

Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) uses this very strong language: "If it be not so (that the unrighteous shall be punished with everlasting fire), then is there no GOD." *Apologia*.

Irenæus (A.D. 178) says: "Christ shall send the impious and the unjust and the lawless and the blasphemous of mankind into endless fire." *Adv. Hæres. Symb. Ap. Lib. I. cap. 10*.

To the above may be added the testimony of Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 194), who speaks of "Eternal torments;"—of Tertullian (A.D. 200), who declares the punishments of the wicked to be "Non diuturni verum sempiterni;" of Cyprian (A.D. 258), "Nec erit unde habere tormenta vel requiem possint aliquando vel finem;" of Lactantius (A.D. 306), "Ad perpetua tormenta damnati, et æternis ignibus traditi;" &c. of Athanasius, who in reference to Judas says, "If his punishment were to have an end, it *would* be an advantage to him to have been born."

Other early testimonies will be found in the *Rituale Anglo-Catholicum*, by the Rev. H. Bailey. *Athan. Creed*, XVI. 41. *Litany*, XVII. 6; whilst with the fact of the condemnation of Origen by the fifth General Council, for holding views contrary to those of the Universal Church on this subject, most readers

will have become acquainted through the letters of Mr Keble and Dr Pusey, which have appeared in the *Times*.

Nor are there any material divergencies from the Catholic doctrine to be found among Christian bodies of later date. True, the Romish Church, by her fond conceit of a purgatorial cleansing, has practically thrown over the orthodox view with regard to any who die in her communion, but she has always conceded the truth of it in the case of all the impenitent who die without her pale: and has always refused canonization to Origen for his heresies on this very subject. The Protestant Confessions,—such as the Helvetic, the Dort, the Augsburg,—are unanimous in their agreement with the revealed doctrine, as are also the leading non-conformist bodies in our own country.

Of the undisguised and emphatic teaching of our own Church, on this solemn topic, it is not necessary to speak. She has affirmed, in words which defy all the powers of a cunning casuistry to evade, “they that have done evil shall go into everlasting fire.” Nor can it be too often repeated that the recent Judgment has *not affirmed anything else*. That Judgment does not touch doctrine at all; as indeed nothing human can; at least whilst those words remain in our Bible, **THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN.**

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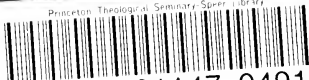
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